

*Chapter 1 of Management Challenges for the 21st Century introduces us to two sets of assumptions. The first set of assumptions relates to the discipline of management, while the second set of assumptions relates to the practices of management (refer to page 5 of the text). Consider your own management experiences (academic and/or work related) and respond to the following questions:*

*Have you (at any time in your academic or professional career) approached the management of a project with one or more of these assumptions? If so, which assumption was made, and how did you feel about that assumption being made about the situation? Are there other assumptions that you feel should be added to the list on page 5? If so, what do you suggest, and why?*

Since I have never managed people as part of a project I can't say that I have ever experienced the situations mentioned in Drucker's book. As an employee participating in projects under the guidance of a supervisor I can say that my assumptions in past experiences do mirror those stated by Drucker. I have always seen management as cut and dried, following the same old mold, and a necessary evil. I guess "a necessary evil" would be the one thing I would add to that list. Perhaps I feel that way is because most of my managers have been inexperienced and had very little insight into good management practices or the technical aspects of the projects they were managing. Actually, now that I think about it, I have held a couple of management positions in my life. One management job was as owner of a chain of video stores and the other was as general manager of the College of Information Technology (CIT). Managing a chain of video stores wasn't very project oriented. All of the "projects" that needed doing were done by me and my brother setting up the stores to get them open. Once they were open they pretty much ran themselves, with my brother and I making all of the purchasing decisions, in addition I wrote the point-of-purchase software that tracked the day-to-day transactions. As General Manager of CIT, I supervised two people, a sales person and a secretary. I was hired at CIT mainly because of my experience as a Microsoft Trainer, General manager was more a title than a position. It was the owner who was hiring and managing the contractors who did the build out. I would recommend equipment purchases, the owner would approve them and I would place the orders. I taught all of the classes at that time, I also designed and created all of the advertising materials. As you can see my "Management" experience didn't require me to do much managing. If I had any inkling of what managing a business really meant, I would have probably been more of a manager and done a better job of it. The type of management Drucker writes about is more for medium to large companies with many more employees than I have ever worked with. I did find he's explanation of how the management of large businesses works and I did gain a much better understanding of how important management is to the success or failure of a business.

*Chapter 2 of Management Challenges for the 21st Century presents five realities, or certainties, which can help organizations develop strategies for success (refer to pages 43 and 44 of the text). What is your employer's (or past employer's) strategy for success? Does/did your employer base this strategy on any of the five certainties identified in Chapter 2? Please explain how these certainties (or lack thereof) have impacted the success of your employer (or past employer).*

Chapter two's explanation of the five certainties was a real eye opener. It really explained how interdependent the global economy is and why we are seeing the changes that are currently taking place in all sectors of our economy. Ever since I can remember business has survived on its growing market share, with the realization that the population in developed nations is constricting it is understandable why businesses have been so aggressive about opening up other markets. As Drucker puts it, education, along with health care, are commodities that are basically inflation proof. People will always pay for these services whatever they may cost. However, my employer is Mt. San Jacinto College, a community college. The impact of the changes in our economy have created quite a paradox for community colleges and regional occupational programs (ROPs); more people are wanting to attend our schools, but because we are publicly funded and those public funds have diminished considerably we are forced to offer fewer classes or go broke. Even though the student's education is subsidized the state has a cap on way it will pay out to an institution in any given year. It appears that state colleges have the right idea by raising their tuition fees as much as they have; 10 – 15% in the last two years. Since the state won't give them any more funds the only way to get more cash is to force students to get federal loans, which are abundant, and funnel those funds to the universities. It would seem that this might "level" the playing field and allow private colleges, which don't receive state subsidies, to be able to be more competitive. What I see is that people need jobs and the educational institutions that are most focused on that end goal will be the ones who will be the most successful.