SKILLS FOR MANAGERIAL SUCCESS

Theory, Experience, and Practice

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PREFACE

AN UNDERLYING RATIONALE

This book reflects our experience wearing two professional hats. As professors, we interact with students who want to develop skills that will enable them to become effective managers; as consultants, we educate people who want to improve their managerial skills. In both instances, the feedback on the usefulness of the topics covered in this text has been overwhelmingly positive. In the case of students, the most telling responses come after they have had the opportunity to manage others. The following statement represents a typical comment from these individuals: "When it comes to managing and making my job easier, your course was among the most practical and useful."

For functioning managers, the relevance of the material is more immediate. These experiences contribute to their ability to accurately assess the appropriateness of transferring what is being learned in the classroom, or workshop, to organizational situations. The flavor of their comments is captured by the following statements taken from several program evaluations: "I wish I had had this when I first became a manager. If I had had this information earlier, it would have made my job a lot easier." "I found the topics covered relevant to my work. I will be putting them to good use. Oh, by the way, can I send my boss to the next session?" It is feedback such as this, the desire to use this material when teaching our own students, and the urging from both colleagues and friends to write a text on management skill development, that has motivated us to put our ideas into print.

Before you begin reading the chapters that follow, it would be helpful to consider the underlying rationale for topic selection and the book's format. Such decisions reflect our belief that the key ingredient to any increase in productivity is the employees who are asked to perform effectively within organizations.

It is employees who use their on-the-job experience to figure out how to better use the technology and other materials with which they must work. In other words, employees are the driving force behind productivity and quality improvements; they make the productivity ratio larger.[1] To be a successful manager, to obtain increased levels of output resulting from subordinate effort and ability, one must learn to work effectively with people. Thus, the primary focus of this text is on manager-subordinate interactions, especially the managerial behaviors needed to develop and maintain positive and productive relationships with subordinates, peers, superiors, and individuals external to the organization.

Topic selection, including the design of case studies, role plays, and experiential exercises, reflects our belief that the ability to manage effectively is a function of the degree to which you possess the *attitudes, knowledge,* and *skills* necessary to perform well within a particular organizational setting. What is your attitude toward ethics in management, employee participation in decision making, assertiveness and followership? Chapter 3 addresses the question of what constitutes appropriate attitudes for managers in the 1990s.

Knowledge is critical to managerial success because it establishes the base upon which decisions are made and the behaviors that are appropriate in a given situation. As a result, each chapter carefully integrates content knowledge with a discussion of appropriate behaviors needed to demonstrate the skill or activity being considered. Chapter 2 (knowledge about the self) and Chapter 15 (knowledge about the organization and its environment) describe the knowledge that must be acquired about one's self, one's organization, and the organization's environment.

The sequencing of chapters is designed to logically move through a building process based on content and prerequisite knowledge, skills or activities. Chapter 1 explains the manager's role and the environmental trends managers are likely to face throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century. Chapter 2 encourages students to evaluate their personal goals, needs, self-efficacy, and interpersonal style, and to assess how their personal profile will affect their ability to manage. Chapter 3 articulates key attitudes managers need to function effectively. Chapters 4 through 7 (stress/time management, communications, and negotiations) focus on support skills that allow the manager to effectively carry out other activities such as performance appraisal, counseling, coaching, progressive discipline, and so on. Chapter 8 considers what a manager should do when required to select the most qualified employees. Chapter 9 describes the goal-setting process and how it can be used to motivate people to perform at, or near, their peak capabilities.

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[1] W. B. Werther, Jr., W. A. Ruch, and L. McClure, *Productivity Through People,* West Publishing Company, St. Paul, 1986: 4.

Goal attainment is facilitated when there is an effective team climate in which subordinates are willing to innovate rather than resist change, and where the negative effects of conflict are minimized. In an attempt to improve understanding of the skills necessary to perform effectively in each of these areas, team building will be covered in Chapter 10, innovation in Chapter 11, and managing conflict and anger in Chapter 12. Chapter 13 considers the topic of performance evaluation and how the manager can use performance reviews for employee coaching and development. Along with conducting performance appraisal for administrative and developmental purposes, managers are increasingly required to engage in counseling activities. To help managers carry out employee counseling, Chapter 14 develops a counseling model designed specifically for managers who want to help their employees. We end the book at the macro level (Chapter 15). This last chapter was included to emphasize that managers function within an organizational system. If they are to perform effectively, they must understand system components.

In an attempt to facilitate the transfer of identified knowledge, attitudes, and skills to the real world, students are provided with opportunities to practice key concepts. Exercises are designed to provide hands-on experience by requiring students to simulate real work behavior. The exercises vary from chapter to chapter because of the wide range of topics covered and the inherent differences in content. Most exercises are designed to be carried out in a classroom setting; some will require preclassroom work to be performed well.

SKILLS VERSUS ACTIVITIES

It is often difficult to separate the skills required for success from the activities that these skills are designed to support. For each activity or functional area there are certain skills that must be carried out if the manager is to be successful. For example, to be successful, managers must be competent in such areas as goal setting, performance evaluation, or counseling. However, to be effective in these areas, managers also need to be skilled in the science of negotiation, conflict management, and change management. To negotiate or counsel effectively, managers should be skilled in the areas of probing, reflecting, listening, giving feedback, nonverbal communications, and so on. Therefore, some chapters deal with activities such as counseling or performance evaluations, while others deal with supporting skills such as communications. After reading this book, students will be able to successfully implement important managerial activities by drawing on the appropriate support skills.

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CONTENTS

xiii

3 Attitudes and Value Systems Necessary for Success 75

4 Effective Communication for the 1990s 127

THE ROLE
OF MANAGEMENT

Objectives:

- Explain the role of management in organizations that are moving into the 21st century.
- Articulate important environmental trends that will affect the manager's ability to perform appropriately.
- Define the underlying themes upon which subsequent chapters are based.

Understanding the Role of Management

Managers organize the enterprise's physical and technical resources; they manage the organization's financial resources; they develop and maintain market share; they deal with external constituencies, such as government and suppliers; and most importantly, they manage others or their work. Management is the process of getting others to perform activities necessary to achieve organizational and personal goals.[1] Therefore, we are not surprised when Tom Monahan, founder and president of Domino's Pizza—one of the wonder firms of the 1980s—stated, "You cannot have a successful business with just good management at the top . . . It [good management] has to go right down to the lowest levels of the organization."

Given the key role that human resources play in determining organizational productivity[2] this book focuses on the interactions between managers and their subordinates, and managers and relevant others. Relevant others include individuals with whom managers must interact in order to obtain desired levels of output and quality. By focusing on these areas, it is possible to provide the required depth of study necessary to facilitate understanding and the transfer of newly acquired skills to the job.

The ability of 1990s managers to successfully fulfill their responsibilities in these two areas has come into serious question. A key reason we experience difficulty competing with such countries as Japan, Germany, and Korea is our lack of good managers. Tom Peters emphasized this problem in his book, *Thriving on Chaos:*

> Consider this statement from Nucor Corporation's president, Ken Iverson: "I've heard people say that Nucor is proof that unions per se have a negative impact on worker productivity. That's nonsense! That conveniently ignores vital questions like: What's the quality of direction being given the workers? What are the resources the workers need to get the job done? Where's the opportunity for workers to contribute ideas about how to do the job better? The real impediment to producing a higher-quality product more efficiently isn't the workers, union or nonunion, it's management." W. Edwards Deming is a little kinder, insisting that management is merely 90 percent of the problem.[3]

The New York Times[4] argued that American managers hold the view "that there is no need to invent, build or develop anything yourself—given the capital and good financial management, anything of value can be bought and any problem can be sold. A sense of commitment—to one's workers, customers, suppliers, even one's fellow managers—is an impediment." Similarly, Mintzberg, in Canada, concluded that management has become so ineffective that it prevents economic growth.[5] Organizations, in Mintzberg's view, put people last, foster the growth of political warfare, undermine loyalty, and prevent creative leadership. Excellence in North American organizations may become a thing of the past.

Without productive employees there are no productive organizations. As Tom Peters stated, "despite the accelerating technology/automation revolution, our organizations must become more dependent on people (line workers). To be sure, fewer people will work on the line in a given factory or operations center, but those who do will be more important to and responsible for the company's success than ever before."[6] What we must realize is that technology is introduced not for the primary purpose of replacing human labor, but rather to make the human resource more productive. This only occurs if the human resource is managed effectively and thereby accepts the new technology.

The need for new management skills and behaviors not only applies to senior managers but to front-line supervisors as well. "Experts agree that the first line supervisor's role will change dramatically...They aren't going to control people anymore. They have to coach them, help to do the planning, approve organizational direction, and make sure the directions are clear. It will be an enabling function rather than a control function."[7] The era in which managers function as heroes and "carry" their group is rapidly drawing to a close. Instead, the adaptive manager must recognize the changes in the environment and take the time to continually improve existing skills and acquire new ones.

An Environmental Imperative
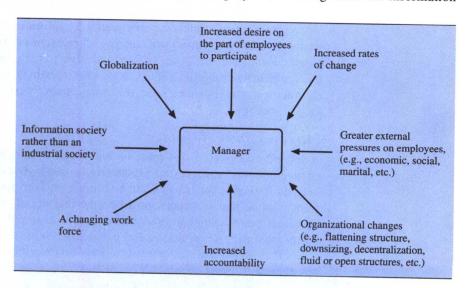
As managers attempt to develop and grow, create an environment that empowers employees, and at the same time remain competitive, they will encounter fundamental changes in their environment. If managers refuse to adapt to these changes, it is unlikely that they will be able to create an organizational climate in which their subordinates can perform at, or near, their peak capabilities. To fully appreciate the changes that managers face, it is necessary to articulate a number of trends shaping their environment in the 1990s (see Figure 1.1). It is within this changing environment that managers must learn to apply the material presented in the chapters that follow.

When considering these trends, it is important to keep these points in mind: First, the impact of many trends has already been felt by managers and their organizations. However, their ultimate impact has not yet fully worked its way through the North American enterprise system. Second, the trends are often interdependent. For example, the fact that employees are demanding a greater role in organizational decision making is a function of their increased education, better training, an increased awareness of personal rights, an increased reliance on self-control and self-help, and other related factors.

Increased Desire on the Part of Employees to Participate

Employees in Canada and the United States want to function within a work environment that provides some level of participation in decision making.[8] The pressure for greater participation is likely to increase as employees continue to increase their education, and as organizations attempt to restructure themselves in an effort to become competitive. Clemmer and McNeil pointed out that we now have "gold-collar" employees, resulting from our information

FIGURE 1.1

Environmental trends of the 1990s: What the manager faces now and in the future

age and more knowledgeable individuals, who "offer their employers imagination and original thought but at a price: they are not nearly as docile as the workers they replaced. Often knowing more than the managers who supervise them, they place a high value on getting along with their co-workers and are difficult, if not impossible, to manipulate. Their respect for authority is conditional—based on proven expertise or actual results, rather than a job title or size of office. They offer loyalty, but expect recognition and opportunities for participation in return."[9] If this is the type of employee that managers will now supervise, then managers must act to create opportunities for employee participation and self-management. However, managerial success will require more than simply increasing levels of employee participation. Managers will have to learn to negotiate, manage conflicts, effectively probe and listen to employees, manage change, and do this with the utmost integrity. If not, employee loyalty, motivation, and service will be lost.

Before moving on to the next trend, it is necessary to offer a word of caution. Managers should not assume that all employees have the same desire to participate in decision making, or need the same level of information about their work environment.[10] A desire to participate occurs if the employee is interested in the issues under consideration and if he or she has the self-confidence to believe that such efforts would be successful. Employees are likely to ask, "Do I have the knowledge, skills, and ideas that would make my contribution valuable?" A "no" response to this question is likely to dampen desire to participate. Individual differences in terms of career stage, personality, desire to fulfill higher order needs (growth, achievement, recognition, etc.) are also likely to affect an employee's desire for participation in decision making. An employee who *(a)* has reached a career plateau and no longer seeks advancement, *(b)* is close to retirement, *(c)* is an isolate (desires to be left alone), or *(d)* is more interested in job security than an enriched job environment, may avoid such opportunities.

Managers can stimulate participation by informing subordinates of their desire to have them participate, sharing all relevant information with subordinates, educating subordinates on how and when to participate, providing opportunities in which subordinates can participate, creating a trusting and supporting environment, and providing positive consequences for participative efforts when they do occur.

Increased Rates of Change

A second major trend that must be addressed by tomorrow's managers is a change rate that is increasing exponentially, and a series of steady states (i.e., periods without change) that are becoming shorter and shorter.[11] Rosabeth Kanter stated that managers must become masters of change if they want to be effective.[12] Kanter argued in her recent book, *When Giants Learn to Dance,* that the rate of change and competition have accelerated to such high levels that, to survive, organizations must become innovative and flexible. If not, they will become extinct.[13]