Motivation And Management Behavior

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In the 12th chapter of Exodus, the 14th verse, we are told that Moses led the 12 tribes of Israel out of Egypt. Some 4000 people wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. In the 18th chapter of Exodus, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, counseled Moses to relinguish complete command and to establish lieutenants--those who would manage tens, fifties, and hundreds. This reorganization took place at Elath. Within 90 days, the tribes of Israel reached the Promised Land. Perhaps management of today is aimlessly wandering in the wilderness and needs to evaluate such new ideas as those provided by Jethro.

It seems that today too many people are not happy at work. In particular, people are not happy with "you supervisors." Recently, a research group asked a large number of people how many "good" supervisors they had worked under in their careers. The range was from 6 supervisors to none. The average was 2.6 good supervisors per work career. And the average age of the group responding was 42. Now if we used a Kelly range--that is, if we threw out the top 10% on the basis that they like everybody and the bottom 10% because they are the tough nuts and don't like anyone, this leaves us with 2 good supervisors per man per work career. For this and other reasons, many people believe that we are not producing the kind of man in our business structure who is fully capable of moving into a management position.

Why does this situation exist? Why is management to some extent "wandering in the wilderness" today? What types of management behavior are emerging as ineffective?

It is discouraging to think that, with so many highly capable people dedicating their talents to this problem, so few really significant results have been achieved. The early research by Elton Mayo and Frank Roethlisberger and others stimulated a great deal of effort towards "keeping people happy on the job." It is possible that managers, in their eagerness to develop an effective work force, have now initiated so many human relations practices that much of industry today suffers from a too fat, too soft, and too sweet style of management. It is for this reason that our approach to worker motivation is being re-evaluated today. Recently, such behavioral scientists as McGregor in The Human Side of Enterprise, Herzberg in The Motivation to Work, and Argyris in Human Personality in Organization have suggested that the important needs of man that affect his job satisfaction and productivity have indeed been neglected. We seem to have become so preoccupied with benefit programs and comfortable surroundings that we have overlooked or forgotten that people can get a great deal of satisfaction from performing a task well. People are unhappy because we provide them with too little challenge and hold them too little accountable for doing a job well. We have tried to motivate people by buying their loyalty and "mothering" them when they really have a strong need to feel that they are honestly contributing to the success of the business. The problem, then, seems to be one of motivation.

But what is worker motivation? In a general sense, motivation is a quality that results from an impulse, emotion, desire, or intention and that enables a person to work to his fullest capability, wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. Many persons suggest that this motivation is an innate quality that a man has or does not have; on the other hand, many of us feel that motivation can be created or improved by constructive supervision and by planned programs of work. The latter attitude seems to be imperative if we are to avoid stagnation or "wandering in the wilderness."

Effectiveness as a manager, then, depends on the degree to which one can motivate others to accomplish the work by helping them achieve satisfaction from the task. The Jesuit Order was begun by 1 man and never reached more than about 600 people. But with 600 persons a large share of the world has been managed, while some American businesses with close to 3000 managers have a difficult time managing 1 company. The difference is that the founder of the Jesuits trained the young men so they were completely motivated to do the job ahead of them. As another example, there is no evidence that Jesus handpicked his disciples. He seemed to have taken the first men who came along. He could do this because his system of motivation would work on anyone. These examples serve to indicate that a manager's true success rests on his ability to work with the human resources available to him.

Based on the observation of management behavior, a "managerial grid" has been identified within which most managers can be categorized. Management seems to divide into the following types:

1. The "impoverished" manager has a low concern for people and, at the same time, little concern for the task. He is the one who is likely to say, "Don't rock the boat. Just hold on."

2. The "country club" manager demonstrates a great deal of concern for the people who report to him but a low concern for the task of his organization. He is the man who is likely to be heard saying, "Keep them happy. Spread out the overtime."

3. The "scientific" manager has an extremely high concern for the task but worries very little about the feelings or attitudes of the people working on that task. This manager is the one who is guided by, "Meet the quotas. Stay within the budget. Watch the E and D ratio and the span of control. People have to fit the pattern."

4. Then there is the "accordian" manager. He is neither consistently concerned with the

task or the effectiveness of his group nor with the attitudes and feelings of the people who report to him. This manager is likely to say, "This week, let's get the job done--forget about how the people feel. We'll take care of them next week." This manager is concerned with production one week and morale the next week and cannot honestly at any time evaluate the entire work situation.

5   The last management type identified is the "consultive" manager, the one described by McGregor in The Human Side of Enterprise as the "Theory Y" manager. This supervisor believes people want to do the best job that they can and that the supervisor needs to be permissive and to have enough faith in the ability of others to allow them to participate in goal setting on their jobs. He has a high concern for both the task and for the people.

By no means does the consultive manager behave the same way all the time. The degree to which control is used and the amount of joint goal setting do and should vary, depending on the group involved. For this reason, a "management continuum" has been identified. This continuum extends through (1) simply telling the group what they shall do, (2) selling them on the approach which should be taken, (3) consulting with the group and then reaching one's own decision, (4) joining the group and jointly deciding on what approach shall be taken, and (5) finally completely delegating the decision to the group. When the boss tells the group what shall be done, the decision is entirely "boss centered." On the other extreme, the decision is entirely "group centered" when the boss delegates completely to the group.

The main question is, of course, when do you use what approach? Primarily, it depends on 3 things: the forces in the leader, the forces in the subordinate, and the forces in the situation.

1.   Forces in the leader.   The particular leadership pattern used depends on the values of the leader, his skills, the confidence he has in subordinates, and the tolerance he has for ambiguity. Obviously, if the leader has little tolerance for ambiguity or little confidence in subordinates, he will tend towards the left end of the continuum and rely more on telling or selling his view to those in the organization. On the other hand, if the leader's values are such that he has confidence in the ability of others and is not afraid to take risks, he is more likely to tend towards the right end of the continuum and participate in joint goal setting or completely delegate to subordinates.

2.   Forces in the subordinate.   The leadership pattern used depends heavily upon (a) the subordinate's readiness to assume responsibility, (b) his ability to contribute to the problem, and (c) whether or not he must implement the decisions reached. "Boss-centered" management can certainly reach a decision faster than can "consultative" management. But if the decision has to be implemented by subordinates, the consultative style will result in much faster implementation.

3.   Forces in the situation.   Of course, such things as (a) the time pressure, (b) the kind of problem, and (c) the kind of organization will have an impact on the type of management leadership that is best suited.

Current research seems to indicate that very few bosses really believe in and are comfortable with "consultative" management. A recent study at the University of Iowa on leadership of some 316 executives showed that 23% were clearly autocratic, 67% could be classified as "benevolent autocrats," while only 10% were clearly democratic.

The benevolent autocrat substitutes words and gimmicks and soft soap to cover up his real feelings. "We want to do it this way; don't we fellows?" is a sickening and disillusioning kind of statement. Most people would rather work any day for an autocrat, for they at least know where they stand with him. The autocrat has no false face which he tries to wear in order to hide the fact that he is a slob.

Some interesting research on the participative, or permissive, or consultative, or democratic manager indicates that he has definite characteristics. There is widespread experimental evidence to show that about three-fourths of the best managers share certain common characteristics today These characteristics are not shared by the worst managers. One-fourth of the best managers seem to have the same characteristics as the worst ones, and one-third of the worst managers seem to have the same characteristics as the best. But when spelled out and digested, the results on the successful manager point to an individual who is more emotionally mature and relaxed, less likely to take it out on others, more apt to have time for planning and organizing, and more accessible to his subordinates. Needless to say, he also knows the work to be managed and has good judgment about it. In contrast, the poor manager is busier, does more of the work himself, likes people less, has less time for planning and organizing, and is less likely to be followed, respected, and liked. He is also less likely to have good communications upward.

Results of another study on the characteristics of a "success personality" show that, after putting reams and reams of information together, the characteristic "confidence" is quite important. One way of defining the word "confidence" is "to get with". Another quality shared by the successful managers is the tendency to look at one's self as the source of the trouble. He has self-insight--he knows what kind of a bird he is. When, during the Last Supper, Jesus said that one of those at the table would betray him, none of the disciples said, "Is it he, or he?" No, all of them said, "Is it I, Lord?" When there is trouble, the best place to look first is usually at yourself.

Several other specific characteristics of the consultative manager have emerged:

1. He has situational sensitivity. He simply is sensitive to situations going on around him. Most of us do not have enough of this ability. But the successful manager adapts, and this means he has to have a feeling for which way things are drifting.

2. He has diagnostic ability. He clearly practices diagnosis before prognosis. He looks for the causes and treats those rather than dealing with the symptoms.

3. He has role sensitivity. This means that he sees himself as adapting to a situation. In looking at the performance of supervisors in one research and development laboratory, some interesting differences were observed between the average profile of those supervisors ranked in the lowest quartile to those ranked in the top quartile. Those supervisors with the

highest ranking scored significantly lower on adherence to laboratory policies, rules, and regulations than did the lowest ranked supervisor. This might indicate that the lowest ranked supervisors are unable to exercise corporate policy and procedure with judgment. They are inflexible and do not adjust to specific requirements.

4. He has problem solving skills. Harold Leavitt, at Harvard, conducted an interesting study that illustrated the importance or dimension of this characteristic. He asked participants in the study to (a) list 3 people who have the most creative ideas, (b) list 3 with the least creative ideas, (c) list those one liked the most, and (d) list those one liked the least. The results showed a .88 correlation between the people "I like" and the people who are the most creative. In other words, "the people I like have the most creative ideas." Or, "I like him because he thinks like I do."

5. He has a philosophy of life or convictions that indicate he believes in the basic worth of people. He keeps clearly before him the fact that he is dealing with "flesh and blood." It is not enough to think of people in the abstract. The more we can look for opportunities to help us learn and think of people in the concrete, the more we will grow in our true worth as leaders.

These 5 characteristics are those of the effective leader, not those of the "autocrat" or "benevolent autocrat." The more a manager can develop a climate in which subordinates feel a clear, personal responsibility for the success of the organization, the more successful he is likely to be. There is a foolish notion held by some people that managers control the organization. They do not. The implementers do. Of course there are implementers at all levels. Some just might be supervisors. People can always think of ways to beat you if they want to. For example, "Sir, I'm going to need more overtime." Or, "Sir, it's over in duplication." The staff is not there to serve the boss--it is clearly the other way round. Olin-Mathieson faced up to this when they recently came up with an organization chart that showed the president at the bottom of the chart.

There seems to be one certainty in the selection of people for management, and that is a feeling of uncertainty. We have come a long way from the methods used by the Chinese as late as the early 1900's in selecting civil service officials. These men were selected primarily on their ability to recite ancient Chinese classics and to compose original lyric poems. While this approach may seem somewhat absurd to us today, a look around the country tells us that some organizations rely on procedures and approaches which are almost as unusual.

In the last 50 years, arguments have been made for and against the generalist versus the specialist or the technical versus the administrative manager. Some companies have had a hard time making up their minds. One large, electrical equipment manufacturer went from the generalist to the specialist approach and now finds that around 60 or 70% of its "division on up" people have technical backgrounds. They are now trying to reverse this trend. Today there seems to be a slight switchback to multifunctional or even multicompany experience as a way of developing managers. Of course, we still have to rely on specialists. Our society has never before been so highly dependent upon specialization. But specialists as managers seem to have a difficult time

in being permissive and in getting the job done through the efforts of others versus being an individual contributor. Personally, I do not mind the specialist thinking that he possesses unique abilities that others lack as long as it does not get in the way of him doing a good job.

There is no road map to successfully guide us in the selection of manage at all levels. There are several notions that should be dispelled, however, that have hampered us in the past:

1. The notion that there should be a specific style of management. We've got to work harder to do away with the "organization man" concept. All kinds of people can and do make successful managers. There is no specific background, manner, or bearing that is likely to result in more successful performance. Whenever you hear of someone looking for a particular type of manager, you will find that the type probably complies with the boss's idea of management material rather than with what job experience has found to be needed. Success as a manager is not all a matter of personality. A person will be successful in life because of what he knows not because of a pleasing personality. When you know something, you have the necessary conviction that allows you to step out, and the personality comes as a by-product of this. People will not follow you because of you; people will follow because of what you can do for them.

2. The notion that growth is an arithmetical process. Some people have the feeling that the number of years on the job determines how much an individual knows. The number of years does not necessarily indicate that a person has "grown on the job." The axiom "1 year of experience 20 times" still holds true today.

3. The notion that wisdom can be told. Wisdom has to be learned. And this means that, in order to grow, a person has to gain experience by doing the job. Even then, we have to recognize that it will be necessary to take risks if there is to be growth. You will never have "all the facts."

4. The notion that a "label" helps a man to grow. Saying that he is a "ball of fire" or "lacks initiative" impedes growth. People can and do change. Assess what the man has done and is doing now. Be willing to change your evaluation.

5. The notion that decision making is a wholly rational process. Sometimes it is impossible to explain the basis for some of your best decisions. Intuitive feelings about things should not be discouraged, if a man has been successful and has made the right decisions in the past. Intuition is probably the result of all of one's past experience, and it should be a valuable basis for decision making.

So, we can describe what there is about certain managers that makes them successful, and we can discuss some of the things which impede the growth of those who may, in fact, have the desire to be successful. But there are no cook book solutions or easy prescriptions available to those who have the desire to change their ways of operating and to become something which they are not now. This is another problem altogether and is very complex. You cannot give people ready-made answers to the problems of life, but you can give them a broad, basic philosophy on which they can draw in order to come up with the answers to almost anything. People who go through

life looking for the $1 + 1 = 2$ answer will never be completely effective. Such rules of behavior leave very little to the intelligence of the individual.

All that can be said is that, in order to change, one must want to change and that one must recognize that developing into a successful manager is not a terminal process. It is not something which you do and forget about but, rather, something which must go on forever. In trying to change your own behavior or that of others, you are faced with a task that demands that you work at it long and hard.

On any Sunday, in any church, the minister in 30 minutes can tell you how to get ahead in this world. Nevertheless, just a very few of us actually make it.