



The Office Experience

HOMESCHOOL ACADEMICS LEARNING CENTER (SM)

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Recharge Consultants, LLC

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An Open Letter

Welcome to “The Office”

A few of you may have seen this wildly popular sitcom. There’s a reason it was so successful. Many can relate to the show’s situations, circumstances, and character personalities.

The business world is much like its fictional counterpart. That’s why movies and television shows based in the workplace become iconic.

Let me take a moment to welcome you to our Office. You have now become part of Homeschool Academics’ make-believe immersive professional office experience. While much of your work is designed to teach specific skills and concepts, you will develop and apply them in your unique role.

For the curious, you will learn more about:

- Accounting
- Business Management
- Entrepreneurship
- Human Resources
- Keyboarding / Typing
- Life Skills and Work Readiness
- Marketing and Sales
- Productivity Software
- Public Speaking
- Website Design

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Don’t feel overwhelmed! I am here to help navigate you through this journey. This experience is not like your regular studies.

Together, we will focus on specific aspects of the subjects listed above that apply to the current situation or circumstance in the office. You must come to these training sessions ready to learn with your assignments completed, your device(s) charged, your supplies on hand, and a readiness to participate.

As we move through our subject materials, you will have the opportunity to experience a variety of theoretical positions within the Office. As we draw closer to the end of our journey, you may find that you are more comfortable with some job tasks than others. That’s okay.



Unit Study One

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The Applicant

First, Let's Learn More About YOU.


An employee's introduction to a business generally starts when the candidate becomes aware of the company and its job openings. This is the first phase of the **employee life cycle** or the employee journey. The potential candidate completes a **job application** and submits a **resume**.

FOCUS:

Choosing A Position

You may not have chosen a career field to study, and the job you will eventually have might not even exist. Artificial intelligence (AI) and technological advances have contributed to a fast-changing job market.

Many of these jobs only existed ten (10) years ago.



App Developers	Virtual Reality Developers
Driverless Car Engineers	Drone Operators
Cloud Computing Specialists	SEO Specialists
App Drivers	Sustainability Managers
Millennial Generation Experts	Telemedicine Physicians
Social Media Content Creators	Social Media Managers
Podcast Producer	E-Sports Game Coaches
Online Dating Profile Writers	Social Media Influencers

The best way to prepare for a promising career is to develop strong technology skills, improve oral and written communication skills, and foster management skills and general business knowledge.

Know Your Skills and Personality

Consider using a personality profile to help assess your interests, skills, and values regarding future employment. Many colleges use software exercises like the *System for Interactive Guidance and Information* (SIGI) and DISCOVER to offer self-assessment exercises, personalized lists of occupations based on your interests and skills, and information about different careers and the preparation each requires.

Self-assessments help to identify preferences, such as what work environments you may prefer (technical, social service, or business), what values you seek to fulfill in a career (security, variety, or independence), what abilities you have (creative/artistic, numerical, or sales), and what job characteristics matter to you (income, travel, or amount of job pressure versus free time).

Businesses will also use personality profiles to determine whether potential candidates are ideal for a position under their **organizational fit** program.

Functions of Work

People exchange labor to receive income to support themselves and their families. For some, working allows them to meet new people and develop friendships. This is not a surprise since many people spend more time at work with their co-workers than at home with their families.

Work also provides a source of social status in the community. It is an essential source of identity, self-esteem, and self-actualization. It gives individuals a sense of purpose and clarifies their value or contribution to society.

Modern Workplace Challenges

Modern workplace challenges include international competition, new technologies, increased quality, employee motivation and commitment, diverse workforce management, and ethical behavior.

International Competitive

International competition has capitalized on companies' disconnecting from their customers and contracting labor in foreign markets. U.S. companies have responded to these challenges by incorporating more technology and automation. They also focus more on service sectors instead of industrial competitiveness.

These seven metrics determine the **relative competitiveness** of economies:

- Institutions
- Infrastructure
- Macroeconomic environment
- Health and primary education
- Higher education and training
- Good Market efficiency
- Labor Market efficiency

Greater competitiveness requires understanding individuals, groups, and entire organizational systems.

New Technologies

Hardware and software change rapidly. Personal computers are quickly being replaced by cell phones and their faster, more powerful predecessors. Cloud computing and access to big data and applications transform data elements into useful information.

Technology affects organizational structure, job design, communication, decision-making, and work-related stress. Adapting to technological changes while maintaining and developing an organization's human resources is a complex managerial balance.

Increased Quality

Competitiveness includes several interrelated factors, including an appropriate product mix, manufacturing efficiency, adequate cost controls, and investment in research and development. *Total*

Quality Management (TQM) describes comprehensive efforts to monitor and improve all quality aspects within a firm. Quality is an integral part of success.

Employee Motivation and Commitment

One of the primary challenges in a post-pandemic world is the traditional adversarial relationship between management and workers. The average employee does not see a reason to increase or improve output quality. Turnover and absenteeism rates are often unreasonably high, eroding performance efficiency and effectiveness.

Diverse Workforce

The U.S. workforce has traditionally been dominated by white males, with women filling lower-paying clerical positions and primarily responding to family responsibilities. However, workplace trends have been evolving and significantly changing workforce demographics.

Ethical Behavior

There has been a renewed concern about maintaining high standards of ethical behavior in business transactions and the workplace. Ethics in decision-making, the exercise of power, performance appraisals, and reward systems are all essential issues. Many believe unethical behavior undermines competitive strength and involves businesses, government, customers, and employees.

Entrepreneurship

Many individuals want to open their own business. They are attracted by the opportunity to be their own boss and reap the financial rewards of a successful business. Many small companies exist to support the family's lifestyle.

Succeeding in Business

There are two ways to succeed in business. One is to rise through the ranks of a company. An advantage of working for others is that somebody else assumes the entrepreneurial risk and provides you with benefits like paid vacation time and health insurance.

The other, which is relatively riskier but often more exciting, path is to become an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurs combine the inputs of natural resources, labor, and capital to produce goods or services to make a profit or accomplish a not-for-profit goal. They are typically not afraid to take risks or change the way they do business if it means a better path to success.

People are willing to start new businesses if they believe the risk of losing their money isn't too significant. The economic system and how the government works with or against businesses can strongly impact that level of risk.

Rising through the Ranks

One common way to rise through the ranks of a company is through management positions. Management exists in virtually all goal-seeking organizations, whether public or private, large or small, profit-making or not-for-profit, socialist or capitalist. For many, the mark of an excellent company or organization is the quality of its managers.

Management is defined as the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the activities of employees in combination with other resources to accomplish organizational goals. Managerial responsibilities can be aggregated into nine significant activities.

- **Long-Range Planning:** Executive managers are frequently involved in strategic planning and development.
- **Controlling:** Managers evaluate and take corrective action regarding the allocation and use of human, financial, and material resources.
- **Environmental Scanning:** Managers must continually monitor changes in the business environment and business indicators such as returns on equity or investment, economic indicators, business cycles, etc.
- **Supervision:** Managers continually oversee the work of their subordinates.
- **Coordinating:** Managers often must coordinate the work of others both inside the work unit and outside.
- **Customer Relations and Marketing:** Certain managers are involved in direct contact with customers and potential customers.
- **Community Relations:** Contact must be maintained and nurtured with representatives from various constituencies outside the company, including state and federal agencies, local civic groups, and suppliers.
- **Internal Consulting:** Some managers use their technical expertise to solve internal problems, acting as inside consultants for organizational change and development.
- **Monitoring Products and Services:** Managers plan, schedule, and monitor the design, development, production, and delivery of the organization's products and services.

Not every manager will engage in all these activities. Different managers have different roles and responsibilities depending on their position in the organizational hierarchy.

Developing Professional Behaviors

In a competitive environment, individuals who succeed in making a good impression will be the ones who get the job, win the promotion, or clinch the deal. Good manners and professionalism are not difficult to acquire; they're second nature to those who achieve and maintain a competitive edge.

- **Make a good first impression.** How you dress and conduct yourself is crucial. Study the most successful people at any company to determine what is appropriate.
- **Focus on good grooming.** Be aware of your appearance and its impact. Many organizations have adopted "business casual" guidelines; others still require traditional attire.
- **Being on time demonstrates respect for others.** Pay attention to corporate culture. Arrive early and leave on time, not early.
- **Practice considerate behavior.** Practice active listening when others are talking. Don't check your cell phone for messages or engage on social media in social environments where your

participation is assumed or required. Don't interrupt others when they are speaking. Wait your turn. Eliminate profanity from your vocabulary. Use appropriate body language by sitting up attentively and not slouching.

- **Practicing good text/e-mail etiquette.** The basic rules of courtesy in face-to-face communication also apply to text and e-mail exchanges.
- **Practice good cell phone manners.** Silence your phone when working, turn off your phone during meetings, and appropriately manage your smartwatch. If you receive a critical call during a meeting, leave the room before answering it. Apologize to the others for the interruption.
- **Practicing safe posting on social media.** Be careful what you share on social media. Be aware that those pictures may not go away even if you delete them from your page. Ensure you know your employer's policy on using social media at company time.
- **Being prepared.** Show up for meetings prepared to discuss the topic on the agenda and have read the appropriate materials.
- **Learning local customs.** Sharpen your competitive edge by becoming familiar with the rules. Learn proper business etiquette for each country you visit. Customs differ widely for everyday activities.
- **Behave ethically.** A reputation for integrity will make you proud of who you are, but unethical behavior can ruin it. Think before you act.

Getting a Job

It can be overwhelming to enter the job market. You and some of your peers may already have employment or work for a family business. Others may be entering the job market for the first time.

A potential job candidate's introduction to a business generally starts when the individual becomes aware of the company and its job openings. This is the first phase of the **employee lifecycle model** (ELM) or the employee journey.

This model illustrates an employee's journey through an organization. It helps Human Resource Management teams create more engaging and memorable employee experiences.