

AN EXAMINATION OF
MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to identify and review some of the more salient aspects of management development programs and to ascertain whether or not there is a generally accepted approach to management training.

The different levels of management development are examined first. This is followed by a discussion on the requirements of a manager. A study of the pre-requisites for these programs precedes the identification and evaluation of certain development activities and techniques. Following this are some case studies on how several large Vancouver-based companies conduct their programs. A critique of the evaluation of management training and a discussion on the problems encountered in these programs ensue.

Finally, an endeavor is made to show that the approaches taken to management development programs are far from being uniform and a case is advocated for a greater effort to devise a more generally accepted framework of management training, flexible enough to accommodate particular needs and situations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

An increasingly important area of business enterprise is the proper development of well-qualified management personnel to fulfill both present and future needs. Unfortunately, it is a subject that has only recently received widespread attention and consideration. Increasing competition, changed socio-economic conditions and new developments in technology accentuate the need for better trained managers imbued with up to date management principles and techniques to cope with the growing complexities of operating business enterprises. Management succession and company growth demand a steady flow of properly trained people to ensure a degree of continuity of business operations. The indifferent attitude towards management development is fast becoming a thing of the past, especially in large companies, as more and more top managements are beginning to realize that the competition of the future would be more and more a contest between management teams rather than anything else.¹

This thesis is concerned with the identification and examination of some of the more salient aspects of manage-

1. Thomas A. Mahoney, Building the Executive Team, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1961, p. 20.

ment development programs and ascertaining whether there is a generally accepted set of procedures and principles in management development as in the case of accounting and other acknowledged professions. A case is put forth to show that there is no one accepted way to develop managers. Though the formulation of a general theory of development is far from sight, for the moment at least, it would be a good idea to explore the possibility of making the whole area of management development more systematic and more generally acceptable.² However, any such framework contemplated should be flexible enough to accommodate the diversity of needs and situations ever present in the business world.

Research Methodology

Much of the material in this thesis is based on secondary sources, particularly books, journals, and other publications, mostly North American in origin. The statistical data and some studies are taken mainly from journals and special reports. Several case studies were undertaken to demonstrate how four large Vancouver-based companies, each representing a separate industry, conduct their management development programs. These case studies are a result of several interviews held with the people responsible for co-ordinating training in their respective companies.

2. By "systematic", it is meant that there should be more planning and organization in a logical and realistic manner. "Generally acceptable" refers to a situation where a set of procedures and principles are adhered to by a majority or all of the people involved in management training.

Scope and Limitations of Study

Management development is too wide a topic to be thoroughly investigated in every aspect. Thus, only the more salient areas are identified and reviewed. The areas included are as follows: the requirements of a manager; pre-requisites for successful operation; procedures, methods and tools used; evaluation and problems encountered in management development. Since the thesis is intended to be a theoretical exposition, the actual mechanics of operating a management development program are not included. Briefly the focus is on the "what" and "why" of management development rather than the "how".

Chapter Organization

Chapter II deals firstly with the different levels of management development. Three managerial levels: first-line supervision, middle management and top management are identified. Training programs should be designed to satisfy the specific needs at each level. Technical and human relations skills are required in the first two levels and conceptual skill in the third level. Next the requirements of a manager are examined. One school of thought believes that certain basic skills are crucial to a manager's effectiveness. A second school of thought emphasizes certain personality traits. Perhaps, a more plausible approach lies in a combination of the two. Judging from the wide variety of opinions expressed on the requirements of a manager, one can conclude that there

is little or no agreement on what a manager should be. However, better management can be learned.

Chapter III is devoted to a discussion of the possible pre-requisites for successful operation of a management development program. These pre-requisites are by no means absolutes. Rather, they are guidelines with which one can possibly make a start. It appears that a well conceived program should have clearly defined objectives, top management support and participation, line responsibility and co-operation, conducive company climate and sound company organization. Moreover, the program should be tailor-made and continuous. If possible, there should be a management development staff to assist in the administration of the program. A program can only succeed if each and every participant has a personal responsibility to make it work; for ultimately all development is self-development.

Development tools are reviewed in Chapter IV. These are devices used for such purposes as determining the basis in which the program is to be conducted, ascertaining organizational and individual needs, processing and storing data pertaining to the program and facilitating the teaching-learning process. Among the development tools frequently employed are position description, management appraisal, post-appraisal interview and management inventory.

Chapter V is a study of the development activities used in on-the-job training. Wherever possible, one should try to

train managers on-the-job because people learn by doing and it is comparatively cheaper and more convenient than off-the-job training. Off-the-job development activities cannot substitute for on-the-job training. Experience indicates that most of the actual learning takes place on-the-job. The most popular form of on-the-job training is personal coaching of a subordinate by his superior. Other forms of on-the-job training includes job rotation, special individual assignment, syndicate, "assistant" jobs and multiple management. The last two are especially good for training promising managers for top positions.

This is followed by a similar study of the off-the-job training in Chapter VI. Off-the-job development activities are often used to supplement the experiences and activities not available on-the-job. Each development technique has its merits and weaknesses and is more suitable for some purposes than others. For instance, one is inclined to utilize role playing, lecture and panel discussions for training people for lower managerial positions; and management games and seminars for developing managers slated for higher managerial echelons. There are some development techniques like the lecture and discussion group which can be used for training people for almost every managerial level.

Chapter VII deals with the evaluation of management development programs. Available literature suggests that relatively little attention is paid to evaluation as compared with other areas of management development even though it is

considered an essential aspect of training. One contributing factor is the relative nebulous nature of the subject. Despite the lack of proper measuring tools, a great number of firms express satisfaction with their results at least in terms of their own objectives. This is an area in which much work needs to be done.

Some case studies on how four large Vancouver-based companies conduct their management development programs are included in Chapter VIII. It is noticed that each company administers its program in a manner it considers befitting to its policy and operations. The companies with a lesser range of activities tend to employ more standardized techniques than the companies with diversified operations. All the companies appear to have a firm belief in proper coaching by the immediate superior and on-the-job training. For some reason or another, none of the companies make any strenuous effort to evaluate their programs.

Chapter IX is concerned with the problems encountered in management development. It seems that some problems can be overcome while others are likely to remain unresolved for some time to come. Some problems like the resistance to learning can be rectified by examining the true nature of resistance and taking the appropriate action. However, other problems such as one involving a conflict between satisfying organizational needs and individual development are not so easily resolved.

In Chapter X, a case is made to show that there is little or no consensus in the approach to developing managers because of the diversity of needs and situations. Consequently, it is suggested that some attempts should be made to develop a more generally accepted framework of management development which is flexible enough to accommodate as many aspirations and circumstances as possible.

Definition of Terms

The term "management development program" could be quite misleading, especially if one were to interpret these programs in terms of courses and classes scheduled in a certain pattern. To overcome this ambiguity, a "management development program" in this thesis means "a systematic, continuing and judicious treatment of the long-term problem of management development in a company and resourceful use of work assignments, coaching on the job and other means to assist managerial personnel to increase their productivity and competence".³

Training and development are used interchangeably in this thesis though in recent years, the use of the term "training" has become one restricted to the learning activities of the non-management personnel and "development" has been applied increasingly to the learning process of the managerial group. "Development" refers "to the individual's

3. A definition found in John W. Riegel, Executive Development, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952, p. 2.

efforts and achievement in increasing and improving his managerial and technical abilities. His efforts can be guided by selected work assignments and other activities affording his beneficial experience".⁴

A manager⁵ in this thesis refers "not only to every supervisor including those in junior levels and those in senior levels in every division of a business, but it refers also to persons not strictly managers who occupy important technical and staff positions which are difficult to fill".⁶ The usage of an all-inclusive term is partly for convenience and partly because there is no definite line of demarcation between the different echelons of managerial staff in any comprehensive management development program. Every echelon is included because one may be a training ground for another. Important technical and staff personnel are often included in management development even though some of them are not classified as managers.

These are the main definitions which it is felt should be clarified initially. Other terms by no means less essential or more lucid, will be clarified when necessary.

4. Ibid.

5. A manager is defined by the Fair Labor Standards Acts as a person having the authority to hire, fire, supervise and direct as well as possessing some discretionary powers. Vide, an extract of this definition in Joseph L. Cummins, "Management a Profession?" Advanced Management Office Executive, Vol. 1, No. 12, Dec. 1962, p. 11.

6. Riegel, op. cit., p. 3.

CHAPTER II

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Before any management development program can be undertaken, it may be worthwhile to discuss briefly the types of training needed in the different managerial echelons and the requirements of a manager. Only then can measures be taken to plan and implement whatever training program one has in mind.

Levels of Management Development

Although every member of the management group has to plan, organize, direct and control, each performs these functions differently, depending on which echelon he belongs to and the responsibilities of that echelon. Moreover the attributes of training and experience which a manager possesses at any given time vary with his position in the organization. In this respect, a management development program should strive to satisfy the various needs of these echelons. Development should be programmed to correspond with the three levels of management: first-line supervision (foremen), middle management (department heads) and top management (company officers).¹ Technical and human relations skills are paramount in the

1. Theodore A. Toedt et al., Managing Manpower in the Industrial Environment, Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown Co., 1962, pp. 446-449.

first two levels, however, in the third level, conceptual skill is the all-important factor.²

Often first-line supervisors are promoted from the ranks. Though possessing little formal education, they are likely to have considerable experience in the work at their level. With such a background, any training envisaged should be designed to develop them in areas in which they are likely to be deficient, such as leadership, organizational abilities and problem-solving techniques.

With the exception of a few hired from outside, most middle managers are selected from the first-line supervisors or more frequently today, from the products of junior executive development programs. Development should be conducted in relation to the sources and backgrounds of those involved. A non-college manager requires a different training program from that stipulated for his college-trained colleague. The former needs to broaden his intellectual outlook, sharpen his problem-solving skill and improve his ability to communicate. On the other hand, the development program for the latter should be designed to familiarize him with company policies, procedures and operations; and to train him to be an effective manager. It is at this level that more and more emphasis should be given to self-development as a key to progress and advancement.

2. Robert L. Katz, "Skills of an Effective Administrator," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 33, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1955, pp. 33-42.

Development for positions in top management takes a somewhat different course from the previous two levels. Those selected for these positions usually have proven leadership qualities and problem-solving abilities. More important, the people chosen have demonstrated their potentials for greater responsibilities. Their duties require a comprehensive understanding of events and situations both within and outside the company. Development at this level is generally tailor-made to suit the individual concerned. Self-development is heavily stressed, for the upper echelon is a place strictly reserved for people with immense initiative, energy and capabilities. Much emphasis is placed on the development or improvement of conceptual skill at this level.

Some writers argue that a management development program should start at a high level because of the importance of leadership, coaching and example by the superior in the development of a subordinate.³ They feel that only top management can permeate the development activities down the line. Moreover, they believe that any development activity not approved by the senior executives is doomed to fail in its objective. Others, however, maintain that regardless of the level started, development activities tend to spread rapidly both upwards

3. One of them is Allen, vide, Louis A. Allen, The Management Profession, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964, p. 302 et seq.

and downwards in the organization.⁴ These activities may slide downwards as the lower echelons begin to consider them to be a device for advancement. These activities may move upwards because the superiors have to analyze their own job performance and needs for improvement before they can do an effective job of developing others. Their experiences in coaching others prepare them well for planning and undertaking development activities for themselves.

Requirements of a Manager: Personality Characteristics or Skills

One school of thought suggests that an effective manager should have certain personality characteristics.⁵ The other school emphasizes basic skills such as technical, human relations and conceptual skills.⁶ There is still some dispute on which is more relevant to a manager's effectiveness. Perhaps a more plausible approach lies in a combination of the two as they are quite inter-related in numerous occasions. For instance, an individual can only master a skill provided he has the necessary aptitude, potential and motivation.

Personality characteristics refer to the "sum total of traits and behavior characteristics which a person presents to the world and which determine the reaction of others to

4. John W. Riegel, Executive Development, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952, p. 67.

5. Burt K. Scanlan, "A New Look at Executive Development," Administrative Management, Jan. 1964, p. 31 et seq.

6. Katz, op. cit., pp. 33-42.

him".⁷ There is a lack of consensus as to what characteristics are essential in a manager. Two authors' opinions as to these characteristics are cited to illustrate what is meant.

To Scanlan, the essential characteristics are as follows:⁸

- Intelligence
- Adaptability
- Decisiveness
- Analytical Ability
- Character
- Proper Attitude
- Motivation

Chris Argyris, from his many studies, comes to the conclusion that some characteristics of successful managers are as follows:⁹

- Exhibit high frustration tolerance
- Encourage full participation
- Continually questioning themselves
- Understand "Laws of Competitive Warfare"
- Express hostility tactfully
- Accept victory with controlled emotion
- Defeat never shatters them
- Understand necessity for limits and "unfavourable decision"
- Identify selves with groups
- Set goals realistically

Others, like Katz¹⁰ believe that the performance of a

7. Carl Heyel, Appraising Executive Performance, New York: American Management Association, 1958, p. 104.

8. Scanlan, op. cit., p. 32.

9. Chris Argyris, "Some Characteristics of Successful Executives," Personal Journal, Vol. 32, No. 5, May 1953, pp. 50-53.

10. Katz, op. cit., pp. 33-42.

manager depends more on fundamental skills than personality traits as mentioned earlier. For instance, the qualities needed by a shop superintendent are not likely to be the same as those required by an executive vice-president. A skill is defined as an ability which can be developed, is not necessarily innate and which is exhibited in performance. Three skills are identified: technical, human relations, and conceptual.

Technical skill is an ability shown in proficiency in a specific activity particularly one involving procedures, methods and processes. Human relations skill implies an ability to work effectively with others. Conceptual skill entails an ability to recognize the inter-relationships among the various functions of the organization and how changes in one affects the others.

According to this approach, conceptual skill becomes increasingly critical in the upper echelons where policies and long-range decisions are made. At the top of the management hierarchy, conceptual skill is paramount. It appears that technical and human relations skills are the principal needs at the lower administrative levels. They also claim that skills are easier to identify and less likely to be misinterpreted than traits in performance appraisals.

Even in this school of thought, a considerable disagreement exists as to what the skills should be. Houston, for example, offers another list of skills which he thinks

is necessary for a manager to do a good job of managing.¹¹

His list is as follows:

- Technical and analytical skill
- Conceptual skill
- Human relations skill
- Teaching and learning skill
- Communication skill
- Decision-making skill

The Myth of Model Manager

Judging from the wide variety of opinions on the requirements of a manager, one can conclude that a model manager is a myth. There are too many variables involved to have one type of manager able to deal with all situations and problems effectively. One factor contributing to this difficulty of defining a manager is the absence of proper measuring tools. Another is that different situations require different managerial performance, which in turn demands different skills and characteristics.¹² There appears to be as many exceptions as there are rules concerning what constitutes a good manager. One can almost gather sufficient evidence to substantiate any point one chooses. A Fortune magazine finding estimated that if some of the requirements, now being stipulated of managers, were to be vigorously applied, as much as a half of the most dynamic men in business today might be

11. George C. Houston, Manager Development, Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin Inc., 1961, p. 14.

12. Roger Bellows, T. Q. Gilson, G. S. Odiorne, Executive Skills: Their Dynamics and Development, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962, p. 7.

out of a job.¹³

It is possible to define the activities and requirements in a particular position in a particular firm at a particular occasion as pointed out by Mace.¹⁴ This is exactly what is needed in many instances of management development. The training received should be appropriate to the man himself and his job. What is seemingly beneficial to a group as a whole may be of little use to the individual members. Any training which fails to attain its objectives is wasted. Thus, training should be designed to strike a happy balance between organizational goals and individual wants.

Management Development is Possible

Though the concept of a model manager is without doubt a myth, management development programs are based on the assumption that managerial skills can be developed or improved. It is said that with proper direction, encouragement, incentives and training, better management can be learned.¹⁵

Research in psychology and physiology shows that an

13. Quoted in William H. Whyte, Jr., "The Fallacies of Personality Testing," Fortune, Vol. 50, No. 3, Sept. 1954, p. 118.

14. Myles L. Mace, The Growth and Development of Executives, Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business, Harvard University, 1950, p. 20.

15. Virgil K. Rowland, Improving Managerial Performance, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 17. et seq.

individual need not have special aptitude or ability to develop a skill though his ultimate proficiency in this skill will not be as outstanding as one who possesses these qualities assuming all other factors equal.¹⁶ A person can possibly "learn" how to change or improve some of his personality traits if he perceives a necessity for so doing and if he is given the necessary facilities and backing to accomplish what he has in mind.¹⁷

However in assisting another to develop as a manager, one cannot start from scratch because the individual concerned already has developed his personality to some extent. His personality, a unique combination of needs, attitudes and abilities cannot be ignored; this forms the framework for his further development. Some behavior scientists are of the opinion that given time and proper methods, an individual's set of personality characteristics can be modified.¹⁸ Of course, there are individual differences in response to any stimulus for change owing to differences in the degree of rigidity of one's personality and the impact of the stimulus on the individual in question.

16. Katz, op. cit., p. 40.

17. For a more elaborate discourse on the relationship between learning and personality, vide, Donald Snygg, "Learning: An Aspect of Personality Development," in Learning Theory, Personality Theory and Clinical Research, The Kentucky Symposium, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1954, pp. 129-137.

18. Walter S. Wikstrom, "Developing Managerial Competence," Studies in Personnel Policy No. 189, New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1964, p. 18.

CHAPTER III

PRE-REQUISITES FOR SUCCESSFUL OPERATION

Over the years, students of management from their personal experiences and the experiences of others have postulated a series of pre-requisites which they think have some relationship with the success of management development.¹ By no means should these pre-requisites be considered as laws in the purely scientific sense. Rather they are more aptly described as guidelines indicating a possibility of success if certain procedures and conditions are fulfilled. As in the case of any body of guidelines, some are accepted by a majority of people involved in management development, some by a minority and others are adhered to by only a few.

Clearly Defined Objectives

The planning and implementation of a management development program will be a lot easier if the objectives of the program are clearly defined and understood. With the establishment of objectives, the people involved will be in a better position to know what they are supposed to do and accomplish. Consequently, development activities can be more effectively planned and executed. Further, the results of

1. Walter S. Wikstrom, "Developing Managerial Competence," Studies in Personnel Policy No. 189, New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1964, p. 17.

the program can more easily be assessed if the objectives are known.²

One possible objective can be improving managers in their present job performance.³ Another can be providing a reserve of qualified managerial personnel to replace present incumbents and to staff new positions. A third possible objective can be attracting and retaining desirable personnel who have an aspiration to move ahead as quickly as their abilities permit.⁴ Still another can be preparing management for discharging managerial responsibilities effectively in the ever increasing complexities of the highly competitive business world and ensuring that management will be kept up to date with the latest developments in engineering, production and other business activities. One can also use a training program for improving morale, communication process, human relations skill and so on within the organization.

2. Evaluating a training program is still a major problem today. One suggested approach to the problem is to assess a program in terms of its stated objectives. Vide, Joseph M. Trickett, "A Survey of Management Development," in Management Education for Itself and Its Employees, Part II, New York: American Management Association, 1954, p. 38.

3. Whyte reports that a college graduate tends to view the existence and nature of a training program as crucial of the job offers he receives. Vide, William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1957, p. 121 et seq.

4. In a study made by the National Industrial Conference Board in 1960, a majority of the respondents placed present job performance as their primary objective. Vide, Walter S. Wikstrom, "Why Companies Develop Their Managers," Management Record, Nov. 1961, pp. 6-8.

Every company contemplating a management development program should decide what objectives are most conducive in relation to its needs, policies and operations. Whatever objectives established for the program should be consistent with the over-all corporate goals and policies. Any objective set should be realistic, attainable, compatible with other objectives and clearly defined.

All Development is Self-development

It is said that any development on the part of the manager is self-development in the long run.⁵ While it is the responsibility of the company to assist him to develop whenever necessary, the entire burden of development rests on the manager because it is a job no one can do for him. All that a company can do is provide the man with whatever experiences and opportunities he requires. The actual development has to be done by him. Studies made of the careers of successful managers indicate that the greatest development takes place when the man himself accepts full accountability for his development.⁶ For any development of any dimension, he should not only possess the necessary native abilities, but also the energy, drive, initiative and purpose to develop his potentials. In short, management development is the cultivation and activation of some latent forces within the individual.

5. Thomas A. Mahoney, Building the Executive Team, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961, p. 213.

6. Robert K. Stolz, "Getting Back to Fundamentals in Executive Development," Personnel, Vol. 30, No. 6, May 1954, p. 439.

Top Management Support and Participation

The success of a management development program depends a lot on top management support and participation. Without this, the program is unlikely to receive the support and attention it deserves. Line managers are mainly concerned with the day-to-day operations and are liable to neglect the long term development of their subordinates. Only top management can provide a stimulus for development if they assume this function as part of their responsibility for maintaining the wellbeing of the enterprise.⁷

If the statement that "People do what their boss expects"⁸ is accepted as a fair assumption, it follows that if top management expects their immediate subordinates to develop their juniors as well as setting their administrative house in order, then the process of development will permeate down the line. A certain German industrial firm is reported to have discontinued the practice of instructing the lower echelons in the utilization of the latest management principles, the reason being the subordinates are unable to apply these techniques in their jobs because these are not practised by their superiors. To overcome this, the firm decided to introduce improved techniques and procedures at the upper echelons

7. Mahoney, op. cit., p. 21.

8. A remark made by Lawrence A. Appley of the American Management Association quoted in Virgil Rowland, Managerial Performance Standards, New York: American Management Association, 1960, p. 15.

first before extending them to the rest of the organization.⁹

However, it is preferable if top management initiates the program rather than be sold on it. This should create an obligation to ensure that the program will work. But once they launch the program, they should prove their interest by active participation. In other words, they should be directly involved with the planning, organizing, directing and controlling of all aspects of the program as much as their time would permit. Should they delegate some of these responsibilities, they must maintain an active interest in its progress. Otherwise the program will disintegrate and the end results may not be worth the effort expended.¹⁰

Line Responsibility and Co-operation

The line refers to "those functions which have direct responsibility for accomplishing the objectives of the enterprise".¹¹ Line managers include division managers to first line supervisors. If each manager is held accountable for obtaining results through others he could not help but develop his subordinates in order to attain whatever goals he

9. Louis A. Allen, The Management Profession, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964, p. 302.

10. Ewing W. Reilley and Bernard J. Muller-Thyer, "The Over-all Company Plan," in Harwood F. Merrill and Elizabeth Marting, Developing Executive Skills, New York: American Management Association, 1952, p. 44.

11. A definition by L. A. Allen quoted in Harold Koontz and Cyril O'Donnell, Principles of Management, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959, p. 135.

sets to accomplish¹² He should be made to realize beyond any doubt that his value to the company is increased, not decreased, through his efforts to develop others.

It is contended that the immediate superior is in the best possible position to develop his subordinates.¹³ Through regular interaction, he should know their individual weaknesses and those areas that need attention and development. The close working relationship offers the superior numerous opportunities to allot specific assignments that would improve their capabilities. Learning is a process attainable through actual doing. The speed of learning will accelerate if the superior assigns tasks that are likely to enhance its progress.

The line responsibility for development is complicated by the lack of consensus on the proper way to train subordinates. Cases have been cited of well-intending superiors who in the process of coaching their subordinates actually performed their jobs for them. In so doing, the subordinates were deprived of the opportunities to develop.¹⁴ Consequently it may be necessary to train the managers in how to coach their juniors.

12. Allen, op. cit., p. 303.

13. Myles L. Mace, The Growth and Development of Executives, Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business, Harvard University, 1950, p. 108 et seq.

14. Stolz, op. cit., p. 440.

Conducive Company Climate

Without a conducive company climate, it would be an arduous task to run a successful management development program. Company climate refers to a manager's working environment or rather his perception of his organization. Working environment consists of the company policies and procedures, the way a manager is treated, the training afforded to him, the interest shown in him and all the things the company stresses and upholds.¹⁵

The creation of a conducive company climate involves the establishment of sound policies and practices as well as a strict adherence to them. There should be confidence in the soundness and fairness of the company operations. Otherwise some aspects of management development may inspire frustration and insecurity. For instance, the manager should be accorded the opportunities and facilities to practice what he has acquired, otherwise his training is wasted. Research studies indicate that any training program is of little use unless what the manager has learned is reinforced by his work environment.¹⁶

The proper utilization of promotion and compensation practices helps to create a more conducive company climate.

15. D. E. Balch, "The Problem of Company Climate," in Merrill and Marting, op. cit., p. 66.

16. Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960, p. 202.

Their influence on motivation is becoming so widely recognised that quite a few companies are making conscious efforts to capitalize fully on them. Some evidences of these deliberations are noticed in the current popularity in managerial job evaluation, executive compensation plans, "promotion from within" and "company-wide promotion" policies.¹⁷ It is suggested that a better company climate would result if the company takes care to ensure that the program is sincere, universal and compulsory for all company managerial staff.¹⁸ Participation if universal and compulsory may assist in eliminating any doubt in top management's professed intention and genuine interest, and in dispelling any fear that participating in management development is a penalty.

Sound Company Organization

A well designed and comprehensive management development program requires sound company organization to succeed. Briefly, in a sound organization managers are required to know what activities are expected of them.¹⁹ Their responsibilities, authorities, and accountabilities are clearly defined and understood. The problem of to whom they report and who

17. Stolz, op. cit., p. 441.

18. Willard E. Bennett, Manager Selection, Education and Training, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959, pp. 36-38.

19. For detailed information on planning a sound organization, vide, Theodore A. Toedt et al., Managing Manpower in the Industrial Environment, Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown Co., 1962, pp. 449-551.

reports to them is clarified. No duplication or overlapping of functions and activities is permitted. Delegation is practised whenever possible so that the superior's work load is lightened and his subordinates are furnished with the opportunities to apply their talents and to gain experience. Any authority given is equated with a corresponding degree of responsibility or accountability. Managers are also required to maintain healthy relationships with their superiors, subordinates, and other integral components of the organization. A business enterprise that does not know what present and future needs there are within the organization is not likely to succeed in its training program.

Management Development Should Be Tailor-made

It is unrealistic to assume every person to be identical with every other in needs, goals, characteristics, learning capacity and background. The same is true of the wide spectrum of business enterprises and their management teams. The ideal management development program is one which is flexible enough to include a variety of development activities sufficient to each individual's needs and capabilities and yet maintain a certain degree of uniformity for evaluative purposes.²⁰

In this connection, management development programs should be tailor-made to suit the individual as well as the organization. The value of packaged programs has been

20. Wikstrom, op. cit., p. 18, et seq.

questioned in some quarters.²¹ It is a waste of effort, time and money to develop skills in individuals that are of no relevance to management or to develop the same skill in all management people when a variety of skills is needed. In the final analysis, the management development programs should be planned, organized and run on the basis of the organizational needs and objectives, and the potentials of the management group.

Proper Role of Management Development Staff

The quality of the management development staff is another factor that influences the success of a program. Like any other staff function, it only advises and counsels but does not do the actual job of training. Its broad responsibilities consist of promoting the interest of management development within the organization and of rendering assistance when called upon. The staff, if they could perform these activities with enthusiasm, wisdom and resourcefulness, could stimulate and facilitate management development to some extent.²²

McGregor argues that the staff should not attempt to "sell" the concepts of development to management. Instead

21. An elaborate discussion can be found in Melvin Aushen, "Executive Development, In-Company vs University Programs," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 32, No. 5, Sept.-Oct. 1954, pp. 83-91.

22. John W. Riegel, Executive Development, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952, p. 53.

they should assist management to operate in such a manner that they would not only attain their objectives but also, in the process, enhance the growth of their subordinates at the same time. If this was the case, all managers would be engaging in self-development and assisting their juniors to develop in order to achieve their goals.²³

Development Should Be Continuous

Management should realize that quick results are not usually attainable in management development. Much time, effort and expense has to be spent to bring about a process of growth and change in the participants. The old proverb, "Rome was not built in a day", lucidly illustrates the learning process in any situation. All changes take time; extensive and enduring changes generally require a fairly long period of time to be accomplished. These changes require reinforcement if they are to be sustained.

Managers who coach their subordinates should be aware of the difficulties of changing another's customary mode of behavior. Otherwise they will be handicapped in their efforts to promote and develop those under them. Sometimes training fads seem able to incur some impressive changes in behavior as reflected in improved job performance. However, these devices are short-lived because they are often temporary adaptive responses to some pressure to bring about some speedy

23. McGregor, op. cit., p. 204, et. seqq.

results. The moment the pressure wears off the people concerned revert back to their previous state. Accordingly, to effect any durable change as well as to forestall any possibility of reversion, development has to be a continuous process.²⁴

In our highly dynamic world, change should be accepted as normal. When business enterprises change, demands on the managerial personnel change correspondingly. With changing demands, new means and techniques have to be developed to train managers to meet the challenges of change. The highly volatile and dynamic nature of business necessitates the development of management personnel, a never-ending process.²⁵

²⁴. Wikstrom, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁵. John H. Proctor and William M. Thornton, Training: A Handbook for Managers, New York: American Management Association, 1961, p. 189.

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Any kind of training scheme needs some tools to facilitate its progress. Management development is no exception. These development tools are devices used for such purposes as determining the basis in which the program is to be conducted, ascertaining organizational and individual needs, processing and storing data pertaining to the programs and facilitating the teaching-learning process.

Position Description

In any sound organization, there should be an accurate and up to date system of position descriptions which defines clearly the responsibility and authority delegated to each position, the existing relationship between positions and the accountability of each incumbent. This should be contrived in relation to established administrative principles rather than peculiar capabilities of the managerial personnel. Lines of authority and responsibility should be well delineated so as to enable each incumbent to understand precisely what is expected of him.¹ With such a delineation, the incumbent is also in a good position to establish the direction in which he should develop.

1. Willard E. Bennett, Manager Selection, Education and Training, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959, p. 32.

Most managerial activities have certain standards of performance. The process of setting standards is designed to induce a greater comprehension in each incumbent of his present job requirements and a mutual agreement between his superior and himself concerning which standards of performance are acceptable. Standards set must be simple, fair and attainable. They should be as specific as possible and be devoid of any ambiguity. The actual setting of standards for managerial positions is by no means an easy task because of such problems as differences in opinions on what the standards should be and differences in requirements of managerial positions even though they may be in the same category.² Absence of such standards denies the individual an opportunity to know his actual job performance. This may place him at a serious psychological handicap in which he experiences difficulty in developing his potential to the fullest. Moreover, a superior has no means to evaluate him and is therefore, unable to assist his development.³

The position description is a useful tool in management development. It strives to attain the objective of development by outlining the standards of performance which guide

2. George Straus and Leonard R. Sayles, Personnel, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960, pp. 527-548.

3. William C. Trenhaft, "Experience with Executive Standards of Performance," General Management Series No. 183, New York: American Management Association, 1956, pp. 3-11.

the evaluation of each incumbent as well as his development activities. The sum of all the position descriptions in a company provides a guidepost for the development of the entire management.

Management Appraisal

The real work of management development begins with management appraisal. A management appraisal is simply an attempt to measure factors which are useful in the utilization and development of a manager's capabilities. It is a device used to evaluate a manager's present performance, to ascertain the level of his current skills and abilities and to assess his potential for further development. Some relevant factors could be measured in an objective manner but others are judged subjectively. An adequate management appraisal only considers factors that are relevant, reliable, objective, practical and free from any bias.⁴

The methods of appraisal are many and varied. Checklists are widely used on which the appraiser ticks off the descriptions that approximate the appraisee's performance.⁵ Sometimes the items are open-ended in which the appraiser has to describe the appraisee's performance in his own words. At

4. Thomas A. Mahoney, Building the Executive Team, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961, p. 86.

5. An "appraiser" in this thesis refers to the person making the appraisal, usually a superior. An "appraisee" is the individual being appraised, normally a subordinate.

times, a rating scale is used to pinpoint the appraisee's performance in each item. Sometimes unintentional bias appears in the assessment, which is often attributed to the "halo" effect on the part of the appraiser.

Generally, there are two broad approaches to management appraisal, one is the "trait" approach and the other is the "results" approach.⁶

In the "trait" approach, a manager's total performance is reviewed and assessed in relation to the personality traits and operating techniques that characterise his position. The rationale is that some of the traits have a bearing on a manager's performance. Normally the company will have to decide what traits are pertinent to its operations before the actual evaluation begins. Usually the appraiser is cautioned to be fair and objective in his judgement. Sometimes he is required to justify his assessment as well as preparing an over-all performance of the appraisee. In addition, the appraisal is used for gauging the appraisee's potential for assuming greater responsibilities and for determining his development activities.

In the "results" approach, a manager's performance is compared with a list of objectives and standards established for his position. The rationale behind this approach is that

6. For details, vide, Walter S. Wikstrom, "Developing Managerial Competence," Studies in Personnel Policy No. 189, New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1964, pp. 29-38.

a manager's effort should be directed toward achieving certain specific goals and how he succeeds in attaining them should be a measure of his performance. More often than not, the goals and standards set are mutually agreed by his superior and himself. It is suggested that these targets should be realistic, specific, harmonious with one another and should concentrate on defining results not activities.⁷

These targets become the standards by which a manager assesses his year-round performance and they are also the criteria by which his performance is appraised by his superior. Both the appraiser and the appraisee are expected to know the underlying causes for the present year's performance in order to plan realistically for a new record in the next year.

Neither approach in itself ensures an adequate management appraisal. Few organizations go to either extreme. Usually the main assessment is on the individual's over-all performance. So if the "trait" approach is applied, the appraiser also considers the quantity and quality of performance. Similarly, traits or characteristics having some relation to the results are taken into consideration when the "result" approach is used. It is suggested that the "result" approach is easier to work with because it is more definite and specific.⁸ Much of the criticism levelled against the "trait" approach could be traced to the numerous studies failing to uncover any consistent set of character-

7. Malcolm P. McNair quoted in ibid., p. 38.

8. Ibid., p. 58.

istics that could discriminate between an effective manager and a less capable one.⁹

The Post-appraisal Interview

In management development, the most critical phase is not making the management appraisal but rather what is done with it in the post-appraisal interview between the appraiser and appraisee. The post-appraisal interview is a device for communicating the appraisal results to the appraisee, and a specific technique for individual coaching and self-development.¹⁰

Several purposes are served by the interview. One is the stimulation of discussion between the superior and his subordinate on matters affecting their mutual responsibilities and performances in the company. Other purposes are to clarify the subordinate's understanding of his responsibilities, to point out the weaknesses in his performance and to assist him in his self-development. Still another is informing him where he stands in the organization.

Care should be taken in the progress of the interview,

9. One dissident study claims that personal characteristics which can differentiate the more effective managers from the less effective ones can be identified. The predictors are valid regardless of job assignments or type of company. Vide, T. A. Mahoney et al., "Identification and Prediction of Management Effectiveness," Personal Administration, Vol. 26, No. 4, Jul.-Aug., 1963, pp.12-23.

10. Mahoney, op. cit., p. 115.

lest the appraisee assume a defensive role when informed of his weaknesses. He may even challenge the criticisms and so create an awkward situation between his appraiser and himself. Any criticism by the superior should be communicated to the subordinate with tact and understanding.

By no means is the interview infallible. One shortcoming is the fact that many superiors dislike the idea of explaining and defending their criticisms of the abilities of others, especially of their subordinates with whom they are anxious to maintain a cordial relationship.¹¹

The Management Inventory

A well-thought out management development program usually requires a management inventory to keep stock of the management resources of the company. It is an endeavour to appraise the management people as a team and to identify the present and future needs of the managerial staff as guides for management development.

To start a management inventory, one should first collect data on the company's present and future needs. Present needs could be obtained from sources such as the position descriptions and the organization charts. For the future needs, one has to study company plans, market forecasts, possible new products and new production processes, changes

11. For a critique on the post-appraisal interview, vide, D. E. Balch "Executive Selection and Inventory," Personnel Series No. 171, New York: American Management Association, 1957, pp. 3-16.

in management techniques and economic trends. All managers in every function and at all levels in an organization should be required to supply data and judgements to make a management inventory workable.

One can obtain information on the individual manager from such sources as personnel records and management appraisals. For development purposes, the significant data are the individual's education and training, his work experience and his personality. Other information such as age, health, family circumstances and other personal matters may be considered if they affect the manager's opportunity for advancement or transfer in any way. Normally it is an accepted practice to include judgements on his capacity for assuming more responsibilities and the training required to prepare him.¹²

The practical usefulness of a management inventory is largely influenced by the manner in which the data and judgements are summarized. Three common forms used are the coded organization chart, the replacement table and centralized personnel file. The coded organization chart is an attempt to provide a quick glance at the efficiency of performance in each managerial position and/or the adequacy or strength of the reserves within the company. To describe the present performance and readiness for promotion of incumbent in the chart, special codes, symbols or colours are employed. The

12. Wikstrom, op. cit., p. 95 et seq.

replacement table is a device utilized to pinpoint the possible replacements or backstops in each position in the company. Usually these replacements are listed in order of their readiness to assume the position. The centralized personnel file is the most detailed of the three. Each manager has a file which contains the relevant information about him. All these individual files are centralized to provide readily-available data relevant for planning efficient utilization and development of management personnel.¹³

13. For detailed information on the management inventory forms, vide, Mahoney, op. cit., pp. 119-123 and ibid., pp. 95-100.

CHAPTER V

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

One of the primary considerations in any management development program is to study the existing and possible opportunities for the managers to be trained in their current jobs. An individual's job allows him to apply and test what he is learning, and provides him with the development experiences and activities that he may specifically require. His relatively close relationship with his superior enables him to receive personal coaching. In addition both his superior and he need not take time from productive work, since the development activities can be built into his job.

Coaching

Coaching is simply an intelligent delegation of responsibilities coupled with a patient guidance of subordinates towards effective performance of the activities involved in discharging these responsibilities. This is a development technique which is used extensively in almost all managerial levels. The underlying assumption of coaching is that the superior recognizes and discharges his personal responsibility to train his subordinates and they in turn respond positively to his coaching.¹

1. John H. Proctor and William M. Thornton, Training: A Handbook for Line Managers, New York: American Management Association, 1961, p. 61 et seq.

In coaching, the superior may only stipulate the results required with or without hinting on the activities required to accomplish them. If anything goes wrong, he may assist the subordinate in locating and rectifying the errors. A good coach must have confidence in his subordinates; otherwise he would not tolerate their mistakes. Errors are inevitable in most learning situations.

One form of coaching is that of the superior consulting his subordinates on his own problems with the objective of broadening their outlook and preparing them for greater responsibilities. Another important aspect of coaching that should not be overlooked is counselling. Counselling is an attempt to assist a subordinate in doing an effective job and in handling problems arising from the work situation. During the counselling sessions the coach and his trainee discuss the difficulties experienced by the trainee. And the coach suggests ways of overcoming them. Care should be taken not to extend the coaching to a psychiatric counselling which is reserved for qualified specialists.²

Several problems are encountered in coaching. In some cases, the superiors refuse to coach their subordinates through fear of the subordinates becoming their bosses. In

2. For a comprehensive treatment of coaching, vide, Myles L. Mace, The Growth and Development of Executives, Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business, Harvard University, 1950, pp. 107-156.

other instances, the superiors may be disinterested in coaching but do so because it is part of their responsibilities. There are also cases of superiors who are only too willing to interfere with or even take over the subordinates' jobs to the extent that the subordinates are denied opportunities to develop. There is also a danger of a superior who may try to "mold" his subordinate in his own image thus inhibiting original thought and action. Sometimes coaching is not effective simply because the subordinates have reached their peak of attainment and cannot be developed further.

Job Rotation

Broadly speaking, there are two versions of job rotation. The first is a kind of orientation and initial job training for new employees - often college graduates - in which they are moved through a planned series of relatively short-term assignments. The second is the movement of personnel to positions of line or staff responsibilities where they are required to perform as effectively as any efficient incumbent.³

Job rotation offers several advantages. For one, it provides a well-rounded training and experience to a trainee, besides furnishing him with a variety of perspectives of company operations. The company could also benefit through

3. Walter S. Wikstrom, "Developing Managerial Competence," Studies in Personnel Policy No. 189, New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1964, p. 62.

periodic injection of fresh management viewpoints which could result in the elimination of unnecessary practices and operations. Job rotation stimulates self-development and tests the individual through a series of different assignments. Lastly, it is employed to increase greater co-operation and understanding within the organization.⁴

As might be expected, some criticisms are levelled at job rotation. One is that the people being rotated may not take their jobs seriously on account of their superiors and colleagues who feel that it is a waste of time to train temporary members of their departments. Job rotation is not applicable to people whose value to the company lies in their restricted and specialized knowledge. No one cares whether the legal counsel knows about product planning, provided he discharges his duties well. Almost every managerial job requires some sort of expert specialized knowledge. A problem with job rotation is that often inexperienced men are sent to do work requiring expert knowledge.

"Assistant" Jobs

Sometimes companies use "assistant" jobs as training stations for promising managerial personnel. In practice, there are two kinds of assistants - the line assistants and

4. Dwight S. Sargent, "The Job Rotation Method," in Harwood F. Merrill and Elizabeth Marting (eds.), Developing Executive Skills, New York: American Management Association, 1958, p. 125 et seq.

the staff assistants. The former has a formal authority over the superior's duties in his absence. The latter has none of this; his role is usually advisory.

At any rate, it is felt that working as an assistant, whether in a line or staff capacity, offers ample opportunities to learn management practices by observation and participation. A man's position as an assistant aids him in understanding the functions of his superior and the division or department which he heads. In addition, he is brought into contact with many key people and this permits him to study their methods and relationships. The experience thus obtained may be relevant to his future assignments.⁵

Occasionally a potential manager may be given an assistant position to understudy the man he is slated to replace.⁶ The understudy is often assigned increasing responsibility, and authority with the incumbent slowly relinquishing his duties so that the continuity is maintained when the promotion becomes effective. "Assistant" positions are often used for training people for top management jobs.

The main criticism against these training stations is that the appointment of assistants tends to create "crown

5. John W. Riegel, Executive Development, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952, p. 284 et seq.

6. More information on understudies can be found in The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Co. (Training Unit, Personnel Department), "Training your Understudies" in Merrill and Marting, op. cit., pp. 111-123.

princes". Sometimes there is some difficulty in removing people who have been assigned as assistants even though their performances do not come up to expectation. Having little responsibility and authority of their own, they may be subjected to constant interference in their work by their superiors, which may prevent them from gaining experience. Even if they develop, they tend to behave like replicas of their superiors. This development could be a detriment to any hope of introducing innovation in the company.

Special Individual Assignment

Quite often a company may give an individual a special assignment either for broadening his experience or for testing him. This assignment could be anything from a study of possible plant sites to a market for a new product. He may engage in this assignment in addition to his regular activities or he may be released temporarily from his job. In the case of a project, he is usually responsible for its completion and is required to furnish a report with his analysis and recommendations.

As much as possible the assignment should not invoke work in which the individual is already competent; otherwise the effort expended may not be worthwhile. On the other hand, it should be tough but not overwhelming for the intention is not to break him but to stretch him. Selection of an appropriate assignment is sometimes a problem.⁷

7. Wikstrom, op. cit., p. 56 et seq.

Syndicate

A syndicate or a task force is a small ad hoc committee, consisting usually of three to six people organized to study and solve one particular problem. They normally work under the leadership of a person who is quite familiar with the syndicate approach as well as the nature of the problem.⁸ Since the problems involved are often interdepartmental in nature, the members are often selected from a variety of functions within the organization.

Two objectives are envisaged in a syndicate. One is to analyze the specific problem and submit recommendations for the solving of the problem. The other is to provide the members with an opportunity to broaden their outlook and experience by participating in managerial problems with other managers.⁹ Through working closely with others, they may come to appreciate the capabilities of people in other areas and the contribution they made to the success of the organizations. Once the problem is analyzed and a report submitted, the group is disbanded.

Multiple Management

Multiple management was first popularised by Charles P.

8. Daniel R. Davies and Robert T. Livingston, You and Management, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 225.

9. Earl G. Planty and Thomas Freeston, Developing Managerial Ability, New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1954, p. 54.

McCormick in 1932.¹⁰ It is an attempt to develop managers in handling problems and making decisions in matters normally above their level of responsibilities. An elaborate system may have a "Junior Board of Directors", a "Sales Board" and "Factory Board" to supplement the usual Board of Directors. Initially the members of these boards are appointed by top management. Thereafter the new members may be chosen by the outgoing board. Members serve a designated period of time which could range from six months to a year. Generally only a part of the board members is replaced each time to ensure a continuity of work.

These boards are often permitted to draw up their own constitutions and bylaws. Their functions are mainly advisory; their task is to investigate, analyze and recommend. Some companies permit their boards to probe in almost every aspect of their operations. Others keep theirs within certain limits. Whatever their scope, only unanimous findings and recommendations are submitted to the usual Board of Directors for approval or rejection. Some companies practising it claim the number of rejections is nominal.¹¹

10. More on Multiple Management is found in Charles P. McCormick, The Power of People: Multiple Management up to Date, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949.

11. Frederick J. Bell, "Highlights of Multiple Management," in M. Joseph Dooher and Vivienne F. Marquis (eds.), The Development of Executive Talent, New York: American Management Association, 1952, p. 110 et seq.

Multiple management is only possible if the chief executive is prepared to allow the various managerial echelons to express their thoughts and transmit them to top management while maintaining the final authority. The Board of Directors must give full consideration to the suggestions put forth by the boards. To make it workable, it is essential that the boards be granted important problems to grapple with. Merely using these boards for exercise and confining them to dealing with trivial matters defeats the very purpose of multiple management. Multiple management is a good instructional method for developing managers slated for top management positions.

CHAPTER VI

OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

Off-the-job training is often necessary because of certain deficiencies in on-the-job training. One deficiency is the lack of proper sequence in learning which may impede the learning process and may cause undue confusion and difficulty. There is also the possibility of the relative significance of events being distorted on the job. Minor problems, because of their immediacy, may appear more important than major issues which are less pressing at a particular time. Further, on-the-job training seldom offers a learner an opportunity to discover what principles are general and which are specific.

Off-the-job training does not necessarily imply that the training is done outside the company. What is connoted is that the development exercises are held in locations other than the work situation as in the conference rooms or training centres of companies and so on. The subjects taught could range from the humanities to specific techniques advocated by the company. For dealing with matters quite unique to itself, the company is likely to ask its most competent and experienced employees to handle them. Where more general subjects such as personnel psychology and business economics are concerned, outside consultants may be called in. Both in-company sessions and outside courses have their advantages and limitations. Company conducted sessions may be more

specific and possibly less expensive at least in terms of the time lost from work. But the relatively homogenous characteristic of the participants does not provide the broadening influence which one receives in an outside course where the different ideas and experiences from a variety of companies are discussed and shared.

Lecture and Panel Discussions

By all accounts, the lecture is probably one of the more frequently used methods of instruction. Before delivering a lecture, it is essential to find out the nature of the audience to which one is trying to transmit the information. The degree of familiarity which the audience has with the material will affect the presentation. Next the lecturer should decide the extent to which the topic will be dealt with. He should attempt to start from what they already know and proceed in a logical sequence to the end. No matter how seasoned a speaker is, he should try to rehearse his lectures so as to build up confidence in himself and his material. During the lecture he should not only try to promote understanding but also try to stimulate and retain the interest of the listeners. He has to be sensitive to their reactions, and be able to act accordingly. Various teaching aids such as graphs, photographs and charts may be used to supplement the teaching process.¹

1. For more information on the lecture, vide, Willard E. Bennett, "The Lecture as a Management Training Technique," Personnel, Vol. 32, No. 6, May 1956, pp. 497-507.

A panel discussion may be considered as a co-operative lecture where a small group of people gives its individual views on some controversial issues or problems.² Much of what has been said of the lecture applies here. Often a panel discussion is more interesting than a lecture because of its variety of speakers and views. Inasmuch as possible the chairman should ensure that the different speakers do not duplicate each other or miss anything crucial. If possible, some effort should be made to bring the speakers together prior to the panel discussion to plan their materials so as to create some degree of unity and sequence in presentation.

Both the lecture and the panel discussion permit the speaker to have a choice of the manner in which he wants to present his information. Because the two methods allow little participation from the audience, there is a danger of them becoming passive, unless they are intellectually responsive to what the speaker has to say. They appear to be well-suited for imparting knowledge. Rarely however do people develop skills or change their attitudes through these techniques.

2. Daniel R. Davis and Robert T. Livingston, You and Management, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 222.

Conference Training Methods

A conference may be described as "a small group of people who have met to define, to understand better or to solve a problem of mutual interest through a free and co-operative oral interchange of information."³ There are many types of conferences training methods. Some of the more frequently used methods are seminars, "brainstorming", case studies, "buzz sessions" and problem-solving conferences. All conference training methods have these characteristics, though they may differ in approach and structure. These methods are based on the assumption that a most effective way of learning is by doing, because active participation in group discussion assists the development of individuals. To ensure maximum individual participation, the size of the group is deliberately kept small; usually to less than fifteen people. As far as possible these should be "a lack of time pressure, a certain degree of informality, friendliness, absence of tension, frank and easy exchange of ideas",⁴ in the training sessions where these methods are employed.

Much can be said of the values of participation in these methods. Firstly, the participants learn and appreciate aspects of problems which they may not be aware of. Secondly, participation tends to prevent intellectual stagnation, since

3. Frank A. DePhillips, W. M. Berliner and J. J. Cribbin, Management of Training Programs, Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin Inc., 1960, p. 180.

4. Loc. cit.

the problems discussed are frequently new or presented and handled in a different perspective. Thirdly, participation in these techniques over a considerable length of time may broaden the outlook of the participants as well as influence their attitudes. Fourthly, these training methods help to develop some intellectual skills. One worth mentioning is an increased ability to analyze problems systematically and critically.⁵

All conference techniques require proper leadership to make the effort expended worthwhile. Some suggestions have been put forth to assist the conference leader in his task.⁶ One is that he should always show a permissive accepting attitude in order to encourage expression of hostile or negative feelings among the participants. Another is that he should try his best to induce as much participation as possible from every member of the group. The third guideline suggests that he should endeavour to inflate the ego of the participants when the opportunity arises especially the reticent ones. In the fourth place, he should encourage competition among the participants with the aim of bringing out the various sides of a problem. Lastly, he should review with them what has taken place.

5. John W. Riegel, Executive Development, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952, p. 67.

6. Stanley G. Dulksky, "Improving Leadership of Management Conferences," in M. Joseph Dooher and Vivienne Marquis, (eds.), The Development of Executive Talent, New York: American Management Association, 1952, pp. 175-171.

Like all other techniques, these methods have their limitations. Some of the dissatisfactions could be traced to the extremely high expectation of the results. These techniques are meant to be devices for intellectual experience, listening and speaking, not psychological tools for causing changes in behavior. While an individual's outlook may be modified by experience, his overt behavior may remain constant. Oft-times the presence of senior executives may preclude some participants from expressing their views or they may run the show instead of the participants. Some people appear to be temperamentally unsuited for these methods because they are either too passive or too domineering to be productive. Too often, the conference leaders are not qualified to do their job. Many leaders are chosen simply because they are holding responsible positions in the company, not for their leadership qualities.

Role Playing

Role playing is the acting out spontaneously of certain characters in a specific interpersonal situation. The participants are players in a spontaneous training drama. They learn by assuming the roles of the characters cited. This technique is used frequently for training skills in human relations because it provides insight and experience in interpersonal relationships. Role playing is used more frequently for training people in lower managerial ranks than the higher echelons.

At the beginning of each role playing session, the participants are briefed by the instructor regarding the situation that is to be dramatized and are given a succinct description of the characters involved. After that, the participants are left on their own to act out the situation and assume the roles of the characters as they proceed. Those not acting the scene may be asked to identify themselves actively with one or two of the participants who are assuming the roles. Sometimes a particular role may be played by more than one person, one after another, by repeating the same skit. This is done to enable the group to appreciate different approaches to the same role. At times too, the roles may be rotated among the participants, so that each participant may be able to experience more than one viewpoint of a situation.

Therefore, role playing is useful in developing skills in interviewing, counselling and other forms of interpersonal dealings. The emotions generated help a participant to obtain a greater insight into the feelings of others and a better grasp of their motivation. Likewise he is able to gain insight into his own behavior because the statements he made, the feelings he displayed and the action he took during the role playing are pointed out and discussed by the group. There are quite a few people who have some ideas how they would like to conduct their interpersonal dealings but hesitate to try them out because of fear of possible failure.

Role playing not only offers them an opportunity to practise and to improve their techniques but also to develop skill and confidence.

One disadvantage of the technique is that the participants may not take their roles seriously. Some may even treat the entire matter as a big joke. Another disadvantage and even more crucial is the difficulty in predicting how much is being learnt. Participants learn as a consequence of their responses to the roles played. There is bound to be some differences in learning because of individual differences in responses. As in any other training situation, what a person learns is influenced by his background. Unlike most other techniques, role playing does not permit the instructor to control its direction once the acting starts. At times, the participant may place too much emphasis on solving the problem rather than on an increased understanding of the interpersonal relationships.⁷

Management Games

A management game could be considered as a dynamic training exercise based upon a working model of a business situation. Within the model, there is a series of relationships which are believed to influence the business situation

7. For more information on role playing and its uses, vide, Alex Bavelas, "Role Playing and Management Training," in Paul Pigors, C. A. Myers and F. T. Malm, Readings in Personnel Administration, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959, pp. 270-278.

being simulated. Information on the current situation is supplied periodically to the participants. Through analysis of the given data and critical observation of how the situation reacts to their respective moves, they may embark in making decisions that would best accomplish their objectives.

In the simple games, the instructor may modify the situation in accordance with the decisions made by the participants and promulgate the periodic returns. Computers are often programmed to process the decisions made in the more complicated games. Empirical time is represented by a fraction of its actual duration; a month or quarter may only be fifteen minutes or a half hour in the games. The periodic reports act as a kind of feedback with which the participants could evaluate their results and plan their next moves.⁸

Ever since management games were introduced a few years ago, there has been controversy regarding the degree of realism in the simulation, compared to the empirical world. Some feel that the closer the game resembles the working environment, the easier it is for the participants to apply what they have learned. Others argue that the games should stimulate a general business situation instead of a specific industry or company. To them, the purpose of the games is to enable the participants to recognize the importance of continuous

8. An excellent book on the application of simulation in industry is Joel M. Kibbee, C. J. Croft and B. Namus, Management Games, New York: Reinhardt Publishing Corp., 1961.

analysis of business events and to gain more familiarity with the analytic tools.⁹

The critique phase which generally follows after a certain number of rounds of play is often referred to as the most valuable aspect of the games.¹⁰ During the critique, the participants are given complete details as to what actually occurs in the games for the first time. Usually a guided discussion follows in which each team explains the strategies it employed. Frequently an outside consultant may be called in to analyze the strategies and the game's outcome and to assist the participants in locating their errors and rectifying them. Some games have two critiques, one half way through the game and the other at the conclusion. The first critique is to enable the participants to review their performances to that point. This is to enable them to be better prepared to handle the factors that have troubled them previously in the second half of the play,

Management games are valuable tools for stressing the importance of sound organization by long-range planning and operating along established lines rather than expediency. To achieve this, the duration of the games should be long enough for the participants to discover the underlying relationships and principles. However, the games are not appro-

9. Paul S. Greenlaw, L. W. Herron and R. H. Rawdon, Business Simulation, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962, pp. 78-83 and 250-251.

10. Kibbee, et al., p. 85.

priate for instructing new subjects. Rather they are useful devices for managers who would like to try whatever management principles they have learned. The games are more suitable for teaching senior managerial personnel than junior executives.

One frequent criticism levelled at the games is that they deal only with quantitative variables and often ignore the human elements. If managing is getting results through the efforts of others, the critics argue, how much realistic training can these games provide? In reply, the proponents claim there is no need for the games to include the human factor for there are already many excellent methods for training the qualitative aspect of managing. Moreover, it is possible to point out some of the human influences on decision making during the critique phase. A further criticism suggests that the games are too expensive and unrealistic. Too expensive because of the many hours required and the high cost per hour. And too unrealistic because of the tendency to over-simplify the variables in the process of constructing a working model.¹¹

Sensitivity Training

Sensitivity training is a newly-evolved training method directed at making people more sensitive to themselves and others, and more aware how they consciously or unconsciously

11. Billy E. Goetz, "A Critique of Business Games," Journal of Academy of Management, Vol. 2, No. 3, Dec. 1959, pp. 177-180.

affect others and how others in turn influence them. It is hoped that with a heightened sensitivity to others, a manager would be more effective in accomplishing results through the effort of others. Because of ambiguity surrounding the nature of sensitivity training, it has not become widespread in usage up to date.¹²

An underlying principle of sensitivity training is that all individuals are creatures of their cultures. All concepts and values governing individual behavior and interpersonal relationships stem from their cultures. Only a few people are aware of and question the assumptions upon which these concepts and values are based. The objective of sensitivity training then, is to assist the individuals in appreciating these assumptions and developing a greater awareness of the nature and problem of interpersonal relationship.¹³

In a typical program for sensitivity training, the participants live together in a location for two weeks away from their job responsibilities and families. They are assigned to "T groups" - "T" for training which is the crux

12. Walter S. Wikstrom, "Developing Managerial Competence," Studies in Personnel Policy, No. 189, New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1964, p. 90.

13. For more information on the uses and limitations of sensitivity training, vide, Alfred J. Marrow, Behind the Executives Mask, New York: American Management Association, 1964, and I.R. Wescheler and E. H. Schein, Issues in Human Relations, Washington, D.C.: National Training Laboratories, National Education Association, 1962.

of the program - which also includes lectures, illustrative movies and so on. There is no agenda or goal stipulated in these "T groups" sessions.¹⁴ The instructor may even refuse to give any guideline at all. In brief, they are left completely to themselves.

Usually total strangers are thrown into a group in which they are expected to study how a group behaves and how its members (including themselves) operate within it. To many, it is quite an experience to analyze others critically and openly and be similarly analyzed by others. It is hoped with such an experience the participants will interact with others more effectively. Most of the former participants endorse the experience as valuable and beneficial. Others consider it to be a waste of time.

Programmed Instruction

Programmed instruction is an organized systematic approach to learning largely based on the studies of B. F. Skinner and Norman Crowder.¹⁵ It is an attempt to get the learner participating actively in the learning process. The

14. Chris Argyris, "T-Groups for Organizational Effectiveness," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 42, No. 2, March-Apr. 1964, pp. 60-74.

15. Vide, B. F. Skinner, "The Science of Learning and the Art of Teaching," in Wendell I. Smith and J. William Moore, Programmed Learning, New York: Van Nostrand Co., 1962, pp. 18-33 and N. A. Crowder, "Automatic Tutoring by Intrinsic Programming," in A. A. Lumsdaine and Robert Glaser (eds.), Teaching Machines and Programmed Learning, Washington, D. C.: Department of Audio-visual Instruction, National Education Association, 1960, pp. 286-298.

material to be learned is presented in small steps called frames. The increment of difficulty between any two consecutive steps is deliberately made very small so that the information presented could be easily comprehended and free from error. Someone remarked quite aptly that "programmed instruction is certainly the most exciting and potentially the most significant development to appear on the business scene since the digital computer."¹⁶

A training program operated by programmed instruction consists of a series of frames on the subject. Each frame is built on the previous one so that the learner can progress step by step, frequently at his own pace. At each frame up to that level, he is subjected to an examination in which he is required to make some kind of active "response" like pushing a button or answering a question. If he makes the correct "response" (which means that he has fully understood the contents of the frame), he is allowed to proceed. Otherwise, he would be informed of his mistakes or instructed to restudy the materials.

Generally there are two major approaches to this sort of rapid, error-free learning. One is the linear or single track form expounded by Skinner, and the other is the multiple-choice or "branching" form favoured by Crowder. In the linear approach, the program is designed to lead the learner

16. Roger W. Christain, "Guides to Programmed Learning," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 40, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1962, p. 36.

in an uninterrupted sequence of frames. Proponents of this approach believe that the absence of errors contributes to more effective learning, because a correct answer is in fact a "reward" and also an incentive to greater effort or continued effort. Thus they endeavour to minimize the number of errors through the use of the narrow gaps between two frames and prompts as well as basing each step on previously learned material. In the multiple response approach, a learner making a wrong choice is shunted into another track or branch where his error is corrected and the point in question is clarified. He may continue in the branching sequence for a number of frames, again depending on his responses before he is permitted to return to the main track.¹⁷ Today, combinations of the two techniques are quite common.

There are several advantages in using programmed instruction in industry. Firstly, it is more effective than the conventional method. Learning is more thorough because of the gradual and systematic exposure of new materials. Secondly, the program is consistent, since each learner receives identical instruction. Identical instruction tends to produce similar results which is often desirable. Thirdly, the program permits self-pacing so that a fast learner can forge ahead without being held back by slower ones. Fourthly, it requires less time. Often course times have

17. Theodore B. Dolmatch, Programmed Instruction: The Basic Vocabulary, New York: American Management Association, 1962, p. 14 et seq.

been slashed by one-third or even by one-half. In addition, there are other benefits, such as improvement in morale and motivation to learn, better defined training goals and reduction of the more rote activities of the training department.

Programmed instruction has its limitations. For one thing, there are quite a few topics that are difficult or almost impossible to teach in this manner. One is the broad area of "executive judgement" which is too nebulous and comprehensive to be grasped fully within a short duration.¹⁸ Many programs being written and used today are poorly constructed. Unless the program is well designed, the interest of the learner will decline. Added to this, is the long lead time required to construct, refine and validate an effective program. There is, of course, the high initial investment especially for a custom-built program.

18. John R. Murphy and Irving A. Golberg, "Strategies for using Programmed Instruction," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 42, No. 3, May-June 1964, p. 120.

CHAPTER VII

EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Despite the increasing interest in management development programs, relatively little work has been done on the evaluation of these programs in contrast to the amount of headway made in the planning, organizing, and administration of programs. A program not accompanied by an evaluation of its results is likely to turn sour, for evaluation requires as much serious notice and planning as any other aspect of management development. For our purpose, evaluation could be defined as "an attempt to arrive at correct judgement of the value or worth of such a program; this judgement may be in either monetary or non-monetary terms".¹

Evaluation in management development is necessary on several counts. The first being the desire to ascertain whether the amount of expenditure incurred for management development is justifiable or not in terms of the returns received. Next is the question of the relative effectiveness of alternate developmental techniques available. Evaluation could be employed to determine the most effective approach to a specific problem. A third task for evaluation lies in the area of improving the individual approaches to

1. Walter R. Mahler, "Evaluation of Management Development Programs," Personnel, Vol. 30, No. 1, July 1953, p. 116.

development. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, all management development ultimately is self-development. Evaluation at the individual level may be more beneficial than at a group level as it is more specific and more related to the problems faced by the individual. As a consequence, management would be in a better position to select the participants most likely to benefit from a particular training course.²

Design of Evaluation

In current evaluation practices, there are three basic designs intended to provide measures of benefits and values of development activities. Each of them is characterized by a different degree of thoroughness.³

At the lowest level of thoroughness is what may be termed a common sense evaluation or an "informal after-the-event" quest for indications of the benefits of a completed development activity. An evaluator may search for evidence which is thought to have some relationship with the completed activity, such as the number of promotions after the training program, inferences arrived at from observations on job performance, reported expressions of satisfaction or frustration and so on. Unfortunately evidence obtained in such a manner is confined to whatever happens to be available and

2. Thomas A. Mahoney, Building the Executive Team, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1961, p. 258 et seq.

3. This classification is taken from Mahler, op. cit., p. 118 et seq.

may not have any real relationship with the results of the program. Obviously this approach lacks the degree of precision and validity in any reliable measuring tool. In spite of these limitations, it is still the most widely used approach mainly because of its convenience. However an increasing number of companies is switching over to more precise measuring techniques.

"Systematic evaluation" is the second approach to measuring the outcome of management development. Normally, provisions are made to measure certain goal achievements before and after the specific training course. To ensure the validity of the measurement, the same measuring tools should be employed before and after the event. This means that the type of evidence, criteria for evaluation, and the measuring devices are determined prior to the introduction of the program. Whatever means employed should permit some amount of quantification on which some inferences or judgments could be made. One example of this approach is conducting an attitude survey to determine the extent to which a human relations course has resulted in a change in the subordinates' feelings towards their superiors and thus towards the company as a whole. Though this approach offers a more objective evaluation, it has little control over the other factors that may have some influence on the results. For instance, any attempt to correlate the reduction of executive turnover with the introduction of deferred compen-

sation is challengeable if there are changes in the economic situation, changes within the organization structure and so on.

A third and perhaps the most ideal design is the "experimental evaluation". Data collection is done under certain controlled conditions. Usually a control group identical to the experimental group except for the difference of the factor being evaluated is established. Measurements are taken in both groups before and after the training session. Any change observed in the experimental group but not in the control group is thus imputed to the training.

A serious defect of this approach is the fact that the mere selection and identification of individuals into experimental and control groups affect their reactions to the experiment. Consequently a bias is created. Several suggestions have been put forth to overcome this bias. One is to conduct an activity to be evaluated within a single department or division initially, with other similar units as controls instead of selecting both the experimental and control groups from the same locations. In this way, any prior identification as experimental group or control group is lessened.⁴ Another obstacle encountered in this approach is the reluctance of many organizations to set up control groups. They feel that the establishment of such groups denies their managers the opportunity to participate in development activities and this may jeopardize their morale and careers. Des-

4. Mahoney, op. cit., p. 264.

pite its limited use today, more and more organizations are beginning to adopt the experimental approach for assessing their management development activities.⁵

Criteria for Evaluation

The selection and development of appropriate criteria of evaluation is just as important as the design chosen for evaluation in the validity and reliability of conclusions obtained. All criteria used for evaluation should be objective, reliable, unbiased, and practical measures of factors selected as relevant indicators of the goals of management development. Selecting an appropriate set of criteria for evaluation requires two main tasks.

The first is the determination of the factors thought to be relevant in assessing management development. Any factor selected should be able to measure at least one of these levels of management development objectives - immediate, intermediate, and ultimate. For measuring immediate benefits, the relevant factors are changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, etc. For intermediate gains, changes in individual performance and subordinates' attitudes and performance. For ultimate benefits, measures of organization performance like growth, rates of return, and so on.

5. For a framework of the experimental method, vide, Daniel M. Goodacre II, "The Experimental Evaluation of Management Training: Principles and Practice," Personnel, Vol. 33, No. 6, May 1957, pp. 534-538.

The second task is to determine or develop measures for these factors. Undoubtedly this is a difficult job because the factors selected should not only be relevant but also measurable, otherwise they are useless. More commonly used methods of measurement include the following: attitudes and opinions, knowledge and skills, and performance. Attitudes and opinions are perhaps the most commonly used but their values as criteria of measurement vary with the context. Observers, instructors and participants are often sought for attitudes and opinions regarding such and such a course. Attitudes and opinions if used in this context have little evaluative value. However in cases where a change of attitude is involved, measures of attitudes and opinions serve as meaningful criteria. Measures of knowledge and skill are more objective than the previous two. This is especially so if the tests are designed specifically for the occasion. Any attempt, however, to construct tests and interpret results should be done by qualified specialists. Otherwise the evaluation runs the risk of unreliability and inaccuracy. Measures of performance whether on the individual or his subordinate or the organization as a whole are quite objective. Perhaps the most popular measures are the performance rating and management appraisals in which specific aspects of performance are evaluated.⁶

6. Much of the ideas in this section is taken from Mahoney, op. cit., pp. 266-268, Goodacre, op. cit., p. 535 et seq., and A. C. MacKinney, "Progressive Levels in the Evaluation of Training Programs," Personnel, Vol. 34, No. 3, Nov.-Dec. 1957, pp. 75-77.

According to Lindbom and Osterberg, there are three levels at which the results of development activities could be evaluated.⁷ Levels here refer to the different kinds of behavior being evaluated. The trainee's classroom behavior is the first level of evaluation. It is the most popular but the least meaningful of the three as there may be little or no relationship between his performance in the classroom and his performance on the job. A second and more penetrating appraisal is that of the trainee's behavior after the program which could be carried out by a trained observer, his superior, his subordinates, colleagues and even by himself - a self-evaluation. However this level of evaluation fails to measure the ultimate goal of most programs - better employee performance. For this reason, evaluation of the employee's behavior on the job or more specifically that of his subordinates is the most meaningful of the three. Various aspects of the subordinates' behavior could be utilized to assess the benefits of training programs. Whatever aspect to be observed should be determined by the nature and objectives of the programs. Success in a communication course could be evaluated by measuring the subordinates' comprehension of his instruction before and after the training program.

Suggestions for Improvements

Much work needs to be done in developing techniques

7. Theodore R. Lindbom and Welsey Osterberg, "Evaluating the Results of Supervisory Training," Personnel, Vol. 31, No. 3, Nov. 1954, pp. 224-228.

that would effectively evaluate the outcome of training courses. One report in 1952 indicated that most companies adopted training programs on the basis of faith and hope rather than on observed training results.⁸ The situation has not changed much today. For some reason or other, some companies cannot engage in any elaborate and precise form of evaluation. In such a case, a crude measure like the "common sense" method is better than none at all.

Though evaluation is a difficult task, there is no reason why attempts should not be made to improve this and develop more effective tools to measure the results of training programs. Some suggestions have been made regarding this. One is that top management should ask for periodic evaluation and should not be satisfied with crude measures. Endeavours should be undertaken to develop and apply more sophisticated techniques like the experimental evaluation method. Management should explore the possibility of greater utilization of measuring and interpreting tools currently being developed to an increasingly sophisticated level in the behavioral sciences. More emphasis should be placed on using evaluation to improve management development, not justifying it. More attention should be paid to defining the objectives of management development clearly and realistically. Last but not least, there should be more research into this area and a greater

8. Charles B. Hendrick, "Feedback: A Method of Evaluating and Improving Management Training," Personnel, Vol. 32, No. 1, July 1955, p. 16.

exchange of information between companies, institutions and interested bodies.⁹

Effectiveness of Management Development Programs

Measurements of the effectiveness of management development is an extremely difficult job as we have observed earlier. However, for purposes of evaluation and guidance for planning future programs, some kinds of measurements, even though they fall short of the ideal, are necessary. Some authorities, like Andrews¹⁰ for instance, seem to feel that it is more important to think about the problems and criticisms encountered by these programs than their measurements. Whether management training is successful or not depends more on how the results obtained come up to or fall short of expectations¹¹ than on the absolute success of the program.

Andrews, from his two studies, said that evidence, obtained from personnel testimony, observations by colleagues, superiors and subordinates and course instructors more often than not suggested some favourable enthusiasm as to the effectiveness of management training programs though there were cases of disappointment. He argues that despite the

9. Mahler, op. cit., p. 121 et seq.

10. Kenneth R. Andrews, "Is Management Training Effective? (I) Evaluation by Managers and Instructors," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 35, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1957, p. 85.

11. Erwin K. Taylor, "Management Development at the Cross-roads," Personnel Journal, Vol. 36, No. 2, March-Apr. 1959, p. 8.

difficulty in assessing or justifying the returns and benefits from these programs, this should not prevent anyone from doing so as long as some indication of gains are shown. The important thing, it seems, is to be cognizant of the needs of the organization and its members and to conduct the training process to meet these wants. He postulates that the effectiveness of a program is a function of such factors as its duration, the amount of trainees' involvement in the program and their association with other participants, the qualifications, experience and behavior of the instructors, nature of the participants' previous experience and the relationship between the training received and the job activities and environment.¹²

Let us now turn to two studies by the American Management Association. Trickett conducted the first survey in 1952-53 in which the effectiveness of management training programs was measured by the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the company administering the program with reference to the results obtained in terms of its desired objectives. The objectives included desired management attributes, changes in management thinking and attitudes, and changes in management action and practice. He found a third of 1,954 responding companies expressed a general satisfaction with their programs, ten percent were not satisfied at all and the balance was either not able to judge their results

12. Andrews, op. cit., and K. R. Andrews, "Is Management Training Effective? (II) Measurements, Objective and Policy," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 35, No. 2, March-Apr. 1957, pp. 63-72.

or made no comment one way or the other.¹³ The other was carried out by Siningen in 1954. Out of the 342 companies with programs he studied, about a third did not make appraisals of their program. Among the two-thirds who did evaluate, he discovered seventy-five percent were either satisfied or quite satisfied with their results, twenty-three percent thought it was either too early or too difficult to evaluate. Only two percent seemed to be definitely dissatisfied "not so much with management development in general but with their own approach or progress up to date."¹⁴

In 1962, the National Industrial Conference Board made a study involving 1,074 graduates of twenty-six different programs in fourteen companies to see how they assessed these programs. The findings revealed a high enthusiasm for these programs on the part of the participants though the level of enthusiasm varied by program and by company. Favorable attitudes were expressed by the majority of the former participants but a third of them were quite critical of certain company practices. For instance, the latter group felt that the courses were "too slow moving" and thought they should be "tougher - more exacting". They also said that they would

13. Joseph M. Trickett, "A Survey of Management Development," Management Education for Itself and Its Employees Part Two, New York: American Management Association, 1954, p. 38.

14. One reason for this apparently wide difference in the two findings is perhaps traceable to the fact that Siningen separated the companies with plans from those without plans. Trickett made no such distinctions and used the term "program" more broadly. James C. Siningen, "Current Practice in the Development of Management Personnel," Research Report No. 26, New York: American Management Association, 1955, p. 12.

have appreciated them more had they been checked more frequently and informed of their progress.¹⁵

According to Krugman, the people that are most likely to benefit from attending management development programs are those who are deprived either through age or poor supervision or specialization or some combination of the three.¹⁶ Some people because of their age have been bypassed or even have lost their status. A training program may furnish them with an opportunity to prove their worth again. Subordinates working under poor supervision are found to react more readily to training programs than those who have good supervisors. Specialists seldom exposed to topics or experiences other than those pertaining to their own areas seem to gain more from these courses than those who have more varied job activities.

Other writers are not so convinced of the effectiveness of these programs. Hariton says that, in general, research studies indicate that when criteria of morale and productivity were considered, courses in human relations do not seem

15. Stephen Habbee, "College Graduates Assess Their Company Training," Studies in Personnel Policy No. 188, New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1963, vide, Highlights in the Preface.

16. His remarks are supported by Andrews, op. cit., who feels that people working in a specialized capacity or having little social intercourse in their work tend to react more intensely (or favorably) to management development courses. Herbert E. Krugman, "Management Development Training: Who Profits Most," Personnel, Vol. 36, No. 3, May-June 1959, pp. 59-62.

to produce concrete results.¹⁷ Liberal education courses conducted by some corporations are now being dropped to be replaced by more practical courses. In good times, management does not question management development programs, but in lean years they demand answers. Friedman believes that many managements are still buying executive training on faith because a lot of the executives do not know much about these programs or feel that the measuring of the payoff of the program is an almost impossible task.¹⁸

In a classic evaluation of a supervisory training program by Fleishman, Harris and Burt, it was discovered that what the trainees learned in the program might be offset by such factors as their job environment and whether after the program they identified themselves more with the workforce or with the management.¹⁹ Blansfield even goes so far as to call management development programs a "fad" because they appear to be a transient, passing thing. They are often

17. Theodore Hariton, "Are Training Programs Paying Off?" Personnel Series No. 151, New York: American Management Association, 1953, p. 7.

18. Jack J. Friedman, "The Riddle of Executive Training: Where's the Payoff?" Dun's Review and Modern Industry, Vol. 78, No. 6, Dec. 1961, pp. 49-53.

19. While a program might make the trainees more concerned with human relations, it might also make them more aware of the fact that they belong to the management group. Showing "consideration" to the workforce and getting things done do not always go hand in hand. Vide, Edwin A. Fleishman, Edwin F. Harris and Harold E. Burt, Leadership and Supervision in Industry: An Evaluation of a Supervisory Training Program, Columbus, Ohio: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, 1955, pp. 87-104.

dropped in a major budget cut necessitated by poor business conditions. As he points out, many sceptical executives would argue that, "We got along all right before without this program, and in view of the failure to show great immediate returns, we can get along without it now".²⁰

20. Michael Blansfield, "The Untimely Passing of Management Development," Personnel Journal, Vol. 39, No. 10, March 1961, p. 405.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME CASE STUDIES

The management development programs studied in this chapter are case studies of four large scale business enterprises with head offices in Vancouver. By no means, should they be considered as representative of the management practices in the Vancouver area.¹ But they do provide some insight on how some companies train their personnel for managerial responsibilities.

In view of the fact the case studies are undertaken in strictest confidence, the identification of the companies involved is deliberately left out. However, the nature of their policies and activities are disclosed in order to appreciate how their management development programs relate to their operations. The terms "training" and "development" are used interchangeably. So is the case with managerial job titles like "executives, managers and supervisors" though there are some differences in status in each of them. The interchangeability is resorted to for purposes of convenience. Each study is organized to depict the highlights of the programs studied though some attempt is made to follow a pattern:

1. They are chosen because they are Vancouver-based, large scale operations, having some form of management training and being in different industries. In addition, they are among those companies which replied favorably to a mail request sent to twenty-five firms in Vancouver for permission to study their programs.

a pattern in presenting each case.

A Forest Products Company

This company, incorporated in British Columbia, is considered one of the world's foremost producers of forest products - newsprint, pulp, lumber and related products. Its operations are located chiefly in the coastal areas of British Columbia. The present company represents an amalgamation of two of Western Canada's largest forest products firms which took place at the end of 1959. It is a highly integrated organization spreading out in four operating groups: logging, wood products, pulp and paper, and packaging. Each product group is autonomous, maintaining its own separate sales organization, administrative and production functions and so on. The staff function and services are retained at the head offices in Vancouver.

According to the Manager for Corporate Training, vigorous attention to management development programs was first paid some time in 1955 when top management decided that the supervisory staff should be exposed to management principles and techniques prior to their assuming managerial responsibilities. The company conforms to the widely utilized three-tiered managerial classification: supervisory or first-line, middle and top management.

A consultant was called in to ascertain the needs of the company and to give advice on the implementation of

appropriate programs. His recommendation of setting a course on basic management principles and functions initially was approved by the Board of Directors. The consultant assisted in the first few courses. The administration of management development has since come under the jurisdiction of the Corporate Training Section of the Personnel Department.

There are two main objectives of management training in this company. One is to narrow the gap between the manager's present performance and the mutually agreed standard as determined by his immediate superior and himself. These standards are resolved or modified by periodic appraisal. The other objective is to assist the employee to improve his effectiveness in his present job and to prepare for advancement within the company. Other objectives, stressed less, include attempts to improve the communication process in the company, to familiarize employees in corporate policies and operations, and to boost up morale. However, participation in these programs or attendance at these courses does not entitle the participants to an automatic promotion. This is to prevent the establishment of "crown prince" status amongst the ranks of the participants. Neither is it necessary for any one to take a few courses before assuming a new position as long as he is considered well qualified to handle the new job.

The selection of candidates for the courses is based largely on the results of "Position Prescription Appraisal". The "Position Prescription" lists all the qualifications,

skills and experience assumed necessary to perform a satisfactory job in a particular position. In the appraisal, the appraisee's current performance is evaluated against this list of criteria in a quantitative basis to arrive at a "Performance Index". However, this type of appraisal and its corollary, the "Performance Index", is more suitable for salary administration than as a development tool. This is because it depicts only an overall assessment of the individual and does not pinpoint the specific areas where he needs assistance and counselling. If the appraisee is found to be capable and sufficiently qualified to assume more responsibilities, he is not required to take additional training as mentioned earlier. Further training serves more to "fill" the gulf between actual performance and the standards stipulated in a position rather than as a pre-requisite for advancement. Despite this, it is the company's aspiration to have all the potential management people undergo a common experience at these courses.

The company prefers to fill a vacancy or new position with someone from its own ranks though it will not hesitate to hire an outsider if there is no suitable candidate within or if there is a need to strengthen the organization with "new blood". Promotion is mainly a function of the "Position Prescription Appraisal". Any deficiency in the requirements of the next position has to be rectified before assuming the new position. Though the retirement age is sixty-five, it is not always adhered to.

Most of the training is done on-the-job. Managers at all levels are held responsible for the development of their subordinates. The Corporate Training Section is only a staff function providing assistance or counsel to the line managers when deemed necessary. The rationale for this ultimate line managerial responsibility is to prevent the line from "passing" the task of training to a staff function. The company adheres to a principle that a sound superior-subordinate relationship is vital on two counts. The first is that such a relationship will be more conducive to the accomplishment of the objectives of both men. The second is that a close relationship will enable the superior to coach the subordinates. This relates to the stipulation that the provision of succession is a manager's responsibility; he is being appraised on the quality and the availability of his successor. The Manager for Corporate Training substantiates the justification for a strong superior-subordinate relationship by quoting a certain American Management Association study indicating that about eighty percent of the executives interviewed attributed their immediate superiors as the main factor in their development.²

The company plans and organizes its courses and development activities with the assistance of publications from the American Management Association, the National Industrial Conference Board and the universities. Since on-the-job coaching is the key development tool, other means and methods are

2. He could not give the exact location of this statement nor could the writer locate it.

considered supplementary. Lately, the company is becoming more and more interested in the outside courses as offered at the Banff School of Continuing Education, the American Management Association, and other institutions. To encourage self-development which is also a responsibility of every manager, the company has a refund system for successful completion of correspondence courses and the courses offered by local institutions like the Vancouver Board of Trade and the Extension Department of the University of British Columbia. However, top management on the advice of the Corporate Training Section has to initiate and approve such courses, which must be related to specific job requirements before they are eligible for the refund.

The in-company courses are conducted by experienced members of the staff. The advantages of these in-company courses are that: firstly, they can be designed to suit the company; secondly, they are more practical in the sense that company examples, materials and situations can be utilized; thirdly, they are more adaptable to suit both the instructor and the trainees. No outside personnel is used except at the initial stages when a consultant was called in to formulate a workable program. The Training Manager mentioned that outside experts would be introduced soon, possibly this coming season. Almost all of the training is done at the product group level except one or two courses for the managerial staff higher than the front-line supervisors. One of these is an administrative course which originated from the consultant's recommendation.

It is the company's long-term objective to conduct a general program for all supervisors.

Courses conducted at the product group level are primarily devised to cater to the specific needs of each group. All instructors of courses have access to the Corporate Training Section for guidance or assistance. Frequently the courses are held in locations away from company operations such as in hotels and resorts. The intention is to minimize distraction from job responsibilities and to create a more conducive atmosphere for learning.

The company resorts to a number of teaching methods and aids in its courses. Audio-visual aids and handouts often supplement the lectures and discussions. Although different approaches are employed to suit different individuals and groups, the most popular techniques are the case studies, role playing and group discussion, either free or guided. For greater effectiveness, the instructor is sometimes aided by a teaching manual which among other things gives hints on when to stress or repeat a point, when and what to illustrate on the blackboard, as well as a script of the curriculum to be taught. Formal instruction and training seldom exceed six and a half hours a day to ensure maximum interest, participation and absorption. The Training Manager believes that the introduction and the follow-up of these courses are crucial to their success.

When questioned on the evaluation of these courses and

the other development activities, the Training Manager argues that it is a most difficult task because the measuring tools available are inadequate, or inaccurate. Perhaps the only "workable" test at present is the actual job performance measured against certain standards and objectives. Quite often, the results of these development activities do not show up immediately but they would gradually show up in some form or another in the future.

University graduates recruited into the company are assigned to the different operating units and are paid initially at hourly wages. Later they are dispatched on a two week orientation tour of the entire company operations. Following this, they are placed in a planned job rotation on a monthly basis. The Training Manager feels that university graduates are excellent material for managerial positions and the company is recruiting them in increasing numbers.

A Department Store Chain

The company under study is a holding company which through its subsidiaries owns/or operates eight department stores and one shopping centre in British Columbia and Alberta. Its retail outlets carry complete lines of the customary department store merchandise, and with the exception of one store in Victoria, operate extensive food departments. It maintains its own overseas buying offices and promotes its own brands. The company is considered as the fourth largest department store chain in Canada. This case study is on the management develop-

ment program in its Vancouver store.

The management training program in this company refers to the period when the management trainee undergoes training as in the case of on-the-job training or attending special courses prepared for them.

Distinctive training for management recruits began sometime in 1947. At that time, the training period was spread over three years. In 1950 it was reduced to two years. Since 1957 the program extends over a year. Each year about thirty-five to forty-five people participate in this program. This year, however, the company intends to expose more people with managerial potentials to the program. Of the one hundred and forty people to be interviewed, seventy-five to eighty will be selected. Those chosen will be divided into groups of about forty each. The size of each group is kept small for reasons of convenience and practicability.

According to the Staff Training Officer, one of the main objectives of the program is "to acquaint the potential managers with the knowledge of what makes the company tick".³ By this he means a good understanding of the company history, operations, policies and procedures as well as an appreciation of the reasons or factors behind the company's success. The other objectives are stated quite specifically. One is to teach the participants how to treat their customers, colleagues and subordinates. Another is to assist these trainees in

3. Actual phrase used by the Staff Training Officer.

reducing lateness, absenteeism and accidents, and in increasing efficiency on the floor sales. Still another is to help them in improving their job performance. And lastly, it is a means to prepare the trainees for managerial responsibilities.

The potential junior executive is expected to indicate that he has resourcefulness, initiative, self-reliance, enthusiasm, self-confidence, that he is eager and willing to accept responsibility and that he has the ability to direct and organize people. No age limit is set though the preferable ages are between twenty-two and twenty-five. A university degree would be an advantage but is not essential. University graduates are given a higher initial salary and a better opportunity to advance. The company expects the candidates to have at least some high school education. His experience and skill, if relevant to the company, would be taken into consideration.

A prospective managerial candidate has a series of three interviews; one by the Staff Training Officer, another by the office superintendent⁴ and the third by his department manager. The final decision for selection depends on the department manager to whose department the successful candidate will be assigned. About ten percent of the successful candidates are women.

The company adheres to a very rigid policy of promotion from within. Preferences for managerial positions are accorded

⁴. Person in charge of the non-selling functions in the store.

to people who are associated in one way or another with the company such as the regular rank and file and the part-time employees. This is reflected in the fact that about ninety percent of the selected candidates for the management development program are from these sources. Promotion is largely based on job performance and evidences of greater managerial potentials.

The program is more orientated towards a development of techniques and a comprehensive understanding of the entire company policies and operations rather than on the development of conceptual or problem-solving skills. Much emphasis is placed on good customer relations and the ability to do an effective job running a department. In some respects, it resembles an elaborate induction program. Every trainee undergoes a common program using a definite curriculum and teaching techniques though these may change from year to year. The program allows no room for people who wish to develop their specific needs and demands. In other words, the program is designed to cater more to organizational needs than to individual wants. The Staff Training Officer remarked that the nature of the program resembles that of the compulsory and universal basic course in many armies which every cadet officer has to undergo before obtaining his commission.

In this management development program, there are five different types of training which a potential manager has to take. The first is the Basic Training which consists of rules,

procedures, company history and "selling" the company. The Sales Procedure Training constitutes the second type. Here the trainee is given some pointers on salesbills, salesmanship and customer relationships. The third and the most important is Training on-the-Job where the trainee is coached by his superior on the various aspects of his functions and responsibilities. The fourth is Self-improvement Training in which the individual is encouraged to develop himself by taking correspondence courses, night school classes and University of British Columbia courses. The fifth and the last type is Executive Training which consists of attending courses like the General Merchandising and Food Merchandising, and participating in the Breakfast Meetings and Supervisors' Conferences.

Only the last three types of training - Training on-the-Job, Executive Training and Self-improvement Training would be examined because the Basic Training and Sales Procedure Training are actually incorporated in Training on-the-Job.

On-the-Job Training is considered to be the major device of training. The department manager is obliged to coach all those reporting to him. The subordinates are constantly appraised so that their weaknesses can be overcome and their merits exploited. The superior is given some guidelines for coaching, like informing the subordinates of their progress, counselling them in their problems and motivating them to develop further. Sometimes the superior may arrange inter-

store visits, for them to broaden their perspectives and experiences.

The Executive Training is a pre-requisite for all potential managers. The General Merchandising Course which is compulsory for all participants in the management development program is dealt with first. The General Merchandising Course is comprised of weekly lectures by senior and experienced staff members on various aspects of merchandising and covers a six months period usually from September to March. No outside experts are used. The curriculum includes retail inventory, purchasing, transportation and credit operations only to mention a few. The contents of the course are deliberately selected to relate to company operations on the assumption that both the instructor and the trainees are in a better position to communicate with one another if the issues and examples cited are topical to both. The lectures are usually followed by discussions on the highlights of the topics covered. Frequently audio-visual aids supplement this. In every course there is usually an open meeting held towards the end of the course where the chief executive and his immediate subordinates make themselves available for answering any questions put forth by the participants regarding the company. Grades are given but they are not considered as critical for the most important thing is actual job performance especially under some pressure.

Other important aspects of Executive Training are the

Breakfast Meetings and the Supervisors' Conferences. All managers, whether trainee or confirmed, are required to attend these Breakfast Meetings which meet once weekly or fortnightly. At these meetings they discuss a wide range of topics and problems relating to the company with senior executives. The Supervisors' Meetings are also held regularly but less frequently than the other. The difference here is that the discussions are confined to supervisors. The idea behind these two types of meetings is to stimulate interest in problem solving, to acquaint managers with the latest developments in merchandising and current business conditions, and to encourage a greater interchange of ideas.

On completion of the one year program the trainees must undergo another round of interviews, four this time. One is by the merchandising manager, the second is by the store manager, the next by the department manager to whose department one or two of the successful trainees may be assigned, and the fourth and last is by the Staff Training Officer. If the trainees are successful, they will be posted as assistant managers in the numerous departments. Every year hence they will be appraised by the same group of assessors until they become department managers. All appraisees are entitled to know their results.

The other courses sponsored by the company include courses in food merchandising, in-store courses on store systems, human relations and so on. The company also sends

promising managers to attend the Toastmaster Course which is held four times a year.

Self-improvement is encouraged by the company. At first all those who attended outside courses had their fees paid by the company. Among the courses attended, the University of British Columbia Courses and the Dale Carnegie Courses were most popular. Recently the company decided to send employees to the Toastmaster Courses instead of the Dale Carnegie Courses. Of late, the company only makes payments after the courses have been successfully attended, the reason being that too many people failed to complete their courses. One of the major factors contributing to this high failure rate was the frequent transfer of managers from one location to another.

A Public Utility Corporation

This undertaking is one of the most comprehensive systems of public utility services in Canada. The corporation is responsible for the generation and transmission of electricity throughout areas of British Columbia containing more than ninety percent of the population of the Province. Other corporate activities include gas service, urban and inter-urban passenger transportation service and a rail freight service. The number of people under its employ is around six thousand. The present corporation is the result of an amalgamation of two utility organizations, one privately owned, the other under the control of the provincial government. It

is now a governmental agency.

Some fifteen years ago one of the two organizations forming the amalgamation launched the nucleus of the present Staff Services Division. Later the Staff Services Division initiated a Department for Manpower Planning and Development. One of this department's functions is to promote management development in the corporation. A manager is defined by the corporation as a holder of a supervisory position. All managers are held responsible and accountable for the control, utilization and development of the employees under their individual jurisdiction. The objectives of management development in the corporation are primarily two-fold as is the case in many companies with other secondary aims. One is improvement of performance in the present job and the other is to prepare managers for placement in more responsible positions.

The Manpower Planning and Development Department is charged with the responsibility of providing a centralized planning, co-ordinating and advisory service to assist the company to make the most effective use of its human resources. The services offered by the Department include the following: the maintenance of a continuous review of all management people and their individual levels of development; assistance to the line for determining and planning for future requirements arising from growth and attrition; maintenance of a centralized placement, development and counselling service.

The basis for determining development needs and activities is the results of the annual Individual Performance Review which is applicable to all supervisory and professional personnel. "Professional personnel" refers to engineers, accountants and others who belong to recognized professions. The purpose of this Review is to ascertain two things. One is to examine whether the appraisee has realized his expectations, or to put this another way, how far he has achieved the standards and objectives required. The other is to identify areas in which improvement in performance can be aided by further training and experiences. The Review indicates performance in the elements of management such as objectives; policies and programs; organization; people; cost control and effective use of resources; technical competence and administration.

In each Review, two appraisals are stipulated, one by the immediate superior and the other a self-appraisal by the appraisee himself. To assist in the assessing, descriptive wording suggesting a range from highly satisfactory (performance) down to inadequate performance in each area of activity within every element of management is given in the Review sheet. Most of the actual performance is expected to fall somewhere between the two extremes. The superior is required to discuss the two appraisals with his subordinate. If there are some disparities in the appraisals, there is a likelihood of a failure of communication emanating from the subordinate misinterpreting the objectives and procedures set out by his

superior or it could be due to something else like the incompetency of the subordinate. Both will have to clarify and resolve any differences in assessment and agree on a program for the appraisee for performance improvement and development in the present job. As a consequence an individual development program is tentatively drawn up.

The next step is to present the dual appraisals before the Divisional Appraisal Committee consisting of managerial personnel included in each level of supervision above the appraisee. They will review the appraisee's tentative individual development program and approve it if they feel it is justifiable. His potential to handle more demanding work is assessed and related to the divisional replacement needs in the foreseeable future. The appraisee's current "stage of readiness" to acquire more responsibility is ascertained. If necessary, the Committee may recommend him for development activities that will advance his "stage of readiness". Following the Division Appraisal Committee's assessment, the superior is required to confirm the approved individual development program with the appraisee, and if necessary, discuss with him possible ways and means to implement the program.

Each individual program is designed to rectify individual discrepancies. This is consistent with the prevailing company philosophy of serving the needs of the organization through the fulfillment of individual needs and aspirations. However, there are safeguards against sacrificing organization goals to individual objectives like the job description and the Individ-

idual Performance Review. The company holds the belief that the motivation to do a better job and improve one's capabilities is greatly influenced by the satisfaction received in having one's goals accomplished. Besides there is no point in having a program that is of little or no use to the person involved, as neither he nor the corporation is likely to benefit from such a program.

The dual assessments approach coupled with a review by the Division Appraisal Committee is directed at attaining a satisfactory superior-subordinate relationship at all levels of the company operations. This is based on the assumption that the quality of such a relationship will largely determine the level of performance attained and the measure of personal growth achieved by each. A superior's ability to develop others influences his own chance of advancement.

As in the case of most companies, most of the training is done on-the-job under the personal guidance and coaching of the immediate superior. Unlike many business enterprises, the company will not hesitate to use outside consultants for teaching whenever necessary. Sometimes this is inevitable because of the complexities of its operations and because no employee is able to conduct the training sessions as stipulated by the company. There is no basic training course which all employees must undergo as in some companies, though the corporation does conduct general as well as specific induction programs for all new employees.

To develop its managerial staff, the corporation resorts to a variety of teaching techniques and courses. The choice of the techniques depends on the existing circumstances. Several in-company courses covering many topics relating to the company operations are available to the employees. Outside courses and programs as offered by any institution in North America are also accessible to the management people if the corporation sees a need for them to attend. As mentioned earlier, managers are only sent to such courses or programs after their specific needs have been spotted in the Individual Performance Reviews and approved by the Division Appraisal Committee. In addition, managers are encouraged to take courses and studies for their self-development. They are entitled to a refund of fees when the courses are approved by the corporation.

Evaluating the results of these programs is one problem area encountered by the company. The Manager for Management Development attributes this to a lack of refined and reliable measuring tools. At present, the evaluation is done through the results criterion as reflected in the Individual Performance Reviews. How these managers perform in relation to the targets and standards set for them will roughly indicate the degree of success (or failure) of their individual programs.

According to the Manager for Management Development, the corporation stresses the importance of not "pigeonholing" employees for training. People are dissimilar because of their differences in education, background, experience and capabil-

ities. What may be relevant for one job situation may not be so for another even though the job titles may be identical. This is evitable owing to the variances in the work environments in which these positions are located. An individualized and specific approach to management development is even more critical in a corporation such as this where there is much diversity in operations, dispersed over a wide geographical area and decentralized in structure. It is on account of these factors that the management development programs are designed to cater to specific needs and objectives rather than to fulfill all demands and aspirations in a single program.

A Financial Corporation

The corporation founded in 1950 in Vancouver is acclaimed to be one of the largest independent financial enterprises in North America today. Its activities include installment purchase and personal loans, short-term financing of industrial expansion and loans for purchase of capital equipment. Most of its two hundred branches are in North America and the remainder in the Bahamas and Europe.

In 1963 a training program for the potential branch managers was started. This, according to the Controller who is in charge of personnel and procedure, is the first step towards a truly comprehensive management development reaching all managerial echelons. Meanwhile preparations are under way for a program at the next managerial level - the

district managers. Following this there will be a development scheme for the regional managers. Development at the upper echelons will be mainly counselling by seniors and attendance of the numerous courses or programs by the different institutions such as the Banff School for Continuing Education and the University of California. Usually the training and facilities offered in these courses are not available within the organization. The company defines the present training program for potential branch managers as "Supervisory Training Program" and the "Executive Training Program" refers to the development of district managers and above.

One of the most emphasized objectives of the present program is to train the potential branch managers to operate in a manner stipulated by the company policies and procedures. The purpose is to attain a certain degree of uniformity in operations and to develop a specific company image in the eyes of the public. A program like this is necessary in view of the fact that many of the employees had worked in other companies before and the same means have to be employed to re-orient their customary mode of operations to that of the company. One other emphasized objective is to produce a sufficient quantity of well-qualified personnel to fill vacancies and new positions arising out of the company's rapid expansion. Other objectives include better job performance and the improvement of morale.

All branch managers are instructed to hire only people who possess the potential for advancement at least up to the branch manager level. This is in keeping with the promotion from within policy which stipulates that all future managers have to work from the bottom upwards. However, some provisions are made for "new blood" to be admitted into the corporation; for example, a special accelerated and more demanding program for a few college graduates recruited each year. Only top quality graduates are considered for the special program, the company preferring not to recruit any if no one meets its expectations as was the case in 1964. The relative homogeneity of the operations makes it possible and expedient for all employees to undergo the same basic training. Those who prove themselves to possess some managerial potentials are selected to join this program.

In general, one may say with some justification that the Supervisory Training Program is designed to develop a breed of company men. The rationale for this, as observed earlier, is to create a familiar company image among its far-flung customers by offering them similar services and facilities as well as a uniform pattern of business transactions.⁵ To some degree, the process of striving to establish a uniform company image is enhanced by the relative homogenous nature of its activities. As such the program is more orientated to attain-

5. Maintenance of a uniform company image is not an unfamiliar phenomenon. Shell Oil, for instance, utilizes the same Shell sign and English lettering in every part of the world it operates.

ing corporate goals than to serving specific individual needs. However, this is not true of the development plans at the upper levels of management where human relations and conceptual skills are crucial. Much of these plans are dictated by the specific demands of these senior executives.

The approach to training is that of "learning by doing". Underlying this is the principle that one should not only acquire new information and knowledge but should be able to utilize them as much as possible. All trainees in the Supervisory Training Program are instructed to schedule their own training and are responsible for arranging their coaching sessions with their immediate superiors. Such requirements are deemed necessary in view of the nature of the program which is designed to permit each trainee to progress at his own pace. In other words, there is a definite number of activities called areas of responsibility which have no specific time limits of completion for the trainee. How quickly and how well he is able to complete this series of activities is a function of his motivation, capabilities and background. A rationale for this is that no two individuals learn in the same speed owing to personal differences. A fast and energetic learner should be allowed and encouraged to forge ahead as rapidly as his abilities will permit him.

An area of responsibility refers to the specific activities in one topic which the trainee has to learn and practice well enough to attain a certain standard of performance.

The topics that have to be studied include profit planning, collecting, cashiering and other activities connected with the operations of a branch office. Each trainee is supplied with a Management Guide Book which spells out in detail the nature of these areas of responsibility in which he has to show competence. A Qualification Procedure is used by the company to direct the trainee's progress in the program. This Qualification Procedure serves two functions, one is to confirm the trainee's standing in areas or parts of areas in which he has attained the required level of performance and the other is to indicate how far and how well he has progressed in each area.⁶ Once he has fulfilled all the requirements in one area, he is considered qualified in that area. He goes on until he is qualified in all the stipulated areas. Briefly, this training scheme permits the trainee to be tested after he has been trained but before he has assumed his managerial position.

The company stipulates that all managers be accountable for training their subordinates. In this program, the branch manager is required to meet the trainee formally once a week off the job. The purposes of the formal meeting are three-fold. The first is to check his progress in accordance with

6. An analogy to this is the R.C.A.F. 5BX Plan; except that in the 5BX, a participant must complete all the requirements in each level before he moves to the next. Here the trainee may attempt to meet the requirements of several or even all the areas at the same time though he may reach a different level in each area.

his qualification procedure; the second is to discuss with him his plans for completing the next week's assignments in these areas of responsibility and the third is to give whatever counsel he needs. In addition, the district manager meets the trainee once a quarter to review his work. All the coaching is done by the company personnel and no outside trainer is involved. The system permits and encourages those with ambition to progress as fast and as far in the program as their capabilities will permit, as the criterion is achievement in results, not the amount of time expended.

Many of the activities in these areas of responsibility require the trainee to do some role playing in order to appreciate their significance and practicability. One characteristic of role playing is the implied pressure on the actor to attempt to "feel" like the person whose role he is playing. To this end, role playing enables a trainee to develop an empathetic understanding of others, especially his prospective clients and colleagues. The major teaching method is the personal coaching by the immediate superior. Other less frequently used techniques are the various group training methods such as lectures, discussions, case studies and conferences. These, however, are employed to a greater degree in the upper echelons.

Refund of fees are available to those who successfully completed their self-development courses. However, these courses must be related to their jobs and be approved by the Controller.

One feature, common to most companies, but absent here is the performance appraisal. The closest approximation of the company to a performance appraisal is an annual assessment for possible salary increase. Recommendations for salary increase are partially based on some aspects of job performance. It appears that the chief consideration is the comparison between the appraisee's present and previous years' figures of such accounting entities as total retail outstanding, accounts per employee, net profit. The Controller said that the performance appraisal in a format commonly known is not suitable for such a company as his.⁷

The program is facilitated by two factors. One is the relative homogeneity of the company activities and the other is the rapidity of the company expansion. These factors together with the compulsory retirement at sixty-five for men and sixty for women eliminate one major problem likely to obstruct the success of management development as experienced by many companies. This problem is how to have sufficient managerial positions for the personnel trained in the company's own Management Development Programs. A failure to fulfill their expectations for greater managerial responsibilities could result in frustration, disappointment and resignations amongst these people.

A Review of the Four Programs

It is interesting to note that each company operates

7. He did not elaborate on this.

its own management development program in its own particular way. Even if they were in the same industry, it is doubtful whether they would employ one standard approach to their programs simply because no two firms have identical problems, operations, background and personalities involved.

Companies with a lesser range of activities tend to employ more standardized techniques than companies with diversified operations. Both the department store chain and the financial corporation could be classified in the former category. For instance, the financial corporation is endeavoring to produce a distinct class of company men within its ranks. Such an approach is liable to encourage the growth of stereotypes. The same may be said of the department store chain in which all the potential managers are required to undergo the same basic training. In both cases, the emphasis is on training their managerial personnel in the accepted company mode of operation. However, the other two companies seem to approach development from a different angle. Development is more individually oriented and no basic training is stipulated for all managers. Development activities are designed to fulfill the individual's specific needs which are determined from the performance appraisals.

All four companies appear to have a firm belief in proper coaching by the immediate superiors and on-the-job training. A sound superior-subordinate relationship is stressed in all instances. Normally a superior is held responsible for the development of his subordinates. He is expected to guide

and coach his juniors whenever possible. Though the companies consider on-the-job activities as the main means to train their personnel, they do not hesitate to resort to off-the-job development activities both within and outside the company when necessary. Moreover, fee refunds are used as an incentive to encourage managers to attend outside courses relating to their work. For some reason or other, none of the companies make any strenuous effort to evaluate their program.

CHAPTER IX

PROBLEMS IN MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Management development programs will be better utilized if more of their limitations and obstacles blocking their progress are identified and overcome. In this chapter the possible reasons that certain programs fail to carry through, and their possible solutions will be examined. There is also a discussion of some unresolved problems.

Overcoming Some Obstacles in Management Development

An obvious area to probe in any failure of management training is the trainee or participant himself. Andrews advocates that a person with a negative attitude toward learning or having too set a mind should be disqualified for he would not benefit much from a program. For this reason, only a willing and capable individual without corporate or familial complications should be permitted to attend any program.¹

Sometimes the wrong people are being trained to do a job as noted by Gordon. He found out that in quite a number of situations, the new employees did not receive their orientation, job instruction and management counselling from their

1. Kenneth R. Andrews, "Is Management Training Effective? (II) Measurements, Objectives and Policy," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 35, No. 2, March-Apr. 1957, p. 89.

supervisors but from others, such as the "set-up men and lead man" and occasionally, from the "informal leader". The same sort of situation would possibly occur among managerial people. If a company desires to improve its training activities, it should train those people who actually do this function. Accordingly, the company should ascertain who does the actual training job and should provide him with the necessary training to perform his task effectively.²

One hypothesis, explaining the failure of many management development programs is given by Allen.³ Two factors are involved. One is the failure to define initially the kind of work a manager should do and thus develop him accordingly to do his job. The other is the assumption that the training could be accomplished away from the job. The former could be rectified by an initial identification of the activities entailed in managing and training him to perform his task effectively. In the latter, off-the-job activities such as seminars, conferences and courses though forming an indispensable part of the training process are actually designed for filling gaps in knowledge and skill. He suggests that a manager could learn more effectively through applying management principles in his regular job activities than relying

2. Richard M. Gordon, "Do We Train the Wrong People," Personnel, Vol. 36, No. 11, April 1958, p. 415 et seq.

3. Louis A. Allen, "Does Management Development Develop Managers?" Personnel Journal, Vol. 34, No. 2, Sep.-Oct. 1957, p.18.

too much on the off-the-job development activities.

Too often, a trainee may learn what has been taught in the course but unfortunately the learning is not transferred to the job situation. Frequently, this is due to his work environment in which there are certain formal and informal forces at work which may hinder his attempt to apply his training. All jobs are said to have social meanings. Any endeavor to change an individual's job behavior is almost synonymous with trying to change his social relationships. For instance, the individual's superior may not appreciate or approve his learning. Thus he has to go along with his superior or face some undesirable consequences. Or he may have to drop some or most of his training in order to placate his colleagues, subordinates, and some informal groups. All training programs should include some training on how to overcome the problems encountered in applying the training. Most recurrent of these problems are the deterrent effects of other individuals. One may say that no development program could be effective unless a man's work environment permits him to apply his training.⁴

Frequently a training program falls short because of poor superior-subordinate relationship. A sound relationship is almost indispensable for any subordinate to be coached properly by his supervisor. Oft-times this relationship is

⁴. James N. Mosel, "Why Training Programs Fail to Carry Over," Personnel, Vol. 34, No. 3, Nov.-Dec. 1957, pp. 56-64.

hindered by a number of factors. Many line managers fail to give sufficient time and thought to working with their juniors. Not uncommonly, the rivalry between the superior and subordinate is allowed to be repressed instead of being acknowledged. Often the company climate may be anything but tolerant of mistakes and the individual needs to learn.⁵ It is suggested that all these shortcomings should be rectified before effective training is possible. For instance, the superior should be made to realize that his status is largely affected by his ability to develop others. Similarly his own superior is held accordingly. Top management should ensure that development is encouraged and facilitated by sufficient opportunities within the organization.

Experiences from university programs indicate that many companies have to contend with poor results because of one or more of the following reasons: participating in these programs too late or too soon, sending the wrong candidates to these courses and choosing unsuitable programs. Consequently many participants become frustrated for two reasons. Some may feel that they have been denied the opportunity to use the training which they have been sent for. Worse still, this denial means possible failure to live up to the expectations of others. Some of those who develop a broader perspective and new attitudes may experience some difficulties in adjust-

5. Harry Levinson, "A Psychologist Looks at Executive Development," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 40, No. 5, Sep.-Oct. 1962, pp. 69-75.

ing themselves in their old work environment. Aushen suggests that a company should integrate participation in these university courses as part of a long term, managerial staffing program.⁶ A company contemplating participation in these courses should make a thorough study of the programs available, and then select the appropriate candidates to attend the programs which match corporate needs. In addition, provisions should be made to accommodate these participants when they return so that what they learn is not wasted.

Resistance to learning is a common obstacle faced in management development or, for that matter, any sort of training. Many people resist training because they view it as a threat to their social relationships and accustomed modes of behavior rather than as a source of help. Learning generally implies a change of some kind. Sometimes the resistance could be attributed to a block in communications, the instructor may not know what his trainees feel about the training and what they want and vice versa. In other cases the trainee may interpret training as a reflection on management belief that he is not as good as he should be.⁷

One approach suggested to solve this recurrent problem is to examine the true nature of resistance. Normally the

6. Melvin Aushen, "Better Use of Executive Development Programs," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 36, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1955, pp. 67-74.

7. James R. Surface, "Resistance to Training," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 32, No. 2, March-Apr. 1954, p. 73 et seq.

trainees do not resist technical change but rather social change - a change in their social relationships that usually accompanies technical change. For this reason, the instructor should attempt to ensure a genuine comprehension, in depth and detail of the specific social relationship that would be sustained or threatened by the learning process or by the manner in which it is introduced. As such, both the instructor and his trainees should communicate as freely as possible regarding their attitudes, the difficulties encountered and whatever comments and suggestions they feel warranted. As far as possible, the program should be designed to strike a balance between the individual need and the demands of the organization.⁸

Some Unresolved Problems

Not all the problems encountered in managerial development could be easily resolved. Some of them are dilemmas as either one of the available courses of action appears to be anything but desirable. Others seem to be part and parcel of any learning process. As happens frequently, new problems arise as old ones are unravelled.

An inability to define a model manager both in terms of his work and his characteristics is a major difficulty faced in management development. It is necessary to know what are the factors involved in the making of an effective manager

8. Paul R. Laurence, "How to Deal with Resistance to Change," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 32, Nov. 3, May-June 1954, p. 52 et seq.

before any beneficial training is possible. There are only broad descriptions and standards of successful managers in general but none for a particular incumbent in a particular company in a particular situation.⁹ There are not only differences in job requirements for positions in different companies but also some differences in requirements for similar positions within the same organization. The problem is further complicated by the different schools of thought on what are the relevant factors pertaining to an effective manager. One school of thought suggests that a good manager requires certain traits such as intelligence, adaptability, decisiveness, analytical ability, character and motivation.¹⁰ Another school emphasizes certain skills such as human, technical, and conceptual.¹¹

Sometimes a dilemma may arise out of the line-staff relations in operating the program. It is not a simple task to define the detailed duties of the staff in a program. If the staff is given the authority to implement the program or to pressure the line to do so, the line managers' vital rela-

9. Vide, "The Mythology of the Ideal Executive," in Myles L. Mace, The Growth and Development of the Executive, Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business, Harvard University, 1950, pp. 20-23.

10. Burt K. Scanlan, "A New Look at Executive Development," Administrative Management, Jan. 1964, pp. 30-34.

11. Robert L. Katz, "Skills of an Effective Administrator," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 33, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1955, pp. 33-42.

tionships with their subordinates are threatened. On the other hand, if the staff were to serve only in an advisory capacity most if not all of its recommendations might not be heeded by the line especially if the line managers are not enthusiastic about development.¹²

A similar problem relating to the question of where to strike a happy medium may occur when there is a conflict between organization needs and individual development. From his research, Chris Argyis found that efficient managers are generally task-oriented. Unfortunately the characteristics common in task-oriented individuals are often the very opposite of the qualities required in good coaches. They tend to be directive and domineering. Frequently they ignore or even block the aspirations of their subordinates, especially when these wants clash with their own objectives. Such a behavior pattern may be instrumental in attaining certain corporate goals but usually at the expense of stifling individual needs and development. As such, it appears that the goals of the company do not go hand in hand with individual needs in certain occasions.¹³

Lack of capable and willing instructors is a recurring problem in development. Accepted organization principles

12. George S. Odiorne, "Five Manager Development Problems," Personnel Journal, Vol. 36, No. 1, May 1957, p. 7.

13. Chris Argyis, "Top Management Dilemma: Company Needs versus Individual Development," Personnel, Vol. 32, No. 2, Sep. 1958, pp. 123-134.

demand that the manager has to be coached by his supervisor. More often than not these supervisors do not possess the training nor the inclination to teach. Some of them are reluctant to develop their juniors because they see them as threats to their own positions. Others who have gone through the hard way have regarded coaching as tantamount to pampering. With such negative reactions, they are not likely to do a good job of coaching. Someone claims that a fairly bright individual requires four years of specialized study to become a competent counsellor.¹⁴ Yet how many line managers have been exposed to a rudimentary course in teaching and counselling? Not very many, perhaps only a handful.

14. Erwin K. Taylor, "Management Development at the Crossroads," Personnel Journal, Vol. 30, No. 2, March-Apr. 1959, p. 19.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS

A major obstacle to any uniform approach to management development is the lack of a consistent and generally accepted set of activities and requirements which a manager should do and have. It is possible to define the kind of man for a particular position in a particular organization in a particular situation. But a model manager for all industries and in all occasions is non-existent. Nevertheless, this should not prevent any attempt to systematize position descriptions, especially within a particular firm as a guide for management development. By "systematic", it is meant a rational and realistic delineation of the various managerial activities and responsibilities. With a clarified position classification, it is easier to comprehend in which direction one should develop. Otherwise development would be left too much to chance.

The multiplicity of variables of the business world is reflected in the almost individualistic nature of specific business units. One firm is different from another just as one human being differs from another. There are differences in policies, operations, personalities involved, sizes and backgrounds in these corporations. As a result, a wide variety of development activities emerges to accommodate a host of diverse needs and situations. The very existence of

such a variety without some kind of controlling agency eliminates the possibility of a uniform approach. Case studies made of four large companies in Vancouver indicate that each company tackles its management development problems in its own peculiar way. Other studies by institutions like the American Management Association and the National Industrial Conference Board support this observation.

This is to be expected in a situation where there is no recognized body having the necessary power or influence to ensure a certain degree of uniformity in development principles and activities. Some people believe that the gradual professionalization of management is paving the way for such a professional body comparable to the acknowledged professional groups like lawyers and doctors. If management were to become a recognized profession, then it would be a lot easier to introduce and implement some sort of guidelines within which management development programs are to be administered. A professional body would clear much of the confusions and controversies prevailing today, such as whether these programs are effective or not, the manner in which they should be organized and operated and so on. Further, an established association would eliminate many pseudo-management consultants who have done more than their fair share of harm to management development. Some critics fear the professionalization of management would produce stereotypes and eventually destroy the entrepreneurial spirit so essential to

business. This is a bit too farfetched, Experiences show that it is easier to make advances and improvements when the tasks are tackled in an organized and systematic manner rather than in a haphazard fashion. A look at advances and achievements made in medicine and engineering would confirm this.

A big problem in many areas of management development is the lack of proper measurement tools and techniques. The evaluation of a particular program, for instance, is not a simple task. Some of the results of the training sessions could not be detected until a lapse of time. Courses involved with the training of qualitative aspects of management are generally more difficult to measure than those concerned with quantitative aspects. Frequently there are other factors working simultaneously to influence the end results of the training process so that it is difficult to determine how each of the changes could be attributed to the program in question. Controversy still rages over the question of whether the "trait" approach or the "results" approach to performance appraisal is more appropriate. One of the outstanding issues in this controversy is how to decide which of the two approaches measures the performance of a manager more realistically and accurately. Perhaps in many instances, the solution lies in a discreet combination of the two.

Consequently it is not unusual to see many companies still adopting management development programs on faith and

hope because of the absence of a reliable measuring device for evaluating the effectiveness of these programs. One way is to do what is being done by an increasing number of companies, that is, to measure the results of their programs in terms of their own objectives. Until a set of reliable measuring tools and techniques is developed, many of the training sessions have to be conducted on a trial and error basis.

Conflicts between organizational needs and individual wants is another recurring headache in management development. Compatibility of organizational and individual objectives do not always coincide. How to find a happy medium is itself a problem. A company wishing to accomplish its stated goals should be prepared to plan, organize, direct, and control its staff in a manner it considers befitting. Yet, all management development in the final analysis is individual self-development. Accordingly a company should encourage its employees to develop in a direction consistent with its goals if possible by means of various incentives and yet be able to accommodate individual aspirations by a careful design of its management development program. It is not an easy job to do, but the company should at least try!

Presently, there are still some programs being initiated by some over-zealous top executives without the faintest idea of what these programs really entail. Once started they are contented to sit back and let fate decide the outcome of these programs. Undoubtedly some programs come into being primarily

because some companies want to live up to the industrial "Joneses". Worse still are the training plans copied wholesale from other firms without the slightest modification to suit the particular circumstances in which they are to be operated. Under such circumstances, the chance of success is not an optimistic one indeed. Oft-times the individual who is put in charge of corporate training has little training or experience in developing others. Moreover, there are others who seem to think that development activities can function effectively independently of a conducive company climate, top management support and participation, line co-operation and proper organization.

Though a sizeable proportion of the companies having some kind of training schemes report satisfaction with their results, there is ample scope to examine why others do not meet their expectations. Research in management development is too vital an assignment to be left entirely to the universities, and other institutions concerned with the subject. Every company operating a program should be continually exploring new ways and techniques to improve its program and should exchange experiences and information with others as much as possible. One such area in which more research needs to be done is the evaluation of management development programs. Of course, these non-commercial institutions could act as a kind of clearing house for the data relating to management development.

With the increasing complexities of operating a business organization today, the need for well-qualified managerial personnel increases correspondingly. Competition in the future is predicted to be more and more a battle between opposing management teams rather than anything else. This is because the other factors of production are equally obtainable to all competitors with little or no difference in quality and quantity. Companies with highly competent managerial personnel have an advantage over others. A good management team cannot be trained overnight nor can it be recruited from outside. If a company wants a team that is able to carry out its objectives and operations, it has to develop one itself. Training is not as simple as it may sound. Effective training entails elaborate planning, organization and comprehensive understanding of the nature of the learning process among other things.

In view of the absence of some definite resemblance of order in management development, some efforts should be made to systematize management training as much as possible with the ultimate purpose of establishing a generally accepted framework. Otherwise management would still remain an art or an immature science at its very best and the possibility of it becoming a profession a forlorn dream. It is high time that management development no longer be left to chance. What is suggested is not a system of procedures and techniques blindly adhered to. Rather it should be a generally accepted framework which offers a range within which manage-

ment training is to be conducted. This is deemed necessary on account of the diversity of needs and situations prevailing in the business world. Take the teaching profession for example. The variety of subjects to be taught, the countless assortments of personalities and situations involved do not prevent the establishment of a recognized profession, with a set of rules, principles and techniques which are flexible enough to cater to all needs and conditions. If and when management attains the status of an acknowledged profession, management development programs would be in a better position to train a new breed of managers ably trained and qualified to fulfil the obligations of their profession and that of their respective companies.

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