

Book Review

SAMUEL B. MAGILL, Editor

THE SHEFFERMAN PERSONNEL MOTIVATION PROGRAM

Nathan Shefferman

Prentice-Hall, Inc.
Englewood Cliffs, N. J.

\$12.50 222 pp.

Reviewed by RUSSELL H. EWING
National Institute of Leadership
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(Note: This review originally appeared in the
Newsletter of the Los Angeles Chapter,
ASTD.)

This is a large and impressive book, beautifully bound and attractively printed. It is designed as a presentation volume for supervisors in connection with the management development program which it describes.

The author's thesis is that the supervisor's most important task is to motivate individuals and get them to cooperate in groups towards achieving management's objectives. The supervisor, like the quarterback, is not selected because he can remember the rules or an intricate system of plays, but because he has the necessary qualities of leadership . . . the ability to diagnose and handle *situations*, inspire confidence, communicate, and help solve problems, while remaining calm in the heat of battle.

Great stress is laid on the need for direct, personal, face-to-face talks between the supervisor and individuals and groups, and with informal group leaders who in turn control cliques; present in every organization. This volume is con-

cerned mainly with the "realities" of management's dealings with the workforce. And the author argues convincingly that every problem of management, leadership, and training, can be solved by the supervisor's "talking to the guy," or the group.

Shefferman thinks it is more important to understand and use the *informal* group and its leader than the *formal* leader in the corporate organization, if harmonious human relations and high production are to result. A basic assumption of the book is that every man is the center of his own universe. The heart of the supervisor must always be open in order to listen, to be sympathetic, and to help the employee to meet and solve his problems. The great task of the supervisor is to help change attitudes, mold opinions, motivate behavior, develop skills, and create the basis for understanding within the work group.

This study casts doubts on the group dynamics theory that people should be assigned to groups on the basis of congeniality, rather than on ability or skill. The author feels that the manager, supervisor, or informal leader should actually lead, and not the group itself. He warns against popular prescriptions for the supervisory medicine cabinet, such as the "problem centered discussion group," where people sit around discussing and often aggravating problems. There is, however, no direct reference to sensitivity.

This is a book that training directors can read and ponder with profit.

ASTD Member Receives McKinsey Award

Announcement was recently made that George C. Houston's "Manager Development, Principles and Perspectives" (Irwin) was one of five books on Management to receive the McKinsey award for 1961-62.

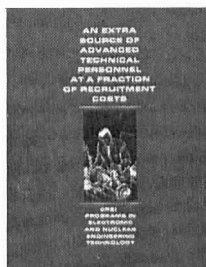
George Houston, a member of ASTD, is Associate Professor at Northeastern

University, and a management consultant. He received his managerial experience with DuPont and the General Electric Company.

The books were judged by a businessman panel appointed by the Academy of Management in the first such program to be sponsored by McKinsey & Co.

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