

THE HORSE BEFORE THE CART

*what do we
really want from
management development?*

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Do you have an acquaintance with, or experience in working with a management development program? If your answer is yes, then quite likely you are aware of some misgivings arising as a product of this experience

CURRENT AND CHOICE

Management development programs, although not particularly new to the business scene, are certainly current and choice as a technique in business management's efforts to improve its level of competency. There is a great emphasis, today on the "professional" or organized approach to management. Companies spend large sums of money and commit manpower resources at high levels on behalf of this goal. Therefore, one can deduce that the business organization feels the goal is both desirable and attainable. Indeed, I believe it to be mandatory.

EXPOSURE AND INVOLVEMENT NOT DEVELOPMENT

What do we really want---

If we accept the premise that the management development path is worthwhile then we should be certain that we are getting what we want and are paying for in the way of a program. But what do we want in the way of program? Some companies may decide to follow a fragmented policy that merely reflects a current problem or area of interest and emphasizes expedient management involvement in corrective action. It is this action that is viewed as management development. There are organizations that do a job for themselves in developing their managers' skills in applying the management processes to a limited degree. An example of this is planning for the annual budget. Here the planning process is implemented, but is limited in scope and in terms of time. The effect of all this is like using a shotgun where a rifle is called for. We need to zero in on the total problem and its solution. A total program is called for--not fractured segments.

CART BEFORE HORSE SYNDROME

It has been my observation that the basic impediment to a sound, workable program stems from the innovators in this field having put the cart before the horse. I see the same, almost standard, approach being used today that came on the scene 15, 20 and 25 years ago. The criticisms of the programs voiced today haven't really changed during this period of time.

WHAT GOES ON IN YOUR COMPANY?

If one exists, reflect on the program in operation for your own company. Likely it is some composite evolving around specific objectives to be accomplished by individual managers. At periodic intervals an assessment is made by the next higher level of management as to the degree and quality of achievement by the lower level being reviewed.

Depending on results, specific directives are made to the individual being assessed to "develop" a better batting average or try some new area or level of accomplishment. Subsequently everyone involved joins in completing an appraisal form which sets out in black and white this past history. It also declares how and when the batting average is to improve. Finally, the exercise includes an evaluation of the person as to whether he is above average, below average, and does or doesn't get along with his fellow employees, etc. We have just completed a type of personality inventory and then proceed to judge the man in the light of development as a personality rather than as a manager. To compound the felony, we in turn compensate him on the basis of this evaluation (indeed if we have any basis at all).

SOMETHING IS MISSING

The fundamental flaw in the entire effort is accepting the measurement of objectives and the personality inventory as the primary substance of a management development program. True, they are necessary ingredients as a function

POSITION INVENTORY
DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The management processes necessary for successful administration of this position are

I Planning

(Deciding in advance what is to be done as a future course of action)

A General Requirements

A statement defining the range and depth of planning required, i e day-to-day production scheduling, special projects, programs coordinator, etc

B Specific Requirements

A statement defining specific planning tasks performed on this job, i e annual department budget, personnel budget, production goals, etc

C Personal Preparation Required

1 Experience

A definition of job experience required in terms of time, level or responsibility, specific jobs performed in support of planning activity

2 Training

A statement of developmental or skills training needed to reinforce current level of planning ability

3 Education

A statement of the educational level or knowledge required to support the planning effort

II Organizing

(Assigning and grouping the work and stating relationships among individuals filling the jobs)

A General Requirements

A statement describing how activities are assigned for administrative purposes, i e guides to be used for this purpose

B Specific Requirements

A statement defining how duties and authority are delegated, and determining the overall structure, i e whether by function, by level or responsibility, etc

C Personal Preparation Required

1 Experience

A statement of experience required that adequately demonstrates this skill

2 Training

A statement of training necessary to help develop skill in this process

3 Education

A statement of the educational level or knowledge required to support this effort

III Supervising

(Directing the relationship between a manager and his subordinates)

A General Requirements

A statement defining the leadership, initiative and personal relationships necessary to motivate people to accomplish their work, i e willingness, personal drive, sincerity, creativeness, etc

B Specific Requirements

A statement outlining the requirements for development of personnel and developing job content with the unit, i e personnel orientation, counseling, training, performance review, etc

C Personal Preparation Required

1 Experience

A definition of the experience required in terms of time, type of people supervised, specific positions supervised

2 Training

A statement of the training required to support current philosophy

3 Education

A statement of the educational level or knowledge required to support this skill

IV Controlling

(Setting of standards, checking and reporting on results, and corrective action to be taken)

A General Requirements

A statement outlining what is needed to size up problems, establish their control, and institute and maintain work standards, i e management by exception, work counts, reports, etc

B Specific Requirements

A definition of the personnel factors, organizational and operational elements that serve as the check points, i e absenteeism, turnover, missed production schedules, duplication of effort or purpose, etc

C Personal Preparation Required

1 Experience

A statement of job experience in terms of time, opportunity, and degree of control that demonstrate ability

2 Training

A statement of specific training necessary to develop skill in this area

3 Education

A statement of the educational level or knowledge required to support this effort

V. Describe in your own words unique factors, if any, required of person who ideally fills this job

of program control, but in the name of the program they do a disservice to the man and the organization. It forces the evaluator into performing in the role of amateur psychologist by the mere act of conforming to the format of the review. Furthermore, this audit of achievement represents another version of production control--without the blessing of a total system normally associated with a production control program.

TOTAL SYSTEM NEEDED

If we are to get our horse before the cart, we must commit our efforts to creating a total system for the development of professional managers. What we are saying is that first things must come first, and we must include all needed elements of the system, not just an isolated segment.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Most management specialists practicing today agree on the definition of the four basic management processes. To the degree these processes are practiced

we reflect the level of professional, skilled management we can enjoy in our organizations. Assuming we want a program that will give us this benefit, then there is a "first" step to take. Specifically, if we incorporate a well-defined "Position Inventory" as step number one in our program, the natural follow-on is the "measurement of objectives" or the standard for program control. In this way, we have a complete vehicle to carry us on the road of management development. It is this assessment of the management requirements that is the minimum essential in a total program.

FIRST STEP OUTLINED

As shown elsewhere in this article, the "Position Inventory" is a description of the management requirements for each position stated in terms of the fundamental processes involved in management work. In every case, the four basic processes are named and defined. Each process is further defined in terms of general requirements, specific require-

ments and a specific statement as to the personal preparation required for successful administration of the position. These classification of qualities are repeated with modifications to fit each particular process. This assessment of the four processes for each position in the management structure creates the "Management Profile" of your organization for which development is sought.

EMPHASIS ON "MANAGEMENT" DEVELOPMENT

If the concept outlined here is applied to each management level, we will have created 50 per cent of a workable program. It allows us to formulate the substance of our effort to develop and evaluate the *management* skills of our participants in total. The technique provides continuity through time and events and truly encompasses the accepted professional standards. The other 50 per cent of the program is committing ourselves and our companies to action!

AWARDS RECOGNIZE CHAPTER WORK

Nine chapters received achievement awards during ASTD's 27th annual National Conference for excellence in chapter programming, administration and membership promotion during 1970.

The chapters receiving awards are the following:

Group I (chapters with 12-30 members) first place--Central Illinois Chapter, Decatur, Ill., and second place--Western Ohio Chapter, Dayton, Ohio.

Group II (chapters with 31-75 members) first place--Fort Wayne Chapter, Fort Wayne, Ind., second place--Washington State Chapter, Seattle

Wash., and third place--Central Pennsylvania Chapter, Harrisburg, Penn.

Group III (chapters with 76 or more members) first place--Georgia Chapter, Atlanta, Ga., second place--Philadelphia Chapter, Philadelphia, Pa., and third place--Tulsa Chapter, Tulsa, Okla.

Two special awards were also given, recognizing achievements in certain areas. Greater Detroit Chapter (Detroit, Mich.) received an award for its programming during 1970 and Washington State Chapter (Seattle, Wash.) was honored for its public service projects.