Explore the first edition of Management: An Interactive Approach with Nicole M. Coomber

What are some of the biggest course challenges students face today?

I teach organizational behavior and principles of management, and some of the biggest course challenges that I've faced is really around engagement and relevance.

Students are having a hard time sometimes seeing the relevance of the content to their day to day lives.

A lot of them are saying to themselves, "Look, I'm not a manager, right now. I'm not going to be a manager as soon as I get out of, you know, undergraduate degree. So why do I need to learn how to be a manager?"

The engagement piece, too, is challenging. You know, students they live in a media
saturated environment. They have constant access to social media.

You can ban laptops and phones from your classroom, but they're always sort of there on the side being a distraction.

And so those are really two of the things that I think are most important for faculty to address and really some of the hardest challenges for faculty to address right now.

What led you to create this product?

I worked together with my coauthor to create a product that we think really addresses the two challenges that we see in our classroom, around engagement and relevance.

Some of the sources that I've used in the past, you know, a great lot of great material out there to choose from but I felt that it was almost overwhelming for my students.

They would see a huge textbook. That would be almost like an encyclopedia of management. And it was really challenging for them to figure out. "OK, what in here is important and what's really relevant to me."

So that's one thing that we really focused on, was picking content deliberately that helped address things that we felt students needed to know.

And then the other thing, too, is that students just have a different level of attention span. They're learning in different ways.

I like to give the example of my son who will go to YouTube to learn about something new. Even my husband will do that.

And we find that students, when they can kind of read a little bit, but then do an interactive activity
and watch a video then get a few quiz questions to make sure that they are really understanding the content that all of these things that really help them feel that sense of accomplishment.

It taps into some of their motivation, right?

That a sense of autonomy that they're learning, they're developing competence. They're moving forward.

And so I think that we were really excited to create this product because it's built on the technology to really address our challenges.

And then we were also able to create a digital first product that allowed us to create around the actual platform that students would be experiencing.

So all of that was really exciting for us. And we were working on creating this.

What feature in this product are you most excited about?

The feature that I'm most excited about and proud of in our textbook is the chapter two, it's called Managing Yourself, and it starts with this premise that students need to manage themselves before they can actually go out and be an effective employee. Be an effective manager.

A lot of the research right now in organizational behavior and management centers on looking at organizational citizenship behaviors we've seen with a great resignation. Right.

Employee engagement is huge, motivation is huge.

So it sort of puts a student at the center and it says, look, you need to manage your own emotional intelligence.

You need to understand what that is.

You need to figure out how you're going to deal with your stress.

You need to manage your time, manage your energy, manage your attention, because all of these things out in the world are competing for your time, energy and attention.

And finally, you need to go out there and you need to be your own best advocate.

You need to engage in impression management.

And so the second chapter of the book before they launch into how do they manage other people,
how do they work with other people?

It starts with them.

It starts with themselves.

And I think that that is a feature that I'm really proud of and really excited of that we've worked on and developed together.

If you could describe your product in one word, what would it be?

So one word that I'd use to describe the product is relevant.