

MAXIMIZING THE UTILITY OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT COURSE

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The curriculum in most business schools includes a course that addresses the basic principles of sound organizational management. Whether titles Principles of Management, Organizational Management or some related name, the course content usually involves the generally accepted primary functions of Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling along with emphasis on a wide range of topics requiring managerial involvement such as Decision Making, Staffing, Communication, Motivation, Group Dynamic, and Ethics.

For many business school undergraduates with a major in business management, it might be readily assumed that the graduate entering the workplace would apply the knowledge gained to maintain or better existing management in the organization joined.

At recent conferences attended primarily by faculty teaching the upper level management course, it was surprising to listen to the varying perspectives on what should be the focus of such a course. The comments regarding course content, both at the conferences and from business focus groups conducted locally, ranged from a course with emphasis solely on text book management terms easily garnered from a glossary to preparing students to successfully market themselves for job applications and interviews to being able to actually coordinate and integrate resources to effectively and efficiently achieve objectives.

The questions raised from listening and discussing the different course objectives are whether there should be a generally accepted focus of teaching management that primarily addressed “how” to manage and apply the inherent principles of management in practice or the “what” of management as traditionally covered in text books or a hybrid course structured to the needs of the particular students, local communities/businesses and the instructor’s areas of interest/expertise.