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MASTERY of MANAGEMENT

How to avoid obsolescence by
preparing for tomorrow's
management today

AUREN URIS

The Research Institute of America, Inc.



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MASTERY
of
MANAGEMENT

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Preface



Here's a conversation between two top executives, overheard during a break in a recent management seminar:

"This morning's session made me realize that management is changing at a terrific rate. Most of the stuff we covered was unheard of 5, certainly 10 years ago—participative management, for example, and the task force concept."

"Yes. It's a new ball game."

"No, it isn't! And that's what's so confusing."

"What do you mean?"

"If it were a new ball game it would be a lot simpler. What confounds me is that it's partly an old ball game, partly new. If it were *entirely* a new ball game, we could just junk the old rules and start from scratch. But today, practicing management is like playing on a regulation diamond with 16 players out in the field. And when you hit the ball, instead of running to first, second, and third base, you head to third base, *then* to first, second, and home."

"Your example is a little far-fetched, but I get the point. . . ."

The nature and rate of change in the management field today is indeed so extreme that basic reappraisal and reorientation is necessary both for the students and the practitioners of management. And what's required is the integration of new insights and information into what remains useful of the old.

If one adopts a broad perspective for the moment, it becomes clear that management is changing because the world at large is changing. Tremendous developments have been bombarding

our society. According to some authorities, we have undergone more change in the last 10 years than in the previous 100. Everywhere one looks, the drastic nature of developments becomes visible. In the sciences such as biology and physics, developments of DNA, new understanding of the makeup of matter, the applied science represented by our giant steps in space, spell out a picture of change. In medicine, organ transplants, cryogenic techniques, the development of drugs and antibiotics, new understanding of longevity, revolutionize prospects for the health and life-span of the individual.

And on the social scene, innovation and upset are rampant. New attitudes towards work and leisure; the so-called sexual revolution and its effect on the behavior of young people; cracks in the foundations of organized religion, the concept that "God is dead," all add up to a world with new values, new attitudes, and fresh ideas about how to spend one's life and develop one's career.

No wonder then that the world of management, with its roots in an exploding technology and human relationships on the work-scene, is undergoing a revolution.

The problems suggested by the conversation between the two executives must be met by a reappraisal of management concepts, procedures, and practices. Accordingly, *Mastery of Management* aims to supply a realistic and useful view of management in an era of change. It offers a context in which the origins, the present status, and future course of development of key areas in the field, are examined and clarified, to the end that managers and executives, present and future, can update their management understanding and practices. Again, new knowledge must be blended with traditional wisdom.

In attempting this ambitious work, the assistance of many individuals contributed to the final result. Most of the indebtedness to authorities in the field as well as experienced executives who shared their views and insights with the author, are acknowledged at appropriate points in the text. In addition, these acknowledgments are gratefully made:

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Auren Uris

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Introduction

“Can anyone write a book that will help the practicing manager—and the countless thousands who will fill the ranks tomorrow—catch up, get reoriented, in the whirling, changing world of management?”

This is the challenging question—and urgent need—to which *Mastery of Management* addresses itself. Obviously, no one book, nor 10 volumes for that matter, could do the complete job. Nevertheless, it is hoped that *Mastery of Management* does provide a foundation for the updating process that the inroads of the “management revolution” demands.

Behind the problem

“It’s a lot tougher to be a good manager today.”

That’s the feeling both of practicing executives, and of expert observers of the management scene. Why? Two factors explain this development.

Management problems are becoming more complex. With the disappearance of a traditional technology operated by authoritarian business leadership, both the hardware and the human problems of today’s business establishment are developing ailments less easy to diagnose, and requiring more sophisticated methods of treatment.

Management itself is becoming more complicated. The old ways are no longer the good ways. Such standbys as company loyalty, acceptance of authority, punishment-reward motiva-

tion, are rapidly fading from the work scene, requiring new and more sophisticated management tools to keep both the people and the machines operating at satisfactory levels of performance.

A particular and personal victim of the management revolution is the obsolete executive. The obsolescence of managerial skills has been widely noted. In a world where experience may be a handicap instead of an asset, today's *better* manager may be the one in for the greatest shock from the advent of change.

Twenty years ago, a young man starting out in business could take comfort in the fact that his new world of work was, by and large, similar to that of his father's generation. But in the last decade, the forces of change have shattered old systems and means:

Automation, the computer, and mathematical concepts of planning and decision-making have altered the content of work.

The findings of the behavioral scientist have also demolished traditional concepts. The fact is, today's manager must cope with "new" people. On the one hand, managers must work with subordinates who are more highly educated and have more realistic aspirations than in the days past. At the same time, companies are hiring high school dropouts, educationally and economically disadvantaged individuals unused to the world of work. Problems of new attitudes and values must be met by new techniques.

Toward a mastery of management

What is needed for a mastery of this changing, complex field? Essentially, a new orientation, a fresh view of the workscene and its new directions. Accordingly, *Mastery of Management* attempts to do two things:

First, provide in broad perspective a backward and forward view of the art/science of management, so that the reader can get a meaningful orientation in the field—see the big picture of where management has been and where it is going.

Second, provide specific courses of action that will help the reader review and update his management skills, so that he will be prepared to manage in today's and tomorrow's business world. To this end, the first three chapters and the last one con-

clude with carefully selected lists of recent books for those who want to further explore the subject areas of the text. All the other chapters conclude with "Points for Executive Thought and Action," material designed to help executives develop personal insights and practical "how-to-do" aspects of the subjects covered in the respective chapters.

In short, this volume aims to equip the manager with the insights and techniques required to manage successfully in the rapidly changing contemporary work situation. To do so effectively, key areas and concepts of management have been organized under four major headings:

Part I *Dynamics—The Big Picture*

Part II *Environment*

Part III *Tools*

Part IV *The Future*

In these four areas, then, *Dynamics—The Big Picture*, *Environment*, *Tools*, *The Future*, are shown the parameters in which the executive of today and tomorrow will be working. It is hoped that the material assembled within the covers of this volume will provide a realistic and practical view of the executive's domain that will make it possible for him to continue to excel in his profession, and in so doing help build a better world for tomorrow.

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Part I dynamics—the big picture

The first three chapters define the transformation of the executive, comparing what he was in the first half of the century to what he is and does today.

The two major forces that have created change on the work scene are discussed in detail: the technology that has influenced the man behind the executive desk; next, the role of behavioral science as it influences executive techniques and procedures. These chapters add up to a broad overview of the management field, with emphasis on the major change factors.

Transformation of the executive

"Today's manager is a new breed."

Almost unanimously, observers of the business scene note that today's executive is a different man, doing different work, in different ways than those of his predecessor 25 or 40 years ago. It is clear, too, that the changes in the executive's job have been real, substantial—and accelerating. Yet several key questions are often left unanswered:

Why is today's executive different?

How is he different?

What new or continuing changes in his job lie ahead?

Answers to these questions are important not only to the hundreds of thousands already in the management profession, but to the much greater number who will be tomorrow's practitioners.

Useful perspective is gained by looking backward to see what the executive was and how he operated in previous decades; then we can measure his progress, appraise his achievements, and consider the direction of his future growth.

The executive circa 1870—a fictional record

Although we have no sociologically accurate study of the early executive prototype at work, artistic sources provide help-

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ful data. One colorful piece of evidence is the description of a New England businessman in the 1870's provided by William Dean Howells in his novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham*.

Lapham is a successful paint manufacturer, and in the first chapter a journalist, Bartley Hubbard, comes to interview him for a newspaper article. The meeting of the two men in Lapham's office provides a vivid glimpse of an executive of 100 years ago in his working environment. Here are excerpts from Howells' description:

“When Bartley Hubbard went to interview Silas Lapham for the ‘Solid Men of Boston’ series . . . Lapham received him in his private office by appointment.

“‘Walk right in!’ he called out to the journalist, whom he caught sight of through the door of the counting-room.

“He did not rise from the desk at which he was writing, but he gave Bartley his left hand for welcome, and he rolled his large head in the direction of a vacant chair. ‘Sit down! I’ll be with you in just half a minute.’ . . .

“‘There!’ Lapham pounded with his great hairy fist on the envelope he had been addressing. ‘William!’ he called out, and he handed the letter to a boy who came to get it. ‘I want that to go right away. Well, sir,’ he continued, wheeling round in his leather-cushioned swivel chair, and facing Bartley, seated so near that their knees almost touched, ‘so you want my life, death, and Christian sufferings, do you, young man?’ . . . He put out his huge foot and pushed the ground-glass door shut between his little den and the bookkeepers in their larger den outside. . . .

“Lapham suddenly lifted his bulk out of his swivel-chair, and led the way out into the wareroom beyond the office partitions, where rows and ranks of casks, barrels, and kegs stretched dimly back to the rear of the building, and diffused an honest, clean, wholesome smell of oil and paint . . . ‘There!’

said Lapham, kicking one of the largest casks with the toe of his boot, 'That's about our biggest package; and here,' he added, laying his hand affectionately at the head of a very small keg, as if it were the head of a child, which it resembled in size, 'this is the smallest. We used to put the paint on the market dry, but now we grind every ounce of it in oil—very best quality of linseed oil—and warrant it. We find it gives more satisfaction. Now, come back to the office and I'll show you our fancy brands.' . . .

“[Finally Bartley is ready to leave.] ‘Good afternoon, Colonel.’

“Lapham put on a straw hat, gathered up some papers lying on his desk, pulled down its rolling cover, turned the key in it, and gave the papers to an extremely handsome young woman at one of the desks in the outer office. She was stylishly dressed, as Bartley saw, and her smooth, yellow hair was sculpturesquely waved over a low, white forehead. ‘Here,’ said Lapham, with the same prompt gruff kindness that he had used in addressing the young man, ‘I want you should put these in shape, and give me a type-writer copy tomorrow.’

“‘What an uncommonly pretty girl!’ said Bartley, as they descended the rough stairway and found their way out to the street, past the dangling rope of a block and tackle wandering up into the cavernous darkness overhead.”

Looking backward 100 years

From the American novelist's vivid paragraphs emerge a number of key observations about the management world of the 1870's:

Working environment. Silas Lapham's office is right next to an active operating part of his business, the warehouse. The office is there because of a necessary relationship. In the formative days of business, the head of the firm usually located close to the working heart of his business, since he was the direct supervisor of the work. A mine owner's quarters were built near