

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Kendrith M. Rowland
Gerald R. Ferris

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Kendrith M. Rowland

Gerald R. Ferris

*University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign*

Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
Boston London Sydney Toronto

Copyright © 1982 by Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. All rights reserved. No part of the material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Rowland, Kendrith Martin.
Personnel management.

Bibliography: p.
Includes indexes.
1. Personnel management. 2. Personnel management
—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Ferris, Gerald R.
II. Title.
HF5549.R653 658.3 81-14995
ISBN 0-205-07740-4 AACR2

PREFACE

Organizational scientists write books for a number of different reasons, perhaps most typically because it is something they have wanted to do for a long time ("I have had this book in me for nearly ten years"), or because they feel there is a real need for it ("Why hasn't something like this been done before?"). *Personnel Management* falls into the second category, and some elaboration will serve to clarify this point.

First of all, this book was not "written" by us. Rather, it is a collection of contributed chapters by experts in the field. Thus, we like to depict our role as planning and organizing—perhaps "orchestrating"—the efforts of others in the accomplishment of a meaningful outcome. Rather than regard this book as a collection of readings, we prefer to think of it as a text that just happens to include seventeen original chapters written by twenty-four people. This book, therefore, is intended to answer a need in the field of personnel management; that is, to present a forum for the exchange of current thinking and future perspectives on the field. To date, nothing quite like this has ever been done.

Second, and consistent with the emerging trends in the field, we have included topics we believe represent legitimate areas of concern for the field, but ones not likely to be found in most personnel management texts today. Job and organizational stress, for example, is a prominent concern for many organizations and management groups. Behavioral scientists, in turn, are beginning to give more attention to this topic. The fact that stress is infrequently discussed in personnel management texts does not suggest to us that it is an inappropriate area of attention for the personnel function.

Organizational exit, while a relatively new term, does not constitute a new and original topic. Organizational scientists and practitioners have acknowledged and avidly discussed the problems of absenteeism and turnover for some time. We see absenteeism and turnover, however, as but one side of the coin, representing only the voluntary side of exit. An equally important side of organizational exit is involuntary exit, the processes by which individuals leave organizations against their will, and, in like manner, the responsibilities of the organization for addressing these matters.

Motivation also represents a continuing concern for behavioral and organizational scientists. The focus given the topic in this book, in contrast to that usually given it in the organizational behavior literature, is more utilitarian than descriptive (in a sense, more managerial). Motivational strategies are discussed as ways to meet persistent human resource problems in organizations.

Third, we would like to say something more about the rather distinctive format of this book. While some may not view it as a text, because it lacks a tight, integrative framework, our primary purpose was to address a number of different and perhaps more critical concerns expressed by instructors of courses in personnel management, especially the more advanced courses. We found, for example, that a good many instructors felt constrained by the structure of the conventional text, and, as a result, were turning to readers to allow them more flexibility. A reader permits flexibility, but often, unfortunately, at the expense of comprehensiveness. To meet the dual needs for flexibility *and* comprehensiveness, we decided to use the contributed chapters format as an appropriate alternative.

Further, to depart significantly from a mere rendition of the selected topics in each chapter, we established essentially two guidelines for the contributing authors. In order to ensure comprehensiveness and provide grounding in the basics, we asked that considerable attention be paid to state-of-the-art concepts, issues, and information. In addition, we asked that a part of each chapter be devoted to a discussion of new perspectives on the area and the identification of important issues for practice and research in the future.

Fourth, we were naturally interested in the overall, content quality of the final product. With many texts, it is not reasonable to assume that the author can be an expert in each (or even several) of the areas covered. Thus, some weaknesses in content coverage are bound to occur. For the topics addressed in this book, we believe we have convened some of the most knowledgeable people in the field. Thus, the student and professional practitioner should receive a thorough grounding in each area. The flexibility and comprehensiveness of the chosen topics and format, plus the strengths of the contributing authors in their respective areas of expertise, seemed to us an ideal (and an unbeatable) combination.

The content of the book is organized into eight parts. Part One, entitled "Foundations," includes in Chapter One (Rowland and Ferris) perspectives on the field of personnel management and two major components of the field: personnel practice and personnel research. Chapter Two (Arvey and Shingledecker) focuses on research methods in personnel management.

Part Two is entitled "Personnel and Job Planning." In Chapter Three (Dyer), consideration is given to human resource planning, a personnel activity that attempts to link the organization to its external environment. Job analysis, one of the most fundamental activities of the personnel function, is described in Chapter Four (Sparks). Conceptually, the activities of this section of the book set the stage for a series of interactions between the individual and the organization.

The title of Part Three is "Organizational Entry," which is the processes by which individuals attain organizational membership. Chapter Five (Schwab) reviews the processes of job search by the individual and recruitment by the organization. The employment interview, the most widely used device in the selection process, is discussed in Chapter Six (Hakel). Finally, Chapter Seven (Sharf) provides an in-depth analysis of the legal constraints on personnel testing and other employment practices.

"Evaluation and Reinforcement of Work Performance" is the title of Part Four. Chapter Eight (Kavanagh) examines the performance evaluation process and new per-

spectives on this much neglected topic, while matters of pay and compensation, which affect the employment relationship, are reviewed in Chapter Nine (Mahoney). In Chapter Ten (Mitchell), the topic of work motivation is discussed and some strategies for increasing it are suggested.

Part Five is "Personnel Training and Development." Chapter Eleven (Lacey, Lee, and Wallace) provides perspectives on both general training and development concepts and issues, while Chapter Twelve (Boehm) deals with the specific uses and benefits of the assessment center technique in selecting and developing managers.

Part Six, "Careers and the Work Environment," focuses on several important topics in personnel management. Career planning and development is a popular personnel activity today. This topic is discussed in Chapter Thirteen (Milkovich and Anderson) from the standpoint of both the individual and the organization. An equally important topic is the antecedents and consequences of job and organizational stress, which is reviewed in Chapter Fourteen (Beehr and Schuler). The final chapter in this section, Chapter Fifteen (Fossum), considers union-management relations, with special emphasis on the collective bargaining process.

Having gone full circle from planning for human resources, to recruiting and selecting them, evaluating and rewarding them, and then developing them, Part Seven, "Organizational Exit," focuses on the processes by which individuals leave organizations. Chapter Sixteen (Steers and Stone) discusses both voluntary and involuntary exit and a number of relevant issues for personnel practice and research.

"Overview," Part Eight, is the final section of the book. Chapter Seventeen (Strauss) presents perspectives on the field and the practice of personnel management in organizations from the past and present, but gives primary attention to the future.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge the major contributions of others. To Mike Meehan, Managing Editor of Allyn and Bacon, we owe a debt of gratitude for believing in us and our ideas for this "impossible" book. To the contributing authors, we extend a word of special thanks for giving their best and timely efforts in the preparation of their respective chapters. To Carol Halliday and Howard Weinstein, a word of special thanks also; Carol, for her careful (and patient) typing skills, and Howard, for helping us with the references.

The "orchestration" analogy used earlier clearly applies. The individual authors contributed substantially to this being a quality piece, much as musicians are the integral components in a celebrated orchestra. However, they cannot bear the responsibility of weaknesses in the planning and organizing of this book, an occasional editorial quirk, Chapter One, and any other potential "sour notes" that are detected. These, of course, must be borne by us as the conductors (or, in this case, coeditors).

K. M. R.
G. R. F.

CONTENTS

Preface ix

Part One: FOUNDATIONS 1

1. Perspectives on Personnel Management 2
Kendrith M. Rowland and Gerald R. Ferris
2. Research Methods in Personnel Management 24
Richard D. Arvey and Pamela Shingledecker

Part Two: PERSONNEL AND JOB PLANNING 51

3. Human Resource Planning 52
Lee Dyer
4. Job Analysis 78
C. Paul Sparks

Part Three: ORGANIZATIONAL ENTRY 101

5. Recruiting and Organizational Participation 103
Donald P. Schwab
6. Employment Interviewing 129
Milton D. Hakel
7. Personnel Testing and the Law 156
James C. Sharf

**Part Four: EVALUATION AND REINFORCEMENT OF WORK
PERFORMANCE 185**

- 8. Evaluating Performance 187
Michael J. Kavanagh
- 9. Compensating for Work 227
Thomas A. Mahoney
- 10. Motivational Strategies 263
Terence R. Mitchell

Part Five: PERSONNEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 301

- 11. Training and Development 303
David W. Lacey, Robert J. Lee, and Lawrence J. Wallace
- 12. Assessment Centers and Management Development 327
Virginia R. Boehm

Part Six: CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AND THE WORK ENVIRONMENT 363

- 13. Career Planning and Development Systems 364
George T. Milkovich and John C. Anderson
- 14. Stress in Organizations 390
Terry A. Beehr and Randall S. Schuler
- 15. Union-Management Relations 420
John A. Fossum

Part Seven: ORGANIZATIONAL EXIT 461

- 16. Organizational Exit 462
Richard M. Steers and Thomas H. Stone

Part Eight: OVERVIEW 503

- 17. Personnel Management: Prospect for the Eighties 504
George Strauss

References	547
Author Index	597
Subject Index	609

PART ONE

FOUNDATIONS

The processes by which we seek to advance the field of Personnel Management (PM) are theory-building, research, and practice. Good theory, supported by appropriate research methods, is the fundamental building block of professional practice. Theory is shaped by professional practice, and theory is deficient if it fails to adequately explain and support practice. In turn, practice is not good (or professional) if it fails to adequately use and test theory. In a sense, the link between theory and practice is research.

In Chapter 1, Rowland and Ferris present their perspectives on the field of personnel management, both in terms of practice and research. They review and then propose some tentative explanations concerning the changing image and role of the personnel function in organizations and the field in general. In the latter part of the chapter, they lay some groundwork for the topics covered in Chapter 2. They suggest that the field may be plagued by the lack of good theory because of a preoccupation with method in research. They also discuss some different modes of scientific inquiry for the field. The current emphasis on method and inductive theory-building is not without merit, but an exclusive reliance upon such a mode of inquiry will likely result in little new ground-breaking theory and thereby have detrimental consequences for the advancement of the field.

In Chapter 2, Arvey and Shingledecker touch on some important philosophy-of-science issues which provide the essential tools for better theory-building. They also discuss traditional, as well as some less traditional, methods for investigating and understanding organizational phenomena. The presentation takes the reader through the basic psychometric issues in laboratory and field research, including a discussion of some currently popular designs and analytical tools. Arvey and Shingledecker argue for more longitudinal research in the future in order to more thoroughly understand the antecedents of the phenomena of interest and seek to establish more definitive causal statements. These arguments lead to a discussion of some data analytic tools in field research for establishing these causal statements, such as cross-lagged panel correlations and path analysis.

CHAPTER ONE

PERSPECTIVES ON PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Kendrith M. Rowland and Gerald R. Ferris

Kendrith M. Rowland is Professor of Business Administration at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He received his DBA from Indiana University. Professor Rowland has served in several administrative capacities at the University of Illinois, including Assistant Dean of the College of Commerce and Business Administration, and Associate Head of the Department of Business Administration. His research interests span a number of areas in both organizational behavior and personnel management. He is the author of numerous journal articles and is coeditor of the book, *Current Issues in Personnel Management*. Prior to his academic career, Professor Rowland served as a psychiatric social worker and as a corporate communications and training director in industry.

Gerald R. Ferris is Visiting Lecturer of Personnel Management and Organizational Behavior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Ferris formerly was Associate Director of Organizational Research at the Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, and he still consults with that organization and others in a number of personnel management areas. Professor Ferris' research interests include the performance appraisal process, the employment interview, and determinants of employee absenteeism. He is the author of several journal articles and coeditor of the book, *Current Issues in Personnel Management*.

Organizations can be viewed as collections of people and activities, separated by function, that share a common mission. Among the functions in organizations are manufacturing, marketing, and personnel. Each function is included in an area of formal inquiry in most college and university business curricula. The personnel function represents the applied component of the field of Personnel Management (PM). It is usually identified as a staff function, much as production planning or quality control are viewed as staff functions to manufacturing.

The personnel function, as part of the general management process, is concerned with the development, implementation, and evaluation of organizational policies and practices bearing on the employment relationship. That is, while the focus of general management is on the management of the organization's many resources, the specific focus of the personnel function is on the management of its human resources.

There is some evidence to suggest that changes in the field of PM and the role of the personnel function are occurring (e.g., Meyer, 1976). These changes, it is proposed, reflect the current philosophical climate of American society—a climate that is embedded in what is identified as the Quality of Work Life (QWL) Era. The QWL era translates for organizations into a greater emphasis on the individual employee and improving his or her work environment to enhance job satisfaction and productivity.

A brief excursion into the past will be used to demonstrate how the personnel function has evolved over the years from a nearly total concern with productivity to a greater, and some would say more balanced, concern with satisfaction and productivity.

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

The history of the personnel function is divided into five eras, each with a different philosophical orientation or climate.

Industrial Revolution Era

Between the late 1700s and mid-1800s, this country began to change from an agricultural to an industrial society. During this time, major changes occurred in the processes by which goods were produced. With the emergence of factory-centered production, production in the home declined. Machinery and factory methods to facilitate production were introduced, thus resulting in the decline of many skilled crafts. People were brought together into work settings and structurally organized by division of labor and hierarchy of authority, both considered useful mechanisms for increasing production efficiency. Along with advantages in efficiency, the Industrial Revolution Era brought with it such problems as long hours and low wages for many employees (including children), and later other equally serious problems, such as monotony, boredom, and alienation, largely the result of routine, unchallenging work that was piecemeal in nature and coordinated by others. The personnel function did not exist in any formal way during this era. At times, some personnel-type activities were assumed by the owner-manager or delegated back to the community.

Scientific Management Era

About 1900, an era emerged that became well known for its explicit emphasis on technical, man-machine efficiency to increase productivity. It is usually identified as the Scientific Management Era and is associated with the efforts of Frederick Taylor, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, and others. This approach sought to make the production of goods more efficient by identifying the “one best method” for performing each job (Taylor, 1911).

In accordance with the scientific management philosophy, the approach was to engineer the job and then fit the employee to it. Scientific management was a prominent philosophy until the 1920s, but it began to decline when employers realized that many of the problems in organizations were human problems, even after they had engineered the job for maximum efficiency.

Industrial Psychology Era

A new era began to emerge between 1910 and 1920, which directly addressed the weaknesses of the scientific management approach, and changed the focus from the job to the individual. This period is labeled the Industrial Psychology Era. With the work of Hugo Munsterberg (1913) on the selection of railway motormen for the city of Boston, and Robert Yerkes on the development of psychological tests for the United States Army during World War I, a concern for some of the traditional personnel practices arose. When an improper job-person match occurred, industrial psychologists introduced training as the remedy, the purpose being to “change” the person rather than the job. This approach, while it focused on the individual, still had a fairly strong orientation to technical efficiency; that is, the proper selection and training of an employee for a given job.

Human Relations Era

The next era is identified as the Human Relations Era. It gave considerable emphasis to improving social relationships between supervisors and employees in work groups. This era grew out of the research of two Harvard professors, Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger, at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in the late 1920s and early 1930s. While the original intent of these researchers was to investigate the effects of physical factors (e.g., ventilation and illumination) on productivity, their results suggested that social factors played an equally important role in influencing employee satisfaction and productivity. A characterization of the philosophy of this era is the phrase, “Happy workers are productive workers.” This era continued through the 1950s. It was supported and shaped to a considerable extent by the social welfare and egalitarian perspectives that emerged during the depression of the 1930s and World War II.

Quality of Work Life Era

It appears that the current Quality of Work Life (QWL) Era began in the 1960s. While the primary objective of the earlier eras was to maximize production by (1) restructuring the production process (i.e., division of labor and hierarchy of authority), (2) increasing

technical or man-machine efficiency, (3) selecting or modifying the person to achieve a better job-person fit, and (4) improving human relationships at work (i.e., to build cooperation and loyalty), our society now began to witness a broader set of concerns. These concerns, in part, had to do with the possible or experienced adverse effects of organizational policies and practices on the well-being of employees or potential employees, especially minorities, and on an assortment of work-related conditions. These concerns were emphasized and legitimized by federal laws regarding equal employment opportunity (Civil Rights Act, Title VII), safety and health (Occupational Safety and Health Act), and the protection of retirement income (Employee Retirement Income Security Act).

These concerns, also with major implications for work organizations, were related to questions about national goals and policies on such critical issues as employment/unemployment, inflation/recession, pollution, and energy, to name a few. What were the nation's goals on these issues? What priorities, if any, had been placed (or were being placed) on them? What policies should guide the nation in the accomplishment of its goals?

With the advent of much legislation in regard to the management of human resources in organizations, and the concomitant compliance required by government regulations and guidelines, additional programs and monitoring activities were created for the personnel function. In summary, organizational efforts toward improving productivity continued, but these were supplemented with efforts toward providing equal employment opportunity, job enrichment, protection of privacy and freedom of speech, reduction of stress, drug abuse, alcoholism, and so forth, all of which demonstrated considerable interest in the employee as an individual.

Recent proposals for pressing on with these efforts have received a great deal of attention and acceptance (e.g., Hackman and Suttle, 1977; Lawler, 1980). However, few have examined the implications of this type of response to the QWL philosophy and the possibility that the consequences may not always be as positive as depicted. For example, in reviews about the rise and decline of bureaucratic organizations, an underlying assumption is that decline was a response to changing conditions in the environment, particularly the lack of commitment by employees to work and their organizations. In that context, much of the thrust of organizations was to respond to a *crisis of commitment* (Beer, 1980). The matter of commitment involved not only an "economic contract"; it also involved a "psychological contract" (Schein, 1971). The consequence, perhaps, was a psychology of entitlement.

On the other side of the QWL philosophy, of course, is the issue of productivity and the accomplishment of essential organizational goals, including survival. During the past decade, our nation has witnessed a declining rate of productivity. According to recent sources (*Work in America*, 1979; *Wall Street Journal*, 1980), many reasons exist for this decline. Some of these can be classified as people-centered reasons, such as changing value systems concerning the meaning and importance of work, and efforts, in response to federal legislation, to integrate and upgrade the labor force through a variety of equal opportunity/affirmative action programs. It is possible, in this regard, to consider the emergence of another type of crisis, a *crisis of adaptability* at the organizational level (Beer, 1980). The connotation here is that productivity must increase for organizations to remain competitive with other organizations in this country and abroad, and

to begin to address some of the problems of world population growth in the face of currently available natural resources.

The choice, in a simplistic frame, is to address either the crisis of commitment or the crisis of adaptability, or, perhaps as a third alternative, to address some combination of both. A major implication of a focus on commitment alone is that organizations may maximize the well-being of the individual employee, but potentially "goodwill themselves to death." So far, the QWL philosophy has emphasized (and perhaps rightly so) the crisis of commitment, but our nation has paid a price for it—productivity has fallen off. Thus, the answer to the productivity problem is probably not an escalation of the present approach, unless it can build such a level of commitment to the collectivity that the individual employee is willing to forego the opportunity to maximize self-interest in exchange for ensuring the viability of the larger unit. This point makes reference to the distinction between the concepts of *individualism* and *collectivism* (e.g., Wagner, 1982; Lazarsfeld and Menzel, 1961). In this country, the dominant ethic is individualism. In fact, this ethic forms the very basis of our capitalistic society. The claim that the individualism ethic is at least partially responsible for some of the organizational problems today receives support from the successes of many Japanese organizations operating in a society with a predominantly collectivist ethic.

Therefore, in regard to the suggested trade-off between commitment at the individual level and adaptability at the organizational level, the answer may well be to view the two not as mutually exclusive choices, but rather as interactive and interdependent. That is, within an attitudes (A) → behavior (B) → attitudes (A) framework, two potential courses of action for the management of human resources are possible. One course of action would be to first build commitment, which in turn would hopefully lead to adaptability (increased productivity). The alternate course of action would be to "push" for adaptability. This presumably would impact positively on employee attitudes (increased commitment) if the outcomes were seen as reinforcing to fundamental (survival) goals. Conceptually, these two approaches are driven by two popular models: one, that attitudes cause behavior (e.g., Costello and Zalkind, 1963), the other, that behavior causes attitudes (Bem, 1972; Weick, 1979).

The extremes of either of these two courses of action, it seems, should be avoided. Rather, an interactive, complementary approach might be based on a contingency perspective; that is, matching the course of action to be taken with the situation at hand. Major problems exist with respect to a contingency perspective, however, because of the uncertainties encountered when every course of action "depends on the situation." This perspective may be salvageable, but the task, of course, is to better specify the conditions under which the outcomes of certain decisions are more or less advantageous. There is a final problem: whether the decision to change from one course of action to another in a pluralistic, political environment can be accomplished in a timely fashion.

EVOLUTION OF PERSONNEL DEPARTMENTS

As noted in the review of the history of the personnel function, personnel departments did not always exist. The first personnel departments were established about 1910, during the early years of the Industrial Psychology Era. The first college course in person-

nel management (i.e., a course essentially for managers of personnel departments) was offered through an evening program at Columbia University in 1920 by Ordway Tead. Professor Tead also coauthored the first personnel management textbook in the same year (Tead and Metcalf, 1920).

The principal activities of personnel departments during the Industrial Psychology Era were the selection, training, and compensation of factory and office employees. These activities were expanded during the Human Relations Era to include the development and implementation of a variety of fringe benefits and social programs (now combined perhaps under the rubric of *employee relations*), such as team sports, long-service and retirement awards dinners, and picnics to celebrate special company achievements or holidays. This era also saw the growth and expansion of unionization, and activities by personnel departments to cope with this significant development in labor-management relations.

Often these activities were the responsibility of a small staff of generalists. As time went on, organizations grew larger and began to face legal and quasi-legal constraints in the management of their employees, especially those protected by union contracts. There arose a need for some division of labor and specialization within personnel departments. The scope of personnel activities expanded to encompass the selection, training, and compensation of managers, contract negotiations and grievance handling, and eventually the administration of a wide range of new and improved employee benefit programs. These activities often required additional skills, and sets of activities that used to take little time, now required the full-time attention of several people.

With the emergence of the QWL era and more employment legislation, the activities of personnel departments and the number of specialists responsible for those activities expanded still further. Government compliance requirements in regard to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action were added to virtually every personnel activity. This led, in turn, to the introduction and use of human resource information systems for record keeping and for anticipating future staffing requirements at all levels in the organization. Formal human resource planning activities, which began in the late 1950s, became more sophisticated and at times made effective use of these information systems. Organization development programs, including job enrichment and team-building activities to increase job challenge and work coordination, were established in many organizations to complement existing programs and activities in the management development area. The new benefit programs of the 1950s were refined and altered to meet changing conditions.

A consequence of the evolution of personnel departments, and the growth and diversity of activities conducted by personnel practitioners, is the terminology problem. There is considerable confusion about what one should label this function and the field that supports it.

THE TERMINOLOGY PROBLEM

Some common terms that attempt to define the function and the field are *employee relations*, *personnel*, or *personnel management*. More recently, the term *human resource management* has come into popular usage. At times, the term *industrial relations* is

used, but typically this refers to such activities as grievance handling, collective bargaining, or, in a generic sense, union-management relations. With the exception of the latter, these terms are often used interchangeably. For the purposes of this book, the terms *personnel* and *personnel management* are generally used.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE FIELD

Having provided a brief, historical perspective on the personnel function, our attention is now directed to a number of alternative perspectives on the field of Personnel Management (PM). One of these perspectives has to do with the organization of the field itself. Is there, for example, any useful way of looking at the field? Can it be divided somehow to help one's understanding of it? From our perspective, which is offered as but one of several alternatives, the field of PM can be divided into two components: personnel practice and personnel research. Personnel practice is equated with the efforts of personnel department staffs to effectively perform the personnel function in organizations. In turn, personnel research is equated with the conceptual and methodological tools employed by college and university faculty and personnel researchers in large organizations (e.g., AT&T) in the area of PM. Both personnel practice and personnel research contribute to, and draw from, the composite field of PM.

Clearly, the focus of the field (as identified here and by others) is on people, and especially people as employees in work organizations. As a result, the field is problem-centered. However, the personnel research component of the field recognizes and encourages investigations of people-oriented topics that appear to have limited relevance to the solving of people problems in work organizations. In fact, such investigations often create new problems or redefine old ones for practice and research. On the other hand, when and where good personnel practice and personnel research come together, useful approaches to solving such problems are often found.

The following perspectives attempt to deal somewhat independently and nontraditionally with the two components of the field: first personnel practice and then personnel research. Also, a time dimension is added to allow some brief speculation concerning the future of PM. However, major emphasis on the future of PM is provided in Chapter 17.

PERSPECTIVES ON PERSONNEL PRACTICE

Most observers would agree that the professional practice of the personnel function has changed since the 1960s, since the beginning of what has been called the QWL era.

Like other eras before it, the QWL era arose out of a variety of major developments in the social, economic, technological, political, and demographic environments of American society, and continues to be supported by them.