COURSE PETITIONS

COURSE PETITION #1

COURSE NUMBER AND NAME: **MGMT 3351**
Business Accounts Management

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:
The course is designed to assist the student in using the PC to maintain, compile, and organize accounting data including (1) Accounts Payable, (2) Accounts Receivable, and (3) Payroll.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:
Resume, Autobiography, Annotated Bibliography pages D-2, Documentation pages D-6, D-10, D-11, D-12, D-13, D-14, D-15, D-16, D-17, D-21, D-22, D-23, D-24, D-25, D-37, D-57, D-58, D-59, D-60, D-64, D-66, D-69, D-71, D-72, D-86, D-87, D-88, D-89

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ANALYSIS

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Concrete Experience:

- In December 1999, I was promoted from Receptionist to Bookkeeper for Automated Food Systems, Inc. located in Duncanville, Texas. I was assigned the responsibility of Accounts Payable. I still maintain the books for the same company. I handle the following aspects of Accounts Payable:

    - Purchase Orders
    - Vendor Invoices
    - Assigning Accounts
    - Maintaining and Updating Vendor Accounts
    - Credit Application Submittals
    - Process Vendor Payments
    - Monitoring Aged Payables Report
    - Material Costing
    - Physical Inventory

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned the importance of issuing a Purchase Order to a vendor. I learned that Purchase Orders are a way to compare current vendor price to what you paid in the past. I learned that you should match the vendor packing lists and invoices to the purchase order to verify quantity ordered matches quantity received and quoted price matches actual invoiced price.

- I learned that entering purchase orders, packing list, and invoices using computer accounting software, saves quite a bit of time, compared to writing or typing them in manually. I learned that entering the information into a computer versus writing or typing is more accurate and leaves less room for error. I learned that accuracy is very important when dealing with the company financials.

- In the book, Financial and Business Statements by George T. Friedlob and Franklin Plewa, Jr., they define Accounts Payable as "Amounts owed to suppliers for merchandise or services, such as an unpaid invoice for merchandise purchases or the utility bill".

- I learned to code invoices and vendors into different accounts based on the product they provided. For example, I have listed below a few of the accounts and descriptions I use to classify different products, whether they be an actual good or service:

Account Number	Account Description
1340	Inventory
7451	Domestic Sales Freight
7500	Vendor Shipping Expense
7625	Health Insurance
7880	Utilities
7900	Shop Expenses

- I have learned to examine invoices for any possible changes in remit to address. I learned that a vendor will usually send a special fax, letter, highlight the change on an invoice, or enclose a flier with the invoice, to notify the Accounts Payable Department of any changes they have made.

- I learned that there may be a drastic change in price that I am not aware of, so it is good to have two sets of eyes look over the payables before issuing payment. I have learned that the Production Manager does the majority of purchasing, which makes it beneficial for him to look over the Inventory and Shop Invoices prior to issuing payment.

- I have learned that it is extremely important to maintain the payment terms that the vendor set up on your account. I learned that during slow economic times, especially immediately following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, it is harder to maintain this responsibility. I have learned that when you are late on making a payment, the Accounts Receivable Clerk will hound you until they receive payment. I have learned that this can eat up a lot of my time and cause me to fall behind in my other tasks. I learned to address the incoming past due inquiries immediately, to put their mind at ease and prevent them from contacting me repeatedly. I learned to give them an idea as to when they can expect payment, so they have an answer as to when they can expect payment.

- By monitoring the Aged Payables Report, I am able to identify which bills will soon need to be paid. I learned to approve, process, and print checks for payment to vendors. I learned to paperclip the check to the invoice(s) being paid when submitting to the company President for his signature. I learned this practice allows him to obtain an overview of the invoices being paid and allows him to spot-check our work to make sure we are being thorough in the Payables process.

- Once the checks are signed, I learned to stamp the attached invoice(s) "PAID" and record the check number on the invoice. I learned this is convenient when needing to research or reference payment information or history in the future. I have learned that it is convenient and efficient to have a single file drawer designated for Accounts Payable folders. I learned to make a labeled file folder for each and every vendor. I learned to file these in alphabetical order for ease of reference. I learned to file the most current invoices in the front of the file, so they are in chronological order from most current to oldest. This provides convenience and order when searching for information from the vendor. I learned to keep the records in the designated filing drawer for one fiscal year. I learned that payable records still need to be referred to from the previous one to two years. I learned to put those in an organized and easily accessible location for ease of reference.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

Concrete Experience:

- Since I was hired as a Receptionist for Automated Food Systems, Inc., I was assigned various functions of the Accounts Receivables function. In the beginning I was responsible for:

  - Providing Customer Pricing
  - Obtaining Customer Purchase Order
  - Entering Invoice into Computer
  - Printing Invoices and Packing List

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned that in manufacturing, pricing has the potential to change each time you order from your vendor. I learned that by buying in volume, the vendor is often times able to offer a discount on pricing. I learned that the price I offer my customer is based on the price my vendor charges me. I learned that because pricing is not uniform, I must present my customer with pricing each time they order.

- I learned the importance of requiring a customer purchase order for each order they place. It forces the customer to enter the information in the computer to obtain a purchase order. This helps because the customer's Accounts Payable department is able to match the quantity and pricing and proceed with the payment process. I learned this increases the receipt of payment from the customer.

- I learned to enter customer contact, mailing address, ship to address, part quantities, part numbers, pricing, purchase order, and shipping method requested into Peachtree very carefully, so as not to mistype or transpose information. I have learned to review the information once all of the information is input, to verify the data is accurate. After I have established the data is correct, I save it.

- The next step is to print the invoices and packing list. I print three copies of the invoice:

    - White Copy-Mail to Customer
    - Yellow Copy-File Copy
    - Pink Copy-Bookkeeping Copy

- I learned the importance of color-coding the invoices is to differentiate the different invoice copies needed. If all the copies were white, it would be difficult to remember if you already mailed an invoice to a customer or if it was filed by mistake. By being color-coded it is a standard practice to process three different colored invoices each time an order is processed.

- The white invoice copy is always mailed to the customer. The yellow invoice copy is attached to the handwritten customer order form and filed in the Accounts Receivable file. I learned to file all Accounts Receivable invoices into a designated drawer. I further learned to prepare a file folder for each customer and file by the customer's company name in alphabetical order and to file the most current invoice in the front of the file to ensure the invoices are in chronological order. This filing system saves a lot of time researching past customer information. The pink invoice copy is the bookkeeper's copy. I learned that this copy is two hole-punched and filed in order according to the invoice number. I learned that customer invoices are not separated. All customer invoices are compiled according to invoice number.

Concrete Experience:

- In January 2000, I added to my Accounts Receivable responsibilities at Automated Food Systems, Inc. These new tasks enabled me to piece all of the puzzle pieces together in order to fully see and understand the Accounts Receivable picture. The new responsibilities included:

    - Recording Payment Receipts in the Bank Register
    - Filling out deposit slips and making deposits daily
    - Assigning Accounts to Sales Invoices
    - Maintaining and Updating Customer Accounts
    - Credit Application Verification
    - Monitoring Aged Receivable Reports

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned the importance of recording and depositing customer payments the day they were received. I learned that this practice assists in:
  - Maintaining a current bank account balance
  - Maximizing interest income earned
  - Decreasing interest expenses

- When processing a customer payment, the following steps were taken:
  - Detach the stub from the check
  - Stamp the back of check with the bank endorsement information
  - Fill out a bank deposit slip
  - Record the check in the bank register book
  - File the check stub with the other check stubs received that month
  - Deposit the check(s) at the bank

- I learned that each of these steps is important when processing a payment. If the check is not stamped, or not entered in the register book the process will be delayed. I learned to legible and accurately record transactions in order to prevent errors when balancing the bank register. I learned to run a calculator tape two types to double check my entries for accuracy. I learned incorrectly entering a single number significantly affects the balance total. I have learned that when I am processing deposits, it is important to not have any interruptions that might distract me from my focus and cause an error.

- I learned the importance of a color-coded invoice system. By having a pink invoice copy specifically for bookkeeping purposes I do not have to search through the Accounts Receivable file to search for invoices processed that month. By locating the invoices in a designated area and filing in invoice order I am able to promptly classify each line item. The system allows me, as the bookkeeper, to assign an account category to each line item ordered. Below is an example of the various sales accounts the line items might be assigned to:

Account Number	Account Description
5220	Domestic Spare Part Sales
5225	Domestic Skewer Sales
5230	Domestic Large Equipment Sales
5235	Domestic Batter & Stick Sales
5240	International Spare Part Sales
5245	International Large Equipment Sales
5250	International Small Equipment Sales

- I learned that breaking the items down by account classification enables the company to identify what portion of sales to attribute to each sales category. I learned this is beneficial in monitoring the progress of a particular product. I have learned this practice is helpful in identifying product strengths and weaknesses. I have learned to compare current accounts to historical accounts to calculate whether the product is growing and/or profitable. I learned this is a good way to pinpoint problem areas, so they can be addressed.

- Before I offer a new customer a credit account, I require they fill out a Credit Application. I have learned that a credit application can save you a lot of money and heartache. In processing a credit application you research the customer's credit history through:

    - Banking Information
    - Years in Business
    - Existing Vendors/Trade References
    - Personal References
    - Dunn & Bradstreet Number

- Once I receive the Credit Application, it is my responsibility to verify the accuracy and integrity of the information the applicant provided. I learned that most businesses listed as a reference do not provide information over the phone. Many states deem this unlawful and require a request in writing, accompanied by permission documentation from the applicant. I have learned that while this is very time consuming, the law is in place to protect individual's confidentiality and credit.

- I learned that most companies that return a credit application are approved for a credit account. They willing provide the information, because they do not have credit blemishes to hide. On the other hand, a company that has requested a credit account, that finds out they must fill out a credit application, and does not ever return it, probably would not have been approved and knowingly does not bother to return the application.

- I have learned that new customer's sometimes require the product immediately and will not wait until the credit application is approved. In this situation the customer can wire transfer the funds to my company's bank account or pay for it C.O.D. I have learned that these options allow for a win-win situation. I am able to collect my money upfront, which eliminates my risk in doing business with someone I have not yet established a business relationship with. It also allows the customers immediate need to be met.

- In the book, The McGraw-Hill 36-Hour Accounting Course, by Robert L. Dixon and Harold E. Arnett I learned "The accounts receivable aging schedule lists the name of each customer and, in a series of columns after the name, shows 1) the total amount owed you and 2) a breakdown of that amount in terms of the length of time it has been owing".

- I learned the importance of maintaining a current and accurate Aged Receivables Report. At a glance I am able to identify the total amount of receivables outstanding and past due. The report further breaks down the receivable accounts by customer, specific invoice(s) outstanding, and aligns the invoice in a category revealing the invoice is not yet due or identifies how many days the invoice is past due. I have learned to use this report as a tool when contacting customers regarding their past due balance. I call on past due accounts once per week. I have learned the sooner you correct the non-payment issue, the more likely you are to collect the debt owed you. I have also learned the longer a past due invoice goes without being collected, the harder it will be to collect payment.

- Through trial and error I have established a set of guidelines that produce results when trying to collect on past due accounts. I routinely practice the following process:

    1. Send a fax reminder if payment has not been received 7 days after due date.
    2. If you have not received a response regarding the fax reminder or received payment 14 days after the due date, contact the customer by telephone.
    3. If payment or contact regarding payment status has not been received 21 days after due date, fax, e-mail and call the customer to inform them, that in 7 days their account will be put on hold and no further orders will be accepted or processed until payment is received.

- While I do not enjoy this aspect of my job, I realize that this function is necessary in order to collect customer payments. I have learned that some customers always pay on time, without exception. On the other hand, there are other customers that consistently pay late and I know their Accounts Payable Clerk on a personal basis. I learned to maintain a friendly, customer-oriented attitude with the customers that consistently pay late. I have learned to balance this friendly demeanor with an assertive and firm demeanor. I have learned that sometimes customers do not heed your warning and you are forced to turn them over to a Collection Agency. The first time I turned a customer over to a Collection Agency I was upset. Even though I had made extensive efforts to collect on their account, I still felt like I was betraying them in a sense. I learned to understand that the customer who refused to pay his bill was the party at fault.

PAYROLL

Concrete Experience:

- Since December 1999, I have prepared and processed the Payroll for Automated Food Systems, Inc. on a bi-weekly basis. I am responsible for accurately inputting, processing and printing the payroll for the managers, office personnel, marketing and sales personnel, and shop employees. The information I am entrusted with is highly confidential, especially employee wage and bonus information.

Learning Outcomes:

- There are several things to consider and remember when processing payroll:

  - Overtime Eligibility
  - Double Time Eligibility
  - Vacation Pay
  - Holiday Pay
  - Sick Pay
  - Dependent Insurance Deductions
  - Child Support Deductions
  - Salary Versus Hourly Pay

- The first step in beginning the payroll process is collecting and tallying timecards. I have learned to have someone check the timecards after I have added them, to make sure I have not added them incorrectly. I learned that overtime is considered time worked over forty hours in one week. I learned that when an employee is an hourly employee, he is eligible for overtime. I learned that when an employee earns overtime, he is to be paid at a rate of one and one-half of his regular hourly rate. I learned an employee is eligible for double time pay at a rate of two times his regular hourly rate, when he works on a Sunday or holiday, if that day is not a day he is regularly scheduled to work. I learned that it is not mandatory to pay a salaried employee overtime or double time pay; however, they can be paid overtime/double time for any time worked over forty hours in one week, at the discretion of management.

- My company pays for employee's health insurance. They also offer employees the opportunity to insure their dependents through the company insurance policy, as long as they pay for it. Several employees insure their spouse and children through the company health insurance policy. I have learned to deduct this expense from the employee's paycheck on a bi-weekly basis. In order to calculate the deduction amount I multiplied the dependent monthly premium by twelve (months), and divided that number by twenty-six (the number of "bi-weekly" pay periods per year). The number I arrived at is deducted from their paycheck every payday. I learned that by deducting the amount directly from their paycheck, it is more efficient and effective this way.

- I learned the process of deducting and paying employee child support. One of the employees at Automated Food Systems, Inc. has two children, and was recently divorced. Two weeks after the divorce was finalized, I received child support documents from the Attorney General's Office instructing me on how to deduct child support from the employee's paycheck. I learned that an identifier number and the employee's name had to appear on the check. I learned that my company would be penalized if the payment was mailed late. I learned that these payments are to be mailed every payday to the designated County Clerk's Office, in care of the spouse's name. In order to prevent myself from forgetting to mail payment, I scheduled a reminder to pop-up on my computer every payday, to avoid any penalties.

- I have learned to follow these steps in processing and preparing payroll:

    - Collect and Tally Hourly Employee Timecards
    - Enter Hourly and Salary Employee Hours
        - ✓ Regular
        - ✓ Overtime/Double Time
        - ✓ Vacation Pay
        - ✓ Holiday Pay
        - ✓ Sick Pay
    - Enter Employee Deductions
        - ✓ Dependent Insurance
        - ✓ Employee Child Support
    - Calculate and Print Pay Check
    - Print Payroll Reports
    - Submit Payroll Checks, Payroll Reports, and Timecards to Company President to Review and Sign
    - Deliver Checks to All Employees
    - Record Payroll in Bank Register
    - File and Lock Up Checks

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW SITUATIONS:

- The skills I learned in Accounts Payable will be valuable in any job I might pursue that involves purchasing, controlling cost, and payment processing.

- While performing my Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable duties I was able to meet and communicate with many people. I was able to learn and expose myself to various attitudes, cultures and personality traits. The diverse communication skills I have gained will benefit me in business and personal life.

- The lessons I have learned in my Accounts Receivable responsibilities are extremely beneficial. The processing, depositing, and recording of customer payments will assist me in my personal financial processes. I could also utilize this knowledge if I ever own my own business.

- The knowledge I gained in invoicing customers via Computer Accounting Software will prove valuable in any sales, bookkeeping or retail position. If I decided to own my own business, I could implement the use of Peachtree for the Accounting side of my business without batting an eye.
- The knowledge and laws I have learned concerning Payroll will always be an asset to me, both personally and professionally. The experience I have in Payroll is considered an asset by many company standards. I could utilize this skill in the future as a Payroll Clerk and a manager.

COURSE PETITION #2

COURSE NUMBER AND NAME: **BUAD 3352**
Business Event Planning

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The course is designed to expand professional skills in planning and implementing special business events. Focus is on planning a (1) Press Conference, (2) Social Event, and (3) Event Travel Arrangements.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:
Resume, Autobiography, Documentation Pages D-6, D-18, D-19, D-20, D-21, D-22, D-23, D-24, D-25, D-73, D-85

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ANALYSIS

PRESS CONFERENCE

Concrete Experience:

- As a member of the Greater Dallas Chamber and Duncanville Chamber of Commerce, Automated Food Systems, Inc. was asked to sponsor a press conference for Governor Rick Perry on February 13, 2002. Of course, we graciously accepted. As Office Manager for Automated Food Systems, Inc. I was tasked with preparing and planning for the big event.

Learning Outcomes:

- In preparation of the event I ordered a banner that read, "WELCOME GOV. RICK PERRY". I went to a local print shop and chose the banner size, font style, font size and colors. After I ordered the banner I learned that the city of Duncanville requires a banner permit to hang signs or banners. I had to go to City Hall to purchase a permit for twenty-five dollars.

- I learned of the various security concerns associated with a government figure in public. I was contacted and visited by the governor's security personnel prior to the event. They came out to research the building layout and all entrance's and emergency exits of the building. We had a designated entrance and exit for Governor Perry that no one else was allowed to use. I made signs to label entrances for the public. Five Duncanville police officers stood guard in the company parking lot.

- We received permission from Governor Perry's security personnel to invite other small businesses from the community to attend the press conference. I learned that I needed to have a head count on the number of people that would be attending prior to making final arrangements. Once I received an firm number on the number of people that planned on attending the event I:

- Rented Chairs to Seat Attendees
- Purchased Beverages and Finger Foods
- Contacted the Local Media
- Scheduled Office to be Professionally Cleaned
- Scheduled Lawn Service to Manicure the Premises

- I learned that word travels fast, as several media personnel attended the event. Television crews from channel eleven and eight were present. Also present was the local newspaper, and various radio station representatives. The governor discussed homeland security, education, taxpayer issues, and so forth.

- After the press conference Governor Rick Perry took a tour of our plant and visited with all of the employees of Automated Food Systems, Inc. He seemed to be very interested in knowing the aspects of the business. When I got the chance to visit with him he was quite genuine and down to earth.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Concrete Experience:

- In December of 2003, I scheduled the annual Automated Food Systems, Inc. Christmas party. I planned the food, beverages, entertainment, location, date and time of the party. I also prepared a "surprise" slide show presentation for all of the employees. I secretly contacted their family members to obtain pictures, so I could scan and paste them into the presentation. Everyone was really surprised and seemed to really enjoy the personal side the slide show added to the party.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned to pick a central location to have the party, since all of the employee's are scattered throughout the Dallas area. After calling several locations, I asked my supervisor if we could have the party at her house due to budget stipulations. This proved to be a more relaxing and intimate setting than the restaurants in past years.

- I learned that it would be less expensive to cook the food myself, rather than have it catered. I planned a menu for the evening and purchased the food and beverages the day before the party. Two other ladies in the office assisted in the preparation of the food. I learned to manage my time to decorate before the event, get myself ready, cook and arrive at the party on time.

- I learned there are several things to consider when planning a social event:

- I rented and scheduled the delivery of folding chairs and tables to accommodate the employee's and their family members
- I organized and put together goody bags for all of the kids to keep them entertained
- I prepared invitations for all of the employee's
- I prepared maps to include with the invitation
- Planned board games and card games to play after dinner
- I arrived early to help set up for the party
- I stayed after the party to help clean up

- I learned a deposit is required when renting items. I used a company credit card to secure the deposit, but a check would have been acceptable too. The deposit was returned when the chairs and tables were returned undamaged and on time.

- I learned to prepare invitations for the event on Microsoft Word. This enabled me to clearly communicate the event time, place, and date to avoid any miscommunication on the details of the party. I used Christmas clip art in the invitation to identify the theme of the party. I also prepared a map to the event to insert into the invitation, to prevent anyone from getting lost. This was effective, because all of the employees and their families were in attendance.

- I learned to plan a schedule of events for the party, as a back up in case there was a lull. After dinner we cleared the tables and brought out game boards, cards and dominoes for everyone to play. This was successful in making the party more personal. It was an icebreaker for the employee's spouses, which allowed us to get to know them better.

<u>TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS</u>

Concrete Experience:

- Since I started working for Automated Food Systems, Inc. in July 1998, I have handled the planning and scheduling of travel arrangements for special events;

  - Trade Shows
  - Machine Installations
  - Service Trips
  - Customer Relations Trips
  - Research and Development Trips

- I am responsible for:

  - Scheduling and Purchasing Airline Tickets
  - Making Hotel Reservations
  - Obtaining Rental Car Reservations
  - Providing Maps

- ➢ Providing Information on Weather Forecasts
- ➢ Dinner Reservations
- ➢ Obtaining and Disbursing Expense Money

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned to make airline, hotel and car rental travel arrangements for employees using various methods. These different methods allowed me to save time, save money, and view detailed information prior to making a reservation. The different methods available are:

    - ➢ Directly with the service company via Internet or Telephone (Delta, Avis, Holiday Inn)
    - ➢ Travel Agency
    - ➢ Internet Discount Travel Specialist (travelocity.com, expedia.com, priceline.com)

- I learned making travel arrangements for employees of the company is a big responsibility. The traveler's rely on me to schedule and provide accurate travel information, such as, travel dates, times, gate and terminal locations, updated flight schedules, and back up schedules. If any errors are made during scheduling, for instance incorrect travel dates, the mistake has the potential of costing the company additional money and time.

- When making airline travel arrangements I learned to enroll the traveler's into frequent flyer programs. This allows the traveler to acquire miles for the airline trips they take based on the miles they fly on each trip. After the traveler has accumulated a certain number of miles, they can exchange these airline mile points toward a free airline ticket. I have enrolled employees of Automated Food Systems, Inc. in these programs based on the air carrier they frequent, such as, American Airlines Advantage Miles and Delta Sky Myles. I also signed the company up to gain these advantages from our corporate credit card, Capital One. We gain one mile for every one-dollar we spend on our Capital One card. I was actually able to take advantage of this promotion recently, when I scheduled an international First Class flight to Germany for the president and vice president of Automated Food Systems, Inc. for a trade show they will be attending in May. Each ticket would have cost the company over six thousand dollars. I was able to turn in 150,000 Capital One Miles and obtain the tickets for free. This saved the company over twelve thousand dollars. I learned the frequent flyer miles have expiration dates. The traveler must use the miles within a year of gaining the miles in order to use them. One of my tasks is to keep track of the frequent flyer miles for each employee, so the company can thoroughly benefit from the program.

- I learned you are permitted to purchase frequent flyer miles through the airline frequent flyer program. These can be given as gifts to family or friends. They can also be purchased if you are a couple of thousand frequent flyer miles short of having enough to apply toward an airline ticket. This proves beneficial when the miles you purchase to make up the difference are less expensive than the price to purchase a ticket without the miles.

- I learned that when you purchase airline tickets direct from the airline, it is usually less expensive to purchase them online. Many companies, airlines included are encouraging buyers to purchase their products over the Internet, by offering them discounts online. When customers utilize the Internet for purchases, this reduces the number of customer service agents they must employee, which directly reduces their overhead costs.

- I have learned to retrieve the address of the traveler's trip destination prior to making travel arrangements. This practice allows me to research and pinpoint the best airport for them to fly into. I am able to enter the destination address on the Internet and search nearby airports to conclude which airport would be the best one to fly into. The search results provide me with the distance of the destination from the airport in miles. This has the potential to save the traveler travel time, if he is traveling to a city with multiple airports.

- I learned that airline tickets are disbursed in different forms. The most common ticket forms available are paper tickets and electronic tickets. Electronic tickets are the type of tickets we prefer to receive, as they are delivered directly by e-mail and are received immediately. When we make an airline reservation close to the departure date, the seller usually requires a paper ticket. Paper tickets are sent in the mail, which costs the buyer additional money for delivery and has the potential of getting delayed in the mail.

- When making hotel reservations, I have learned to use various methods of comparing hotel prices, in order to obtain the best price. I have found the cheapest method for finding a hotel in the desired location is through searching Internet travel websites or searching the hotels direct website. I prefer to use Internet travel websites because they:

    - Allow you to choose from a variety of hotels
    - Sort hotels according to price, location, or customer preferences
    - Provide pictures of the hotel interior and exterior
    - List the number and size of beds
    - Classify and rate hotel on a scale of one to five stars
    - Provide unsolicited, previous customer feedback
    - List hotel amenities and features

- I learned viewing pictures of the hotel prior to making the reservation is helpful. Pictures allow you to view actual images of the hotel, which enables the traveler to see first hand whether the hotel matches their individual preferences. Prior to using the Internet to view pictures of hotels, we made reservations over the phone without having any idea of the condition of the hotel. On some of these occasions, the traveler's were greatly disappointed at the conditions of the hotel. In some instances they actually moved to another hotel due to the unbearable hotel environment.

- I learned the importance of reserving a hotel close in proximity to the event. When the employees in the shop or managers go out of town to do an installation, trade show or service trip, they perform physical labor and are worn out at the end of the day. The last thing they want to do is drive a long distance to get back to the hotel. When reserving a hotel I have learned to base my decision on the following considerations:

    - Within ten miles of the event
    - Restaurant on the premises
    - Offers late check-in and check-out
    - Amenities offered
    - Reasonably priced
    - Safe Area
    - Rating of Hotel
    - Previous Customer Feedback

- I learned to make rental car reservations for employees that travel for the company. Car reservations are important, because they ensure the traveler has a reliable means of transportation when they reach their destination. I am able to make these reservations on the Internet and by phone with rental car companies, such as Avis, Alamo and Budget.

- I learned it is beneficial to enroll in the company in a corporate rental car program. This program provides discounts to its regular customers. Being enrolled in type of account saves the company money and allows a quick check-in and check out for the customer, because the corporate information is already on file.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS FOR NEW SITUATIONS:

- The experience I gained planning and organizing a press conference will benefit me in understanding security issues involved in high profile leadership roles. This knowledge will enable me to have more respect for the in-depth and extensive security planning, a security agent establishes. I will benefit from this awareness in the future in any political event I help plan. I will also be sure to not take for granted the risks political figures are subject.

- The skills I learned planning the press conference and social events taught me various aspects of planning an event, such as gathering a head count on the number of people that will attend the event, planning and preparing food, beverage and entertainment to satisfy those in attendance. I will be able to apply these skills in the future when planning a wedding, party, church gathering and so forth.

- The knowledge I gained making travel arrangements for events will benefit me professionally and personally. I will always understand the importance of comparing prices and enrolling in discount programs to save myself and/or my company money. I will also be able to utilize the various methods for scheduling, reserving and purchasing travel accommodations. The ability to be versatile is an asset that will benefit me at work, home or church.

COURSE PETITION #4

COURSE NUMBER AND NAME: **BUAD 3354**
Customer Service

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will discuss the importance of becoming a customer-focused organization in today's business world to remain competitive. It includes the importance of (1) understanding customer needs, (2) implementing value-added services, (3) building loyalty and trust, and (4) delivering great customer service.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:
Resume, Autobiography, Annotated Bibliography pages D-1, D-4, Documentation pages D-7, D-12, D-13, D-21, D-26, D-29, D-30, D-31, D-33, D-34, D-35, D-36, D-37, D-55, D-57, D-58, D-59, D-60, D-61, D-67, D-68, D-72, D-73, D-75, D-76, D-85 D-98, D-99

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ANALYSIS

UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER NEEDS

Concrete Experience:

- Almost every job I have ever held has involved customer service. Customer Service is a strength I possess. It is absolutely essential to understand the customers' needs, in order to provide them with excellent customer service. Since July 1998, I have been offering customers of Automated Food Systems, Inc. excellent customer service. When I started as the receptionist, it was my responsibility to:

  - Take customer parts orders using customer order pad
  - Quote spare part and shipping price to customer
  - Determine urgency of shipment, so I could ship accordingly
  - Handle customer complaints
  - Direct customer telephone calls to the appropriate department based on their need
  - Wire transfer funds to distributor

- Since January 2000, I began delivering customers of Automated Food Systems, Inc. a different type of customer service than I had previously provided. One of my duties as bookkeeper was to call on past due accounts. I developed past due form letters and a phone script to notify customers of their past due accounts. The challenge I experienced was in collecting the past due amount, while keeping in mind they were the customer and maintaining a kind, and friendly demeanor, even when the Accounts Receivable Clerk made it difficult. I switched gears from the "customer is always right" mentality to a more assertive, "firm, yet friendly" mentality.

- Even more recently, since I have become Office Manager for Automated Food Systems, Inc. I have been able to tend more to customer relations needs. I have visited customers at their place of business. I have taken tours of the customer's plant, to discover and better understand how they operate. Through observation of their plant I have come up with ideas for my company to better serve them based on their needs. I have taken customers to lunch in an effort to get to know them on a more personal level. I apply the Golden Rule to my approach to Customer Service. I always, always treat the customer the way I would want to be treated. This is the key ingredient in delivering excellent customer service.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned one of the best methods of determining what the customer wants is through direct personal contact. I learned I could not provide good customer support until I understood the customers' needs and understood what was important to them. I learned I had to ask them what their priorities were because they may not be the same priorities I had established. I learned I had to continuously stay in touch with the customer because needs can change. I learned I am more likely to hear from that customer more often if he knows I am there to meet his needs. I learned that when you take the time to meet with a customer one-on-one, he knows you mean business.

- The customers I deal with produce high volumes of food product around the clock, everyday. Every hour they are down, they lose thousands of dollars. That is why it is critical for my company to respond quickly to the customers' request for spare parts. I learned when I follow through on action items and respond to their need with a sense of urgency, the customer knows I am serious and dedicated to providing customer support. I have learned that the customer values this dedication and this creates customer loyalty. Sometimes we are unable to assist a customer over the phone. I can purchase an airline ticket over the phone or Internet in minutes to send a technician to the customer's plant to help solve the problem.

Concrete Experience:

- I attended a "Take Charge Assistant" seminar when I was a receptionist at Automated Food Systems, Inc. This seminar taught me how to become more assertive and efficient in juggling my many tasks. One point I really picked up on was the importance of customer service. For the first time it dawned on me, if it were not for the customer, I would not have a job. This realization impacted the way I treat customers. I make a concerted effort to understand the customer's needs and find a way to meet their needs.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned I had to visit customers at all grade levels, not just my level, because they all have needs and their needs are different. I learned to join with a group of people from my organization with a focus for meeting our customer's needs. I learned some of their needs were to be provided with more up-front, improved communication. I also learned that I had to share customer insights and feedback – good or bad. When our office was criticized, I had to bring that to the forefront. I learned you have to identify the issues and problems and initiate corrective action if you want to provide good customer support.

- I learned we needed to allow more time to visit with the customer. The customers were so pleased to meet with us that we could not get the meetings over in time to return to the office for other scheduled obligations. I learned they were so pleased to have us visit, that spare parts sales, more often than not, increased immediately following our visit.

- Having read the book, Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service written by Kristin Anderson and Ron Zemke, I learned that listening is so important. Since good service involves listening, understanding, and responding to customers, good listening is an important skill. Why? They listed the following reasons:

    1. It helps you figure out what your customer wants and needs
    2. It can prevent misunderstandings and errors
    3. It gives you clues about ways to improve the service you provide
    4. It helps build long-term customer relationships

- I learned in this book that "to serve your customers well, you need to know as exactly as possible what they want, how they want it, when they want it. Your customer is ready, willing, and able to tell you everything (or almost everything) you need to know."

IMPLEMENTING VALUE-ADDED SERVICES

Concrete Experience:

- Since July 1998 as Receptionist, then in January 2000 as Assistant Office Manager/Bookkeeper, and now as Office Manager for Automated Food Systems, Inc. I have consistently offered value-added services and strived to develop and implement new value-added services. In order to pinpoint the customers' definitions of value, I compiled information I had accumulated through the years of customer feedback via phone, fax, and visits made to their place of business. I attended a business writing seminar on July 26, 1999, entitled "Business Writing for Results". I learned effective ways of communicating to customers, employees, and business colleagues. Based on the results of this seminar I have learned to deliver direct, proactive communication and I made the decision to:

- Better train the office personnel
- Improve responsiveness to customers
- Always present the customer with a good, positive attitude
- Actively listen
- Take ownership of problems
- Update and inform customer's through written documentation

- I also offered a 25% discount to customers that order all of their spare parts from Automated Food Systems, Inc. only. This entailed making a list of "regular wear" items that would need to be replaced on a fairly regular basis and keeping track of their purchases on these items. This type of value-added services significantly increased our spare parts sales. Although we reduced the customer price, the volume of sales increased so much that we made more of a profit after the discount was offered.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned customers want information and help with their problems. I learned they want to be treated with dignity and respect. I learned I needed to respect their time and I needed to be on their side. I learned to stay calm with difficult customers, and have also learned that by staying calm one of those most difficult customers has become a friend. I learned we are capable of bruising or soothing our customers with words; it all depends on how we use them. If a customer requires their order immediately, I am able to access U.P.S. Online to schedule a "Next Day Air" shipment or specify "Saturday Delivery".

- I learned to be accessible to customers. Every time I meet with a customer I make it a point to provide them with my business card. Since my contact information is readily available to them, they are more apt to contact me.

- I learned that if I don't take care of my customers, a competitor will. I learned that it is extremely important to find out how to effectively communicate with each and every customer, as what is valuable to one customer may not be valuable to another customer. I have learned not to assume anything. It is my responsibility to gather clear, detailed instruction in order to identify and fulfill the customers' needs. I learned that customers value honesty. Whenever Automated Food Systems, Inc. is able to purchase a part or raw material for at a lower cost, I make sure that the office personnel pass that savings on to the customer.

- I learned that how you feel and how you think will determine how you serve. I learned my attitude determines the degree of excellence of service I will provide. I learned you have to have a positive attitude, goal setting, listening, pride and responsibility. I learned I represent the perceived image of my organization. If I am a great person, the customer will think my organization is full of great people. I learned a daily dose of new information will build my customer service skills. I learned I need to own the problem and I will own the customer. If I lose the problem by saying things like that is not my problem, I will lose the customer.

BUILDING LOYALTY AND TRUST

Concrete Experience:

- From December 1995 to February 1998 I was a waitress for Trail Dust Steakhouse in Arlington, Texas. My responsibilities were to take customers' orders and serve them in a friendly and timely fashion. I made sure I knew the menu by heart, so I could answer any questions or make recommendations when requested. I made efforts to get to know them personally, such as:

    - I would ask their children's names and ages and bring them cherries
    - If they were a repeat customer I would acknowledge that I remembered them
    - I would offer free appetizer coupons
    - If a customer became a "regular" visitor, I made it a point to learn his name
    - I would ask personal questions to get to know him better
    - If a customer ordered the same type of steak on two separate visits, I would remember this and ask him if he wanted this again on the third visit
    - I would remember personal or business information he shared with me on his prior visit and follow-up with him on his next visit, to check its progress

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned that when you show concern about what matters to your customer, you develop customer loyalty. I learned that if I provide more creative, personalized customer service than my competitor, it is likely the customer will be a repeat customer of mine. I have learned that if I do not take care of my customers needs, someone else will. I have learned that the best way to get loyalty is to earn it, it is not just given away. I learned that when you remember your customers name or what they ordered last time they were in, this makes them feel special and they are more likely to return. I learned that one type of customer service does not fit all. I discovered that some customers favor minimum interaction and require prompt, accurate service, while others thrive on the interaction and could careless if you got their order right as long as you continue to listen to them talk about their Granddaughter Suzie.

- I learned all things being equal, people want to do business with their friends. All things being not so equal, people still want to do business with their friends. I have learned I need to make friends with my customers. I have learned not to be "all business" when they call. I used to be so afraid to ask how they were doing and the phone call would be all business. I have learned to ask them what their weather is like, how are their children doing in college and how are they doing in college. I have learned by making friends and enjoying dinner or lunches with them that we have many things in common like some of us are college adults.

- I learned that what he says is determined based on his typical transaction with me. I learned that memorable service leads to positive word-of-mouth advertising and repeat business for my organization. I also learned I need to read more personal development books. There are issues like hurt feelings, anger and disappointment, that compose the emotional side of the customer. I learned that I need solutions to include the logical and emotional needs of my customers.

- In the book, Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service by Kristen Anderson and Ron Zemke, they said, "When it comes to customer service, honesty isn't the best policy, it is the only policy. Lying to, or misleading, customers invariably leads to far worse problems than looking them straight in the eye and telling them something unpleasant they need to hear right now."

DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Concrete Experience:

- Since July 1998 I have provided excellent customer service to both my internal customers and external customers. This is one of the reasons I have been promoted three times in less than six years of employment with Automated Food Systems, Inc. I make myself readily available to assist fellow managers, employees, board members, and external, paying customers. When I receive a call, letter or email, I provide help as quickly and efficiently as possible. The President of the company and my immediate manager, have received several phone calls from customers over the years, recognizing me for the friendly and results-oriented service I have provided.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned that customers call, contact or visit for one reason – they need help. I learned they need answers, service and information. I learned I needed to respond efficiently and quickly.

- I learned from the book, The Loyalty Effect by Frederick F. Reichheld, that once you get feedback from your customers, you must act quickly. "If a customer calls with a complaint, you must respond immediately – preferably by fixing the problem, but at least by affirming your intention of fixing the problem as quickly as possible. If customers have to call more than once with a problem, they are much more likely to be dissatisfied, even if the second call results in a fix."

- I have taped a list of my customer service goals to my computer, to serve as a reminder of the goals I must strive for to deliver excellent customer service. My personal goals are:

    - To understand my customers needs
    - Be prepared to serve my customer
    - Resolve customer problems immediately
    - Provide and receive clear communication with my customer
    - Genuinely and actively listen to my customer
    - Accept responsibility for my actions
    - Live up to my commitments and follow through
    - Surprise my customer
    - Strive to keep my customer for life
    - Create a lasting impression on my customer
    - TREAT MY CUSTOMER THE WAY I WANT TO BE TREATED!

- I learned in order to deliver great customer service, you have to be there for the customer. It is important to let the customer know what you can do to be of service and benefit him. When you provide good services they will appreciate it and may even recognize you through phone calls or letters of appreciation and commendation.

- I learned from the book, Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Customer Service by Kristen Anderson and Ron Zemke that "delivering knock your socks off service means creating a memorable experience for every customer. It means meeting expectations and satisfying needs – and in such a way that you're seen as easy to do business with. The customer who experiences all that will be your customer again and again. Everybody wins, your customer, your company and you."

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW SITUATIONS

- The lessons I learned in having a positive attitude, goal setting, listening, respect and responsibility will help me in all areas of my life. I can apply this practice to all my relationships – business, family, church, neighbors and friends. The lessons I learned in building trust and honesty will also help me in these same relationships.

- The lessons I learned in communication and identifying needs will help me in all areas of my life – business, family and church. I can listen and identify needs of someone's current situation, so that I may be able to minister to them, be a friend and an understanding wife and mother. It begins with listening and understanding needs and then working to satisfy those needs. I have many customers from many different organizations and I can use these lessons on communication and identifying needs in dealing in any customer relationship.

- The lesson I learned in loyalty and trust are priceless and can be used in any personal or business interaction. People intuitively gather where they feel

COURSE PETITION #7

COURSE NUMBER AND NAME: **BUAD 3358**
International Business Relations

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course will discuss the importance of gaining awareness about various countries for purposes of international business relations. The emphasis will be placed on international business dealings between the United States and Europe, Mexico, and Canada. The focus will be on (1) culture, (2) currency, (3) exporting and importing, and (4) international travel.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Resume, Autobiography, Annotated Bibliography pages D-3, Documentation pages D-7, D-8, D-11, D-22, D-23, D-24, D-25, D-28, D-33, D-34, D-35, D-36, D-37, D-55, D-56, D-57, D-58, D-59, D-60, D-61, D-62, D-63, D-64, D-65, D-66, D-67, D-68, D-69, D-70, D-72, D-75, D-76, D-85, D-90, D-91

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ANALYSIS

CULTURE

Concrete Experience:

- I started working for Automated Food Systems, Inc. in July of 1998. Since I have been with the company I have been given the opportunity to work with and personally interact with many people from various countries:

  - Germany
  - Canada
  - Mexico
  - South Africa
  - New Zealand
  - Egypt
  - Australia
  - China
  - Argentina
  - Colombia
  - Brazil

- The interactions I have had with these individuals enabled me to learn and observe first hand the many different aspects of other countries cultures. I am responsible for interacting with existing international customers and distributors to take orders, make payment arrangements, offer customer service, and gather, organize and process shipping arrangements. These encounters have been eye-opening experiences for me, and I have learned about how other countries beliefs, values, customs and cultures differ from those of the United States.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned some foreign governments are operated quite differently than the United States government. It is important to research the structure and power of government in which you plan to do business, because this can drastically affect your success or failure in a country. Some countries are corrupt and encourage bribery as a means of getting business.

- I have learned there is usually a language barrier when doing business with people from other countries. The inability to communicate effectively can be frustrating for all parties involved. It can delay business dealings, eat up a substantial amount of time, cost money, and cause errors due to misinterpretation. It is important for both parties to agree upon and establish a common means of communication. This can be achieved by:

    - Hiring a Translator/Interpreter (Verbal or Written)
    - Learning the other Parties Language
    - Having Someone on Staff that knows the other parties language

- I learned to know and understand the predominant religion practiced in that particular country. People's faith and religion are very important to them. It is important to know their beliefs so you can understand them and be respectful. For example, one of the ladies at work is Muslim. One day at work we ordered a sausage and cheese pizza and a pepperoni and cheese pizza for the office staff. Prior to her coming to work for us I had never meet some one of the Muslim faith, therefore I knew nothing of their religious beliefs. When she did not eat lunch with us I was puzzled. When I asked why she did not want to eat, she said she did not eat pork, as her religion prohibited her from doing so. I felt terrible, because I had inadvertently secluded her. As her immediate Manager I should have read about her faith and religious beliefs, in order to be respectful of her beliefs. The next day I read up on her faith so I could be more considerate of her feelings in the future. This was a big lesson for me, because I discovered how little I knew about the world outside of my Christian faith.

- I learned that when doing business outside of the United States it is highly important to understand how people from other countries conduct their business. You should adapt to the buyer's business style and culture when doing business in their country, as long as their procedures are lawful and ethical. Being aware of accepted norms in given international regions gives you an advantage. Not only will you fit in better, the buyer will respect your obvious efforts of studying his culture. Gestures, actions, sayings, speed in which you conduct business, your tone and your body language should all be carefully considered, as they may have different meanings in different cultures. I have learned that the following countries, as a whole, possess distinct characteristics that require consideration in order to be more successful in international business dealings:

COUNTRY	LANGUAGE	BUSINESS PRACTICES
➢ Mexico	Spanish	Personable, Talk About Family, Like to Bargain, Discuss Business During Meals, Do Not Rush Them-They Want to Know You More Personally to Establish Trust Prior to Committing to a Sale
➢ Germany	German	Formal Greeting (Handshake at Greeting and Closing; Slight Bow to Women, Exchange Gifts, Punctual, Private, Direct, Education Important to Status,
➢ Australia	English	Directness, Efficiency, "No Haggle", Pragmatic, Candor
➢ Canada	English/French	Prompt, "No Haggle", Follow *"European Tradition"*, Friendly

- I learned it is important to consider other countries work schedules when planning to do business internationally. There is a huge time difference between the United States and countries overseas. When we start our workday in the United States, individuals in Germany are wrapping up their workday. Also, businesses in Europe, as well as in Mexico typically start their workday a bit later than we do (around 9 a.m.).

CURRENCY

Concrete Experience:

- In January of 2000, I started keeping the books for Automated Food Systems, Inc. One of my responsibilities as Bookkeeper was to handle international incoming payment receipts and outgoing payments. I was tasked with monitoring the receipt of funds payments and the issuing of payments via wire transfers. This required me to keep in constant contact with our Commercial Account Representative at Merrill Lynch, where the funds were received. When issuing funds I sent written wire transfer instructions that indicated the destination, currency amount and currency type to be transferred. I became aware of the various exchange rates, payment methods available and payment terms international customers will accept.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned that each country uses a standard currency, which is usually decided upon by its government. The United States currency is the U.S. dollar, Mexico's is the Peso, Germany is the Euro, and so forth. When you pay another country you must go to a bank to exchange U.S. currency for the currency the customer accepts and uses in their country. The exchange is most commonly executed through banks, which offer exchange rates for purchasing foreign currency with U.S. dollars. For example, the current average for one Euro (1E) is equivalent to one dollar and nineteen cents ($1.19). This rate of exchange indicates that the Euro is presently stronger than the U.S. Dollar. I learned several factors can impact an exchange rate:

  - Economy
  - Politics
  - Quantity of Domestic and International Investments
  - Current Events
  - War
  - Inflation
  - Interest Rates

Concrete Experience:

- On December 8, 2000 I attended an International Business Development Conference sponsored by the Greater Dallas Chamber. The conference covered the various methods of payments designed for international transactions. The focus was placed on minimizing the risks associated with Letters of Credit. It also addressed the different financial support and credit insurance programs available to assist U.S. companies in international markets.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned each customer has an individual preference on how he pays his invoices. My company has a payment policy that requires receipt and bank clearance of funds on orders over sixty thousand dollars, prior to fabrication of the equipment order. This is known as an "advance Payment" policy, which alleviates most of the seller's risks, since the buyer pays up-front. Customers requiring their order as soon as possible tend to wire transfer us the funds, because it is the fastest way to make a payment to a vendor. In the book <u>International Direct marketing Guide</u> by Todd W. Johnson I learned that there are several acceptable international payment methods available for customers to choose from, such as:

  - "**Wire Transfer of Funds**-The buyer goes to his bank and has the money transferred to the seller's account. There is virtually no risk associated with this method of payment for the seller.

- **Check**- The buyer issues a check to the seller for the amount due. A foreign check can be drawn on a foreign bank or U.S. bank. Foreign checks drawn on a U.S. bank is equivalent to a U.S. check, which is what my company requires to avoid delay of payment and international check processing fees.

- **Money Order**- Same as cash and must be issued in U.S. dollars.

- **Credit Card**- The buyer uses their credit card to pay the amount due. The exchange rate is done within the credit card's own system based on an average of the hourly exchange rate. This is helpful because the credit card company converts the exchange rate and details the foreign currency purchase and the U.S. dollar billing amount on the customer's statement.

- **Letter of Credit**- Letter's of credit are issued by the customer's bank, at the customer's request, which guarantees payment by the bank to the seller. It serves as a written contract and reduces the risks associated with international non-payment".

- I recently learned the benefits of processing foreign currency payments through a company who specializes in the foreign currency exchange. In the past, I had always issued the fund transfers through our company bank, which does not allow me to receive the best exchange rate available and charges a thirty-five dollar wire transfer fee per transfer. The new company charges me a twenty-dollar wire transfer fee and offers me a better exchange rate by monitoring the fluctuation of the currency. I am able to instruct the currency company to wire transfer a specific amount of funds immediately if the rate drops to a designated point. I save time because someone else is monitoring the exchange rate for me. Plus, I save the company money by executing the transfer at a lower exchange rate. This service has proven to be extremely beneficial.

EXPORTING/IMPORTING

Concrete Experience:

- When I started working for Automated Food Systems, Inc. in July 1998 I was responsible for shipping domestic and international packages. The international aspect of this responsibility required:
  - Obtaining Shipping Quotes from Freight Forwarders
  - Preparing Documentation for Customs
  - Scheduling and Arranging Shipments
  - Preparing Shipping Labels, Invoices and Packing Lists
  - Consideration of Duties, Taxes, Tariffs, and Embargos
  - Knowledge of Trade Agreements Between U.S. and Other Countries

- Knowledge of Various Shipping Methods
- Terms of Sale

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned the importance of establishing a good relationship with freight forwarders. Freight forwarders can assist with an order from the start by advising the exporter of the freight costs, port charges, documentation requirements, insurance costs, handling fees, and documentation fees – all of which help in preparing accurate price quotations. Obtaining an accurate price quote is necessary for preparation of a pro forma invoice. This insures that the shipping price quoted to the customer does not exceed the shipper's actual shipping cost. Also, freight forwarders guarantee quotes for 90 days, which minimizes the risk of shipping price fluctuations for the exporter. When the order is ready to ship, freight forwarders assist in reviewing all documentation to insure that everything is in order and correct. Freight forwarders may make the necessary arrangements with customs brokers to insure that the goods comply with customs export documentation regulations. After the shipment is delivered, the freight forwarder forwards all documents directly to the customer or to the paying bank. The importing customer must provide original shipping documents, in most cases, in order to acquire the goods.

- I learned how to prepare the appropriate documents for exporting goods. This is important because the exclusion of pertinent information and documentation can delay a shipment and result in fines or penalties to the exporter. I learned the following documents are commonly used in exporting:

    - **Commercial Invoice-** The commercial invoice is a bill for the goods from the seller to the buyer. It should include basic information about the transaction, including a description of the goods, the address of the shipper and seller, and the delivery and payment terms. The buyer needs the invoice to prove ownership and to arrange payment. Some governments use the commercial invoice to assess customs duties.

    - **Bill of Lading-** Bill of ladings are contracts between the owner of the goods and the carrier. The customer usually needs the original or a copy as proof of ownership to take possession of the goods.

    - **Certificate of Origin-** Certain countries require a signed statement as to the origin of the export item. A certificate may be required even though a commercial invoice contains the information.

    - **Export Packing List-** An export packing list is similar to a domestic packing list, but is considerably more detailed and informative. It itemizes the material in each individual package and indicates the type of package. It shows gross weight and measurements for each package. The packing list should be attached to the outside of a package in a waterproof envelope marked "packing list enclosed".

- I learned to coordinate shipment scheduling between the seller, the buyer, and the freight forwarder. Overseas buyers have the option of shipping the order by air or ocean freight. Neighboring countries have an additional option of ground freight service. Air Freight service is considerably more expensive; and it is typically ordered when requiring goods by the fastest means possible. In shipping smaller orders Federal Express and UPS can be utilized to lower the cost and speed the delivery of international shipments. The shipping method and date of shipment is agreed upon between the buyer and the seller prior to obtaining the final signatures on a pro forma invoice.

- I learned the importance of preparing international labels. The overseas buyer usually specifies export marks that should appear on the cargo for easy identification. When shipping a carton the exporter needs to include the shipper's mark, country of origin, weight and dimensions, number of packages, cautionary markings, and port of entry. It is extremely important that markings are legible. Markings should appear on three faces of the container, usually the top and on two sides. It is a good idea to repeat these markings in the language of destination. I have found that customs regulations regarding freight labeling is strictly enforced.

- I learned the importance of understanding the different aspects of duties, taxes, tariffs, and embargos. As an importer, I have to know what charges will be applied to the goods I am importing by my government. These charges affect the cost of the goods, which is critical to know for pricing strategy. As an exporter, it is equally important to know what charges will be assessed on your goods by the importing country. Depending on the terms of sale, the exporter can be responsible for these charges, which are usually billed back to the seller by the freight forwarding company. Understanding trade embargos is critical for exporters and importers to understand because they can have a great impact on international business interactions. Trade embargos limit the types of products that can be sold from a certain country into another country. These limitations are developed and enforced by the government of the country that establishes the trade embargo. As an exporter it is important to know which countries you can sell to and which ones you cannot. If you sell an embargoed product into the country from which it is embargoed, you can face penalties and legal action from the government that can put you out of business.

- I learned that there are various trade agreements between the United States and other countries that facilitate trade and transit of products between the countries covered under the agreement. The trade agreement that directly affects me is NAFTA. NAFTA is a trade agreement between the USA, Canada, and Mexico that my company benefits from on a regular basis. The agreement has lowered the duty rate on many products sold between these countries. This is beneficial because, as an exporter, it allows my company to be more competitive in the Mexican and

Canadian markets. As an importer, it allow me to purchase goods from Mexico and Canada without paying duties which decreases my cost on those items relative to what they were prior to NAFTA.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Concrete Experience:

- I schedule and execute all business travel arrangements for Automated Food Systems, Inc. Since I started performing this task in January 1999, I have become aware of various aspects to be considered when making travel arrangements. In the five years I have been tasked with making domestic and international travel arrangements, I have become more aware of the needs and accommodations to be considered of those traveling internationally, such as:

    - Travel Schedule
    - Identification Requirements
    - Travel Considerations
    - Weather Factors

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned there are several factors to consider when scheduling travel accommodations. When traveling to an international country the flight should be scheduled to arrive at a decent hour in that countries time zone. You do not want to arrive at two o'clock in the morning to a destination that is foreign to you. You might get lost, you do not know how safe that area is, and you risk putting yourself in a dangerous situation. Jet lag is another factor to consider. It is wise to arrive a day or two early to allow your body to adjust to the time difference. It is important to eat at that countries designated eating times to assist in getting your body on the new schedule.

- I learned to consider lay over times when connecting to another flight. At least an hour should be allowed in between connecting international flights. This allows for any flight delays on the first leg of the flight, and helps to insure that you do not miss the connecting flight.

- I learned to be aware of the flight preferences of each traveler. Knowing the travelers' airline, seating (window or aisle), and flight class (first, coach, business) preferences enables me to specify their requirements when making the reservations. When the travelers' needs are fulfilled, the trip seems to go better for them, because they are more comfortable, at ease, and satisfied, which directly impacts their attitude.

- I learned to shop airfare, hotel, and car rental rates to ensure the lost available price. Airline fares can be quite substantial. I compare prices among various airlines, travel websites (travelocity.com, expedia.com), travel agents, hotel chains and rental car chains to capture the lowest price with the most quality available. I usually obtain the best pricing through travel websites. I learned that they are able to offer these low prices because they receive deep discounts for purchasing blocks of flights, hotels, and car rentals in bulk. They then resell these items at a profit, which is still lower than you are able to purchase them at the regular rate.

- I learned to purchase airline tickets fourteen to twenty-one days prior to the date of departure. Lower rates are offered during this time, because there are more seats available they are trying to sell. As the departure date nears fewer seats are available and they can demand a higher price. This also encourages travelers to purchase tickets in advance. I learned tickets are less expensive when a Saturday stay over at your destination is booked. Tickets tend to be more expensive during times of high demand, like holidays.

- I learned of the documentation requirements needed prior to leaving or entering a company. A U.S. citizen must have a current U.S. Passport in order to cross country borders. In some instances an entry permit, visa and a Certificate of Vaccination is required as well. This often hinges on the length of your stay, whether or not you will be working during your visit, and government regulations.

- I have learned that it is important to be aware of the climate, season and weather conditions of the country you are going to visit. Climates can vary drastically from one country to the next. When traveling abroad it is important to consider the weather forecast for the dates of your visit, so you can pack accordingly.

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW SITUATIONS

- The lessons I learned in my business dealings with people of nationalities different from the United States has taught me to be more aware of other people's cultures. The knowledge I gained has opened my eyes to world diversity, which has helped me to become more open-minded, understanding and considerate of other countries styles of doing business. I will benefit from this for the rest of my life on a personal and business level when interacting with others from various countries. As the concept of globalization continues to spread I will continue to meet more and more people from other countries. The skills and knowledge I have already learned will continue to grow and develop, and serve as a good foundation for future international relations.

- The skills I learned in currency exchange will benefit me when traveling abroad, for personal or business travel. The knowledge I gained will help me make informed and educated decisions when making international financial decisions. This will benefit if I work for any company that requires payment from or sends payments to international businesses.

- The experience and knowledge I gained handling imports and exports are extremely valuable. I feel fortunate to work for a company that allows me to work on a one on one basis with international clients. The skills I gained processing international shipments, such as; required documentation, shipment labels, NAFTA, taxes, duties, tariffs, embargos and customs has benefited me greatly and will continue to in the future. Any international shipping firm or company that exports goods internationally would view the skills I have obtained as an asset to their company.

- The lessons I learned in scheduling international travel would allow me to save any company I worked for money and time through accessing, purchasing, and utilizing various sellers of airfare, hotel and rental cars to obtain the best quality product at the cheapest price. If I ever get the opportunity to travel abroad on a business or personal trip I will be well versed in the identification and documentation requirements to enter and leave a foreign country. I will also be aware of the various scheduling considerations. This will benefit others that have not processed international travel, because I will have first hand insight to offer them.

COURSE PETITION #9

COURSE NUMBER AND NAME: **BUAD 3360**
The Leader's Role in Supervision

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will discuss the roles of leadership and supervision including: 1. leadership strengths and styles, 2. empowerment, 3. balancing work assignments, and 4. leading by example.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:
Resume, Autobiography, Annotated Bibliography pages D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4, Documentation pages D-8, D-73, D-74, D-86, D-87, D-88, D-89

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ANALYSIS

LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS AND STYLES

Concrete Experience:

- As an Office Manager for Automated Food Systems, Inc., since January 2001, I have developed a leadership style that fits me and is effective at the same time. I respect and trust my employees, and they respect and trust me in return. I have become less of a manager and more of a leader. I am viewed as one of the team. I just happen to oversee the process and monitor the progress. As a leader, I care for my employees. We are like a small family. My subordinates know what I expect of them, and we do not allow personal feelings to get in the way of business. My "compassionate" leadership style has proven effective. My employees know they work for someone who cares about them. This motivates them to do a good job, be more productive, and show pride in their work.

Learning Outcomes:

- I have learned that the ability to lead is something that can be learned. I have learned that any supervisor can become a more effective leader if there is an earnest effort to develop basic managerial and human relations' capabilities and skills. I learned that effective leadership is a dynamic process that takes place between the supervisor, the work group, and various situations confronting the supervisor. I have learned that leadership is the ability that one possesses to influence the opinions, attitudes, and behavior of others.

- I learned from the book 30 Days to Confident Leadership by Bob Biehl that "there are three competencies of team leaders: (1) leadership, (2) modeling, and (3) coaching". In this book I also learned that "many of the behaviors of team leaders and successful supervisors are the same. Three consistent attributes are associated with the most successful leaders in both traditional and empowered organizations:

1. The ability to create strong mutual respect between the workers and the leader.
2. Assuring that the job gets done.
3. Providing leadership in getting problems solved".

- In the book, The Practice of Supervision by Andrew J. DuBrin, I learned about the combat model of leadership. Dubrin says, "This method is used in considerable hardship because of the environment or actions of the enemy. The most difficult circumstances in which a leader must lead are in combat." From this book I learned the six ways to make the combat model work for you:

    1. *Be willing to take risks.* Ask yourself, what is the worst that can happen? Accept that, and then press on.
    2. *Be innovative.* There is more than one way to lead in any situation. Think before you act.
    3. *Take charge.* If you want to lead, you have got to take charge.
    4. *Have high expectations.* Research has shown that the higher the expectations you have, the higher the expectations you will achieve. The more you think your organization can accomplish, the more it will accomplish.
    5. *Maintain a positive attitude.* Scientists have discovered that to a certain extent we can control our moods and feelings and maintain a positive attitude regardless of the reality of external facts. Think "can do" and then do it.
    6. *Get out in front.* There is only one real way to lead, and that is to get in front. You have got to lead by pulling and not pushing.

- I have learned that there are many fundamentals that form the basis for my approach to leadership. I have learned that some of the fundamentals I have incorporated as a team leader are that trust is vital in my subordinates. I have learned that this trust needs to be balanced with a willingness to remove people who cannot be trusted, and to make some tough decisions.

- I have learned that I should facilitate problem solving but should let my subordinates solve most problems. I have learned that I must have stamina. I have learned the demands of leadership are very heavy and no matter how well I may plan my daily, weekly, and monthly schedule, there are times when the pressure and demands will be onerous. I have learned that I need to be able to find the reservoir of energy and creativity to handle crisis situations and other tough decisions. I must not condone incompetence. I must be willing to set standards, to abide by those standards unwaveringly, and to require my subordinates to live by those standards.

- I have learned that I must take care of my employees. I have learned I need to recognize the top performers but also the many others who are doing their jobs well. I have learned I must have vision. I have learned I must be visible and approachable. I must be patiently decisive. I have learned I should listen to all sides of an issue before making my decision. I have learned I need to be introspective. I need to look at myself objectively and analyze where I have made mistakes and where I have headed down the wrong path.

- I have learned I must be reliable and should be careful about what commitments are made, but once those commitments are firm, nothing short of major health problems or a very serious crisis in business, or family matters, should alter them. I have learned that I need to be open-minded. I need to be interested in hearing new points of view. I have learned I need to establish high standards of dignity and to maintain high standards of dignity. I have learned that not only should I talk about integrity, but also operate at a high level of integrity.

- I learned in the book, <u>Practice of Supervision</u> by Andrew J. DuBrin about eight styles of leadership. They are:

    1. *Authoritarian Style* – Attempts to retain most of the authority within the group. They make all the decisions and assume subordinates will comply without question. Drill sergeants and professional football coaches are usually authoritarians. This supervisor generally gives minimum consideration to what subordinates are likely to think about an order or decision. Subordinates sometimes see an autocrat as rigid and demanding. In some situations, a supervisor is best advised to use an authoritarian leadership style. One example would be a high-accident-risk work area where the employees were not particularly knowledgeable about the potential risks.
    2. *Participative Style* – Shares decision-making authority with members of the group. Participative leaders consult with group members on most decisions of consequence. They rarely make arbitrary or unilateral decisions. Instead, they would engage in such practices as: present the idea and invite questions, present a tentative decision subject to change, present the problem, get suggestions, and make the decision. This style is suited to leading competent and well-motivated people who want to get involved in making decisions and giving feedback to the boss. A participative supervisory style generally works best with highly skilled or professional employees.
    3. *Free-rein Style* – A very casual leader. This person issues general goals and guidelines to the group and then does not get involved again unless requested. The only limits directly imposed on the group are those specified by the leader's boss. A supervisor will rarely meet with effectiveness when using free-rein leadership. They are often perceived as lazy or indifferent.
    4. *High-task and low–relationship Style* – A fruitful way of classifying leader or supervisory styles is to take into consideration two aspects of behavior at the same time. Two critical aspects of leader behavior relate to emphasis on getting work accomplished and to emphasis on relating to employees. A high-task and low-relationship supervisor emphasizes showing employees how to get the tasks accomplished and spends a minimum of time giving

them emotional support or reassurance. They are not necessarily rude or discourteous. They simply take the expedient route of focusing on work rather than people.

5. *High-task and high-relationship Style* – The high task and high leader relationship spends considerable time showing people how to get the work accomplished and providing them emotional support. Often considered the most generally useful because it results in high productivity and personal satisfaction. Works best when employees are lacking in self-confidence and technical skill.
6. *High-relationship and low-task Style*– A supervisor using the high-relationship and low-task style gives employees much encouragement and support but a minimum of guidance about performing the actual work.
7. *Low-relationship and low-task Style* – A supervisor using this style is essentially a free-rein leader. Subordinates are given considerable latitude in performing their work. Also, they are given very little emotional support, encouragement and praise. Allows followers to run their own show.
8. *Theory X versus Theory Y Style* – Styles based on opposite assumptions about human nature. If you believe people are basically lazy and dislike work, you tend to prod them and supervise them closely (Theory X). If you believe that people are well motivated and enjoy work, you tend to be participative (Theory Y).

- I have learned that in order to be effective, a supervisor must adapt a leadership style to the situation. I have learned that making such an adaptation assumes that you have the skill to diagnose the situation and to change your supervisory behavior. I have learned that my basic personality traits and characteristics exert an influence on how I go about leading others. I have learned that the leadership style used by my own supervisor and other key managers in my organization also exert an influence on my style of leadership.

Concrete Experience:

- I read the book, <u>The Leader's Shadow</u> by William Q. Judge where he discusses the necessity to change the attitudes and behavior of those persons who are under your supervision.

Learning Outcomes:

- In Judge's book I learned that "a leader's job often includes changing your people's attitudes and behavior." I learned the following suggestions to accomplish this:

1. Begin with praise and honest appreciation.
2. Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly.
3. Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person.
4. Ask questions instead of giving direct orders.
5. Let the other person save face.

6. Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement. Be "hearty in your approbation and lavish in your praise".
7. Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.
8. Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct.
9. Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest.

EMPOWERMENT

Concrete Experience:

- Since January 2001, as Office Manager for Automated Food Systems, Inc. I have become an advocate of arming employees with empowerment. This makes the employee more confident and the customer senses that. My employees know that I will always back up their decisions, wrong or right, when in front of others. They can count on me to address my true feelings regarding their decisions in private. If I disagree, they will know why and be given specific instructions on how to handle the matter in the future. It is my intent to "empower" each employee. They are experts in their field. The only way their skills can be fully utilized is through empowering them.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned that the characteristics of an empowered employee are enthusiasm, assumes authority, courage, willing to take risks, forceful, positive, goal oriented, team player, vigorous, positive attitude, and patience. I have learned that three strengths of an empowered employee are patience, flexibility, and forcefulness. I learned the empowerment pyramid, which is the five "C's to self empowerment:

  - Commit to take action
  - Communicate your intentions and rally support
  - Courage to take risk
  - Confidence to believe in self
  - Choice – your fundamental right

- I learned that the basic principle of empowerment, according to Ron Zemke, is that "The person doing the job knows far better than anyone else the best way to do the job," and thus is also the best person to improve it. Leaders need to establish boundaries for followers, and "then get out of the way." To establish an environment where empowerment can occur, I learned these seven elements:

  1. *Hire the best people for your organization or department* – the best, in this case, meaning consistent with your values and mission.
  2. *Communicate your expectations* – This starts during the initial job interview and is an ongoing process. Be open, accessible and ready to help. Maintain a free flow of information; be ready to handle all questions.

3. *Provide Training and Development* – Go beyond technical knowledge. Teach people how to like themselves and others. Continue to provide information, resources, and support, as your followers need them.
4. *Delegate* – To delegate means to entrust the task or authority to someone else. While much as been written on this, delegation continues to be a sore spot with many otherwise effective leaders. Delegation means allowing others to make their own mistakes and be accountable for them.
5. *Hold Your Staff Accountable* – Let your staff be free to succeed and to make mistakes. Enable them to have ownership over what they do. Set deadlines and establish consequences if work is not completed.
6. *Follow-Up through Coaching* – The job of the coach is never finished. Even your star performers need coaching.
7. *Acknowledge and Reward Your Team* – People will channel their energy toward what they are rewarded for or paid to do.

Concrete Experience:

- I read the book 30 Days to Confident Leadership by Bobb Biehl. Biehl's book organized the role of the leader and helped me to discover my leadership capabilities.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned from reading Mr. Beihl's book, based on his research and conclusions, he came up with thirteen attributes:

  1. *Empowering* – This was number 1 on the list and carries with it the strong notion of helping others to achieve their personal goals, consistent with corporate goals. It also suggest the paradox that, in order to obtain power, one needs to figure out how to give power to those who would be followers. This position is also strongly motivating and implies a great deal of trust in all directions. A leader with this quality will be perceived as highly supportive of his or her people.
  2. *Has a vision* – The leader with a clear and positive vision is alive and well today, at least in principle. Beyond the vision itself, of course, is the notion that it needs to be articulated in a clear and succinct manner, such that folks can easily grasp and support it.
  3. *Team builder and player* – The leader was also perceived as a strong team builder as well as a team player. The former is easy to accept whereas the latter is possibly counterintuitive. Some of us have known people who thought they were leaders but could not play on anyone's team but their own.
  4. *Renewing* – This attribute also implies learning and growing. The leader is able to do this in a personal context as well as with respect to the overall enterprise. This attribute supports a company that is able to adapt to the changing environments in which it finds itself.

5. *Communicative* – Strong communication skills are on most people's list of what it takes to be an effective leader. The messages also need to be truthful and sincere.
6. *Positive values/culture* – The leader's influence is such that positive values are supported, leading to a company culture that reflects these values. What the leader "stands for" is known and is widely communicated and accepted.
7. *Significant attributes* – The final six dealt with time management, being action –oriented, making a contribution and commitment, being innovative and imaginative, having integrity, and displaying the appropriate skill and knowledge levels.

BALANCING WORK ASSIGNMENTS

Concrete Experience:

- I have been an Office Manager for Automated Food Systems, Inc. for almost six years. One of the best things about working for a small company is the opportunity to perform a variety of different tasks. Not only do my employees and I perform our daily tasks, we handle anything that is thrown our way. We are always learning something new. This provides everyone with a challenging work environment. It is important for me to make office assignments based on office priorities and capabilities of the employee. I utilize variou8s checklists to delegate, advise, monitor, counsel, and provide instruction to employees on assignments.

- I created a form for managers to fill out if they need one of my employees to perform a task. The form states:

    - Task to be performed
    - Date Submitted
    - Date Assignment Must be Completed
    - Who Submitted Assignment
    - Special Instructions

- The form prevents my employees from repeated interruptions, leading to lost time. It also provides the office employee with required information, so information is not left out or forgotten. After the form has been completed, the manager turns the form in to me. I then designate an employee to complete the task, based on the employees' strengths and current workload.

Learning Outcomes:

- I have learned the individual strengths of each employee. I have learned how to match specific tasks with the appropriate individual. I assign tasks that must be completed that week (what do you do with the other requests?) unless an unusual circumstance occurs that interferes with the completion of the task. I have learned that this type of scorekeeping improves all of our performance because we are motivated to do those tasks, and our performance is geared to those tasks. I have learned that this type of positive reinforcement merges the employees' personal quest for pleasure with my need for them to perform certain duties that may not in themselves be pleasurable.

- In the book The Practice of Supervision by Andrew J. DuBrin, I learned "the question of how and to whom to assign work is a much more frequent problem to the supervisor than the question of how to organize departments. Since the supervisor must deal with people, this will always involve numerous differences of opinion; but assignment of work should be justifiable and explainable on the basis of good management, rather than on personal likes and dislikes or even hunch and intuition. The supervisor will be subject to pressures from different directions in assigning work to subordinates. There will be those who are willing or who want to acquire more work and there will be those who feel they should not be burdened with additional duties. It becomes one of the supervisor's important responsibilities to assign work so that everybody has a fair share, and so that all employees can do their part equitably and satisfactorily. If too much reliance is placed on one or a few persons, a department will be weakened if these top performers are absent or if they should leave the enterprise."

- I learned that delegation does not mean assigning a task to someone else and then forgetting about it. You may have confidence in your delegates to do their jobs, but you must still keep control over the tasks you delegate. You can do this by having a method of checking to assure that the work is accurate and complete. Just remember that although you are getting work done through someone else, you are still responsible for the results. When I delegate work I:

    1. Analyze the task thoroughly and write down every piece of information you would need to do the task.
    2. Organize that information in a logical, orderly fashion.
    3. Divide the info into learning segments if the task is large or complicated.
    4. Demonstrate as you explain.
    5. Give the delegatee time to absorb the information. Ask delegates to repeat instructions to ensure that they understood you and that you gave complete instruction.
    6. Provide written instructions if a task is involved or if delegates will perform the task infrequently.
    7. Refrain from checking on the progress of delegates; however, encourage delegates to check with you whenever they have questions about procedure.
    8. Let delegates correct their own mistakes.
    9. Explain how a portion of a task the delegatee is doing fits in with the whole.
    10. Ask delegates to keep you informed by reporting exceptions rather than progress on routine operations.

11. Give delegates deadline for completing the work.

- I have learned that I need to be prepared to lead. I have learned that all projects require regular monitoring–especially in the beginning and so do all employees. I have learned some projects require more scrutiny, especially those related to financial data. I have learned that some employees need more direction. I have learned that I have to keep in mind upcoming projects that I will have to assign and who will be available to complete those tasks. I have learned I also have to consider how much each employee can handle. I have learned I need to keep track of who is doing what so that I do neither over-assign nor under-assign.

INPUT TO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Concrete Experience:

- Since January 2001, one of my duties as Office Manager/HR Manager for Automated Food Systems, Inc. is to provide input to the supervisor concerning performance or commendation of the employee based on their employment records. As Human Resource Manager, it is my responsibility to keep the employee records updated. I provide the employee's supervisor with:

    - Attendance Records
    - Wage and Compensation Records
    - Performance Goals and Records
    - Evaluation/Appraisal Worksheet
    - Dates of last raise and evaluation

Learning Outcomes:

- I have learned the employee's performance appraisal must be made by the immediate supervisor or team leader, who knows more about the employee's performance than anyone else in the organization. I have learned that the supervisor who continuously communicates with employees will find that the annual appraisal will be primarily a matter of reviewing much of what has been discussed during the year. I have learned that appraisals become an important influence upon employee morale. I have learned that appraisals reaffirm the supervisor's genuine interest in employees and in their continuous development and improvement. I have learned that the supervisor should have before him at the time he is actually preparing the rating all available objective measures of the person's performance, including attendance records, records of goals and records, wages and compensation records, and all other similar information. I learned this should all be taken into account and given proper weight.

- In the book, Managing Today by Stephen P. Robbins I learned that "every appraisal should be made within the context of each employee's particular job, and every rating should be based upon the total performance of each employee. It would be unfair to appraise a subordinate on the basis of one assignment, which had been done particularly well or particularly poorly. The appraisal should be based on an employee's total record of reliability, initiative, skills, resourcefulness, capability, and any other relevant factors."

Concrete Experience:

- Since January 2000, one of my responsibilities as Assistant Office Manager was to administer employment evaluations for the office staff at Automated Food Systems, Inc. In January 2001 when I was promoted to Office Manager, I maintained and developed this responsibility. I perform a formal employment evaluation at least once per year. I follow-up with office staff on a monthly basis to check progress on the goals set at the evaluation. I assign new goals as the employee develops. When I administer an employee evaluation, I offer constructive, honest feedback to assist the employee in growth and career development.

Learning Outcomes:

- I have learned that my primary goal in measuring and monitoring the performance of employees is not to punish them for making a mistake or missing a milestone–it is to help them stay on schedule and to find out whether they need additional assistance or resources to do so. I learned that most employees do not want to admit that they need help getting an assignment done–whatever the reason. I have learned that because of this reluctance, it is critical that I periodically check on the progress and regularly give them feedback on how they are doing.

- I have learned that an employee should be awarded based on job performance, not necessarily his years of service. I have learned that goals give an employee direction and a purpose to strive toward. I learned that when giving constructive criticism, you don't focus on the person that performed under par, you focus on how the job can be performed more effectively. I have learned that employees possess better attitudes and work ethics when they feel they are making a contribution and making a difference within the company.

- In the book The Practice of Supervision by Andrew J. DuBrin I learned "that leadership is made up of a number o f characteristics, not all of which are equally important of office supervision. Thus the leadership in an army, in a large corporation, in government, or in a group of office employees is similar, but also widely different. A person eminently qualified for leadership in one position might be a failure on another job. One cannot become a supervisor unless one is willing to exercise leadership. The successful supervisor must be a successful leader because he must lead a group to the successful completion of its task."

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW SITUATIONS

- The skills I learned in being a leader can be used in companies, non-profit organizations, government departments, clubs, associations, schools, churches and many other groups. Those skills will help me to get groups that I might lead to perform more productively. In addition, those skills should help me at home in leading my family. Having high expectations and a positive attitude will influence the behavior of others whether it is in my business or personal life.

- The skills I learned in empowerment will help me in any future job I might hold. The empowerment skills of personal commitment, creativity, trust, self-confidence and risk taking and knowledge are important in any job. The strengths of being patient, flexible and forceful are an added benefit to any organization.

- The skills I learned in balancing work assignments is beneficial to any position I might hold. Those skills I have learned over the year help me to more effectively lead a team in order to achieve the organization's goals and mission.

- The skills I learned in input to employee performance will help me in any future position I might hold. Those skills will help me to be fair and look at an employee for his entire performance. The skills I learned in understanding the importance of goals will benefit me in all aspects of life.

COURSE PETITION #10

COURSE NUMBER AND NAME: **BUAD 3362**
Business Training and Development

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course provides instruction and practice in business training and development in a typical business situation. Topics include 1. understanding training needs, 2. types and methods of training, and 3. training aids

METHOD OF EVALUATION:
Resume, Autobiography, Annotated Bibliography pages D-3, D-4, D-5, Documentation pages D-8, D-29, D-30, D-31, D-72, D-75, D-76, D-77, D-78, D-79

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ANALYSIS

UNDERSTANDING TRAINING NEEDS

Concrete Experience:

- In December 1999, I was promoted to Assistant Office Manager and Bookkeeper for Automated Food Systems, Inc. in Duncanville, Texas, because my boss, the Office Manager at that time, was going on Maternity Leave toward the end of January. I was trained in my new responsibilities of bookkeeping, which included Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Payroll. I was trained to handle the flow of the office during her leave. I was also, tasked with the responsibility of hiring and training a new employee to take over my old responsibilities as Office Assistant/Receptionist.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned that there were certain immediate obvious advantages for the workers in our office because of the training program. I learned that the first of these advantages was that the office employees were given an adequate opportunity to learn the duties required of them to perform their job. I learned that by training on a one-on-one basis the employee was not left to learn what he was expected to do in a haphazard, time-consuming manner. I learned that adequate training gives the employee a fair chance to experience success and avoid the frustrating experience of failure in performing the duties assigned.

- I learned that training needs must be determined before training starts. I learned that I had to perform an analysis to understand what skills should be taught in the training. I learned that a detailed job description is required to effectively convey and outline the expectations of the position in which the employee was hired. I learned that if an employee is to be taught to perform a job satisfactorily, it is necessary to know what tasks constitute the job. I also learned that it is necessary to know the relationship of the correct performance of these tasks to the standards for the job in order that proper emphasis may be placed on them in teaching the task.

- In the book The Credible Trainer by Robert J. Rosania I learned that "learning is a continuous process throughout the life of each individual; therefore, training, or the direction of this learning, must also be continuous. Effective training can develop an employee to a productive level in a minimum of time. The collective influence of a group of well-trained employees can largely determine the success of the enterprise. Higher productivity, lower costs, and lower employee turnover rates are some of the direct benefits."

- I learned from the book, Policy, Strategy and Implementation by S. Benjamin Prasad, Norman F. Kallaus, Ph.D. and John J. W. Neuner, Ph.D, C.P.A. that "well-trained, confident office workers lessen the need for close supervision. Training increases the self-confidence of workers, which means that well-trained employees will ask fewer questions and will cooperate more readily with their coworkers. As a result, the burden of the supervisor is reduced and the morale of all workers should be improved".

- I learned understanding the needs of employees and then providing good training enables you to build people's capability, which will often have remarkable results. I also learned that I needed to make sure that the way I presented and delivered the training was beneficial to the new employees way of learning, as individuals learning needs vary from person to person.

- In the book, Professional Secretaries International Complete Office Handbook, by Susan Jaderstrom, Leonard Kruk and Joanne Miller I learned that "to determine the areas of training, a needs assessment should be done among office staff. Separate training topics can be implemented after a needs assessment. Surveying management and office professionals will pinpoint the technical, administrative, and interpersonal skills in need of improvement".

TYPES AND METHODS OF TRAINING

Concrete Experience:

- In January 2001, I was promoted to Office Manager/Human Resource Manager for Automated Food Systems, Inc. in Duncanville, Texas. I still hold this position today. One of my main goals and duties as Office Manger/HR Manager is to train new office personnel and retrain and further develop existing office personnel. There are many types and methods of training. The challenge is finding which type and method of training is most effective in training each individual employee in the job he will perform.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned that on-the-job training is simply assigning the new employee to an experienced worker. I learned that in this method of training that the learner, in acquiring job skills, knowledge, and attitudes, uses the machinery and materials, which he will use once his formal training is completed. Also, I learned that during on-the-job training, the employee learns in the physical environment in which he will eventually be required to perform his tasks. I learned that on-the-job training can be an effective training method but it requires hard work and careful planning by those responsible for training to make certain that the trainee has an optimum situation for learning.

- In the book, <u>The Loyalty Effect</u> by Frederick F. Reichheld, I learned that "Individual training is frequently on-the-job training, which often means largely skills training. It is desirable to follow an established routine that covers each activity. Otherwise, in repetition, the trainer may inadvertently skip important steps, or pass by some steps because they appear so simple". In this book I learned the steps to instructing:

    1. *Step 1* – Prepare the Worker – Put him at ease, State the job and find out what he already knows about it. Get him interested in learning the job. Place him in correct position.
    2. *Step 2* – Present the Operation. Tell, show and illustrate one important step at a time. Stress each key point. Instruct clearly, completely and patiently but no more than he can master.
    3. *Step 3* – Try Out Performance. Have him do the job – correct errors. Have him explain each key point to you as he does the job again. Make sure he understands. Continue until you know that he knows.
    4. *Step 4* – Follow-Up. Put him on his own. Designate to whom he goes for help. Check frequently. Encourage questions. Taper off extra coaching and close follow-up.

- In that same book, <u>The Loyalty Effect</u>, I learned the methods of training:

    1. *Lecture Method* – While most office work can be taught on an individual basis, there is much information that can be given by the lecture method. If a group of employees needs common information, it can be given in a lecture. The lecture method is economical because the trainer can inform many people at one time.
    2. *Demonstration Method* - The demonstration is frequently tied in with some other type of instruction. Some times it is useful to bring in an outside expert to give a demo. This is particularly true if the demon is difficult and the demonstrator's approach is superior to other possible approaches.
    3. *Role Playing Method* – Role-playing is acting out a role under specific conditions. The trainer actually takes the part of some employee in a particular assignment and performs as he thinks the one on the job would act.

4. *Case Study Method* - The case study approach is widely used in college. But it can be successfully used to teach the principles of handling people at a supervisory level and in problem solving at various operational levels.
5. *Conference Method* – Most discussion methods are time-consuming, and the conference method is no exception. Discussion methods assume that participation in a group is a desirable teaching method.
6. *Programmed Instruction Method* – Is a type of training developed for individual use. The material to be learned is divided into detailed, easily understood steps that progress through the entire learning situation. The material covers one lesson at a time and is prepared in a manual or printed booklet. As the student learns one lesson, he is tested immediately.

- I have participated with my children in school trips, so I have learned from those trips that there are other training methods like field trips, observations, or tours. I learned from seminars and training that I have attended over the years that panel discussions represent a variation on the structured discussion format. I learned that panel discussions tend to be short lectures by a variety of people rather than a long lecture by a single lecturer. I also learned that brainstorming is another training method. I learned that its most frequent use is to teach learners to suspend judgment until a maximum number of ideas have been generated.

- In most of the Business courses I have attended, I have learned through case studies. I learned that case studies have a popular way to get involvement and to bring discussion down to a reasonable level of concreteness.

- I have learned that some instructors use games. I have learned that instructors use games to increase the energy and commitment of the participants – they add motivation to the learning.

Concrete Experience:

- From October 1993 to January 1994, in my job as Assistant Manager for a seasonal retail outlet, named The Christmas Store, in Denton, Texas, I was responsible for training five new employees. As their Supervisor I trained them to:

    - Assist Customers
    - Manage the Cash Register
    - Stock Inventory Items
    - Enhance Sells
    - Exhibit Excellent Customer Service

- I provided individual training prior to the employees shift and on the job training during their shift. During their shift I observed their performance, so I could offer them feedback after the store closed. I made it a point to compliment and commend the employee on the positive attributes he exhibited during the shift. This served as motivation, which built their confidence and self-esteem. I also, constructively expressed ways in which they could improve as an employee, which helped each employee to grow and develop. By the end of the season, these employees (that happen to be college students) were confident in their selling, customer service, and retail abilities. Through effective hands on training I was able to develop a profitable, confident, customer service-oriented team.

Learning Outcomes:

- I have learned that I must be willing to teach skills, to share insights and experiences, and to work very closely with people to help them mature and be creative. By teaching, I can inspire, motivate, and influence subordinates. I have learned that training and development of all staff is important to the bottom line of any organization and certainly vital to its existence.

- I have learned that training should be ongoing for all employees. I have learned that learning is a process, not an event. I have learned that training takes the deliberate and ongoing efforts of employees with the support of their managers. I have learned that if either party drops the ball, then employees do not grow, and the organization suffers the consequences.

- In the Book 500 Tips for Trainers, I learned, I need to stay alert to the development needs of employees and to keep an eye out for potential development opportunities. I learned to ensure that employees receive the development that enables them to meet the coming challenges by following these steps:

  1. Meet with employees about their careers. After you assess your employees, meet with them to discuss the places in the organization you see for them and also find out where in the organization they want to go. This needs to be a joint effort.
  2. Discuss your employees' strengths and weaknesses. Assuming you discover you are on the same wavelength as your employee, the next step is to have a frank discussion regarding his or her strengths and weaknesses. Your main goal is to identify new skills that your employees need to develop to allow their continued upward progress in the organization and to meet the future challenges that your business faces.
  3. Assess where your employees are now. The next step in the development process is to determine the current state of your employees' skills and talents. Assessing your employees provides you with an overall road map to guide your development efforts.
  4. Create career development plans. Career development plans are agreements between you and your employees that spell out exactly what formal support, such as tuition and time-off, they will receive to develop their skills and when they will receive it. Career development plans also contain milestones for the achievement of learning goals.

5. Follow through. Stand by your agreements and make sure that your employees do the same. Make sure that you provide the support you agreed to provide. Check on employee progress regularly. If they miss schedules because of their priorities, reassign work as necessary to ensure that they have the time to focus on their career development plans.
6. Be supportive. As a manager, you are in the best position to give your employees the support they need to develop within the organization. When you do employee development right, you don't just talk about it once a year at annual performance reviews. The best employee development is ongoing and requires that you continuously support and encourage your employees' initiative.

- I learned from the book, Professional Secretaries International Complete Office Handbook, by Susan Jaderstrom, Leonard Kruk and Joanne Miller, that "one must be prepared to accept differences in people, take them as they are, and model them into effectively functioning units within the requirements of the job. I have learned that this does not mean all employees will respond alike. I have learned the trainer's job is not to change an employee' s thinking habits and general way of life, but to get him to conform to a pattern on the job so as to accomplish effective work."

TRAINING AIDS

Concrete Experience:

- Beginning in December 2000 as Assistant Office Manager and even more so now as Office Manager/HR Manager, I realize and understand the importance of training aids when training a new employee and further developing an existing employees. I have used several training aids in teaching employees to develop and grow in their career. My personal practice in further developing my Business knowledge and career is through:

  - Continuing my education at Dallas Baptist University
  - Attending Business Seminars: "The Take Charge Assistant", "Business Writing for Results", "Letter's of Credit"
  - Hands-on Learning
  - Reading Business Books, Newspaper, Magazines
  - Online Training Sessions
  - Business Audio and CD Lectures

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned how to use a desktop computer to take a training session on a new Accounting Software we implemented at work. It was crucial for me to take this interactive training session to get used to the Windows based, *Peachtree Accounting for Manufactures* software, as it was quite different from the prior DOS based, ACCPAC, the company had used for over 20 years. It was my responsibility to learn how to set-up and operate this new software. This presented me with an abundance of pressure, because it dealt with the company financials. One wrong data entry, one incorrect formula, one miscalculation and the financials for the company would be inaccurate and would potentially throw off all of the financial figures. I learned what it was like to train in front of a group audience. The group I trained was the company President, Vice President, Top and Middle Managers, as well as my office personnel.

- I have learned from attending training and from training myself at work, school, home and church that there are many different types of training aids. I learned that these consist of:

  1. *Real equipment* – One of the best possible training aids is the actual equipment the trainee will use in his work.
  2. *Models* – A model is one of the better training aids and can be ranked second to the actual equipment.
  3. *Textbooks and Manuals* – Textbooks and manuals are often considered such basic tools that they are hardly regarded as training aids. Yet they are widely used for most training. The printed and spoken words convey meanings in a way that the trainer has accepted since childhood.
  4. *Other Printed Material* – Pamphlets and handouts are useful in covering specific areas of training. They can be used to bring out details of subject matter not so thoroughly covered in a book.
  5. *Photographs* – Photographs give an immediate picture in the mind of the trainer because he sees and does not have to image.
  6. *Graphs* – Graphs and charges are convenient devices for conveying specific types of information and for making comparisons.
  7. *Overlays* – An overlay is a type of visual aid in which a piece of equipment or some other device is shown in a series of steps.
  8. *Boards* – Chalkboards, flannel boards, magnetic boards and flipcharts form a battery of very simple equipment, which works extremely well for visual stimulation. These are available with little cost or effort to help us in stimulating and clarifying visual processes.
  9. *Projectors* – Projectors have evolved from a variety of still-pictures and movies. There are overhead projectors that use transparencies. There are also opaque projectors which are an altogether different machine. It uses a solid page of print, and requires no transfer to the "transparent" state, as do overhead projectors.
  10. *Videos* – Videos are useful because a training program can be shown to a roomful of people or sent out to a thousand

branches across the country. Trainees can also watch training videotapes on a TV screen and may also perform exercises on microcomputer.

11. *Computer-Aided Instruction* – Uses a program encoded onto a diskette along with courseware that introduces features of the program frame by frame. The learner turns on the computer, inserts the disk, and hits the proper keys and then the system takes over showing and telling the student what to do next.
12. *Interactive Video Instruction* – Considered the state-of-the-art in self-paced instruction, interactive video instruction (IVI) allows the user to control the pace and content of a video. It takes advantage of the educational precept that people retain only about twenty-five percent of what they hear, forty-five percent of what they see and hear, and seventy percent of what they see, hear and do. IVI lets the user see, hear, and do.
13. *Audiotapes and Compact Discs* – Through the use of a cassette, a voice prompts the learner through a series of programmed segments. An accompanying diskette controlled from the computer keyboard works along with the tape, displaying additional course materials on the screen and illustrating particular points.

- I have learned that most of the present training aids are devices of one sort or another designed to aid the instructor and make his teaching more effective. I have learned that when the training aids overshadow the instructor, they become less effective, because the students expect a real, live person to be concerned about their learning.

- I learned to use a checklist when being trained to do a new task. This serves as a guide in the steps and order of performing the task. I use checklists frequently to ensure I have thoroughly completed all aspects of the assignment.

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW SITUATIONS

- The skills I learned in understanding training needs will help me in my present job and any future job. Those skills will help me to understand where there are weaknesses in the organization and help me to be able to understand and work with those weaknesses to correct them. This, in turn, will make a better workforce.

- The skills I learned in understanding the types and methods of training will help me on my present job, future jobs and also in church. By understanding the different methods, I can apply those methods in different situations to reach different people. Having different methods and using different types of training will appeal to different people because we all learn in different ways.

- The skills I learned in training aids will help me in my present job, future jobs, parental job and church. Understanding the different aids available helps bring a different aspect to the situation. In addition, those aids will have different effects on different people. Knowing more than one skill and using it will appeal to a larger audience.

Petition #13

COURSE NUMBER AND NAME: **MGMT 3365**
Office Management

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course covers elements of researching and updating systems, procedures and practices related to organizing, planning and managing the office. The focus is on 1) insurance, 2) human resources, 3) budgets, 4) personnel policy manual and 5) corporate reports.

METHOD OF EVALUATION: Résumé, Autobiography SP-6, Annotated Bibliography pages D-4, Documentation pages D-9, D-38, D-39, D-40, D-41, D-42, D-43, D-44, D-45, D-46, D-47, D-48, D-49, D-50, D-51, D-52, D-53, D-73, D-74, D-99, D100

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ANALYSIS

INSURANCE

Concrete Experience:

- In 2000, after being employed by Automated Food Systems, Inc. since July 1998, I was given the responsibility to monitor the corporate group insurance policy, general liability, workers compensation, automobile, and foreign liability policies. This includes meeting with insurance agents/companies, providing support documentation for quotations and working up cost comparisons.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned important guidelines to follow when obtaining workers compensation, liability, auto, and health insurance quotes. Workers compensation, liability and auto insurance quotes are obtained through our insurance and bonding agent. They provide the required forms to be filled out in order to receive an accurate quote. I am able to contact them with any questions, instructions, and deadlines on how to file claims and what documentation must accompany each claim.

- I have learned what financial data is necessary in calculating premiums and providing support for audits. Workers compensation and general liability are audited each year and I've learned the audit process so that the necessary data is readily available to the auditor(s). General liability insurance relies on sales revenue calculations. Automated Food Systems, Inc. is an international corporation and I must carefully review the sales numbers to ensure that only domestic sales are used in the premium calculation and annual audit for general liability. Payroll figures for the policy period must also be provided and distinguished by classification class.

We have two classifications, Mechanical and Clerical. The classification is important as the premium rates can differ by class.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Concrete Experience:

- In January 2000, I began managing human resources at Automated Food Systems, Inc. This involves all aspects of personnel including maintenance of personnel files and their security, tracking attendance, vacation time and raise history as well as monitoring personnel evaluation schedules and notifying respective supervisor. I'm also heavily involved in the hiring process.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned that a completed I-9 Verification of Employment Eligibility and W-4 is required at hiring along with the new employees social security number. Automated Food Systems, Inc. policy dictates that the above mention documents be filed along with a completed application with their personal information, such as name, address, telephone number, emergency contacts, date of birth and work history/references.

- I learned how to use Accpac Plus and Peachtree Complete for Manufacturing to track vacation time and raise history. This enabled me to also track their evaluation schedule and alert the employee, supervisor and any other pertinent persons. This is important to record accuracy and provides essential information for the employee.

- I've learned the importance of protecting confidential personnel documentation. I keep it locked in a fireproof filing cabinet. Employee records are kept separate from all other records. The information provided by the employee to the company is confidential and not for public view. Employee pay information and employment history with the company is confidential information and is not to be shared with unauthorized employees.

- I've learned the importance of written documentation to record work related conflicts between personnel. Written incident reports act as a safeguard for the employee as well as the employer in the event references to the event are required in the future. The incident report also provides acknowledgement by the employer of the incident and the steps that were taken to resolve the issue.

BUDGETS

Concrete Experience:

- In 2000, I assisted in the development of the corporate annual budget for Automated Food Systems, Inc. This involved researching past years for purchasing and sales trends, working with the marketing department to pinpoint sales projections, and designing the format used to track and provide budget numbers.

Learning Outcomes:

- I learned how relational sales and cost of sales are. Typically cost of sales, as percentage of sales is consistent. If we see a change in the percentage it flags possibly an error or that we moved a higher than normal quantity of products with low cost and no labor.

- I learned how a clear and concise budget aids in monitoring expenditures as the year progresses. The budget serves as a guideline in achieving sales goals and not going over designated expenditures. Budgets are a guideline and can be overridden, but serves as a means of identifying problem areas that might have otherwise gone unnoticed.

- In the book Managing Today! by Stephen P. Robbins I learned the "Popular types of budgets:

    - **Revenue Budgets** – Project future sales. Determined by multiplying estimated sales volume by sales price.
    - **Expense Budgets** – List the primary activities undertaken by a unit and allocate a monetary value to each.
    - **Profit Budgets** – Used by separate units of an organization that combines revenue and expense budgets to determine the units profit contribution.
    - **Cash Budgets** – Forecast how much cash an organization will have on hand and how much it will need to meet expenses.
    - **Capital Expenditure Budgets** – Estimate investments in property, buildings and major equipment".

PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

Concrete Experience:

- In 1999, I assisted the office manager at that time, with developing a Personnel Policy Manual. As the current office manager, it is my responsibility to maintain the handbook, keeping it updated with changes, as well as distributing it to new hires after going over it during their orientation.

Learning Outcomes:

- I have learned that the goal of a Personnel Policy Manual is to provide employees with necessary information with which to operate. It not only answers most commonly asked questions, for instance what holidays are paid, when is vacation earned, what benefits are provided, but it also provides the guidelines of conduct and a clearer chain of order with respect to different events or scenarios.

- I've learned that a personnel manual should not be thrown together, but requires a great deal of time and input. Payday laws as well as employment requirements must be accurate and current. It is a good idea to have policy manuals reviewed by legal professionals for the protection of the company and its employees.

- I have often heard from other companies that employee manuals are a waste of time and money. However, I have learned the contrary. By addressing policies upfront time is saved for the human resource office responsible for answering the same questions repeatedly. Additionally time is saved for the employee who can now refer to his/her manual at times more convenient for him/her.

- Policy manuals also offer added protection to the employer. Conflict can easily arise when an employee hasn't been informed of an important company policy. By periodically going through the manual with the entire staff and having them sign that they've received and reviewed the manual ensures that the information has been conveyed.

CORPORATE REPORTS

Concrete Experience:

- Since assuming the bookkeeping responsibilities in 2000, I also coordinate with the CPA in relation to corporate reports and their timely filing. I also track corporate depreciation schedule in conjunction with the CPA to ensure that all assets are accurately reflected and classified.

Learning Outcomes:

- I've learned how to generate various quarterly reports, such as, the 941 quarterly reports, as well as, the Texas Workforce Commission Unemployment quarterly reports. These documents are prepared by our CPA, based on the company documentation I forward on to him. Our accountant contacts me when these forms are ready to be picked up. I obtain the necessary signatures, prepare the required checks, and mail the reports by the designated deadlines.

- I've learned that the classification of assets is critical. It is important to accurately classify purchases, so that the depreciation of assets is scheduled correctly. Items are assigned a depreciation schedule and I deduct them each month by entering a journal entry.

- I've learned that clear descriptions of assets including any serial numbers and receipts should be maintained. This has proven helpful when an asset is sold and should be taken off of the schedule.

- I've learned how to initiate an electronic funds transfer to the IRS so deposits can be made. I prepare a fax with deposit instructions to go to the bank. This serves as a means of authorizing the bank to disburse funds to the IRS. Delivering tax deposits via EFTD has become law within the last couple of years. Prior to the law it was acceptable to forward these funds via check.

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW SITUATIONS

- I've learned so much about the structure of a business and how important all the parts, including management, marketing, financial and human resources are. Working for a small business affords the opportunity to see and, in my case, participate in all aspects of business. I believe I have a better understanding of what it takes to keep a growing business doing just that. With all the knowledge I've gained at Automated Food Systems, Inc. it's clear that businesses rarely if ever exist in a constant state. I must be ready to tackle new challenges, as they most assuredly will come. Wearing many hats has given me an attention to detail that has helped me deal with new situations, even crisis.

- There's always work to be done and recently we've gone through a transition in upper management. The founders are nearing retirement and the next generation is stepping up to the plate. New opportunities are rising, each with its challenges and goals. I will be overseeing the company's financial software to ensure that we stay current with technology. This will require attention to details, a thorough knowledge of the current systems, and a clear vision of how we could utilize them best, then looking at what's on the market to determine if we could do even better.

- I'm working with upper management to develop more financial strategies for our customers including online orders and payment by purchase cards.

- We believe the Internet may hold a key opportunity to harness additional sales by providing our complete spare parts line on our website. I will be involved in the structuring, implementation and efficiency review of this process.

- Customer support is so critical. Yet, it can become lax and neglected to the point problems arise. I am always looking out for ways to make our support team better. I'm currently compiling seminar information for individual staff members. My goal is for the company to provide additional education in areas the staff as a whole or individually struggles with.

- Our inventory is contained in a computer generated carousel system. Inventory management has improved dramatically in count accuracy and order processing time. We will be interfacing the carousel software with our updated financial software over the next month. Maintaining it's accuracy and during interfacing and subsequent implementation will require hours of data entry and periodic reviews and tests for accurate counts and information.