

Complete the self-assessment to better understand your management style and strengths.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.1

THE TELLER DILEMMA

Tanya R. Li has been promoted to director of the Bank at the Urban Center. The customers serviced by the bank are racially and ethnically diverse. The white tellers are in the minority and feel isolated. The tellers of color feel that the white tellers do not understand the customers. In addition, James, a veteran teller, has been discovered to have a criminal record prior to employment at the bank. Headquarters has a policy that does not allow anyone with a criminal record to work in direct contact with money, but the supervisor who hired James was not aware of the policy.

Tanya has identified three problems: (1) how can she make the tellers gain better understanding of each other's cultures? (2) How can she help the tellers gain better understanding of the customers' culture? (3) How does she deal with James, whose performance has been stellar since he joined the bank 15 years ago?

Before trying to advise Tanya on how to proceed, consider these questions:

1. What knowledge, skills, and abilities in organizational behavior would Tanya need to possess in order to deal with this situation?
2. Which of these capacities do you already have?
3. Which of these capacities do you need to acquire or improve upon?

Please come back to this case after studying this chapter to see how your answers differ.

A Brief History of Organizational Behavior

Let's look briefly at how the study of human behavior in organizations has addressed these questions. Although for hundreds of years, historians and philosophers have discussed **leadership**, what has been called "the management century"¹ began about a hundred years ago. From that point, the development of organizational behavior can be divided into categories: the classical period, the humanistic period, and modern organizational behavior. In the following sections, we will examine representative works in each area. Our intent is not to provide a complete overview of work in each period but just to suggest the main themes that were discussed in each.

Leadership: occurs where one or more members of a group or organization stimulate others to more clearly recognize their previously latent needs, desires, and potentialities and to work together toward their fulfillment

The Classical Period

Most managers and writers on management in the early 20th century focused on simply controlling workers and manipulating their environment so as to maximize efficiency and productivity. From the perspective of early management experts, people were primarily viewed as extensions of their tools and machines. For example, employee motivation, if it was considered at all, was based on patterns of compensation (rewards), but also on the fear of physical or economic abuse (punishment). It was assumed that workers found work to be unpleasant and therefore had to be motivated, mostly by money, to contribute to the organization. It also was assumed that workers would do what they were told because they would be punished or fired if they did not.