

WHY HASN'T MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT WORKED?

*motivational management
development: an approach
to career planning and
human resource management*

Has there been a significant pay-off for the management development investments which we have been pouring into identifying and developing high talent managers during the past two to three decades? Is there something wrong with our management development approach? What might a totally new approach to the manager development process look like? Questions such as these reflect the increasing concern now emerging and the resulting dilemmas being faced by many organizations.

No one would dispute the importance of managerial leadership in the successful achievement of any undertaking. Indeed the essential character of leadership in goal achievement is an almost universally accepted fact. Although the presence of managerial leadership in the formula of accomplishment is readily recognized, practically no one has been able to describe its components, except in specific situations. Furthermore, development of leadership potential in individuals is at best an "art" often practiced by other leaders who feel they have discovered through their own successes, the leadership "potion." Management development practitioners have heralded the notion that we can, indeed, educate managers to manage by teaching them what they need to know about how to manage. The practice of manager development, by its very nature, implies doing something *to the* individual. It makes little or no attempt to understand the individual's own needs and motivations, whether they be directed at learning to manage or not.

Annually, companies divert millions of dollars into so-called management development programs. Numerous organizations (American Management Association, Industrial Education Institute, Bureau of Industrial Relations, etc.) have and are thriving on the hunger for managerial knowledge and learning with little or no understanding of how their services alter the behavior patterns of those who partake of the learning.

Organizations are beginning to ask questions as they see "high potential" men

leave for "greener pastures." In one major U.S. firm last year, a "high potential" top-level manager stepped into his boss's office one Monday and announced he was resigning after 15 years with the company. He was in line for a vice presidency and he knew it. His boss asked: "Why?" The response was: "I am tired and it's no longer fun to work here."

What's wrong with management development? Isn't it time we tried to understand how people do, indeed, grow and develop throughout their lives, and in particular as managers.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

When the dynamic self-made leader reigned high in many of our organizations, it was a matter of "who could survive" and "may the best man win." Top managers picked their disciples, controlled their futures, planned their experiences and virtually assured their success or failure. Such leaders characteristically were autocratic, powerful and sometimes ruthless.

As our institutions and organizations matured, the very process of succeeding has created a system which tends to encourage and accept managerial incompetency. Managers in general have not been able to develop and grow as many of their predecessors did. Organizations having recognized that incompetency (or lack of competency) does indeed exist, and without understanding the why, have resorted to management development systems designed to press the individual to move in the direction of development designed by the organization. This often results in hostility and, therefore, dependency on "slogans" (e.g., "When I first started with this company") or termination from the organization, or withdrawal, or displacement in some other manner ("kick the dog").

Management development has come a long way from what it used to be. The changing picture reflects some of our frustrations in finding the answers to how managers really develop. Figure 1

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presents a capsule look at how management development has evolved during the past 20-30 years. It is interesting for organizations to evaluate at what stage their programs are functioning. Most forward-looking organizations today are functioning at the **PROCESS** level. Evidence that we are reaching the saturation point (maximum return) at this level is being reflected in declining success ratios (number of men who are successfully developed and actually become managers in the firm). Why is this true? The answer is not simple, although it is becoming clear that what motivates the manager to develop his talents may indeed be out of step with the company programs designed to develop managerial talent.

Have we been wrong? The answer appears to be "yes" and "no." What may have been right a decade or two ago may not be right today or in the future. A closer examination of the nature of man today should be helpful in pointing a direction for the future.

HUMAN NATURE AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

In 1954 Abraham Maslow¹ introduced his notion of a structure of human needs. He saw the individual in organizations as an untapped resource capable of

vastly more creative and effective work. He expressed a more "Humanistic" view of man, referring to man as not only a biologically growthful structure but also as being capable of "psychological growth."

Frederick Herzberg² was not satisfied with the vague notion of "psychological growth" so he set forth six ways that "psychological growth" manifests itself in the individual. Herzberg said that psychological growth appears as a person (1) continues to acquire knowledge and learns more, (2) as he understands more concepts and relationships, (3) as he is thinking and creating, (4) as he is able to be effective in ambiguous situations, (5) as he maintains his individuality, and as he (6) has a sense of attaining and recognizing real psychological growth.

Maslow made the further observation that the best managers seemed to always be psychologically healthier people than poorer managers. Apparently the psychologically healthier managers are those who have been able to maintain a higher degree of growth and development throughout their lives. We can then conclude that organizations so structured that members can deal realistically and effectively with their tasks will provide powerful sources of psychological growth. There are a variety of

closely-related ideas about what organizational conditions seem to promote psychological growth in the individual. Let us look at three:

THREE APPROACHES

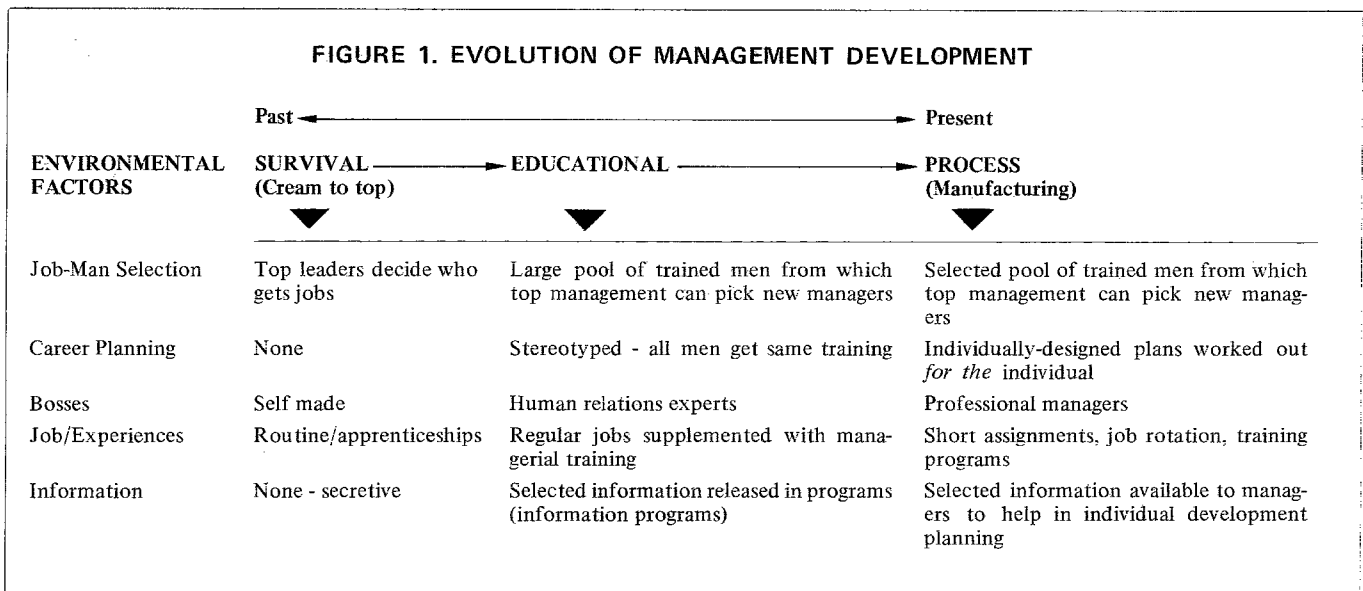
Chris Argyris³ points out that adults will tend to obtain optimum personality expression while at work if they are provided with jobs which permit them to be:

1. More active than passive.
2. More independent than dependent.
3. Have longer rather than shorter time prospective.
4. Occupy higher position.
5. Have control over their world.
6. Express many of their deeper and more important abilities.

Saul Gellerman⁴ suggests that a growth-inducing environment is one which stretches the individual, provides the individual with accurate feedback, offers coaching and guidance, and systematically helps individuals manage their own careers.

Fred Herzberg notes that it is the job itself which is the prime vehicle of individual development, and that task support is the most effective means by which management can influence manager development. "Self development" is, therefore, likely to be most effective

FIGURE 1. EVOLUTION OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT



when the task a person is engaged in is authentic and motivational and when in doing it the individual receives understanding, imaginative and capable support.

In summary, Argyris, Gellerman and Herzberg are saying that individuals (managers) grow psychologically (1) when they can actively influence their careers and those decisions relating to their job selection and assignment; (2) have challenging (motivational) and authentic responsibilities which stretch them to learn; (3) are allowed to function independently; (4) but are giving accurate and fast feedback; and (5) receive capable coaching, guidance and support.

A COMPARISON

It can be generally stated then that conventional management development programs usually fail to recognize that managers develop when, and only when, they are growing psychologically. This critical point implies a need for a whole new set of operationalized concepts which must be designed into our management development programs. Just what does this mean? A way of looking at a possible answer to this question is to compare what we've been doing up to now with a proposed "motivational" approach to management development. Figure 2 makes a comparative summary of our present approaches to management development vs. a motivational approach.

It can be clearly seen that we are suggesting a "new world" of management development, one which releases the developing manager to plan and implement his own career path. Perhaps we should take a closer look at what the motivational approach may involve.

A MOTIVATIONAL APPROACH

Motivational management development, at the very least, will require an unseating and changing of existing structures, systems and policies effecting management development. For example, it may

FIGURE 2

Environmental Factors	Present Way	Motivational Way
Job-Man Selection	<i>Management</i> evaluates and judges and selects men for managerial assignments	<i>Individual</i> influences their own evaluation and selection. (self selection)
Career Planning	<i>Management</i> decides career paths and training needed for individuals	Individuals with guidance, plan their own careers, growthful experiences; congruent with organizational needs
Bosses	<i>Managers</i> evaluate, direct and force conforming changes in individuals	Individuals turn to their managers for support and coaching and receive understanding, imaginative and capable assistance.
Job/Experiences	Jobs usually <i>lack</i> challenge and authentic characteristics	All jobs are challenging, authentic in nature
Information	Feedback is <i>limited</i> and information systems are slow, inaccurate, and distrusted	Feedback to individual is <i>direct</i> , accurate and meaningful

require a totally new type of management development function, not just a "shot in the arm" but probably a new management development staff who are in tune with the expanding technology of human growth and development. It may require renaming the function to something like Career or Human Resource Management. You may have to change the basic managerial climate and philosophies of how you manage. To allow an individual to "self select" for a managerial position requires a different set of beliefs about how to manage. New policies and systems will have to be designed. For example, you will need a computer-based feedback information system designed to provide individuals with information about career growth opportunities within the organization.

These are just a few of the possible changes which may be necessary for a motivational approach to management development. Such a radical shift will tempt many to continue with the "old." You should be careful that you are not mislead in deciding to stick with the old. Changing life styles of younger managers have already shifted many of our approaches to manager development and will continue to move us relentless towards a motivational model.

TENTATIVE MODEL

If you agree that a change is needed, what then should we include in a tentative operational model designed to maximize psychological growth and thereby manager development?

First a Job-Man Selection system must be designed where the aspiring managers select positions, within the organization, which fit into their individual career plans. In such a system the individual's present manager would not be able to block movement out of his department where it can be clearly shown that the move will enhance the individual's growth and where he is qualified and acceptable to the new department head.

Second, each individual desiring to move up in the organization would have a career plan which he personally designed with the aid of a career planning counsellor. Instead of a management development department it would be replaced with a career planning unit capable of assisting individuals in designing their career plans.

Third, department heads would need to follow a more democratic style of managing. They would be more supportive, helpful and hold a high set of expectations for their subordinates. The devel-

opment of more democratic type managers will evolve as younger more "personalistic" managers move up in the organization. The best managers in an organization will turn out to be those for whom aspiring managers would prefer to work.

Fourth, all jobs in which potential managers work will be designed to provide challenge, responsibility and learning. They would be authentic and important positions within the organization and the results produced by the incumbent in the job would contribute to the profitability of the organization.

Last, information relative to a person's progress and performance, how his boss perceives his work, how the organization is operating, and what specific con-

tributions the individual is making would be openly, accurately and quickly shared with all people. This requires a rework of the flow of information, as well as, how it is recorded and stored.

SUMMARY

High turnover, shortages and low success ratios in developing managers points to the fact that we have not found the answer to how managers develop. The "follow the leader" approach of the past hasn't worked for years. Educating selected high potential managers in the "fine art" of managers is failing. We haven't been able to identify management potential nor have we been very successful in developing talent once it is "discovered." What then are we to

conclude and what can we do? The answer seems to be that a change is needed if we indeed wish to solve the problems of management development.

Various behavioral scientists have suggested that the critical force usually overlooked in management development is the need for an individual to continue to grow psychologically. That is, to learn new things, understand relationships, be creative, be effective in ambiguous situations, maintain individuality and realize real psychological growth! When a man is growing psychologically, he is developing his talents, be they managerial, artistic or skillful. Most manager development programs impose development processes on the individual. Psychological growth implies "self development." Individuals in organizations grow psychologically and managerially when they can actively influence their careers and those decisions relating to their job selection and assignment; when they have challenging and authentic responsibilities which stretch them to learn; when they are allowed to function independently; when they are given accurate, fast and timely feedback about their work; and when they receive capable coaching, guidance and support for their development.

If our diagnosis is correct, most of our management development programs will soon need a major overhaul.

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