Introduction: This is a simulation of a real world experience. Your research and consulting company, Hamada Consulting (a fictional company), has taken an extremely lucrative contract to assist Salinger Chemical in a reorganization of middle management and communication systems. Based on the high quality of your previous performance, the account has been assigned to you alone. Salinger has provided as much information about their company as Hamada Consulting should need. They are not hiring Hamada Consulting to help them improve their chemical production; they are looking for strategies to increase sales and improve communication.

Hamada Consulting will be penalized if it does not deliver the full report on time. The account's designated employee will be terminated if the company is left in the embarrassing (and expensive) position of being penalized. As in the real world, your other duties will continue and you will receive new responsibilities throughout project’s duration, as well as being responsible for wrapping up old projects. What follows is a description of Salinger Chemical and the problems it is experiencing.

Company History and Profile

Salinger Chemical of Bardstown, Kentucky is part of Salinger Industries, Inc. of Louisville, Kentucky. Salinger Chemical manufactures three types of chemical products from three separate plants at the same 25 acre location: (a) Bleach-Out, a product which Salinger Chemical sells to several name brand detergent manufacturers who put their own name on it and resell it, (b) Shino, a chemically neutral base used by several floor wax companies as an ingredient in their products, and (c) Pet-Roll, a petroleum-based gasoline additive sold directly to retail distributors.

Salinger Chemical has approximately 350 full time employees at its location in Bardstown with another 50 part time employees filling in during vacation and rush periods. Of the 350 full time employees, 40% work in the Bleach-Out division, 40% work in the Shino division, and 20% work Pet-Roll division. Each division shares an administrative staff consisting of a location chief executive officer, vice president of operations, administrative assistants, and sales and accounting staff located on site in the administrative building. Each plant has been under the supervision of a plant supervisor, six general foremen, and two administrative assistants.

Each division was projected to produce $8 million in sales during the fiscal year June 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004, but each division fell short. The Bleach-Out division missed its goal by 7 percent; the Shino division missed its goal by 5 percent, and the Pet-Roll division missed its goal by 8 percent. A company study found numerous problems regarding production, personnel, machine maintenance, employee theft, training, absenteeism, and missing orders and paperwork. As a result, the six general foremen at each of the three locations were terminated.

Your assignment: reconstruct middle management at Salinger Chemical.

Terminating the 18 general foremen gives Salinger the opportunity to recreate the function of its middle management. Hamada Consulting has been hired to research middle management as a concept and as a function to get a better understanding of the contributions middle management can make to a company.

Research Proposal

For our June 18th class period, write a research proposal (2.5-3.5 pages) explaining and clarifying the needs of Salinger Chemical and communicating Hamada Consulting’s plan to conduct research, present findings, and recommend a solution. Use figure 21.4 on pages 358-361 as a model. An explanation for each of the proposal’s sections can be found in chapter 21, beginning on page 356, under the heading “Proposals for Class Research Projects.” Of course you’ll need to modify this format to fit the situation you’re writing in, but the structure should still be based on the same concepts. Hamada Consulting was selected by Salinger’s CEO, Bernard Leach, to carry out the contract.

The report must reference at least 4 actual research sources. At least two of those sources must be non-websites. Books, pamphlets, and articles accessed through library databases will be counted as non-websites. Please check with me if you think something is borderline, or you want to make a case for using something. Remember, your research is
limited first and foremost by the quality and relevance of your research.

Regarding the “Qualifications and Resources” section of this proposal, students are welcome to create a background for Hamada Consulting, but only because this is a fictional situation. Of course in an actual contract, the hiring company would have every right to sue Hamada Consulting for misrepresentation.

All resources must be cited thoroughly and correctly using either APA or MLA styles of documentation. If you want to suggest an alternative, please see me during my office hours to explain your plan. Sources must appear as in-text citations and in your bibliography. Only sources actually cited in the text should appear in the bibliography. It’s not merely a list of what you read to prepare your report. It’s a list of what you’ve used.

Formal Report

For our July 6th class period, write a formal report using Figure 24.2 on pages 405-418 as a model. A brief explanation of each of the report’s sections can be found on pages 404-422. Make sure the report includes at least the following elements: Cover page, Letter of Transmittal, Executive Summary, Table of Contents (including a List of Illustrations), Introduction, A Report Body (which presents research focused on organizational structures likely to accomplish Salinger Chemical’s goals, and maybe some that won’t. Within the Report Body, create section titles appropriate to this particular report, or borrow some from the model report: What is (insert selected organizational model here), Results of …., Model programs, etc.), Resources Required, Conclusions and Recommendations, and Works Cited. Use this format as a framework on which to hang the solutions to the following challenges from Salinger:

(1) An allocation design of middle managers between the three plants. Should each plant have an equal amount of middle managers? Why or why not?

(2) The identification of tasks and areas of responsibility for each middle manager. What are the common positions needed for each plant? Will a plant have positions not existing at the other plants because of the unique characteristics of its product?

(3) A communication system to connect the middle managers. How will each middle manager report, and to whom will each middle manager report?

(4) Supporting documentation for your proposals based on research from reputable sources.

The report should consist of 10-12 pages using 8-10 sources and consistent documentation. Please take note that every page of the document is counted in these requirements. So even the title page goes toward the total of 10-12 pages. Material from any reference sources must follow APA guidelines and be documented in the text and on the reference page(s). At least one visual aid (chart, graph, etc.) must be included as part of the evidence within the body of the report.

Important: 70/30 rule. No more than 30% of the text can be directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from research sources. At least 70% of the text must be the author's own analysis. Failure to observe the 70/30 rule will result in a zero for the assignment and a failing grade for the course.

Important: Remember, Salinger Chemical has much more expertise about the chemical industry than Hamada Consulting does. That's not what they're hiring them for. What Salinger wants is reliable and substantial research on management models that might work for them, and they want Hamada Consulting to actually recommend one. It is not important (for the sake of this course's assignment) that the report includes the most relevant, most recent, or most successful information out there. There are countless books and magazine articles written about management styles, strategies, and structures. Please find a couple, pick at least one, and try to explain it to Salinger Chemical. Try to convince them it will work, why it will work, and how they can implement it. Don't forget to also include a system of communication, which might include a recommendation about technology or protocol.

Important: Get started immediately on the research. Leave ample time for inter-library loan. Begin now.

Grading Criteria: deadline, length, format, organization, required information, number of resources, quality of resources, use of documentation style, language skill, proofreading.