

Stop Stifling Commitment

Submitted by Kenneth M. Schatz, founder of Schatz and Company, Alexandria, Virginia.

It is management's job to lead people to commitment; just hoping for the best won't do. Managers must probe what their underlying assumption is about their people: Are they committed or not? Some people know they're committed, and they show it. Others know they are but don't like to show it. Still others don't know they have any commitment, so they talk as if they don't. Unfortunately, most managers need to see overt signs of commitment from their people. In other words, they assume that a lack of expression of commitment is the same as a lack of commitment.

But people fall into at least three categories: those who have shown they are committed; those who have shown they are not committed; and those who have not shown either. If a manager treats the second two groups alike, he or she creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. People treated as if they are not committed will react to such treatment by not being committed. However, the reverse is true: treat them as if they are committed, and they might begin to show commitment.

Managers can do this better if they understand some basics about commitment. First, no one is 100 percent committed—not even the boss. Given the right opportunity, most employees will leave a company. But such flexibility won't prevent an employee from committing to a company. Less obviously, no one is entirely uncommitted. Some employees don't express their commitment very clearly, but it's there.

Surprisingly, there are some places where expressing commitment is not the accepted thing to do. In fact, in America until recently, this attitude was common. But now, as many workplaces are reorganized to emulate Japanese management methods, people are encouraged to speak up, to acknowledge they care about their companies, and to act, at least, as if they "own" it.

Management impotence disappears in workplaces where employees express commitment because committed employees follow their bosses. To lead, managers must recognize the extent to which their own attitudes enforce commitment—their own and their employees'. If a manager doubts employees' commitment, the manager may treat them as if they had none, coercing them to perform instead of tapping dormant commitment. And what's worse, those who don't see a reason to express commitment have their attitudes reconfirmed by the manager's actions. Such a vicious cycle breeds only cynicism.

Managers can take a more useful point of view—that employees are committed until proven otherwise. Tactful managers seek out committed employees, congratulate them for demonstrating commitment, and make sure the other employees hear about it.

Shuttle Disaster Linked to Experts' Lack of "Influence Skills"

"The failure of scientists and engineers to convince NASA project managers they should postpone the ill-fated space shuttle flight is a tragic reminder that technical professionals frequently lack the influence skills necessary to affect managerial decisions," says George Klemp, senior partner of Charles River Consulting, a Boston human performance research firm. "Our studies of technical professionals across the *Fortune*-500," Klemp adds, "including major defense contractors, show that a comparatively small number of highly effective scientists and engineers differ from their more numerous but less effective counterparts not in what they know, but in their ability to convince others that what they know is right. As a consequence, critical information often does not get the attention of senior program managers."

Klemp says that the world of logical analysis and hard data clashes with "action-oriented" managerial philosophies. He suggests that the *Challenger* disaster might not have occurred "if the people with the technical concerns had been more skilled at influencing the people with the managerial concerns."

Though the Rogers Commission report blames NASA's decision-making "process" for the shuttle disaster, Klemp suggests that the problem lies as much in the distrust that many scientists and engineers have for the influence process as in the apparent willingness of the decision makers to ignore important data.

Is There Room at the Top for Black Professionals?

Do black professionals at America's major companies feel they are barred from top management? A new panel study by Deutsch, Shea & Evans reveals that, although they may not necessarily aspire to the highest positions, in the words of one panelist, "There's a feeling that you just can't get up there because of your sex or race. Corporations are sending this message even though they profess equal opportunity."

At the middle level, blacks view their prospects for advancement as good. They do not feel threatened that a less qualified or less competent white person will be advanced before them. However, they are aware that federal pressure on corporations to hire and promote highly qualified minority personnel has declined. And they resent what one described as "the federal government backsliding out of every EEO commitment there ever was."

The panel assembled for the study consisted of eight men and four women. All are from the New York metropolitan area and are graduates of well-known accredited universities, some with advanced degrees. Among the group, three are EDP professionals, five are engineers, two are MBAs in business functions, one is a CPA, and one a bioscientist. All are employed by major U.S. businesses or industrial organizations. Their experience levels

range from two to over eighteen years, and their salaries are from \$29,000 to \$75,000 per year.

The report on this research, *DSE Focuses on: Experienced Black Professionals*, is the third in a series of focus group studies devoted to the career aspirations and expectations of various working groups. For more information, write Research Division, DSE, 49 East 53rd St., New York, NY 10022; call 212/688-0500.

Data Processing Salary Update

Salaries for data processing managers and employees increased an average of 5.3 percent in 1985, according to the fourth annual Data Processing Salaries Survey conducted by the Administrative Management Society, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. Published in the *1986 AMS Data Processing Salaries Report*, the survey covers salaries of 20 typical DP positions from over 2,000 companies in 99 cities.

Data processing managers (three positions—see summary on the last page of the report) averaged \$40,800 in 1985, an increase of 5.7 percent over the 1984 average of \$38,600. The highest-paid position in the survey for the second year was manager of software systems programming at \$42,800.

At the professional/supervisory level (nine positions), employees averaged \$30,500 in 1985, up 5.5 percent over 1984's average of \$28,900. Highest-paid in this group were data base administrator and project leader (lead programmer/analyst), both at \$37,400.

Data processing staff (eight positions) averaged \$16,600 in 1985, up 4.5 percent from the 1984 average of \$15,900. The highest-paid staff position was lead computer operator at \$21,000.

In Canada, salaries for all 20 data processing positions increased 6.5 percent in 1985. Data processing management averaged C\$43,700, professional/supervisory personnel averaged C\$33,200, and staff positions averaged C\$21,000. The highest-paid position was manager of applications programming at C\$45,300.

Highest-paying region: West

As in last year's survey, the Western

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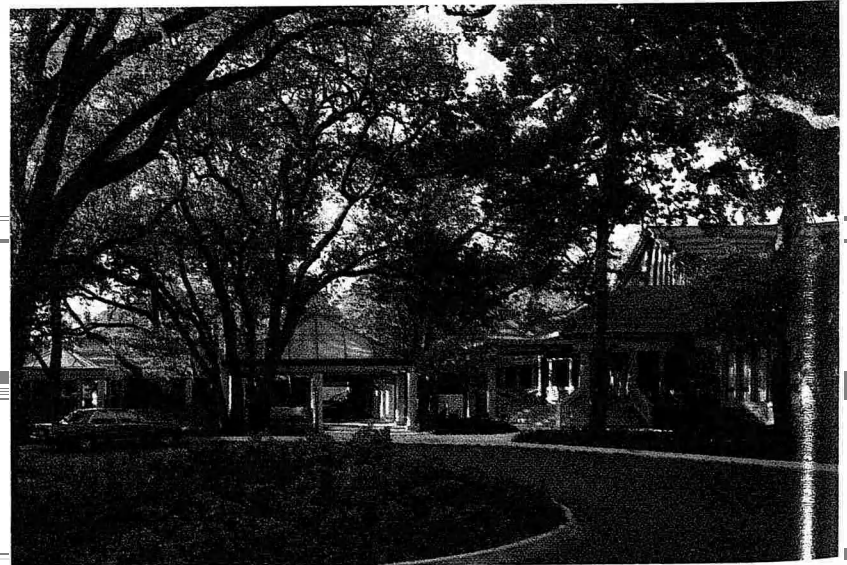
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part of the country emerged as the highest-paying region and also noted the highest increases in 1985. Western DP managers earned an average of \$42,900 in 1985, professional/supervisory employees averaged \$32,300, and staff averaged \$18,100.

Highest-paying industry: utilities

Also as in past surveys, the utilities industry continued to pay the highest salaries in the data processing field. All three levels of personnel averaged at least \$4,000 a year higher than their counterparts from four other categories. They also received the highest increases in 1985.

The 1986 *AMS Data Processing Salaries Report* includes salary ranges and averages for each of 20 data processing positions, reported nationally, and by city, region, and type of business. It also includes information on merit increases and compensation-related policies. The complete report is available for \$115 by writing or calling Amelia Harper, Administrative Management Society, 2360 Maryland Road, Willow Grove, PA 19090; 215/659-4300.

Motorola Builds Corporate Training Facility

Motorola, Inc., recently dedicated its new \$10 million Galvin Center for Continuing Education in Schaumburg, Illinois, a facility designed to increase the electronics company's already extensive training activities. (The Center is named in honor of Robert W. Galvin, Motorola chairman and chief executive officer, and the late Paul V. Galvin, Motorola founder.) "Training and education are part of Motorola's strategic response to maintain a leading position in an increasingly competitive marketplace for advanced electronics," said A. William Wiggenhorn, Motorola vice president and director of training and education. "This is a place for all Motorola employees to learn new skills that will make them more productive and efficient."

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Areas of study at the Center will include the automated "factory of the future," computer software development, sales, engineering, manufacturing, and management skills.

Last year, Motorola invested more than \$40 million to deliver more than one million hours of training to its employees worldwide. The 88,000-

square-foot facility will house many of the company's ongoing training programs in the Chicago area and will provide space to develop and deliver new programs. It shares land already containing Motorola's corporate headquarters, Communications Sector headquarters, Automotive and Industrial Electronics Group headquarters, and

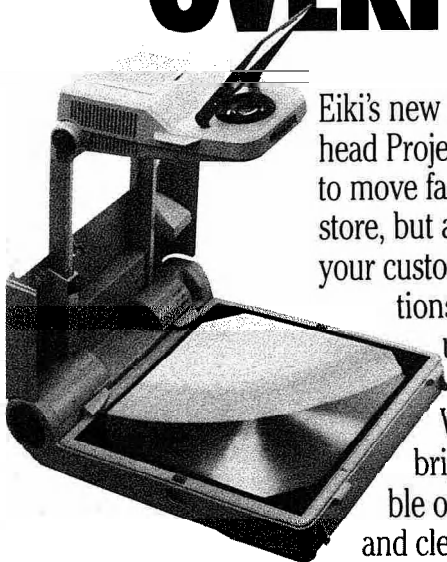
production and distribution operations for several of Motorola's high-technology electronics businesses.

The Center includes classrooms, an auditorium, a dining room, lounge areas, and a learning resource center (to open in 1987) where trainees will access computerized data bases in an "electronic library" or consult program-related journals, documents, and tapes. It also houses a "management education suite" with advanced audiovisual capabilities and a "manufacturing management institute" in which laboratory areas will be equipped with personal computers, computer-aided design and manufacturing equipment, robots, and other tools for learning new skills that can be applied on the job in management and manufacturing environments.

Courses offered typically will run for two or three days, with some extended to two weeks or longer. Employees also may participate in course work offered by the National Technological University, a Colorado-based consortium of universities started in 1984 with corporate support. Courses offered by 20 universities are available via satellite or videotape presentations from the consortium, which also offers a three-year master's degree program in electrical engineering.

In addition to taking part in job-related training and education, employees will also have an opportunity to use a physical fitness center, eat low-sodium and low-cholesterol food in the Center cafeteria, and enjoy the advantages of a no-smoking policy.

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Office Employment Update

Comparing the results of a recent national opinion poll, office support staff requirements for the second half of 1986 have dipped in hiring projections—yet, the overall employment outlook remains strong. According to interviews with hiring executives in 473 companies across the country conducted by Office Mates/5, the support staff division of Management Recruiters, Inc. (MRI), the current pro-

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jections show that 24.3 percent of those interviewed plan to add to their clerical support staffs. This is 9.4 points lower than the previous projection. Additionally, 65.1 percent plan to maintain current staffs, while only 9.3 percent intend to reduce staff sizes. In the same period last year, 31.7 percent planned to add new hires to their staffs; this year's projection is lower by 7.4 percentage points.

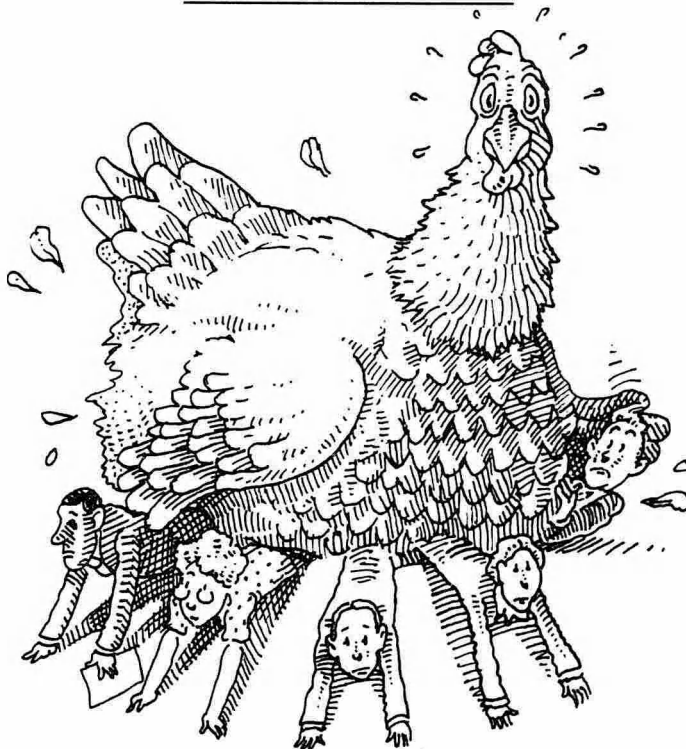
"At first glance, the planned new hire projections do not look very encouraging," said Alan Schonberg, president of the Cleveland-based MRI; "however, one has to look at the overall employment picture for support staff in relation to professional staffing." The combined figure of new hiring plans and maintenance is 89.4 percent, which clearly indicates a continued strong work environment. Office support personnel should feel encouraged by the overall commitment to maintain the staffs previously added.

The study indicates that the Mid-Atlantic area shows the strongest potential for job opportunities, with 43.8 percent of those polled saying they planned to increase clerical/support staff in the second half of 1986. This is an increase of 10.1 points from the first half of the year. Besides the Mid-Atlantic, the New England, Midwest, and Pacific regions all showed gains from the first half of 1986.

A complete summary of the findings, including a survey on job satisfaction, are available by writing Nancy Valent, Management Recruiters International, 1127 Euclid Ave., Suite 1400, Cleveland, OH 44115-1638.

"In Practice" is edited and written by Robert E. Send items of interest to: In Practice, Training & Development Journal, 1630 Lake St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.

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