

Fairy Tales Can Come True

in the strange state of "the Organization"

Joseph Lomuto

Once upon a time, there were three managers: an upper manager, a middle manager and a lower manager. They all lived in a strange state called "The Organization." Here, surrounded by staffs, lines and many boxed-in missions, functions and operations, they made daily decisions.

The upper manager was called Top Man. His decisions were respected and obeyed, for he was as wise as he was kind.

The middle manager was called Mid Man. He, too, made decisions. Sometimes, in his eagerness to help, he'd make decisions not rightfully his to make.

Then, there was the lower manager, Little Man. He was as cute as a beaver and as eager. Though he religiously practiced making decisions, they were occasionally un-

wise. But he needed the practice and it was such fun!

One morning, an important decision needed making. Top Man quickly summoned Mid Man and told him to be at the snack bar with Little Man before the line got too long. (This, of course, was their porridge break.)

Over the steaming porridge, Top Man said, "This stuff is too hot to handle. Let's go someplace until it cools off."

"I know just the place," said Mid Man.

"Where?"

"Personnel Park," Mid Man whispered into Top Man's lapel. "Not too many of us go there for fear of getting too much help. But, if we leave now, we can make some vital decisions between us before the little one misses us."

"Oh, no!" declared Top Man. "Leave Little Man all alone in this jungle? Never! I want the little one to see how we operate. And, if he needs help, I want him to know he always has someone to turn to."

"How would you like it if *you* had no one to turn to?" the little one asked Mid Man.

"Who can I turn to?" Mid Man asked ungrammatically. Before Top Man could object to the innuendo, he turned to Little Man. "Oh, all right; come along. But if you so much as interpret one regulation, I'll put you on cold porridge for a whole pay period!" Mid Man always gave the impression that he had made the final decision.

The trio packed a lunch of leftover crow and away they went to the park, singing "Who's Afraid of the Labor Force?" Top Man sang

the lead tenor; Mid Man carried the burden of harmony; and Little Man "listened to another drummer."

At Personnel Park, Top Man and Mid Man played happy little games together, such as "Take a Giant Step," "Hide and Go Seek" and "Tag" — a euphemism for "Pass the buck, Charlie!"

Little Man sat on the edge of the playing area waiting for one of the big boys to say, "Let's play ball." He waited and he waited and he waited.

Meanwhile, back at the Organization, little Golden Brick appeared at the snack bar. He spied the three bowls of hot porridge and knew the three managers had been preparing to make decisions. (Ever since he had been kicked upstairs, Golden Brick had not been allowed to make important decisions on his own.) Oh, he thought, if only I could make important decisions on my own! Now, at last, he had his chance.

To make a long tale stubby: Golden Brick tasted the porridge and said "Ech!" three times. He sat on each stool, but even the little one wouldn't break down. (Golden Brick carried little weight around the Organization.)

He went upstairs to the executive suite and tried the plush leather lounge — left, middle and right sides — but feeling more at home at the bottom, finally fell asleep on the floor.

Darkness fell. The trio left Personnel Park and, fortified with the latest garbled regulations, returned to the Organization, stopping first at the snack bar before returning to their relative positions of decision-making.

Suddenly, Little Man pierced the din. "Aha!" he cried. "Someone has been nosing around. There are unmistakable signs of an invaded pad."

With that, omitting the porridge-tasting jazz and the chair-testing bit, he went right to where

the action was.

"Aha!" he repeated as he leaped into the executive suite. "Golden Brick! In your usual position, I see!"

Golden Brick awoke with a start and rolled over.

"So you thought you could make a decision on your own! Not over my dead coordination copy!"

"Please!" GB pleaded. "Be a pal. I just wanted to see how it felt to dictate policy. Please don't tell Toppie I'm here and someday I'll do you a favor."

"Oh, yeah!" Little Man wasn't going to be hoodwinked; but, on the other hand, why not find out what GB had in mind? "Just what do you have in mind, GB? What can you do for me that I couldn't do for myself?"

"You gotta be kidding! Why do you think they kicked me upstairs?"

"Because that's the only way they can keep you from interfering with production."

"I can get you kicked upstairs, too. I know all the tricks."

Just then, Top Man entered the sanctum. (Mid Man was a safe distance behind him.)

"I heard that!" Top Man bellowed. "From now on, Golden Brick, we're kicking the likes of you *downstairs*." He turned to Little Man. "Shame on you! You almost fell for his line. If I can't trust Little Man, whom can I trust?" (He's more grammatical than Mid Man.) "My directives will be moot."

"Wait!" intervened Mid Man. "That which is moot is debatable. Don't blame the little one. It's probably my fault. I just didn't make it clear to him where he stands."

"Yes," agreed Little Man. "He who knows where he stands has a firm footing."

Top Man thought that a sage remark, and asked, "Who said that?"

"I did," said Little Man naively.

Top Man pressed the little one to his bosom. "I don't want you to think that I'm playing this too close to my chest, but if, just once in a while, you get the beat of the big drum, we'd be number one on the charts more often."

Little Man agreed, but cautioned: "If the big boys played ball with the little boys more often and if Golden Brick developed a taste for porridge, picnics could be fun and we could all work happily ever after."

USEASTD

Editor's note: Due to the editorial nature of this article, no sexist references were eliminated from the text.

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Abstracts

Swanson, Steven M.; And Others

The Role of Related Instruction in Apprenticeship Training [A Pilot Study].

Northeastern Univ., Boston, Mass. Dept. of Economics; Manpower Administration (DOL), Washington, DC Office of Research and Development. MF 0.75; HC \$6.60; 145 pp., December 1973.

This pilot research project analyzes the role related classroom instruction plays in training journeymen in three Boston area trades, machinist, electrician and operating engineer. Information was gathered from apprentices, journeymen, apprentice coordinators and others by means of personal interviews and/or mail questionnaires. The data were used to estimate the impact of related instruction on individual job performance. The principal hypothesis was that related instruction has multiple roles, varying by trade and the particular objectives of different sponsors. It was possible to identify the independent effect of related instruction on job performance. In all three crafts the primary objective of related instruction was to equip apprentices with the technical knowledge and manipulative skills to become versatile all around journeymen. Only in the electrical trade did related instruction seem to offer a significant explanation of the variation in individual performance. It was almost impossible to coordinate related instruction with on-the-job training in construction. In the machinist trade, the degree of coordination varied from firm to firm.

Ertle, Vicki; And Others

A Guide to Correctional Vocational Training: The First National Sourcebook.

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New England Resource Center for Occupational Education, Newton, MA. MF .75; HC \$21.; 433 pp., July 1973.

The sourcebook is the result of the first major, nationwide research project designed to produce detailed information on how various inmate training programs are implemented, financed and operated. Most of the book is devoted to reports on individual training programs operating in correctional institutions or serving inmate-students in outside training