



PRINCIPLES OF
SUPERVISORY
MANAGEMENT
PART I

SUPPLEMENTAL
READING

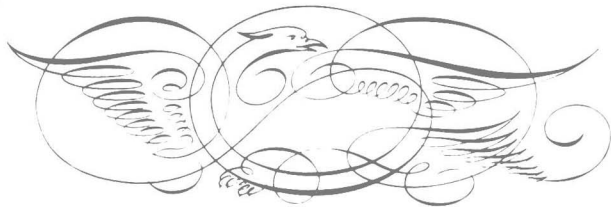
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Management the Simple Way

By Lawrence A. Appley

ONCE I WROTE A BOOK THAT FOLLOWED ALL the rules: It had an impressive, all-inclusive title; it had a preface, an introduction, an index; it contained research references, appendix, and bibliography; and between its covers were the findings of some 15 years' experience with staff and line executives, top and middle management, supervisors, foremen, and lead men.

The book suffered, however, from at least one common weakness—it made a simple, natural process appear complicated and difficult. The result was that many of those who might have profited by it did not finish it, while those who did finish it were too confounded by the apparent complexity of the subject to act on many of the recommendations.

Is it not odd how men and women like to complicate and distort simple, natural activities? Why do we fight

the obvious? Why do we insist upon flying in the face of facts and principles which have been tested and proved over the years? Why do we continue to insist that we are different, that the people with whom we deal are different, that the activities in which we are engaged and the problems with which we are faced are different? Why do we continue to demand special consideration and tailor-made treatment? All we accomplish is to make things difficult for ourselves and unpleasant for those around us.

No automobile is exactly the same as another. Most automobiles look different; they have varied origins; they operate in multiple environments, perform numerous functions, and are used in many geographic areas and under normal and extreme climatic conditions. But they all work on the same principles: Their engines will stop without fuel; their parts will break down without proper care; their tires will go flat if punctured; they will skid without chains. No one of them will perform in the same way for different drivers, and no two of them respond alike for the same driver. Sailboats are like that too. So are people. They all operate according to the same basic principles, and all have individual personalities.

We think of the Gettysburg Address as a masterpiece of simplicity, but there is a much older pronouncement which by comparison makes the Gettysburg Address look like a Federal income tax statement. The modernized version is, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

There, in one sentence, is the greatest book ever

written, on the greatest subject there is, by the greatest author that ever lived. There is the main principle of good management in its simplest form. Why do we need more? Why do we require tons of books to explain something so simple?

It can only be because of our stubborn human desire to write the rules our own way. "Do unto others what we think ought to be done." That version of the rule opens the door to all our selfish motives. It warps our judgments, gives rise to pressure groups, creates economic depressions, loses wars. It causes us to hold tenaciously to pet prejudices, outworn traditions, antiquated practices, and valueless, time-consuming procedures. It creates duplication of effort, induces neglect of responsibilities, fosters misunderstandings and jealousies, and makes for friction and lost time. In other words, it makes a simple job difficult. *When prejudice and selfishness enter, reason, justice, and simplicity exit.*

There has been so much written about "executive abilities," "administrative talents," and "managerial qualifications," and there have been so many arguments about whether leaders are born or made, that the whole field of leadership has been engulfed in mysticism. As a result, many actual and potential managers develop fear complexes and imagine complicated situations where none exist.

The truth of the matter is that leadership is a perfectly natural status in life. The world divides itself casually into leaders and followers. In any situation, such a division takes place, and no one can stop it. Civilization is bound to progress (assuming you have

any faith in a Supreme Plan for the universe), and progress depends upon leadership. The process of natural selection, therefore, will generally provide good leaders.

The situation is complicated somewhat, however, because some of us feel that the whole future of the world depends upon us—that if we do not bring about perfection during our regimes the world is doomed. If we would only stop to realize that competent people contributed to world progress long before our time and that there are capable people still to be born, we should be more sympathetic toward the idea of leaving something for posterity to do.

Let us each make his own contribution with as little fuss and feathers as possible and in a simple and natural way. This does not mean we should work any less hard, but it does mean that there is little merit in being busy just for the sake of being busy. *Activity is of value only in terms of attainment.*

It would seem that we should be convinced by now that the success of any organization depends on having an adequate number of human beings in the right jobs at the right time, all producing at their highest capacity—outstanding people have told us so often enough. Then why do many of us expect intelligent human relations to develop spontaneously, while most of our time and effort is devoted to consideration of production schedules, transportation facilities, availability of raw materials, prices, and markets?

It complicates management activity to a great degree when a struggle is necessary to place personnel activi-

ties on the same level of importance in the minds of operating officials as material items. Whenever consideration of the human element has a place other than of primary importance in management circles, ultimate success of the organization is made more difficult.

Management has been defined in very simple terms as "getting things done through the efforts of other people," and that function breaks down into at least two major responsibilities, one of which is planning, the other control.

① Planning encompasses the whole field of deciding what you want human beings to accomplish. This involves the careful determination of needs, the establishment of objectives, the outlining of procedures that will attain those objectives, and the proper assignment of responsibility to individuals or groups of individuals.

If it is impossible to build a house without a blueprint, without some indication of what the carpenters, electricians, masons, plumbers, and painters are to do, how can we expect to manufacture a product or render a service without the same careful planning?

② Control requires the use of various media which will impel the people in the organization to work in accordance with the plan. There are at least two control factors that require careful attention: One is organization structure and the other is supervision.

Unless the organization structure is simple and unless all who are part of it understand it, it will defeat its own purpose, which is to enable people to work together in groups as effectively as they would work

alone. If there is misunderstanding about individual and/or departmental authority and responsibility, or about interrelationships between individuals and organization units, people cannot work effectively.

The function of supervision is to close the gaps between desired performance and actual human performance. If the mere issuance of policies and instructions would induce people to do what they are supposed to do, supervision would not be necessary.

Having divided the activity of management into the two basic elements of planning and control, it is simple to arrive at a statement of the primary executive function—~~to determine what you want people to accomplish~~^{to check periodically on how well they are accomplishing it, and to}~~develop methods by which they will perform more effectively.~~

This all leads us to a rather simple truth: Management is the development of people and not the direction of things. If this fact were more generally accepted, many management difficulties would disappear. The executive or supervisor who says that he would rather exhaust himself doing things correctly than expend the time and patience necessary to get other people to do them correctly is admitting that he cannot manage.

From these deductions it is not difficult to comprehend the fact that management and personnel administration are one and the same. They should never be separated. *Management is personnel administration.*

Since management requires staff and line activities,

it is natural to divide personnel functions between staff and line executives, provided that one appreciates the significance of each. Line executives have complete and final responsibility for personnel matters and final authority for them. Staff personnel executives are expected to advise, help, and be of service to the line in the fulfilment of these responsibilities. There is an important place for both in any administrative setup.

What complicates an otherwise simple matter is the desire on the part of some operating executives to delegate all personnel responsibility to a staff personnel executive and/or department as well as the desire on the part of some personnel executives to seize such responsibility. If this is permitted, the human element cannot receive proper consideration.

Consumer acceptance of products or services is dependent upon public goodwill—that is a well-accepted truism. It is also axiomatic that public goodwill is influenced the most by the employees of the organization—those who are selling the products or rendering the services. *Good employee relations within an organization is, therefore, the most important contributing factor to a sound and successful business.*

If you are to build sound employee relations, your dealings with the human beings in your organization must take into account the perfectly natural, simple motives and desires of those human beings. To clarify that point, let us consider a few of these natural in-

terests. As they are presented, think of yourself as the employee. If you agree that they apply to you personally, you can rest assured that they apply to every worker under your direction.

1. *When an individual is seeking a new connection, he likes to be treated courteously and made to feel at home and at ease.* Under such conditions, he can be natural and show himself to the best advantage. That means that the individual seeking a job does not like to be herded down some back alley into a drab cell of an employment office. And when he arrives there, he does not like to be treated like a criminal in the line-up at police headquarters. The prospective employee's contact with the employment office is his first impression of the organization for which he may be working in a few days. In the atmosphere of an employment office, you sow the first seeds of morale.

2. *The average individual likes to be welcomed to a job rather than thrown into it.* Without much effort, simple induction procedures and orientation training can be provided. Such a program makes the new employee feel that he is considered an entity of some value, not a non-productive nuisance. The average person does not like to be shoved at an unsympathetic foreman, who in turn hands him over to some skilled mechanic to whom a greenhorn is a pest. Yet new workers are receiving such treatment every day.

3. *The ordinary human being would like to receive simple and intelligent instruction in what he is ex-*

pected to do, how it can be done, and what constitutes a job well done. A simple program of job instruction which will enable the new employee to master his own job and prepare himself for a better one is not hard to devise. Agreement on what constitutes a job well done can be brought about by the establishment of simple standards of performance, in terms of quantity, quality, time, cost, and tests to be met. Working without standards is like participating in an athletic contest without any system of scoring.

4. *Any human being likes to work under someone whom he can respect and in whom he can have confidence.* The greatest single morale-builder is the feeling upon the part of a worker, "I like to work for that man." To foster that feeling, capable supervision is necessary. But intelligent, capable supervision can be developed only through a management-planned and -administered program of continuous supervisory training. This also is a simple practice which pays big dividends.

5. *Every individual likes someone to recognize his or her importance.* One of the simple driving motives in human nature is the desire to have a place in the sun. A management which recognizes that each individual on the payroll has some intelligence, some ability, and something to contribute to the company's policies and operations—no matter how small the contribution may be—has satisfied a basic desire. Human beings like to be heard, and they like to have their opinions and suggestions considered and re-

spected. Channels of communication between top management and employees will, if established and kept open, contribute toward this end. Conferences, personal contacts between bosses and employees, suggestion systems, house organs, and the like are all simple methods of establishing such channels. Intelligent grievance procedure, which gives any employee the right to reach top management, is essential.

6. *Many human beings like to feel their daily work is of service to others.* In fact, the greater the opportunity for service, and the more the employee realizes it, the less the demand for material recognition. Knowledge of the organization involved—its objectives, policies, accomplishments, management philosophy, and the part each worker plays in them—helps to satisfy this natural human desire.

7. *There are few human beings who do not desire realistic recognition of a job well done.* We all like to be paid what the work we do is worth, and in accordance with employer capacity to pay. We all like to receive promotions when our abilities and merits justify them. Simple systems of job evaluation, salary and wage administration, merit rating, and job progression would satisfy this desire. Why are they not in greater use?

8. *There are few human beings who will not work hard and long for incentives.* Special recognition always inspires greater effort. A pat on the back has its merits, but a medal on the uniform is tangible evidence of management appreciation. Special awards,

bonuses, prizes, etc., fairly administered, increase human desire to produce. Why do we try to complicate such simple things as incentives? Why do we try to level off rewards, to treat everyone alike, regardless of attainment? Why do we do so when we know that a simple human impulse is to produce more when more recognition is possible?

9. *Every human being likes to work in an organization in which there is universal confidence in the ability and fairness of top management.* Most people who are worth their salt will go through hell for a leader in whom they believe. They will put up with anything because of their confidence in him. A management which is frank and aboveboard, which has in it no vestige of paternalism, which is fair and open in its business and labor negotiations, will satisfy this inherent desire. Management reports to employees, personal contacts during which management and employees come to know each other as personalities, are simple means to this end.

10. *All of us want to be sound of mind and body.* Consequently it helps when others take an interest in our health, and particularly when our bosses do—we cannot work well when mentally or physically ill. Vacations with pay, medical examinations and services, hospitalization plans, safety programs, credit unions, employee counseling, all help the employee to keep well. Incidentally, they will pay dividends in increased production and improved morale.

11. *A basic instinct in all of us is the desire for se-*

curity. When a human being is worried about his job or about the welfare of those dependent on him, he cannot produce effectively. We all know that our earning capacity is certain to diminish eventually, and the fear of want in old age is constantly before us. Annuity plans, insurance programs, opportunities for savings, job stability, all help to counteract this fear. And they are all possible if we but have the will to create them.

12. *When it is necessary for an employee to terminate relations with an employer, he likes to do so with his head in the air and with a full understanding of the reasons for termination.* He does not like to be notified of his termination by a pink slip attached to his time card. If termination is for cause, he does not like some mushy-mouthed, smooth-acting diplomat to lie to him. A properly conducted and timed exit interview would, in most cases, satisfy his normal wish to know the facts.

These, then, are some simple truths about human beings. Added up, they make plain, everyday horse sense. Why, then, do we tend to make them needlessly complicated?

If one were to summarize all the different ways of insuring good management that have been suggested over the years, the list would run into the hundreds. But it would be of little value because the average operating executive or supervisor would probably take one look at it and decide that the whole matter was too complicated to act upon in one short lifetime.