

THE EIGHT-YEAR CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

*a new tool in
personnel management*

The company and the individual employee have a mutual interest in personnel development. The company wishes to supplement its force of capable individuals operating at their optimum level in order to increase profits. The individual wishes to satisfy his income and status requirements and to experience the feeling that he is making a contribution to his company and to the society of which he is an integral part.

The demands of both parties are more readily achieved if the employee clearly outlines his career objectives and his plan of achieving them to his superiors. Such a system has distinct advantages.

BENEFITS FOR THE COMPANY

Reduction of attrition. A two-way channel of communication is opened up and the risk of loss of capable employees is reduced. If the employee firmly believes his own personal objectives cannot be fulfilled within his company, he will take action causing undesirable staff turn-over. If, however, the company is aware of the objectives of its employees, various routes can be suggested for their attainment.

A company cannot completely eliminate loss of competent employees. Such loss, however, should be restricted to the case where the company, after careful consideration, cannot satisfy the objectives of the capable employee, thus eliminating the case where the company is unaware of his objectives. Any employee receiving such consideration is less likely to be hostile towards the company, and may, later in his career, return.

Recruitment aid. Companies which encourage their employees to prepare career objectives and plans are more likely to develop a motivated work force. Satisfied employees attract others of similar inclination to the company.

Further, the recruiting officer is in a firmer position to explain the role the company is prepared to play in career development.

Aid in forecasting manpower requirements and shortages. If the company is

planning expansion, reference to the individual plans will enable the management to determine which employees have interests in needed areas. Steps can then be taken to supplement the existing staff if necessary. Furthermore, if too few employees are preparing for careers in a particular field, this can be detected sufficiently early for corrective action.

Finally, succession surveys are on a more realistic basis. Previously, logical successors may well have accepted basically unsuitable positions where the chance of promotion was the dominating factor. Management can thus dovetail the personnel requirements of different departments to a greater extent.

Aids in employee evaluation. Present employee evaluation is often carried out by the position supervisor. In a career plan, the employee sets his own standards and then rates himself by a progress review. A successful achievement record thus indicates an employee who is prepared to work to achieve his objectives whereas an unsuccessful record is an indication of a slow worker or a dreamer. Such a system thus improves personnel records.

Supervisor responsibility to both company and employee are more clearly defined. Frequently, a supervisor is faced with the situation in which a capable employee is competently carrying out an assignment below his potential and thus not preparing the employee for advancement. The employee will either deteriorate in ability or leave the company when he realizes what is taking place. Such dangerous situations are easily detected and avoided if the company has a plan outlining the objectives of its employees.

BENEFITS FOR THE EMPLOYEE

A plan instigates action. An employee who does not set objectives or make plans is unlikely to succeed. A plan reduces the tendency to intentional or unintentional drift since, by definition, it outlines a definite course of action. It also sets standards by which progress

J. MARDON
*Technical Director,
Pulp and Paper Group,
MacMillan Bloedel Limited,
New Westminster, British Columbia.*

and

R. M. HOPKINS
*Senior Engineer,
Central Technical Department,
MacMillan Bloedel Limited,
New Westminster, British Columbia.*

can be measured and it induces the achievement of objectives.

A plan makes maximum use of time. A plan accelerates the achievement of objectives. For example, attendance at a convention might offer the opportunity of visiting a nearby plant of special interest. Planning insures that such opportunities will not be missed.

It aids in seeking alternative employment. Should the employee feel his present position does not coincide with his career objectives, the plan is a suitable starting point for:

1. Making his dissatisfaction known to his company and manipulating a transfer to different work.
2. The preparation of a summary to be used in seeking employment outside the company.

PLAN COMPONENTS

A career plan is essentially a program designed to fulfil the following:

1. Gain experience (learn by self action)
2. Gain knowledge (learn from books)
3. Develop contacts (learn from the experience of others by association with them)

To establish a program, the individual must:

1. Establish his objectives
2. Analyze himself and detect areas where he is weak
3. Determine a course of action to overcome these shortcomings
4. Outline a procedure for periodical review of progress

PLAN PREPARATION

Establishment of objectives. This is the most important and the most difficult part of preparing a career plan. Objectives should be set high, but not so high that they lie beyond the employee's inherent basic intelligence and work capabilities. Since no one really knows exactly what his 'potential' is, it is easy to set objectives either too high or too low. (Also see Analysis of Strengths and

Weaknesses later.) This can be avoided to some extent on the basis of a review of objectives with acquaintances who can give dependable, honest assessment. Regardless of the opinions of others, the employee must set his own objectives. These should span a reasonable time; *but should not* exceed eight years which is considered optimum. Planning for a shorter period will limit the scope of the plan. Planning for a longer period will involve too many doubtful assumptions.

Objectives will vary with each individual, but the following points ought to be considered in plan preparation:

- (a) The positions the employee intends to hold over the eight-year period.
- (b) The qualifications of the people presently holding these positions.
- (c) The knowledge and special skills required for these positions.
- (d) Whether the positions are changing and whether more personnel will be required in the future.
- (e) The salary objectives of the employee.
- (f) The leisure time objectives of the employee.
- (g) Questions concerning housing location and travelling requirements.

It is important to bear in mind that objectives must be compatible with one another and within the inherent potential of the individual. For example, an employee disliking public speaking and having no desire to travel should not aspire to director of public relations.

ROUTE PLANNING

In planning objectives for a relatively senior position, it is often helpful for the individual to plan the various routes by which he might advance to this position. This is especially true if the position is three or more levels above that held at present, or if it is in a different line of work.

The reason for doing this, is that on analysis, all routes may not be equiva-

lent, and although a particular route might be ideal from the point of view of experience, it may have a low probability of success if an attempt is made to proceed along it.

Figure 1 illustrates the various routes by which a process engineer might advance to the position of assistant manager in a paper mill.

Despite the fact that a direct advance would involve only four promotions, there are eleven positions which could be held and a large number of possible combinations available for achieving the final post. Not all routes however have an equivalent possibility of success. For example, if at the age of 32, the employee were to accept a position in sales, he might find it difficult to return to the logical channel for the position set as the objective. Similarly, a preponderance of staff rather than line responsibilities might lessen his chances of being considered should the position become available.

Moreover, certain positions are quite flexible for the first promotion, others are not. For example, the position of technical assistant to the paper mill superintendent is a very flexible position while that of senior engineer sales service is not.

In preparing his work schedule, the individual should choose the best route fitting his experience requirements and should prepare himself to proceed along that route. Circumstances might force him to deviate from it, but such action will help guard against becoming side-branched.

ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The employee should prepare a list of points for and against his established objectives. This list should include:

- (a) Personal characteristics which can be corrected or improved
- (b) Areas where experience has been obtained and where it is required

Figure 1. Hypothetical Advancement Routes for Process Engineer Deserving to Advance to Assistant Mill Manager in Eight Years.

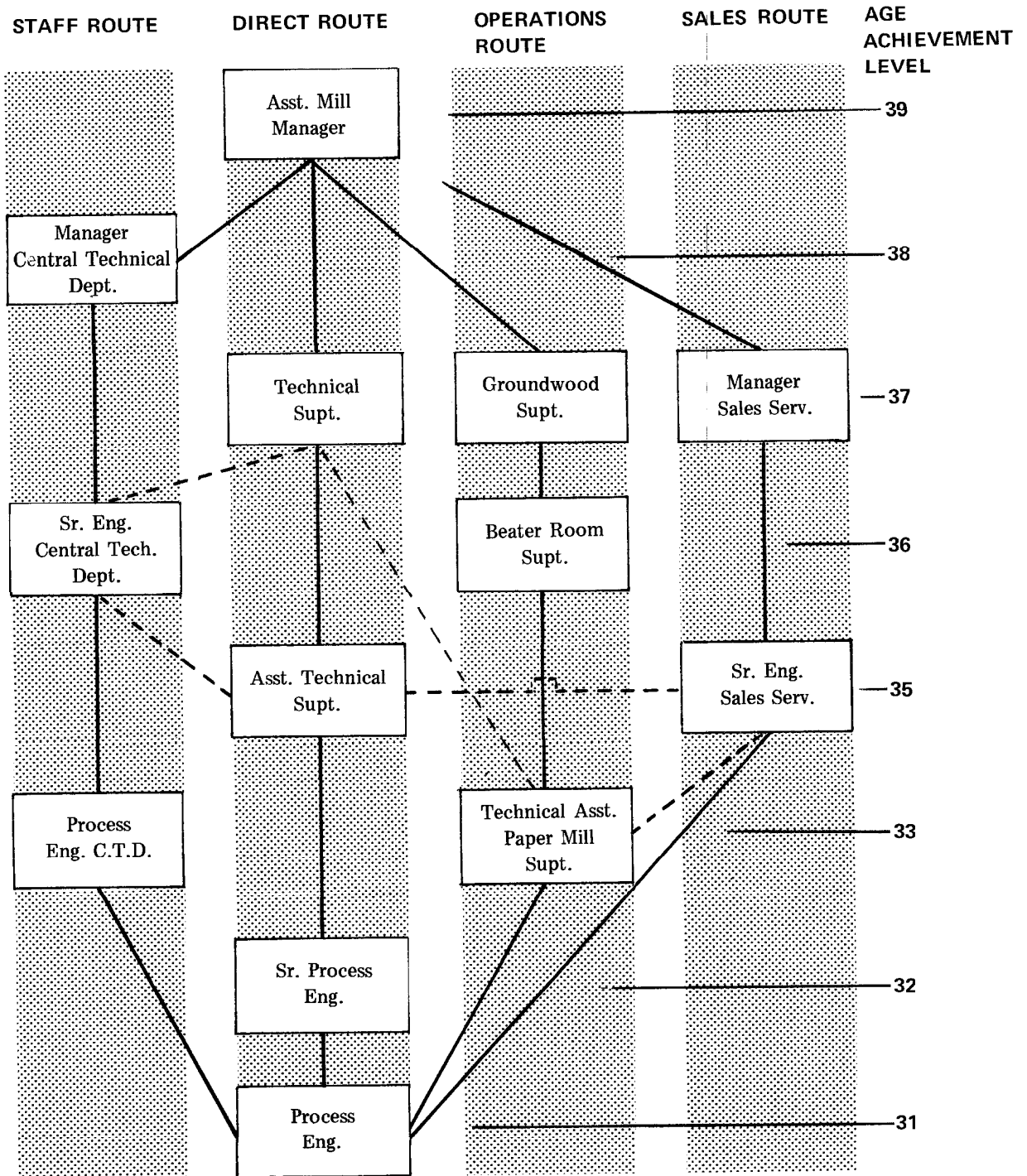


TABLE I
FORMAL COURSE OF STUDY

OBJECT	PROBLEM	HOW TO PROCEED	SCHEDULED COMPLETION		REVIEW	REMARKS
			EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE	
Gain knowledge of statistical methods.	Inadequate knowledge of statistics. Failed to see value of subject in undergraduate years.	(1) Contact _____ for references on statistics.	June 1967	July 1967	July 1967	Knowledge now sufficiently complete to handle statistical problem.
		(2) Put in request to attend statistics courses.	Jan. 1968	Jan. 1969		
		(3) Take statistics course.	July 1968	July 1969		
Learn basic instrumentation.	Falling behind in rapidly developing field.	(1) Discuss with _____ of systems engineering dept. and obtain references.	Sep. 1967	Dec. 1967		
		(2) Read and prepare literature review on electronic instrumentation for paper machines.	Dec. 1968	July 1968		
		(3) Attend vendor instrumentation course.	Aug. 1970	May 1971		

TABLE II
INFORMAL COURSE OF STUDY

OBJECT	PROBLEM	HOW TO PROCEED	SCHEDULED COMPLETION		REVIEW	REMARKS
			EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE	
Gain knowledge of scientific papermaking.	Inadequate knowledge of literature.	(1) Get papermakers reading list from _____ .	Jan. 1967	June 1967		
		(2) Have _____ note most important papers.	Jan. 1967	June 1967		
		(3) Review papers and prepare summaries.	Jan. 1967	Jan. 1969		
		(4) Write authors to clarify doubtful points.	Jan. 1967	Jan. 1969		
		(5) Meet suppliers of equipment — obtain brochures.	Jan. 1967	Jan. 1969		

TABLE III
PAPERS TO BE WRITTEN

SUBJECT OF PAPER	HOW TO PROCEED	SCHEDULED COMPLETION DATE		REVIEW	REMARKS
		EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE	
Study of newsprint printability through subjective evaluation.	(1) Review own work done on subject.	Jan. 1970	July 1971		
	(2) Ask _____ and _____ to co-author.	Jan. 1970	July 1971		
	(3) Review literature.	July 1970	Dec. 1971		
	(4) Prepare paper outline.	Jan. 1972	June 1972		
	(5) Draft paper.	Jan. 1972	Sep. 1972		
	(6) Deliver paper at convention.	Jan. 1973	Sep. 1973		

TABLE IV
VISITS AND CONFERENCES

PLACE TO BE VISITED	OBJECT	HOW TO PROCEED	SCHEDULED COMPLETION DATE		REVIEW	REMARKS
			EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE	
Rochester Institute of Technology.	Study first class printing school.	(1) Write _____ at Rochester. _____ to introduce.	Jan. 1969	Jan. 1970		
		(2) Visit Institute (try to coincide with attendance at convention).	Feb. 1969	Feb. 1970		

TABLE V
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

OBJECT	PROBLEM	HOW TO PROCEED	SCHEDULED COMPLETION DATE		REVIEW	REMARKS
			EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE	
Become proficient.	Poor at public speaking.	Join Toastmasters Club.	Sep. 1967	Sep. 1968		

An example of such a list might be as follows:

STRENGTHS

Related to individual

1. Adequate basic intelligence
2. Willing to work hard
3. Tolerant toward views of others

Related to experience

1. Sound formal education (B. Sc. hons. - 1962)
2. Two years as 5th hand on paper machine

WEAKNESSES OR AREAS WHERE EXPERIENCE IS LACKING

Related to individual

1. Tendency to procrastinate
2. Introvert or extrovert tendencies
3. Can be excessively argumentative

Related to experience

1. Lacks knowledge of instrumentation
2. Mathematics inadequate for future requirements
3. Insufficient personal contact with others in field, etc.

Once strengths and weaknesses have been analyzed, they should be compared to the objectives, and a detailed plan prepared.

PREPARATION OF WORK SCHEDULES

Work plans will vary according to the objectives set by the individual. Typical plans are shown in Tables I to V. These plans are for a hypothetical process engineer, 31 years of age, wishing to achieve the post of assistant mill manager in eight years. His ambition is to advance through a technical department into managing mill operations. This intended route is as follows:

- (a) Formal Courses of Study
- (b) Informal Courses (Reading and Literature Reviews)
- (c) Attendance at conventions and visits to other mills
- (d) Plan for personal and professional development
- (e) Plan for technical papers to develop reputation and personal contacts.

In the preparation of the schedules, a range of completion dates is preferable to a specific date, thus increasing the flexibility of the plan. Provision is also made on the schedules for a review.

REVIEW OF THE PLAN

The plan will not yield maximum bene-

fits unless it is periodically reviewed. As positions are terminated, the date should be entered on the schedule together with a short note pertaining to the benefits gained. This serves to make the schedule a progress report.

The plan should be completely reviewed once per year. Should conditions have altered to such an extent that they are no longer appropriate, complete revision of the objectives and schedules should be made.

SUMMARY

A procedure has been detailed whereby an employee outlines his career objectives and his intended means of achieving them. The company thus lowers the probability of losing good staff, adds to its recruiting program, is better able to plan its future while, at the same time, adding to its personnel records at a minimum cost. The employee indirectly improves his personal efficiency and provides himself with a complete and up-to-date record of his achievements. The preparation of development plans are thus mutually beneficial to company and employee provided that such preparation is carried out in a thoughtful and conscientious manner.

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN INCREASES

The number of bachelor's and higher degrees conferred by the Nation's colleges and universities has been increasing at a faster rate for women than for men, a recent U.S. Office of Education survey report shows.

Prior to World War II, women received about 40 percent of college and university degrees. After the war, when thousands of American males attended college under the G.I. Bill of Rights, the percentage of women graduates dropped to less than 25 percent in 1950. The Office of Education survey shows that women are again receiving 40 percent of

the degrees--and are still gaining on the men.

During the 12-month period ending June 30, 1968, women received 345,068 earned degrees, 125 percent more than the 153,448 total a decade ago. Men received 526,764 degrees, a 70 percent increase over the 1958-59 total of 310,647.

Men received 60 percent of the degrees in 1967-68, a drop of about 2 percentage points from the previous year. Women increased their share 2 percentage points at the bachelor's degree level and one point at other degree levels.