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# Personnel Training In The 1970's

## The Educational Organization Approach

Food 70's

Most urgent need to balance employment needs with educational and training needs of prospective employees

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The ultimate goal for America is constant but the strategy may vary. The advancement of the people toward a just and abundant society is the fundamental aspiration of all. America today is beset by war, inflation and an intangible spiritual malaise. There are misty doubts and frustrations over government's inability to solve these compelling problems.

Increasing crime and violence, increasing alienation among our young citizens and the polarization of our people on the basis of race and income has generated widespread disillusion. Our institutions are failing to reflect, preserve and impart our values. The drive to achieve peace and to combat inflation are immediate goals and the pace of domestic progress depends upon the realization of these objectives.

The goal of restoring the people's confidence in the American system will not be achieved by rhetoric. This goal will have to be accomplished by sweeping reforms and realignments within the institutions of this country.

There is a need for increased emphasis on the individual--his rights and responsibilities, his opportunity and equity. There is an insistence on restoring power to State and local units. There is need for commitment to planning and organizing to reach the roots of problems, to eliminate the causes rather than treat symptoms. The American people will regain confidence in the American system when they see with certainty that they are, in fact, in command. <sup>1/</sup>

People on farms now number less than 5 percent of the U. S. Population and their contribution to the economy is as important as it ever has been. Agriculture is the nation's biggest single industry. One of the urgent needs in the decade ahead is to make rural America more attractive economically, culturally and socially. Secretary Hardin says the goals in agriculture are an efficient flourishing agricultural economy keyed to opportunity and abundance, 1/

<sup>1/</sup> Goals for America, Aerospace Magazine, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1969

with family farm enterprise as its cornerstone. If these goals can be achieved there will be created a greater America for all the people.

There can be no cutoff point for desirable quality and breadth of educational opportunity--or for adequacy of supportive assistance to the handicapped, the impoverished and the disadvantaged.

The mandate we face in America today is to enhance the quality of life that potentially ought to be within the reach of every American. We have great difficulty measuring the impact of effectiveness of our program efforts, we do not know well enough what works and what doesn't or whether the targets built into our ongoing programs are in fact being achieved.

A priority need is the upgrading of the planning and evaluation function in every area of our program responsibilities. The label, "most urgent," needs to be assigned to effective interdisciplinary coordination and to the coordinated delivery of services in the field. This means in the next decade a massive commitment--the investment of men and materials--the assembly of an organizational system--which all together can achieve a decent home, employment and suitable living environment for all Americans. This commitment would call for an expansion and redirection of our manpower programs to balance the employer's need for workers with the job, education and training needs of men and women to assume the jobs. America is an urban nation and our most serious domestic problems are urban in nature.

The changes that have occurred over the last two decades have been phenomenal. I am anxious to read the judgments that will be made on this decade of the 60's by "objective" historians twenty or thirty years hence. It will make exciting reading . . . some historian has commented that it's not always pleasant living in times about which it's exciting to read, and there's little question that these last ten years have been rather difficult and painful.<sup>2/</sup> Not only has technology changed many of our patterns of living, but it has also changed our patterns of thought and evaluation. Those things that dominate our environment significantly shape how we are as human beings. Certainly the family environment is crucial in determining who we are but this is also true of our wider environment, which today is a technological environment, a world of computers, bureaucracies, forms, and a world of time pressures, efficiency and speed.

Recently someone commented: "Now all our buildings are looking like computer cards, and in the name of efficiency you can't get a human response. I had to call four numbers at the airport before I got something besides a recording." This Chinese parable presents a rather radical evaluation of how our thought patterns have changed:

As Tzu-Gung was traveling through the regions north of the river Han, he saw an old man working in his vegetable garden. He had dug an irrigation ditch. The man would descend into a well, fetch

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<sup>2/</sup> Marshall McLuhan. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965.

up a vessel of water in his arms and pour it out into the ditch. While his efforts were tremendous the results appeared to be very meager.

Tzu Gung said, "There is a way whereby you can irrigate a hundred ditches in one day, and whereby you can do much with little effort. Would you not like to hear of it?"

Then the gardener stood up, looked at him and said, "And what would that be?"

Tzu-Gung replied, "You take a wooden lever, weighted at the back and light in front. In this way you can bring up water so quickly that it just gushes out. This is called a draw-well."

Then anger rose up in the old man's face, and he said, I have heard my teacher say that whoever uses machines does all his work like a machine. He who does his work like a machine grows a heart like a machine, and he who carries the heart of a machine in his breast loses his simplicity. He who has lost his simplicity becomes unsure in the strivings of his soul. Uncertainty in the strivings of the soul is something which does not agree with honest sense. It is not that I do not know of such things; I am ashamed to use them." <sup>3/</sup>

As one commentator on the contemporary scene has said: "Finally the great threat of a technological environment--and more so of the cybernetic environment is the reduction of the human to a scale accessible to the machines men have built for themselves." <sup>4/</sup> Behind our computers stand bureaucracies which are like computers in the sense that they exist for the sake of efficiency. They can be grinding, slow and unresponsive if you don't fit the mold they are geared to serve. They can, in their worst moment, raise images and events that remind us of Orwell's "1984," images of uniformity and dehumanized machine standards. One of the dangers of this time is that we might indeed grow a heart like a computer and become unsure of our possibilities as human beings.

Every aspect of a firm's activities is determined by the competence, motivation and general effectiveness of its human organization. Of all the tasks of management, and particularly the training dimension, managing and developing the human component is the central and most important task, because all else depends upon how well it is done. The shifting sands of practitioner judgment cannot in today's world be the source of knowledge about how to organize and run an enterprise. The art of management and training can be based on verifiable information derived from rigorous, quantitative research. Research based training will be substituted extensively for practitioner judgment in all aspects of management and particularly to the management of the human enterprise.

<sup>3/</sup> op. cit.

<sup>4/</sup> William Kuhns, *Environmental Man*, Harper & Row, 1969, p. 132.

The fundamentals of training have often been overlooked or disregarded in favor of more expedient or glamorous approaches such as: the smorgasbord approach, the bandwagon approach, the crisis approach, and the excursion approach. These approaches indicate the lack of attention to a few basic fundamentals or requirements in administering effective training programs.

If training in the 70's is to be effective, a climate that is conducive to learning must be established. Such a climate should include the following factors: (1) an individual develops primarily through the performance of his job - if the job is planned to foster growth; (2) the subordinate recognizes that he is responsible for his own development - and that no one else can develop him; he recognizes that growth is largely the result of a planned effort that he alone can initiate and sustain - and that an essential part of his own growth is his acceptance of decision-making responsibilities along with the risks that these entail; (3) there is a mutual understanding of the specific areas of responsibility involved in the job and the standards of performance that the subordinate is expected to meet; (4) the superior recognizes that a major part of his skill is managing lies in providing a climate that permits growth, and that the chief characteristic of this climate is a willingness on his part to delegate responsibility. It follows, therefore, that the subordinate must be free to err and must be prepared to accept, within reason, the consequences of his mistakes.

Someone once wrote, "Objectives are like targets - make sure you have one before you start shooting." This advice will be very applicable in the development of training programs in the future. Once training needs have been identified, specific objectives must be established to direct programs toward such needs. Evaluation will be extremely important to the success of training activities. Evaluation should provide a company with an opportunity to measure the contributions of training. Many current methods of evaluation do little to measure an individual's application of training to the job. Performance appraisals still hold the greatest potential for such measurement. This means that along with training there must be job delineation, job enrichment, performance standards and performance appraisals that enhance the possibilities of self-actualization and achievement.

Every organization is in a continuous state of change. The conditions requiring these changes arise from both within and without. Because of this, there is never-ending need for adjustments to change. If the information available for decision-making is inaccurate or is incorrectly interpreted, the diagnostic decisions are likely to be in error and the action taken inappropriate.

The way doctors diagnose an illness illustrates the process. A physician needs two different kinds of information to make a correct diagnosis. First, he must know a great deal about the nature of human beings, the character of the human body's normal and abnormal functioning. This knowledge gives him the insights into how the system ought to function. The second kind of information he needs to discover the patient's state of health is that revealed by appropriate measurements and tests made on the patient at that time.

Every organization faces a similar situation in diagnosing its problems, needs and opportunities for training. It needs to understand the fundamental nature of its system, the way in which its component parts function. This basic knowledge is a necessary prerequisite to the determination of what specific indicators to look for in diagnosing and interpreting. For purposes of easy reference, Likert calls these two kinds of information, respectively, information on the nature of the system and information on the state of the system. <sup>5/</sup> Information on the nature of the system means data which enables one to construct the basic conceptual model of the organization. This model, in turn, tells what to obtain for diagnosing the state of the system and how to interpret these data. By information on the state of the system, Likert means data which reveals the current situation of the organization, such as the behavior of its leaders, the motivation of the employees, its communication and decision-making processes, and its productivity and earnings.

Such a science-based approach to management is appreciably more complex than the practitioner approach. It requires greater learning and **greater** skill to use it well, but it yields impressively better long range improvement in productivity, labor relations, costs, and earnings.

In making training and other management decisions in the future, extensive use will be made of three broad classes of variables--causal, intervening and end-result. The "causal" variables are independent variables which determine the course of developments within an organization and the results achieved. These include those which can be changed by the organization and its management such as structure of the organization, management's policies, decisions, business and leadership strategies, skills, and behavior.

The "intervening" variables reflect the internal state and health of the organization, the loyalties, attitudes, motivations, performance goals and perceptions of all members and their collective capacity for effective interaction communication and decision-making.

The "end result" variables are the dependent variables which reflect the achievements of the organization, its productivity, costs and earnings.

The interrelationship among some of these key variables can be portrayed graphically in a useful but oversimplified form in the following figure. The three kinds of variables shown in the figure are the end-result, intervening and causal variables. The concepts suggested in the diagram are consistent with data from many studies.

The causal variables have two essential characteristics: (1) they can be modified or altered by the organization or firm; they are not fixed or controlled by external circumstances, and (2) they are independent variables,

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<sup>5/</sup>

— Rensis Likert, *The Human Organization*, McGraw-Hill, 1967, 1. 129.

when they are changed, they cause other variables to change, but they are not directly influenced by other variables.

The intervening variables are produced largely by the causal variables and, in turn, have an influence upon the end-result variables. Attempts to improve the intervening variables by endeavoring to alter them directly will not be too successful usually unless there are efforts directed toward modifying them through altering the causal variables.

The end-result variables reveal the final outcome and reflect the influence of the intervening variables upon them. Efforts to improve the end-result variables by attempting to modify the intervening variables will usually be less effective than changing the causal variables.

If a manager has:

Well-organized plan of operation  
High performance goals  
High technical competence

Causal  
Variables

and if the manager manages by:

Direct hierarchical pressure.  
Fears, threats and occasional  
reward.  
Little trust and confidence in  
subordinates.

Principle of supportive relation-  
ships, group participation in  
setting goals and appraising  
progress. Confidence and  
trust in employees.

his organization will display:

Interven-  
ing Vari-  
ables

Little group loyalty.  
Low performance goals.  
Great conflict and little  
cooperation  
Little technical assistance  
to peers.  
Great feeling of unreasonable  
pressure  
Less favorable attitudes toward  
manager.  
Low motivation to produce.

Great group loyalty.  
High performance goals.  
Great cooperation.  
More technical assistance  
to peers.  
Little feeling of unreasonable  
pressure.  
Favorable attitudes toward  
manager.  
High motivation to produce.

the organization will attain:

End-  
Result  
Variables

Lower sales volume.  
Higher sales costs  
Lower quality of business sold.  
Lower earnings by salesmen

Higher sales volume.  
Lower sales costs.  
Higher quality of business  
sold.  
Higher earnings by salesmen.

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Martin R. Warshaw, Changing Perspectives in Marketing Management, Univ. of Michigan, Bureau of Business Research, Ann Arbor, 1962.

Let's review briefly some personnel training practices that have been developed over the years as attempts to instill "motivation." Behavioral scientists criticized management for not knowing how to deal with people. Costly human relations programs have been in vogue for many years. The limited successes of human relations training to produce motivation led to an advanced form, sensitivity training, for supervisors and managers. Some of the failures of sensitivity training are now being explained as a failure to really conduct proper sensitivity training courses.

With the realization that there were only temporary gains from human relations and sensitivity training, the field of communications opened up as a whole new area of "scientifically" sanctioned training. Professors of communications were invited to join the staff of training programs and helped in getting employees to understand what management was doing for them. Little motivation resulted and the obvious thought occurred that perhaps management was not hearing what employees were saying.

Management conducted morale surveys, suggestion plans and group participation programs. As a result both employees and management were communicating and listening to each other more than ever, but without the expected improvement in motivation.

Another look was taken by the behavioral scientists and then it was decided that people want to actualize themselves. Job participation and "give them the big picture" approach was tried. The goal was to provide a sense of achievement rather than a substantive achievement in their task. Real achievement, of course, requires a task that makes this possible. Still there wasn't the expected motivation and this led to employee counseling.

With all these many approaches to training, the pressures and demands to find out how to motivate workers have not lessened. Starting in 1958 research attempts were made to determine symptoms and causes of motivation and dissatisfaction among company workers. Research done by Herzberg and others found that factors involved in producing job satisfaction, motivation and productivity are separate and distinct from the factors that are associated with no job satisfaction. The job satisfaction or motivation factors intrinsic to the job were found to be: achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility and growth or advancement. These are the factors that have to do with the self-actualization of the individual on the job. The no job satisfaction or dissatisfaction avoidance factors were found to be those that are extrinsic or peripheral to the job such as: company policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary and security. Workers become dissatisfied when opportunities for meaningful achievement do not exist and they become sensitized to their environment and begin to find fault.

Some people are motivated by the nature of the task and have high tolerance for relatively poor environmental factors. These people might be

called "motivation seekers." Some people are motivated primarily by the nature of their environment and tend to avoid motivation opportunities. These people are "maintenance seekers," they are chronically preoccupied and dissatisfied with maintenance factors surrounding the job such as pay, supplemental benefits, supervision, company policy, and fellow employees.

Maintenance seekers show little interest in the kind and quality of work, some succeed on the job through sheer talent, but seldom profit from experience. Motivation seekers enjoy work, strive for quality, tend to overachieve and benefit from experience.

Maintenance seekers in an environment of achievement, responsibility, growth and earned recognition tend to behave like and acquire the values of motivation seekers. The absence of motivators or job satisfiers causes many motivation seekers to behave like maintenance seekers and to become preoccupied with the maintenance factors of their environment.

The spiraling cost of fringe benefits in business and industry clearly indicates the attempts to increase job satisfaction through maintenance factors. Such practices seem to have failed to increase productivity and probably contribute to the pricing of products and services out of the market. Insuring job satisfactions is not only a more realistic approach for satisfying personal goals and for sustaining the organization, but it is also less expensive.

Conditions of motivation are task-centered: they depend on management and supervisor's skill in planning, organizing work and the enrichment of work. Ideally it begins at the top to provide members at each succeeding level with responsibilities that challenge capabilities and satisfy aspirations. Matching jobs with people requires a knowledge and control of the task, as well as an understanding of individual aptitudes and aspirations.

During the '70's I expect the thrusts in training and in research to zero in on job enrichment to bring about more effective utilization of personnel. People do exercise self-direction and self-control when they can commit themselves to an objective and commitment depends on the kind of rewards that can be achieved. People learn under proper conditions not only to accept but also to seek responsibility. Training and research in the decade ahead needs to be concerned with "how we utilize people" and not so much on "how we treat people." Resources allocated to job enrichment efforts could result in the largest dividend in human satisfaction and economic gain that industry and society has ever reaped through personnel management and training.

Research and training in the 70's will need to further study and test in practice some of the current concepts of management such as: the use by the manager of the principle of supportive relationships, group methods of supervision and decision making, and high performance goals which represent an optimum integration of the needs and desires of the members of an organization.

There seems to be considerable concurrence that there is consistent, dependable and marked relationships among what have been termed the causal, intervening, and end-result variables of an organization or business. Training in the 70's will need to be planned and conducted with these relationships in mind in order to build and maintain the human organizations through which all else is accomplished. When an organization seeks to apply research results and modify training, it needs to involve a total systems modification and not an atomistic modification. Changes in training need start by altering first the most influential causal variables and there need be systematic plans to modify in coordinated steps which will insure anchoring the organization firmly to its system of management. Effective training programs will need to be internally consistent, their content drawn from only one system of management. Research shows that few organizations achieve effective performance where there is an attempt to use principles and procedures which disregard the systems approach. Training often is hampered and ineffective because of a lack of accurate information concerning the actual internal state of the organization. Training programs for the 70's will need to be based on findings from evaluations and studies which reveal clearly the management system, the principles and procedures of a firm and the resulting motivational and behavioral consequences of the system.

The study and diagnoses of organizational problems is a complex task. Training programs which are treatments of symptoms rather than causes are too costly.

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