

# MANAGER TRAINING

*a review of the  
need and means for  
developing managers*

Management and the job of the manager have been viewed and interpreted as a position or a function in a hierarchical system. As a member of this system he is a member of a group of individuals who are looked to as the leaders of any company or organization.

The need for leadership in all areas of life, public and private, is greater today than ever before. Not too many years ago there was widespread acceptance that leaders were born, not made. Sometimes a man became a leader by reason of his birth or his family position in society. Sometimes his personality was the chief reason of his acceptance as a leader.

Organizations in search of executives sometimes lose sight of the real issue. Performance on the job should and must be the criterion for selecting men into this group known as managers. This is not to imply that personality traits are not important. They are.

## PERSONALITY AND LEADERSHIP

There appears to be little correlation between personality traits and effective leadership—the achievement of your goals and objectives through the guidance of people. Just because a man is a “nice guy” is no guarantee that he will be a successful manager or leader.

To become a leader, a person has to have certain qualities. They should have the ability to create; to experiment and be willing to gamble on the risk of failure; to be brave enough to start over again; and to be judged on what he contributes to the total picture of the organization as a whole.

Sometimes it is hard to develop a leader or manager if the man is confined to an area where his talents are restrained or directed to a small segment of the entire operation. A man cannot learn to manage if his talent is concerned with only one function. Somewhere along the line he must be exposed to the entire operation of a company to achieve maximum training. However, today in this age of specialization, total involvement

is not encouraged usually and is not included in the management program.

## MANAGER SKILLS

Certain skills can be developed to develop knowledgeable managers. These skills can be nourished and made to grow and make a person a highly-skilled manager.

1. Technical knowledge such as working with methods and procedures such as engineers, accountants, electricians are skills which require knowledge and tools of a specific nature.
2. Human skills to enable the manager to work effectively as a member of an organization, and to be able to control the action of others are skills which are concerned with people.
3. Creative idea skills reflect the ability of the manager to work with ideas and creative thinking. He must see the organization as a whole and look beyond his own area.

As one climbs the organization ladder, his need for technical skills becomes less and less and his need for human skills increases. Usually creative thinking also increases as a manager rises to higher levels within the organization. A top-level manager should be spending at least 80 percent of his time in this capacity.

The greatest problem in business today is that too many of the top-level managers are too old and set in some of their old-fashioned ideas. This is probably due to bringing capable people up into higher levels too late in their career. Most rapid growth companies have key management men in their forties and early fifties. These younger people are those with the ambition and guts to make fast and sometimes radical decisions. These people are opportunity innovators. If a man learns to take things in stride and make decisions in his thirties and early forties, by the time he is fifty he is presumably stable and can

GLENN H. TURPIN  
*Director of Personnel,  
Memphis Light, Gas and  
Water Division,  
Memphis, Tennessee*

make decisions easily without having them wear him out physically and emotionally.

### IDEA KILLING

Unwittingly, a lot of managers are idea killers. Sometimes they are jealous of anyone who shows initiative and drive. They are viewed as threats to their own positions. Also, there are some who couldn't recognize a good idea if it hit them in the face. Good managers encourage individual thinking. They should view every idea as a potential winner, and critical judgement should be suspended until proven otherwise. All channels of communication must be kept open. A good manager has to be a positive listener and hear out all ideas in order to see if any merit exists. A good manager must let others think and act for themselves.

The manager will be aided in his decision making by using various concepts and methods. These are tools to aid the decision maker in realizing his potential as a first-class manager:

1. Planning involves finding the answers to the following questions: What? Why? When? Who? and Where? Planning has been defined by some to mean the function of originally determining an effective, economical basis of action for the accomplishment of specific objectives.
2. Organizing — establishing the proper relationship between the planned work and the available resources. Thus, organizing is primarily based on the planned work to be done. Organizing is a continuous process and begins with an analysis of things that require attention. The organization is built around the work flow and not around individuals. Individuals will change but the work usually remains constant. Delegating of responsibility and authority is essential to a good manager. Responsibility is necessary for the

accomplishment of the business goals. Authority is delegated with responsibility and in equal measure.

3. Controlling — measure and maintain harmony between planned action and results. It provides standards of performance to measurable quantities, and uses the standards to evaluate the performance. Proper control insures promised goals and specifications, and minimizes mistakes.
4. Motivation — causes the worker to seek gratification of his personal goals. Motivation creates the highest level of human utilization and development. It provides a pleasant working atmosphere. Good morale is a by product of proper motivation.

In this day and age everything seems to become obsolete in a short period of time. Men are no exception to this rule. Over one half of all the technical information printed in this country since the American Revolution has been printed in the last ten years. As a result, managers have been forced to keep abreast of the times. Managers must continue their education and training to keep themselves well informed as to the latest developments in the business world.

### TOP SUPPORT ESSENTIAL

To be successful, a manager training program must have the backing and support of top management or it is doomed to failure. The participants should understand company policy and practices to insure the content of the program can be translated into specific applications on the job.

Most management training programs that fail can be traced to (1) content of the program is not applicable to the particular job of the participant, (2) the training program is contrary to the company policies and practices, (3) the applicant resists and takes a negative approach to the training program.

There will be a scarcity of managers in the next ten to fifteen years due to the tight labor market. Men in their late thirties and early forties will be thrust into top management jobs before they are really qualified to assume such duties. For the next fifteen years we will have fewer people in what we consider the "prime of life." This condition will continue until the depression babies reach middle age.

The primary problems that are now confronting all companies big and small deal with:

1. Finding talent that already exists within the present organization.
2. Developing the raw talent of these newly discovered people through increased training and self-improvement courses.
3. Keeping the talent once it has been found.

### MANPOWER SURVEYS

One way of finding these men is through a method that has been neglected and underemphasized, the manpower survey. Each management job within the organization should be surveyed to determine; (1) who is available to replace the incumbent, (2) what training and development he needs before he can become qualified to replace the incumbent. This survey should be projected for the next five to ten years and kept constantly up to date. The manpower survey will therefore tell you the number and caliber of people you must handle in your training and development programs. Top management must be told the real need for manpower planning and development.

Every company operates off the human element and they must make sure that the people concerned are growing and developing. Every job will have people constantly replacing themselves. They must be trained to move not only up the ladder but should be trained to

move into lateral jobs also for future development.

## TRAINING RESOURCES

Companies find it difficult sometimes to find suitable management training devices and programs due to the numerous aids available. There are countless audio-visual and programmed techniques, not to mention the countless text books and pamphlets on the market today. Sometimes one or several of the above can be used to establish a successful management training program.

Part of the reason why there is some problem in setting up a successful program is because the company does not know what the program is to accomplish. Also, a decision should be made as to whether the program should have short-term or long-term results.

A packaged training program may not always be the most competent method, although it may be quicker and cost less. Packaged training has its merits as it may be used either as the base material or as supplementary material. If used as the base material it may not hit at the heart of the problem and actually be a waste of time and money. Therefore these programs should be analyzed carefully in terms of goals. They may offer a general approach but lack that certain direction to make a program successful. It costs less to purchase such programs than to devote time and energy to the research and development of an original program. However, the cost of sending managers to a meeting or series of meetings that may or may not contain material to develop them may be false economy.

Packaged programs and training devices of various types can be purchased at almost any cost desired. Combinations of these programs may be the answer to some training needs. If these packages do not turn the trick or accomplish what is intended, training people must use their own creative ability.

## SENSITIVITY TRAINING

Sensitivity training is an excellent method for a manager to get a good look at himself in action in a group. The manager is given the opportunity to interact with others and he receives feedback from them concerning their reactions to him. This is probably one of the few opportunities to see himself as others see him. This could be a situation where he may have some of the "starch" taken out of his sails and be deflated like a balloon with a hole in it. One method to help emphasize this type of training is to incorporate a video tape recorder. Video tape is an excellent means to show an individual how he actually appears and sounds to others. The video tape recorder has the greatest potential of any training instrument available in the last decade.

In-basket exercises are frequently used for manager training. The purpose of these tests is to establish the present and potential skill of individuals. These in-basket tests can be purchased or a skilled training coordinator can develop his own. Accurate scores require considerable time on the part of the trainer. Sometimes letting the individual score his own test can achieve the desired result with minimum time of the instructor.

## MANAGEMENT GAMES

Since 1956 there have been hundreds of "management games" on the market. These games are usually dynamic, simulated-decision-making episodes performed in an environment in which feedback is given to allow analysis of the results. Usually these are played by a small number of teams, although games for individuals are available also. Some games are designed for top management and some for middle and low management. Business games have exceeded in popular use the attempt to measure their reliability. Management games are not only entertaining but also educational.

Training programs should be designed to lead and direct participants toward desirable goals. Managers must be taught to lead! Effective management leadership requires adequate knowledge of certain tools and techniques. Training programs must be designed to provide them.

Managers must be taught the following: understanding of human behavior; ability to manage people; how to get results from people; guides for handling complaints and grievances; how to delegate responsibility; proper communications; counseling of employees. These are just a few of the many things a manager must master to become a leader.

## IS TRAINING EXPENSIVE?

Training of managers is expensive. One utility company has set the cost of executive training at about \$10,000 per man. Yet any company can justify the expense by comparing it with what an untrained executive wastes in payroll expense, resources, lost customers, competitive position, etc. The financial burden of an untrained worker can be far greater than the cost of the training. To receive a good return on its investment, a company must make sure that each employee reaches and maintains a profitable level of production. This can only be done through an effective training program.

To a capable executive, problems have a way of becoming goals and opportunities. A manager must welcome these chances and not attempt to shun them or pass them off to others. His position has been assigned certain duties and responsibilities and he must be taught to meet these to the limit of his ability. A manager must and should be given the keys to unlock the doors to future growth and development, not only for his benefit but for the company's as well. If these keys are lost or carelessly set aside then the manager is not worthy of holding his present position in the organization.