

# Management Development

KENNETH B. WOLFE

*Author's Note: This article is the result of conversations with numerous training personnel. I have tried to combine the difficulties training men encounter in establishing a Management Development Program with a suggested approach to "selling" it.*

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## What Is It?

In my estimation too much ado has been made about this area. Actually, what are we trying to accomplish through this generalized medium? Isn't it merely the systematic, organized training of the individual supervisor, foreman, manager, etc., so that he may better perform his managerial duties?

Towards this end, I would like to take the down-to-earth common sense approach. That is, strip the magical wrappings away and relate each phase of the program to past practice, pointing out that all we are actually doing is a more complete job through organization and, most important, consistent and close follow-up to determine whether we are achieving the desired results.

What do I mean by the term organization? First, reduce the plan to writing

and have it accepted as part of operational policy of the company; second, meet with top management to assure understanding as to the procedure; and third, determine who will coordinate the overall program. It is extremely important that we consider each person (being developed) as an individual, determine his specific needs, group those personnel together where a common need exists, deliver a program which will fulfill this need. Also, through outside sources, such as schools, consultants, libraries, professional society conferences, etc., arrange for each individual to fulfill his particular need.

Why then, is management somewhat reluctant to engage in an overall program which will insure, through long-range planning, a reserve of personnel capable of assuming the "reins" in the event it becomes necessary? To approach almost any member of management and inquire as to whether a suitable "second team" has been trained, the answer would be yes. At the risk of being impertinent, I would disallow this answer in a great number of cases. I refer to those companies where the "old hit-and-miss" apprenticeship type of training is

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KENNETH B. WOLFE received his AB Degree in psychology at Lycoming College at Williamsport, Pennsylvania in 1951 and has done post graduate work in industrial management at Pennsylvania State University. Upon leaving college, he was employed by the Lycoming Division - AVCO Manufacturing Corporation in the general employment area. Leaving his position as Employment Supervisor at Lycoming, he became Training Supervisor at American Viscose Corporation's Lewistown plant. He recently joined General Railway Signal Company of Rochester, New York as Training Coordinator.

the *modus operandi*. I mean those companies who are attempting to train assistants without any central agency (training department or otherwise) to insure adequate research for each trainee to determine his specific training needs and also to provide adequate follow-up.

It can also be true that the selection process is nothing more than a pseudo-physiognomy type where, if the individual doesn't get into difficulty too often, and he "parts his hair right," he is selected. Modern selection methods behoove management to use a more objective selection process.

### **General Plan**

To reduce the plan to writing, the program steps must be established. To define the training needs, a management inventory must be taken. Every management person must be appraised to determine his individual needs. This may be accomplished through an appraisal form in conjunction with an appraisal interview during which he is requested to list the responsibilities and qualifications of his position and to evaluate his qualifications. Department managers should be trained in appraisal interviewing so they are capable of assisting the person in making an honest evaluation of his qualifications and ultimately, his needs. This appraisal should be made in the form of an annual or semi-annual report and should report weaknesses and what is being done about them, strong points, and advancement potential. The same pattern can be followed with pre-supervisory trainees with a marked degree of success.

If the needs of several personnel are similar, the training may be given in the

form of a course, otherwise outside agencies may be utilized.

Since selection is the beginning and one of the more important phases of the program, the following steps are recommended to secure the best possible candidate. First, make an investigation and evaluation of the person's personal life; second, determine if the person possesses the minimum technical job knowledge; third, obtain and evaluate test results including IQ at least, aptitude and personality; fourth, obtain recommendations from member of management; and fifth, assemble a committee, consisting of management, (one from the department to which the candidate is to be assigned) to sit as a general appraisal board.

### **Existing Personnel**

Discussing selection brings up the question of what do you do with existing management personnel who have training needs. The same procedure applies insofar as appraisal and training are concerned. However, unfortunate though it may be, the process may indicate that transfer or possibly even discharge is in order. This will be evident when the inventory is completed, training given and performance re-evaluated.

An important part of the program is the follow-up with each trainee's manager. It behooves the trainee's manager to live up to the ideas and philosophy being taught.

The management development formula is simple—so why the reluctance on the part of management to provide the same systematic, organized approach as they do for their every day production problems?