



Minnesota Professionals for Psychology Applied to Work

Upcoming Speaker

By Joyce Bono, VP Programs

Thursday, January 15, 2004: Leadership, Teams and Transitions

Gordy Curphy, President, Employer C³

Start off the New Year on the "dark side"!! In January, Gordy Curphy joins us to talk about his work with Robert and Joyce Hogan on the topic of leadership incompetence. Gordy and his colleagues have submitted a series of three articles to Harvard Business Review. The second article in this series addresses managerial incompetence and will be the focus of Gordy's talk.

Despite the thousands of books, articles, and training programs dedicated to leadership development, it may well be that over 50 percent of the people occupying positions of authority are incompetent. Both psychologists and businesspeople would be hard pressed to find an area in which so much is invested with so little return. Gordy and his colleagues suggest that this high level of leadership incompetence may be partly due to how we define leadership. The purpose or *ends* of leadership is to get results through others, whereas the *means* to leadership is through the creation of cohesive, goal-oriented teams. Some individuals are skilled at getting short-term results, but are unable to build the teams needed to achieve superior performance over longer periods of time. Other individuals seem to be more concerned with insuring that everyone is getting along, at the expense of achieving results. It may be that few leaders are capable of building teams and getting results *through others*, across a variety of situations.

Although common definitions of leadership may cause some leaders to be classified as incompetent, there are other reasons why people fail to consistently get results through others, which include:

- Unclear expectations
- A lack of accountability
- Poor selection processes
- Poor development processes

I/O psychologists have developed a number of well-researched processes to address these issues, which if adopted, could significantly reduce rates of managerial incompetence. Whether these processes and solutions are embraced depends as much on the ability of I/O psychologists to build trusting relationships with key decision makers as on the adequacy of their solutions. In Gordy's talk, he will discuss all of these issues . . . how we define leadership, reasons for incompetence, and what I/O psychologists can do to help organizations increase leadership competence.

Gordy's interest in leadership goes back to the mid-1970s when he was a student at the United States Air Force Academy. His interest in the topic continued while he was an Associate Professor at the

Academy, an Adjunct Faculty member of the Center for Creative Leadership, and a Vice President at Personnel Decisions International and the Blandin Foundation. Gordy did his doctoral dissertation at the University of Minnesota on transformational leadership and has written chapters in the Impact of Leadership and The Successful Manager's Handbook. He is also the co-author of the number one selling textbook, Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience and is currently working on The Handbook of Community Leadership. He is also the co-author of an article on leadership and personality in American Psychologist and is a regular presenter at SIOP.

Join us on January 15 for a conversation about managerial incompetence. We will meet once again at the University of Minnesota, Humphrey Center - Room 180.

MPPAW Update

by Carol Lynn Courtney, President

It was like old home week returning to the HHH 180 meeting room at the Humphrey Center. We had a standing room only crowd (even though we grabbed any available chair in sight) for the presentation given by Dr. Filip Leivens, visiting Fulbright Scholar to the University of Minnesota from the University of Ghent. He spoke on competency modeling and shared some of his European perspective on I/O. He brought a great deal of levity and fun to this hot topic. We are sorry to see him leaving Minnesota to return home.

In January, Dr. Gordy Curphy will discuss some innovative perspectives on managerial incompetence. Dr. Curphy is an exciting presenter and I encourage people to come early and get a seat! Also, please let us know if you would be interested in being a presenter or would have ideas for future speakers. We will consider all ideas as we continue to balance the research/practice model and member interest. We are working to keep the program fresh.

Sid informs me that we have a total of 159 members (109 professional members, 50 student members). The group continues to grow and become stronger. Please let any member of the board know if you are interested in participating next year. We will have a number of people "retiring" from positions.

See you at the meeting on January 15th!

September Presentation

Summary prepared by Christine Stanek, Co-Secretary

The Quality of Inferences Made in Competency Modeling
Filip Lievens, Ph.D., Department of Personnel Management & Work
Organizational Psychology, Ghent University

Competency modeling is increasingly used in practice in the U.S. and Europe. However, there is a good deal of skepticism about competency modeling in academia. Dr. Filip Lievens presented evidence of this ongoing competency modeling debate. He defined competency modeling, suggested its usefulness, and highlighted the differences between it and traditional techniques such as job analysis. He also provided an overview of three of his recent empirical studies.

Dr. Lievens suggested the debate around competency modeling in general has roots in the debate to simply define it. There is confusion around whether it is a group of KSAOs, the next generation of KSAOs, and whether it is an observable skill, or underlying trait. The trainability of competencies, therefore, depends upon how one is to define them. In response to this debate about competency modeling, Dr. Lievens pursued the study of competency modeling further. Specifically, he studied the quality of inferences made from competency modeling, how it compares to job analysis, what factors affect the quality of inferences made, and, which design characteristics might increase the quality of inferences made.

According to Dr. Lievens, the debate about competency modeling centers around its practical applications and validity. A proponent would say competency modeling is flexible, user-friendly, face-valid, linked with business strategy, and future-oriented. Skeptics (often in academia) would say that competency modeling is less systematic than traditional job analysis, jeopardizing legal defensibility. Further, if it is so flexible and easy to use, does it take an I/O psychologist to do it? Business strategies are often used to infer competencies; this may be too big of an inferential leap. These are the many issues that fuel recent competency modeling study...in particular, Dr. Lievens' studies.

In his studies, Dr. Lievens made use of a taxonomy of competency modeling designed by Lominger. It is a portfolio sort card method with 67 competencies and utilizes a Q-sort method of five forced-choice rating categories with behavioral anchors. The system has external validity to other systems used for competency modeling.

The first study was a lab experiment with a sample of 39 I/O psychology masters students. It was to determine how competency modeling compared to the job analysis approach and a blended approach utilizing competency modeling and job analysis. The procedure involved a lecture about competency modeling and job analysis, and training in the portfolio sort card usage. There was a simulation in the study involving HR personnel, in which they determined competencies for three common organizational roles. They determined ten competencies via consensus. In condition one of the study, information regarding HR strategy was provided. In condition two, task-based information was provided. In condition three, the blended approach, information about the HR strategy and tasks was provided. Dr. Lievens conducted a generalizability analysis to determine interrater reliability and disentangled the different sources of variance (competency, job, raters, and interactions). There was somewhat less variation due to raters in the blended approach. Further, SMEs were somewhat more effective raters than students in the competency modeling approach. Yet, results were not statistically significant. From these results, Dr. Lievens suggested the blended approach is slightly better than task-based approach and the task-based approach is slightly better than competency modeling.

The second study was in a multinational production company. All SMEs knew how to use the portfolio sort cards approach. There were four types of SMEs on panels: HR specialist, job incumbent, supervisor, and internal customer. As in the first study, the panel rated three production jobs. The results were compared to those of the students in study one, and there was more agreement between the SMEs on what competencies fit with the job. Further, competency modeling appears to work better for some jobs than for others.

As study two provided stronger evidence in favor of competency modeling than study one, Dr. Lievens conducted a "tie-breaker" field study with the same multinational company. They randomly assigned four jobs to two conditions: competency modeling (HR strategy) and the blended approach (task-based information in addition to HR strategy information). The blended approach decreased variability among raters. It took twice as many raters in the competency modeling approach to reach a g-coefficient comparable to that of the blended approach. Therefore, the blended approach was more practically useful. Dr. Lievens suggested that limitations of these studies included a question of generalizability to the organization, the competency instrument used, and the context (Belgium).

Dr. Lievens presented general conclusions regarding the design of competency modeling. The consistency of competency sortings and ratings between jobs needs to be examined as it can vary dramatically and affect legal defensibility. Experienced raters (more than two) need to be selected. The internal customer is not as strong of a rater compared to HR specialists, incumbents, and supervisors. There are practical concerns for competency modeling when the job is vague and the HR business strategy needs to be explicit. The blended approach seems to be superior to just the competency modeling approach, as every rater has the same information about the job. Therefore, blending task with competencies has strong implications for practical use.

Announcements

Join the PHWA Committee

The Minnesota Psychological Association (MPA), in coordination with the APA, sponsors three awards per year to businesses that exhibit a positive, healthy organizational climate, called the Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award (PHWA). The MPA's PHWA committee is seeking 1-2 more members and we are also seeking an intern. Our tasks include: promoting the award, reviewing applications, choosing the winners and presenting the awards each spring at the MPA Annual Convention. Visit the MPA www.mnpsych.org website or contact Nan Rivers at nrivers@capella.edu, or 612.252.4224 for more information.

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Member Profile

by Megan Pavot, Co-Secretary

Alexandra Luong, Assist. Professor, Univ. of MN — Duluth

Alexandra Luong recently moved to Minnesota from San Francisco, California. She currently resides in Duluth, where she is an assistant professor in the psychology department at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. She received her B.A. in English Literature and Psychology from UC Berkeley, and her Ph.D. in Psychology, with an I/O specialty, from Bowling Green State University in 2001.

Prior to joining academia, Alexandra held various positions in applied I/O psychology. She worked on selection projects and organizational surveys for Pacific Gas & Electric Company. In addition, she worked for both the City and County of San Francisco in human resources, conducting job analyses, working on selection and compensation projects, as well as classifying city and county jobs. She has also worked on various performance management projects, primarily 360 feedback, for American Express in New York.

Alexandra has found herself in a program with faculty who are, as she puts it, "dynamic and diverse in research interests and teaching approaches." In her current position at UMD's undergraduate psychology program, she teaches three I/O classes each semester, and also works with a few students who assist her with current research projects. She is also the advisor for the undergraduate I/O Psychology Club, which she started with some students last spring semester. The club is dedicated to providing opportunities to students to learn more about the field of I/O Psychology. Her current research interests include emotions in the workplace, work meetings, history of recruitment, and decision-making in selection.

Besides recently moving from the land of sunshine and warmth to the land of wind and snow, Alexandra also has a new husband who resides with her, along with two not-so-new cats. When she is not "living, eating, and breathing" I/O psychology, she enjoys hiking, running, modern poetry, and reading literary theory. To give herself justification for living in northern winters, she has recently decided to add skiing to the list.

In October 2003, she became a member of MPPAW, and she brought students from UMD's undergraduate I/O Psychology Club to the meeting as well.

Welcome Alexandra!

Dan Bender, Student, MN State University— Mankato

Dan is originally from Sacramento California, and currently lives in Mankato. When not in school, he resides in Folsom, CA. He graduated from California State University Sacramento with a BA in Psychology, and received his AA from American River Community College. Dan had an internship over the summer for Sutter Health, one of the largest not for profit organizations in the country. He had the opportunity to get some experience in selection, disability management, and temp agency contracts.

Before he came to MSU, he was a supervisor for several different construction companies. His duties included working with permits, inspectors, and customers, as well as supervising employees and providing labor. Besides going to school, he continues to work in construction when he goes home.

Dan is currently working on his thesis, which involves consumer behavior research, and examines the effects of priming product schemas, on the estimation process of consumers. One thing that attracted him to the field was the ability of I/O Psychology to help turn bad and good companies into profitable companies. Another thing he appreci-

ates about I/O is its application of a scientific approach to examine the effectiveness of companies. Instead of making guesses about the effectiveness of programs, I/O psychologists are able to use facts and data to determine utility.

Dan is engaged to Cassondra Babcock, who he has dated for 7 years, and will be marrying this September. Dan's hobbies are paintball, fishing and basketball. He is a member of the MSU Paintball team, which plays against other colleges from all over the country. He also enjoys bass fishing tournaments, but has never been ice fishing. In addition, he plays in a basketball league when he is in Sacramento.

Dan has been a member of MPPAW for a year and a half, ever since he started grad school. He hopes to find a consulting job in Sacramento after he graduates, but is currently looking for an internship in Minnesota for the spring semester.

Format of Meetings

Meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour, followed by the presentation. The presentation begins at 6:20 p.m. and the meeting will conclude at 8:00 p.m.

A door fee of \$10.00 per MPPAW member and \$20.00 per non-member (\$5.00 and \$15.00 for students) will cover hors d'oeuvres, food, and soda at the social hour. This fee will also cover the costs associated with the presentation that evening.

The meetings are held at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota (West Bank of the Twin Cities campus), 301 – 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis. The room reserved for the presentation is 180A and B. Parking is available at the ramp across the street, at the corner of 19th Avenue and 3rd Street South.

Directions from the west: take I-94 east to the Riverside Avenue exit. Turn left onto 25th Avenue South. Cross over I-94 and then turn left onto Riverside. Follow Riverside to ¼ block past 19th Avenue and enter the parking ramp on your right.

Directions from the east: take I-94 to the Riverside Avenue exit. Turn right onto Riverside. Follow Riverside to ¼ block past 19th Avenue and enter the parking ramp on your right.

Directions from the south: take I-35W north to the University of Minnesota – West Bank exit. Turn right onto Washington Avenue (which will curve to the right in 2 blocks and become Cedar Avenue). Turn left at the third stoplight onto 3rd Street (one-way). Enter the parking ramp on your right.

Directions from the north: take I-35W south. Take the Washington Avenue exit (to West Bank). Turn left at the top of the exit ramp onto Washington Avenue (which will curve to the right in 3 blocks and become Cedar Avenue). Turn left at the fourth stoplight onto 3rd Street (one-way). Enter the parking ramp on your right. The Humphrey Institute is across the street from the parking ramp, next to the Carlson Center.

Continuing Education Credits

For Licensed Psychologists needing to meet the CEU requirements of the Minnesota Board of Psychology, remember that attendance at each MPPAW event counts as 1.5 hours of CEU credit. What a great bonus and easy way to help meet those requirements. And only \$10 added to your membership dues covers all the expenses for the MPPAW year, up to 10.5 CEU credits!

MPPAW Officers and Key Committee Members

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