

TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

10 basic principles for management development

To train a man to become the leader of men is a magnificent accomplishment. Some of the world's great teachers, like Socrates and Plato, have taken up this challenge and failed. Yet today, trainers in business and industry are called upon to accomplish this task on a regular basis.

In a legend about the training and management of men, a wise ruler counsels his son in these words:

- He who instills a sense of greatness in his people is tempering an instrument which will serve him in tomorrow's need.
- Impart less of the dry bones of knowledge than a mode of thought enabling men to grasp knowledge.
- You shall not fill men with hollow formulas, but with visions that open doors to creative action.
- Teach the man respect to himself and others, for irony is the habit of the dolt. And what can replace love?
- Teach the man to barter himself for something greater than himself, for otherwise he will be warped.
- Do not base your strength on men's falsehoods and corruptions even though they seem to benefit you, for he who betrays a fellow laborer will not be faithful to you. Fidelity alone breeds the strong man.
- Teach love of perfection, for every work a man sets his hand to may lead to progress.
- You shall show how wonderful it is for men to work together - each seconding each and all - for all must maintain the same vessel in which they all sail.
- And this above all - do not change the man into an ant trained to the life an ant hill. The one thing needful for a man is to be - and to live and die in the fullness of his being.

Thus goes the legend. And any one of the admonishments has potential to fill a training workshop or a lunchtime discussion.

I would like to add to them - making no claim to wisdom. But there have been 10 principles or generalizations that have served me well in a lifetime spent in the training of men. You may find them helpful, or at least stimulating, since most business enterprises are vitally concerned with the development of people - executive development, man-

agement development and others. And if they seem simple and obvious, it is the simple and obvious that is most often ignored.

PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUAL

1. Development and training must be highly personal and individual.

Apparent, but often overlooked. No person is just like any other person. The individual is unique. He is individual and different.

But even in his difference he is not always the same. He changes with time. No man is the same as he was last year.

It follows then, that we cannot successfully develop people by means of canned, over-standardized methods. It cannot be said that all men should be developed by some one method, such as rotation, Junior Board of Directors or formalized training courses. Since there is no "average man" and human development can never be an assembly-line process, not one but many manager development plans are needed. And each plan must be tailor-made to fit the abilities and needs of a particular person - aimed at helping him develop in the direction that is best for him.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

2. The obligations and responsibilities for development rests with the individual.

Young men are coming to business concerns with the attitude: "Here I am. Develop me." This is wrong. Possibly recruiters oversell to the youngsters. What we ought to say is: "We'll give you the opportunity, but don't come here unless you want to work hard and earn your pay and develop yourself." This will eliminate the chaff early.

The company naturally has an interest in a man's development. And the company can and will help. But development is not something you do *to* a man. The motivation, the desire, the effort, the obligation and the responsibility for development lie with the man himself.

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NO IDEAL PERSONALITY

3. Do not seek men with certain "personality traits," but men who indicate or demonstrate an ability to do the work you want done.

Development cannot and must not be based upon any set of ideal personality characteristics. Why not? Well suppose you could arrive at the ideal personality traits of an ideal manager. Would you then try to develop a race of supermanagers - all having these ideal characteristics? If you did, you would be heading toward conformity and uniformity. Yet a company's strength has always been in the individuality of the people who compose it. And actually there just isn't any standard pattern of personality traits that make a good manager. Some managers are tough and rugged personalities, others are quiet and thoughtful men, still others are the aggressive salesmen type and others are just as widely assorted - different individuals but all good managers. So personality traits are not something upon which we can base our development approach.

In addition, personality traits are almost impossible to define. Nor can we measure them. And we can change them only with the greatest difficulty. One method is psychoanalysis. The other is religious conversion. Neither is our forte.

Work is the better focal point than personality traits. Work can be seen, identified, analyzed, measured. Work is specific, tangible, basic. The whole company is nothing more than a group of people banded together to do work in return for money and personal fulfillment.

In the area of management, there is an important check-point in evaluating a man's work. The single common denominator in all managerial jobs, whatever the work, is that the manager must get results through the efforts of other people. Education and development activities should be directed to teaching or helping to develop a man's abilities to do this kind of work.

MANAGEMENT IS DIFFERENT

4. Management, or leadership, is a separate and distinct kind of work. In the past, the best engineer was made manager of engineering, and often failed. The star salesman was made sales manager, and often failed. Too often, when the outstanding individual performer is made manager, we lose the good performer and get a mediocre manager. The reason: failure to realize that managing has its own particular requirements. And failure to realize that management should not be the only reward for outstanding achievement.

In making a choice between manager and contributor, the decision should rest on the answers to the questions: "Is this man in the right kind of work now? Is management the right direction for him?" And if all men were truly adult, we would not yearn after the trappings of prestige, but would want fulfillment in our work. In the area of work and teamwork, we would want to get recognition for our professional capacity and contributions, rather than in the social hierarchy of the company. But all of us are something less than adult. An outstanding contributor is often unhappy because he sees a lesser productive man getting "promotions" he is not getting. From this dissatisfaction comes decreased individual effort. Which is worse, a second-rate manager or a second-rate producer?

The solution is that the prestige and rewards for an individual's outstanding contributions should be equal to the prestige and rewards for managerial work. And this is not yet true. This is an area where there is still much to be done.

CONCENTRATE ON NOW

5. Emphasize a man's development in the present assignment, rather than on a promotional ladder.

Promotion as a development factor is important. But if undue stress is placed on the promotional ladder, everyone begins to feel that he is in his present job only temporarily. So he devotes most of

his attention to looking ahead and not to getting his present work done. And you are failing in your development activity.

The development process should be integrated with the normal conduct of the business.

But, if a man's development is concentrated on his present job, will he be able to take the bigger responsibilities when they come? The answer is that he concentrates primarily, not solely, on the present job. At the same time, he is helped and encouraged to broaden himself to take on the bigger tasks. Broadening-for-the-future should be an additional factor. The main objective is doing better what you are doing now. Then when he moves up, in recognition or authority, he has earned it.

OFFER OPPORTUNITY

6. Opportunity for development must be unrestricted.

Many development programs have been based on the idea of selecting "high potential men." Yet, checks show that a low percentage - one-third - fulfill their predictions. And there are historic warnings against the "promising young man." Abraham Lincoln, one example, was a constant failure in his early life and would never have appeared on anybody's "promising" list.

Everybody in the company must be given opportunity to develop. Obviously the brighter man will develop faster. But the lesser man is not cut off. Each gets an appropriate opportunity. Nobody is left out and the stage is set for happy surprises, dark horses, and poor starters and strong finishers.

DAY-TO-DAY DEVELOPMENT

7. Develop a man through his experience in his day-to-day work.

Nine out of ten managers will tell you that the outstanding factors in their development were the manner in which they were managed in their daily work, the climate in which they worked and their relationships. Civic activities, outside courses, rotation and formal train-

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ing were important, but the daily experience was much more important.

There can be no doubt where the major attention should be directed. Every man is having experience in his day-to-day work that tends to develop him — or to retard his development. He is daily reacting to the climate in which he works and to his relationship with his immediate manager.

DECISION-MAKING PRACTICE

8. A prime instrument of development is decision-making.

No one can really develop judgment and learn how to make good decisions except by actually making decisions. In any game, sport or skill, learning is done with the head, with the muscles and with the intestines. This kind of learning comes from doing. But if most of the decision-making in the company is concentrated among a few of the top brass, it limits the field for individual decision learning.

Some companies have discovered that small isolated plants breed many of their best executives. The man in a decentralized component has to make decisions for himself right there on the job. He develops by doing.

MANAGER INFLUENCE

9. The incumbent manager influences the development of the people under him.

Use the incumbent manager in development training. He is a powerful influence. Many managers object to development work but part of the description of his job, part of the rule against which he is measured, should be work in helping the people who report to him to develop themselves. He must watch the climate that exists. He must originate opportunities and work situations which will challenge and develop these men.

Actually, development work can be one of the most satisfying parts of a manager's job. It helps him in getting his work done when he operates on an integrated, reciprocal basis. Anyone can issue commands and give orders. But to make a

man feel that he is developing through his work so that he performs voluntarily at a high level of effectiveness, this is leadership. This is motivation in the true sense.

ETHICS AND MORALS

10. Moral and spiritual values are important in development.

For a long time, we have been growing more and more materialistic. We have been making great progress in material science. But the human being has advanced very little. The scientific and physical things we have in our hands have grown all out of proportion. So we must find the way to greater wisdom in handling our present power for good or evil.

This is directly involved with decision-making — with the quality of our decisions, particularly those in regard to people. They must be wise and they must be good. This necessitates the ethical man, the moral man, the complete man. And developing the ethical norms of conduct distinguishes development and education from mere training.

We cannot interfere with a man's private life and we cannot insist on a church affiliation. But we can suggest interest in a broad range of subjects not related to his work — sociological pursuits that make him a part of the community of men — and reading to condition and improve his moral judgments. It is important for management to demand the qualities expressed in an advertisement: "Give Me A Man Who Reads!" It is important for management to keep its managing men growing morally and intellectually.

These are ten thoughts for those who are interested in the development of people. They touch only a few facets of an extremely complex problem. There are great gaps in our knowledge which we may not fill for generation. But until then, some thought and action based on these ten guides and on the counsel of the legendary king may help us to fill these gaps — and to enable each of us "to live and die in the fullness of his being."