

THE BRYCE IS RIGHT!

Empowering Managers in today's Corporate Culture



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Since 1971:
Software for the finest computer - the Mind

MBA PRESS

The Bryce is Right

Includes index.

1. Management Science

I. Bryce, Tim

ISBN 0-9786182-3-8

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Printed in the United States of America

DEDICATION

*To my wife Susan, daughter Kelly, and my son Patrick,
for their tireless patience and support.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR	PAGE 1
INTRODUCTION	PAGE 2
CHAPTER 1 - THE DEATH OF MANAGEMENT	PAGE 3
CHAPTER 2 - HOW DO WE MANAGE?	PAGE 7
CHAPTER 3 - UNDERSTANDING CORPORATE CULTURE	PAGE 11
CHAPTER 4 - A CRASH COURSE IN MANAGEMENT	PAGE 14
CHAPTER 5 - PARENTING MANAGEMENT	PAGE 25
CHAPTER 6 - INDIVIDUALISM VS. TEAMWORK	PAGE 29
CHAPTER 7 - WHY WE RESIST CHANGE	PAGE 31
CHAPTER 8 - INCREASING BRAIN POWER	PAGE 35
CHAPTER 9 - THE NEED FOR CRITICAL THINKING	PAGE 39
CHAPTER 10 - THE ART OF PERSUASION	PAGE 41
CHAPTER 11 - IMPLEMENTING BUSINESS ETHICS	PAGE 44
CHAPTER 12 - MANAGING FROM THE BOTTOM-UP	PAGE 46
CHAPTER 13 - FIRING EMPLOYEES ISN'T FOR SISSIES	PAGE 48
CHAPTER 14 - HOW PRODUCTIVE ARE YOUR MEETINGS?	PAGE 52
CHAPTER 15 - MANAGING CRUNCH TIME	PAGE 55
CHAPTER 16 - WHY WE NEED POLICY MANUALS	PAGE 59
CHAPTER 17 - CREATING A SKILLS INVENTORY	PAGE 62
CHAPTER 18 - 10 TIPS FOR IMPROVING SOCIAL INTERCOURSE	PAGE 67
CHAPTER 19 - CRAFTSMANSHIP: THE MEANING OF LIFE	PAGE 71
EPILOGUE	PAGE 76
QUOTATIONS	PAGE 77
BRYCE'S LAWS	PAGE 81
INDEX	PAGE 84

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

TIM BRYCE

Tim is the Managing Director of M. Bryce & Associates (MBA), an international management consulting firm located in the Tampa Bay area of Florida.

Mr. Bryce graduated from Ohio University in 1976 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications (BSC) from OU's College of Communications, School of Communication Studies (formerly School of Interpersonal Communications). Upon graduation, he joined MBA full time and served in a variety of capacities, including both sales and consulting. As Director, his responsibilities include product development, implementation, training and ongoing support of all MBA customers on a worldwide basis. Because of this, he has traveled extensively providing training and consulting services at various levels of computer proficiency (novice to expert) on a variety of management and computer related subjects.

Tim is the principal author of MBA's "PRIDE"-Enterprise Engineering Methodology (EEM) and the designer of the Computer Aided Planning (CAP) tool (a tool for calculating corporate priorities and performing an organization analysis) and Automated Systems Engineering (ASE), a tool used to generate system designs. He is also responsible for the development of MBA's Automated Instructional Materials which includes instructions and documentation for all of the "PRIDE" methodologies for IRM,

A prolific writer, Tim has considerable experience in writing technical documentation (paper and on-line), help text, and web design. He has authored several papers on a variety of management and computer related subjects and was the co-author of the book, *The IRM Revolution: Blueprint for the 21st Century* (ISBN 0-9621189-0-7) and authored *The PRIDE Methodologies for IRM* (ISBN 0-9786182-0-3). He regularly maintains a blog which is read by thousands of I.T. professionals worldwide. His "Management Visions" commentaries are broadcast regularly over the Internet.

Mr. Bryce has also made several presentations at computer trade related meetings and has given lectures at various universities. Tim also actively participates in various trade related associations and user groups, as well as community organizations. He

is available to give presentations on subjects related to Information Resource Management (IRM).

Tim has also served on numerous Board of Directors of industry, nonprofit, and fraternal organizations, as founder, President, and a variety of other capacities.

END



INTRODUCTION

Who should read this book? Managers.

The corporate landscape has changed a lot since I first entered the work force in the 1970's. Thanks to changes in government regulations and socioeconomic conditions, we have witnessed substantial changes to corporate cultures in terms of communications, fashion, socialization, morality, and how we conduct business. Despite all this, one thing has remained constant: the need to get a job done, and this is the domain of the manager.

Quite often management is taken for granted, that it comes naturally to people. It doesn't. I see companies spending millions of dollars on technology but little on improving the skills of its managers. To me, this is putting the cart before the horse. Some people are afraid to manage; probably because they don't know how to or because they live in fear of a lawsuit. And others devise harebrained schemes to manage their area (usually involving the manipulation of numbers). There is actually nothing magical to management; all it requires is a little common sense. But as I have learned over the last 30 years in business, if there is anything uncommon today, it is common sense. I wrote this book because management is not naturally intuitive to people, nor is it painless, and to remind you that "man" is the key element of "management."

This book is well suited for those aspiring to become effective managers, as well as for those who require

a refresher or change of focus. It should also be read by workers to better understand what is required of a manager, thereby lending him the support he desperately needs to fulfill his duty. Some of you may not like what I have to say, and I warn you that I am not always politically correct. Regardless, my observations are based on years of experience traveling around the world and visiting with hundreds of different types of corporations where I have seen a lot of successes, as well as a lot of snafus.

This book is actually based on a collection of papers on Information Resource Management (IRM) I wrote from 2004 - 2006. My original intent was to discuss such things as planning, systems and data base design, and project management. However, I was encouraged by my readers to expand my commentaries into other areas involving general management, hence the development of this collection of papers.

Throughout this book you will hear a lot about such things as corporate culture, empowering the workers (managing from the bottom-up), and the need for developing the socialization skills of the next generation of our workers; in other words, the human elements of management. This is one reason why our corporate slogan is "*Software for the finest computer - the Mind,*" for in the end, it is the human-being that matters most, not our technology.

- Tim Bryce
June 2006

CHAPTER 1

THE DEATH OF MANAGEMENT

*"You cannot treat a patient if he doesn't know
he is sick."
- Bryce's Law*

INTRODUCTION

Epitaph:

*"Here lies the body of 'Management,'
Who at one time moved mountains but was put to
death by government regulations, social mores,
office politics, and general apathy.
R.I.P."*

I have a good friend who was recently elevated to the job title of "Systems Manager" at a large Fortune 500 company in the U.S. Midwest. As someone who has been in the Information Systems field for over 30 years now, my interest was piqued and I asked her how big of a staff she was going to manage and what kind of systems she was going to be responsible for administrating. She told me she had no staff and her responsibilities primarily included going to user sites and helping them setup their laptop computers with office suites and pertinent Internet software.

This is certainly not how I have come to understand the concept of a "Systems" person or, for that matter, a "Manager." What she described was more of a technical or clerical role as opposed to one of management. But I guess the times are changing.

I always viewed "management" as a people oriented

function, not a mechanical function (which is why "man" is used as part of the word). I define it as, *"getting people to do what you want, when you want it, and how you want it."* But perhaps I am beginning to date myself as more and more "managers" are appearing with fewer and fewer people involved. Even though the title is flourishing, I contend true management is becoming a thing of the past.

WHY IS MANAGEMENT DISAPPEARING?

First, we have to understand that managers are in the business of conquering objectives and solving problems in the workplace through people. If we lived in a perfect world where everyone knew what they were suppose to do and when they were suppose to do it by, there would not be a need for managers. Inevitably, this rarely occurs as people are social animals and rarely agree on anything, particularly on how to perform a given task. Hence, a manager is needed to establish direction and referee. As such, managers are the field generals for their departments.

There are three basic attributes of a manager: Leadership, Environment, and Results. Let's consider each separately and how they have evolved:

1. LEADERSHIP

To properly coordinate human resources, an effective manager should always be at least one step ahead of his staff. This requires visionaries who inspire confidence in their troops and can set them marching in the right direction. The problem though

is that little, if any, planning is being performed in corporate America. Instead, we are content to react to calamities as opposed to looking into the future and trying to anticipate problems. As a small example, we are now embroiled in a tempest over the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans. Engineers have long known that the levees used to keep the sea out of the city were inadequate for a category four or five hurricane (Katrina was a category four). In fact, I saw a documentary on this very subject just weeks prior to the disaster. Now, we have local, state and federal government agencies rushing to correct the problems (and doing a lot of finger pointing in the process). As costly as it would have been to fix the levees, it would have been a spit in the bucket when compared to the costs to clean up the aftermath.

In the corporate world, Detroit is reeling from the types of automobiles now being imported into this country. Asia has stolen Detroit's thunder who now finds itself offering cash incentives to stem the tide. It is no secret America has developed an ever-increasing dependency on foreign oil, and is now saddled with an aging oil refinery infrastructure and a shaky economy. Why then was Detroit surprised to see their market share take a nose-dive in favor of quality fuel-efficient automobiles from overseas?

The point is, our planning and leadership skills are at an all time low. Why? Because it is easier to react to a problem than to do a little planning; easier, but costlier. Let's face it, planning is hard work and, as the old adage goes, *"You can pay me now or you can pay me later, but you are going to pay me."* Planning is a projection into the unknown and involves a certain level of risk that most people are not willing to assume (and are afraid to do so). Consequently, our society is more interested in safety nets than in taking risks. I guess this is why I admire gamblers who mentally calculate their odds for success and are unafraid of taking risks.

Nonetheless, American competitors (and our enemies) fully understand our weakness as planners and are not afraid of taking the risks that we balk at. As a result, they will continue to take advantage of us until such time as we get some serious leadership.

2. ENVIRONMENT

In order to set workers to task it is necessary for a manager to establish a suitable work environment.

This includes:

- Defining the location of the workplace, hours of operation, and corporate policies to be observed (e.g., payroll, benefits, performance reviews, etc.).
- Defining the methodologies, tools and techniques to be used by the workers in their assignments.
- Defining the corporate culture - Although this is normally defined by the company overall, the astute manager establishes the ethics, customs and social intercourse to be observed within his area of responsibility (a subculture). By doing so, the manager has defined the code of conduct in the department denoting what will be tolerated and what will not.

As part of the corporate culture, the manager defines his own personal style of management, for example:

- The types and level of discipline, organization, and accountability expected from the workers.
- Will the manager try to micromanage everything (top-down) or empower his people, delegate responsibility and manage "bottom-up"?
- How employees are evaluated and rewarded; by accomplishments or by political maneuvering.

The manager's objective is to create a homogeneous working environment whereby everyone is "rowing on the same oar" towards common objectives. Unfortunately, the problem here is that our society is now more inclined to accept rugged individualism as opposed to team effort. For example, employees are commonly rewarded based on individual initiative as opposed to group effort. Between this spirit of individualism and government regulations that embolden employees to resist the company, loyalty and teamwork are at all-time lows and apathy and restlessness permeates corporate America. Such spirit disrupts the harmony of the work environment, thus compounding the problems of the manager.

3. RESULTS

Ultimately, the manager is charged with the responsibility of producing a product or performing a service. As such, the manager must establish and prioritize assignments, and assure they are accomplished in a timely and cost effective manner. This

requires managers who can articulate assignments and coordinate resources towards this end. Sounds pretty simple, right? Then why are we failing in this regard? Three reasons:

- Managers are more interested in gamesmanship than actually producing anything of merit. They have developed a "fast track" mentality whereby managers have little interest in their current job and want to advance to the next plateau in their career. "Long-term" planning is no longer measured in years, but rather in months or weeks (a "long-term" project is now considered three to six months in length). Consequently, managers are primarily interested in quick and dirty solutions which will see them through their tenure of office, but will create burdens later on for their successors. Managers now spend more time scheming and maneuvering than worrying about getting the job done. What's the sure sign of such a manager? He/she knows the latest buzzwords and is always "politically correct."
- Managers are no longer results oriented, Instead, they are more focused on the process or mechanics of getting a job done. Although it is desirable to be well organized and precise in our work effort, it is for naught if you cannot deliver what you are charged to produce. The manager needs to be focused on deliverables, not mechanics (with apologies to the ISO 9000 folks).
- Managers no longer hold people accountable for their actions. This is due, in part, to government regulations that are more concerned about the rights of the employees as opposed to the manager's. As a result, managers spend less time managing and more time supervising people. Understand this: there are substantial differences between management and supervision; the two are most definitely not synonymous. Supervision is much more "hands on" with employees being continually watched and directed in their work assignments. Managers should manage more and supervise less, and employees should do more self-supervision. Unfortunately, this philosophy is not in vogue these days. Workers no longer seek responsibility and prefer to be told what to do thereby they cannot be held accountable if something goes awry. This alone says a lot about our society and is worrisome to me.

Let us never forget, unless you can deliver what you are charged to perform, you are a failure as a man-

ager. Consider the numerous coaches and managers in the world of sports who have been fired over the years, not necessarily because they didn't run fine programs, but because they lost sight of the end result: winning.

CONCLUSION

What I have described thus far pertains primarily to large corporations. Management is still alive and well in small businesses that are not encumbered with bureaucracy and need to manage simply to survive. I have also been primarily describing corporate America, but many of these bad habits are creeping into the management style of Asian and European companies as well.

Now and then, I like to make an analogy between management and dieting. There is nothing magical about losing weight; you simply watch what you eat and get some exercise. However, millions of dollars are spent on the latest diet craze, usually to no avail. The same is true with management; you simply need some leadership, organization and follow-up and you will get the results you want. However, it seems companies today do everything but manage.

Beyond this, our social fabric and government regulations discourages effective management. Instead of discipline, organization and accountability, we are more concerned with nurturing free-spirited individualism, gamesmanship, and chasing panaceas. In many cases, managers are inhibited by the press who scrutinizes decisions, particularly in the government sector. Fearing to make a bad decision, managers suffer paralysis and nothing is accomplished.

Bottom-line, corporate America is no longer managing; instead, we are playing games or as I like to call it, "*Rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.*" In other words, as the ship is going down, we tend to focus our attention on everything other than saving the ship or passengers.

What is needed is someone who isn't afraid of taking the reigns and is allowed to run the department to produce the necessary results - that is the job of a manager. Let me give you a small example. Recently, I attended a meeting for a nonprofit organization who wanted to draft legislation for the association. The meeting started out pleasantly enough but quickly slipped into an uncontrollable series of arguments. I could tell by the confused look on the faces of the attendees that the meeting was out of control

and so I grabbed the gavel and brought the meeting to order. I next divided the group into subcommittees to discuss the different issues and gave them a deadline to produce a rough draft of the legislation. Within each subcommittee I appointed a chairman, a secretary, and someone to research the legislation. I then went outside to smoke my cigar. When I came back to the room, bedlam had been replaced by quiet organization. The legislation was drafted according to my instructions and the members left the building saying it was one of the best meetings they had attended. Why? Because a manager took the gavel.

One last note which I will specifically address to my colleagues in the Information Technology Industry; In my 30 years in this field I have never encountered a technical problem that cannot be conquered by good old-fashioned management. I'll bet this is true in any industry, not just I.T.

END

CHAPTER 2

HOW DO WE MANAGE?

"Management is more of a benevolent dictatorship as opposed to a democracy."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

Before we begin, let us not forget that all of our actions are based on human perceptions, whether they be real or fallacious. Consequently, the three theories of management are based on perceptions, e.g., how we perceive the character of our workers. If we believe people will act or react to certain situations in a specific way, we will use this in our management philosophy, be it brute force, carrot-and-stick, or permitting freewill. From this basis, let's consider...

THE THREE THEORIES OF MANAGEMENT

THEORY X ("Dictatorial Management") - This is derived from "Scientific Management," a concept best illustrated by the time-and-motion studies of a late nineteenth century industrial engineer named Frederick W. Taylor. Taylor observed the workers under his supervision at the Midvale Steel Company in Philadelphia brought their own shovels to work regardless of what size coal lumps they would have to shovel. He suggested to management that the company furnish shovels corresponding to the size and weight of the individual load, thus increasing the total amount of coal each worker could shovel in a day. Efficiency and production, the Theory X cornerstone, led to the assembly line and industrial production.

The philosophy of Theory X management style is based on the view of human nature as:

1. People have a natural aversion to work.
2. People need to be coerced, controlled, and threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of company goals.
3. The average person prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has little ambition, and wants security most.

Theorists now ask how much of this behavior described is inherent human nature and how much is behavior learned from bosses who manage with those assumptions. Perhaps the assumptions become self-validating: workers who are always treated by an authoritarian management as though they were lazy, tend to behave that way.

THEORY Y ("Participatory Management") - Most observers agree that the Theory Y management philosophy was derived from a series of experiments in the 1930's at the Western Electric Hawthorne Works in Chicago. Employees had been divided into two groups: a "test" group that worked under changing lighting conditions and a "control" group that worked under constant lighting. When the test group's light conditions improved, their productivity increased, as expected. But what mystified researchers was a similar jump in productivity when illumina-

tion worsened. To compound the mystery, the control group's output rose when the test group's did. It was concluded that both groups felt management was giving them special attention and so responded with improved performance. This discovery of human relations management was called Theory Y.

Theory Y's assumptions represent a much more positive assessment of human behavior and gave rise to the thousands of mentoring and management training programs in the 1960's and 70's, the purposes of which were to help managers change their assumptions of human nature from a Theory X to a Theory Y outlook. The basic premises of Theory Y include:

1. The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest.
2. External control and threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort toward corporate goals. People will exercise self-direction and self-control to achieve goals they find important.
3. Commitment to objectives is in proportion to the rewards associated with their achievement.
4. The average human being learns under proper conditions not only to accept but to seek responsibility.
5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in solving work problems is widely, not narrowly, present in the population.
6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the brain power of the average human is only partially utilized.

THEORY Z ("Group Involvement") - Theory Z was introduced in 1981 by UCLA Professor Dr. William Ouchi in his book of the same name. It is based on Ouchi's observations of Japanese management practices of the time. Basically, Theory Z promotes employee participation in decision-making, thereby increasing their motivation and productivity. This management style emphasizes long range planning, consensus decision making, and neutral worker-employee loyalty.

Ouchi concludes that Japanese managers got more out of their employees than U.S. managers because the whole structure of Japanese society encourages mutual trust and cooperation. This management phi-

losophy is based on the following assumptions:

1. Long term, even life time, employment is expected by both managers and employees.
2. Employees need freedom and opportunity to "grow."
3. Decisions should be group decisions involving workers and managers.
4. Subordinates are whole people at work (in contrast to being thought of as titles or units of production).
5. Management has a broad concern for subordinate welfare.
6. Open communication, both vertically and horizontally, is the norm.
7. There is complete trust among groups and individuals because they all have the same goals - the good of the organization.
8. Cooperation, not competition, is the basis for relationships within the company.

We have been conducting business in Japan since 1976 and have personally seen Theory Z in action. For example, when we sold our "PRIDE" Methodologies in Japan, we would have to make several sales presentations to a single company in order for all of the affected parties to reach a consensus as to whether this was the correct course of action for the company to pursue. After several months of deliberations, we would finally get a contract. Contrast this to American companies where we would make a single sales presentation to top management and close on the sale within a few days or weeks. However, to the credit of the Japanese, because everyone approved of the purchase, they all made an effort to successfully install and use it; if they failed, they would "lose face." Western managers, on the other hand, would shove the product down people's throats (a la Theory X), thereby the methodologies were viewed as the will of a single person and not the company overall. Consequently, when the manager left the company, "PRIDE" followed shortly behind.

WHICH IS BETTER?

Most managers favor Theory X, others Theory Y. A

few are likely to become Theory Z managers. Most, however, use some combination of the three. There is no "right" style of management because the appropriate style depends on the kind of people you employ and the kind of business you run.

But what is the current trend? During the second half of the 20th century there was a definite movement from Theory X to Theory Y. But now it appears the pendulum is swinging back to Theory X. As evidence, mentoring and employee training programs (a cornerstone of Theory Y) is being phased out as a means of cutting costs. Further, younger employees need considerably more supervision and direction, which lends itself to a Theory X philosophy.

Even Theory Z in Japan is showing signs of erosion. Although the Japanese economy ran well in the 1980's, it has slowed considerably over the last fifteen years, causing the Japanese to rethink how they compete and conduct business in a fast-paced world economy. Japanese managers realize they no longer have the luxury of waiting months to make a group decision and although they still wish to be loyal to the workforce, they realize certain sacrifices are inevitable. Further, thanks to Hollywood and the Internet, younger Japanese workers no longer share the same values as their predecessors. Frankly, they have picked up a lot of bad work habits from their Western counterparts. Concepts such as lifetime employment, corporate loyalty, and hard work is slowly evaporating from the Japanese business culture.

BACK TO PERCEPTIONS

How we elect to manage others or how we elect to be managed is based on our perceptions. For example, if we believe a person to be lazy, we will apply a Theory X style of management. But if we believe people are responsible, take initiative, and are successful, then Theories Y and Z are used.

A generation gap has emerged between management and the latest generation of workers. Management perceives today's young workers as immature, disorganized, undisciplined, and shirk responsibility. Whether this is true or not is immaterial. It is perceptions that count. Because of this, it should come as no small wonder that Theory X management practices are on the rise again.

For those younger workers who are as frustrated with management as management is with you, the only

advice I can offer is that you make a concerted effort to improve your interpersonal relations/communications skills. If you have garnered anything from this article, it is that appearances are extremely important. Your physical appearance, forms of speech and conduct all play a significant role in how you are perceived by management. Are you someone who is bright but doesn't know how to apply your skills, or do you have a proven track record for performance? In other words, it is time to grow up. As President Calvin Coolidge observed years ago:

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'Press On' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."

CONCLUSION

Management is more of a benevolent dictatorship as opposed to a democracy. It operates according to its own whims. If management wants to be tyrannical, it will. If it wants to allow group participation, it will. And if it elects to do nothing, it will. But understand this, management's style is based on what the manager believes is good for the company and how they perceive their workers. Sometimes the actions of management will seem strange and without justification. But there may be some very rational reasons for acting as such, perhaps for strategic or tactical purposes. There is little the worker can do in this regards aside from mutiny, which is rarely the proper decision. To overcome this problem, it behooves management to promote loyalty and faith in judgment.

Management is about human relations, not numbers. If a manager stands by a worker in the face of adversity, in all likelihood he will be building a good employee for the company's future. In return, the employee should pledge allegiance to the manager. Years ago, I remember Les Matthies, the legendary "Dean of Systems," taught me that a man should always be loyal to his manager while he is in his employment. If the worker doesn't like the manager, he should either curb his tongue or get out. Only after the worker has left, should he talk trash about his manager and even then he should think twice about doing so.

Bottom-line, the manager's style of management is based on his perceptions of his workers, right or wrong. If the worker believes he is not being treated fairly perhaps it is time to reexamine his relationship with the manager. And that reexamination begins at the mirror. Do you perform enough work to just get by or do you strive to achieve? Do you prefer to be told what to do or are you self-motivated? Do you dress appropriately? What about your form of speech and mannerisms? Habits? Remember, we as human-beings act on our perceptions. Want to know where you are going in the company? Ask yourself, "*How am I perceived?*"

END

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING CORPORATE CULTURE

"All companies have a culture. In order for employees to function and succeed, it is essential they understand and believe in the culture."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

The subject of "corporate culture" seems to be on everyone's mind these days; from the college graduate entering the job market, to the executive who is trying to improve management and productivity in his organization. It is the topic of interest at social and professional gatherings.

The perceptive manager understands the importance of establishing and controlling the work environment, including both logical and physical considerations. Unfortunately, many managers do not appreciate the concept of corporate culture and how to use it to their advantage.

Corporate culture pertains to the identity and personality of the company we work with, either in the private or public sectors. All companies have a culture; a way they behave and operate. They may be organized and disciplined or chaotic and unstructured. Either way, this is the culture the company has elected to adopt. In order for an employee to function and succeed, they must be able to recognize, accept and adapt to the culture.

MEMBER VS. ALIEN

Have you ever noticed how people react to foreign

visitors; whether an exchange student or a visiting professional? The stranger may be welcomed, but may never be accepted unless that person can adapt to the norms of their new environment. If they do not, the members will shun the stranger and reject the alien from their culture. The same is true in business. If the new employee, consultant or visitor cannot adapt to the corporate culture, their chances for success are slight. The members of the culture will reject the person outright and will work against them.

The reason for this phenomenon is because people tend to prefer conformity in their culture. Conformity represents a harmonious environment where the behavior and actions are predictable. Most people have a deeply rooted desire for a sense of order and stability in their lives, which is what conformity provides. A stable environment promotes self-confidence in the members of the culture and allows them to concentrate on their work.

HUMAN PERSPECTIVE

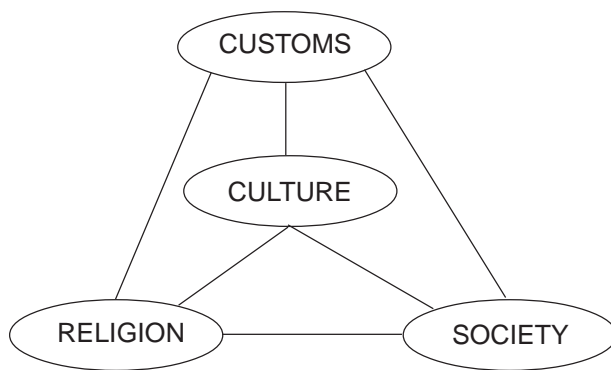
Corporate culture deals with how we see ourselves and others. We act on our perceptions, not necessarily what occurs in reality. The culture greatly influences our perceptions and behavior. For example, our values and beliefs may distort what happens in fact. Gossip, propaganda, and a sensational press, deals with what people want to hear, not necessarily what happens in reality.

DEFINING CULTURE

Before we can alter the culture, we must first understand it. Culture is defined as the characteristics of the members of a civilization. Ultimately, culture defines the quality of life for a group of people.

Culture doesn't appear suddenly, it evolves over time as people grow and learn. The older the heritage, the more ingrained the culture is in its members.

There are essentially three parts to any culture: Customs, Religion and Society. Each influences the others.



CUSTOMS

Webster defines custom as a "long-established practice considered as unwritten law." Custom dictates the expected manner of conduct for the culture. It prescribes the etiquette to be observed in dress, speech, courtesy and politics (gamesmanship). Several companies, most notably IBM, have long understood the power of customs. These norms are established to project a particular image the company wishes to convey.

RELIGION

Religion is the philosophy of life and the basis for our values. It influences our judgment in terms of what is ethical and what is not. Although uniform morality sounds attractive to executives, it can be quite dangerous if unethical practices are allowed to creep into the moral fiber of the company.

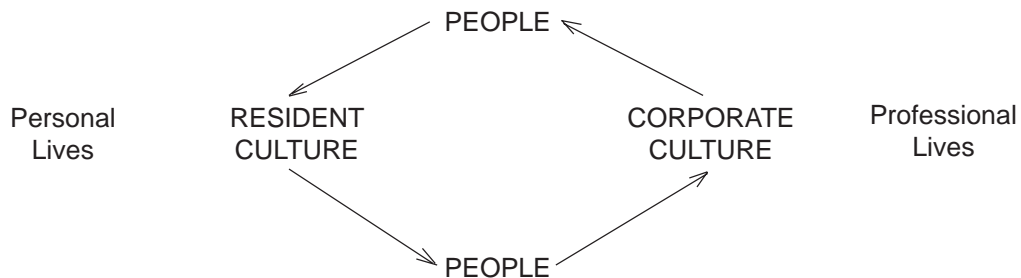
SOCIETY

Society defines our interpersonal relationships. This includes how we elect to govern and live our lives. Society defines the class structure in an organization, from Chairman of the Board to the hourly worker. It defines government, laws and institutions which must be observed by its members. More often than not, the society is "dictated" by management as opposed to "democratically" selected by the workers.

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

Obviously, it is people, first and foremost, that influence any culture. In terms of corporate culture, the only external factor influencing the enterprise is the "resident culture," which is the culture at any particular geographical location. The resident culture refers to the local customs, religion and society observed in our personal lives, outside of the workplace. The resident culture and corporate culture may differ considerably in some areas but are normally compatible.

Anthropologists have long known the physical surroundings, such as geography and climate, greatly influence the resident culture. The resident culture, in turn, influences the corporate culture. The corporate culture, which affects the behavior of its members, will greatly influence the resident culture.



SUBCULTURES

Within any culture there are those people exhibiting special characteristics distinguishing them from others within an embracing culture; this is what is called "subcultures." In a corporate culture, subcultures take the form of cliques, special interest groups, even whole departments within a company. This is acceptable as long as the subculture does not violate the norms of the parent culture. When the characteristics of the subculture differ significantly from the main culture, it becomes a culture in its own right. This situation can be counterproductive in a corporate culture, a company within a company. For example, we have seen several Information Technology organizations who view themselves as independent of the companies they serve. They "march to their own drummer" doing what is best for the I.T. Department, not necessarily what is best for their company. Conversely, we have seen management regulate the I.T. department as a separate, independent group as opposed to a vital part of the business.

CHANGING THE CORPORATE CULTURE

Changing the corporate culture involves influencing the three elements of the culture: Customs, Religion and Society. This is not a simple task. It must be remembered that culture is learned. As such, it can be taught and enforced. However, the greater the change, the longer it will take to implement. It should evolve naturally over time. A cultural revolution, such as the one experienced in communist China, is too disruptive for people to understand and accept. As a result, they will resist and rebel.

A smaller company can change its culture much more rapidly than a larger company, simply because of communication considerations. In addition, an organization in the private sector can change faster than one in the public sector (such as a government agency), only because a commercial company isn't encumbered with government regulations. This is an instance where a "dictatorship" works more effectively than a "democracy."

To change the corporate culture, one must begin by defining the current corporate and resident cultures, including the customs, religion and society observed. There are several indicators for measuring the pulse of the culture: Absenteeism, Tardiness, Turnover, Infractions of Rules, Employee Attitudes, Productivity, etc. All of these can be used to gauge how people

behave within the corporate culture.

This is followed by a set of requirements for the culture and a plan to implement them. In a corporate culture, a policy and procedures manual can usually stipulate the customs and society to be observed. Developing a corporate consciousness is far more difficult to implement and involves considerable training and demonstration. Great care must be taken to avoid the "do as I say, not as I do" situation.

It is one thing to enact legislation, quite another to enforce it. Without an effective means to monitor and control the culture, it is quite futile to establish any formal policies or guidelines.

CONCLUSION

Management is much more than just meeting deadlines. It is a people-oriented function. If we lived in a perfect world, there wouldn't be a need for managers. People would build things correctly the first time and on schedule, on costs. The fact of the matter is that we live in an imperfect world. People do make mistakes; people do have different perspectives, etc. Management is getting people to do what you want them to do, when you want them to do it. The corporate culture is a vital part of the art of management. Failure to recognize this has led to the demise of several managers. But for those managers who take it into consideration, the corporate culture can greatly influence the productivity of any organization.

END

CHAPTER 4

A CRASH COURSE IN MANAGEMENT

"If we lived in perfect world, there wouldn't be a need for managers. However, the reality is, we live in an imperfect world."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

There is an old joke whereby a new manager had been hired by a company to take over an operation. As the new manager was moving into his office he happened to bump into his predecessor who was preparing to leave. The new manager asked if there was any advice the former manager could offer on assuming his duties. The former manager said he had written down advice for his successor and placed them in three envelopes in the desk marked "1," "2," and "3", and that they should only be opened in the event of an emergency. The new manager laughed, shrugged it off, and went about his business thinking nothing about the envelopes.

The manager's reign started off fine but inevitably ran into a problem for which he had no solution. Desperate, he happened to remember the three envelopes and opened Number 1 which offered the following advice: *"Blame your predecessor."* The manager thought this was a clever way to get himself off the hook and used it to good effect.

Time went by until the manager was faced with another seemingly impossible hurdle. Not knowing what to do, he turned to envelope Number 2 containing a note that read simply: *"Reorganize."* The manager thought this was a sound idea and set about reorganizing his operation.

Organization charts were re-drawn, job descriptions modified, and new office furniture and equipment obtained.

The reorganization overcame the manager's problem but he eventually ran into a crisis taxing his abilities as a manager. At a total loss as to what to do, the manager turned in desperation to envelope Number 3 which included a note that read, *"Prepare three envelopes."*

Laugh as we might to this anecdote, there is a bit of truth in it. Too often people rise above their level of competency to take on the job of manager. Let me give you an example; in the Information Technology field, the first job a college graduate typically assumes in this area is that of a programmer. As time progresses and the programmer excels in his duties, he is promoted to senior programmer, to analyst, to supervisor, then to manager. In this particular scenario, the manager is still a programmer in sheep's clothing. The point is, people are too often given the title of manager without any knowledge or skills in how to do their job. Companies are quick to spend a lot on the latest technological gizmo, but little on management.

Consequently, this is a guide for those of you aspiring to become a manager or have recently been promoted to a management position and are at a loss as to how to implement your duties. This is not necessarily a guide for someone with a fast-track mentality and only see your job as nothing more than a mere steppingstone on your career path. Then again,

maybe this is for you after all. If you prove yourself to be a productive manager, new opportunities will present themselves to you. But make no mistake, the lessons inculcated herein are not suited for someone with a "quick and dirty" mindset but, rather, for someone conscientious about their job.

ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY

There is more to management than a fancy new job title, a new office, and all of the other perks accompanying it. These trappings may be nice, but they are not being given to you just because you are a nice fellow, you are expected to earn them. More than anything, management is about responsibility. Whereas the individual worker is only concerned about himself, the manager is responsible to his superiors to implement policy and get a job done, and; to his subordinates who depend on his judgment and abilities. If you do not have the mental acuity to accept responsibility, then being a manager is not for you. Its better you recognize this now before it is too late. As an example, I have a friend who is an expert craftsman working for a machine-tool company in Cincinnati. His skill and workmanship caught the eye of senior management who promoted him to manager in the hopes he could properly guide the junior workers. Unfortunately, becoming a manager was unnerving to him. Now, instead of just worrying about producing a quality product himself, he had to worry about the work of employees under him. This was more than he could handle and he developed an ulcer. The stress was simply too much for him and he asked to return to the ranks of the workmen. To his credit, he understood his limitations. Unfortunately, many do not and try to bluff their way through their career. Sometimes they get caught, many times they do not.

KNOW THE BUSINESS

The first thing you should know as a manager is the business of your company and where you fit in its scheme. Years ago, my father was hired by the Quaker Oats Company in Chicago as M.I.S. Director. During his first few weeks, he took a crash course in how Quaker's business worked. He saw everything from the manufacturing of cereals and cookies to the production of dog food (Ken-L Ration). By going through this indoctrination, he came away with an understanding of how the business worked and who his department would have to serve.

Too often managers and employees lose sight of the

company's purpose and overall direction. If the company's mission is forgotten or misunderstood, then there is a tendency for areas in the company to work at odds with the rest of the company. This, of course, is counterproductive. For example, I have seen far too many people in Information Technology departments who honestly believe the business of their company was programming and not the delivery of the products or services offered by the company. In order to adequately serve the company, it is essential a manager expand his horizon and take a more global look at the business.

To properly understand a business, a manager should know:

- The products and/or services offered by the company.
- How the business is organized and who is responsible for what.
- What the company's current priorities are.
- The company's marketplace. This includes the types of customers it serves, the competitors it does battle with, and the vendors/suppliers it works with.
- The operating policies of the company (e.g., Policy Manual).
- The corporate culture in terms of expressed or implied acceptable forms of behavior (social structure).

The Japanese refer to this broader perspective as thinking in "*360 Degrees*." In other words, in an age of specialization, it is wise to be aware of the total picture of the business, thereby understanding the influential factors affecting you.

RUN YOUR DEPARTMENT LIKE A BUSINESS

Although the manager will have responsibility over only a portion of the business (be it a division, department or a group) it is wise to think of your area as an autonomous business. This is not to suggest developing a maverick attitude in opposition to corporate objectives and culture, but for organizational purposes. By assuming the role of a separate business entity, the manager is more inclined to exercise good judgment, focus on the necessary work effort, consider risks, and develop an entrepreneurial spirit.

Establishing your "business" begins with a thorough understanding of the products and/or services your area is required to produce and the processes needed to produce them. This will not necessarily be the same products and/or services as commer-

cially offered by the company, but rather components of them. Regardless of their magnitude, think of them as the "finished goods" your business is responsible for producing. From this viewpoint, we can begin to measure production (your department's own GNP).

Just as it is important to know the company's business, it is important for the manager to understand his department's business in order to properly operate within its scope. This includes:

- Knowing the products and/or services to be produced by the department along with the processes required to produce them.
- Knowing your customers (to better serve them).
- Knowing your vendors (to better serve you).
- Knowing your lateral working relationships within the company so that you understand your department's alliances and how to work with them.

To establish your "business" you need three things:

1. **Defined Infrastructure** - as represented by a simple organization chart and associated job descriptions.

2. **Financial operating budget.** In this regard, the ability to use spreadsheets should be considered a prerequisite for the job of manager. Devising a budget is relatively easy, adhering to it is another matter altogether.

3. **Take stock of your human and machine resources** so you know the availability and capability of your resources. A Skills Inventory is invaluable for cataloging resources, along with their skills and proficiencies. It can also highlight weaknesses requiring training or supplemental resources. Also, a Project Management (PM) system is useful for studying resource allocations and monitoring activities.

A Human Resources department can also offer assistance in this regards.

These three items (Infrastructure, Budget, and Inventory) are useful for establishing the scope and boundary of the department, as well as the parameters you will be operating under.

Finally, understand the owners of your business and its board of directors as represented by your superiors and perhaps lateral relationships. By thinking in terms of an autonomous business you will become

more self-sufficient and become more conscious of serving your customers.

YOUR THREE PRIME DUTIES

As manager you have three prime duties to perform: Provide Leadership, Establish the proper work Environment, and Produce/Deliver your products or services.

1. LEADERSHIP

As the field general for his department, the manager should be able to articulate the objectives of his area, and the strategy for conquering them. In other words, he has to have a vision and be able to effectively communicate it to his subordinates in order to instill confidence and provide a sense of direction. People like to know where they are going and appreciate some direction in their lives. As social creatures, we take comfort in knowing we are working in a concerted manner towards common objectives we deem important. As such, not only does a manager need a vision, he must be able to convince his workers of its necessity. If the workers believe in the manager's vision and are confident in his ability to lead them, they will gladly follow him.

Following this, the manager must be able to develop practical project plans for the staff to follow (e.g., work breakdown structures and dependencies, and priorities). These project plans should be explained to the staff along with their rationale. By doing so, workers cannot claim they didn't know the plan or what their role was in it. Think of the game of football where plays are called for the eleven players on the field; all are given assignments to perform towards a common objective. If any one player doesn't know the plan, in all likelihood he will make a wrong move and cause the team to lose yardage. As my football coach was fond of saying, "*A team is as strong as its weakest player.*" Planning requires communications which ultimately leads to teamwork and harmony. To this end, keep your project plans and calendars up-to-date and visible to everyone in the department.

In any given area of a business you will find projects that are similar or repetitious in nature. For example, processing an order, building a product, etc. All are based on standard and accepted processes performed time and again. As such, documenting standard methodologies for use as templates can materially assist in expediting project planning. Further, consistent work effort leads to measurable and uni-

form results, as well as providing a standard and consistent line of communications between project personnel. The use of defined and reusable methodologies is also encouraged by standards organizations, such as ISO-9000.

In order for the manager to instill a sense of confidence in the staff, he must not only be able to demonstrate he knows what he is talking about, he must also express a high level of moral conduct. The manager's word should be considered his bond. If he is caught in a lie, cheating, defrauding, back stabbing, or some other misconduct, this will be noticed by the staff who will no longer trust him. A true manager is a person of integrity.

Finally, beware of becoming a "reactionary" manager whereby you simply go from one problem to another as they occur. Under this scenario, the manager is not in control of his department's destiny and has to dance to the tune of someone else's fiddle. Some reactionary management will inevitably be necessary, but take control over your environment and practice more "proactive" management as opposed to "reactive" management. Too often people are lulled into a reactive mode of operation or as we refer to it, a "fire fighting mode" of operating. As a manager, you are cautioned to beware of your chief firefighters, they are probably your chief arsonists as well. Also remember the old adage, *"If you don't make the decision, the decision will be made for you."* Control your destiny: take a proactive approach to management.

2. ENVIRONMENT

The astute manager will appreciate the need for cultivating the proper work environment. If a worker feels comfortable in his environment, he will feel amenable to working and will take a more positive view of his job. But if a "sweat shop" environment is provided, the worker will dread coming to work and put forth minimal effort to accomplish his job.

There are two dimensions for creating a work environment: logical and physical. The physical aspect is somewhat easier to explain and involves the facilities and equipment used in the business, both of which impact morale and attitudes towards work. How people behave in a clean and contemporary facility is noticeably different than those working under dingy and antiquated conditions. Whereas the former supports a professional attitude, the latter promotes a lackadaisical attitude. Basically, a clean and contemporary work place is saying to the employ-

ees, *"I care about you and am willing to invest in you."* However, the economic reality may be you cannot afford the latest "state-of-the-art" facilities or equipment. Nonetheless, you should make an effort to keep your physical surroundings as clean and up-to-date as possible. As an example, the military typically operates under a philosophy whereby you either work on something, store it away, or dispose of it. This forces people to be organized. There are those who would argue *"a cluttered desk is the sign of a brilliant mind."* Nothing could be further from the truth. A cluttered desk represents laziness and disorganization. People, particularly customers, prefer an orderly workplace. Think about it next time you go to a grocery store.

The point is, our physical surroundings affect our attitudes towards our work. For example, I know of a print shop with a manager who insists on keeping it spotless. Their paper products are packaged and shipped promptly, inventory is well stocked and maintained, waste is disposed of immediately, and the machines are routinely cleaned and kept in pristine form. Further, the printers are dressed in uniform jumpsuits to keep ink and chemicals from soiling their clothes underneath. Contrast this with the typical print shop that is often cluttered with debris and the machines are infrequently cleaned. The printers of the "clean" shop have a much more positive and professional attitude regarding their work than other printers working in "dirty" shops. Further, absenteeism is not a problem in the "clean" shop and the printers are proud of the products they produce. Basically, they see their workplace as an extension of their home and treat it as such.

As a footnote, I asked the manager of the print shop why his printers kept the facility so clean when others were so dirty. He jokingly confided in me, *"They don't know any better."* In reality, the manager had set operating standards and routinely inspected the premises to assure they were adhered to. Over time, it became a natural part of the print shop's culture and now he rarely has to inspect them. This, of course, means discipline which leads us to the logical aspect of our work environment.

Whereas the physical aspects of the work environment are tangible and easy to assimilate, the logical aspects are intangible and perhaps harder to manipulate for it involves dealing with human perceptions, attitudes and emotions. Along these lines, there are three considerations:

A. Corporate Culture

The corporate culture is expressed in terms of the accepted customs, morality (religion), and society of the institution.

- Customs dictate the expected manner of conduct for the culture. It prescribes the etiquette to be observed in dress, speech, courtesy and politics (gamesmanship). Several companies, most notably IBM, have long understood the power of customs. These norms are established to project a particular image the company wishes to convey.
- Morality (religion) is the basis for our values. It influences our judgment in terms of what is ethical and what is not. Although uniform morality sounds attractive to executives, it can be quite dangerous if unethical practices are allowed to creep into the moral fiber of the company.
- Society defines our interpersonal relationships. This includes how we elect to govern and live our lives. Society defines the class structure in an organization, from Chairman of the Board to the hourly worker. It defines government, laws and institutions which must be observed by its members.

A corporate policy manual is useful for explaining the official rules and regulations of a business, but rarely will you find the corporate culture expressed in print. Why? Because it changes with time as people come and go from the organization. Typically, a new worker is taught the corporate culture by either the manager, by other workers with more tenure of service, or by personal observation. This brings up an important point: Culture is learned. To illustrate, I know a baseball manager who inherited a high school team with a long tradition of losing. To overcome this problem, the coach had to break habits, change attitudes, and impose new disciplines. By reshaping the culture of the team, the coach eventually turned them into winners for several years. Even after the coach retired, the team continued their winning ways because the coach had succeeded in embedding the culture into the psyche of the team. Concepts such as discipline, organization, workmanship, and accountability are all derived from the corporate culture.

This brings up another point: changing the corporate culture is no easy task. As creatures of habit, humans have a natural aversion to change of any kind. Yet, in order for a manager to succeed he has

to be able to modify the corporate culture in his area to suit his needs. To do so, the manager can either dictate the changes, have his subordinates establish a new path, or a combination of both. Either way, it is necessary to establish examples and set precedents, thereby establishing models for others to assimilate. Understand this, if you do not teach the corporate culture properly, the workers will learn it on their own.

Devising standards of conduct is the first step in instilling discipline in your workers. This begins with standard and consistent terminology in order to avoid a "Tower of Babel" effect during production. Once a standard is established, enforce it. There is little point in enacting a change if nobody is going to enforce it. To this end, the manager must do more than inspect and enforce, he must lead by example. If the manager is caught violating the norms of the corporate culture, it will not go unnoticed by his subordinates who will in all likelihood assimilate the indiscretion.

Finally, be wary of creating a subculture at odds with the overall corporate culture. Senior management will allow some leeway in your department's behavior as long as it doesn't seriously conflict with corporate standards.

B. Management Style

In Chapter Two, I described the three theories of management, X, Y, Z, each having a different philosophical basis than the others. It now becomes necessary to determine your own personal style of management, for example:

- Will you take a dictatorial approach and try to "micromanage" everything or will you allow group participation in the decision making process?
- Will you provide for additional training to cultivate the staff or will this be left to their own discretion?
- How much personal responsibility will you allow your workers to assume, a little, a lot, or nothing at all?
- How much discipline and organization do you require?

As mentioned in Chapter 2, managers will use different elements of Theories X, Y and Z to suit their needs. It is all ultimately based on the manager's perceptions of the workers in terms of their intelli-

gence level, motivation, and attitudes towards work. This is why it is important the manager studies and understands his employees. If he is in tune with his workers, he will devise a suitable management style that both the manager and the workers can accept. Ultimately, the manager is seeking a uniform and consistent management style that is fair and won't show favoritism, thereby affecting morale.

Keep in mind, management is most definitely NOT a democracy, it is a dictatorship, be it autocratic or benevolent. How much freedom the workers are allowed is based on what the manager allows.

But the manager should never be afraid to push the staff to excel to a new level and affect his department's culture (as seen in the baseball manager example). Being a manager means that you are not in the popularity business. Do not be afraid to exercise your authority if the need arises. Your decisions will not always be popular with the staff. Regardless, you have a job to do.

Understand this, in many situations people prefer to be told what to do and will willingly go along with the manager's orders if they believe it to be for their own good. But beware of becoming overbearing and stifling the freedom and creativity of your workers. Get them to work for you as opposed to against you.

In order to promote morale, the manager should not only be fair and effective in implementing change, he should be the primary cheerleader. If the manager loses his faith in his department's ability to perform, his workers will lose faith in his ability to lead them.

As for me, I tend to believe what President Ronald Reagan said, *"Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere as long as the policy you've decided upon is being carried out."*

I am very much a believer in empowering people as opposed to trying to micromanage everyone. However, sometimes it is necessary to micromanage the activities of others in order to obtain the precise results you want when you want them, but realize this may result in having an adverse affect on your staff. Its like saying, *"Look, you're not smart enough to do this, so I will direct your activity."* As the old saying goes, *"If something is urgent, do it yourself. If you have time, delegate it. If you have forever, form a committee."* The manager should be smart enough

to stay a couple of steps ahead of the staff and constantly review project plans so that micromanagement is not necessary.

To assist in empowering people, I believe a manager should manage bottom-up, as opposed to just top-down. Under this philosophy, the manager assigns project plans and authority to perform work (top-down) and the staff should participate in the project estimating process and work according to their assignments (bottom-up). This is why I do not subscribe to the concept of "man hours," but rather, "Direct Time" and "Indirect Time." Direct Time represents the time necessary to perform the necessary assignments and is managed by the individual worker. Indirect Time represents interferences or distractions from performing the work and is the responsibility of the manager to control. For example, meetings, training, reviewing periodicals, and breaks may fall under the category of Indirect Time. If a worker is behind schedule on an assignment, the manager may opt to minimize the distractions so the worker can tend to their work. The ratio of Direct Time to Indirect Time is referred to as "Effectiveness Rate."

$$\text{Effectiveness Rate} = (\text{Direct Time} + \text{Indirect Time}) / 100$$

In most office work, employees are typically 70% effective, meaning in an eight hour day they perform approximately five hours of direct work. Effectiveness Rate should not be construed as an efficiency rating. For example, a worker can have a high effectiveness rate yet be your worst worker; it just means he knows how to manage his time. Further, a worker could have a low effectiveness rate, yet be your most productive worker. The concept of effectiveness rate is useful for computing project schedules, but more importantly, it represents worker empowerment. Again, the worker is responsible for their Direct Time, and the manager is responsible for Indirect Time.

The manager's ultimate goal is to promote teamwork. Sure, you will have individuals who can perform miracles, but they must either become an intricate member of the team or get out. Remember, teamwork can accomplish far more than individual effort.

C. Continuous Improvement

The manager should be intimate with all aspects of production in his area. Further, he should be constantly looking for new and imaginative ways for improving it. Before doing so, the manager should un-

derstand this fundamental concept of productivity:

Productivity = Effectiveness X Efficiency

Too often people fallaciously equate productivity with efficiency. This is simply not true. Efficiency simply represents how fast we can perform a given task. For example, an industrial robot on an assembly line can perform a task such as welding very precisely and quickly. But if the weld is being performed at the wrong time or wrong place, then it is counterproductive, regardless of how efficiently it performs the task. Effectiveness, on the other hands, is concerned with the necessity of the task itself or as we like to say, "Do the right things." Under this scenario, the manager should consider effectiveness first, and efficiency second. Undoubtedly, the manager will meet salesmen who will offer products promising improvements in efficiency. But if they cannot meld into your operations effectively, it will be counterproductive. By being conscious of both effectiveness and efficiency, the manager can avoid the "Rearranging the Deck Chairs on the Titanic" phenomenon whereby people work on the wrong things at the wrong time.

The latest gizmo may be technologically enticing, but the manager should be looking for pragmatic cost-effective solutions to adapt to his environment. Consider this, even if you purchase the latest technological marvel, will your people be sophisticated enough to use it? Further, the new technology may require the development of a dependency on a new vendor. To me, the simple solutions are the best. Be practical and be wary of developing a "Keeping up with the Jones'" mentality. After all, the Jones' may be in more trouble than you are.

Whether the implementation of change is large or small, recognize that people will resist it until it becomes a natural part of the corporate culture. As creatures of habit, humans have a natural aversion to change, even if it is for their own good. But if the manager is convinced of the necessity of the change, he must persist in its implementation.

If there is anything constant in life, it is change. Both the manager and his workers should understand this; it is a natural part of our lives. Don't fight it, adapt to it. But understand this, change simply for the sake of change is ridiculous. There should always be a significant reason for the implementation of change.

Understanding that change is an inherent part of life, the manager should consider the need for ongoing

training of his workers to enhance their skills. Again, a Skills Inventory can assist in monitoring the staff's abilities and devising suitable training programs to suit your department's needs. Also encourage your staff to participate in trade groups and subscribe to trade related publications to stay abreast of developments and sharpen their skills.

The bottom-line on Environment: As manager, you want to create a workplace people want to come to and think of as their home away from home; a place they are proud of, loyal to, and take pride in workmanship. As noted British economic historian Arnold Toynbee said, "The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play."

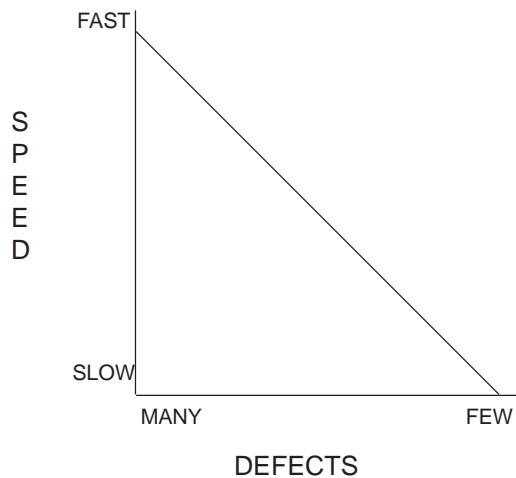
3. PRODUCE/DELIVER

Equal to Leadership and creating the proper Environment, is the manager's duty of being able to Produce the products or services he is charged to deliver. Even if you have the best plans and environment, if you fail to deliver your products or services, you have failed as a manager. To illustrate, one of President Lincoln's first commanders of the Army of the Potomac during the American Civil War was General George B. McClellan, an extraordinary engineer and organizer, but a complete failure at execution. If you are convinced of a specific course of action, do not procrastinate, act. An opportunity rarely presents itself twice.

Producing includes delivering quality goods on-time, on-schedule, and within budget. Consequently, it is wise to establish a production control function within your area; someone charged with monitoring activities and expediting problems that might arise. This can take many forms depending on the size of your department and available resources, be it a sharp secretary, a perceptive foreman or supervisor, or a staff of people to oversee production. Here, tools like Project Management (PM) systems and work measurement tools provide great assistance in this regard. PM is used for reporting time, costs, and monitoring schedules. Work measurement tools analyze trends and performance, be it words typed per minute, number of keystrokes, compilations, machine cycles, or time performing a given task versus mistakes or errors made. Not only are such tools invaluable for troubleshooting production schedules but are also useful for spotting inefficiencies in need of improvement.

In terms of delivering a quality product/service, the

manager should understand the relationship of quality to the time necessary to produce the goods.



The faster the product is produced, the more likely it will contain defects in workmanship; conversely, the more time allowed in production, the greater the chances for producing a high-quality product. Although everyone stresses the need for quality, the reality is the manager must be able to balance development time against defects in workmanship and that a suitable development time needs to be devised to match the level of quality desired. This also means the level of precision in production is proportional to the level of quality desired, all of which will greatly influence a manager's style of management. For example, in a high pressure situation, the manager may exercise more supervision and a little friendly bullying in order to get the job done. Under less pressure, the manager will allow more worker freedom and participation in developing decisions.

Finally, the manager should keep an eye on the bottom-line and be smart enough to know when he has hit a wall and know when to ask for help. But please do not be driven by just numbers; consider risk as well as opportunity.

THE MANAGER'S PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

As indicated in the introduction, people often inherit the job of manager with little training or background. Since management primarily deals with people, a manager should possess good interpersonal relations/communications skills, including:

- Public speaking
- Persuasion & salesmanship
- Rhetorical thought

- Interviewing
- Negotiating
- Debate
- Listening
- Reasoning
- Patience
- Counseling
- Team building & coaching
- Writing skills (for such things as memos, proposals, and business letters)
- Basic math (for calculating cost/benefit analysis and return on investments)

You should never lose sight of the fact that you work for, with, and get things done through people.

Other than this, the manager should understand:

A. How to hire/fire people as well as how to do a performance appraisal.

Corporate policy manuals will undoubtedly have standards to be observed in this regards. Nonetheless, be fair and objective. I always thought the best training for learning honesty and fairness is by spending time as an umpire or referee in sports. My years as a Little League umpire taught me a lot and allowed be to sleep well at night. Even if you despise a person, do not stoop to their level; be fair and impartial, the world will think better of you. Also, be smart enough admit when you have made a mistake and remedy the situation.

When evaluating a worker's job performance, be wary of the Peter Principle whereby a person has been elevated to their level of incompetence. Keeping people at such a level is a disservice not only to the company, but to the worker as well. When a person has risen above their level of competency, it will become obvious to others and may affect morale. Consequently, the manager's ability to be fair and equitable will begin to be questioned by the workers. Standard and routine performance appraisals should help overcome this problem. But if they are infrequently performed or done in an inconsistent manner, the Peter Principle will inevitably kick in. However, if you, as manager, believe the person is worth salvaging, work with the person and get him back on track.

B. How to deal with corporate politics.

As social animals living in a competitive society, politics is a fact of life, be it on a grand scale or a minor request for your consideration. Don't ignore it, ad-

dress it. In Western culture, it is customary for people to dig and scratch their way to the top, be it by merit or by politics (predominantly the latter). In the Eastern culture, primarily Japan, a class of workers are put on the same career path for ten years, after which their performance is evaluated and rewarded accordingly. This system promotes merit over politics. Interestingly, whereas the Western system promotes individual achievement, the Eastern system promotes teamwork. The corporate culture has a lot to do with this. Regardless, office politics is a fact of life in all societies.

As a manager, it is wise to identify the various fiefdoms of the company, who the Kings are, how their subcultures operate, and the general pecking order. Learn to keep your distance, operate within your own realm and do not try to usurp the authority of another thereby creating an enemy. Stay focused on your own territory. When dealing with the other fiefdoms, a little diplomacy can go a long way. Understand this, what people should do logically is not necessarily what they will do emotionally. A person skilled in tact and proper etiquette will survive a lot longer in the corporate world than someone who does not. Your intention should be to develop allies as opposed to enemies who will stab you in the back at an opportune moment.

All corporate politics are based on human ego and the higher you go up in the organization, the bigger the egos will inevitably be. People will fight you over a variety of things, be it simple competition and domination, jealousy, sheer spite, or because they simply don't like how you look today or something you said. This is where being "politically correct" comes in handy. Understand corporate politics, but do not let it consume your time or distract you from your mission.

If corporate politics turn ugly or vicious, be prepared to either turn the other cheek or be prepared to fight back. Both are useful. Turning the other cheek may win the admiration of your staff by not stooping to the level of your opponent, but some may also see it as a sign of weakness in your character. Fighting an issue will tell them you are a principled man who is not afraid to stand up to adversity, but it also may say to them you are a hothead. If you need direction, seek the advice of your superiors or contemporaries and discuss the problem. Sometimes the best solution is to sit down with your opponent and offer your hand in peace. Even if this fails, your superiors and subordinates will know you at least extended the

olive branch and will not blame you for any other action you might take.

Create a spirit of cooperation as opposed to competition. As noted quality expert W. Edwards Deming liked to say, "*Create Win-Win situations.*" Instead of a Win-Lose situation, where one party wins at the expense of another party's loss, why not establish partnering programs whereby both parties win? I remember how Deming used to like to talk about "Nylon" which represented a successful joint venture between two parties, one in New York (NY) and one in London (LON). Remember, the only good business relationship is one where both parties benefit. To this end, forge alliances within your company and support an "Open Door" policy, not only to the workers of your department, but to the rest of the company as well. Keep the lines of communications open.

Finally, be on the lookout for gossip pertaining to your department and be prepared to do a little rumor control. Gossip and rumors can spread like wildfire in your department and can have an adverse affect on morale. To nip it, you should have a standard and consistent line of communication with your subordinates as well as lateral relationships. For example, daily/weekly e-mails or memos discussing plans and developments in the department. If your people are well informed, they will be less likely to fall prey to gossip.

C. Is image everything?

To a lot of people in Western society, image is much more important than producing results. For example, I have a friend who serves as a Systems Manager in New England who had an important project requiring supplemental help in programming. Consequently, he began to recruit programmers by offering very competitive salaries and generous benefits packages. Interestingly, he had one applicant turn my friend down simply because the applicant wanted the title of "Software Engineer" as opposed to a mere "Programmer."

Image is nice but lacks credibility if you cannot produce. Our job titles, form of dress and physical appearance, speech, mannerisms, and political moxie all affect human perceptions. Yes, image is important but do not rely on it entirely. You must be able to back it up.

As manager, dress appropriately; dress for success. Create the proper image you want your staff to emu-

late. But don't put on false airs that can be easily seen through by your workers. Otherwise, your credibility will be shot.

Lead by example. Never ask someone to do something you aren't prepared to do yourself. And always remember to speak the right word at the right time. As Benjamin Franklin said, *"Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."*

CONCLUSION

The lessons listed above are based on 30 years of practice and observations in hundreds of commercial and nonprofit enterprises around the world. They are commonsense approaches that are universally applicable and transcend company type.

There is more to management than saying, "Lead, follow, or get the hell out of the way." It is a people-oriented function requiring someone intimate with the business of the enterprise and well versed in interpersonal communications/relations. Someone who knows how to get what he wants through people. Regardless of the management tools of the day, they do not make the decisions, the human-being does. I encourage people to use suitable management tools, but more importantly, I encourage them to develop their people skills first. Consequently, a manager is one part visionary, one part coach, and one part politician.

The ultimate measurement of a manager's abilities is whether the department can function successfully in his absence. By creating a well oiled machine, the manager's goal is to do himself out of a job and leave the department better off than when he first took charge.

The business schools do not teach these lessons. I'm just filling in the gaps. Hopefully these lessons will serve you well as manager. If not, you can always prepare three envelopes.

END

LESSONS LEARNED (RECAP)

The following is a summary of the lessons inculcated herein:

Management = Responsibility

Know the business. Think in terms of "360 Degrees."

Run your department like a business.

As manager you have three prime duties to perform: Provide Leadership, Establish the proper working Environment, and Produce/Deliver your products or services.

The manager's word should be considered his bond.

A true manager is a person of integrity.

Beware of your chief firefighters, they are probably your chief arsonists as well.

Control your destiny. Be proactive as opposed to reactive.

Our physical surroundings affect our attitudes towards our work.

Culture is learned.

Insist on standard terminology; thereby avoiding a "Tower of Babel" effect.

Once a standard is established, enforce it. There is little point in enacting a change if nobody is going to enforce it.

Changing the corporate culture is no easy task.

Be wary of creating a subculture at odds with the overall corporate culture.

The manager should be smart enough to stay a couple of steps ahead of the staff and constantly revising project plans so that micromanagement is not necessary.

Management is most definitely NOT a democracy, it is a dictatorship, be it autocratic or benevolent. How much freedom the workers are allowed is based on what the manager allows.

Being a manager means that you are not in the popularity business.

Manage from the bottom-up, not just top-down. Empower people and hold them accountable for their actions.

LESSONS LEARNED (continued)

Effectiveness Rate = (Direct Time + Indirect Time) / 100

The worker is responsible for managing their Direct Time, and the manager is responsible for controlling Indirect Time.

Teamwork can accomplish far more than individual effort.

Productivity = Effectiveness X Efficiency

If there is anything constant in life, it is change.

Whether the implementation of change is large or small, recognize that people will resist it until it becomes a natural part of the corporate culture. As creatures of habit, humans have a natural aversion to change, even if it is for their own good.

The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play.

Even if you have the best plans and environment, if you fail to deliver your products or services, you have failed as a manager.

If you are convinced of a specific course of action, do not procrastinate, act. An opportunity rarely presents itself twice.

You should never lose sight of the fact that you work for, with, and get things done through people.

Keeping people at a level of incompetence is a disservice not only to the company, but to the worker as well.

If corporate politics turn ugly or viscous, be prepared to either turn the other cheek or be prepared to fight back.

The only good business relationship is where both parties benefit.

Keep the lines of communications open.

Create "Win-Win" situations.

Image is nice but lacks credibility if you cannot produce.

CHAPTER 5

PARENTING MANAGEMENT

*"Most children are raised by amateurs,
not professionals."
- Bryce's Law*

INTRODUCTION

Want to know what to expect of the work force in the years ahead? Look no farther than our schools or homes. Let me preface my remarks by saying that in addition to all of my other responsibilities, I was very active in my local Little League for a number of years where I served as coach, umpire, and on the local board of directors. Further, I have been very active locally in offering Masonic scholarships to High School students. In addition, my wife has been active in the local school system for the last ten years at the elementary, middle, and high school levels (this also included PTA and SAC). Although we probably won't win an award as the world's best parents, we made a point of becoming an important and influential part of our children's lives. We didn't take any special courses in parenting, we just got involved. But we are the exceptions as opposed to the rule.

Prior to World War II, the country was immersed in an economic depression which put a strain on families and disrupted our society. Everyone in a family was expected to pitch in and do their part in order to survive, this included going to school and their place of worship. Some families suffered severe hardships during this period causing children to drop out of school and go to work. They didn't drop out as some form of rebellion or protest, but to simply earn money to help support the family. Consequently, many

earned nothing higher than a Junior High diploma which was prized by many families. The point is, there was a sense of family back then and the people's hunger built character. They understood the value of a dollar, worked hard and squandered nothing. It was this generation that got us through the war and propelled the country towards economic success in the latter part of the 20th century.

In the 1950's and 1960's, as the country was experiencing an economic boom, a parent normally stayed at home to manage the family, usually the wife. If a child had a problem, a parent was always home to tend to their needs. Children no longer had to drop out of school to support the family and our High Schools and Colleges swelled with students. The "baby boomers" were considered well adjusted and readily adapted to the work force. This generation saw us through the space race and the technology revolution which changed the face of corporate America.

But in the last three decades, we began to lose faith in our economy and our standard of living. As a result, both parents began to work inordinate hours and a generation gap began to emerge. Exhausted by their work, the parents would return home where the last thing they wanted to hear was their child's problems. Consequently, children became social outcasts in their own homes and often had to fend for themselves; they simply couldn't relate with their parents. Sure, the parents would sign their kids up for Summer Camp, Little League and Soccer, but this was viewed more as baby-sitting services as opposed to

taking a true interest in the child's development. They would also give their kids television sets and video games to occupy their time.

Today, school teachers have become surrogate parents by default, something they weren't trained for, nor inclined to accept. Talk to a teacher and you will hear stories of lack of respect for authority, poor manners, and dysfunctional social intercourse. Children today no longer learn their values from their parents but rather from Hollywood. As young adults entering the work force, their work ethic, values, and behavior are noticeably different than the prior generation. There is no longer a sense of quality, service, or craftsmanship; just put in your time and collect a paycheck. This is all having an adverse effect on how we conduct business and the corporate culture.

Now, let me give you a the scary figure: probably 20%, or less, of today's graduating High School seniors are socially well adjusted.

Knowing this, what should you do as a manager?

THE NEED FOR PARENTING

In the past, if you were a new employee, it was assumed you knew how to manage your personal life and you were expected to adapt to the corporate culture. This is no longer true and presents a problem for managers. Younger employees today have problems managing money, dressing appropriately, and interpersonal relations and communications, not to mention alcohol, drugs, and sex. They are raw and rough. But are they salvageable? They better be, for your company's sake, as they represent tomorrow's work force.

Perhaps we can take a lesson from the military services here. The military is well aware they are not getting the "cream of the crop" when they take on new recruits. Many are social misfits coming from broken homes. As such, the military's initial role is to break the individual of bad habits and impose a new system of discipline and work ethic. Individualism is replaced by teamwork and, in the process, a sense of belonging and family is imposed. This is either readily accepted by the new recruit or they are drummed out of the service. Discipline, organization, teamwork, and a strong work ethic can have a dramatic affect on a drifting soul. By doing so, it can bring order to lives and a sense of purpose, something that perhaps was neglected at home.

Today's Drill Instructors and junior officers also find themselves as surrogate parents and are now instructed in counseling young soldiers. The boot camps of today are a lot different than what the country experienced during World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam. Yet, we are producing a fine class of soldiers which makes our country proud. In other words, they must be doing something right.

If we have learned anything from the military in this regard, it is that the times have changed and our employees today have different needs requiring a new type of manager who can adequately tend to them. And like today's Drill Instructors and school teachers, managers are finding themselves in the role of surrogate parents, like it or not. Managers bristle at this notion. After all, they want to get on with their business and do not want to be regarded as a baby-sitter. But the fact remains, home parenting skills are at an all-time low and to overcome this problem, someone has to assume the duty to compensate for this inadequacy. Again, the military readily understands this and has adapted accordingly. But can business?

Understand this, corporate America's "recruits" come predominantly from the colleges and universities whose purpose is not to teach social skills, but rather, to teach people how to learn. A college diploma most definitely does not mean the graduate is socially well-adjusted, but that he/she has learned to study and accept new ideas. If anything, the student's extracurricular activities tell more about a person's personality than the degree itself. For example, participation in team sports, club activities, or Greek life speaks volumes about a person's personality and social skills.

PAST EFFORTS

In the past, new corporate recruits underwent special training programs to learn how the company conducts business. Sales people in particular had to undergo rigorous training to learn how to present products and care for the customers. Workmen underwent training to learn how to build quality products. However, such programs have been slashed in recent times as a means for cutting costs (and will be the subject of a future paper).

There was also a period where mentors were assigned to new employees to chaperone them on their journey through the corporate world. Mentors were basically a "Big Brother/Sister" program where se-

nior employees would offer sage advice to neophytes on adapting to the corporate world. But like the training programs, mentoring is also being phased out.

Although mentoring and training programs were intended to develop the employee's skills and effectiveness from a corporate perspective, neither dwelled on the personal problems of the employee.

Now that new employees are left to fend for themselves, a generation gap is emerging in business. Managers from just about every job segment are frustrated with new employees, and, likewise, new employees are frustrated with management. Whereas managers lament how little is accomplished by new employees, new employees complain how much time they are putting in at work. This highlights a significant difference between the generations: whereas the new employees are watching the clock, the managers are watching what is produced. The two are not synonymous, but nobody has taught the young employees this yet. To the "newbies," their time is what is important, regardless if they produce anything worthwhile or not; to the manager, it is just the opposite. Also, young people believe calling in sick is an acceptable form of behavior. Where did they learn all this? On their own. It is a sad state of affairs when the media has more influence over the values of our children than parents do. But when adults abdicate parenting to the media, it is not entirely surprising.

So, what is needed? More training? Mentoring? Nope. Just some parenting. The sooner corporations realize this, the sooner they can begin to develop mature and responsible employees. Again, this is why the military now teaches its Drill Instructors basic counseling techniques, so they can help new recruits find their way through life and become a good soldier. It is most definitely not "baby-sitting" but, rather, a recognition that parents have dropped the ball in their child's development and someone has to pick up the pieces in order for the newbie to realize their potential.

I do not claim to have a Ph.D. in parenting, but as I see it there are three primary duties a parent needs to inculcate:

- Role Model - first, a parent has to be a good role model with attributes their subordinates want to aspire to attain. Role models are respected for their authority and become a highly credible source of information and inspiration,

- Teacher - second, a parent has to be able to teach, not just academic lessons but those of life; e.g., morality, socialization, even finances (e.g., balancing a checkbook, life insurance, etc.). It is the teacher who establishes the rules and regulations of the classroom and, as such, is also the disciplinarian.
- Guidance Counselor - third, parenting includes guiding others on their path through life, explaining options and making recommendations.

Very important, a parent has to recognize they won't have all of the answers, but should know how to point someone in the right direction to get the answers they need.

Above all else, a parent has to care about the welfare of their offspring. I am not suggesting corporate parents love their children like biological parents, but they need to invest time in the person, believe in the person, and motivate them accordingly, whether through kindness or a good swift kick in the rear. The corporate parent has to also know when their work is complete and allow the offspring to move on to the next stage of their corporate life.

The military has the advantage of written contracts and boot camps to indoctrinate new recruits. Perhaps a corporate boot camp could be devised and teach the same lessons as found in the military, such as:

- Cause and effect, e.g., if you make a mistake, you know you will be penalized accordingly.
- The value of good workmanship and its impact on others.
- How to give and take an order.
- Discipline and code of conduct.
- Teamwork.

CONCLUSION

Companies today are at a loss coping with the newest generation of workers. What they don't realize is, it will get worse before it gets better. Since most biological parents are content with allowing others to teach their children the necessary values in life, teachers, the military and corporations are forced to pick up the slack, like it or not. The sooner we admit this,

the sooner we can address how to remedy the situation. Whether this involves one-on-one counseling or a boot camp type of environment, something has to be done to teach our newest wave of workers the proper values to succeed in business and in life.

Let me leave you with a real-life story on parenting in the workplace. Some time ago I was visiting with a CIO in Columbus, Ohio who took me on a tour of his facility. Along the way, we happened upon a young programmer who was new to the company. Frankly, he looked a little wet behind the ears and had long hair over his collar. After the CIO introduced me to the young man, he instructed him to go get a haircut. The young programmer, shot back indignantly, "*You can't say that to me!*"

The CIO turned calmly but deliberately to the programmer, and said, "*Yes I can. Watch,*" then pointing to his mouth, "*Get a haircut. Now!*"

The programmer backed down and, to his credit, dutifully got a haircut.

I had just witnessed a little "Parenting Management" in action. The CIO exercised his authority and had quickly instructed the newbie on one of the rules to be observed in the workplace. The programmer's biological parents hadn't instructed him properly, now it defaulted to his corporate parent.

"Parenting Management" - Just remember, you heard it here first.

END

CHAPTER 6

INDIVIDUALISM VS. TEAMWORK

"There is more to building a team than buying new uniforms."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

As you travel around corporate America these days, you hear a lot about "teams"; that groups, departments or whole divisions are trying to behave more as a team as opposed to a group of individuals. Its the latest catch phrase du jour. I guess someone finally figured out the power of teamwork. But just how much of this represents sincere efforts? My corporate contacts tell me its mostly facade. They contend they get some nifty new corporate shirts and some great pep talks, but aside from this, little else. As much as corporations tout the need for teamwork, most still encourage rugged individualism.

There is more to creating a team than simply saying you are one. New shirts and axioms are nice, but in order for this to work, people have to think and act as a team. In other words, success hinges on it becoming a natural part of the corporate culture.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Teachers, coaches, and drill instructors have long understood the value of teamwork. The intent is to turn a heterogeneous working environment into a homogeneous environment whereby everyone is working in a concerted effort towards common goals. But do corporate managers truly understand teamwork? Not necessarily. Many still create competi-

tive environments in the hope that the strongest will rise to the surface. Teamwork is more about cooperation than it is about competition.

This brings up an important point: Teamwork is taught. It means developing a disciplined work environment where the participants must conform to a specific set of rules. Inevitably, it means breaking some work habits and creating new ones. This can be painful, yet necessary if you want to achieve the desired results. Basically, you are teaching people how to live and work together as opposed to apart.

In the United States there is more of a natural inclination to teach individualism as opposed to teamwork; perhaps this is because we are a nation based on freedoms. For example, our public school systems have minimal dress and hair codes; each student is allowed to look and dress as they personally see fit, many with some very questionable taste. This is permitted as it is believed the individual must be allowed to freely express him/herself. This may be fine, but it certainly does not promote a spirit of teamwork. Compare it to other countries, such as Japan, where students are required to wear school uniforms and are given group assignments, such as the preparation and cleanup of their daily lunch. In Japan, students are taught the value of cooperation at an early age which has the added benefit of improving their socialization skills.

As mentioned, teamwork requires the establishment of a working environment conducive to teamwork. It doesn't happen simply by making some platitudinous

statements. A manager must do more, much more; some suggestions:

1. First and foremost: Lead. All teams need a leader who can articulate goals and give direction. The team must trust and believe in its leader. Without such confidence, the team will not likely follow the leader, particularly in times of difficulty. The leader should also be wary of leading by democratic rule. Soliciting input is one thing, as is having assistants, but there can only be one ultimate leader to guide the team.

2. Institute uniform operating practices that everyone will be expected to conform to, such as operating hours of work, dress code, office appearance, speech and conduct, etc. Such uniformity stresses the equality of the workers. As another suggestion, downplay job titles and put more emphasis on work assignments instead. Job titles tend to emphasize a person's stature in a company and can be disruptive in terms of equality.

3. Establish standard practices for executing work assignments, thereby everyone is following the same methods, and using the same tools and techniques in their work effort. This improves communications, provides for the interchangeability of workers, and promotes the development of quality work products.

4. Make sure everyone knows their responsibilities and assignments and understands their importance. Nobody wants to be regarded as the weakest link and, as such, the manager must be able to communicate their importance and carefully balance the workload. Yes, there will be those workers who will undoubtedly excel over others, but teamwork is a group effort. If a weaker worker needs additional training, either give it to him or replace him.

5. Routinely check progress. Whenever applicable, keep statistics on both team and individual performance. However, it is not important to publish such stats. It is important for the leader to know the team's strengths and weaknesses, but it is nobody else's business.

6. Be on the lookout for conflicts in working relationships. Some people will simply not get along and it is up to the manager to referee such conflicts. Either have the people work out their differences, keep them apart, or rid yourself of them. You want harmony, not contention, on your team.

7. Allow time for the team to meet and discuss issues as a group. This keeps everyone in tune with common goals, problems, and the team's general progress. It also allows the team to socialize and form a camaraderie (a bonding of unity).

8. Recognize individual achievement but reward on a team basis as opposed to an individual basis.

CONCLUSION

Are we really trying to promote teamwork or is this nothing more than the latest corporate fad that is being implemented more for public relations than anything else? Let's hope for the former and not the latter. Teamwork is a powerful concept, particularly when there is anything of substance to be done.

Shrewd managers intuitively understand the need for teamwork. Let me give you an example from the world of entertainment. Jack Benny, the famous comedian of yesteryear had a great appreciation for teamwork. His radio and television shows were consistently at the top of the rating charts for a number of years. When asked what his secret to success was, Benny simply said teamwork. To Jack, it wasn't important that he personally got the best lines and laughs week after week. In fact, he was often the butt of many of the jokes. Instead, he made sure his cast, guests, and writers all received the accolades they deserved. It was more important to Benny that people said they had tuned into *"The Show"* as opposed to tuning in to see *"Jack Benny."* He was right.

I realize there are instances in business when it becomes necessary to exercise individualism, but these are becoming a rarity. Instead companies can find greater glory as a team as opposed to a group of individuals.

"Individual glory is insignificant when compared to achieving victory as a team."

- Dot Richardson, M.D.

U.S. Olympic Softball Team

Two time Gold Medal Champions

END

CHAPTER 7

WHY WE RESIST CHANGE

"If anything in life is constant, it is change."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

Like so many of you, I am often mystified as to why there is so much trouble in the middle East. We could easily blame it on religious fanaticism, be it Christian, Jewish, or Muslim. Perhaps. But I tend to believe it can primarily be attributed to change (or the fear of it). In this part of the world, there is great suspicion over the cultural differences between religious groups. Each side fears if they make peace and accept the other parties, it will have an adverse affect on their culture which is something they simply will not accept. In their minds, each believes they follow the "true calling" and will not tolerate any discussion to the contrary. Frankly, I do not think anyone is trying to change the moral conviction of the other; nonetheless, the fear remains.

We see similar examples of the fear of change, on a much smaller scale, in business, the volunteer non-profit organizations we participate in, and in society in general. Change is a fact of life. Change happens every day before our eyes in the most subtle ways. Change is constant. And instead of resisting change, we should learn to understand it and learn to cope with it. Refusal to deal with change is simply denying reality. For example, I see substantial changes in the schools my children attend, not just the difference between my generation and theirs, but the changes in their own schools in the short time since they have been going to school. I have also

witnessed substantial changes in the workplace since I entered it in the 1970's.

In the systems world, Information Technology departments should readily understand the nature of change for they typically devote 80% of their work effort on modifying and improving corporate systems. As an aside, I find it rather amusing that systems people, who are supposed to be the merchants of change, are often the most resistant to it themselves.

It would be nice to believe change always represents progress. Not necessarily. Change can also be counterproductive if a new convention is introduced that doesn't improve the status quo. This is probably the biggest cause for the fear of change; that it will not improve our livelihood but, instead, cause a decline in our way of life.

Change is not a technical problem as much as it is a people problem. Implementing changes to our mechanical devices is nothing compared to how the human being must deal with the device.

WHAT CAUSES CHANGE?

There are fundamentally three reasons for change:

- Political/Government influences - representing new or modified laws, rules and regulations to be implemented either dictated to us or by majority rule. This is closely related to...
- Cultural influences - society, fashion, religion,

customs and language, even the physical environment affects change. For example, the use of our vernacular or our personal appearance represents subtle changes in attitudes and morality. Mother nature, with its tempest of storms, affects how and where we live. The evolution of technology falls into this category as well. For example, consider how the PC, cell phones, video players, and the Internet have affected our lives over the last few years. We now live in a fast-paced world where we expect everything on demand.

- **Competitive/Economic Influences** - in order to succeed in life, it is necessary to evolve and improve in order to win. Do we really want to just "Keep up with the Jones'" or do we want to get ahead of them? Economics also influences our way of life and represents our safety blanket. For example, if we do not feel economically stable, we will alter what we are doing in life to safeguard our family and ourselves.

As an aside, these three agents of change greatly influence our information requirements. Those who understand this will adapt accordingly and be masters of their destiny. Those that do not, will fall behind.

There are three degrees of change:

- **Subtle** - representing minor changes occurring daily which we accept (either gladly or grudgingly). Subtle changes can be as insignificant as a change in our speech, form of address, a new hair style, etc. We will either like and embrace such changes or we will simply tolerate them.
- **Moderate** - representing significant modifications to the status quo. This includes such things as upgrades to our systems and procedures, changes to our policies, and material changes affecting our way of life. Moderate changes are either mandated or requires some tact or diplomacy to implement.
- **Radical** - represents changes upsetting the status quo. This includes complete overhauls of systems, the introduction of totally new ways of conducting business, and such things as mergers, diversifications, closings, and divorce.

Understand this, resistance to change grows as we move from subtle to radical. Subtle changes are

those we understand and readily adapt to, but unending changes turning our world upside-down will not always be greeted with enthusiasm.

"Living without change would be inconceivable and unbearable. At the same time few of us would care to go on living in the midst of ceaseless, chaotic, completely unpredictable change."

- Hadley Cantril

WHY DO WE RESIST CHANGE?

Let us now consider the fundamental reasons why we resist change:

- We are creatures of habit. We long for stability in our lives which represents a comfort zone we want to live in. Any proposed change to this comfort zone is greeted with suspicion. This is perhaps the biggest reason for resistance to change.
- Fear of the unknown. Going into a dark room is difficult even for the bravest of souls. As human-beings, we have a natural tendency to want to be in control of our actions and behavior. As such, the unknown is terrifying and causes us to invent rationales for why we shouldn't do something; even worse, ignorance leads to fabrications of the truth and gossip.
- Human emotion. Humans are capricious, and tend to do only what pleases them. We may elect to cooperate or stubbornly resist for no apparent reason. As such, we must recognize man as a political animal who will only do those things they feel are in their best interest. We do not like our authority or territory challenged whereby we might lose control. Consequently, we will sabotage any change coming our way.
- Ignorance. We are either unaware a problem exists or that a better solution can be found. Many people are comfortable operating in a state of ignorance, they do not want to know about problems or anything affecting their environment.
- Combinations of the above.

A person's age also affects resistance to change. As we get older we become more set in our ways and less likely to accept change. In contrast, younger people are much more adaptive to change. A lot of this has to do with the fertility of the mind. Our most

creative and energetic years are in our youth where we believe the sky is the limit. This is why the military wants young soldiers for they believe themselves to be fearless and want to prove themselves to their superiors and family. In other words, they have not yet learned they are not indestructible. But after they have been burned a couple of times, they start to become jaded and start to challenge the rationale for why they are asked to perform certain tasks. Further, the military realizes younger minds can be shaped more readily than older ones.

IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

As we all know, implementing change is not a simple matter. A lot depends on the perceptions of people. If we believe a change to be worthwhile, we will readily accept it; if not, we will bitterly resist it. As humans, we act on our perceptions which is not necessarily synonymous with reality; it is how we believe something to be regardless if it is true or not. Hitler and Joseph Goerbels were acutely aware of this phenomenon and distorted people's perceptions in order to bring about sweeping changes in Germany. Both the press and politicians in general are also astute in this regard and attempt to influence public perceptions, thereby bringing about the changes they champion. Advertising agencies are also aware of this, as should business and nonprofit groups interested in bringing about change.

Before we turn everyone into propaganda ministers though, let us consider the fundamentals for altering perceptions which is commonly referred to as the three canons of discourse: ethos, pathos, and logos, representing emotional appeals at ethical, emotional, and logical levels. We deliver these arguments through media appealing to our senses and intellect and "voila" you have the recipe for manipulating perceptions:

Rhetorical Argument (the message) X Media = Perception

Before we try to sell people on a particular change, we have to weigh the impact on its effect (subtle, moderate, or radical) versus the costs and benefits involved.

We must recognize from the outset the cost of change is proportional to resistance to it. The higher the degree of change ("subtle" versus "radical"), the more costly it will be to implement.

Regardless of the scope or degree of change, in or-

der for it to be successfully implemented, it must become a natural part of our lives (our culture). In other words, we have accepted the change and alter our lives to implement it. If we fail to adapt to it, the change will not take affect in the manner we had hoped. Let me give you an example, years ago my wife worked for a large jet engine manufacturer in the Midwest where she ordered specific parts for the assembly line. A lot of the ordering was done manually using index cards and paper forms. The company believed this to be antiquated and ordered the design of a new Order Processing System. Millions of dollars were spent on the project for a new "state of the art" system. As the system neared initial startup, the order processing staff was given rather cryptic training in the use of the system. The system may have been a good one, but the developers underestimated the human element of change. So much so, when system startup came, the order processing staff simply ignored the new system and continued with their index cards and manual forms. This was a major setback for the systems people. What had they done wrong? Three things: first, they didn't solicit support for the project from the order processing staff in the early stages of the project, nor did they have a representative from the staff participate in the project; Second, the training of the staff was done badly (cryptic instructions were given instead of offering education in terms the staff could understand), and; Third, the systems department failed to provide adequate technical support during system startup. Consequently, the order processing staff ignored the new system, went back to their old ways of doing things, and sent the systems staff back to the drawing boards.

Anytime we are interesting in introducing any major change, there are three things we must do:

1. Solicit support from the people who will be affected by the change thereby getting them "on board."
2. Train them effectively (in terms the staff will understand).
3. Follow-up and support the people until the change becomes a natural part of the culture.

By doing so, we set at ease concerns people have about the merit of the change. If this is not done, people will either ignore the change, or even worse, deliberately sabotage it.

Implement as much change as the people affected

can assimilate. Too much change may be too difficult for people to cope with. In this event, stage your changes over times. Always remember, *"You eat elephants one spoonful at a time."*

TREND ANALYSIS

The Implementation of change is considered so important by some companies, they will track the frequency of changes and the degree of severity by either maintaining logs or plotting time lines (or both).

Such analysis is useful for spotting trends. If there is increased frequency of change, a manager should be asking questions as to why. Perhaps there is something fundamentally wrong with the product or object we are managing.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE CONTROL

People will tolerate a certain amount of change, but complete chaos, where change occurs rapidly and unpredictably, is difficult for anyone to tolerate. "Controlled" changes, on the other hand, are more palatable to accept. To do so, we have to itemize and prioritize a backlog of anticipated changes and implement them under structured conditions as time and costs permit, thereby adding "rhyme and reason" to changes as opposed to helter skelter.

Taking control over the implementation of changes (or "Change Control") is essential in order to move from a "reactive" management style to a "proactive" style. In other words, we take charge of change as opposed to changes taking charge of us.

CONCLUSION

Change is a fact of life and as such, we must either learn to adapt to it or perish. In fact, it is our duty to change, to aspire, to progress, to seek perfection and evolve. Change is natural.

Change impacts the lives of people and, as such, affects their emotions and insecurities. To implement change requires an appeal to the perceptions of people in terms of how it will improve their livelihood. If the change is misunderstood or if it is perceived as something having an adverse effect on the status quo, it will be steadfastly resisted. However, if a change is pitched properly, not only will people welcome it, they will help implement it for you.

Implementing change means overcoming fear and

establishing trust. And remember, bite off only what your people can chew. Since change is an evolutionary process, stage your changes over time. As one part of your overall plan is implemented, phase in the next.

Finally, I will leave you with this quote from Machiavelli's, "The Prince" written in 1513:

"It must be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage than the creation of a new system. For the initiator has the enmity of all who would profit by the preservation of the old institution and merely lukewarm defenders in those who would gain by the new ones."

I guess some things never change.

END

CHAPTER 8

INCREASING BRAIN POWER

"If the mind really is the finest computer, then there are a lot of people out there who need to be rebooted."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

In the world of writing there is something called "Writer's Block" where the author procrastinates on his work and is easily distracted. Hopefully, he overcomes the problem and tackles his assignment. To do so, he needs to eliminate distractions and engage his brain to the subject at hand. The same is true in any endeavor, be it a carpenter, an engineer, or a programmer. The more we can engage the brain, the more we can produce. The challenge therefore becomes how to maximize the use of our brain. By brain power I am not referring to a measurement of IQ, but rather to simply engage what God has given us.

LEVELS

I may not be a psychologist, but it has been my observation as a management consultant that there is essentially three levels by which our brains operate:

LEVEL 1 - PRIMAL

This represents our basic instincts and reflex actions as we blunder through life (I call this the "autopilot" mode). For example, we devise a morning regimen where we awaken and prepare for work. At this level, we are not at our most alert. Instead, we want to

simply catch up on the news, brush our teeth, dress, and travel to work. Similarly, at the end of the day, we decelerate our activity as we prepare for sleep. In other words, we develop predictable routines to go through day after day without much thought. The brain is engaged, but far from our maximum output. In fact, we take in more than we put out. This is where we want to be entertained or informed.

LEVEL 2 - MODERATE

This level represents an equal level of input and output. The brain is either accelerating (at the beginning of the work day) or decelerating (at the end of the work day). At this level we have no trouble taking instructions and produce an average amount of work, quite often mundane or routine assignments simply to pass the time of day. We are also easily distracted. In the normal business day, Level 2 typically occurs between 9:00am - 10:00am (as the work day begins), 12:00pm - 1:00pm (following lunch), and 4:00pm to 5:00pm (as we prepare to conclude the work day).

LEVEL 3 - ACCELERATED

This level represents high achievement where we are able to concentrate and put forth our best work effort. Here, the brain is fully engaged and our output surpasses our input as we concentrate on the job at hand. In the normal business day, Level 3 typically occurs between 10:00am - 12:00pm, and 1:00pm - 4:00pm.

AVERAGE WORK DAY

Let us now consider how we use time during the average work day and consider how much is used at the various levels. First, we will divide the day into three equal increments of eight hours: Sleep, Work, and Personal Time.

REST - 8 HOURS

During this time, the brain is not truly engaged other than to maintain bodily functions.

WORK - 8 HOURS

Based on studies we have performed on time management, we have found most people in corporate offices to be approximately 70% effective, meaning in an eight hour work day, they are spending about six hours on direct work assignments, and two hours on indirect activities (time that doesn't contribute directly to their assignments; e.g., breaks, meetings, taking instruction or direction, etc.)

PERSONAL TIME - 8 HOURS

This represents time where we perform pet projects and hobbies, pay the bills, run errands, attend a function (such as a meeting), relaxation, awake, prepare for sleep, etc. During this time we typically spend two hours of concentrated work, and six hours of indirect activities.

SHIFTING GEARS

This means in a typical work day, we only spend eight hours to really exercise the brain (Levels 2 and 3). But from a manager's perspective, we are primarily concerned with the six hours devoted to work. During this time, people will spend approximately three hours operating at Level 2 and three hours at Level 3. This ratio between Levels 2 and 3 will fluctuate based on how well the worker is able to engage the brain. Some people are able to engage their brains at Level 3 for several hours, some for only an hour, and some not at all.

At this time we have to recognize that thinking is hard work. Although Level 3 is where we want employees to perform at, we must recognize that nobody can keep it in high gear for an extended period of time. The brain grows weary and moderates itself, shifting from Level 3 down to Level 2 or Level 1.

We must also beware of the "cattle phenomenon" whereby we fall into the tedium of repetitive behavior and, as such, our brains do not progress past Level 2. Consequently, repetition often leads to laziness.

"He who joyfully marches to music in rank and file has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would suffice."

- Albert Einstein

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the manager's objective to keep employees operating at Level 3 for as long as is practical, thereby producing the best and most voluminous work products. To do so, the manager must minimize distractions, relieve tension, and maximize focus on work (concentration). To this end, the manager should consider the following:

- **Use of Stimulants**

No, I am not suggesting the use of narcotics in the work place, other than a good strong cup of coffee (the rocket fuel of industry). However, you want to create an environment that appeals to the human senses, specifically visual, audio, touch, even smell. For example, a well lit and brightly painted room stimulates human senses as opposed to a dark, dull, lackluster room. A painting or office furnishings can add a touch of class and stress the disposition of the office. A calm and quiet office, perhaps with some suitable background music, can help people focus as opposed to a loud and boisterous environment. Ergonomically designed office equipment can have a positive impact on employee behavior. But be careful not to introduce too much comfort as it might put people to sleep. To illustrate, I do not have a problem with hard chairs that force people to sit up and pay attention.

Encourage mental gymnastics during the day. Perhaps some friendly debate or the solving of a problem. It has long been known that puzzles, crosswords, chess and checkers, and the like help stimulate the human brain. Simple, basic social intercourse can work wonders in terms of stimulating the mind.

Consider room temperature; if too warm or too cold, it will become distracting. But keep the room more cool than warm as it forces you to stay awake. Also consider the amount of available oxygen which stimulates the brain.

Another area to review is nutrition. Make sure workers are eating the right foods in the right amount. Large meals tend to put people to sleep immediately afterwards.

Basic exercises can also enhance both physical and mental acuity. Many companies now offer in-house facilities for such programs.

Understand this, employee breaks are not all bad. It gives the worker an opportunity to get away from his work, clear his head, and return with a better focus. Of course, there will be those employees who will abuse this privilege and, because of this, the manager has to constantly monitor the use of breaks.

Ultimately, the corporate culture has a profound effect on the stimulation of workers. If the right environment is established, you can turn lethargic workers into "movers and shakers."

- **Motivate**

It is necessary for the manager to encourage workers to rise to a challenge and work harder. To this end, the manager must play the role of Industrial Psychologist to understand what makes people tick, thereby providing the means to motivate them to excel. This can be done with simple praise, rewards, and recognition. It can also be done through constructive criticism. I have seen instances where both a cheerleader approach and a tough taskmaster approach have worked to positive effect. Some people respond to praise, others respond better when their integrity is challenged. Here, the manager has to intuitively know when and where to press the right buttons of his workers.

The manager needs to be able to create a sense of urgency, regardless of the task at hand. This can be done either by carrot or by stick depending on the situation. The worker must understand their work is important and adds value to their life. If they feel their work is irrelevant, then their self-esteem will suffer and they will put forth little effort to achieve anything. One way of implementing this is to empower the workers and make them more personally responsible for their actions and allow them to participate in the decision making process. By creating a sense of ownership, the worker becomes more responsible (and active) in their work effort.

- **Avoid Repetition**

As indicated earlier, repetition can cause the brain to relax. Because of this, the manager must consider ways to break up the monotony and cause the workers to refocus. Work breaks can break up the tedium, perhaps with some brief physical exercise thrown in. Scheduled breaks are effective but they too can face the problem of repetition; e.g., workers work around anticipated breaks. In contrast, unscheduled breaks often have a better effect as it disrupts worker expectations. Think of it as a game of "Musical Chairs."

Sometimes a simple change of scenery can help break up repetition. Instead of meeting at the same place over and over again, try a different physical venue to perk up worker interest.

- **Health**

Regardless of how logical we believe we are, the brain is a physical organ greatly influenced by human health. If we are sick or in distress (perhaps due to the death of a loved one, a pending divorce, financial problems, etc.), it is difficult to focus on our work. The manager should monitor worker mental/physical health and take corrective action. For example, if someone is sick, get them to a doctor so they can begin to mend and become productive again. Further, the last thing you need is for someone to infect the rest of your workers with a contagious disease (e.g., colds, flu, etc.).

The manager should also look for sleep deprivation in workers and counsel them accordingly. A tired worker will not engage his brain properly. Further, look for signs of drug abuse and depression that might have an adverse effect on their work.

- **Minimize Distractions**

One of the manager's responsibilities is to monitor the surroundings of the worker in order to minimize distractions and create a suitable environment to concentrate on their work assignments. To assist in this regards, a Project Management system is useful to record both direct and indirect activities. By doing so, the manager can analyze the causes of worker distractions, plot trends, and take appropriate action to minimize interference. For example, if a manager detects excessive use of the telephone, he may devise a policy to arrest the abuse. He may even go so far as to hold all outgoing calls.

The point is, the manager should constantly monitor and analyze disruptions and distractions so that workers can concentrate on their work effort.

- **Avoid Technology**

A recent study was performed by Kings College in London for Hewlett Packard, the purpose of which was to study the effect of technology on worker performance. According to Dr. Glenn Wilson, the author of the study:

"Results showed clearly that technological distraction diminished IQ test performance (mean scores dropped from 143.38 achieved under quiet conditions to 132.75 under 'noisy' conditions)."

"The impact of distraction was greater for males (145.50 down to 127) than for females (141.25 down to 138.50). Putting that another way, males were superior in quiet conditions, females were superior in the distraction condition. This is consistent with the idea that women are better than men at 'multi-tasking'."

"Noisy conditions caused a striking increase in self-reported stress. Ratings on a 0-10 scale of 'stress experienced during the test' increased from 2.75 to 5.5 for males and 4.75 to 6.75 for females. Note that in addition to the main effect of conditions of testing, women reported higher stress levels than men overall."

Basically, Wilson's study is saying that excessive use of technology can have an adverse effect on a person's brain power. This is somewhat disturbing as technology now permeates our society. As an example, while traveling through the airports recently I observed the majority of my fellow travelers "tuned out" by technology. The lion's share of travelers today make active use of iPods, PDA's, cell phones, DVD & CD players, and laptop computers. It seems fewer and fewer travelers read a book or engage in conversation anymore. In other words, most travelers today are operating at a Level 2.

If Wilson is correct, and I believe he is, the manager should take notice of this adverse effect of technology and discourage the use of such devices, particularly at break time, and encourage more interpersonal contact instead. Technology has its place, but I tend to believe we rely too heavily on it. For example, using an automated calculator allows our brain to relax while the machine performs the math.

Too often I have seen people reach for a calculator to perform a simple computation as opposed to working it out with paper and pencil. They simply do not want to engage their brains. Further, I have seen whole engineering departments come to a standstill when power outages brought their computers down. Do they really lack the skills to continue their work? Not really; their minds have simply been turned off by the technology.

CONCLUSION

The human brain distinguishes us from the rest of God's creatures. It is sad when we do not use it to its full potential. How the brain shifts between Levels 1-2-3 is something we control ourselves. We can elect to engage it and aspire to achieve, or not to engage it and become lazy and complacent. It can also be engaged due to circumstances and affected by others, such as our friends, family, fellow workers and manager.

How a manager manipulates his worker's brain power is analogous to a mechanic fine-tuning an automobile. He is simply trying to get the most out of it. Hopefully, we can give the mechanic something to work with; if not, we'll be scrapped.

"The more you use your brain, the more brain you will have to use."

- George Dorsey

END

CHAPTER 9

THE NEED FOR CRITICAL THINKING

"I have never encountered a technical problem that couldn't be conquered with a little imagination, some concentrated effort, and a lot of good old-fashioned management."

- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago I was managing a "crunch time" project involving a staff of eight programmers. The system design was well documented and very thorough. Nonetheless, I found it important to start the day with a brief meeting where each person reviewed their progress and what kind of technical problems and interferences they were facing. From this, I developed a punchlist of action items to be resolved, and took the necessary steps to solve them. The meetings started at 8:00am and took no more than 30 minutes. It was brief, to the point and a good way to wake the staff up and put them to work for the day. It also allowed the staff to speak their minds, brainstorm, and share ideas. From this, they developed an esprit de corps and conquered a mammoth project on time. As the manager, I also saw it as a convenient vehicle to release stress and put the programmers in the proper frame of mind.

This story runs contrary to today's Theory X world of management where the opinions and ideas of subordinates are considered inconsequential. As for me, I saw it as a vital means to get everyone on the same wave length and solicit their support. What I learned from this experience was that if you are going to empower people, you must let them speak.

As an aside, even though this was a "state of the art" project involving new technology, we found there was no technical problem we could not overcome simply by putting the problem on the table and discussing it in a rational manner. Please keep in mind that I hardly consider myself a technical guru and, instead, allowed the staff to think aloud and explore alternatives. But such openness in today's corporate world is the exception as opposed to the rule. Many managers feel threatened by allowing their subordinates to think and, as such, suppress such discourse. Inevitably, this results in considerable frustration by employees who feel restrained by management.

PURPOSE

Aside from a means to release pressure, open critical thinking in the workplace provides several benefits:

- 1. Fertility of Mind** - Due to the repetition of the workplace, workers often fall victim to complacency. By forcing them to perform mental gymnastics, they must stay sharp and on top of their game. Open discourse actually becomes challenging and results in friendly competitive debate.
- 2. Commitment** - By creating a think tank environment, the employee realizes their voice is heard by management and, consequently, enhances their commitment to the company and the project. It also helps to thwart apathy and promotes participation. As an employee is allowed to speak more, they develop a sense of ownership of a project and a greater

pride in workmanship. As such, it has a positive effect on staff morale.

3. Teamwork - Open communications promotes teamwork by forcing people to realize they are working towards common goals and raises awareness of their dependencies on each other.

4. Problem Identification - In terms of problems, nobody likes surprises. The sooner a problem can be identified, the sooner it can be addressed and solved. Establishing a punchlist of problems allows a manager to preemptively strike a problem before it festers and worsens. Get the problems on the table as soon as possible and chart a course of action to solve them.

5. Communications - An open dialog provides a manager with the means to dispel rumors and misconceptions and keep the staff on track. Open discourse also allows the manager to easily spot a disgruntled employee.

Permitting critical thinking in the work place is a wise investment in your staff and provides for their continuing education. However, if you do not care what they think, you won't be permitting such debate. But then again, the staff will be talking regardless if you grant them permission or not. Then why not channel this discourse and turn something negative into something positive?

IMPLEMENTATION

Establishing the proper forum for the exchange of ideas is important. Although there is a tendency today to implement such a forum through Internet Discussion Groups and Blogs, there is nothing better than face-to-face discussions. And because of the varied egos, interests, knowledge and levels of experience involved, it is necessary to establish certain operating rules regardless of the selected venue. Here are some suggestions:

- Keep the discussions positive and constructive. As Winston Churchill said, *"Any idiot can see what's wrong with something, but can you see what's right?"* Do not open Pandora's Box by allowing this to turn into a general bitch session. Further, a professional decorum should be observed. Do not allow personalities and politics to creep into the discussion. Members should respect all opinions, regardless who gives them. Because of this...

- The discussion must be moderated by someone who will fairly and honestly control the discourse. The one thing you want to avoid here though is full censorship which tends to alienate people. Be forceful in respecting the rules of discussion, but do not censor a person simply because you do not agree with him.
- Welcome all ideas, regardless if they are unorthodox or a bit avant-garde. Further, all ideas should be permitted without fear of ridicule or retribution. In other words, you do not want to inhibit participation. Even if someone is in the minority, allow them to take an opposing position but insist they adequately defend it (this inevitably results in some of the most stimulating debate of all).
- All persons must be identified, no anonymous feedback (this is particularly needed for blogs and discussion groups). You are looking for the participants to take a responsible role in the discussions.
- What is said here, stays here. This is a think tank for your group only. Their comments may be misunderstood by others. As such, privacy is critical.

Finally, if problems are identified and not addressed with no apparent reason, problems will inevitably ensue. If no action is taken based on their input, the staff will quickly realize that this is nothing more than a colossal waste of time.

CONCLUSION

I learned early in my business career that you get things done through people; that a single person cannot do everything. As such, it is necessary to respect the human spirit and allow it to flourish. I also learned that we enjoy life through the help and society of others. I have not yet met that person on this earth who knows everything and, as such, it is vital to exchange ideas, form consensus opinion, and evolve. By allowing employees to discuss pertinent issues, we promote communications and teamwork, establish trust, and conquer the pressing problems of the day. But to make this all happen, critical thinking must be channeled in a structured and positive way.

END

CHAPTER 10

THE ART OF PERSUASION

Man-1: *I came here for a good argument!*

Man-2: *Ah, no you didn't, you came here for an argument!*

Man-1: *An argument isn't just contradiction.*

Man-2: *Well, it CAN be!*

Man-1: *No it can't! An argument is a connected series of statements intended to establish a proposition.*

Man-2: *No it isn't!*

- Monty Python

INTRODUCTION

This is a subject near and dear to my heart. As a graduate of the College of Communications at Ohio University, I studied interpersonal communications which I found fascinating and has served me well in my business career. Currently, I see very little emphasis on sharpening the speaking skills of students. High Schools typically spend little time in this area, as do the colleges (aside from Communications schools such as OU's). Consequently, we are developing a generation of dysfunctional people in the work place who do not know how to work with other people.

Key to speech is the art of persuasion which is needed in order to lead people, sell ideas or products, conduct negotiations, and to simply argue a point. Instead of calm rhetorical discourse though, I've observed heated arguments in the board room, in the office, and life in general, with personal relationships becoming casualties of such debate. This was very obvious in the last presidential election, as

well as in Congress today.

A substantial part of the problem is that people do not grasp the fundamentals of persuasion. To some it comes easily, to others it is difficult to assimilate. First, we have to understand that formulating a persuasive speech is hard work. For example, Winston Churchill was well known for his eloquence as a speaker. But few understood the amount of effort Churchill put into his speeches. He would work late into the night writing and rewriting his talks. It was common for him to carry slips of paper in his coat pocket to jot down notes of key phrases he wanted to use. Further, he would rehearse his speeches time and again until he got the tone and inflection he thought would have the most dramatic effect. To outsiders, Churchill appeared to be a great extemporaneous speaker with flippant quotes and catch phrases; In reality, everything was well rehearsed in advance.

THE THREE CANONS OF SPEECH

Preparations and rehearsals are important, but so is content. To formulate a persuasive speech, the speaker should be cognizant of the three basic modes of speech: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos.

ETHOS

Ethos is simply an appeal based on the character of the speaker. An ethos-driven speech relies on the credibility and reputation of the speaker. Basically, an ethos-based speech says, *"If you trust me, then*

you will support my point of view." This is why sponsors are important in persuasion. For example, the reputation of a current or former CEO carries more weight in a board room discussion than a clerk's. This is also why we bow to people with greater experience or have seniority. The only caveat here though, is that if the speaker's integrity is questioned, so is his argument. Further, do not become dependent on using ethos-driven arguments, if you are ever proven wrong, your reputation and credibility will be tarnished.

"A reputation once broken may possibly be repaired, but the world will always keep their eyes on the spot where the crack was."

- Joseph Hall

LOGOS

Logos is an appeal based on logic or reason. Business proposals and corporate reviews are typically logos-driven, as is an academic thesis. Basically, a logos-based argument exhibits geometric characteristics, such as:

If A = B
And B=C
Then A=C

The danger here is developing a weak or convoluted argument which is perceived as either illogical or is difficult for the audience to grasp. For example:

Communists are people.
Americans are people.
Therefore, all Americans are Communists.

Logos is vital to the credibility of your argument which should be carefully constructed with basic building blocks of common sense.

Logical discourse is an effective way of communicating your thoughts, but it is important to know your audience when presenting such ideas.

"It is dangerous to be right in matters on which the established authorities are wrong."

- Voltaire

PATHOS

Pathos is an appeal based on emotion. Sales and promotional advertising makes active use of emotional appeal by teasing human desires, particularly

greed. The intent is to motivate people to take action. As such, a pathos-driven argument is probably the strongest canon of speech. Even if a logos-based argument is logically sound, it will fall on deaf ears when compared to an ethos-based argument. Motivational speeches are typically ethos-based. Coaches, managers, and political leaders make extensive use of pathos-driven speeches. As an example, consider Franklin Roosevelt's "fireside chats" which assured the American public during the Great Depression and World War II.

The only problem here is that truth is not a requirement for an ethos-based argument. To illustrate, Adolph Hitler was able to motivate the German people to develop a military state, but his discourse was often laced with lies. Also, advertising often substitutes facade for substance and as such, the public should exercise "caveat emptor" (let the buyer beware). Aside from this, pathos is a great way to get your point across.

"Whenever you find humor, you find pathos close by his side"

- Edwin P. Whipple

ALL THREE

Rarely will anyone rely on a single canon of speech. Instead, a good argument makes use of all three to get a point across. Churchill, for example, often relied on his reputation as elder statesman to get his point across, as well as presenting arguments appealing to logic and emotion. A careful blend of the three canons of speech, spoken at the right time and place can work wonders.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Critical to all of this is a clear understanding of your audience in terms of their knowledge, intelligence, "hot buttons," moral values, interests, and their place in society. The more you know about your intended audience, the better you can prepare an effective argument. Never forget that you speak to communicate. As such, you must speak at the level of your audience, not above or below it. I seriously doubt you will impress a group of grape pickers using a vernacular picked up at MIT. If you want to persuade people, choose your words carefully.

The Bryce is Right!

"Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."

- Benjamin Franklin

THE NEED FOR ORGANIZATION

Finally, organize your argument carefully. I am a big believer of the concept of, *"Tell your audience what you are going to tell them; Tell them, then; Tell you what you've told them."* A speech with no direction goes nowhere fast. This means you should have an Introduction, a Body, and a Summary to conclude your argument.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, the above discussion is equally applicable to both the written and spoken word. What is important here is that the more we know about the art of persuasion, the better we can devise suitable oratory or text for expressing our argument. To recap the points expressed herein:

1. Know your audience
2. Develop a speech conducive to your audience, using the three canons of speech and with some form of structure.
3. Rehearse

Obviously, situations will arise where you will not be able to effectively prepare a formal speech but, instead, must formulate an argument on the spot. As long as you are cognizant of these elements, you'll be more effective in your discourse.

More importantly, keep your cool when making your pitch and stay in control. Debate should be tempered so that you do not engage the ire of your audience (unless that is your intent). Viciousness should be left at the door. Be organized, be prepared, and enjoy the ride.

"In a republican nation, whose citizens are to be led by reason and persuasion and not by force, the art of reasoning becomes of first importance"

- Thomas Jefferson

END

CHAPTER 11

IMPLEMENTING BUSINESS ETHICS

"The ethics of a business are whatever the top-dog says they are."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

We hear a lot these days about the deterioration of ethics in business, e.g., graft, corruption, cheating, favoritism, skimming money, etc. This has resulted in a public relations nightmare for business. If consumers do not trust a company, its a matter of time before it goes out of business. This is supported by recent studies that give evidence there is a correlation between business performance and ethical practices (see the Institute of Business Ethics). Basically, the Institute's study suggests there are long-term benefits associated with enacting an ethics programs. Such studies and recent corporate snafus (e.g., Enron) are impetus for companies coming to grips with ethics in the workplace.

There are essentially two considerations for devising an ethics program in business; first, knowing what your ethics are, and, second; implementing them in a consistent manner.

INTERPRETING ETHICS

There is little point in my telling you what is ethically right or wrong. You already have an interpretation of this. But let us understand what influences our interpretation of ethics; our interpersonal relations with others, such as our family, friends, neighbors, fellow workers, as well as the media. Ethics is learned more

than it is taught. It is based on observations of the conduct of others, people we like and respect as opposed to those we do not. It is then up to each of us to interpret these perceptions from which we will base our conduct and behavior. The point is, we act on our perceptions, however accurate or inaccurate they may be. Another influential factor are our own human frailties of competitiveness, love, greed and ambition. But then again, this goes back to interpersonal relations.

Let us recognize that ethical behavior is interpreted differently from person to person. What one person may consider right or wrong may be different for the next person. The objective in business is to implement a uniform form of behavior thereby instilling consumer confidence in a company overall.

IMPLEMENTATION

Writing a corporate code of conduct is in vogue today as a means of articulating the ethics of a business. Such codes are proudly displayed on web sites and in corporate brochures more for public relations than anything else. True, they are useful for disciplining an employee for an infraction of the rules, but I do not see them as an effective way of implementing an ethics program. Understand this, regardless of what the code of conduct states, the ethics of a business are whatever the top-dog says they are. Too often I have seen companies say one thing, then act another, e.g., Enron.

Printed codes of conduct are nice, but we have to recognize that it is one thing to enact legislation, quite another to enforce it. As stated earlier, ethical behavior is based on observations. Regardless of what a code of conduct says in print, ethical behavior is based on the relationship of superior and subordinate worker relationships. If a subordinate observes an indiscretion by his superior, in all likelihood it will be emulated by the subordinate. This phenomenon occurs top-down in the whole corporate chain of command. If it breaks down anywhere in the corporate hierarchy, it will become visible to the subordinate layers and potentially create a "trickle-down" effect. This means the boss has to be a role model for ethical behavior; they must "walk-the-walk" as well as "talk-the-talk." If they do not, it will not go unobserved by their subordinates. Managers, therefore, should avoid the "do as I say, not do as I do" phenomenon. They must lead by example. Anything less is sheer hypocrisy and will inevitably lead to changes in behavior.

It is simply not sufficient to issue platitudes as to what is and what isn't ethical behavior. The manager must follow-up and assure ethical behavior is implemented accordingly. In other words, we shouldn't just "desire" truth and honesty, we must "demand" it. If one person gets away with an indiscretion, others will surely follow. As such, when writing out a code of conduct, be sure to stipulate the penalties for its violation.

The success of a business ethics program is ultimately measured by how well it becomes ingrained in the corporate culture. As we have discussed in the past, corporate culture pertains to the identity and personality of the enterprise. All companies have a culture; a way they behave and operate. They may be organized and disciplined or chaotic and unstructured. Either way, this is the culture which the enterprise has elected to adopt. What is important is that in order for an employee to function and succeed, they must be able to recognize, accept and adapt to the culture. If they do not, they will be rejected (people will not work with them).

The intuitive manager understands the corporate culture and how to manipulate it. Changing the Corporate Culture involves influencing the three elements of the culture: its Customs, Philosophy and Society. This is not a simple task. It must be remembered that culture is learned. As such, it can be taught and enforced. For example, a code of conduct is useful for teaching, as is a system of rewards and penal-

ties. Designating people to act as watchdogs of the culture can also be useful, but be careful not to create a climate of paranoia. Ultimately, as a manager, you want to create a culture that promotes the ethical behavior you desire.

CONCLUSION

We now live in strange socioeconomic times. 40-50 years ago we normally had one parent staying home to raise the kids. Now it is commonplace to find families where both the husband and wife are working and paying less attention to their children, thereby relegating their parenting duties to teachers and coaches. In other words, the family unit, which is the basic building block for learning ethical behavior, is becoming severely hampered.

In business today we have a "fast-track" competitive mentality which does not encourage a spirit of teamwork but, rather, more rugged individualism. Nor does it promote employee loyalty. Further, we now live in a society that encourages people to go into debt, thereby causing financial tensions.

Bottom-line, ethics is about people and trust. Consequently, we should be sharpening our people skills as opposed to avoiding it. We don't need more maxims of how we should conduct our lives; we need to lead by example. As such, we need more role-models and heroes than we do paperwork.

Let me close with one last thought on how ethics impacts business; there is probably nothing worse in business than being caught in a lie, particularly by a customer. Any trust that there may have been before disintegrates immediately and business is lost. In this day and age, there is something refreshingly honorable about a person where their word is their bond. Ethics just makes good business sense.

END

CHAPTER 12

MANAGING FROM THE BOTTOM-UP

"Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere."
- Ronald Reagan (1986)

When the American colonies were forming a government in the 18th century, there was a fleeting notion that George Washington should become King with absolute power. Instead, our founding fathers opted for a democratic society where officials were elected by the people. The intent was to give the individual citizen a means to participate in the running of the government. This was a wise decision and has served America well for over 225 years. By being included in the process, people align their loyalties to the government and country, and are quick to come to its defense in times of national emergency. Involving the individual is a simple gesture that has had long range positive effects on our country.

It is an interesting dichotomy that whereas our country involves the individual, most of our other institutions do not. I have been fortunate to have traveled the world and have seen many different types of companies, from large to small, and in just about every field of endeavor imaginable. Most are run top-down with a benevolent (or maybe not so benevolent) dictator at the helm. Assignments, estimates and schedules are pushed down the corporate chain with little regard for the individual employee.

Over the years there has been a lot of discussion about Theories X, Y, and Z in management; whereas "X" is autocratic, "Y" is more of a "carrot and stick" mentality and "Z" promotes individual participation.

Remarkably, despite the many years of promoting the rights of the worker, today we primarily live in a Theory X world. Employees are told what to do and when to do it, without any interest in their input. Today, this is commonly referred to as "micromanagement." Under this approach, although the work will eventually get done, there is no loyalty to the company by the employee, mistakes are made and quality suffers, and productivity declines since there is no personal sense of urgency by the employee. In other words, the company works, but not like a well-oiled machine.

More recently, I have noticed this same phenomenon occurring in nonprofit volunteer organizations, such as homeowner associations, clubs, school organizations, sports associations, even church groups. The people that run these groups may have the best intentions, but rarely do they know how to actually manage. Sadly, some people get involved with such organizations to satisfy a petty power trip they are on. Consequently, they have little regard for organization and adherence to policies and rules. Instead, they try to micromanage everything. People, particularly volunteers, have a natural aversion to micromanagement and quickly lose interest in their work.

Let us always remember that the word "management" begins with "man" for a purpose: it refers to how we interact with people and, as such, it is not a clerical or administrative function, but, rather, a people function; how to work with the human being, a very challenging task considering you are dealing with human

beings who can be emotional, irrational, and just plain "thick." There is a countless number of books on the subject of "management" alone. But for our purposes, perhaps the best way to think of "management" is simply *"getting people to do what you want, when you want it, and how you want it."* If we lived in a perfect world, there would not be a need for managers; people would know what to do, and projects would be executed on time and within cost. However, as we all know, we live in an imperfect world. People do make mistakes and problems arise, hence, the need for "managers", people charged with assigning and directing the work of others. Managers are in the business of solving problems; people problems!

Some of the most productive organizations are those where management succeeded in getting the individual workers involved with the running of the company. Sure, management is still in control, but they have stimulated employee interests by encouraging their participation and feedback. Management still has some top-down responsibilities, including:

1. **Delegate** - prioritize and assign tasks to qualified employees.
2. **Control work environment** - minimize staff interferences and provide a suitable workplace to operate with the proper tools to perform the work.
3. **Review progress** - study employee reports and take corrective action where necessary.

Individual employees have bottom-up responsibilities to management:

1. **Participate in the planning process** - review work specifications and give feedback; estimate amount of time to perform an assignment, assist in the calculation of work schedules with management.
2. **Perform work within time and costs constraints.**
3. **Report activities to management** - including the use of time, interferences, and possible delays.

In this bottom-up approach, employees are treated as professionals and are expected to act as such in return. This results in far less supervision as found in micromanagement. Employees are delegated responsibility, supervise their own activities, and report to management on progress. This approach will work

in any business, be it a corporation or nonprofit volunteer organization. There is only one catch to this approach: some people resist assuming responsibility for their actions and prefer to have someone else tell them what to do; thereby when something goes awry, they can blame the other person for the snafu. This type of person is more suited for a dictator type of organization where they can continue to grouse about management, yet do nothing to help correct the problem. Aside from this, the benefits of the bottom-up approach far outweigh the negatives. It is simple and it works.

END

CHAPTER 13

FIRING EMPLOYEES ISN'T FOR SISSIES

INTRODUCTION

I recently had a good friend experience a troubling termination of an employee. This was for a national retail distribution company where my friend serves as Sales Manager for one of the company's regional outlets. The problem centered on a young (thirty-ish) salesman who was well trained but acted like a loose cannon, e.g., policies and procedures weren't always followed, and he was caustic and abrasive with customers and suppliers alike. This inevitably resulted in some serious customer relations problems for the company. On more than one occasion, my friend was called in to bail out the salesman. His conduct and attitudes were well documented in his performance reviews and my friend went beyond the call of duty to counsel the salesman. Regardless, the salesman recently insulted a young female supplier by using the legendary "f***" word on the telephone (along with several other choice expletives). Not surprising, this traveled up and down the management chain of command until it finally landed on the desk of the Sales Manager who was told to fire the salesman. Dutifully, my friend called him into his office, explained the situation, and gave the salesman the option of allowing him to either resign or be terminated. The salesman flew into a rage and called the Sales Manager every name in the book and came close to exchanging blows with him. It was very ugly.

I talked with my friend at length about the incident and told him if he was guilty of anything, it was that he was too kind and too often gave his people the benefit of a doubt. Whereas he always hopes for the

best from an employee, I generally expect the worst and am pleasantly surprised when things work out. In other words, they have to earn my respect; they cannot take it for granted. This got me thinking about how we terminate employees these days. In the old days, if you screwed up, you were fired on the spot and shown the door. No questions asked; it was a done deal. But in today's litigious society, managers have to be more careful or face a costly lawsuit.

I remember firing my first employee several years ago. Even though I hadn't hired the person, it was my duty to terminate him. The night before the termination, I agonized over how I would do it and what I would say. My stomach flipped-flopped and I definitely did not look forward to doing it. Nonetheless, the next day I called the employee into my office, explained his services were no longer needed, and let him go. In hindsight, I'm sure it was less than perfect, but I somehow got through it (and had a stiff drink afterwards). Since then I have had to terminate a fair share of people over the years. I no longer get upset over it and have learned a few things along the way. Perhaps the biggest lesson is that firing employees isn't for sissies. There are not many things worse a manager can do than botching a firing. We laugh at Donald Trump saying, "You're fired," on television, but that is a rigged situation where contestants already understand there is going to be only one survivor. In the real-world, a termination affects a lot of people other than the employee and yourself; it affects the employee's coworkers, family and, in the situation described above, customers and vendors. Firing an individual requires great skill and, as

far as I'm concerned should be left to professionals. for the firing.

BACKGROUND

There is a big difference between firing a person and letting a person go. Whereas the latter could be the result of work stoppages, the former is due to the performance of the individual. As such, this article is primarily concerned with firing. From the outset understand this, keeping a poor performer employed is a disservice to the company, the coworkers, you (the boss), as well as the individual. As mentioned in the beginning, a poor performer causes coworkers and/or the boss to work overtime to cover for the employee. Consider this though, it hurts the individual who is either unskilled for the job or has risen above his level of competency. This type of person has hit a "dead-end" in his career and it is unfair to keep him in a position where you know he will undoubtedly fail. Let him get on with his life in another capacity where he might succeed.

Prior to any firing, a paper-trail is required to document the person's performance. An Employee Performance Evaluation (or "Review") should be conducted routinely, particularly in the early stages of employment. Such a Review should highlight both the person's strengths and weaknesses giving the boss an opportunity to offer advice to the employee on how to better himself. Very important, have the employee read the Review carefully and SIGN IT. Thereby, the employee can never say he was unaware of any problems.

If the employee is struggling and you have to put him "on notice" (either improve or face termination), this should be written into the Review as well. More importantly, if you put a person "on notice" be sure to follow the worker's progress carefully, not only to make sure he is improving, but to see if he is preparing to bail out on you.

PREPARATIONS

Assuming you have adequately documented the employee's performance and you are convinced you have just cause to fire him, now it is time to properly prepare yourself:

1. First, you may need to get permission from your superior or someone in Human Resources to fire the person. Be prepared to give a detailed reason for terminating the employee and be able to substantiate your claim. This makes for a convenient rehearsal

2. Consider the person's current work assignments and what affect his firing will have on your department (coworkers, vendors, customers, delivery dates, etc.). Even if a person is working on something critical for the company, and it is absolutely necessary to terminate him, do not let the employee hold his job hostage. Even if you kept the person, there is no telling whether his work would ever be completed to your satisfaction. If he has to go, he has to go. Do not procrastinate.

3. Determine an exit strategy. To minimize disrupting the work of others, determine a proper time and date to terminate the employee. More people are fired on late Friday afternoons than any other time or day of the week. Why? Simple. It is the end of the workweek and people are more interested in going home than listening to someone being fired. By Monday, the person will already be a memory.

Psychologists might suggest Monday mornings are a better time for terminations as opposed to Fridays, simply because the employee won't have time to think about it over the weekend and become despondent or irrational. As for me, I am a Friday man as I don't want this to weigh too heavily on the staff.

In preparing for the employee's exit, consider what corporate paperwork is involved (see Human Resources), what keys, locks, badges, computer passwords may need to be changed, and back up the employee's computer files. Under no circumstance should the employee be allowed to touch his computer after being dismissed; there is no need to invite sabotage.

Select a witness to attend the termination meeting (this should be done in all cases regardless if you are expecting a hostile firing or not). Even better, be prepared to record the termination if possible in case it is needed in a court of law.

If necessary, have a box prepared for the employee to empty his desk.

DO IT PROFESSIONALLY

Now the hard part; actually terminating the employee. Now you have to prepare yourself psychologically. If you go into it with any emotions (guilt, anger, sympathy), you are doomed to fail. Always remember you are an emissary of the company, not an individual

with a vendetta. It is hard to be cold in situations like this, but you have to be well organized and in the proper state of mind to pull this off. Ideally, the objective should be that the employee being terminated comes away from the dismissal knowing he had been fired by a pro, not a clown.

Just prior to the dismissal, talk to your witness and let him/her know what you are about to do and what will be expected from the witness during the termination (which should be to simply observe and not to speak during the firing).

When ready, invite the employee into a private room, preferably away from the coworkers. Be cordial but avoid idle chitchat as it is not relevant at this point. Inform the person of the purpose of the meeting and why he is being terminated. It is important the person understand why they are being fired. Some people feel this is unnecessary. I don't for two reasons: First, if a person starts litigation against you or the company, he cannot claim he didn't know the reason for the termination, and; Second, if the person is ever going to improve in the future, he should understand why he is being dismissed.

It is very important you remain in control of the meeting at all times. Stick to the facts and do not waver. The employee will react one of two ways: either surprised by the termination (didn't see it coming) or knew it was inevitable. The emotional reaction to the termination may take many forms:

- Grateful it is over (allowing them to move on to something else).
- Understands reasons and accepts it.
- Embarrassment.
- Anger.

Regardless of the emotional reaction to the termination, stay in control of the meeting. Do not show weakness by back-peddling or allowing second chances. Remember, you reviewed the employee's work performance in the past and the employee should have already adjusted his work habits. Providing an employee a second chance at this stage only invites sabotage.

Do not prolong the termination either; keep it short and to the point (do not give him time to think and react). Sympathy is not necessary, nor is gloating. Also, it is not necessary to be apologetic, after all, you have a valid business reason for terminating the employee don't you? Just keep things in a "matter

of fact" tone of voice. Again, you represent the company in this capacity; maintain your composure.

If it is necessary for corporate papers to be signed as part of the exit, have the employee sign them at this time. If the employee refuses, have it so noted by the witness. Also explain to the employee how he will receive his final paycheck.

In some situations, it is better to try and get the employee to resign as opposed to being fired. If the person is fired, they are automatically eligible for unemployment (which the company has to ultimately pay). If the person resigns, collecting unemployment is considerably more difficult to obtain (although the government loves to give away your money anyway).

If the employee shows signs of being upset, allow them to regain their composure before exiting the meeting. An emotionally distressed person can have an adverse affect on the staff. It also allows the employee to save face.

POSTMORTEM

Fired employees should clean out their desks of their personal items as soon as possible. This should normally be supervised by someone, preferably not the witness or the person who just fired the employee. Further, when the employee is gone, make sure the desk is cleaned out to your satisfaction; leave no traces.

Farewells are not necessary and should be discouraged. The less contact the employee has with your staff, the less chance he has of "infecting" your people. Some companies also find it necessary to escort the person off company premises.

Following the termination, prepare a report reviewing the termination which should be filed in the employee's personnel jacket. Keep it factual and to the point (include time, date and the length of the meeting). If the employee made any threats, this should be documented. The witness should also make a similar, but separate, report. Both reports should be simple and to the point and reflect what actually transpired during the termination. Also, if the termination was recorded, it should also be filed in the employee's jacket.

Your staff will inevitably be wondering what happened. It may be necessary to briefly discuss it at a staff meeting (do not call a meeting just to discuss the

The Bryce is Right!

termination). When reviewing the termination with the staff, it is not necessary for you to rationalize why the employee was terminated (if he was a loser, they should be able to figure it out). Further, the fired employee may have friends on the staff who might testify against you in the future. Instead, keep it simple; that the employee is gone and discuss who is going to pick up the pieces. Do not belabor the firing. Its over. The only thing you, as boss, should be concerned with at this point is problems in staff morale as a result of the firing.

After the employee has left, be careful of requests for job references for the employee. You can state the employee's job title and length of employment but little else. Do not discuss why the employee was terminated or his job performance. If you make disparaging remarks about the employee, he might learn of them and initiate a lawsuit; In contrast, if you give a glowing report on a former employee and he turns out to be a dud, the employee's new company may consider a lawsuit over false claims and misrepresentation. Therefore, do not discuss the employee's performance. The only exception is if you are asked if the former employee is eligible to be rehired (a simple Yes/No will suffice).

CONCLUSION

We live in a strange time where managers are afraid to fire employees in fear of possible litigation. Instead, there is a great temptation to transfer or promote the misfit to another department, thereby transferring your problems to someone else. This is horribly irresponsible and does your company a disservice by allowing the employee to screw-up elsewhere (and badmouth you to boot). Do not prolong the agony. Get on with it. As my old football coach used to say, "Have a little STUG" (that's "Guts" spelled backwards).

Firing a person is an important part of being a manager. It goes with the territory. Do not procrastinate and never live in fear of firing someone for if you do, you will become ineffective as a manager. But if you are going to do it, do it right. Let the employee know he was fired by a pro. If done properly, you will win the respect of your superiors, your subordinates, as well as the person you are letting go.

Firing employees isn't for sissies.

END

CHAPTER 14

HOW PRODUCTIVE ARE YOUR MEETINGS?

*"Unless someone is looking for an excuse to duck a work assignment, nobody wants to attend an inconsequential meeting."
- Bryce's Law*

INTRODUCTION

As a businessman, one of my favorite movies is "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" featuring Steve Martin as an advertising executive trying to return to Chicago during the Thanksgiving holidays. The movie opens with Martin attending a meeting in New York City where he is pitching an ad campaign to the President of a large corporation, played by William Windom. The meeting is rather long and boring as Windom quietly agonizes over the layout of Martin's proposed ads. All of the meeting attendees sit quietly and patiently as they wait for Windom to make a decision (which he never makes). As it is the holiday season, they all have other things they want to do (in Martin's case, it is to return home to Chicago). Ultimately, the meeting is a colossal waste of time for all of the attendees.

We've all been involved with such meetings where the person running it is either insensitive to the needs of the attendees or the subject matter is painfully boring. It should come as no surprise that excessive or pointless meetings are probably the number one cause for decreased productivity in organizations, be it corporate or nonprofit (as Dilbert has pointed out to us time and again). Understand this, unless someone is looking for an excuse to duck a work assignment, nobody wants to attend an inconsequential

meeting.

Remarkably, there are a lot of people who don't understand the basics of running a productive meeting, hence the problem as exemplified by Martin's movie. There is nothing magical about conducting a good meeting. It just requires a little preparation, along with some leadership and structure during its execution. Here are some simple guidelines to follow:

PREPARATION

First, determine the necessity of the meeting itself. Do you really have something important to discuss or do you just want to simply "chew the fat." Meetings are nice but we should never forget they distract people from their work assignments. Therefore, we should only hold a meeting if it is going to benefit the attendees and assist them in their work effort. Let us not forget there are many other communication vehicles at our disposal: memos, e-mails, web pages (including blogs and discussion groups), posted notices, general broadcasts over a PA system, etc.

If you are convinced of the necessity of the meeting, you will need to know three things:

- **Your objective** - Is the purpose of the meeting to communicate a particular message, develop a dialogue and reach consensus, educate/train people, or to offer a simple diversion for the attendees? People do not want to hear the boss

pontificate on some trivial manner (a la Dilbert). Make sure you have a firm grasp of the purpose of the meeting and what you hope to accomplish. Ask yourself how the attendees will benefit from the meeting.

- **Your audience** - Be sure to understand the targeted audience, their interests, their work assignments, and their attention span.
- **How the meeting should be conducted (this is critical).** Should it be held on-site or off-site to minimize distractions? Who should lead the meeting? How should the meeting room be setup, such as required audio-video equipment, flip charts/blackboards, computer equipment, podiums, and the setup of tables and chairs. A classroom setup is fine for lectures and presentations but not necessarily conducive if the participants are going to work in teams. For dialogs and strategy sessions, a roundtable or u-shaped layout is better. Even the chairs are important; everyone likes comfort but if you want to keep people's attention, there is nothing wrong with hard chairs that force the participants to sit-up and take notice during the meeting.
- **Print up agendas in advance so everyone knows the meeting's purpose, the items to be discussed, the timetable, and what is needed for preparation.** It is not uncommon to also advise the dress code for the meeting. If possible, send agendas and any other items in advance for the attendees to adequately prepare themselves for the meeting. This will save considerable time during the meeting.
- **Post scheduled meetings to calendars and, whenever possible, send out reminders at least one day in advance.**

EXECUTION

Having a strong and fair leader for the meeting is essential for its success. This may or may not be the main speaker. Nevertheless, the leader has to play the role of traffic cop so the meeting doesn't get sidetracked and stays on schedule. Knowing when to defer peripheral discussions to a later time or place (such as after the meeting) is important to keep everyone focused on the main mission of the meeting. Being the traffic cop often requires skills in tact and diplomacy so the meeting doesn't spin out of control.

Here are some other items to consider:

- **Stick to the agenda.** Start and end on time and maintain order. Got a gavel? Do not hesitate to use it judiciously. Maintain civility and decorum. Allow people to have their say but know when issues are getting out of hand or sidetracked.
- **Follow the old military principle of: "Tell them what you are going to tell them; Tell them, and then; Tell them what you've told them."** Developing a punchlist of action items at the conclusion of the meeting can be very useful for certain situations.
- **Introductions** are important so participants know the cast of characters involved and their interests. But do not waste an inordinate amount of time here. Also, name tags or name cards are useful to avoid the embarrassment of forgetting names and titles.
- **Make the meeting worthwhile.** Keep it interesting and informative; Heck, make it fun if you can. Make it so the attendees feel that they are not wasting their time.
- **Again, know your audience** - speak in terms your audience will understand. An eloquent vocabulary might be impressive, but it may also intimidate and confuse the attendees (beware of the "verbosity of bullshit" phenomenon). Also, read the body language of the attendees to see if they are paying attention.
- I am not a big fan of histrionics. Many lecturers like people to get up, stretch, shake hands with everyone or hold a group hug. This can be down right embarrassing to people. Get to the point and move on.

REVIEW

All meetings should be reviewed, either formally or informally, to determine the success of the meeting. Informal reviews are used for short meetings to determine action items to be followed up on. Formal reviews should be considered for all lengthy meetings. Standard critique sheets should be used for attendees and the leader to evaluate the meeting. Prepare a summary and evaluate the meeting's success. More importantly, learn from the comments received. There is little point of going through the motions of a review if you have no intention of acting on it.

CONCLUSION

Mastering the execution of an effective meeting requires a little planning, a little organization, and a lot of management. Bottom-line, how do you know if your meeting was a success? People do not groan when you call the next one.

END

CHAPTER 15

MANAGING CRUNCH TIME

"All of your hard work, regardless of how well it is intended, is for naught if it results in a pile of rubble."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

Okay, you are under the gun to produce something by a given date; you do not have a lot of time for a robust methodology, nor are you interested in being encumbered with a lot of bureaucracy; you want to get the job done quickly and you want few problems; its "Crunch Time."

This dilemma is faced by departmental managers every day. You are required to move heaven and earth in a short period of time with minimal resources. How you found yourself in this predicament is irrelevant. You can point fingers later, but right now you have a deadline to meet. Now is not the time to lose your cool but, rather, work your way through the problem with a little creativity and a lot of resourcefulness.

What to do? What are the bare essentials for survival? There are seven points to be considered:

1. GET ORGANIZED

First, develop a project scope specifying EXACTLY what is to be accomplished. Determine the minimum to succeed, yet be ambitious enough to aim a little higher. Articulate and document the project scope as accurately as possible. This will be invaluable for

conveying the project objectives to the project team.

Next, take stock of your strengths and weaknesses, particularly in terms of available human resources. Now is the time to recruit suitable personnel, either internally or outside contractors, to work on the project. If available, reference the company's skills inventory to locate suitable personnel to perform the work. If special equipment is required, order it now.

Since you may need to offer incentives to employees to motivate them, check with management to see what will be allowed, be it money, time-off, or some other perk.

Determine the working hours during the tenure of the project; for example:

- Will it be necessary to work overtime and on weekends?
- Will it be necessary to cancel vacations?

It is also not uncommon for managers to rent out hotel rooms close to the office to minimize distractions and keep the staff close to their project work.

Get this straight now so there is no confusion later on.

2. PLANNING

Now, more than ever, you have to do some planning. Whether you do it on your feet or on paper (the latter,

of course, is preferred), you better get a battle-plan in place otherwise you will certainly fail.

First, prepare a rough design of the product to be produced or a punchlist of the services to be performed.

Second, layout a plan and assign responsibilities. This is performed by defining a simple Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) reflecting the parts of the product to be built or the punchlist. Keep your WBS as simple as possible. Talk in terms of whole phases of work as opposed to detailed activities or tasks.

When the WBS is defined, assign people to the various phases of work. Assign one person to each phase thereby delegating responsibility for the completion of the work to a specific worker. If it is necessary for more than one person to work on a given phase, assign a person to be primarily responsible for the phase. By delegating authority of a phase of work to an individual, you are empowering the worker and holding them accountable for their actions.

Inevitably, you will not have sufficient resources to do everything in parallel. Because of this, consider resource allocations and establish precedent relationships between phases of work.

After the WBS has been defined, devise basic standards by which the work is going to be produced; e.g., design standards along with the acceptance criteria of the deliverables (form and content).

A couple of other planning considerations:

- Plan on sharing and reusing everything possible, be it design templates, data, etc. Now is not the time to fall prey to the "Not Invented Here" (NIH) syndrome whereby you will not consider alternatives as proposed by outsiders. Now is the time to be as resourceful as possible.
- Where pertinent, plan on running computer backups on a frequent and regular basis. The last thing you can afford now is "downtime" or losing the work of your employees.

3. CREATE A SENSE OF URGENCY

Your next concern is to create a sense of urgency among your staff. It is not sufficient that you alone (the manager) are on the hook for delivery, now is

the time to kick your employees into high gear. Simple pep-talks won't hack it. You will need to do more.

First, have a kickoff meeting describing what has to be done and when. Describe the project scope in detail with the staff. They must have a crystal clear understanding of the work to be performed, how it will be performed, and the delivery date. Depending on the situation, describe any pertinent incentives for the employees, be it financial, time-off, job recognition, etc. Job security may be the best incentive of all. However, be wary not to be "doom and gloom" as employees may begin to bail out on you immediately.

Review the WBS, precedent relationships, and assignments. Then, as a group, layout a project schedule with start and end dates. Make sure your employees understand this is their commitment to the project which will be closely followed.

Both the WBS and schedule will require high visibility. To this end, it is recommended you post it in a place where everyone will be cognizant of their commitment. For example, I used to keep a magnetic board in the project team area where I posted a simple Gantt Chart listing the phases of work and the employees assigned to it.

This chart raises the awareness of the impact each employee has on the project. The MagBoard is nice, but you can also accomplish the same feat using a simple blackboard or flip chart placed strategically in the office. I have also seen managers use such diagrams as the official desktop background on all PC's in a department. Further, it is essential that you, as manager, update the schedule as the project progresses.

Another item that can greatly assist in raising the sense of urgency is the implementation of a time reporting system whereby employees keep a daily record of the time expended on their work. This can be done either through simple PC software or through manual forms.

Very important, on the Time Sheet the employee should account for not only their project assignments but their interferences as well, such as: meetings, breaks, personal time, etc. From this data, the employee should calculate their "Effectiveness Rate" which is simply an analysis of the amount of time spent on direct work as opposed to interferences.

The time sheets should be collected once a week (on the first day of the new work week) and approved by the manager. This simple review materially assists in raising awareness of project responsibilities and promotes a sense of urgency.

4. SUPERVISE

You've heard me frequently say that normally you should *"manage more and supervise less."* Unfortunately, under a "Crunch Time" scenario it will be necessary for you to perform more supervision. Inevitably, a much more "hands on" approach will be necessary where you will actively work side-by-side with your staff.

Now is not the time for any surprises to pop-up and distract your mission. To this end, hold short meetings to review progress and report problem areas. I used to call for an early morning meeting prior to the start of the work day to wake everyone up and get them thinking of their assignments right away. From this meeting, I would also develop a punchlist and action plan to tackle technical problems encountered by the staff. Such meetings should be as brief as possible and to the point.

As supervisor, it is critical you control the staff's operating environment. In particular, you want to minimize distractions and interferences, such as irrelevant telephone calls and e-mails. A good secretary can work wonders for monitoring such activities and tracking the whereabouts of the staff. You might also want to consider having lunch brought in to minimize employee "down time."

Since the staff will be under considerable pressure to produce, look for ways to lighten things up, such as background music and loosening up on dress codes. Such techniques, as simple as they may sound, helps to release pressure.

Carefully study each employee's time sheet/screen, paying particular attention to indirect time (interferences). Where necessary, take action to minimize such distractions. Also, consider the amount of time remaining on a task and recalculate schedules as needed.

5. MANAGE THE CRITICAL PATH

During the project it is incredibly important that both the manager and the staff STAY FOCUSED on their objectives. This is accomplished by constantly moni-

toring and updating the critical path of the project. As supervisor, your attention will jump from one part of the project to another as the critical path changes. Also, updating the project schedule (such as with a MagBoard or whatever) is an effective means for communicating to the staff as to what has been accomplished and changes in start and end dates.

It is also a good idea to appoint a troubleshooter to take a SWAT-team approach for conquering technical problems. The staff should learn to turn to this person as a reference point to research problems and find solutions.

6. DELIVER A QUALITY PRODUCT

Due to the shortcuts you are taking in a "Crunch Time" project, in all likelihood you will not deliver the highest quality product as produced using traditional methods. Nonetheless, there is nothing more embarrassing than to produce something that will inevitably fail. All of your hard work, regardless of how well it is intended, is for naught if it results in a pile of rubble. Test the hell out of everything. Depending on time commitments, this is a job well suited for the manager to perform. By doing so, it makes the manager more intimate with the nuances of the product and assures a level of consistency.

7. REVIEW

After the dust has finally settled and assuming you have satisfactorily delivered the product, you can take a breath. Now is the time to hold a postmortem on the project and determine what went right and what went wrong. Such analysis is invaluable for the next "Crunch Time" project which will inevitably come along, whether you or someone else is charged with implementing it. Also, add up the costs associated with the project and prepare a written report for review by management. When preparing this report, ask yourself, *"If I were to do it all over again, what would I do differently?"*

Finally, it is pay back time for any staff incentives promised at the start of the project. Always keep your promises. If you do not, the staff will certainly not forget it next time. At bear minimum, offer up some sort of celebratory party or luncheon to thank the staff for their hard work.

CONCLUSION

Key to the manager's success in "Crunch Time"

projects is his ability to change direction on a dime. Your ability to supervise and control the project will be severely tested for, inevitably, if anything can go wrong, it most certainly will. Think of it as an endurance test. Something that will be watched closely by your superiors as well as your subordinates. Not only will you be evaluated in terms of being able to deliver a product in the required time frame, but you will also be evaluated in terms of how you handle adversary and remain cool under pressure.

Management by "Crunch Time" is no way to operate on a regular basis. Nobody wants to work under helter-skelter conditions with "quick and dirty" solutions for a prolonged period of time. By doing so, you run the risk of burning out your staff and yourself. You need to do a lot more than the above mentioned items to make your department run like a well oiled machine. Your project review should highlight this.

Its interesting. Americans tend to react better to crisis situations than perhaps anyone else on the planet. Our ability to perform under catastrophic conditions is legendary, be it Pearl Harbor, 9-11, or, more recently, Hurricane Katrina. When the chips are down and everyone knows the score, Americans are the most resilient when it comes to responding to a challenge. Its in our character. As for forethought and planning, forget it.

END

CHAPTER 16

WHY WE NEED POLICY MANUALS

"A policy is written to protect a company from those who break the rules, not from those who follow them."

- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

In today's litigious society, a Policy Manual (sometimes referred to as an Employee Handbook) is a wise investment for any company, large or small. Let me give you an example, back when we were developing products for the mainframe, our staff blossomed to 25 employees, a small company no matter how you look at it. Like any startup company, our interests in the early days were on product development, marketing, and servicing our customers. As our company grew, we began to take on additional consultants, developers and clerical personnel. We then began to notice people taking advantage of our work environment, e.g., sick days, excessive doctor visits, people began to dress sloppily, they were spending too much time attending to personal affairs at the office, etc. It finally became obvious to us that we needed a well written policy manual to bring conformity to our operations and protect the company from abuse. We thereby devised a formal Policy Manual, and had all of our employees read it and sign a statement they understood its contents.

Policy Manuals may be common practice in large corporations but it is also a shrewd investment for small companies. I am still amazed that a small business such as ours needed to develop a Policy Manual but I am certainly glad we implemented it for it has

saved us on more than one occasion from frivolous lawsuits brought on by former employees.

From the outset, understand this, a policy is written to protect a company from those who break the rules, not from those who follow them. In our early days, when there were just a handful of employees, it was easy to monitor what everyone was doing and communicate our corporate position to them. But as the company grew, it added a new level of complexity to our communications making it harder to assure consistency in the conformance of our rules. An employer would like to believe its employees will maintain the best interests of the company. Regrettably, this is a naive concept as employees normally put their own personal interests before the company's. If it was true, there would not be a need for a Policy Manual. A Policy Manual, therefore, is needed for those people who break the rules; for those who do not, it is a trivial concern.

WHAT SHOULD A POLICY MANUAL CONTAIN?

The manual should provide tightly worded descriptions of corporate positions. The following is a sampling of sections that should be included. Additional sections may be required due to the nature of your business.

Introduction:

- Introductory comments from a senior officer (e.g., President) specifying the purpose and organization of the manual.

- Code of Employer-Employee Relations - specifying the basic rights of both the employee and the employer.
- Optional - organization charts, business function charts, a definition of the corporate culture.

Employment:

- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Sexual Harassment
- Hiring
- Employment Agreement
- Orientation and Training
- Medical Procedures
- Probation
- Transfer
- Promotion
- Hours of Work
- Reporting of Time and adherence to defined methodologies.
- Temporary and Part-time Employees
- Termination of Employment
- Retirement
- Safety

Pay Practices:

- Salary Administration
- Performance Appraisals
- Bonuses and Pension
- Severance Pay

Reimbursement of Employee Expenses

- Travel
- Automobile Usage/Vehicle Care
- Customer Entertainment
- Meal Reimbursement
- Expense Account Guidelines
- Participation in Trade and Professional Associations

Employee Benefits:

- Vacations
- Holidays
- * Lunch
- Health Services

Company Premises and Work Areas:

- Maintenance of Work Area
- Personal Property
- Solicitation

- Parking
- Security

Absence from Work:

- Attendance and Punctuality
- Short-term Absences
- Leaves of Absence

Personal Conduct:

- Behavior of Employee
- Personal Appearance of Employees
- Personal Finances of Employees
- Customer Relations
- Vendor Relations
- Personal Telephone Calls, Mail, and use of Internet (incl. E-Mail)
- Conflicts of Interest
- Confidential Nature of Company Affairs
- Intellectual Property
- Disciplinary Affairs
- Drugs and Narcotics
- Smoking

Miscellaneous:

- Maintenance of Personnel Records
- Updates (Log)
- Forms

It is not uncommon to structure the policies in accordance with a numbering scheme somewhat similar to a financial chart of accounts. Further, the Policy Manual should be prefaced with a Table of Contents which reference the section numbers. An index is also helpful.

When writing policies, keep the language simple, clear, and to the point. Your objective is to write policies in such a way as they may not be misinterpreted or leave anything to someone's imagination. After policies have been written, they should be carefully reviewed by management and modified accordingly.

It is important to recognize that the policy manual is a legal document and ultimately represents a contract with your employees. As such, it should be reviewed by your corporate attorney.

IMPLEMENTATION

Policy Manuals are normally printed and bound and distributed to managers to review with employees. It

is not unusual for companies not to allow such manuals off of corporate premises. Further, manuals are often numbered and assigned to individuals. The reasons for this are twofold: to control the whereabouts of the manuals and to assure employees have reviewed it.

Regardless of how the manuals are distributed, it is important to obtain a signed statement from each employee that they have reviewed and understood the policies contained in the manual. This statement should then be filed in the employee's employment jacket for maintenance. In the event of modifications or additions to the policy manual, updates should be issued and employees acknowledge they have read it as well.

Although companies will typically print Policy Manuals, there is a movement underfoot whereby the Policy Manual is made available to employees via a secure corporate intranet. In this instance, there should be concern over unauthorized printing and distribution of the policies.

For more information on developing a Policy Manual, consult the Internet. Kits are also available at office supply stores or on the Internet.

CONCLUSION

If you are going to the trouble of writing a Policy Manual, make sure that it is effectively implemented and enforced. There is little point in enacting legislation if you are not going to enforce it.

I have always found the necessity of a Policy Manual to be interesting. There are those employees who can conceptualize, take initiative, and lead moral and ethical lives. But there are also those who need to be told what to do. It is for this latter group that Policy Manuals were devised, not the former.

Today, the younger generation needs such structure. They have grown up under a rigorous set of rules and regulations and cannot imagine life without such formality. Let me give you an example, as a child, I lived and breathed baseball. In addition to playing little league, we would have pickup games before school, after school, and during recess. We probably played more baseball on our own as opposed to under the rules of the little league. But today's kids are not like this anymore. Having coached for ten years I have observed that kids rarely, if ever, have pickup games. Instead, they feel more com-

fortable operating under the rules of a league. I knew of a large group of kids who wanted to play recreational slow-pitch softball during the summer. The fields were available for such play, but this never happened. It wasn't until I devised a local league with teams, uniforms, and rules that they all signed up to play. This taught me how structured our younger people have to be; they actually prefer being told what to do as opposed to exercising personal initiative. I find this very odd and somewhat disturbing. Nonetheless, these are the people who are now entering the workforce.

So, if you are a small company, should you develop a Policy Manual? If you find your employees require structure in their lives or if there is a possibility the company might be sued by an employee, the answer, sadly, is Yes. I cannot imagine operating a company in today's litigious world without one.

END

CHAPTER 17

CREATING A SKILLS INVENTORY

Abbot: *"Let's see, we have Who on first, What's on second, I Don't Know is on third."*

Costello: *"That's what I'm trying to find out."*

INTRODUCTION

As I visit corporate clients, I am always amazed to see how out of touch managers are in terms of knowing the talents and abilities of their staff. Such ignorance makes it difficult to properly assign staff to project assignments. Consequently, there is a tendency for companies to hire too many outside consultants or purchase training programs unnecessarily. Why? Because most organizations refuse to take the time to develop and maintain a simple "Skills Inventory" which catalogs and rates the skills of their human resources. You cannot capitalize on the talents of your staff if you do not know what they are.

WHAT IS A SKILL?

A skill is a developed aptitude or ability for performing a certain task. It represents specific knowledge or talents as developed by education and/or experience. Skills relate to the type of work we do and the tools and techniques we use. We can define skills as vaguely or as precisely as we so desire, but the real value of a Skills Inventory lies in precision. The following are categories of skills we have developed for Information Technology organizations:

Basic Business Skills: e.g., Conducting a meeting, Interviewing, Speaking/presentations, Writing, E-Mail,

Word Processing, etc.

Business Functions: knowledge of a specific corporate function, e.g., Marketing, Sales, Manufacturing, Inventory, etc.

Degrees & Certifications: e.g., Associates Degree, Bachelors, Masters, Doctoral, and trade certifications.

Languages: foreign - e.g., French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, etc. Programming - e.g., Basic, C, COBOL, Java, Pascal, etc.

Methodology: Listing the Phases and Activities of in-house methodologies, such as the "PRIDE" Methodologies for IRM.

Standards: corporate policies, writing standards, design and development, etc.

Tools & techniques: programming techniques (e.g., OOP), data base design, DBMS, CASE tools, program generators, workbenches, Office Suites, Graphics Packages, etc.

Some companies also use a Skills Inventory to track the talents of machine resources. Some have found it of value to inventory such things on a computer as languages supported, memory, program utilities, compilers, backup programs, and various other attributes about the operating system. This is useful for tracking hardware resources and determining when it is necessary to upgrade equipment.

Knowing a resource's skill is one thing, knowing its level of proficiency is another.

WHAT IS A PROFICIENCY?

Skills and proficiencies are not synonymous, although they are complementary. Proficiency refers to the degree of knowledge or experience someone or something (a machine) possesses for performing the task.

Proficiency is normally based on some sort of scale, such as 1 (low) to 9 (high). In many organizations, the establishment of any proficiency rating is a highly sensitive subject as it is believed it is used for job performance review. In this situation, most people will use an "average" proficiency rating (5). Unfortunately, this will not help in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of our human and machine resources.

After the list of skills has been prepared, they should be developed into a survey for each resource. Although the survey could be circulated, it is recommended human resources be interviewed individually to clarify intent and responses. Here, the resource is not asked how well they know a specific skill (good or bad). Instead, they are asked to qualify their response. For example:

FOR EACH SKILL, THE RESOURCE ...(PROFICIENCY RATING)

- A. Could qualify as an INSTRUCTOR or EXPERT in this area (9)
- B. Could act as an ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR (6)
- C. Has had formal training or experience (STUDENT) (3)
- D. Is aware of the CONCEPT or OBJECT (1)

This approach is much less intimidating to employees and tends to produce honest results. From this, a Skills Inventory can be developed to show the skills and proficiencies of each resource. Also, an average resource proficiency rating can be calculated for each skill which may indicate the need for additional training.

Determining the proficiency of machine skills can be far less painstaking. Depending on the equipment, an operator or product manual can usually describe the capabilities of the equipment.

CREATING THE SKILLS INVENTORY

There are many ways to create and maintain a Skills Inventory; e.g., a simple card catalog/index, commercial software, or even a simple data base package

as found on most of today's PC's can be used. For a basic Skills Inventory, only two reports are needed:

1. Resource Profile - describing the skills of a single resource (see Figure 1)
2. Skill Description - describing all of the resources with a specific skill (see Figure 2). Please note the "Average Proficiency" figure at the bottom of the report; this is important figure for determining overall proficiency.

An optional third report can also be prepared, a "Resource/Skill Matrix" which gives a more global view of resources-to-skills (see Figure 3).

By analyzing these reports, it may become obvious there is a lack of talent for a particular skill or set of skills. Consequently, this may trigger the need for either some training to develop the skill or recruiting new resources with such talent, or both.

If the Skills Inventory has been implemented with computer software, be sure there are some adequate search facilities to quickly reference a particular skill or resource. Also be sure data entry is simple and clean. One last caveat if creating a computerized Skills Inventory, be sure it does not interfere or overlap with anything a Human Resources department might be doing. Ideally, there should be an interface between the two.

FIGURE 1

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-----
RESOURCE PROFILE
-----
MAR 20, 2005                                     PAGE 1

*****
* RESOURCE: RE-01557 SHINE, JOSEPH                *
*****

ALT ID-          274-65-8876
LAST EVALUATED- 03/20/2004
TYPE-           HUMAN, INTERNAL
DATE HIRED-     12/01/2002

SKILLS-                                     PROFICIENCY

SD-00001  ASSEMBLER PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE      3
SD-00002  BASIC PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE          9
SD-00003  COBOL PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE          6
SD-00020  C++ PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE            9
SD-00100  HYPER TEXT MARKUP LANGUAGE          9
SD-00115  JAVASCRIPT LANGUAGE                 9
SD-00251  ADOBE InDESIGN                       6
SD-00258  MICROFOCUS COBOL                     6
SD-00276  MICROSOFT OFFICE                     9
SD-00288  LOTUS APPROACH                       9
SD-00305  "PRIDE"-ISEM, PHASE 3                3
SD-00310  "PRIDE"-ISEM, PHASE 4-II            6
SD-00316  "PRIDE"-ISEM, PHASE 5                9
SD-00320  "PRIDE"-ISEM, PHASE 6                6

* * * END OF OUTPUT * * *

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FIGURE 2

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SKILL DESCRIPTION
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MAR 20, 2005                                     PAGE 1

*****
* SKILL: SD-00132 COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS          *
*****

RESOURCES                                     PROF  LAST EVAL

RE-00232  CARLEY, SIMON                       6     02/03/2004
RE-00255  IGNATOWSKI, JAMES                    9     01/01/2005
RE-00359  NARDO, ELAINE                       6     01/01/2005
RE-00376  BANTA, TONY                         3     12/01/2004
RE-00412  REGER, ALEX                         6     01/01/2005
RE-00413  DEPALMA, LOUIS                      1     09/01/2004
RE-00420  WHEELER, BOBBY                      3     01/01/2005
RE-00423  GRAVAS, LATKA                      1     03/03/2005

AVERAGE PROFICIENCY                          4.4

* * * END OF OUTPUT * * *

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FIGURE 3

OD-90390		R E S O U R C E / S K I L L M A T R I X				"PRIDE"-EEM	
SEP 19, 2004		RELEASE 1.2.0				PAGE 2.1.1	
RESOURCES >	RE-00002	RE-00004	RE-00018	RE-00021	RE-00025	RE-00036	RE-00043
SKILLS	JONES, ROBERT	SMITH, GEORGE	DEMARCO, JOHN	CONDU, CONNIE	FRANCIS, BETTY	THORNTON, FRED	SIMPSON, R.J.
V							
SD-00001 ASSEMBLER PROGR AMMING LANGUAGE					3		6
SD-00002 BASIC PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE					3		9
SD-00003 COBOL PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE			3		6		9
SD-00004 MICROSOFT PROGR AMMRS WORKBENCH			3		6		9
SD-00006 JAVA PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE					9	6	
SD-00009 LEGAL FILING SKILL	9	6					
SD-00011 FORTRAN PROGRAM MING LANGUAGE				9	1		3
SD-00014 RPG PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE					9		1

REVIEW

Whether human or machine related, skills and proficiencies will change over time; they will not stagnate. Because of this, they should be reviewed on a routine basis to keep them up to date. Maintenance of the Skills Inventory should be delegated to a qualified person who can safeguard such records.

OTHER USES

Up to now, we have described a Skills Inventory in its most fundamental form. However, if done properly, it can be used as a tactical corporate tool, such as providing assistance when performing an "Organizational Analysis." Under this scenario, skills can be related to business functions (such as Marketing, Administration, Manufacturing, etc.). As such, assigned proficiencies should denote the minimum level required to perform the function. When compared to the average skill proficiency of resources implementing the function, it may be discovered that a function may not be adequately fulfilled. For example, a Sales function may require skills such as "Contract Preparation," "Product Presentation," etc. If we examine the personnel ultimately implementing the function, we may find they either have the wrong skill set, or are not as proficient as they need to be.

BENEFIT\$

A simple Skills Inventory is easy to implement, yet offers tremendous assistance in terms of:

- Selecting suitable personnel for project assignments.
- Determining the need for additional training or recruiting new people.
- Evaluating the need to upgrade hardware.
- Career path planning - this is particularly useful when a resource masters one part of a methodology, and is ready to graduate to another.
- Interfaces with Human Resource Management.
- Holds future potential for performing such service as an "Organizational Analysis."

Try it, you will either be pleasantly surprised to know the talents your staff possesses, or come to the realization your staff needs help. Either way, you will be taking a proactive approach to managing your department.

END

CHAPTER 18

10 TIPS FOR IMPROVING SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

"Social intercourse is a two way street. Make sure you are driving on the right side."
- Bryce's Law

INTRODUCTION

In past articles I have described the problems our younger workers are having with interpersonal relations/communications. Many find it easier to plug into an iPod as opposed to working with others. This is resulting in a socially dysfunctional workplace where people work at odds with each other. To overcome this problem, I offer the following suggestions for improving a person's social intercourse. There is nothing magical here, just ten commonsense tips to help you develop better relationships with your co-workers, your vendors, and your customers.

1. GREET SOMEONE

Nobody wants to feel unwelcome or unappreciated. If they do, they will feel like outcasts and less likely to help you with something. The objective is to make people feel at home. This can be accomplished with a simple greeting or a firm handshake while looking at the person directly in the eyes.

It is easy to detect when a greeting is sincere or routine. Your goal is to appear genuinely concerned about the person. This can be achieved by:

- Complimenting on some personal attribute of the person (e.g., clothes, hair, car).

- Inquiring about a person's family (e.g., birthday observed, anniversary, graduation, pets, health, etc.)
- Asking about an event the person recently experienced (e.g., attendance at an event, participation in a volunteer organization/charity, a new job or project assignment, etc.)
- Commenting on something newsworthy - community, sports, weather ("*What did you think about...?*")

Such greetings are an expression of your interest in the person. Too often greetings become routine and, as such, less credible. Try to break it up.

A good, basic greeting can work wonders in building cooperation between people.

2. ENGAGE IN A CONVERSATION

People have a natural curiosity as to what you are all about. The best way to communicate this is to engage in simple conversation. Some people are naturally shy and tend to withdraw from such discourse. If one person is not willing to start a conversation, another should take the initiative simply by asking the other, "*How are you?*" or "*What do you think?*"

A good icebreaker is to tell a joke. But in this day and age of "political correctness," exercise good judgment and taste in your humor. Avoid slang and of-

fensive remarks unless the occasion calls for it. Goodhearted kidding and teasing is fine, as long as it doesn't turn malicious.

Some people do not have the gift of gab for telling jokes. As such, tell a story about some recent event that happened to you. But don't ramble. Stay focused and be sure your story has a point to it.

A conversation is a two-way street, regardless if it is humorous or serious in tone. Look interested, stay focused, and ask questions. Also be careful not to dominate a conversation unless that is your intention. If you have a tendency to monopolize a conversation, people will be less likely to engage in conversation with you.

3. VOLUNTEER

Many people prefer to sit back and watch as others perform the work. Volunteering your time or skills may add an additional burden but it tells others you believe in them and are willing to help out. Such an expression also makes it easy for you to solicit support when you are in need of help.

4. ASK FOR ADVICE

Too often people are too proud (or too stubborn) to ask for directions in our journey through life. But asking for advice from a colleague accomplishes two things: first, you might get the answer you seek, and; second, it says to the person you trust and respect their opinion. By confiding in an individual, the advisor becomes concerned with your best interests. This leads to mutual trust and respect between people.

When you are asked to offer advice to another, be as articulate and rational as possible. If you do not know the correct answer, do not fabricate advice or mislead the person. This will only shatter the person's trust in you. Instead, point him in another direction where he might find the answer he is seeking.

5. NETWORK

It seems participation in trade groups and volunteer organizations today are dwindling. This is surprising since such groups provide a convenient vehicle to meet and exchange ideas with your peers. Such forums are useful:

- To exercise our basic social skills.

- To stay abreast of current developments in our field of interest.
- To establish relationships with people who possess different skills and knowledge that can help us.

Instead of resisting networking with others, the younger generation should embrace it. I heartily recommend joining trade groups and volunteer/charity/fraternal organizations. Regardless of the group dynamics involved, such forums help to improve ourselves personally and professionally.

6. TURN OPPONENTS INTO PROPONENTS

Today we live in a competitive society (some prefer the expression "*a dog-eat-dog world*"). I guess this is somewhat natural. There is nothing wrong with some friendly competition; it is when it turns vicious, thereby turning competitors into enemies, that you have to be careful. To overcome this problem, be gracious in defeat and magnanimous in victory. This was the secret to Abraham Lincoln's success. After losing earlier political campaigns, Lincoln would stun his opponents by appearing at their victory celebrations and offering a sincere hand of congratulations and support. Because of this, his early opponents became his proponents later on. After winning the presidential campaign of 1860 he again stunned his opponents by offering them seats in his cabinet. These former opponents became his closest confidants during the dark days of the American Civil War.

It is one thing to go into a contest confidently; it is quite another to go in with a chip on your shoulder, thereby inviting trouble. Take disagreements in stride and pick your fights carefully. Ask yourself if it is really necessary to create an enemy at this point in your career.

7. BE COURTEOUS

Your manners and how you interact with others says a lot about a person's character. Basic courtesy means you are socially well adjusted. No, I am not suggesting everyone turns into a "Miss Manners," but attention to basic courtesy can improve your image with others. Small details can have a dramatic effect. For example:

- A simple Thank You note will be remembered for a service rendered. I have been a program chairman for various organizations over the years. After a speaker conducted a presentation for me,

I would be sure to send a thank you note to him/her for their presentation (regardless if there was an honorarium or not). This is a nice personal touch that is remembered. Consequently, I never have a problem securing a speaker.

- Invite others to participate in events. Again, a personal note can work wonders and makes people feel wanted. If you stumble over an omission on your invitation list (which inevitably happens), move swiftly to correct the omission. Include people, don't exclude them, let them know their presence has meaning to you.

Above all else, watch your temper. As the old adage admonishes us, *"You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar."* A little courtesy can go a long way towards building fruitful relationships.

8. BE POSITIVE

People naturally gravitate to others with a positive or upbeat personality. This doesn't mean we always have to wear a smiling face, but we should concede that people like optimists as opposed to pessimists. As such, we should always be looking for reasons why something should be done, as opposed to reasons why it shouldn't.

This leads us into the area of effective criticism. Avoid the temptation to maliciously criticize someone or something. First, it makes the person look like a whining and jealous naysayer; second, it tends to be more destructive as opposed to constructive. It is simply good practice, when identifying problems, to suggest alternatives as opposed to simply criticism. As Winston Churchill astutely observed, *"Any idiot can see what is wrong with something. But can you see what is right?"*

So, is the glass half empty or half full? Your answer says a lot about how people perceive you.

9. BE OBSERVANT

As I have frequently written in the past, if there is anything constant in life, it is change. Change is always around us, but it takes a perceptive person to be able to spot the smallest of changes, whether it be a new hair style, someone losing weight, a small job well done, or whatever. When a change is observed, ask yourself why it has happened. Be inquisitive and understand the rationale for the change. This will help you adapt to the change as well as

improve your interpersonal relations. For example, people are easily flattered when someone compliments them on a change. It means you are perceptive and interested in the person, both of which puts you in good standing with the other person.

Included in this area is the observance of the names of people. It is embarrassing to both parties when a name is forgotten. In particular, it sends a signal to the other person that he/she is irrelevant in your eyes. This certainly does not help build relationships. Asking for business cards is one thing, remembering names is something else. This may require a little effort but it is time well spent.

It is these little observations that go a long way. As an example, perhaps the best secretary I ever saw was a lady named Myrna who worked for an M.I.S. Director in Chicago. The first time I visited the office, Myrna warmly greeted me and asked if I wanted a cup of coffee. Saying Yes, she then asked me what I wanted in it. I said cream and sugar, which she then made for me. Months later when I returned to visit the M.I.S. Director, Myrna greeted me by name and presented me with a cup of coffee with cream and sugar. Frankly, I was startled that she not only remembered my name but how I also liked my coffee. Later I found out that Myrna maintained a simple card file; whenever someone visited the office, Myrna would record their name and the type of coffee they liked. Sharp. Very sharp.

10. BE HONEST

The linchpin to good interpersonal relations is trust. Regardless of our form of discourse, nothing builds trust better than honesty, the basic building block of confidence. Having an honest character conveys an image that you are dependable, that your word is your bond, and you can be trusted to do the right thing. But your reputation can be shattered overnight if you are caught in a lie. Therefore, don't falsify or mislead. If you do not know an answer, do not fabricate one, but make every attempt to find the answer elsewhere.

We now live in an age where it is more commonplace to cover-up a mistake as opposed to admit to it. Inevitably, all hell will break loose when the cover-up is discovered. Instead, admit a mistake early on, correct it, and earn the respect of your coworkers.

Give credit where credit is due. Remember this, nobody wants to work with someone they fear will

wrong, cheat or defraud them.

CONCLUSION

There are other areas I could have gone into with this article, such as "persistence" and "leadership," but they would fall outside of the scope of improving social intercourse. I could have also covered such things as "gossip" and "finger pointing" but, instead, I was looking for those basic elements for people to improve themselves, not others.

Early in my college career I learned, "*We enjoy life through the help and society of others.*" True words. Like it or not, we must interact with other people on a daily basis. The tips I have described, while admittedly are simple, can greatly facilitate how we interact with each other, thereby making our companies a better place to work and live.

Look, its really not that complicated; just use your head, loosen up a bit, treat others as you would have them treat you, and try not to stick your foot in your mouth.

END

CHAPTER 19

CRAFTSMANSHIP: THE MEANING OF LIFE

"Manage more, supervise less."
- Bryce's Law

When I got into the work force back in the mid-1970's it seemed everyone dressed in a suit and tie, drank black coffee, smoked their brains out, and worked their butts off. Today, golf shirts have replaced suits, herbal tea and bottled water have replaced coffee, nobody is allowed to smoke, and rarely does anyone work beyond 5:00pm. More importantly, we used to care about the work we produced; there was a sense of craftsmanship, regardless of the job.

My Brother-in-law in Cincinnati conducted me on a tour of his company's machine-tool shop years ago and showed me how he could take a block of aluminum and convert it into a high-precision machine tool. It was a pleasure to watch him work, as it is to watch anyone who knows what they are doing, be it a waitress, a programmer, a laborer or a clerk.

Quality and service used to be considered paramount in this country. If it wasn't just right, you were expected to do it over again until you got it right. We cared about what we produced because it was a reflection of our personal character and integrity. But somewhere along the line we lost our way and craftsmanship has fallen by the wayside. Why? Probably because we no longer care.

In today's litigious society, employees are acutely aware that it is difficult to be fired due to poor performance. They know they will still get paid and receive benefits, regardless of the amount of effort they

put forth. Consequently, there is little to encourage people to perform better. Money isn't a motivating factor anymore. People now expect bonuses, raises and other perks to be paid out regardless of how well they perform during the year.

We've also become a nation content with doing small things. America used to be known as a powerhouse that could tackle large projects, such as building skyscrapers, designing innovative bridges and tunnels spanning substantial bodies of water, engineering transcontinental railroads and highway systems, conquering air and space travel, and defending freedom not just once but in two world wars. If you really wanted something done, you talked to the Americans and no one else. Now we get excited over iPods, cell phones, and other electronic trinkets.

Many believe Craftsmanship is in decline due to the general apathy found in today's society. Maybe. I tend to believe it is due to an erosion of our moral values. Let me give you an example. Having a child in college, my interest was piqued recently by an article describing the pervasiveness of cheating and plagiarism in our schools. It is not my intent to make a political statement here but many of the students mentioned in the article rationalized their cheating on the fact that one of our past Presidents cheated and lied under oath, and got away with it. They figured if it is okay for the Commander-in-Chief to act this way, it was an acceptable form of behavior.

Arnold Toynbee, the famed English historian, observed, *"Civilizations die from suicide, not by mur-*

der." If the moral fabric of our society dies, our story is told as evidenced by other great civilizations that long preceded us. Our perspective needs to be re-aligned: Our personal and professional lives must be viewed as one. As Toynbee remarked, *"The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play."* By doing so, we identify more closely with our work and assume a greater pride in workmanship. We do not need to hear this from our boss, but rather from within. As strange as it may sound, I see Craftsmanship as being patriotic in nature; doing a good quality job is part of leading a good and honorable life and builds on the individual's esteem, the company he works for, and the country he lives in.

The biggest problem though is that we have forgotten how to manage people. The manager's primary goal is to create the proper work environment for employees to produce the desired work products. This is different than a supervisory capacity that directs how each person performs the various tasks of a job. In fact, I encourage managers to manage more and supervise less. I cringe when I see a manager try to "micromanage" either a Fortune 500 company or a nonprofit organization. Yes, people need to be trained in order to properly perform their work but following this, employees should be mature enough to supervise themselves. In the old days, management stressed discipline, accountability, and structure; three ugly words in today's workplace.

UNDERSTANDING CRAFTSMANSHIP

Some might say craftsmanship is a simple concept that we should intuitively know. Not true; most people today have no comprehension as to what makes up a good craftsman; they have either forgotten or it has simply passed them by. Craftsmanship can be found in any field of endeavor imaginable, be it in the product sector or service industry. Craftsmanship, therefore, is universally applicable to any line of work.

Craftsmanship is not "workmanship", nor is it synonymous with quality, although the three concepts are closely related. Let's begin by giving "Craftsmanship" a definition: *"The production and delivery of quality goods or services from highly skilled workmen."*

Quality relates to the absence of errors or defects in the finished product or service. In other words, finished goods operate according to their specifications (customers get precisely what they ordered). Such

products are normally durable and require minimal maintenance. Craftsmanship produces quality products. In the absence of craftsmen, a rigorous methodology or assembly line process is required to produce quality goods using workers without the expertise of craftsmen. Such processes detail "Who" is to perform "What" work, "When", "Where", "Why" and "How" (5W+H), thereby assuring a quality product or service is produced. Such is the underlying rationale of the ISO 9000 certification as used by many companies today. The point is, quality is not the exclusive domain of the craftsman.

Craftsmanship is also a human trait. Some might argue a computer or industrial robot can produce quality products and are, therefore, craftsmen. However, we must remember these devices are programmed by human beings in accordance with the rules of the craftsman. As such, they are an extension or tool of the craftsman.

Craftsmanship can be found in either the overall work process or a section of it. For example, there are craftsmen who are intimate with all facets of building furniture, such as a table, a chair or desk, and can implement the product from start to finish. However, as products grow in complexity, it becomes difficult to find people suitably qualified to build them from the womb to the tomb. Consider military weapons alone, such as the complicated ships, tanks, and airplanes we now use, with thousands or millions of parts to assemble. Such complexity makes it impossible for a single person to have the expertise to build the whole product. The same is true in the service sector where different types of expertise and capabilities may be required. In other words, craftsmen have a specific scope of work. The scope of work may relate to other types of craftsmen through a chain of work dependencies, e.g., Craftsmen A, B and C concentrate on separate subassemblies which are eventually joined into a single product.

ATTRIBUTES

So, what are the attributes of a craftsman? What makes a craftsman a craftsman? There are three basic attributes described herein:

1. Possesses the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the work.

The craftsman is an expert in his field of endeavor; so much so that he could easily serve as an instructor in the subject matter. But the craftsman is also

smart enough to know that education is not a one time thing, that his world and field evolve as new tools and techniques are introduced. As such, the craftsman is a student of his profession and is constantly looking to improve himself. This is exercised through such things as continued education, routine certification, studying books and trade publications, and industrial groups. The craftsman willingly participates in trade groups, often at his own expense, in order to network with his peers.

It is important to note that the craftsman does not need to be told he needs periodic training to sharpen his skills. Instead, he takes the personal initiative to stay on top of his game. Further, the craftsman has no problem with a periodic job review; in fact, he welcomes it for it might bring out a weakness in a skill he needs to sharpen.

2. Attention to detail.

The craftsman understands and respects the process of building/delivering a product or service and is acutely aware of the penalties for cutting corners. Earlier we discussed the need for a methodology that specifies 5W+H. The craftsman is intimate with all details of his scope of work, so much so, he could probably write the methodology himself. Further, his intimacy of the work process means he can produce a reliable estimate of time and costs to perform the work.

Although many of the craftsman's tasks may be repetitive, it doesn't mean he easily falls into a rut. Instead, he is constantly looking for new tools and techniques to improve the work process. As such, he plays the role of Industrial Engineer who is normally charged with such a task.

The craftsman's attention to detail also means that he demonstrates patience in his work effort. Again, wary of cutting corners, the craftsman must possess such patience in order to produce the product the right way.

3. Views professional life as an extension of his personal life.

The craftsman identifies with the end product which is where pride in workmanship comes from. In his mind, the craftsman has been charged with the responsibility of producing something, and wanting to satisfy the customer, puts forth his best effort to produce it. In other words, craftsmen take their work

personally. This is a difficult trait to teach particularly in today's society where the focus is more on financial compensation than on the work product itself. It may sound naive, but the craftsman believes he will be suitably compensated for producing superior results.

Years ago, Dick Butkus of the Chicago Bears (NFL) confounded sports writers who could never understand why Butkus played as hard as he did year after year for a losing football team. True, Dick loved the game, but beyond that, the sports writers didn't understand one thing about the seven time All-Pro linebacker: Butkus took his job personally. It was important to him that his opponents know that they had been tackled by the best player; as he said, *"When they get up from the ground I want them to say 'it must have been Butkus that got me'."* Dick Butkus was a craftsman.

The craftsman has a burning desire to produce a superior product/service because he sees it as a reflection of himself. As such, the lines delineating their personal life and professional life are blurred. This is a significant characteristic that clearly separates a craftsman from the average worker. The craftsman's work is his life. He does not shirk responsibility, but rather embraces it with confidence and embosses his name on the finished product. Conversely, making a work related mistake of any kind pains a true craftsman.

Job titles are normally inconsequential to the craftsman who is more interested in delivering a quality product/service enjoyed by the customer. Instead, the craftsman takes pleasure in being touted as the best in his craft. He appreciates recognition; when someone makes a compliment about a product, the craftsman views it as a personal compliment. This too runs contrary to today's corporate world where people desperately seek recognition through simple job titles. Want someone with an inflated ego? Give them a title. Want something done right? Call a craftsman.

PRODUCTIVITY

"Dependable", "professional", and "resourceful" are adjectives that aptly describe the craftsman. He is not one who fabricates excuses but, rather, always finds a way to get the job done. The craftsman is typically your most productive employee. He is mindful of the concept of productivity that we have touted for years:

Productivity = Effectiveness X Efficiency

Most people fallaciously equate productivity with efficiency, which simply gauges how fast we can perform a given task. Effectiveness, on the other hand, validates the necessity of the task itself. There is nothing more unproductive than to do something efficiently that should not have been done at all. An industrial robot, for example, can efficiently perform such tasks as welding. But if you are welding the wrong thing, then it is counterproductive. Going back to our description of a methodology, effectiveness defines "Who/What/When/Where/Why", efficiency defines "How." The craftsman is well aware of the difference between the two and knows how to apply both. As such, the craftsman is in tune with his work environment and corporate culture.

SO HOW DO WE MAKE CRAFTSMEN?

Not easily. Because of the human dynamics involved with the craftsman, you will need to be a pretty intuitive manager or industrial psychologist to make it happen. Selecting suitable candidates is the logical first step. Devise an aptitude test to determine the candidate's suitability to become a craftsman. After all, *"you cannot make a silk purse from a sow's ear."* Aside from specific knowledge and experience in a given field (e.g., programming, woodworking, construction, accounting, etc.), here are some other important traits to look for:

- Fertility of mind - judge his ability to learn, to adapt to changing conditions, and to look beyond his scope of work. Evaluate his professional curiosity.
- Confidence - judge how well the candidate knows himself, particularly how well he knows his own limitations. He should admit his deficiencies and not fabricate excuses.
- Dedication - judge his loyalty and determination to accomplish something. What is his attendance record? What outside clubs and organizations does he belong to and how active is he in them?
- Entrepreneurial spirit - judge his personal initiative. Is he driven to succeed (but not to the point of reckless abandon)? Does he have a problem with accountability? This says a lot about assuming responsibility.
- Attention to detail - judge his ability to focus on a

subject. Does he have a problem with discipline or organization? A person's dress, mannerisms, and speech says a lot about a person.

- Reliability - judge his ability to assume responsibility and carry a task through to completion.
- Resourcefulness - judge his ability to adapt to changing conditions and persevere to see a task through to completion. The candidate cannot be inflexible; he must be able to find solutions to solve problems.
- Socialization skills - does he work better alone or as a team player? His position may depend on his answer.

When you have selected suitable candidates, here are three areas to concentrate on:

1. Develop their skills and knowledge by allowing such things as: participation in trade groups, outside certification and ongoing training, subscriptions to trade journals, continued education, etc. Some companies even go as far as to develop an in-house school to teach the company's way of doing things. If the in-house school is good, it will promote confidence through consistency. Even if people leave the company, they will recommend your company because they know the quality of the work produced. Supporting the education needs of our workers is not only smart, it is good business.

2. Teach them the need for producing quality work; they should become intimate with all aspects of their work process (5W+H). Further, instill discipline and patience in their work effort.

3. Change their attitude towards development so they become more focused on delivering a quality end-product. This is perhaps the most difficult element to teach. However, it can be realized by having them become intimate with the needs of the customer (have them visit or work with a customer for awhile - *"let them walk in the customer's shoes"*). It may also be necessary to change their form of remuneration by going to a reward system for work produced (as opposed to guaranteed income regardless of what is produced). Changing the mode of financial compensation is highly controversial in today's business world. But, as an example, can you imagine the change of attitude of today's professional

athletes if they were paid based on their accomplishments (e.g., runs or points scored, hits, rebounds, etc.) rather than having a guaranteed income? Their motivation and attitude towards their profession and team would change radically.

Candidates must learn to respect their institution, the process by which they work, fellow human beings, and themselves. They must also learn not to be afraid to TRY; that they must put their best foot forward, win or lose. Bottom-line: they must learn that their work has meaning and worth. If they don't enjoy their work, they shouldn't be doing it.

"There are two things that I want you to make up your minds to: first, that you are going to have a good time as long as you live - I have no use for the sour-faced man - and next, that you are going to do something worthwhile, that you are going to work hard and do the things you set out to do."

- President Theodore Roosevelt
Talk to schoolchildren in Oyster Bay,
Christmastime 1898

CERTIFICATION

Teaching the elements listed above probably cannot be done in one fell swoop. Further, companies simply don't have the time or money to wait for the craftsman to be produced. Instead, they must understand the human spirit needs to be cultivated and be allowed to grow over time. Because of this, it is strongly recommended that an in-house certification program be devised specifying what the candidate should know and what skills and talents he should demonstrate. This should be divided into classes of progressive expertise; e.g., apprentice, intermediary, and craftsman. The ancient builders in Egypt, Rome, and Greece understood this concept and devised such classes of workmen. Other disciplines and schools follow similar tactics (the various degrees or belts in martial arts for example). Each degree is based on specific prerequisites to master before moving on to the next level.

An in-house certification program has the added nuance of making people feel special which greatly enhances their self esteem. If they are made to feel like a vital part of the company, regardless if their work of a large magnitude or trivial, they will strive to do what is best for the company overall, not just themselves. Consequently, their work adds meaning to their life.

There is one pitfall to all of this; today's "go-go" management style fails to see how craftsmanship adds value to the company. In fact, there were companies back in the 1980's that shut down such programs simply to reduce costs. As a result, quality suffered, repeat business was lost, products were more in need of repair, absenteeism on the job escalated, etc. Want value? How does a loyal customer base who has confidence in your products or services sound? And what effect would employee harmony have, particularly if they believed in the work they were producing? It would be mind-boggling, all because we had faith in the human spirit to produce superior results.

A final note: craftsmanship is not a one time thing. After it has been instilled in people, it has to be cultivated and perpetuated. If a manager slips even for a moment, it will go right out the window and it will take time to bring it back to life. As for me, I like to post motivational reminders kind of like the one recently spotted in the Hickey Freeman manufacturing facility in New York, "*Excellence is Tolerated.*"

END

EPILOGUE

Thanks to government regulation, political correctness, and a short-term "bean counter" mentality, it is becoming ever more challenging to be a manager these days. People want to manage, but feel restrained by corporate and social mores, possible litigation, and a general lack of knowledge. There is actually nothing magical to managing, it just requires a little common sense. If you have read this book carefully, I don't believe you will find anything earth shattering in terms of revelations, just some pragmatic advice for achieving results. And as I mentioned in the Introduction, if there is anything uncommon today, it is common sense.

In the end, the manager must be in tune with his superiors, his workers, his peers, his work environment, and his mission. Perform your duties with a little class, dignity, humor, and ambition. If you haven't guessed by now, people are quick to tell you what you cannot do in life. Nine times out of ten they are dead wrong. If you can think it through, you can do it. Mind power is where its at.

Let me leave you with this final thought, never be afraid to simply TRY. Undoubtedly, you will have a fair share of successes as well as failures. Accept your successes graciously and your defeats gracefully. Learn from your mistakes.

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails Daring Greatly so that his place shall never be with those timid souls who know neither victory or defeat."

- Theodore Roosevelt

END

QUOTATIONS

In addition to the various quotations laced throughout this book, here is a compilation of my favorite quotes I have collected over the years which I have found useful for making a point. Perhaps it will help you as well.

"If you tried to do something and failed, you are vastly better off than if you tried to do nothing and succeeded."
- Anonymous

"An optimist is someone who tells you to cheer up when things are going their way."
- Anonymous

"If you do not make the decision, the decision will be made for you."
- Anonymous

"Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it."
- Anonymous

"Learn from the mistakes of others - you can never live long enough to make them all yourself."
- Anonymous

"A memorandum is written not to inform the reader but to protect the writer."
- Dean Acheson

"It's got to be done and done quickly, so let's get it done."
- General Henry "Hap" Arnold

"Genius, that power which dazzles mortal eyes, is oft but perseverance in disguise."
- Henry Austin, "Perseverance Conquers All"

"A learned fool is one who has read everything and simply remembered it."
- Josh Billings

"The work an unknown man has done is like a vein of water flowing hidden underground, secretly making the ground green."
- Thomas Carlyle

"I do not believe in a fate that falls on men however they act; but I do believe in a fate that falls on them unless they act."
- G.K. Chesterton

The Bryce is Right!

Quotations

*"Nothing can save England if she will not save herself. If we lose faith in ourselves, in our capacity to guide and govern, if we lose our will to live, then indeed our story is told."
- Winston S. Churchill (1933)*

*"Profit in business comes from repeat customers, customers that boast about your project or service, and that bring friends with them."
- W. Edwards Deming*

*"Any 20 year-old who isn't a liberal doesn't have a heart, and any 40 year-old who isn't a conservative doesn't have a brain."
- Winston Churchill*

*"A champion is someone who gets up when he can't."
- Jack Dempsey*

*"Always acknowledge a fault. This will throw those in authority off their guard and give you an opportunity to commit more."
- Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)*

*"Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds."
- Albert Einstein*

*"Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress.
But I repeat myself..."
- Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)*

*"It has become appallingly clear that our technology has surpassed our humanity."
- Albert Einstein*

*"It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly American criminal class except Congress."
- Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)*

*"Retirement kills more people than hard work ever did."
- Malcolm S. Forbes*

*"The great trouble with baseball today is that most of the players are in the game for the money and that's it, not for the love of it, the excitement of it, the thrill of it."
- Ty Cobb*

*"I am looking for a lot of men who have an infinite capacity to not know what can't be done."
- Henry Ford*

*"It ain't braggin' if you can back it up."
- Dizzy Dean*

*"The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young."
- Henry Ford*

*"What we need to do is learn to work in the system, by which I mean that everybody, every team, every platform, every division, every component is there not for individual competitive profit or recognition, but for contribution to the system as a whole on a win-win basis."
- W. Edwards Deming*

*"There is one rule for industrialists and that is: make the best quality goods possible at the lowest cost possible, paying the highest wages possible."
- Henry Ford*

*"Learning is not compulsory... neither is survival."
- W. Edwards Deming*

*"Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning."
- Benjamin Franklin*

*"Ever since man began to till the soil and learned not to eat the seed grain but to plant it and wait for harvest, the postponement of gratification has been the basis of a higher standard of living and of civilization."
- S.I. Hayakawa*

The Bryce is Right!

Quotations

*"Some people, when they hear an echo, think they originated the sound."
- Ernest Hemingway*

*"I will not deny that there are men in the district better qualified than I to go to Congress, but gentlemen, these men are not in the race."
- Sam Rayburn*

*"Take time to deliberate; but when the time for action arrives, stop thinking and go in."
- President Andrew Jackson*

*"I've always believed that you can think positive just as well as you can think negative."
- Sugar Ray Robinson*

*"Hey, big mouth, how do you spell triple?"
- Shoeless Joe Jackson's response to a heckler*

*"Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip."
- Will Rogers*

*"Take everything you like seriously, except yourselves."
- Rudyard Kipling*

*"I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts."
- Will Rogers*

*"Get the future organized - it's too late for the present."
- Werner Kirst*

*"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort."
- John Ruskin*

*"No man is entitled to the blessings of freedom unless he be vigilant in its preservation."
- General Douglas MacArthur*

*"In an illogical world, the logical person will appear to be illogical."
- Spock, "Star Trek"*

*"Originality is the one thing which unoriginal minds cannot feel the use of."
- John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty"*

*"Most ball games are lost, not won."
- Casey Stengel*

*"People can be divided into three groups: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened."
- John W. Newbern*

*"Leadership is the ability to get men to do what they don't want to do and like it."
- President Harry Truman*

*"Don't look back.
Something might be gaining on you."
- Satchel Paige*

*"We must never despair; our situation has been compromising before; and it changed for the better; so I trust it will again; If difficulties arise; we must put forth new exertion and proportion our efforts to the exigencies of the times."
- President George Washington*

*"A competent leader can get efficient service from poor troops, while on the contrary an incapable leader can demoralize the best of troops."
- General John Joseph "Blackjack" Pershing*

The Bryce is Right!

Quotations

"I've always followed my father's advice: he told me, first to always keep my word and, second, to never insult anybody unintentionally. If I insult you, you can be goddamn sure I intend to. And, third, he told me not to go around looking for trouble."

- John Wayne

*"Always forgive your enemies;
nothing annoys them so much."*

- Oscar Wilde

*"Never trust a computer you can't throw out
a window."*

- Steve Wozniak

*"Early in life I had to choose between arrogance
and hypocritical humility. I chose honest arrogance
and have seen no occasion to change."*

- Frank Lloyd Wright

END

BRYCE'S LAWS

Bryce's Laws have been a favorite of systems development professionals and management for many years. Below is a partial list for your perusal. I hope you will enjoy them. For the complete list of Bryce's Laws see our corporate web site or specifically:

<http://www.phmainstreet.com/mba/pride/laws.htm>

Productivity = Effectiveness X Efficiency

There is nothing more unproductive than to build something efficiently that should not have been built at all.

Organizations progress when the impact of good actions and decisions outweighs the impact of poor actions and decisions.

Technology alone will not solve our problems, only effective management will.

No amount of elegant programming or technology will solve a problem if it is improperly specified or understood to begin with.

If anything in life is constant, it is change.

Quality must be built into the product during design, not inspected in afterwards.

Never embark on a journey without knowing your destination.

An elegant solution to the wrong problem solves nothing.

No one has ever built a perfect system the first time, and no one ever will.

How a system is implemented is of little importance if it solves the problem effectively.

Beware of your "firefighters," they are probably your chief arsonists.

If we built bridges the same way we build systems in this country, this would be a nation run by ferryboats.

The first on-line, real-time, interactive, data base system was double-entry bookkeeping which was developed by the merchants of Venice in 1200 A.D.

You must first plant the seeds in order to harvest the crop. Unfortunately, most companies tend to eat the seed and then there is no crop to harvest.

There is only one problem with common sense; it's not very common.

Without a road map, you might be driving in circles.

It is one thing to enact legislation, quite another to enforce it.

Most estimating errors are errors of omission, not commission. It is what we forget to estimate that gets us into trouble.

The Bryce is Right!

If we lived in a perfect world, there would not be a need for managers; projects would be executed on time and within cost. However, the reality is, we live in an imperfect world.

Managers do not create problems, they solve problems.

Manage from the bottom up; not just from the top down; this creates personal commitment and accountability.

A project will only be accomplished if the individuals performing the work want to do it.

We accomplish projects through people.

Manage more, supervise less.

The only good business relationship is where both parties benefit.

Employees should be treated as professionals and held accountable for their actions.

All companies have a culture. In order for employees to function and succeed, it is essential they understand and believe in the culture.

Culture is learned. It can be taught and enforced.

The ethics of a business are whatever the top-dog says they are.

Time lost, is time lost forever. You cannot buy it back.

You cannot capitalize on your workers' talents if you do not know their skills and proficiencies.

An expert is someone who lives more than 50 miles out of town and wears a tie to work.

"We never have enough time to do things right."

Translation: *"We have plenty of time to do things wrong."*

The "man" in the word "management" refers to "mankind." Don't forget it.

Do not try to apply a Band-Aid when a tourniquet is required to stop the bleeding.

All of your hard work, regardless of how well it is intended, is for naught if it results in a pile of rubble.

Bryce's Laws

You cannot treat a patient if he doesn't know he is sick.

A man's trustworthiness is measured by the number of keys he holds.

Most children are raised by amateurs, not professionals.

Never trust a person who doesn't have at least one known vice (e.g., drinking, smoking, swearing).

Business is about people, not just numbers.

Management is more of a benevolent dictatorship as opposed to a democracy.

Unless someone is looking for an excuse to duck a work assignment, nobody wants to attend an inconsequential meeting.

I have never encountered a technical problem that couldn't be conquered with a little imagination, some concentrated effort, and a lot of good old-fashioned management.

Lawsuits primarily benefit the attorneys and nobody else.

A policy is written to protect a company from those who break the rules, not from those who follow them.

Technology without Management is Madness.

You eat elephants one spoonful at a time.

You simply can't build anything of substance without a good set of blueprints.

If you are not pissing someone off, you are probably not doing your job.

If the mind really is the finest computer, then there are a lot of people out there who need to be rebooted.

If they do not have an appreciation of whence we came, I doubt they will have an appreciation of where we should be going.

In this industry, we tend to worry about the wrong things. This is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Forget about today, build for tomorrow.

The Bryce is Right!

Bryce's Laws

Social intercourse is a two way street. Make sure you are driving on the right side.

Don't watch the clock, watch the product or service to be produced.

Do not criticize unless you can offer an alternative. Turn something negative into something positive.

There is more to building a team than buying new uniforms.

"Bullshit" is the most versatile word in the English language. It can be applied in just about any business situation. Frankly, we do not use it enough.

Youth is our only true vacation in life, and our most unappreciated.

In every person's life, you must eat at least one spoonful of dirt.

END

INDEX

- 360 Degrees - 15
- 5W+H - 72
- Abbot & Costello (quote) - 62
- Acheson, Dean (quote) - 77
- Advice, seeking - 68
- Anonymous (quotes) - 77
- Arnold, General Henry "Hap" (quote) - 77
- Audience - 42, 53
- Austin, Henry (quote) - 77
- Average Work Day - 36
- Benny, Jack - 30
- Billings, Josh (quote) - 77
- Bottom-Up, management - 46
- Brain Power - 35
 - levels - 35
- Bryce, Tim - 1
- Bryce's Laws - 81
- Butkus, Dick - 73
- Cantril, Henry (quote) - 32
- Canons of Speech - 41
- Carlyle, Thomas (quote) - 77
- Certification, for craftsmen - 75
- Change - 31
 - causes - 31
 - degrees of - 32
 - implementing - 33
 - resistance to - 32
 - trend analysis - 34
- Change Control - 34
- Chesterton, G.K. (quote) - 77
- Churchill, Winston - 41
 - (quotes) - 69, 78
- Clemens, Samuel L. (quotes) - 78
- Cobb, Ty (quote) - 78
- Coolidge, Calvin (quote) - 9
- Commitment - 39
- Communications - 40
- Continuous Improvement (manager) - 19
- Conversation - 67
- Cooperation - 22
- Corporate Culture - 11, 18, 29
 - changing - 13
 - defining - 12
- Craftsmanship - 71
 - definition - 72
 - making - 74
- Critical Path, managing - 57
- Critical Thinking - 39
 - implementing - 40
- Crunch Time - 55
- Customs - 12, 18
- Dean, Dizzy (quote) - 78
- Deming, W. Edwards (quotes) - 22, 78
- Dempsey, Jack (quote) - 78
- Distractions - 37
- Dorsey, George (quote) - 38
- Effectiveness - 20
- Effectiveness Rate - 19, 56
- Efficiency - 20
- Einstein, Albert (quotes) - 36, 78
- Employee Evaluation (Hire/Fire) - 21

Empowerment (employee) - 19
Environment, working - 4, 17
Epilogue - 76
Ethics, Business - 44
Ethos - 41

Fertility of Mind - 39
Firing, employees - 48
- postmortem - 50
- preparations - 49
Forbes, Malcolm S. (quote) - 78
Ford, Henry (quotes) - 78
Franklin, Benjamin (quotes) - 43, 78

Gantt Chart, use of - 56
Goerbels, Joseph - 33
Greeting - 67

Hall, Joseph (quote) - 42
Hayakawa, S.I. (quote) - 78
Health - 37
Hemingway, Ernest (quote) - 79
Hewlett Packard (report) - 38
Hickey Freeman (sign) - 75
Hitler, Adolph - 33, 42
Honest, being - 69

IBM - 12

Jackson, Andrew (quote) - 69
Jackson, Shoeless Joe (quote) - 79
Jefferson, Thomas (quote) - 43
Job References, handling - 51

Kings College (report) - 38
Kipling, Rudyard (quote) - 79
Kirst, Werner (quote) - 79

Leadership - 3, 16, 30
Lincoln, Abraham - 68
Logos - 42

MacArthur, Douglas (quote) - 79
Machiavelli ("The Prince") - 34
Management
- definition - 3
- Recap of Lessons - 23
Manager's Personal Development - 21
Meetings - 52
Member vs. Alien - 11
Mentoring - 26
Mill, John Stuart (quote) - 79
Monty Python (quote) - 41
Morality (Corporate Culture) - 18

Motivation - 37

Newbern, John W. (quote) - 79

Observant, being - 69
Opponents, turning into proponents - 68
Ouchi, William - 8

Paige, Satchel - 79
Parenting Management - 25
Pathos - 42
Perceptions - 7, 9, 33
Pershing, John Joseph (quote) - 79
Persuasion - 41
Policy Manuals - 59
- implementation - 60
Politics (corporate) - 21, 68
Positive, being - 69
PRIDE Methodologies for IRM - 1, 8
Produce/Deliver - 20
Productivity - 20, 78
Proficiency, definition - 63

Quality - 21, 57, 72
Quotations - 77

Rayburn, Sam (quote) - 79
Reagan, Ronald (quote) - 19, 46
Religion (Corporate Culture) - 12
Repetition, avoiding - 37
Resident Culture - 12
Resource Profile (sample) - 64
Resource/Skill Matrix (sample) - 65
Responsibility (in management) - 15
Results - 4
Richardson, Dot (quote) - 30
Robinson, Sugar Ray (quote) - 79
Rogers, Will (quotes) - 79
Roosevelt, Franklin (fire side chats) - 42
Roosevelt, Theodore (quote) - 75, 76
Rushkin, John (quote) - 79

Skill, definition - 62
Skill Description (sample) - 64
Skills Inventory - 16, 62
- benefits - 66
Social Intercourse - 67
Society (Corporate Culture) - 12, 18
"Software for the finest computer - the Mind" - 2
Spock (quote) - 79
Stengel, Casey - 79
Stimulants (use of) - 36
Subcultures - 13
Supervision - 57

The Bryce is Right!

Teamwork - 29, 40

Technology, avoiding - 38

Thank You Note - 68

Theory X - 7, 18, 46

Theory Y - 7, 18, 46

Theory Z - 8, 9, 18, 46

Time Sheet - 56, 57

Toynbee, Arnold (quotes) - 71, 72

Truman, Harry (quote) - 79

Trump, Donald (quote) - 48

Urgency, creating a sense of - 56

Voltaire (quote) - 42

Volunteering - 68

Washington, George - 46

- (quote) - 79

Wayne, John (quote) - 80

Whipple, Edwin P. (quote) - 42

Wilde, Oscar (quote) - 80

Wilson, Dr. Glenn (report) - 38

Win-Win - 22

Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) - 56

Wozniak, Steve (quote) - 80

Wright, Frank Lloyd (quote) - 80

END