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**THE
EFFICIENT
EXECUTIVE**

BOOKS BY AUREN URIS

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL LEADER

WORKING WITH PEOPLE

IMPROVED FOREMANSHIP

DEVELOPING YOUR EXECUTIVE SKILLS

THE EFFICIENT EXECUTIVE

**THE
EFFICIENT
EXECUTIVE**

AUREN URIS

McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY, INC.
NEW YORK TORONTO LONDON

THE EFFICIENT EXECUTIVE

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PREFACE

The breath of change is blowing through executive offices. Depending on who is sitting at the desk, the breeze will chill or invigorate.

Old methods are marching toward obsolescence at a faster pace than ever before. Even more unsettling, yesterday's standards no longer tell us what we want to know: judged by old standards, Executive A seems to be turning in a perfectly adequate job. But "He isn't getting results," his boss will tell you.

The executive's job, in content, direction, and quality, is parting from the past with avalanche-like abruptness.

The signs of change appear in many ways:

"What we look for in executives these days," the personnel head of one of the large metal producers told me during a visit to the Pittsburgh home office, "is often completely different from previous requirements. For example, we are setting up a new \$70,000,000 processing plant. Fifteen years ago the plant manager would have been selected on the basis of his ability to turn out goods. Today that executive's primary responsibility will be community relations."

Talk to men engaged in management development or the hiring of managers and they tell you of old yardsticks being discarded. And the new ones often bear little resemblance to those of the past: the qualities measured are different; the relative importance of specific executive skills has shifted.

EXECUTIVE PROBLEMS, NEW STYLE

A change has taken place in the production methods of a record manufacturing concern. On one floor you see a department head

running a hundred-man department with a hundred molding presses turning out 18,000 discs an hour.

But a new department on another floor operates differently. Sixteen automatic molding machines operated by four employees turn out many times the number of records put out in the old department.

Contrast the changed responsibilities of the heads of the old versus the new:

The supervisor of the old-line department must deal with one hundred employees and keep one hundred machines of simple design operative.

The production executive in charge of the new department has the same job elements. But there will clearly be a difference in dealing with a select group of four than with a one-hundred-man group.

Compare the consequences of a faulty decision or an operating misstep. A problem with one employee conceivably might knock out 25 per cent of the department's output. And consider the value of the equipment. One of the new injection presses is worth ten to fifteen times one of the old compression machines. Breakdown of a single machine means a production nosedive.

QUEST FOR EFFICIENCY

The basic problem you face is maintenance of efficiency in the face of change. Yesterday's outlook must be tempered by new insights and information. Your new goals must be—

- Efficiency without the rigidity that hampers initiative and imagination;
- Efficiency that includes the search for the new and the more effective way with due regard for human values;
- Efficiency that requires no sacrifice of job satisfaction;
- Efficiency that adds interest and challenge to the executive job.

To the query "How do I adapt?" the answer for the manager lies in two related ideas:

1. *Reexamination of purpose.* You have to probe the question

of objectives. Has there been any basic change, for example, in your goals of executive action? Tools of analysis and evaluation are required to answer the question effectively.

2. *Search for new methods.* We need better ways of accomplishing standard tasks and imaginative ways to achieve unfamiliar tasks. Action tools, workable ideas must be found to satisfy the material needs of efficiency.

APPLIED DESIGN

This book has been designed to provide help in both areas. Note, for example, how the four major divisions of the Table of Contents represent a new view of executive activity.

Glance through the chapter headings. Both the telescopic and microscopic view of the executive's job are represented. Such chapters as "Your Relationships Up the Ladder" and the three chapters on dealing with subordinates (Chapters 16-18) take the broad view. "The Science of Wastebasketry," "How to Dictate a Letter," "Post-planning Techniques" put a sharp focus on the details of your job that are frequently time-traps of inefficiency and cause of failure.

To increase the helpfulness and practicality of the book, specific tools—self-rating quizzes, checklists, charts, and diagrams—have been devised.

An inefficient book on efficiency would obviously be suspect. To avoid this contradiction, the physical presentation of the material—the use of headings, subheads, numbers, for example—has been planned for maximum memorability and reading ease.

The author's belief in the importance of the efficiency concept stems from a general observation of our world in our time. Efficiency for the executive is both a goal and a symbol—a goal for the individual capable of accepting an occupational challenge of the first order; and a symbol of the strength and potential of today's shield of democracy, an expertly managed economy.

Auren Uris

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"A book is as good as an author's friends can make it," says one member of the writing profession. Certainly, the assistance of my friends and colleagues accounts for much of the wealth of ideas that may have been successfully conveyed in the pages that follow.

Too, the ready cooperation of many individuals whom I have not had the good fortune to meet personally—experts in fields of knowledge related directly or indirectly to management—deserves recognition and my heartfelt thanks. Their contributions have been acknowledged at their points of appearance in the text.

Let me begin naming names by avowing my gratitude first to Aaron Levenstein, editor-in-chief of the Research Institute of America's management development program. His contribution lies both in much of the virtue this book may possess, but even more, in the continually widening personal horizons my association with him through the years has helped bring about.

To these RIA colleagues: Arthur Barron, Phyllis Brown, Ruth Burger, Raymond Concannon, Robert Dobbins, Dr. Mortimer Feinberg, Richard Halpern, Karin Klepper, William Shepherd, and Helen Willyoung. For help in preparing the manuscript, Roberta Glick, Jean Clausen, and Agnes Wootton. For library assistance, Carrie Hirtz, Lisa Caplan, and Betty Jane Barlow. To Matthew J. Murphy, editor, Lewis K. Uiquhart, managing editor, and Lester R. Bittel, industrial management editor, *Factory Management and Maintenance*; to M. Joseph Dooher, executive editor of *Dun's Review and Modern Industry*, for their expert editorial guidance. To the editors and publishers of *Factory Management and Maintenance*, *Petroleum Refiner*, and *Dun's Review and Modern Industry*, my thanks for permission to use, in somewhat revised form, material of mine appearing in the pages of their publications.

Finally, an acknowledgment of debt to the many more people and organizations who, by their own creativity and productiveness, provided research and background materials to which any and all subsequent work must clearly stand in debt.

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PART 1

**CONCEPT
OF THE EFFICIENT
EXECUTIVE**

THE MAHOGANY MAN

"I wish I had a shorter name!"

That was President Eisenhower's wry reaction to a wrist-deep pile of papers awaiting his signature. Like every executive, the Chief Executive of the land was aware of the pressure for efficiency—the need to get more work done in less time.

The President's offhand jest is a perfectly sound solution, as any time-study man will agree. No question but that precious minutes could be saved by lopping a few letters from his name. Yet practical considerations obviously make this impossible.

And there you have one of the frustrating obstacles to the problem of increased efficiency. You could, in a few minutes' time—there's no doubt of this at all—list dozens of moves that would increase your efficiency in the performance of your job. But most of them would have to be dismissed as not worth the effort to apply.

The search for efficiency—the better method, the less time-consuming procedure—must spring from a less superficial starting point than the top of the head.

THE ROOTS OF EFFICIENCY

Few executives need to have the importance of efficiency pointed out to them by their superiors, though this may not be true of employees down the line. Generally, your alertness to the need for greater efficiency is self-generated.

Your drive for efficiency is not imposed on you by others. No "efficiency expert" stands at your elbow, shaking his head in dis-

approval and exclaiming gently, "Tch-tch-tch, Mr. Smith, we really must get on with it."

You want yourself to be more efficient. You have good reason. Justice Louis D. Brandeis summed it up this way:

"The world's demand for efficiency is so great and the supply so small that the price of efficiency is high in every field of human activity."

Yes, the search for efficiency can be taken as a sign of your desire to perform the executive job with distinction. The fact that the efficient executive may reap consequent rewards—in terms of higher pay, advancement, or prestige—merely adds further motivation.

The nature of the executive job itself suggests the need for streamlined action.

REWARDS OF EFFICIENCY

Your efficiency, or inefficiency, is compounded. The executive who lags creates a traffic tie-up in his wake. The one who zips right along encourages fast movement among his subordinates and the countless others whom his actions affect.

Executive responsibility is flexible. Few executive positions have sharply defined limits. The blurred property lines that mark off your bailiwick may represent points of opportunity—for your growth and increased responsibility. But in most cases the job expands only as you increase your capacity to do it.

Carrying the irreducible minimum can be backbreaking. No one will ever tell you that the executive's job is a lead-pipe cinch. If ulcers could talk, they'd argue the opposite view eloquently. You have a negative incentive. The executive who attempts to cope with his chores inefficiently frequently does so at a cost of poor performance and ruined health.

They're changing the rules on you. The executive who isn't on top of his job is likely to be steam-rollered underneath it. Organizational and general business changes shift job pressures. The executive who is busy trying to catch up with last month's tasks is likely to be caught embarrassingly exposed by a sudden shift in primary emphasis. How can a production executive, for example, deep in

the problems of meeting past-deadline quotas, enter clearheadedly into a discussion of expanded needs for the next quarter?

Factors leading to such shifts are growing stronger in our economy. A rising rate of technological advancement—call it automation, mechanization, or what you will—expansions and declines in specific consumer fields, new products and services—each has implications for and impact on your job.

You don't have to go further than your newspaper for the signs of our changing times. The words you are reading now were written on May 21, 1956. That morning's *New York Times*' headlines read like a fanfare to the future:

"Airborne H-Bomb Exploded by U.S. over Pacific Isle; Blast Believed Record." Our continuing research in the military applications of atomics has its inevitable counterpart in the industrial and business field.

"Air Force Calls Army Nike Unfit to Guard Nation." Here two branches of our military are in a dispute over a weapon of the future, part of a guided-missiles crash program that will have important implications for civilian transportation, both freight and passenger, in the next decade.

"Scientists Vision New Civilization for 21st Century." The article by Robert K. Plumb starts off like this:

Man is standing at the gateway to a new era of civilization.

In the next hundred years the earth's population will multiply at least two to four times. . . . There will be no shortage of minerals, meals or metals. Machine civilization will spread over the earth and it can provide for all from the most common substances; air, sea water, ordinary rocks, and sunlight.

As most executives know, the tremors of these developments are already being felt. It's too much to expect that, in a world erupting in change like a kid with hives, the old-fashioned executive, secure in his mahogany fortress, will remain untouched.

The price of survival, in the average case, will be the efficient organization and practice of the executive job. By a welcome coincidence, the same activity leads us to positive achievement and its rewards.

FAILURE OF THE OBVIOUS

Keep in mind that logic is not necessarily the best guide down the road to efficiency: the logical or “common-sense” approach frequently leads down a dead end.

Just take the situation of the typical overburdened executive. His mail piles up; his subordinates start queuing up in front of his door, each with an important matter requiring his attention; the bank of phones sound off first singly, then in complicated organlike chords, as the phone users go to work on him.

The harassed executive, coming up briefly for air, decides the logical solution is to dig in with greater energy. He comes in earlier, leaves later. He buys a second briefcase. His lunch hours are no longer for eating, but merely for swallowing, as he works right through.

Maybe he does, maybe he doesn't, succeed in seeing daylight. But a thought that hasn't entered his head may be a much sounder solution. Perhaps he should *cut* his hours. Instead of going from eight to twelve, he might try going from eight hours to six.

Suicidal? Not at all. Not if what he needs, basically, is a more accurate idea of the matters he *must* handle, as differentiated from those he should delegate. A restriction of his time would *force* him to stop fooling around with a lot of stuff that could be handled just as well, or possibly even better, by subordinates.

THE SHORTEST ROAD TO EFFICIENCY

For you personally, achieving greater efficiency must be a unique undertaking. Your approach may not work for another executive; his approach may not fit your needs at all.

The requirements of your job, of your temperament, even the personality of your superior, demand a tailor-made solution. That's why you'll find, in the chapters ahead, a host of ideas that add up basically to a flexible tool that you can fit to your own hand.

In very few cases will you find simple directives of the “you should do this or that” variety. There are all too few valid universal rules in this area. Studies of executive success and failure indicate

that, for the executive on the move, a personal formula is the surest answer.

The personal solution to the problem of efficiency is frequently unorthodox. It may not consist, for example, of doing the "right" thing in the "right" way.

We all know that good communications are a necessary adjunct to good performance. Yet the plain fact is that, in many cases, your most immediate need, in order to function efficiently in a given situation, will be to *isolate* yourself. That's why you'll find Chapter 8 devoted to a discussion of the situations and methods that make a severing of communications possible, without loss of executive control.

Throughout this book you will find the same emphasis on the realistic rather than the "correct" approach. Your job life is complex. A tendency to simplify the difficulties that confront you leads to an oversimplification of solutions, the pat answer that will seldom work.

THE "SCIENCE OF YOU"

That's why you'll be given the opportunity to study yourself—your own needs, your own capabilities, your own job. That's why you'll find many self-appraisal tests and self-analysis instruments provided. The facts and findings revealed by these are, in effect, your directional road signs.

The knowledge and insights gained from these devices can be fed right back into the hopper, turned to immediate advantage in your job.

In short, you'll find reflected in the pages ahead the view that your job is a laboratory, where pretested ideas can replace the high cost of trial and error. By applying the suggestions, you can change your problems into opportunities, become a more efficient executive in the most rewarding sense of the term.

Let's start the quest for efficiency at the logical beginning, your own job.

“What are you doing?”

That’s the probe that a well-intentioned but misguided top executive devised as a quick test of his executive staff. His assumption was simple: ask that question of an executive at work at his desk, and the answer will indicate whether he’s aware of the *purpose*, the *objectives* of his job, or whether he’s a nose-to-the-grindstone type of individual.

The test got nowhere. The hoped-for “intelligent” responses, such as, “I’m trying to expand our Western sales,” or “I’m developing a new approach to increased utilization of company assets,” didn’t materialize. Instead, he got:

“ . . . setting up a golf date with Brown, so we can discuss the ABC delivery schedule.”

“ . . . straightening out that hassle between the shift foremen in Building B.”

And, as you’d expect:

“I’m putting a stamp on an envelope. Can I do something for you?”

SELF-ORIENTATION

The naïve and blundering attempt described above does, however, touch on an important key to your over-all efficiency. The executive’s *approach* was wrong, but his *purpose* wasn’t. The fact is, the manager who understands “what he’s doing” in the broad sense, and who can state “why he’s there,” will inevitably do a more effective job.

Our limitations as human beings bar us from a constant awareness of objectives. In order to cope with a task we must concentrate on its minute-by-minute demands.

The typical executive, caught up in his endless paper shuffling and the continual exchange of information and ideas with colleagues, may be unable, on the spur of the moment, to tell you the relationship of his routine activities to his essential targets.

Self-orientation, knowing "why you're there," demands an understanding of the broad areas of executive activity. Until recently, no practical approach existed that served this end.

Of course, there have been many breakdowns of the executive job: *plan, organize, coordinate, direct, control*, for example. But this kind of *functional* breakdown brings with it little insight leading to improved performance.

The trouble is, you must start asking an entire string of new questions: What is the relationship between the five elements? Is one more important than the other? And, most critical: What implications does this analysis have for me in my job?

The answers to these queries, unfortunately, are no easier to come by than a similar list you could work up for the "unsimplified" concept, *executive activity*.

Members of the staff of the Research Institute of America set out to supply a new view of executive activity. Preliminary ideas were tested and refined with the help of dozens of executives at all levels in a variety of companies.

The final result provides a foundation on which to build a new and useful understanding of your job.

EXECUTIVE ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

Here's your chance to take a sharp look at your day-to-day activities in a fresh light—to uncover imbalances, contradictions, unseen facets.

Heart of the idea is a three-way breakdown of managerial activity:

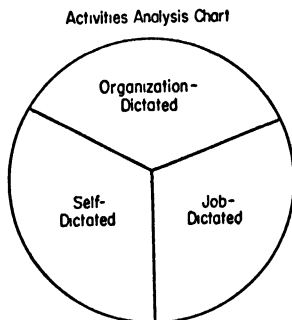
Organization-dictated. These are the activities that stem from the needs of your company as an organization. They include the

tasks you perform as a member of the management group. Many of them are due to the fact that you have to work with higher-ranking executives or other department heads.

Job-dictated. These are the immediate responsibilities dictated by the need for getting out the work of your department or unit. In this area you have more independence than in the first area.

Self-dictated. This category covers those tasks you voluntarily undertake in order to satisfy your personal ambitions for increased status, higher earnings, ego satisfaction—in short, for personal advancement.

Here's a representation of the approach in visual terms:



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Executives who tested the approach agreed that all their activities could be classified under the three headings. The accompanying chart diagrams the whole job.

"The value of this approach," said the manager of a firm that manufactures electronic parts, "is that it raises such questions as: what are the most important parts of my job? how do they fit into the whole? When I started to put the jigsaw together, I learned a great deal about my job, job relations, and what was expected of me. Most of all, I was surprised at the big holes in my work—things I was omitting."

Incompleteness of this nature, of course, represents a major inefficiency.

CHARTING YOUR OWN JOB

You can use the three-way analysis to get a fresh view of your own job activity. For example, it took only a few minutes for the personnel director of a petroleum refinery to provide this breakdown of his job:

ORGANIZATION-DICTATED	JOB-DICTATED	SELF-DICTATED
Conferences with other management personnel	Planning work of the personnel department	Studying work of a sales department that's due for expansion and that may need more executives
Carrying out orders of superior	Handling administrative details in hiring	Keeping up on literature in personnel field and in executive training
Arranging for better interdepartmental communications	Setting up department procedures	Work in Personnel Club
	Supervising subordinates	

The vice-president of a public utility company came up with a rather interesting list of his *Self-dictated* activities. He included:

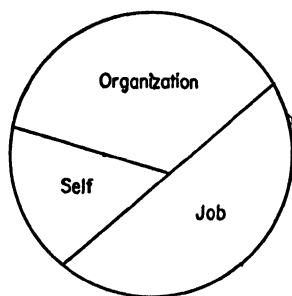
- self-development, keeping up with business developments and new trends like automation;
- looking for opportunities to elevate the position of the company in the industry, through participation in industry committees;
- activities in civic, local, and national organizations.

QUESTION OF EMPHASIS

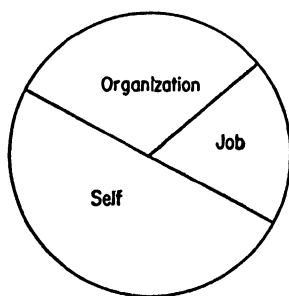
You can't distribute your time and energy among the three areas on a set arithmetical basis. The reason is, you can't attach permanent values to different parts of your work. But it's possible to determine a desirable proportion that will hold for a given period.

A number of executives, after preparing their Activities Analyses,

were asked to draw rough diagrams of the relative emphasis they were giving each of the categories. Here are two examples:



Executive A



Executive B

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Executive A is a branch manager in a pharmaceutical company. The most noteworthy feature in his activity distribution is the comparatively small slice devoted to his personal satisfactions and his needs for advancement. He summed up his situation this way: "I see now I've been overloaded in my *Organization-* and *Job-*dictated activities. The result is that I'm not really prepared for any step upward."

On the other hand, Executive B, who is associated with a food-processing company, was forced to this conclusion by his diagram: "I can see what's been happening. I like to work on research and product application. You see, I was a technician before I was promoted. I've been satisfying the parts of my job that are *Self-*dictated, but in the other two areas I've just been keeping things moving on a 'get-by' level."

IS THERE A "PROPER" BALANCE?

There is no objective formula that can give you the answer. The ratio that would mean efficiency for one executive might prove all wrong for another. The right allocation among the three areas depends on your personal needs, the nature of your job, the kind of company you work in, the associates with whom you deal, etc.

Even then, the balance will have to change as circumstances

alter. In a given situation, company interests controlling your *Organization-dictated* activities may override your *Job-dictated* activities.

Analysis of your activity distribution, however, may help to reveal, as it did for Executive A, that you are in a rut, dominated by the day-to-day pressures of your job. Like Executive B, you may be able to recognize that you are dangerously close to becoming a "grandstander."

OVER-ALL BALANCE

Some of our test group of executives were asked for their views on constantly revising the balance. Here are typical answers:

A paint company executive: "Seasonal factors play a great part. Near the end of the fiscal and calendar years, the *Organization-dictated* area claims a greater share of my activity." During a "normal" period, he thinks his activities are distributed this way:

Organization-dictated, 20 per cent
Job-dictated, 40 to 50 per cent
Self-dictated, 30 to 40 per cent

Office manager in an insurance company: "I suddenly realized that my company's increased interest in eliminating hand operations in favor of more machine handling meant that I had to dig much deeper into my departmental operations if I wanted to be an active participant in the changeover."

OBSTACLES TO EFFICIENCY

Some of the executives mentioned obstacles they had encountered in trying to achieve a better balance:

"Top management sometimes makes unreasonable demands in the area of *Organization-dictated* activities, to the detriment of the others."

"Executives strike a bad balance sometimes because they *don't* know which part of their job is most important. The ignorance may be due to the fact that information is withheld; sometimes it's due to bad judgment."

"Inadequate contact with one's superior or colleagues results in lack of perspective."

"The biggest hazard, I'd say, is to let the job run you, instead of vice versa."

Deriving benefits from your analysis is essentially a matter of asking yourself a series of *obvious questions* and compelling yourself to make *specific answers*. For example:

Am I giving enough time to *Organization-dictated* duties so that I'm making the greatest possible contribution to the company.

Am I devoting too much energy to company-wide duties so that I'm making a poor over-all showing?

Am I overdoing the *Self-dictated* activities so that I'm out of step with the rest of the management team?

Bear in mind the fact that reaching the right balance is more than a process of cold logic and evaluation. Here's how one very successful vice-president in charge of operations in a lumber company summed it up:

"I think a person must play it by ear. I doubt if someone coming into my job would make the same balance I do. I know that I differ widely from my predecessor. For example, he used to sign all checks; now my office manager does that. He used to order all plant material; my plant superintendent now handles orders. What do I do with this released time? I spend the time on new *Self-dictated* activities. I think the company is better off. I know I am."

The underlying thought in this statement is that you have to work out for yourself the best ratio among the three areas. But fortunately, you don't quite have to "play it by ear." There are some guides that assist materially:

How new is your job? If you've recently been appointed to your present position, that fact suggests that your *Job-dictated* duties should get major emphasis. That's the area where the costliest lapses are likely to develop, where you're likely to stand or fall by immediate results.

How high up the ladder are you? The president of a small appliance company, a member of the Institute's test group, made the

point: "At my level, *Organization-dictated* activity tends to pervade the whole picture." And it's true that as you go up the ladder, the more attention the *Organization-dictated* segment requires, and the less important the other two elements are likely to become.

What's your past record? The divisional manager of a multiplant chemical operation told us: "What you have done in the past determines the amount of time you must allot to the *Organization-dictated* area. In most instances, the home office keeps out of your hair as long as you've been a good boy, i.e., get reports in on time and complete, handle the Sales Department's problem with a minimum amount of gripes on their part, and so on. However, once the home office people have to ride your tail to get the things they want, they'll hound you to death. If that happens, you may spend 75 per cent of your time on *Organization-dictated* activities. I say, keep the front office people happy, and you can save yourself a lot of time and effort, and work out a really efficient distribution of your effort."

DANGER: LIVE WIRE!

One hazard to avoid is the idea that the way to get ahead is to put heavy emphasis on the *Self-dictated* activities, and maintain the other two areas at a get-by level.

That shortsighted view overlooks the simple fact that generally you are judged on the basis of your *total* job performance. You can undoubtedly supply examples from your own experience, in which executives who have moved rapidly up the ladder scored by doing outstandingly well in *Organization-* or *Job-dictated* areas, *apparently* to the neglect of the *Self-dictated* segment.

Remember also that the three areas are *not* rigidly separated one from the other. On the contrary, they tend to overlap and blend, one into the other.

DEVELOPING THE AREAS

To implement the Activities Analysis approach, you will find the chapters ahead divided according to the three-way breakdown. Each chapter takes up an aspect of your activity that is of general

importance. Yet, in your own case, you'll find these sub-areas of varying significance.

It's at this point, if you haven't already done so, that you may want to take pencil in hand and break down your own job as was done by the personnel director on page 11.

Or you may make this judgment by referring mentally to the responsibilities and situations that exist for you in your present position, as you read from chapter to chapter. The more pertinent the subject matter of a given chapter is for your needs, the greater becomes its potential contribution to your over-all efficiency.

GETTING RID OF THE RULE BOOK

A knot, an egg, a steamboat, each in its own way and in its time has demonstrated the merit of breaking through the shackles of the "right and proper way":

Knot. Back in the fourth century B.C. an oracle declared that whoever succeeded in untying the knot of cornel bark that bound the yoke of King Gordius' chariot to the pole should reign over all of Asia. Many men tried and failed. Alexander the Great didn't fiddle. He cut the knot by a stroke of his sword.

Egg. That's the one Columbus stood on end, by gently cracking the shell. He proved that a new approach could indeed bring about "the impossible."

Steamboat. The *Clermont* was its name, and the skeptics were sure the smokestack would never replace the sail. But Robert Fulton's brainchild did indeed go places—and hasn't stopped yet.

STRAITJACKET OF THE CLOSED MIND

"You can't do that!"

Every age, continent, nation, city, home, and office has echoed to the shouts of the nay-sayers. Every situation that must be dealt with finds them twittering with concern, lest "the rules" be violated.

To their credit, it should be said that habit and decorum are on their side; frequently, however, success isn't.

In your quest for the efficient way, you may have to do what's described as tossing the rule book out the window. But more is

involved than that airy phrase intimates. Your problem, actually, is to know:

When: Under what conditions you should start looking for the unorthodox method.

How: In order to avoid hitting anybody on the head with the rule book as it falls and, of course, to keep from getting smacked yourself.

The need for a fresh eye in the quest for effectiveness has already been touched on (page 3). But the idea is important enough to warrant further attention. There's more to be said about the possibilities of the unconventional approach.

WHEN TO KICK OVER THE TRACES

Two occasions suggest that it's time for you to put aside the "tried and true":

When going by the rules gets you nowhere. The executive who talks himself blue in the face to maintain "good relations" with a recalcitrant subordinate, but fails to get the desired response, realizes he may have to create "bad relations" in order to crack the barrier.

When you want outstanding results. In many instances, the "right way" will work out adequately. But you may require something more. For example, a controller who writes his own credit letters knows that, by following his usual low-pressure tactics, he'll get a 25 per cent return. But the company needs every cent it can get that month. He sends off individual letters, addressed to the check writers at the other end, whose names he gets from Sales. He doubles his previous best record for collections.

HOW TO AVOID KICKBACKS

Don't be confused on one point. We're not counseling the panicky move that an individual tries because all else has failed, and he'd rather do something than nothing. The executive who comes to the pass where he'll "try anything" is not one to be emulated.

The executive who resorts to the unorthodox *in extremis* is the

man who has failed to attempt the unusual as a considered step. Suggested here is the use of the unorthodox solution as a matter of calm choice.

Some interesting reasons explain why we hesitate to leave the straight and narrow:

We assume two different kinds of failure. In one, we followed the "sensible" method and did not make out; in the other, we attempted an unusual course of action and failed. Somehow, we feel the second type of failure is more culpable.

We all have a tendency toward the conventional. That's to be expected. We've gone to the same schools, absorbed more or less the same learning, and accepted the same social and ethical traditions. There's a strong pressure for conformity in every society, ours included.

We tend to think of "rule breaking" as wrong. And we fail to distinguish between "good rules"—those that protect—and "bad rules"—those that inhibit action *not* harmful, dangerous, or undesirable.

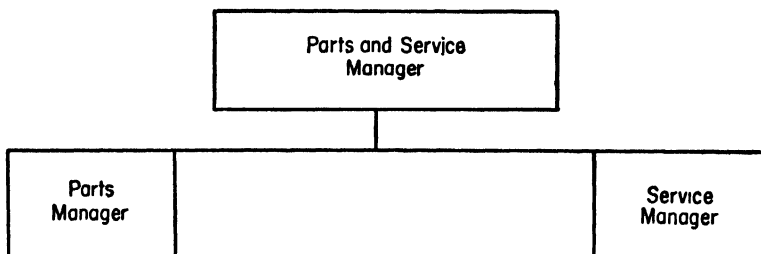
For example, the sign that says, "Speed limit, 60 miles per hour," is a good rule because it's for protection of the public. But the "rule" that you so often hear expressed as, "We've always handled it that way," preserves nothing but the mental laziness or unconscious bias of the speaker.

Some cases in point will illustrate the virtues of the fresh approach. Look what happens in the closely rule-bound areas of "Right" and "Wrong."

WHEN IT'S RIGHT TO BE WRONG

A West Coast automobile dealer was suffering from a knock in his organizational motor. Poor departmental relations between Parts and Service had resulted in unsatisfactory service to customers. The head of the Service Department claimed he couldn't get materials as and when wanted. The Parts Department manager felt that he was being asked to carry an impossible inventory: 15,000 parts are needed for just one model of car.

The dealer decided to change the organizational setup in a radical way. The old line of command had looked like this:



The dealer combined the operations and placed a *committee* consisting of three managers in charge. Each man got equal authority and responsibility for both operations. Here's how the organization shaped up under the new arrangement:



Few students of organization would recommend that a three-man committee assume responsibility for two heavy-duty departments such as Service and Parts. Just consider some of the obvious problems:

- an almost minute-to-minute need to make scheduling decisions in line with customer relations policy;
- the "three bosses" bogey faced by the people of both departments;
- vague individual responsibility among the triumvirate.

Nevertheless, the setup devised by the car dealer works well. The three-man team operates on a unified budget and bonus system. All Parts and Service accounting procedures are now integrated. Problems of operating policy are decided by the three men. Projects are tackled cooperatively. Past frictions and delays have been eliminated.

"Okay," you say, "how come?"

Good question. Let's answer it by asking two more:

Is it actually unsound? Don't assume that an unorthodox ap-

proach is necessarily unsound. The new arrangement, when reduced to principles, may be as logical as the more accepted method.

Is the result permanent? Even the law of gravity may be defeated, for a time. Occasionally a "wrong" solution will prove a fine temporary expedient, until factors submerged by the change reassert themselves. For example:

An astute sales manager, feeling that a change of some kind was necessary to jog his salesman into a new frame of mind, paired them off. For a month's time, one member of the team was "in charge" and the other reported to him. The salesman in charge acted as the boss, by questioning, suggesting, encouraging. At the end of the month, there was a complete rotation.

Obvious handicaps of the method meant eventual trouble. But for a few months the tremendous stimulation of the change paid off.

The implication here isn't that the unorthodox solution is at best a temporary solution. What is suggested is that when you apply an off-the-beaten-track method, it may require more careful watching and follow-through.

Now let's consider another instance where the normal or commonly accepted needs to be replaced by something uncommon but more appropriate.

WHEN IT'S WRONG TO BE RIGHT

Is it ever, you may ask? To be right is what most of us strive for in most of what we do.

Yet, there are times when being right amounts almost to an affront to others. Best example, of course, is the old "I-told-you-so" situation, in which the individual not only was right but takes up time and destroys tempers by reminding people of the fact.

The subordinate who has received the benefit of your good advice in arriving at a decision is a case in point. Despite all you've said, he goes in the opposite direction, and flops badly.

Irritation, injured pride, dismay at the loss possibly caused by the wrong move—all suggest that you remind the subordinate that you were right and he'd be, too, if he'd followed your advice.

But there are many other things you could be, and to better advantage, than "right." Possibly you could be sympathetic; or constructive, in telling him how to pick up the pieces; or encouraging, by minimizing his failure.

Realize, then, that the value of the unconventional approach includes even the basic concepts of "wrong" and "right": the "wrong" answer may work. You may forget about being right, and come out better in the end.

FALSE LOGIC

You'll often find that behind the unquestioned repetition of hackneyed approaches is a pseudo logic. What seems to be common sense doesn't meet the test of practicality.

Just consider this situation:

You're head of a warehousing section in your company. Your boss tells you: "John, we're facing a hectic month. Be prepared to handle fifty thousand cases."

His words couldn't be clearer. But should you do the common-sense thing, and act according to the literal meaning of your boss's words? Most people would, but let's see if there isn't a wiser course.

Fifty thousand cases, your boss has said. It would be a tight squeeze, but by arranging and rearranging, using every last inch, you know you could make it.

But let's say you had a brainstorm. You decided that you'd make preparations for sixty thousand cases. It would take even more effort, more careful planning. You'd have to bend yourself into a pretzel, but with ingenuity you'd manage. The extra effort would pay off:

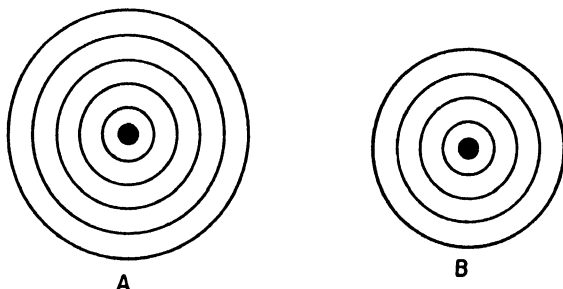
if the fifty thousand cases came in, you'd be able to accommodate them with ease.

if the boss has possibly underestimated. In this case you might find yourself in the pleasant situation of being able to say, when he came along with the sad news of an overage: "I'm all set."

PSYCHOLOGY'S ON YOUR SIDE

One of the principles involved in the example above has been studied by psychologists and laboratory-tested repeatedly. Results indicate that there's benefit in putting aside the "common-sense" rule that if you're shooting at a particular target, you should accustom yourself to hitting that target.

Here's the problem in visual terms. Suppose you have two targets:



Executive A practices with Target A.

Executive B practices with Target B.

Assuming the two executives are on a par to begin with, and they both practice the same amount of time, which one will turn in the better performance? Which one will improve his marksmanship sooner?

Psychologists tell us that Executive B will make a better score, right from the start. Prof. C. A. Mace, writing in *Occupational Psychology*, explains it this way:

In both cases, the purpose is to hit the bull's eye. But the size and number of the rings provide different frames of reference. The larger target has the effect of making "good enough" or a "near miss" much easier to achieve. Executive B, with a more difficult target to hit, must set himself a higher standard of performance. By doing so, it becomes comparatively easy for him to beat out Executive A.

OUT THE WINDOW WITH THE GREATEST OF EASE

Getting back to the figure of speech we've been using, throwing the rule book out the window, you know that some of us can make the toss easily, and others may find it a real struggle. The personality trait that determines where we fall between these extremes is *flexibility*.

The degree to which you possess this quality tells you how much or little effort you must exert in the situation where putting aside the ordinary for the extraordinary may be in order. The quiz below is designed to give you a rule-of-thumb answer.

HOW FLEXIBLE ARE YOU?

Answer the questions below as accurately as possible. Even if you're able to spot the "right answers," try to indicate what you would actually do in the situation described. You'll find scoring directions at the end of the quiz.

1. You're in a room with three or four other executives. They're all wearing gray flannel suits; yours is brown tweed. Your reaction if you noticed their garb at all, would be:
 - a. To smile to yourself at their conformity.
 - b. To suggest jokingly that at your next meeting they appear "out of uniform."
 - c. To feel uncomfortable at being incorrectly dressed.
 - d. To make a mental note to wear your gray flannel next time you are going to be in similar company.
2. Your office is to be moved to a different floor because of some structural changes being made in the building. Your feeling is likely to be:
 - a. Regret that you'll be leaving a place to which you've become accustomed.
 - b. "Fine! New surroundings will be a welcome change."
 - c. Interest in seeing that the new setup will be as good as the old.
3. You're in a conference called to decide whether or not the company should expand into a new field. Your probable course, all other things being equal, would be:

- a. To argue for the move.
 - b. To argue against the move.
 - c. To argue for the move on condition that a careful study indicates good chances for success.
4. Your boss calls you into his office. "Jack," he says, "I've been wanting to talk to you about your job, but I don't know just how or where to begin. Now I want you to ask me for a raise. I think that will trigger the things I have to say." Your move is to say:
 - a. "Boss, I'd like to have a boost of twenty dollars a week, retroactive to the first of the year."
 - b. "I couldn't, Boss. Let's wait until you can get going under your own steam."
 - c. "Boss, our relationship must be getting awfully weak if you can't come right out and tell me what you want to say."
5. Your boss calls you into his office. "Henry," he says, "let's go through our usual routine of discussing last week's problems. I'm not sure we're getting much benefit from this procedure, but I feel it's better than not doing anything at all." Your reply is:
 - a. "Sure, just as you wish . . .," and then you launch into the kind of monologue that has featured the sessions.
 - b. "Since we're not getting satisfactory results, why not change our approach? How about . . .," and you suggest a couple of alternative methods that you think might yield more information.
 - c. "If you feel it's a waste of time, why do it at all?"
6. A customer is on the phone, telling you he must have delivery on an order by the end of the week. You tell him you can't make the stuff up to the standard of quality he wants and still ship within the time limit he has set. He insists; you insist. Finally:
 - a. You tell him, "I'm sorry, Mr. White, but you're being unreasonable. No matter how much we'd like to, we just can't satisfy your request," and that's your final word.
 - b. You ask him whether he could use material of the lower quality that would result from a speeded-up process.
 - c. You say, "There is a possibility that we could get the work out on time, but it would mean running on a three-shift basis, and we're only set up for two. Would you be willing to pay the extra cost involved in our arranging a three-shift schedule?"

7. You've just got a new secretary. She's a good, capable girl who insists on dusting your desk every morning. The trouble is, she has her own ideas of how your desk equipment should be arranged: she puts your in-out box at the right instead of the left, puts your phone at the back of the desk, although you generally keep it toward the front, and so on. Would you:
 - a. Let her have her way.
 - b. Make it very clear that you have your personal preferences in the matter of desktop arrangement, and order her to place the items the way you've always kept them.
 - c. Ask her why she feels her arrangement is better than the one you've been using.
8. You've made it a practice to have lunch with one of your colleagues every Tuesday. He calls you in the morning to say he can't make it. Which would be your likeliest move:
 - a. Phone another friend or acquaintance and try to set up another lunch date?
 - b. Feel quite disconcerted, go to lunch alone, and find yourself at loose ends for the entire hour?
 - c. Go to lunch alone and enjoy the unaccustomed pleasure of an hour's solitude?
9. You get out of bed one morning and see it's a little late; you shave, gulp breakfast, and dash off to the station. To your surprise you notice the platform is practically empty; then you realize it's Sunday morning. Would you:
 - a. Try to sneak back into bed without waking your wife, so that you could keep the incident a dark secret?
 - b. Feel the incident proves you're too deep in the rut, and cast about for some way of easing up?
 - c. Decide to go into town anyway, to clean up a couple of overdue matters at the office?

SCORING

First, realize that any one question by itself isn't too significant. Many of us can be flexible in some areas—matters of dress, personal working habits, for example, and inflexible in others—time schedules, and off-the-cuff reactions to abrupt changes.

However, a very high score in the quiz is probably a favorable in-

dication of your flexibility in general; a very low one is apt to be unfavorable. Rate yourself as follows:

Start by giving yourself a perfect score, 90 points. Then, *subtract ten points* for these “wrong answers”: 1 *c* or *d*; 2 *a*; 3 *b*; 4 *b*; 5 *a*; 6 *a*; 7 *b*; 8 *b*; 9 *a*.

Here's the rating scale:

70 to 90: You're as adaptable as a good boxer.

40 to 60: You tend to freeze a bit at the edges; ease up.

Below 40: A bit of rut-busting might do you a world of good.

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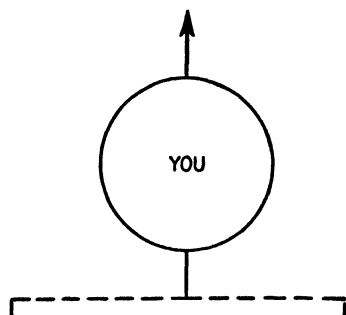
PART 2

YOUR

ORGANIZATION-DICTATED

ACTIVITIES

4

YOUR RELATIONSHIPS
UP THE LADDER

On your company's organization chart is a section that is near and dear to your heart. Whether it's up toward the apex or temporarily near the broad and populous base, you view it with fond eyes.

The part we're referring to, of course, is the circle that carries your name and title.

That little piece of diagram packs a revealing wallop, implying, as it does, that blocking your path upward is another circle bearing the name and title of your superior.

If you're overly aggressive, you may interpret that juxtaposition of circles as meaning that in order to take your next step up the ladder, someone (you're not naming names at this point) must go. But there's a more realistic view.

CEILING TO YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

Blair Nestor, of Wethersfield, Connecticut, has had years of experience consulting with and counseling executives. Recently, he

accepted a job with the responsibility for working with management personnel in a lighting fixture manufacturing firm of Meriden, Connecticut.

"It was clear to me," explained Nestor, "that my effectiveness in the new position would be directly proportional to my ability to establish satisfactory relations with my superior."

Blair Nestor's words may seem a statement of the obvious. Certainly your ability to get along with your superior is an important part of your job. But don't permit the simplicity of Nestor's statement to blind you to its profundity.

Consider, for example, the implications of the idea for your *Organization-dictated* activities. Isn't it a fact that the executive typically makes his contribution to his company largely through his superior?

"It's true and unfortunate," was the wry admission of an executive with whom the paragraph above was checked. The "unfortunate" part of the comment refers to the all-too-frequent failure of the executive to work out a relationship upward that permits him to function effectively.

WHY YOUR BOSS COUNTS

Many of us have emotional blindspots when it comes to our relationships with the man we work under. Freudian psychologists would have us believe that we see in our superior a father image, with resulting distortions that reflect our innermost sensitivities and insecurities toward authority.

But you don't have to be a Freudian psychologist to know that your superior, whether he's genial and generous or mean and scheming, is a factor in your effectiveness:

He decides what's efficient, and what isn't. "So you were able to make the consumer survey for \$5,000," your chief may say. "Fine. For the results you got, the job was worth twice that much." Of course, he might just as well have grumbled that your cost was 50 per cent out of line.

Your over-all performance is judged by his standards. You think you're doing an effective job, and feel you're making a big contribu-

tion to the company. But your boss's opinion of your achievement is a more meaningful measure of how you're doing.

He passes or rejects ideas, efforts, and so on, that represent your contribution to the management team. Management's version of exile to Siberia is the deep freeze from the top down—fortunately, seldom employed. It's the censor rule of a superior that may reduce an otherwise effective executive to complete impotence.

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH YOUR SUPERIOR

Executive after executive will tell you the same story: "It was Mr. Y (a previous superior) who . . . gave me my first break . . . taught me all I know . . . gave me a helping hand . . . put me where I am today."

Accept, then, the fact that your Organization-dictated activity must be channeled through your superior, and look for ways to improve the process.

In instances of a successful relationship, you'll generally find that certain conditions exist. Friendship and mutual respect? Yes, in practically every case. Points like those below can contribute to better understanding and accord.

1. Get the facts about his job methods, preferences, aversions. You're not being either prying or presumptuous, if you try to be informed on points like these:

1. HIS AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY:

- His title
- His boss
- His second-in-command
- His key subordinates

The departments (people, functions, and physical area) in his charge.

2. HIS INFORMATION NEEDS, SUCH AS REPORTS ON:

- Work progress
- Work problems
- Employee morale
- Emergency matters
- Suggestions and ideas

3. HIS PREFERENCE IN COMMUNICATION:

Phone
Face-to-face
With or without notice
Writing
Complete detail
Brief outline
Summaries attached to long reports

4. HIS STANDARDS OF EVALUATION, IN SUCH MATTERS AS:

Quality versus quantity
Observance of deadlines
Concern over details
Caution versus daring

II. Learn to use his background. Unless he is a boy genius fresh from college, or a member of The Family who moved up like lightning in the firm, your superior has a business past. He came up through Sales, Accounting, Production, Engineering, Personnel, or some other field.

The path he followed influences factors such as his present method of operating, the way he looks at and sees things, and the aggressiveness or caution with which he approaches problems.

Even if your boss is one of those who covered the field on his way up, getting experience in a number of areas, he's likely to favor or fit more naturally into one. So, the difference still exists.

The orientation that shaped your superior's present attitudes may show you:

- How to get his approval easily on projects you'd like to undertake. The ex-Chief Accountant might be more concerned with the cost and how it will show up on the books than another man would be.

- How to foresee his objections and be ready to answer them. From a man with a public relations background, you might expect some questions like, "What will the community think of this?"

- How to anticipate his needs in a given situation and be on hand with means to fill those needs. You can expect the erstwhile Labor Relations Director to raise questions about union relations.

- How to sell him an idea or influence him to make a change. If your boss is an engineer, you'll want to do your best to give all the technical data that his type of mind would naturally seek.

- How to understand and cope with his stand in an interdepartmental difference. The eternal conflict between Sales and Production may find your boss lined up more on one side than the other. But note: it could be just the opposite of what you expect. He might tend to lean over backwards to compensate for his past inclinations.

III. Learn as clearly as you can how he defines your areas of responsibility:

1. PERSONNEL:

Are you free to hire?

Free to fire?

Can you take disciplinary action?

2. PURCHASING:

Anything without his okay?

Up to a certain amount without his okay?

Particular items okay, or proscribed?

3. OPERATIONS:

Can you set work goals, quality standards?

Are you free to make priority decisions?

What are the physical and operational limits of your bailiwick?

WHEN TO CRY WOLF

You'll occasionally find yourself torn between the need to stand on your own feet, and the realization that sometimes you can't—or shouldn't.

Of course, situations differ, and so do bosses. But there are some objective signs that can help you spot the *kind* of problem you should take to him, and *how* to do it.

You're bound to be right in taking a matter to your superior when both these factors are present:

Serious consequences are involved for him.

You have exhausted all your potential for handling the problem.

The way you make the contact can be more important than the

subject you want to discuss. With the right approach, you're not likely to annoy your chief even if the problem doesn't clearly require his attention. Plan the encounter by reviewing questions like these beforehand:

Is the timing right? If you don't know when the boss will be free of pressures, check with his secretary or ask him.

How far has your thinking gone? At a minimum, you should be able to define the problem. It helps to be able to tell the cause even if you don't know the remedy. And your superior will appreciate any suggestions.

Why are you coming to him? It may be that the methods you see for attacking the problem involve decisions beyond your authority. Or you're stymied and know the boss's thinking can help.

What medium should you use? Sometimes a substantial memo is enough. More often, a well-prepared verbal presentation is the answer; even then, a written summary may help the telling.

Are others involved? The matter may concern an individual, or touch the responsibilities of fellow executives. Perhaps a colleague or a subordinate may be able to supply details or technical information that you're not expected to know. Check with them first.

TOTEM POLE TANTRUMS

The worst strain you can put on your own sanity is to assume that every business organization is a well-organized and logically guided entity.

Companies have had bad moments because top executives, being human, make unwise decisions, try a gamble that doesn't pay off, or are simply not up to their jobs. For similar reasons, companies—yes, even countries—have gone out of business.

It's important to understand the nature of organizational stasis. Your understanding of what should happen but doesn't, or what does happen but shouldn't, in the typical business firm can be refreshing information.

LEARN FROM A GREAT VICTORY

A Japanese naval officer can contribute to your view of inefficiency due to organizational pressures at upper levels.

The United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* for August, 1956, featured an absorbing description of the battle for Guadalcanal as seen through Japanese eyes. Titled "Japan's Losing Struggle for Guadalcanal,"¹ the account written by Vice Admiral Raizo Tanaka highlighted a summary of reasons that explained the outcome of the Guadalcanal struggle. As you read each italicized item, look for parallels in company organizational terms. For "Army-Navy coordination," for example, substitute "Production-Sales cooperation"; for "Underestimation of the enemy," try "Underestimation of competitors."

A simple statement of the facts makes it clear that the Japanese attempt to reinforce Guadalcanal ended in failure. The causes of this failure, however, are probably as diverse as the people who may offer them. From my position as commander of the Reinforcement Force I submit that our efforts were unsuccessful because of the following factors:

Command complications. At one and the same time I was subject to orders from Combined Fleet, Eleventh Air Fleet, and Eighth Fleet. This was confusing at best; and, when their orders were conflicting and incompatible, it was embarrassing at least, and utterly confounding at its worst.

Force composition. In almost every instance the reinforcement of Guadalcanal was attempted by forces hastily thrown together, without specially-trained crews, and without previous opportunity to practice or operate together. Various types of ships of widely varying capabilities were placed under my command one after the other, creating unimaginable difficulties and foreordaining the failure of their effort.

Inconsistent operation plans. There never was any consistent operation plan. Vessels, troops, and supplies were assembled piecemeal to suit the occasion of the moment without over-all long-range plan or purpose. This was a frailty our Army and Navy should have recognized soon after the outbreak of the China Incident. It was a fatal Japanese weakness that continued through the attempts to reinforce Guadalcanal and even after.

Communication failures. Our communication system was seldom good, and during the fall and winter of 1942 it was almost consistently

¹ Copyright 1956 by the U.S. Naval Institute.

terrible. In wide theaters of operations and under difficult battle situations, it is indispensable for a tactical commander to have perfect communication with his headquarters and with his subordinate units. The consequence of poor communications is failure.

Army-Navy coordination. This situation was generally unendurable. It did little good for the Army or the Navy to work out their own plans independently, no matter how well founded, if they were not coordinated. Time and time again in these operations their coordination left much to be desired.

Underestimation of the enemy. In belittling the fighting power of the enemy lay a basic cause of Japan's setback and defeat in every operation of the Pacific War. Enemy successes were deprecated and alibied in every instance. It was standard practice to inflate our own capabilities to the consequent underestimation of the enemy's. This was fine for the ego but poor for winning victories.

Inferiority in the air. Our ships, without strong air support, were employed in an attempt to recapture a tactical area where the enemy had aerial superiority. This recklessness resulted only in adding to our loss of ships and personnel.

The greatest pity was that every Japanese commander was aware of all these factors, yet no one seemed to do anything about any of them.

It was certainly regrettable that the Supreme Command did not profit or learn from repeated attempts to reinforce the island. In vain they expended valuable and scarce transports and the strength of at least one full division. I believe that Japan's operational and planning errors at Guadalcanal will stand forever as classic examples of how not to conduct a campaign.

WINNING THE BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL

As Admiral Tanaka's analysis indicates, skill, bravery, and understanding of the operational situation don't necessarily turn the tide when mighty imponderables are stacked against you.

Your efforts to work effectively through your organization—and remember, that means the activity you direct upward—must be open-eyed. If you find yourself fighting *against*, instead of *with*, the organization, stop—try to find out *why*. Consider these possibilities:

You're in the wrong. You're misdirecting your aggressiveness.

There has been a misunderstanding. A failure to grasp organizational objectives may have caused you to start off on the wrong foot.

Your relations with your superior are at fault. He has failed to communicate with you, or you've failed to comprehend what he's trying to say.

Trouble at the top. It's not likely, but if all other possibilities must be rejected, look into this one.

Final question: What do you do if the trouble is in the upper echelons? The Japanese Navy couldn't answer that one, but then, there's no tradition that says you must go down with your ship.

MAKING YOURSELF KNOWN IN YOUR ORGANIZATION: YOUR PERSONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

In 1952 the world of business laughed aloud at itself. With a mixture of delight, and mortification at the baring of supposedly concealed motives, the business executive had his risibilities brought to a rolling boil by a book entitled *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, by Shepherd Mead.

In chapter after chapter of witty satire, the executive on the make was given a devil's recipe for getting ahead. Here's a sample:

The after-hour planner will be careful to be in the office after hours *at the right times*.

If you hear, for example, that the boss is going to drop in to the office Saturday morning, if only to pick up his golf clubs, be there a half-hour ahead of him.

Roll up your sleeves, tousle your hair, and loosen your collar. Several empty paper coffee cartons and a few hundred cigarette butts will also help. (The cartons and butts can be kept in a drawer and used again.)

You will be noticed!

"Oh, working this morning, Finch?"

"Is it morning already, sir?"

"Great Scott, been here all night?"

"No, not *all* night! Just trying to clean up a few things. Shouldn't be here much longer."

(Avoid any hint of self-pity!)

"Oh, that's good."

"Is there any way I can get in tomorrow, sir? Just in case. The night watchman is very fussy."

Like all good satire, a mere hairbreadth separates the jest from reality. Many an executive, for example, owes his advancement to the fact that his superiors have recognized his diligence and devotion to job duties.

The only difference between the typical executive and Mr. Mead's Finch lies in the factor of motivation. The average executive tends to be honest and sincere. Finch is a gay scoundrel.

ANOTHER ROAD TO INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS IN THE COMPANY

The previous chapter makes the point that your boss is a key contact between you and the organization as a whole. There is another factor that influences the effectiveness of your relations to the company.

The operation of this factor is simple: the executive who is well-thought-of pulls more weight, his ideas go farther, he is more likely to be asked to participate.

The *acceptance* you receive from colleagues and other executives on a level with, or higher than, your own superior can make or break you. This acceptance is a function of your personal public relations in the company.

The present chapter is devoted to a discussion of how you should, and shouldn't, go about developing a reputation for yourself with your boss, your colleagues, and others in the organization.

It's a delicate undertaking. Consider some of the problems that arise:

Can one deal with the subject of reputation-building without, by implication at least, counseling exhibitionistic or show-off behavior?

Can the subject of your reputation in the company be treated without saying what kind of reputation you should try to develop?

Can one deal with the subject in generalities appropriate for two kinds of executives:

Those who simply have to *be encouraged to be themselves*, in order to make a good impression;

Those who *make an effort to dissemble* their natural tendencies in order to make a good impression?

ADDRESSEE UNKNOWN?

A package for Mr. Jonathan Jones is delivered to an information desk. "I'm not sure we have a Mr. Jonathan Jones here," the receptionist says, "Just a minute, I'll check."

Of course there's a Mr. Jonathan Jones on the payroll. But his public relations in the company are so undeveloped that he is a forgotten man.

Possibly the above is a hammed-up version of the facts. You'll seldom find a situation, or information clerk, quite that bad in real life.

What you do find is almost as bad. People doing important jobs, and doing them well, hide their light under a bushel of anonymity. If it weren't for the weekly paycheck coming around, there might be a doubt that they actually work on the premises.

You've seen the reverse situation. "Looking for Mr. Tom Thompson? Sure. Third office down the hall, door to the right." And the interesting thing is, everyone from the elevator boy to the president of the company can give those directions.

HOW TO BE POPULAR

Your aim, of course, is not popularity as such. The popularity that comes to the office funny man, for example, is not especially desirable to most of us.

Two elements must figure in your public relations thinking:
How do you want to look?

How do you go about publicizing the image of yourself?

In both cases the answers must be appropriate for you. Your personality is the best guide to the answers that make sense.

Finch to the contrary, nothing phony, however clever, is likely to be effective. After all, your brother executives, your boss, are in exactly the same boat that you are. They know the appeal of the grandstand play, the urge to idealize oneself for the purpose of self-glorification and confounding the competition.

The artificial gesture, the ulterior motive are as transparent to them as theirs would be to you.

Your public relations policy must be made of practical stuff, not of dreams and schemes but facts and acts.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO LOOK?

The answer to that question tips off its value. To get an honest reply, you must look at yourself with an analytical and objective eye.

Spotlight your strongest qualities? Certainly. But first you have to be able to see yourself almost as your colleagues see you. Robert Burns has been telling schoolboys and publicity agents for years:

O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion.

The lines are no less true because we mumbled them in our teens. Yes, the image we like to build of ourselves must have its basis in what we are. Shepherd Mead's lazy Finch, in our real world, isn't likely to be successful in putting himself over as an 80-hour-a-week man. The executive whose strong points are in the area of the bright idea, the inspired plan, would be unwise to attempt to build a reputation for himself as the Leonardo da Vinci of detail.

Your first move, then, is to decide which is your best foot to put forward. Perhaps this question will help:

On which of your assets do you want to base your main claim to fame?

Remember, this doesn't mean that you have only one asset. It only means that this is the aspect of your ability you want to highlight.

It's a searching question that it will pay you to answer, because the answer serves two functions: first, to give you a fresh view of yourself in your job; second, to suggest which face, of the several faces we all have, you'd like to turn to the public.

BEST FOOT FORWARD

Eventually, your answer may come to a single sentence, even a single word. Just to give you a starter, we asked several executives to sum up their strong points in a word or phrase. Their answers covered quite a range:

creative, an idea man
a "harmonizer"—builder of good will
well informed about company technical processes
dependable
clear thinker—problem solver
a man who knows how to get along with people
lady's man (we include this only for completeness of the record)

Now, if you're ready, add your own to the list. Having done that, you're in a position to consider the second part of the problem.

PUBLICIZING YOURSELF

You're doing it all the time. You do it when you appear before one or more of your colleagues, when you write an interoffice letter, when you speak up in a conference, sit down at a lunch table, attend a company picnic, or close your door to give one of your subordinates a calling down for due cause.

The difficulty lies in this conflict: you don't want to be under constant constraint; yet, if everything you do is a matter of public notice, must you watch every step you take, with one eye on your public?

Again, it's a conflict between the artificial and the forthright. You do what comes naturally, perhaps even more so. Most of us are governed more by modesty than by exhibitionism. Often, the problem is to let go and follow the course urged upon you by your impulses.

GETTING THE SPOTLIGHT

Here are the answers of two executives to the question: "How do you go about propagating the image of yourself before the public?"

The idea man. The division manager of a plastics manufacturing company described his approach this way: "Obviously, every execu-

tive has opportunities to sound off: in conferences, discussions, emergency situations. In my case, there are five managers of divisions about the same size as mine. They're all capable fellows, and you've really got to have something to offer to stand out in the crowd.

"I make it my business to concentrate as much as possible on operating problems we have in common. Whenever these come up for discussion, I make it a point to put my ideas before the group, describing them as clearly as possible, arguing for them as hard as I can. I can tell you, it takes extra effort to bone up on new ideas, to keep abreast of new developments in our field. But I feel the payoff, in terms of my acceptance in the company, has made it worthwhile."

The "harmonizer," good-will builder. This executive has acquired the reputation for being a good team man, at which he aimed. He described his reputation-objectives in these terms: "I have always felt I should have something unique to offer, something of special value in the way of aiding company progress.

"In whatever situation I find myself that's appropriate, I talk up the company, my department, my associates. I try to be positive, I point with pride to tasks well done, and to use a trite phrase, I give credit where it is due."

He makes this additional statement that clarifies his reputation-building activity even more:

"I try to create a balance. If someone is under attack, I do what I can to ease the pressure. For example, I'll make it a point to side with the weaker party in an argument. Now I know the so-called Open Door policy has been laughed out of management literature, but I want to say that I use it—for my associates. I've given many a steamed-up colleague a chance to blow off steam, and provided encouragement to the one who's downhearted."

FOR THE EXECUTIVE WITH A BAD FOOT

Consider this a footnote addressed to that rarity, the executive who has acquired an undesirable reputation in his company. In most instances, this state of affairs results from:

a single slip or incident
constant thrusting of one's worst foot forward

In either case, some honest stocktaking, as a result of the ideas in this chapter, may start a desirable transformation.

The basis for improvement lies in the fact that people react favorably to a reversal. Watch the next crowd at a sports event. They'll root for the underdog. If he starts winning, they'll switch and start cheering for his losing opponent.

We find drama in watching a bum become a hero—and, unfortunately, vice versa. In other words, efforts to improve a reputation among one's colleagues will generally be directed to a responsive audience.

They'll love you if you proceed

WITHOUT	WITH
antagonism	humility
artificiality	humor
backbiting	honesty
overreaching	

Some reputations are made—or destroyed—overnight. But in most cases, the image you set out to create acquires substance over a long period of time.

This ponderousness of movement can be discouraging, particularly where you have not succeeded in your reputation-building, or a mischance has created a reputation for you other than the one you favor.

If you're in such a position of discouragement, the story of some New Hampshire farmers may snap you out of it.

MIRACLE INGREDIENT

The cattle in this New Hampshire valley were stunted, prone to illness and early death. There were no known countermeasures. According to legend, Chief Chocorua of the Pequawket Indians had pronounced a curse on the cattle.

Well, the "Curse of Chocorua" recently has been licked. And the nature of the cure may perk up the executive who may have

decided he must live with his unsatisfactory public relations because the remedy is almost beyond his effort.

Scientists, casting legend aside, suspected the sick-cattle problem lay in a soil deficiency. After years of research, it was discovered that a lack of cobalt caused the trouble. Now, with just a trace of this element— $\frac{1}{2}$ part per million—in the feed, the New Hampshire cattle are as sturdy as any in the world.

The equivalent of the “trace of cobalt” to enhance you in the public eye may still remain to be discovered. But there should be lots of comfort in the idea that the cure may lie in a comparatively tiny dose of just the right ingredient.

HOW TO WRITE THE PERFECT MEMO

Mr. Auren Uris
Research Institute of America
589 Fifth Avenue
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Uris:

No desk-bound denizen of the business world escapes the necessity of writing—and reading—office memos.

Can you tell us how to write good ones?

Sincerely,
Al Reese

As Mr. Reese, editor of *Petroleum Refiner*, an oil-industry trade journal indicates, executives—in the oil business and out—are concerned with the need to do an effective job of intracompany communicating.

His request for a piece on writing memos was made despite the existence of dozens of fine articles, and several books, on the subject. The question persists: how *do* you write effective memos?

The executive who knows how gains advantages that derive from these facts:

Memos are a primary communication medium.

They help create the impression, for good or bad, that you make on your associates.

Your memos are another major means of integrating yourself and your efforts into the total activity of the company.

The one single fault to be found with even the best of the how-to pieces on the interoffice memo is this: the final result usually fails to reflect the personality of the writer.

Even the best set of rules describing a form to be followed is likely to turn out an artificial product if the form is unsuitable to the user.

Mr. Reese's query was answered; the article in the *Petroleum Refiner* containing the answer was widely reprinted. It offered no pat formula for writing interoffice memos. Rather, it told executives how to develop a personal formula.

INVESTMENT WITH A FUTURE

It's worth your while to make the small investment of time and effort needed to solve the memo-writing problem.

There's one point that ought to be made at the outset: memo writing is one activity where quantity doesn't necessarily mean quality. Take this case, for example:

Executive A never writes a memo to anybody about anything. Executive B's outbox is piled mountain high with correspondence aimed up and down the line.

Yet the second executive may be doing just as poor a job "putting himself across" with the receivers of his mail as the non-sender. In short, "doing it" isn't enough. It's doing it well that pays off.

WORKING OUT THE FORMULA

Here are the steps that lead you down the road to better memos, which will bring heartfelt thanks from all your correspondents, and the satisfaction of mastering an important management skill.

Gather a sample of interoffice memos you've received recently. If you like, ask your secretary to do it for you. If your correspondence is filed as it comes in, ask your secretary to accumulate the memos that come your way for the next few days. Anywhere from six to twenty pieces of correspondence will do the trick.

Separate the bad ones from the good ones. Go through the memos you've accumulated, dividing them into two piles. In one pile put all the memos that you feel are poorly written—those that for one reason or another you *don't* like, those that make difficult or dull reading. This is your "N.G." pile. Into the second pile go the "O.K." memos—those that you feel do the job for which they were intended.

Disregard content at this point. You may find, for example, that in one communication the boss has called you down. If you can admit, however grudgingly, that his memo is well written, it still goes into the O.K. pile.

Analyze the qualities that make for a poorly written memo. Go through the N.G. pile. You may find that some memos have qualities that are obviously undesirable. Verbosity, for example, is easy to spot. But of course, there are other possible drawbacks besides that of using a dozen words where one word will do. Keep on going through the group of memos and note on a sheet of paper each quality that you find objectionable.

One executive, after following this procedure, was able after fifteen minutes of analysis to come up with the following list of undesirable memo characteristics.

NO CLEAR IDEA OF MEMO PURPOSE. The item in which this characteristic was observed started off with a rambling discussion of the necessity for cutting costs. After six paragraphs of this, the writer then stated the memo purpose—an idea he had for revising an office procedure.

OVERLOAD OF BIG WORDS, AND STILTED PHRASES. "I am of the opinion that it is highly desirable to create an early liaison between sales and production on this vital matter. Ultimate considerations should be taken up," etc., etc.

UNATTRACTIVE HARD-TO-READ APPEARANCE. Two pages of single-spaced typing, all in one sentence.

NO PURPOSE, BUT AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE. The memo was really only an expedient for the writer who was expressing his gripes and complaints.

Spot the qualities that make for a well-written job. Proceed in the same manner to go through your O.K. pile. In some cases you may

not be able to decide off the cuff exactly why you find a particular memo easy or pleasant reading. You may have to do some thinking about the individual pieces.

Qualities of well-written memo. After you've gone through your O.K. correspondence, you may find a list of desirable qualities that looks something like this:

Early statement of purpose

Clear statement of purpose

Persuasive

Businesslike, to the point

Easy to read

Well organized

Don't start writing yet. Now that you're up to this point, you've completed more than half the job of developing your personal memo-writing formula. But hold on. You've still got a little distance to go before you can switch on the dictating machine and say, "Miss Smith, take an interoffice letter."

It's the how-to-do-it element that's still lacking.

By compiling a list of desirable memo qualities, you have a pretty good idea of the basic prerequisites. Now it's necessary to work out the implementation. You want to transfer the desirable memo characteristics to your own memo writing; avoid the bad ones.

BUILDING THE "PERFECT MEMO"

Some of the points are obvious. Now that you've indicated by your own reactions that it's desirable to have an "early statement of purpose" in an interoffice memo, there's little question as to how to accomplish this end.

But for the sake of completeness, let's go down the list item by item and work through the points involved.

Early statement of purpose. "Early" doesn't mean in the first sentence, but it should mean in the first paragraph. Let's say, for example, that you want to tell your superior that one of your customers is about to send in an order that will require special attention. Your first paragraph might read: "In a phone conversation with Ed Jones this morning, he told me that he's considering

a reorder of our XL-50 material. He'll let us know by the end of the week, but I'd like to remind you that placement of this order will mean . . ."

Clear statement of purpose. This seems like a pretty obvious point, but actually it's one which many executives find troublesome. "My department has been having considerable difficulty with deliveries," one executive writes. And then he goes on with a general discussion of the transportation problems that have hampered his operation off and on over the past years. What's the "purpose" of this memo? Is the executive going to suggest holding conferences with the carriers or is his idea to change the means of transportation?

A "clear" statement of purpose means a simple and specific statement that will explain why this particular memo is being written at this particular time:

"I would like you to O.K. the extra expense involved in having a direct messenger service for small shipments from local suppliers."

Persuasive Frequently you'll write a memo to get someone to go along with an idea or a course of action. Your correspondent may be anyone in or outside your organization. But the art of being persuasive by means of the written word is somewhat different from talking. The matter of being persuasive, of course, is a subject all by itself (see Chapter 7). In connection with written memos, however, there are two points to keep in mind. You can get people to see things your way by these two means:

1. **PAINT THE OBJECTIVE** you're trying to achieve in attractive terms: "I feel this idea, if properly worked out, could be the solution to a problem that has been a headache to all of us. In your own case, for example, it would mean that you'd be rid of the nuisance of supervising six people by 'remote control' . . ."

2. **SUPPORT YOUR STATEMENTS** or arguments by facts that tend to back up or prove your contention: "A similar move was made by the ABC Company one year ago. In this twelve-month period the company has achieved the following results . . ."

Businesslike, to the point. Don't confuse this quality with brevity. You could write a 1000-page report that would still be businesslike and to the point. This quality can be summed up in a single word:

"relevancy." As long as what you're saying bears on the basic purpose of the memo, you're on the beam.

Easy to read. This quality can be built into a memo in several ways. There's no hard and fast rule, but here are some of the points to keep in mind:

1. **INTEREST.** Material can be either inherently stimulating or dull as dishwater. If you're describing how something happened, for example, you're in effect telling a story that in the average case will sustain your reader's interest. You're in a less fortunate position, however, if what you're writing about centers on a mass of monotonous data.

2. **BREVITY.** Generally short words make easier reading than long ones; ditto short sentences; ditto short paragraphs.

3. **GOOD ORGANIZATION.** Frequently you can spot this quality at a glance. You examine one memo that looks like a solid block of typing. You approach the task of reading it with the same resignation as the explorer, machete in hand, confronting a dense jungle.

The well-organized memo, on the other hand, is as attractive as an open sunny field. And as a matter of fact, in the way a well-organized memo is laid out, in its precision and neatness, it has some of the qualities of neatly fenced countryside. Here are the specific points that make for good organization:

Title: Even if your interoffice form doesn't have the printed word "subject" at the top, there's no reason for you not to add it. Here are a couple of examples:

Subject: Vacation Schedules for the Maintenance Department.

Subject: Suggested Agenda for St. Louis Meeting.

Main headings: The average memo lends itself to division into two or more main sections. Here, for example, are the four headings used in a memo discussing a grievance case: Background; The Grievance Incident; Developments in the Handling of the Case; Present Situation.

Incidentally, in this connection, the lives of many executives have been made a lot easier by their secretaries. Your secretary may very well be able to make constructive suggestions as to the positioning of headings and subheads.

Using the formula. There you have it—your personal formula for effective memo writing. The basic approach, of course, has been to analyze what it is about the memos you *receive* that you find particularly desirable, and to incorporate these qualities into your own memo style. It's simply an application of the golden rule: you'll be doing unto others what you'd like them to do for you.

Testing your effectiveness. The question of *content* comes up in connection with the memos you write. The check list below can help you analyze your memo-writing performance on this point:

1. Do your people often have to check you for:
 - a. additional information (for example, to supplement a report)?
 - b. clarification of a communication you've sent them?
2. Do your subordinates complain that they get information late?
3. In communicating with your superior:
 - a. do your replies to his reports or memos tend to be late?
 - b. do you have to telephone him to give him additional information that should have been included in the memo?
 - c. does he have to contact you for an explanation of your memos?
4. In your communications with fellow executives:
 - a. are you handicapped by persistent gaps in information?
 - b. are you sending any routine memos that no longer fill a purpose?
 - c. do you know of any change in method of communications that would improve results (e.g., switching from memos to conferences)?

Finally, keep in mind that you have available to you a gold mine of information about your memo-writing practices. Just check through the carbons of the last ten memos you wrote. How do they stack up against the list of "desirable characteristics" you developed by examining the other fellow's correspondence?

YOUR POWERS OF PERSUASION

"Love at first sight," points out the industrial engineer, "is a great time saver."

Whenever you get mutual consent on basic objectives, the saving in time is apt to be tremendous. And let's not overlook avoidance of frustration, injured feelings, and general turmoil.

But mutual agreement is just as rare as love at first sight. Seldom do you find people seeing eye to eye in their views. And that's why such a large percentage of the communicating you do is in the nature of persuasion. That fact is fully appreciated by the executive who almost daily must try to do the following:

- Get his boss to go along with an action he has planned.
- Get his boss not to go through with a plan of action the boss has developed, for which the executive foresees serious hazards.
- Get a fellow executive to change a procedure that may be fine for the other man's department, but is detrimental to his.
- Get an assistant to accept a course of action to which he is opposed, but which the executive is fairly certain will deliver the desired result.

You doubtless can spin out the list from your own daily experience.

As a matter of fact, to a large part of the working population, persuasion is the very substance of their activity. Recall the last salesman you entertained. Or, if you're at home, just tune in on the next TV commercial.

FORCE VERSUS PERSUASION

The power of persuasion has been described as "Getting someone to do something that you want done because he wants to do it."

Accept that description for a moment, and compare the result you get from that process with the results of an opposite approach, namely, force.

Certainly, in many situations, you have the authority to force agreement. You can insist that a pet idea of yours be acted on by your subordinates. But the result of reluctant compliance when stacked up against enthusiastic cooperation is the difference between failure and success.

FORCE VERSUS PERSUASION À LA AESOP

That ancient Greek, Aesop, had several words for the force versus persuasion controversy. According to Aesop:

The wind and the sun argued over which was the more powerful. They agreed to settle the argument by seeing which of them would be able to make a traveler remove his cloak.

"I'll win in a breeze," boasted the wind; he blew, and blew hard. But with each blast, the man only wrapped the cloak closer around himself.

Then the sun came out and began to shine. After a few minutes the traveler removed his coat and sat down under a tree to cool off.

Said Aesop: "Persuasion is better than force."

And the Greek's axiom has been echoed century after century.

"Nixon Urges Persuasion to Win Integration": The *New York World-Telegram and Sun* of September 27, 1956, carried the above headline. As a solution to the explosive integration issue, Vice-president Richard Nixon counseled: "We have recognized that in the long run, education and persuasion rather than compulsion are the most effective weapons."

A RARE SKILL

It's about as difficult for you to learn how to persuade people as it is to learn how to make a million dollars. There have been

books written on both subjects. To date, there have probably been as many book-made millionaires as there have been readers who have mastered the art of persuasion.

With this in mind, don't build up false hopes. Reading this chapter is *not* going to qualify you for a diploma in a difficult art. It will do several other things, however:

Indicate why it's difficult to persuade;

Describe some revealing examples of persuasion;

Provide the basis for an approach that can make you considerably more persuasive than you've been before.

OBSTACLES IN YOUR PATH

As soon as you set out to persuade someone, you're in trouble. Obviously if he doesn't agree with your view at the outset, you must change him. And the majority of us resist change with the same instinct that prompts us to blink when a hand is swung at our eyes.

Second, we often begin our attempt at persuasion with the bland assumption that since the view to which we're trying to win the other fellow is "right," the problem is merely to get him to understand what we have in mind. And that's where we're wrong.

PERSUASION IN PERU

Case studies recently presented to the public under the title *Health, Culture and the Community*, published by the Russell Sage Foundation, clarify the problem. The unique background of the persuasion attempts described exaggerate, and thereby make even more vivid, the elements involved. Here are two cases, as described by Dr. William P. Shepard, vice-president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

In a small village in Peru, the drinking water was grossly contaminated. Mortality from enteric infections was sky high. However, if the villagers could be induced to boil their drinking water, the difficulty would be eliminated.

Offhand, you'd say that there was no problem. Persuade people to take a simple precaution that would save their lives? A wrap-up.

Yet, after *two years* of effort, a team of competent sociologists and health educators succeeded in persuading only 11 out of 200 village housewives to boil their water.

Why?

The natives in the village had ideas of their own about the use of heat and cold. To paraphrase their belief:

"Everybody knows that heat is associated with illness, cold with good health. Boiling water means heat, hence illness, not health, as these strange white people are trying to say."

Let's put the objection another way:

The whites were considered an outside group. To accept the standards of these outsiders involved defection from the orthodox group, as serious to the Peruvians as we might consider defection from democracy to communism.

Perhaps you feel that the mental level of the Peruvian villagers presents a special factor that doesn't apply in other persuasion situations. Well, let's get a little closer to home:

In a small Canadian town, an attempt was made to persuade the populace to enlighten its attitude toward mental illness. Trained sociologists applied all the classical methods of health education for six months, without success.

The reason for failure, basically, was the same as in the Peruvian village: *The villagers had well-established ideas of their own on the subject.*

They tolerated and even joked about mental illness. But once an individual was placed in a mental institution, he was rarely visited, or even spoken of. And in the cases where a patient was discharged, he was heavily stigmatized in the community.

The villagers continued to believe that one must remain aloof from the mentally ill or run the risk of being suspected of illness oneself.

PERSUASION AT HOME

At this point there may still be a holdout: "Primitive people and primitive thinking explain the two cases cited."

Well, then, let's place the action in our own back yard.

The manager of a production division is looking for a man to head his lathe room. He knows the man he wants. Wes Black is completely familiar with lathe room operations. An experienced and skillful operator, he can take apart, reassemble, and set up every machine on the floor. He has made several suggestions for improving individual machine performance that Engineering applied successfully.

"I know you can do the job, Wes," the manager tells him. "How about it?"

"Sorry, C. R., I'm satisfied where I am."

"But Wes, it's a swell opportunity for you. You won't lose by it financially, and chances are that in a year or two, you'll be earning more than you're making now."

"I don't want the responsibility."

"But that's no problem for you. Why, you've taken over whenever the regular foreman was out sick or on his vacation."

"Oh, that was just for a short while. No thanks, C. R., but I'll stick with the job I've got."

WHY PERSUASION MAY FAIL

Why does Wes Black turn down a job that seems to mean real advancement for him in terms of cash, security, prestige?

The possibilities, of course, are many. To name a few:

Wes Black, an avid member of the beer-and-bowling set in the plant, surmises that taking the foreman's job eventually would force him to part company with his group of buddies and suffer the loss of the camaraderie he particularly enjoyed.

He has a definite though unvoiced feeling that a man is always "safer," that is, more "independent," when he earns his living by using his hands rather than his head. When he was a lad, his father may have told him: "As long as you're the master of a trade, you'll never have to worry about your livelihood."

He may not like the idea of taking on C. R. as a direct superior.

SIX RULES OF PERSUASION

The three examples showing the failure of persuasion illustrate some of the pitfalls you face. Here are six "rules" that can help you overcome the obstacles described, and others as well:

Build a backlog of good will. Assume that a complete stranger stops you in the street and attempts to persuade you to follow a course of action: vote for his candidate, buy his brand of cigarettes, join his club. Your first reaction is likely to be, "Just who is this bird, anyway?"

It's normal to want to know something about an individual who sets out to influence us. The more favorable reputation the would-be persuader, the stronger is his position.

The bigger the backlog of good will you have working for you, the easier for you to gain a sympathetic hearing and agreement. Your efforts at persuasion will begin most auspiciously if you can create a friendly atmosphere. A reputation for honesty and selflessness will also materially assist. But these must take place *before* the fact.

The Chinese say, "Dig a well before you're thirsty." Your past dealings and relationships, if properly developed, are a strongly favorable factor.

Describe the risk and the stakes. Before you start the actual discussion, spend a few moments getting yourself clear on what's involved. In any case of persuasion, there are benefits to be gained, perhaps the possibility of losses as well. Your ability to identify correctly the benefits and the beneficiaries, the losses and the losers, is a key to your sincerity. You should know the answers to these questions:

1. **WHAT DOES THE INDIVIDUAL STAND TO GAIN OR LOSE?** In the average case, there are both advantages and disadvantages to a given move. You're wise to enumerate both: "Jim, I know that giving up your old territory and taking on a new one isn't going to be easy. I don't want to kid you, and I don't want you to kid yourself into thinking you'll find it smooth sailing. You'll have

to put more effort into the job, longer hours, and, at the start, your earnings are likely to drop.

"Those are pretty serious disadvantages. But as I see it, the favorable side is much more important. While you're near top potential in your present territory, the new area is just crying to be opened up. Your personal approach to selling is particularly well suited to the new prospects. It's an opportunity that I feel sure you'll be able to make pay off handsomely."

2. **WHY DID YOU PICK HIM?** Generally, there are flattering reasons that explain your choice of persuadee. Give them:

"I picked you over other possible candidates because of your record. It's not only a matter of high volume, Jim, but you've proved that you know how to think through a sales problem, and crack the toughest resistance by a well-directed approach."

3. **WHAT'S YOUR STAKE?** A persuader occasionally is a disinterested party. But the man you're trying to convince is likely to be enough of a realist to suspect you've got an ax to grind. Don't make it a concealed weapon. The penalties for trying to appear impartial when you're not are likely to be severe. To continue the above example:

"I don't have to tell you I have a personal interest in your accepting the new territory, Jim. Frankly, I'd find it tough to start a new man there. Just as important, I've been trying to sell the boss on our expanding into that area, and he finally agreed, with the understanding that we would get an experienced man to accept the assignment. It would make me look plenty good if you handle the job successfully."

4. **WHO ELSE MAY GAIN, OR LOSE?** Continue to demonstrate that you're trying to give an objective picture by mentioning the effects on others: "Top management will be watching with real interest, Jim. If you're successful, as I'm sure you will be, the company will benefit materially. Now there are one or two men who may feel they should have been offered a chance at the territory. I'm going to talk to each of them and explain the reasons for my choice."

Try to spot the beliefs or attitudes that block acceptance. You seldom operate in neutral territory. Generally, you must persuade *away from* as well as *toward* a given view or action. As far as possible, try to ascertain the views that stand in the way of agreement.

Your efforts to persuade may be set back by resistance of two kinds. Some authorities have described the two types as those that are expressed, and those that the individual keeps to himself.

Descriptively, these are perfectly valid. But from the standpoint of handling resistance, there is a better pair of categories *logical* and *illogical* (or emotional).

Example of the *logical*: Executive A sets out to persuade his boss that a new purchasing policy should be innovated. "Sounds fine," says the boss, "but I foresee the possibility of our having even greater trouble with deliveries than we now have."

Example of the *illogical* (or emotional): The Peruvian natives, the Canadian villagers, Wes Black could not be persuaded because they had objections to the course of action urged upon them. The fact that these objections "didn't make sense" to the persuader made them of no less consequence.

Dividing resistance into logical and emotional (or illogical) types rather than "stated" and "withheld" is more useful because stated objections may or may not be factually correct, as in the following example:

"I can't afford it," says the housewife to the salesman at the door, knowing that to be a prime discourager. But actually, she may have felt the product was too cheap in quality, the color was wrong, or she preferred making her purchase of that particular item from her regular dealer.

To spot the reason for resistance to your persuasion attempts, you have to function as a psychologist, a diplomat, a trial lawyer, a keen observer of the expressions, gestures, and voice quality of your fellow man.

"That sounds like an excellent proposal," your boss tells you. "Leave it with me and I'll give it some further thought."

Knowing your superior as you do, you're pretty sure that's the

end of your idea. He's just letting you down easy. As you leave his office you say, "Now exactly *why* didn't he go for that plan?"

In any case of persuasion where you find the going rocky, you must ask yourself that question: "What is the basis for resistance?"

The answer comes through discussion, observation, reasoning, or all three. You may try to pin down the resistance by:

- asking a direct question ("Now that I've given you the picture pro and con, what's your reaction?")
- interpreting behavior

You've been trying to get an assistant to change a work procedure he's been using. "I don't think it's as good as the way I'm doing it now," he tells you. You noticed a pained expression on his face as soon as you started talking. You know he hasn't had the opportunity for fair comparison. Therefore, you'd probably be correct if you guessed he was exhibiting the normal resistance-to-change syndrome.

You can also use your *knowledge of the person's character*. You have tried, but in vain, to sell a fellow executive on a plan to share the expense of an engineering study that would be of mutual benefit. You know Pete well enough to be fairly sure that, in general, he would favor that kind of a study. He has offered no argument as to the worthwhileness of the plan. You're left with two possible conclusions: Pete feels there is an inequality in the return you'd both be getting; or he feels that for him to accept your plan would put him at some disadvantage in prestige. Recalling that Pete prides himself on being an idea man, you decide the latter conclusion is the probable basis for his refusal.

Finally, there are the *realities of a situation*. You're trying to persuade a capable secretary to accept a job of greater responsibility. She gives lukewarm acceptance, several times asks for reassurance that she can have her old job back if she wants it.

At first you're disappointed and nonplused. She has always seemed to you to be an ambitious, capable, and self-reliant person. Why does she hesitate? Then you see the proposal from her point of view. You can almost read her mind: "I'm hoping to get mar-

ried soon. Why get involved in a job with plenty of headaches if I'm not interested in making a career of it?"

Present your case with an eye on his viewpoint. If you are a person of logic, argument with emotional overtones will leave you cold. If nonlogical values rate high with you, an emotional appeal—"for the good of the company" or "for old time's sake"—will be impressive.

In the same way, the person you are trying to persuade may be completely untouched by one approach and strongly affected by the other.

Where many would-be persuaders go astray is in the selection of the approach *that sounds good to them*. Accordingly, we sometimes tend to render ourselves completely ineffective: "I gave him every reason to go along, but he wouldn't budge."

To get a person to go along with you, you must provide a big enough push to make it easier for him to move than to stand still. The source of this power is inside the individual himself. You can tap into this energy through four basic motivations:

1. **GAIN.** Sometimes it is a matter of money, a prime mover. But very often it's not. An ambition realized, for example, may mean more than a sizable amount of cold cash: "Hank, taking this young fellow on as an assistant will be the eventual means of getting you that extended visit to the coast that you've been trying to work out for the last two years."

2. **CONVENIENCE.** This appeal is as appropriate for the subordinate who must be sold on a new work method, or a top executive whose responsibility it is to select the site for a new plant. One advantage of this factor is that it generally can be spelled out in specifics:

"We could cut down the distance from our warehouse to the first point of operation from 525 feet to 270 feet."

3. **PRIDE.** In each of us exists an ego that usually responds well to flattery. We like to look good to ourselves and to those about us. There's a lot of appeal in telling an individual that he'll be able to set a record, pull off a "first," or build up his prestige in the eyes of colleagues.

4. **SECURITY.** Most of us want it, although we may hedge at the idea of being stick-in-the-muds or play-it-safers. But frequently you can emphasize the security advantages of a move without making it sound stodgy or limiting:

"Working out a compromise with Brown will give us peace of mind on the whole issue. Then we'll be able to turn our attention elsewhere with renewed energy."

In the course of your discussion, you will make various assertions, pro and con. Wherever possible, back up what you say with proof as clear and concise as possible.

Proof is an almost physical entity in the sense that it gains effectiveness from several factors:

1. **QUALITY.** The more pertinent and realistic the better.

2. **QUANTITY.** Fact piled on fact adds up in persuasiveness and unarguability.

3. **METHOD OF PRESENTATION.** A waiter slaps a steak down in front of you in a greasy plate, and you lose interest in the meal. But the same fare, served well, becomes mighty acceptable.

If your proof is visual, or in the form of facts and figures, the trouble you take to organize it and give it eye appeal usually pays off.

Make compliance easy. "All you have to do to get the benefits of our service, Mr. Blank, is to sign your name here." Obviously, Mr. Blank is going to have to do considerably more to get the benefits than putting his signature on the dotted line. He's going to have to lay out X number of dollars, for example, do without other things he might have bought for his money.

The expert salesman invites a simple, easily accomplished act *that is actually symbolic of agreement*, and slurs over the less pleasant consequences.

There may be some ethical criticism of getting persuasion on this basis, that is, substituting an easily acceptable symbol for a harsher and less palatable reality. However, there's no doubt that making it easy for a person to comply can increase the effectiveness of your persuasion.

An agent specializing in industrial properties has been trying to

get a busy executive to view an out-of-town lot. He has told the potential customer of the advantages of the property, stated its attractive price, and so on. However, he has concluded his efforts with: "Just let me know when it's convenient, Mr. Frank, and I'll be glad to drive you over to see the property."

But with this injunction, he has asked the executive to perform a rather complicated procedure, involving among other things a decision as to whether viewing the property deserves a higher priority than a dozen other items on his daily schedule.

One day the real estate man pushes the right button: "Mr. Frank, I don't think you should put off seeing this property any longer. I'll have my car right outside the door of your home tomorrow morning. We can go out to see the lot and I'll have you back at your office just about your regular starting time."

"I'll have the car right outside your door . . ."

Getting an individual to take the first step usually signifies success. Removing the obstacles from his taking the first step, making it simple and convenient, has always been and will always be one key to effective persuasion.

But in some cases, your first attempts fail and your patience gives out before you are successful. Does this mean that the cause is lost? Not necessarily. The final guidepoint may help you even in the toughest case:

Add a new element. An example of eventual success after repeated failures demonstrates how this approach works:

X Lithographing Company set out to win the printing business of a large hobby kit manufacturer. The fruits of successful persuasion were attractive. The boxes in which the hobby kits were sold were entirely covered with full-color printed sheets, and each kit included an instruction sheet and a four-color promotion piece advertising other hobby kits. A lot of business was to be had. But X Company's salesman couldn't get to first base:

"We're happy with our present suppliers," was the gist of the purchasing agent's attitude. It continued to be the answer despite everything the salesman could do.

The sales manager of X Lithograph and his salesman put their

heads together. They discussed and discarded every possible appeal in the books. Finally they came up with a new angle. To get a foothold with the hobby kit maker, they would design a new product for him—something he'd want so much that he'd be willing to let X Lithograph do all the printing for the job.

The new product the sales manager and salesman came up with was a do-it-yourself toy-making kit. They made up a model. On presentation of samples, the manufacturer, favorably impressed by the item, was willing to make the deal.

Whenever you come up against a stone wall in your persuasion efforts, you may, as a last resort, want to consider the addition of a new element. Of course, it is standard practice to add to the advantages you're offering. You can increase the dollar benefit or extend an additional gain.

But you're not necessarily limited to boosting the ante. Sometimes a new emphasis, stressing and enlarging a part of the picture you may have slurred over, can make your persuasion irresistible.

HOW TO ISOLATE YOURSELF

You've read enough about the importance of communications over the years to yawn at the mere sight of the word. You've doubtless noted, for example, that

- Communication is one of the most important functions of management.
- Lack of communications is one of the direst organizational ailments.
- Failure to communicate with the organizational levels below you isolates both them and you.
- Failure to communicate upward cuts you off from information you must have to operate successfully.

It's all true, every word of it.

But the other side of the communications coin may also be legal tender. In the course of your executive activity, you're sometimes involved in situations that require isolation, or noncommunication:

You must have complete solitude to think through a problem or decision.

You must have uninterrupted chunks of time to complete a major task, such as the polishing off of a special report.

You may possess confidential information, of natural interest to others in the organization, but not to be divulged.

The first two of the three instances above require that you physically cut yourself off from organizational ties. The third instance requires noncommunication within a stipulated informational area.

Both of these actions become problems to you, *not* in the doing—it's simple to turn the key in your door—but in cutting the communications ties without losing contact or control.

Up to this point we've considered your requirements. But it's just as likely that *your superior* must lower the mahogany curtain. When you're on the outside, you may be in a tough situation.

A brewery executive whose duties make frequent consultation up the ladder an operating necessity put it this way: "When my boss locks his door, I know it means he's under terrific pressure. But he's putting me and others who have to report to him in a tight spot. I can't help but feel it's a kick in the pants."

As an executive, you'll undoubtedly find yourself on both sides of the mahogany curtain. You ought to know how to handle the situation in either case.

WHEN YOU'RE BARRED

It's a challenge to your tact and ingenuity. When you feel you must get through, you want to do so without offending your superior. Here are some cautions:

Don't rely on force. Aggressive tactics rarely win admiration in this situation. The impulsive young staff executive who tells the top man's secretary, "He'll see *me*," is likely to gain two enemies.

Don't try tricks. "Imperative I see you about an urgent matter," reads the note an executive slips in to his boss's desk. Okay, *if* the statement is accurate. But any stunt you pull to get a hearing, thinking you can right matters later, may very well boomerang.

Don't jump to any conclusions. Nobody can escape an uncomfortable feeling when the mahogany curtain falls. But watch out for these reactions:

1. **SELF-BLAME.** "What have I done now?" worries one man who's held off. In many cases, there's nothing personal about it.

2. **CRITICISM.** "If he were better organized, he wouldn't have to shut himself in," an executive mutters about his boss's communications blackout. Could be, but a fellow executive ought to recognize that some unexpected and urgent problems do arise and may call for intense concentration.

Analyze the curtain. You will find there's a lot to be learned by examining the precise form the barrier takes. Look for factors like these:

1. **WHO IS LOCKED OUT?** Is the curtain down for everybody or only for some? Don't rush to conclusions when you get the answer. "A" may have access, while "B" is kept out, for many reasons. For example, "A" may be involved in the matter on which the boss is concentrating.

2. **IS THE TIMING SIGNIFICANT?** You owe it to yourself to understand your boss and what he does. The timing of the blackout may be your tip-off. Does the curtain go down on a particular day of the week or part of the month? If so, plan to take care of your business with him ahead of time.

Break down the door gracefully. Imagine this situation: your boss is the only one who can act in a crisis that has just erupted. Big stakes hang in the balance. The boss's secretary has told you, "Mr. Worth said he's not to be disturbed." You've got to get word to him immediately. What do you do?

Your judgment, your sense of values must help you through. You want to avoid a situation like the following:

A company treasurer knocks at the president's door. Entering at the gruff invitation, he faces an unfriendly superior who reminds him that he's asked not to be disturbed.

"I'm sorry, J. D., but the bank just called again. They are very anxious for us to make up our minds on that investment matter."

"For goodness' sake, Rod, that matter has been pending for six months. It can certainly wait another couple of hours."

Before knocking at that door, answering a few questions can ensure your getting a favorable reception:

1. **SURE IT'S IMPORTANT, BUT IS IT URGENT?** Distinguishing between the two may counsel delay until the communications freeze is off.

2. **WHAT'S YOUR SUPERIOR'S PAST BEHAVIOR ON INTERRUPTIONS?** If he reacts violently to being invaded, the matter will have to be just that much more urgent. If he doesn't mind too much, you'll

be risking less of a kickback by trying to see him. But don't let his good nature destroy your sense of what it takes to warrant an intrusion.

3. CAN HIS SECRETARY HELP YOU DECIDE? "Miss Thompson, we've just received a shipment of parts from the B. B. Burlap Company that are off specifications. Without those parts, we're stopped cold on the National order. Do you think Mr. Worth would want to be informed of that situation now, or should we wait?"

4. CAN ANYONE ELSE HELP? Under certain circumstances your best solution may be to refer the matter to another executive—your boss's assistant, for example.

One final point concerning the moment you cross the proscribed threshold. Generally, this is the second or two of time at which your superior's irritation is at its peak. Witness the dire fate of one young and inept executive:

"Tom, you've come busting in here when you know I'm trying to finish off an important job and you haven't said two coherent words in the last five minutes. Now, will you please tell me what the devil you want?"

First, come to the point immediately: "Mr. Haven, I'm sorry to disturb you, but one of the presses has just broken down and we'll have to move fast if we want to get set for the second shift. Can you send over to the foundry, etc., etc."

Second, in some situations, you may give your superior the chance to register an opinion as to the priority of the matter: "I want to remind you about the discussion we scheduled on the pay issue. Do you think we should clear it up now, or can it wait?"

WHEN YOU'RE INSIDE LOOKING OUT

When you're the man *behind* the mahogany curtain, you can put aside the question of whether you should or shouldn't cut off contact. You have to, or you wouldn't do it. But once deciding to enforce your desire for privacy, you want to take the steps that will cushion the slam for subordinates. Your secretary, others involved, should be briefed. Precautions like these help take the thorns out of the move:

Give advance notice. A written memo to interested parties may be in order: "I find it necessary to cancel all appointments and phone calls on Wednesday morning."

State the length of the quarantine. Knowing how long you'll be out of circulation can help your subordinates decide on the advisability of trying to reach you in cases of emergency. "You won't be able to reach me except for emergency reasons from the hours of 9 to 12:30."

Tell the reason if possible. An explanation for lowering the curtain always makes for reassurance and eliminates rumors and unnecessary mystery. "We have only one more week to submit our estimates on the Bank Street Park job and I want to look over the entire project before we put in our bid."

Provide a clue for acceptable exceptions. Knowing the possible problems that may arise, you may be able to tell your subordinates what to hold up, or what matters to bring to your attention immediately. "Any supply figures that may come through should be sent to me without any delay. All other matters, except for unusual emergencies, should be held in abeyance."

SECRECY WITHOUT TEARS

"Don't answer that!"

We all know the familiar inner voice that sometimes signals us to stop before it's too late. But for the executive particularly, it's not always simple. It's difficult for you to cut off conversation as you wish.

There are times when a topic raised by a subordinate or colleague is not an appropriate subject for conversation:

- You may not have worked out all the details.
- You may have been told to keep something in confidence.
- You might embarrass someone else by discussing it.
- You might start a rumor by tipping your own thinking.

Whatever the reasons, all executives have to face the problem of side-stepping further discussion. Cutting off the interrogator must be done with the delicate skill of a surgeon to avoid killing

off future contacts. Done effectively, adverse reactions can be minimized:

Onetime Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox worked out an interesting stopper. During a conversation an old friend asked the Secretary about some confidential Navy plans. Knox asked him if he could keep a secret. "Sure I can," said the man. With a smile, Knox answered, "So can I."

A canvass of executives has uncovered some of their favorite methods for detouring communication. Here are several techniques that some of them find effective:

Shift the focus. Avoid the issue by turning to some other subject. One executive finds it very helpful to raise a related question, saying for instance: "That reminds me, I want to discuss the problem of overtime with you before it slips my mind."

Keep it general. Say nothing that sounds like a direct answer. Management lore already provides some pat answers, on which you may be able to work out original variants:

- "That's going to take a lot of thinking."
- "Let's give it time to jell."
- "Don't you think we should wait for more facts?"
- "That's a matter for general discussion."
- "We might discuss it when it comes to a head."

Flood the channel. Some executives talk a great deal without ever stopping to answer. Then the time passes and both parties move to more immediate tasks. Meanwhile a possible problem has been avoided.

Postpone it. In some circumstances it's proper to say: "That's an interesting question. It raises many problems, but I think it's much too important to tackle right now. Let me think it over and then call you."

Actually, your objective is to make them realize that you don't want to discuss the matter. But you want to let them down gently, and the above methods are often helpful in doing just that. But they can be dangerous.

The best approach is often the frank one: "I'm sorry, Tom, but

that's a subject I'm not in a position to discuss with you at this time. When I can, I'll be glad to do it."

In most cases, it is possible to give the reason for your refusal to discuss the matter: "It would be unfair to others . . . I am not authorized. . . . It's too early to talk about it . . . etc., etc."

In developing the techniques of isolation, remember this basic fact, that silence is golden only when it can be justified; communication and contact are always accepted media of exchange.

CONFERENCES: FROM THE FRONT AND SIDE SEATS

"Conferences begin at 9:00 sharp and end at 11:00 o'clock dull."

The gags and wry references to meetings are likely to be the pseudo-sophisticated manager's cockeyed appraisal of a vital communications process.

Certainly there tend to be abuses and misuses of the conference. Anything and everything may be wrong: conferences may be held in noisy, inappropriate surroundings; there may be more conferees than can be handled effectively; the conference leader may prove somewhat less than perfect.

But make no mistake about it. The formal and informal conferences are tools basic to modern business. The answer to increased communications efficiency is not to avoid conferences or to look for alternatives to the conference process, but to improve the individual executive's use of the tool, whether he is to be a conference leader or a conferee.

WHEN YOU'RE THE LEADER

The A B C's of conference leadership have been written about at length by many competent authorities. At the end of this chapter you'll find a bibliography of books on the subject. Our concern here is with the broader aspects of the process rather than with the details. Your effective use of the group get-together can be increased by *some general considerations* having to do with an identification of types of conferences, for example, a distinction that even veterans of the conference table frequently overlook.

Getting straight on objectives. Before you meet, be sure in your own mind *what kind of conference you want*. This is not as obvious as it seems, in view of the fact that you may have to choose from among all these types:

1. **PROBLEM SOLVING:** Here the purpose is to arrive at a solution to an operating difficulty.

2. **POLICY MAKING:** In this kind of conference, your objective may be to formulate a uniform rule or practice.

3. **APPRAISAL:** The purpose is merely to review or evaluate a course of action that has been taken or a situation that has developed.

4. **PLANNING:** The goal is to work out a blueprint for future activity.

5. **INFORMATIVE:** The sole purpose is to disseminate information—to announce a new policy or report new developments.

6. **DECISION MAKING:** The conferees, acting as a group, meet to choose among a given set of alternatives.

7. **TEAM BUILDING:** The conference atmosphere has proved effective as a means of building morale and group cohesion.

8. **TRAINING:** People stimulate and motivate each other to learn more and faster when they are in a group.

9. **SHAPING ATTITUDES:** This kind of conference is used to develop a set of common viewpoints as a background for unity of action in the future. Differences of opinion are expressed, but the net result is tolerance and mutual understanding.

Main drag, or turn-off? A conference can have several of the above targets at the same time. But it is important that you know in advance which ones are yours. And to make sure other members of the conference stay out of the irrelevant byways, they too should know your goal right at the outset.

Each type of conference, of course, requires a different approach. An *informative* conference usually allows full time for a statement or report. Participation by the group is then limited to questions or elaborations of the factual data.

Staying on track. Don't let other objectives intrude. And when the purpose of your conference has been achieved, adjourn.

If your purpose was *training*, don't start a new conference on *policy making*. Once a meeting loses its identity, the participants become confused. Then they leave with the question, "What did we accomplish?"

There are some rare occasions when the character of a conference may have to be changed in mid-session. For example, the course of discussion in an *appraisal* conference may have revealed the existence of an emergency that calls for immediate *decision making*. In such a case, you cannot afford to be rigid in keeping the conference on one course.

The basic rule is not to allow the nature of the conference to change *by itself*. That would make you vulnerable to the bane of conferences—aimlessness or rambling discussion. *Change course only knowingly*—articulate exactly why you are doing so and get agreement on its desirability.

The most common type of conference is the *problem-solving* one. If it fails, the reason may be simply that there is no available solution. But more often, the cause can be found in the way it was conducted.

The late Dr. Irving J. Lee observed the sessions of more than 200 groups, of which 150 were staff, board, and committee meetings in business, military, and community organizations. Analyzing what he found, he concluded that too much time was spent on the *solving* and too little time on the *problem*. The result: time lost—not gained.

"If what we saw in discussions is typical of what goes on elsewhere," he wrote, "then this can be said: People are ever so eager to *prescribe* for problems and loath to *describe* them." (*How to Talk with People*, published by Harper and Brothers, New York, N. Y.)

Dr. Lee recommends concentrating on *identifying the problem*. By thus postponing the effort to work out a concrete solution until every facet of the problem has been explored, better and quicker answers are discovered.

Assuring participation. A churchgoing executive noticed that the individual sitting in the pew ahead sat unmoved throughout the

entire service. He accosted the man afterward and asked how he could sit with dry eyes through the sermon when everybody else was shedding tears. Came the reply: "I don't belong to this parish." To get participation in the conferences you run, you clearly must make the conferees feel that "they belong to the parish."

To get effective results with your conference group is not a function of your personality or even your general leadership ability. Specific considerations can make major differences in the degree of participation you get:

1. **SELECT INTERESTED PARTIES:** at least the majority of the individuals at a given conference should have direct interest in the business of the conference. This does not exclude individuals who, while having no direct benefits to achieve, nevertheless may have information or experience pertinent to the subject under discussion.

2. **ANNOUNCE THE CONFERENCE OBJECTIVE.** And if "announce" doesn't do the trick, then restate, rephrase, explain, demonstrate, illustrate what the purpose of the meeting is to be. This same point has been made earlier, but it bears repetition because oversight or neglect of this one point causes more trouble more often than any other.

3. **CREATE AND SUSTAIN A PERMISSIVE ATMOSPHERE.** To insure participation, it must be clear to every person in the room that each individual will have the right to speak his piece without fear of sour reactions or personal criticism.

One of the key indications of conference atmosphere is the fate of the conferee who advances a "wrong" or unpopular idea. Naturally, any statement that tends to be controversial will trigger discussion, even argument. But it is both the duty and the wisdom of the leader to protect all individual conferees from the derision, or even ire, of their fellows.

4. **EASE TENSION.** Uncomfortable strain in the course of a conference may develop for any one of several reasons: ill-tempered reaction, disagreement, clash of personalities. When you notice tension building past the safety point, it's up to you to release the safety valve. You may do it with a friendly joke, or simply face

the tension: "We seem to be an edgy ground here, gentlemen. Perhaps we'd better go over that last point and see why it's giving us trouble."

Breaking the log jams. If a conference is brought to a halt by disagreement, for example, or temporary loss of direction, you must step in. Here are some of the possibilities:

1. **WHEN YOUR GROUP IS TORN BY HARSH DISAGREEMENT**, your offer to do something extra can set an example: "I'm no expert, but I'd be glad to get more information so we can understand the problem better."

2. **IF THE GROUP SEEMS DISCOURAGED**, refer to past accomplishments. They don't have to be world-shaking to encourage the group: "Remember how we licked that problem of misdirected shipments? That took time, too."

3. **WHEN THE GROUP IS RAMBLING**, suggest that everyone head in one specific direction: "Charlie had an idea about running a special promotion campaign. Let's concentrate on that possibility."

4. **WHEN THEY'RE BOGGED DOWN IN THEORIES**, suggest some concrete action—by yourself, by someone else, or by all the members.

5. **WHEN IT'S ALL ACTION AND NO REAL THOUGHT**, try to get them to do some thinking: "Sorry, but you're going too fast for me. I for one need more explanation on that."

WHEN YOU'RE A PARTICIPANT

You're frequently called upon to join a group of your peers under the leadership of your superior. To operate effectively as a conferee may require as much skill as you need to be a leader.

Naturally, the problems you face from the side seat are different from those that confront you at the head of the table. Briefly, these are the kinds of situations you must learn to deal with effectively:

How to stay awake in an apathetic conference. If the conference is putting you to sleep, chances are you have numerous bedfellows. You have good reasons, both personal and economic, not to sit idly by and permit such inefficiency. Of course, the primary responsibility for keeping a conference rolling is the leader's, but that

fact doesn't impose a passive role on you. Without preempting his position, there are courses open that can put the spark of life back into the meeting:

1. CHALLENGE A STATEMENT: "Bill has just said it would be impossible for us to use the warehouse for a Christmas backlog. Does he have figures that confirm his view?"

2. MAKE A CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT: "I don't believe the customer's always right, and when he's wrong, I think we ought to tell him so."

3. RAISE A QUESTION: "Does anyone in the group have an idea as to what would happen if we reversed our policy completely?"

How to be interested in a dull subject. Occasionally the agenda of a meeting may be outside the line of your direct interests. If you simply think "not for me" and mentally pull out of the conference, you may be missing an opportunity.

Realize that "getting somewhere" in the discussion, while important, is not necessarily the sole objective. For example:

The Research Institute polled 490 men and women who had just participated in management conferences. The individuals were asked: "What is the most important thing that happened in the conference?" Some answers:

"I feel for the first time that I honestly *belong* to this group."

"I got to know my fellow executives better."

"I discovered I'm not the only one who has problems."

"Found out the boss is not a stuffed shirt after all."

Don't overlook, therefore, the opportunities that the conference situation provides for indirect benefits: a better understanding of colleagues by seeing how they handle themselves when they have the floor; how they respond to controversy or challenge. In short, the conference room can become a vital human relations laboratory where you can arrive at a better understanding of yourself and your fellow managers.

How to disagree without being disagreeable. The executive who agrees with you makes you like him. But the man who disagrees with you can make you think. There's an art to disagreeing. Here are some of the principles:

1. **DISAGREE WITH THE THOUGHT, NOT THE THINKER.** It makes a difference whether you say, "You're all wet," or "I think there are some hazards in following that course of action."

2. **USE QUESTIONS INSTEAD OF STATEMENTS.** A statement, particularly when it's in contradiction, can be blunt and hateful. You can make the same point by asking a question and leave no harmful aftereffects. Compare:

"The cost of that procedure will be way out of line."

"Will that procedure cost more than we can afford?"

3. **LOOK FOR VALUE IN POOR IDEAS.** Even a "wrong" idea may be put to use; it can, for example, suggest the right answers to you.

4. **EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR A CONTRIBUTION.** There's always something praiseworthy in an offer or a suggestion. A fellow conferee, for example, may have suggested a completely cockeyed solution to an operating problem. That still leaves room for you to say:

"That approach has possibilities. You stress the reaction of the machines, and that leads me to raise the question of how we get the material to the machine operators . . ."

How to use the conference to your own advantage. Obviously, it is a matter of degree. Chances are that if there were no benefits for you, you would not be at the meeting at all. But by giving some attention to your own problems and needs, it is sometimes possible for you to move the conference along in a direction that will be to your special advantage. Here are some of the possibilities:

- Try to get the leader to include areas of your special interest.
- Suggest problem cases in which you're interested, for group discussion.
- Participate as actively as possible for the practice of speaking and thinking on your feet. Don't forget that regardless of how smoothly a conference is run, it is basically a competitive situation. The more effective you show yourself to be, the more your prestige will be enhanced in the eyes of your colleagues. Don't overlook the fact that in selling yourself, the conference room is a logical market place.

PRECONFERENCE TECHNIQUES

Two other aspects of the conference deserve your consideration. They are treated in this chapter because, for the most part, they are overlooked in general discussion on conferences. Attention to either one or both of these points can amplify to a great degree the benefits of the time you use up in conferences.

As a conference leader you know you must make the preparations for your conference: you get up an agenda, or work out an outline, or establish a continuity in your own mind.

These steps are generally standard. However, there are steps you can and should take, to prepare yourself to function efficiently as a conferee:

Research the subject. Let's say, for example, that your superior has called a conference on the problem of handling interoffice mail. Application of just an hour's time can make you much better informed on the subject than if you entered the conference room without the preliminary digging.

On the subject of mail deliveries, for example, compare observations with your own secretary, the head of the mail room, a friend who is an executive in another company where the mail is handled differently. All of these can give you a solid basis on which to operate.

Determine your self-interest. Let's say the subject to be discussed in an announced conference is allocation of new storage space. A brief amount of time devoted to determining just what your storage needs are puts you in a position, first, to know what you want; and second, to back up the requests you may make.

What's your greatest contribution? When you know the subject matter of a conference, ask yourself, "What is in my experience or background that may make it possible to offer something unique in the course of the conference?"

POST CONFERENCE TECHNIQUES

In addition to preconference steps, there are things you can do *after* a conference that can increase its value to you. As every

executive who has been in a conference knows, the business of a meeting seldom is concluded by the exodus from the conference room. Loose ends are usually left trailing. Here are some of the steps you can take to extend the benefits:

Volunteer for follow-up. Unanswered questions may be tossed to a committee. In many instances, executives on these impromptu committees can gain helpful experience and extend their managerial know-how.

The mere fact that they will be working with fellow executives gives them the opportunity to get to know their peers better. In addition, there are opportunities to contact individuals not ordinarily available: staff experts, top executives, and others. These contacts also provide further opportunity for training and the development of useful personnel relations.

Strengthen relations with fellow conferees. In the course of a conference, for example, agreement with an executive can make you realize an area of like purpose. Continuing a discussion, joining forces, developing a common enterprise with a fellow executive may prove fruitful.

And exactly the same thing can be proved with an executive with whom you have disagreed. Continuing a discussion, comparing opportunities, and matching experience can lead to a mutual increase in knowledge and insight.

RATING YOURSELF

William G. Shepherd, Field Research Editor of the Research Institute of America, has made a career of studying and teaching communications, especially communications through the conference medium.

He has led hundreds of conferences throughout this country and Canada, and has trained thousands of executives to be effective conference leaders. He has sat in on conferences as a participant—as have we all.

With his permission, you'll find reproduced below two self-rating quizzes he uses that can help you appraise your effectiveness as a conference leader and as a participant.

YOU'RE A GOOD CONFERENCE LEADER: TRUE OR FALSE?

The dozen items below, says Mr. Shepherd, can test your conference leadership knowledge and skill. Indicate whether you believe each statement to be true or false. Then check your score according to the directions at the bottom of the page.

	FALSE	TRUE
1. You may do nothing between your introduction and summary except ask questions and still do a good job of leading a conference.	T	F
2. Differences of opinion generally hamstring a conference.	T	F
3. When you "know the answer," you should save time by telling the conferees, rather than use the slower method of leading them to think their way to the answer.	T	F
4. The leader should state his view to encourage the conferees to state theirs.	T	F
5. When a conferee is "wrong" or advances an unpopular opinion and is attacked by the group, you have a responsibility to defend him.	T	F
6. A side discussion can be stopped without chastising the participants.	T	F
7. Vote taking is the only approved device for settling disagreements.	T	F
8. Even the long-winded conferee should be given full opportunity to say his piece.	T	F
9. "Atmosphere" changes in a conference can be detected before they erupt.	T	F
10. The best number of conferees is twenty-five.	T	F
11. An articulate expert is a constant help to a conference leader.	T	F
12. The leader is a dead duck if the conference gets out of control.	T	F

SCORING

To see how good you are as a conference leader, score your answers as follows: Give yourself 10 points for each question correctly answered. It may be that you may disagree with some of the "right"

answers given below. If you disagree violently, stick by your own answers and give yourself full credit. But generally, we believe you will find the answers as given to be acceptable:

1. True. Socrates did it all the time, and look what a reputation for wisdom he gained! And the modern leader finds it an effective method.

2. False. They're an important asset. If everyone agrees, no one will go out smarter than when he came in.

3. False. The answer they think out acquires real meaning and acceptability.

4. False. There will always be a number of insecure individuals who will refrain from ever doing anything that even remotely smacks of bucking the boss or leader.

5. True. Actually he's doing the group a favor—making them think.

6. True. For example, if you can assume they're talking about the conference subject, state that everyone would like to hear the idea they're discussing.

7. False. If there's that much lack of agreement, more discussion is needed.

8. False. The uncontrolled Rambler is a prime conference killer. You must help him get his point briefly.

9. True. Learning to recognize "feeling words," negative interactions and subsurface meanings equips you to predict and counteract them.

10. False. Experience recommends six to twelve as optimum in most cases.

11. False. The expert is best rendered inarticulate, so others can think and contribute.

12. False. The fact that a conference occasionally does wrench loose from its mooring is proof of its spontaneity. And it's seldom a problem to restore peace and direction.

Rate yourself on the following scale:

100 to 120 . . . outstanding

70 to 90 . . . good

40 to 60 . . . poor

Below 40 . . . suggest you read one of the books in the bibliography at the end of this chapter

YOU'RE A GOOD CONFEREE: TRUE OR FALSE?

	TRUE	FALSE
1. The conferee who does not have the problem being discussed can be a valuable contributor.	T	F
2. People sitting next to you influence you more than do those across the table.	T	F
3. A conferee who hears all that's said knows what is happening in a discussion group	T	F
4. Conferences can be a promotion-gaining vehicle for a conferee.	T	F
5. Skilled conference leaders make good conferees	T	F
6. The fellow conferee who disagrees with your view is more help than one who agrees	T	F
7. It is all right to tell a joke during a conference.	T	F
8. It's a good idea to "study up" on a subject before a discussion.	T	F
9. If you see that everyone in the group but you is heading in a direction you believe is wrong, you should keep quiet for the sake of peace and unanimity.	T	F
10. Any single conferee can make or break a conference by being either aggressively negative or aggressively positive.	T	F

SCORING

To see how good you are as a conferee, give yourself 10 points for each question correctly answered. You may disagree with some of the "right" answers given below. If you disagree violently, stick by your own answer and give yourself full credit. But generally, we believe you'll find the answers as given to be acceptable:

1. True. He has the great advantage of objectivity, can see the problem without emotional obstructions.

2. False. Tests show that the greatest interaction is between conferees sitting directly opposite one another.

3. False. Often, occurrences beneath the surface affect a conference more than visible factors do.

4. True. Many firms use conferences as a means of detecting superior and promotable people.

5. False. While their knowledge of problem handling, etc., equips

them to help the leader eliminate disruptions, they sometimes cannot overcome the impulse to step in and start leading the discussion.

6. True. He obliges you to think harder and deeper in order to support your position.

7. True. A funny story is a big help, if it's relevant, illustrative, or seems to ease tension.

8. True. You're better equipped to participate.

9. False. If you believe your contrary view is valid, you do a disservice if you don't speak up, even though it may mean that, in a way, you pit yourself against the group.

10. True. One person can liven it up if it's dull, sour the whole group, raise spirits if defeatism is setting in, etc.

Rate yourself on the following scale:

80 to 100: Outstanding

50 to 70: Just about O.K.

Below 50: Poor. Suggest you reread the conference participation part of this chapter, starting on page 79.

BOOKS ON CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP

Hannaford, *Conference Leadership in Business & Industry*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1956.

W. D. Ellis and F. Siedel, *How to Win the Conference*, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1955.

J. J. Auer and H. L. Ewbank, *Handbook for Discussion Leaders*, New York, Harper, 1954.

W. M. Sattler and N. E. Miller, *Discussion & Conference*, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1954.

Irving J. Lee, *How to Talk with People*, New York, Harper, 1952.

Joseph Glass, *How to Plan Meetings and Be a Successful Chairman*, Marlin Press, 1951.

William Utterback, *Decision through Discussion*, New York, Rinehart, 1950.

M. F. Stigers, *Making Conference Programs Work*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1949.

Alfred Cooper, *How to Confute Conferences*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1946.

PART 3

**YOUR
JOB-DICTATED
ACTIVITIES**

THREE HAZARDS OF EFFICIENCY

"Blasphington," observes Blasphington's boss, "I have the impression that you're not very efficient."

"Maybe so," replies the cream of the Ivy League yearbook heroes, "but, sir, somebody's got to get the work done around here."

Although it can be properly assumed that Blasphington is a completely fictitious character, his plight is a real one with which we can all sympathize. And interestingly enough, Blasphington is quite right. Efficiency that puts method ahead of results is, of course, not efficiency at all.

In pursuit of the fruits of efficiency, don't fall victim to the pitfalls that threaten the feet of the unwary.

EFFICIENCY VERSUS RESULTS

In *The Insect Comedy*, by the Czech playwright Karel Čapek an ant scientist comes forward with a great efficiency-increasing device. He can, he assures his superior, increase the efficiency of workers 25 per cent. How? In performing their tasks, they work to the rhythm, "One, two, three, four." His suggestion: "We'll have them count, one, two, four."

On the workscene, you find other examples. Here's an instance reported by Robert Dobbins, of the Research Institute's field editorial staff. The words are those of an executive in a construction organization:

"Recently we took on a marginal profit job. It looked like good business because it would fill out our schedule, keep our people busy.

"The decision to accept the business seemed sound—until the job was turned over to a plant manager with an uncontrolled impulse for 'efficiency.' To get the job out of his hair in a hurry, he authorized his crews to work Saturday, Sunday, and Labor Day. To him that seemed like the 'efficient' thing to do. But the overtime costs resulted in a loss of about 20 cents an hour for all time worked on the job."

INSIST ON RESULTS

We're still too close to the stop-watch approach to efficiency to be free of its influence. And the fundamental error we're sometimes led to make is so simple that it's funny. Here's the way it shows up:

Time-study engineer (stop watch in hand): Let us take a time check on Method A. (He does, gloomily.) Ten seconds.

Subject: Now Method B?

Time-study engineer (He nods, and times the operation, joyously.) Nine seconds!

Subject: And that means . . . ?

Time-study engineer: We use Method B, of course.

If we gave it a moment's thought, the idea of measuring one method against another as a gauge of efficiency rather than measuring the *results* of one method as against the *results* of another, is patently silly. Yet, it's a frequent mistake: we adopt a "Method B," for example, without regard to a fatigue rate or error rate that may be higher than that in a "Method A."

A prime test for efficiency, then, can be stated: "Is what we are doing efficient in fact rather than by appearance?" In other words, when you compare two procedures to ascertain which is the more efficient, don't do it only on an elapsed-time basis, but by setting one group of results—and be sure you include *all* results—against another set of results.

EFFICIENCY VERSUS MORALE

A mechanistic view of efficiency may mean the overlooking of intangible but pertinent factors. For example, an experiment by

Alex Bavelas and a group at M.I.T. in the area of communications (reported by William H. Whyte, Jr., "Is Anybody Listening?") produced noteworthy information:

Bavelas arranged a group of five people so that they communicated with each other in a circular pattern. This would be representative of the flat, democratic organizational structure. He set up another group of five in a hierarchical pattern, representing the strict, chain-of-command organization. Both groups were given the same problem and were instructed to solve it by exchanging messages.

Bavelas found that the group in the circular pattern was very happy—but not very efficient. The hierarchical group got more efficient results—but was not very content or satisfied with the manner in which its decisions had been reached.

The chances are good that the "more efficient" method, in the long run, would prove less desirable.

The key phrase in the above paragraph is *in the long run*. Morale reactions often generate slowly. A new secretary on a job, for example, may not respond, either favorably or adversely, to an item in the daily routine for weeks or even months.

In your own case, don't burden yourself with an approach to efficiency that creates a slow drain on your temper or a drag on your feeling of well-being if more desirable alternatives are at hand.

EFFICIENCY VERSUS FLEXIBILITY

Here's another pitfall on the highroad of efficiency:

"He's only working at 50 per cent of capacity," one executive may say as a criticism of another. The thing that's wrong here is the implication that it's possible or even *desirable* for an executive to try to work at 100 per cent of potential efficiency.

We don't harbor such expectations of machines. Why should we of people?

HOW EFFICIENT SHOULD YOU GET?

Consider the problem in terms of the modern motorcar. We're told that Automobile X packs a 300-horsepower motor under its gleaming hood.

Great, we say, and rush out to buy it. But now, we'd no more think of pushing the machine to give out with that 300 horsepower than we'd think of spanking the Venus de Milo.

We understand machines well enough to know that when an automobile or any other piece of equipment is operated at 100 per cent of effective output, two undesirable consequences are sure to follow:

The deterioration rate increases. You'll chop years of service out of that newly purchased car if you constantly run it at top speeds.

There is nothing left for emergencies. This result is possibly even worse than faster deterioration. In terms of a car, it means that you have no reservoir of unused power for emergency passing. In terms of executive functioning, there is no resource of unused power for emergency work situations or no reserve that makes possible an adaptation change.

Take *Tyrannosaurus rex*, a dinosaur that lived some 250 million years ago. Efficient? Never has the earth known another animal so well equipped to deal with his environment. Thick armored hide shielded his vital organs. Three sharp claws at the end of his forelimbs had the bite of a steam shovel. He was ready for anything, could lick triple his size.

Our dinosaur friend was an efficient machine, all right—100 per cent efficient. But 100 per cent efficiency means nothing left over in reserve. *Tyrannosaurus rex* could do almost anything—except change. Small drops in temperature, to which the dinosaur couldn't adapt himself, led to his eventual destruction.

In passing, it should be noted that some eons later, a puny creature, apparently not too well designed to fight the battle of survival, came on the world scene. Possessing the quality of adaptability, he was able to master the world of living things.

Don't be concerned, therefore, with feelings that you're not putting out like the proverbial well-oiled machine. Power held in reserve, resources not applied to the immediate responsibilities at hand, are not indications of inefficiency, but are desirable, even necessary, for survival and change.

Every executive faces the occasional need for extended applica-

tion to a single important task; or the abrupt mobilization of total effort for a sudden crisis; or the need to face up to an unfamiliar situation with out-of-the-ordinary displays of alertness, perceptivity, and judgment.

The automobile analogy may again clarify the situation. The distinction between cruising speed and top speed sheds light on the question. Your full cruising capabilities should be applied to the job, day in and day out. The accelerator goes down for additional power on the occasions that require the expenditure of reserve physical or mental energy.

J. R. Williams, well-known cartoonist of the Western scene, recently depicted one aspect of the office problem:

A ranch foreman sits in a neatly appointed office. At the door, two ranch hands struggle to get a third into the sanctum. Protests the maverick: "I don't talk to nobody at desks! I'll talk settin' on a fence er somethin'. But, if they can't talk without being fortified with a deskload of papers against my ignorance, I'm retreatin'."

Your office is a primary executive tool. Appropriately designed, it's a vital asset. Unsited to your needs, it can hinder you at every turn.

Certainly the over-decorated office in which field workers are supposed to contact the executive can be as inappropriate as an unsightly "factory" type of office might be for you to receive customers.

SEVERAL HATS ON THE RACK

It's advisable to review physical arrangement of your headquarters from time to time. As in every other facet of executive functioning, your requirements change with developments in your status and activity.

Appropriateness and *suitability* are the key words that should guide your thinking. But don't take the narrow, functional view. An executive's office fulfills more than one purpose. It is the place where you hang your hats—the whole array, one for each of your various duties. It's the place where you sit down to work.

But in addition, your office provides status satisfaction—or dissatisfaction; and, of course, the right office can contribute a great deal to your personal efficiency. How much? Well . . . promises one designer:

“If you accept our plans for redoing your office, your efficiency will be increased ten per cent.”

That kind of talk is likely to be unadulterated nonsense. Improvements in your office setup *may* provide ten, twenty, thirty or more per cent increase in efficiency. But these increases in efficiency derive largely from intangibles—your personal feelings of comfort, the emotional effect your office has on other people, and so on.

HOW DOES YOUR OFFICE MEASURE UP?

Let's talk about offices, yours in particular. You don't want to become an office space analyst or office designer. But it is highly desirable that you acquaint yourself with some of the helpful principles of office layout.

The ideas of two authorities, Michael Saphier of Michael Saphier Associates, Inc., and Frank Walke, who spent several years in developing and applying principles of office planning for consulting clients, have been the main contributors to the points made and the ideas offered in the paragraphs ahead:

Location. The top man usually gets the “ideal” spot, the corner office with most windows. North light generally poses the least difficulty, avoids the problem of direct sun glare. And of course, the room with the view is always desirable.

“Satellite configuration.” Naturally, the location of any one office must be viewed in relation to the locations of other offices in the company. Space analysts use the phrase *satellite configuration* to describe the need for arranging the work areas of subexecutives in efficient relationship to the executive to whom they report.

Simply put, the question comes down to who should be near whom. The president may want the treasurer close by. The treasurer may want to be near the accounting office.

Interexecutive relationships are, accordingly, a major determi-

nant of office location. Just as the line executive naturally would be located near the facilities in his charge, the staff man would logically operate in an area central to the other executives with whom he has functional contact.

Size and shape. Size generally is a status feature. Executives have come to expect bigger offices than their subordinates and smaller ones than their superiors.

In some cases, size takes on functional importance. For example, the amount of conference activity you carry out in your office would partly determine the amount of space you need.

The over-all shape of an office is largely dictated by the shape and architecture of the building. However, a change in shape can make an office more useful.

Take the example of an art director who has administrative responsibilities and at the same time sits down at a drafting table to rough out basic art approaches. This executive might find it helpful to have an L-shaped office. In one branch of the L would be his drawing board; the other branch of the office, free of the clutter of art supplies and equipment, would be for his deskwork. Engineering executives similarly might benefit by an office floor plan other than the square or rectangle.

Layout. Most executives like to face the door, sitting with their back to the windows. Generally, it's a good arrangement from the point of view of lighting and accessibility.

However, there are some dissenting opinions for you to consider. One office designer asserts that lighting should be over the left shoulder of right-handed executives to eliminate pencil shadow. This suggests placement of the desk with the window to the left of the seat of the executive.

An executive we interviewed asserted that the desk-facing-the-door arrangement gives the occupant a "ready-to-pounce" look. Another objection to the desk-facing-the-door arrangement: "I don't want every passer-by in the corridor to distract me from my work."

Floor plan for relaxation. A lawyer who spends a considerable part of his day receiving and consulting clients in his office recently

replanned his office with great success. Key idea was a "living-room" corner surrounded on two sides by floor-to-ceiling drapes, comfortable armchairs and a sofa, and table-lamp lighting that further emphasized the at-home feeling.

This legal executive reports, "I find it becomes almost miraculously easy to get people to relax. When I feel it's important to get clients to ease up, I walk away from my desk, and we move into the living-room area. The informality and comfort of the place has a very salutary effect."

BASIC RULES FOR OFFICE LAYOUT

The basic rules are familiar enough, but worth repeating. Here are seven topics, with suggestions, you will want to check.

Know the space you can use. Make the distinction between rentable space and gross usable space, which may be considerably smaller. You have to subtract entrance corridors, columns, and other architectural features that prevent effective space utilization.

Minimum space for nonessentials. That display case with sports trophies may provide an interesting, personal touch. But it would be unwise to devote a major amount of floor or wall space to it.

Easy access. Items you use fairly often—files, reference books, manuals, production models, adding machine—should be close at hand. Consider the various solutions to the accessibility problem—wall shelves, rolling tables, etc.

Privacy and security. The amount and quality of privacy best-suited to your needs are highly personal and important considerations. The blocking-out of sound and the erection of barriers against prying eyes from the outside are not necessarily related. You may have one without the other:

1. **VISUAL PRIVACY.** An executive whose duties included considerable planning worked extensively with charts, photographs, and so on. Colleagues, intrigued by these working materials, would stroll into his work area to take in the sights. This executive needed—and eventually got—a screening wall that stopped curious eyes and the time-destroying casual visitor.

2. **AUDIO PRIVACY.** One of the larger advertising agencies felt that

it was desirable *not* to have their executives hidden. They wanted to avoid hiding their hand-picked, good-looking executives behind opaque doors. Nevertheless, the need for protection from the casual eavesdropper was necessary. The company provided iron grill doors through which the executives could easily be seen. However, a person standing at the threshold is unable to hear what is being said a few feet away because of the excellent sound-proofing.

3. **CONTROLLED DISTRACTION.** The whole question of sound can help or hinder your concentration. Dead silence may be just as bad as an intermittent, irregular noise. To some executives, the clatter of typewriters is music, for others it's nerve-jarring cacophony. For this problem, the experts are now talking of "controlled distraction."

Music, for example, piped in from a central record library is an old device in business and industry for increasing employee comfort. The experts think the same medicine may work for the executive.

The related idea of security is also a necessary consideration for many executives. Whether it's confidential information or information of a competitive nature, you may have to take positive measures to protect yourself from both the internal and the external snooper. The size, strength, and location of a safe, locked file, or other means of physical protection may be a vital part of your office plan.

Desks—or deskless? Maybe you don't need one. Some executives don't like to sit behind a desk. They read reports, correspondence, and so on in an armchair, and do their writing at a small work table. If you prefer a desk, remember that there are desks and desks, all sizes, shapes, and designs. Consider these individual points:

1. **TOP.** In too many cases, desks are wider than they need be. The most convenient work area of a desk is generally an arm's length from the chair. Stay away from glass desk tops and highly polished surfaces that reflect light. And remember that dark desk

tops contrasting with white paper places heavy demands on eye accommodation. Eye fatigue is likely to result if the ratio of brightness between paper and desk top exceeds three to one.

2. **DRAWERS.** If you don't need them for frequently-referred-to files, or they tend to accumulate a miscellany of unnecessary objects, you may be better off with a minimum of drawers.

3. **PULL-OUTS.** These add to the usefulness of a desk by providing more desk-top space, or by keeping a phone, typewriter, adding machine, and the like out of sight when not in use.

Lighting. Generally, lighting should be indirect. If you carry out several kinds of activity, different light levels may be desirable. Here's what's recommended for general purposes:

50 to 60 foot-candles for conference activity

60 to 80 foot-candles for general desk work

80 to 100 foot-candles for drafting and artwork

As for the quality of the light, a human-engineering study carried out at Tufts seems to indicate that warm light is somewhat less fatiguing than cool light.

Lighting engineers state that misuse rather than overuse is the chief cause of eye weariness. Uniformity of illumination as well as intensity of light should be considered.

Many executives are building-in visual aids, such as wall charts, slide projectors, chalk and cork board, magnetic panels, flow charts, organization charts, and so on. These point up the need for localized wall lighting.

Decoration. The style of your office certainly should be one in which you feel comfortable. But before you tell a decorator that you want American, Colonial, eighteenth century French, or ultra ultra Modern, keep in mind the public relations angle of your working quarters.

Topflight office designers also use the phrase "institutional face" or character in suggesting one of the limits on your choice of decoration. If your company professes to be a progressive, up-to-the-minute outfit, the streamlined look of the contemporary styles might do more for you than a pleasing but old-fashioned look.

DECORATING FOR CUSTOMER COMA

In some sales quarters, you may hear the idea suggested that the "right" style of decoration can change a customer's firm "No" to an unsteady "Yes." Bizarre decoration known in the trade as "gas-station modern" is said to be effective in high-pressure selling operations. Screaming reds next to clashing blues, chopped-up zigzag color areas create an unusual environment that throws an individual off his guard. It creates a kind of minor mental crisis, a disorientation that renders a man more suggestible.

The cagey experts may have a point. To date, however, they have failed to describe the effect of this type of office on the unfortunate executive who perforce must stand up to it eight hours a day.

"Man is a tool-using animal . . . without tools he is nothing, with tools he is all," said Thomas Carlyle.

Until recently, that statement wouldn't hold for the executive. With bare hands and brain alone, he was supposed to subdue the problems that dogged his steps through the wilderness of executive routine.

Increasingly, however, the executive is getting to be a tool-wielding professional. A modern manager, for example, would no more think of keeping track in his head of a fluctuating production record than an engineer would try to manipulate logarithms mentally.

None of the executive tools available today is unknown to you. Chances are that you have used most of them, or avoid them as a matter of choice.

But there are good reasons for taking a fresh look at the executive tool rack:

New uses. Executives who have been able to figure out new applications for old stand-bys such as charts and graphs have successfully de-kinked knotty tasks that previously slowed them down.

Tool awareness. The executive who looks for help in the form of tools tends to develop a concept of efficiency, of "the better way" that reflects in his over-all performance.

TOOL CATALOGUE

Below you'll find a list of devices that are to be found in executive offices everywhere. There isn't an executive alive who uses all or even most of them. But your use of a single *one* may prove to be the answer to an unsolved problem of efficiency that may have been bothering you for a long time. As you go down the list, keep in mind your own operations and the possible assistance you may gain by an application or adaptation of each item.

Charts and graphs. All types and sizes of these are for organization control, production control, and quality control; for a quick picture of absenteeism, safety, budgets, waste and costs; for keeping track of orders received, processed and shipped, overtime, stock needed.

Phone adaptations. You can have conference phones that sit on the desk and require no handling; double phones for three-way talks; phone side-switches to tell the switchboard whether the executive is in, away or available by auto-call; timers to limit long-distance calls.

Blackboards and easel charts. You can use these behind the desks as well as in conference rooms, for problem solving, illustration, etc.

Slide rules, adding or calculating machines. These make for easy computation in planning. "I run up a column of figures a dozen times a day," is a fairly typical statement from a top-level executive to explain the presence of equipment you wouldn't expect him to have.

Work tables. You can get them man-sized, medium, or small to use as a second desk, a clear work area, for quick huddles, blueprint-examinations, and so on.

Cameras. Movie, candid, and still types can be used for getting visual evidence of a damaged shipment, supplies received in poor condition, safety mal-practices and many other occasions.

Calendars. Have different kinds, for planning operations and recording appointments.

Clocks. Include an alarm clock, to remind you when it's time

to set out for an important meeting or date. Wrist models are becoming popular.

Projectors. Slide or movie projectors are becoming more common in executive offices. As an adjunct to conferences, or as a briefing or training device, their rich possibilities are largely unexplored.

Dictating machines or recorders. The use of a dictating machine for letters, and so on, is standard. But executives have found that putting a conference "on tape," for example, provides a verbatim record that at times is highly desirable.

The possibilities for each tool itemized above are by no means exhaustive. Your ingenuity in seeking out new uses may make a measurable improvement in your personal effectiveness, or that of your subordinates.

Just to show what opportunities exist for some of the devices mentioned, let's take two, the camera and the sound recorder, and explore at greater length ways and means they can be made to play a part in the executive function.

"WATCH THE BIRDIE?"

Ever since 1829, when Daguerre first exposed an iodized silver plate to mercury vapor fumes and created the first photograph, the camera has sprouted new uses.

The Polaroid Corporation has done a particularly good job of publicizing the business potentialities of the camera. Polaroid equipment, with the unique feature of getting from the clicking stage to the finished print in 60 seconds, offers some special advantages. But any camera, handled with a fair degree of competence, may prove a valuable executive tool.

Here are some of the business uses Polaroid's Stanley Cohen, dealer service manager, describes for the camera:

Work methods. The Allis-Chalmers Company, in its Boston plant, photographs tooling setups for short-run jobs. If the job is ever repeated, or the question arises as to how a particular job was turned out, photographs supply a visual record and guide.

Physical plant changes. A change in layout or alteration of a structural detail can be made specific by use of the camera.

A photo of the original condition is the starting point. Then a grease pencil in the hands of an executive, who got even a "C" in high school drawing, makes it possible to sketch the change right on the print.

Job instruction. Alden Products Company of Brockton, Massachusetts, uses photos of tricky operations, pastes them to the machine of the employee as a guide.

Damage claims. Heads of traffic departments use photos of damaged shipments as they arrive at the receiving platform. This enables the traffic department to evaluate the damage and call the carrier's claim inspector.

Progress reports. Whether it's a new plant you're putting up in the lot next door, a machine gradually taking shape in the engineering department, or a new product being roughed out in the design department daily, weekly or monthly, photos afford a visual record of progress.

It may not be practical for big construction. But in the case of a new design that ends up with an unsatisfactory result, shuffling back through the photographic record may bring you to the point at which the undesirable elements began to creep in. You can strip down to that point with the hope of coming out to a more desirable conclusion.

Before and after. Whether you're rearranging your office, changing layout of a product area, trying out a new cleaning product, there's always a chance that the before and after pictures can prove useful. In some cases, where results are visual, these photos can report better than the proverbial "thousand words" just what has been accomplished.

Decision making by eye. In some cases, you have to choose among alternatives that can to some extent be reported visually:

1. **SITE PLANNING.** Krebay Construction Company of Indianapolis shoots proposed building sites. Back in the office, executives use these photos to help them in estimating costs, distribution, and so on, of one way as compared to another.

2. **STORE RELOCATION.** The executive of a chain-store organization, who must select desirable store properties, may use photos to

refresh his memory as well as to evaluate the physical advantages and disadvantages of one store as opposed to another.

3. **HOUSEKEEPING AND SAFETY.** An executive responsible for safety or the physical maintenance of a shop or plant can use pictures to make his findings stick with supervisors. Photos of bad conditions could back up his complaint and eliminate argument. And photos of satisfactory findings would make an effective item for the bulletin board along with a letter of commendation.

In general, wherever your concern is with something that can be photographed, whether it is a work scene, an operating condition, or what you will, good photographs can help you tell your story, refresh your memory, and act as a permanent record.

For the executive who is already a shutterbug, there's the chance to make his hobby a business asset. And for the executive who has heretofore been only a desultory picture-taker, here's the chance to develop a useful skill that may keep on growing into a most desirable hobby.

"LET'S PUT IT ON TAPE"

Another device that has a bright future is the sound recorder. As effective in the world of decibels as is the camera in the land of lumens, full potentialities are still to be realized. Here are possible applications:

Speechmaking. You're bound to be called on to make speeches, one time or another. If it's not at a company function, it may be before a local community group, or a trade or professional gathering. Unless you're the rare executive who has considerable experience and confidence in his ability to deliver an untested talk, you gain two advantages by orating to the receptive ears of a recording machine:

1. **YOU CAN IMPROVE ON THE TALK.** Listening in on the playback, you can spot the points at which you're not as effective as you'd like to be, and make repairs.

2. **YOU CAN CHECK LENGTH.** We all are familiar with, and have been bored by, the speaker who goes on long past his allotted time. In many cases, this is not the result of a sadistic streak, or a pro-

pensity for what the actor calls "building the part." Plain ignorance of how long an untested speech will run may be the answer. A recording can tell you to the second how long you're likely to require.

And, of course, just as bad from the viewpoint of the speaker, is to finish one's remarks in ten minutes when the program chairman counts on the talk to keep going for half an hour.

Conferences of decision. You may call a conference of fellow executives or subordinates. In the course of that conference, you know arguments will be offered in support of or against a particular line of action. You're quite sure that a final decision will be based on the best thinking that can be done by the group. And yet, in justice to the backers of the suggestions that are turned down, it may be desirable for their ideas and contentions to be available for later examination.

The obvious problem in this connection, of course, is the sensitivity that executives sometimes acquire when it comes to putting themselves on record. If you feel that this is likely with your group, a tape recorder will have the same effect as a cannon mounted at the head of the table. But if you know your group well enough, and are reasonably sure that your explanation for "putting it on tape" will be accepted and won't inhibit the conference, the conference record may be the perfect means for you to second-guess a poor decision.

Information-gathering interviews. In the course of your executive duties you often consult experts. These may be fellow executives in your own company, or they may be outside people. Two methods to record the facts in an interview are notes you take yourself, or a more detailed record taken by a secretary.

There's no question that a verbatim recording will be more comprehensive and remove all possibility of doubt as to just what was said.

Some executives who use recorders for this purpose have found that their own note-taking backed up by a table recorder is most effective. Their notes represent the highlights, the essentials of

the information. Having the full record makes it possible for them to check on details.

Verbal reports. You may go out into the field on a service call to clients or customers. Or you may send an assistant. In either case, it may be desirable to have a record of findings. If it is your assignment, what you've learned may have to be sent along to your superior. And of course, if it's a subordinate who has drawn the job, you are the superior who's expecting the report.

In some cases, an on-the-scene description makes much more vivid reporting. And let's face the fact: some of us talk more effectively than we write.

The recording-instrument manufacturers are doing a job for us. They're helping us solve the on-the-scene report by devising portable recording machines that weigh as little as two pounds. With a gadget of this kind and a carrying case on your shoulder, you can deliver a running record as you make a tour of inspection. The time-saving value of this procedure can be tremendous.

And don't overlook the morale factor. Just recall the last time you were stuck in a hotel room at night hunched over a typewriter typing out lengthy reports from scribbled notes. The portable recorder, with the possibility of transcription, can help eliminate this type of executive servitude.

MARSHALING THE PAPER-WORK PARADE

"High-salaried executives have a productive corporate worth many times greater than their salaries, and their time is worth thousands of dollars an hour."

This was the explanation by General Lucius D. Clay, chairman of the board of Continental Can Company, for the purchase by his company of three Fairchild four-jet planes. Continued General Clay:

"The speed of an airplane can contribute immeasurably to the best utilization of an executive's time."

Continental Can is one of many companies attempting to increase the efficiency of their executives by minimizing their travel time. The Civil Aeronautics Administration estimates that business planes flew 4,300,000 hours in 1955, more than all the domestic airlines combined. This was an increase of 10 per cent over the preceding year. (The airlines, of course, fly more passenger miles.)

Travel by air is one of the many ways American executives attempt to convert every minute of their working time into productive time. For the executive who does considerable traveling, the airplane represents an important time saver. If you work for a multiplant company (Continental Can, for example, has plants and offices in more than ninety cities), or if your job takes you into the field, the time you save en route means that much more time to use productively.

HURRY UP AND WASTE?

The sad truth is that companies spend thousands of dollars trying to save minutes for their executives, while hours are being wasted at the point where most executives spend the major part of their time—namely, their desks.

The modern executive has been described as a man who wears out two pairs of pants for every pair of shoes. It's tragic when the pants get shiny in vain.

To make time saving at the executive desk a reality, a special study was undertaken to provide:

A picture of the paper-work practices of a typical cross section of executives.

Concrete suggestions by executives themselves for easing the paper-work burden.

Although the group studied was small, it included executives of both line and staff, and covered most of the standard functions—personnel, sales, financial, and general management.

To get the greatest value from the study, compare your own activities to those revealed by the group figures. Don't consider this in any sense a self-rating, but rather a device that will give you a rough measure of how your time outlays look on a comparative basis.

EXECUTIVES' PAPER-WORK LOAD

1. "What percentage of your working time do you spend doing paper work at your desk?"

Following is a breakdown of replies:

NUMBER OF EXECUTIVES	PER CENT OF TIME
11	95 or more
36	80
54	75
33	70
27	40
12	25 or less

2. "What does your paper work consist of?"

The figures given are those of an "average executive":

Reading interoffice correspondence	10 per cent
Reading outside-the-organization correspondence	5
Writing or dictating interoffice correspondence	6
Ditto, outside correspondence	6
Preparing reports	17
Planning	20
Working on problems with paper and pencils	12

Note the interesting fact that although reading inside correspondence takes twice as much time as outside matter—10 against 5 per cent—time spent *answering* both categories is the same. The reason is that the inside figure is trimmed by face-to-face or telephone follow-up, a possible time saver that might be used to advantage by more executives.

Other items mentioned by the test group as a whole and adding up to 24 per cent included:

- Analysis of reports
- Trade publications
- Writing up interviews and meetings
- Writing house organ
- Checking details
- Reading insurance plans, taxes
- Labor reports, etc.
- Studying
- Reviewing special paper work
- Filling out questionnaires
- Reading publications and services
- Reading sales appeals

3. "What, in your opinion, are the executive's big headache producers in the paper-work area?"

Here's a compilation of the most revealing replies:

"People dropping in without appointment, and I mean within the organization."

"Unnecessary copies of correspondence, and memos written by others where a phone call would suffice."

"Lack of factual, detailed information properly summarized to allow prompt action."

"Trying to get uninterrupted periods to devote to major tasks."

"Preparing reports that seem inevitably to have conflicting deadlines, with too little notice to prepare."

"The sheer volume of reading matter. And it's not merely a matter of reading speed, but the ability to absorb it all."

The significance of the list above is that it represents the *successful identification* of what was, probably, an unidentified difficulty. Once the problem is pinpointed, the solution is usually clear. There's little doubt that you could run your eye down the list of items and prescribe a series of off-the-cuff solutions that would almost surely work for anyone having the problem—including yourself.

4. "What is your single strongest recommendation to help fellow executives save time on the paper-work chore?"

Sixty-five per cent of the executives answering agreed on a basic need: "Better delegation of details to others."

One executive was even more specific: "Have secretary sort incoming correspondence into folders marked a) action required, b) to be read, c) to be signed. When I'm on a trip I arrange to receive a daily summary of correspondence sent to me."

Some other ideas:

"Get things on paper while they're fresh. It's twice as hard, once time has elapsed and other problems have intervened."

"Schedule your day carefully and allow for the likely interruptions so that you can maintain flexibility with less wear and tear on the nervous system."

"Learn to read more speedily, selectively, and use the waste basket more frequently (I have taken a rapid reading course which was of some help.)."

"Organize and systematize your job so that a minimum of written communication is necessary."

"The ability to dictate rapidly and well (I can't. I have to rough things out on a pad—a time waste.)."

In addition to the results you've just read, personal interviews with some members of the group provided further information on paper-work problems. Here, for example, are five specific difficulties pointed out by individual executives, with suggested solutions:

Irregular load. The office manager of a leather processor told us: "I'm snowed under Monday and Tuesday, there's a lull Wednesday and Thursday, and the avalanche starts again on Friday."

If your pattern is similar, can you:

1. **SHIFT SOME ITEMS TO SLOW DAYS?** Maybe the people writing you can spread the load.

2. **USE "UNDISTURBED TIME?"** One executive from a Duluth insurance company reports that the half-hour before starting time is equal to two hours during the regular work period.

3. **CONSOLIDATE DICTATION TIME?** Where your time tends to be broken up, it may be better to use small "free time" periods efficiently to take care of your mail piecemeal.

Mixed priorities. Items marked "Rush" are not necessarily the most important, from the point of view of dollars involved. These steps may help set priorities:

1. **ANALYZE YOUR MAIL.** When correspondence piles up, it's time to establish clear-cut priorities.

2. **EXPLAIN DELAYS.** For items at the bottom of your priority list, acknowledge receipt, if possible, and state your intention to reply in due time.

Consultation required. A big mail stopper is the letter requesting information that you must get from another source, especially if that source isn't presently available. Here are two possibilities to consider:

1. **IS THERE MORE THAN ONE SOURCE FOR YOUR INFORMATION?** This may merely mean a second person in the same office, to help if your regular informant is out.

2. **CAN YOU CLARIFY THE REQUEST?** A call to the individual who

made the inquiry may suggest another way to gather the needed information.

Overcommunication. The desire to keep company people informed of developments is fine. But it can be overdone.

To keep this tendency under control, there are several things you can do:

1. **MINIMIZE THE "CARBON-COPY-TO- . . ." MENACE.** Discussion with other people involved can establish the limit of good communications.

2. **CONSIDER THE VIRTUES OF THE "ROUNDUP" LETTER.** Here's an illustration: an office supervisor from a food-processing firm in Toronto described his version, a weekly letter to six subordinates to sum up developments of varying interest to all. He eliminated the need for six individual letters.

3. **REMEMBER THE BULLETIN BOARD.** It provides a handy place for items of general information.

The slow respondent. To simplify follow-up, can you:

1. **ESTABLISH DEADLINES FOR YOUR RETURN CORRESPONDENCE?** This can be done on a more or less permanent basis for routine items. But on your "one-shot" letters, you may have to specify the date for a reply from your correspondent.

2. **MAKE ANSWERING EASIER?** There are many methods for simplifying responses. Here are several you can readily adapt:

Suggest that the reply be written on your own memo.

State clearly the alternative answers, where these are possible: "Let me know whether process A or process B is your choice."

Enclose a checkoff sheet, where checks in appropriate boxes will constitute a full reply easily given by the recipient of your inquiry.

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THE SCIENCE OF WASTEBASKETRY

The two student Execs turned up the input on their power skates and rolled even more rapidly down the soundproof Tex corridors.

"We'll make it in time," Elena whispered into her shoulder mike.

Flanders nodded, and tapped his mike twice, a habit he had for registering agreement.

The two figures swept up a ramp and into the circular auditorium. Quickly finding two empty relaxoseats, they stretched out just as the spray machines whitened the air with Attento, the drug that increased the individual's powers of concentration.

A chart appeared on the dome:

Four Historical Stages of Wastebasketry

1. Garbage Container Period
2. Destruction Anxiety Period
3. Era of Maximum Discard
4. The Golden Age

Didactor Fipps briskly mounted the podium, struck the posture for commanding attention, and commenced his lecture.

GARBAGE CONTAINER PERIOD

"The history of our subject really begins about the middle of the twentieth century, when ignorance of the potentialities of the wastebasket as an executive tool was rampant. Informally, this is known as the Garbage Container Period, or Garconp. In those

benighted days, the wastebasket was considered merely as a means of disposing of cigarette butts, empty coffee containers, and yesterday's newspaper.

"However, glimmerings of enlightenment were even then beginning to appear. By use of such terms as 'circular file,' for example, an awakening to a possibly functional purpose is indicated."

DESTRUCTION ANXIETY PERIOD

"Unfortunately, the development did not run true to course. Before the 'circular file' concept could be logically expanded, an ancient psychological ailment known as Destruction Anxiety afflicted Execs by the thousand.

"The fact was, the mighty force represented by the uncontrolled wastebasket was more than many people knew how to handle. To offset anxiety, office equipment suppliers began building wastebaskets with compartments.

"With a certain amount of ancestral shame, I must tell you that it was common practice for Execs to dispose of a day's correspondence with ostentatious use of the wastebasket. But this bold display was followed up by a dutiful secretary—as you know, in those days before the Secro and Stenro machines, people served in this capacity—who collected the wastebaskets and stacked them in storage areas.

"At this point, that great innovator, Elbender Lee, set forth the dictum, 'An end to wastebasket hoarding,' and brought to a close the second stage of our history."

ERA OF MAXIMUM DISCARD

"But with the end of one false turn came another. Due to price manipulation, the price of baled paper quadrupled over night. Executives competed with one another to make the biggest contribution to their company's paper reclamation effort.

"Those were indeed the evil days of wastebasketeering. It was not uncommon, for example, for one Exec to raid another's inbox, just to be able to end the day with a higher yield of scrap paper.

"Needless to say, efficiency nosedived. What else would you expect when meals in executive dining rooms began with recitation in unison of such phrases as, 'A piece of paper retained means profit restrained'?"

"With everyone trying to depend on the other fellow's records, with Exccs getting their secretaries to commit important information to memory, so that original papers could be scrapped, chaos reigned."

THE GOLDEN AGE

"At this critical time, the great Joe Golden made his contribution, and by intensive study and self-dedication, developed the basis for our practices today."

The audience of reclining figures stirred in anticipation, as the Didactor momentarily paused.

Elena pressed Flanders' arm and whispered, "He's coming to the Golden Rules." The student Excc tapped his shoulder mike and leaned back to get a clear view of the magnifying screen.

Didactor Fipps gazed fondly down at his enraptured audience. "It never fails to move me," he always told his wife, "the way the students respond to the climactic moments of my lecture on Advanced Wastebasketry."

He cleared his throat—a sound blocked from his audience through the censor-mike he was using—and continued:

"It was Joe Golden who first made it clear that this object," and he held aloft a round, old-fashioned disposal unit, "is both the strength and salvation of the working Exec. Golden hit right at the heart of the difficulty. He reduced the problem to two sub-problems:

"What should go into the wastebasket?"

"What should stay out?"

THE GOLDEN RULES OF WASTEBASKETRY

The Didactor adopted the stance that meant he was coming to the meat of the meeting. Tension mounted, and Fipps smiled

in self-appreciation. He signaled for another squirt of Attento, and continued:

"Joe Golden, father of modern wastebasketry, taught us to consider the wastebasket as a functional link in the successive steps of paper-work flow. Here are the guides he provided—guides, let me add, that transform the wastebasket from a piece of furniture to an Exec resource:

"Lick the physical details. Size, shape, and location should reflect not only functional requirements but also personal preference. Obviously, the basket you use should be capacious enough to absorb all you feed it, without overflowing and becoming a useless eyesore. And it should be convenient to your hand rather than occupy a spot determined by the whim of your porter or Office Cleanall machine.

"Some Execs with small capacity requirements find that a small, flat-sided basket works out well, particularly where it can be fastened to a wall bracket or on the desk inside the kneehole area.

Rule out the extreme cases. In your use of the wastebasket two types of material crossing your desk pose no problem:

"1. THE NATURAL WASTEBASKETABLES. A mailorder ad for a product you'd have no conceivable use for, routine announcement of a company development with which you're already familiar, fall in this category.

"2. THE OBVIOUS RETAINABLES. Weekly production figures that you keep on file, information you'll need at a later date, clearly is aimed for a destination other than the wastebasket.

"Set up your own rules for routine material. This is one area of Exec practice that must reflect your personal needs. The most logical set of rules for another Exec might be wide of the mark in your case. We've noted a few suggestions for your consideration in chart form. To those that are appropriate for you, add those you have worked out for yourself. In general, your objective is to throw out as much as possible. As one famous Exec puts it, "The fuller the basket, the more productive the day."

At this point, Didactor Fipps projected another chart on the Tri-D screen:

FOR THE WASTEBASKET

1. *Use and discard.* A memo announcing a conference, for example, can be tossed out after you've noted the conference date on your desk calendar.
2. *Extra copies.* You may be sent several copies of printed material. Where you need only one for the record, the others may be discarded.
3. *Unnecessary bulk.* Voluminous material of which you need only a summary or portion can be abstracted.
4. *Irrelevant material.* Circulars, form letters of no interest to you should seldom survive at desktop level.
5. *Recorded elsewhere.* Sales figures that are posted on a centralized permanent record may be noted and disposed of.
- 6, 7, 8, etc. Add your own!

TO BE RETAINED

1. *Reports.* Key periodic reports that fit into a series you use for comparison, etc.
2. *Items with a future.* You'll hold correspondence that contains:
 - a. queries that require reply.
 - b. information you need for an as yet unmade decision.
 - c. ideas on which you'll want to follow up.
3. *"Evidence."* Letters sent you "for the record"—terms of an agreement, for example—are file material.
4. *Reference material.* Manuals, instruction booklets, etc., for equipment or procedures in your area.
5. *Carbons of your own memos, letters, etc.* These help clarify the record in case of misunderstanding, or qualify you for "credit, if it's due."
- 6, 7, 8, etc. Add your own!

The Didactor switched off the chart and continued his recitation:

"Face up to the emotional angle. It's a psychological commonplace that certain instruments and devices carry an emotional charge for the user. Some of us get a bang out of owning and using modern firearms, for example. Similarly, wastebasketing imparts to some practitioners a definite emotional fling.

"Let me illustrate the point. The Chief Exec of an attitude-testing organization told me: 'I like to throw things in the basket. This gives me a feeling of work done. On a deeper level, it makes me feel decisive. It's such a crisp action to crumple up paper and toss it away.'

"To some Execs the fact of finality creates an opposite effect, an unnecessarily high level of caution. Their wastebaskets achieve

only a fraction of their potential value. Watch for any such reaction on your part, and report to Psycho if it persists.

"Using the other fellow's wastebasket. This can be either admirable or a darned nuisance, depending on how it's done. From time to time you receive material of no importance to you but of possible interest to a colleague. Routing such matter to him can be of real help. But occasionally this procedure becomes the means by which an Exec evades a wastebasketing decision. Before sending along a letter, brochure, memo, advertisement, to a fellow executive, clear it with your conscience.

"Students, that is all for today."

As one man, the student Execs yanked heartily at the approval sirens attached to their relaxoscats. Fipps bowed to the applause.

Elena arose, so moved that she talked directly to Flanders: "Isn't the Didactor splendid!"

Flanders absent-mindedly tapped his mike twice.

"What are you thinking about?"

"How rugged our ancestors must have been to have functioned as Execs at all, without our advanced knowledge."

They started their power skates and joined a beginner's group in the Golf Break class.

SOME NOTES ON DICTATION

The executive who has five, ten, or fifteen subordinates may or may not be a big shot. But the executive who has two secretaries unquestionably is.

Why the obeisance to the secretary as a symbol of status? There's a sound reason. A secretary, unlike a subordinate, symbolizes the executive's personal accomplishment. Granting, of course, that he is making good use of the secretarial assist, two secretaries clearly indicate that here is a man who is putting out the work.

"TAKE A LETTER . . ."

The secretary as a taker of dictation becomes a direct multiplier of the executive's effort. And of course, in our day, the dictating machine frequently substitutes for the human stenographer.

"Talk Your Work Away," is the title of an article on dictating by Ray Josephs in the *Michigan Business Review*. And although the promise of the title is perhaps too rosy, the opening paragraph of Josephs' item clearly states the potential for increased efficiency:

"If you are in any business which requires communication of ideas from yourself to others, or needs the gathering of information, you'll find no greater time-saving device than modern electronic dictating equipment."

Mr. Josephs is sold on the mechanical dictator. You may not be. But secretary or machine, your proficiency at dictation can be a prime means of chopping your workload to size.

MORE AROUND THE CORNER

As management becomes more communications-minded, and as the total volume of communications mushrooms, the greater your correspondence load becomes. Unless you want to limit yourself to longhand or tie yourself down to a typewriter, you must develop your dictation skill.

Manufacturers of dictating machines estimate new sales at 1,500 units a month. That means every month a large number of executives push down a button marked "dictate" for the first time. What happens thereafter is an individual story. Everything from mike fright to an antipathy for "gadgets" can transform a carefully engineered machine into an unused dustcatcher. Whether you use a secretary or a dictating machine, or both, it will prove helpful to appraise your handling of the dictation problem.

Your own dictating practice is intimately linked to company policy. For example, top management's decision to purchase dictating machines and set up a typists' pool would clearly affect individual executives. The points below, accordingly, are of interest to you both from the viewpoint of your personal duties and as a company manager.

Machine versus secretary? Get straight on one point: there is no clear-cut superiority of a dictating machine over a secretary, or vice versa. Each has advantages and disadvantages, as charted below:

FACTOR	SECRETARY	DICTATING MACHINE
	No hard cost figures are available because of the variables; nevertheless, average figures are provided by experts in a position to make acceptable estimates:	
<i>Cost</i>	Cost per 15 lines based on salary: 26⅓ cents	13⅓ cents
<i>Operating problems</i>	The stenographer has both the advantage and disadvantage of being human: her good moods help you along, her emotional upset or her absence becomes your personal handicap.	Generally suffers from nothing a good mechanic can't fix. But some companies find it rough recruiting capable typists for transcription. On the other hand, the marriage rate is zero.

FACTOR	SECRETARY	DICTATING MACHINE
<i>Off-hour requirements</i>	May have to be coaxed to stay overtime or work at odd hours.	24-hour, 7-day-a-week service, no questions asked.
<i>Speed</i>	Range of good secretary is 80 to 120 words per minute, which adequately covers the average dictation rate of 100 w.p.m. Some personnel departments will hire girls at 60 w.p.m. where steno duties are light.	Can take it as fast as you can dish it out. As long as your words are clear, there's no special problem of transcription.
<i>Portability</i>	For the executive in the field, the traveling secretary is generally impractical.	The standard dictating machine, weighing 11 pounds, can go along with your luggage. A new, camera-size transistor machine weighs two pounds. Battery-powered, it can be used anywhere, runs a full hour on a single tape
<i>Training</i>	Generally the training is one-way, aims at making the stenographer adapt herself to your methods—good, bad, or indifferent.	The executive necessarily is the trainee. Because of this fact, the dictating machine is particularly helpful for the new executive, since it forces him to improve his dictating practices.
<i>Flexibility</i>	The modern secretarial student is given courses in grammar, spelling, vocabulary and business correspondence. A well-trained secretary can do an editing job for you, and take over handling of routine items.	The machine is limited by what you can do with it. A typist transcribing from a disk or belt can make only minor corrections.

Your dictating style. Whether you use a secretary or a machine, your personal habits can help or hinder the dictating process. Interviews with secretaries and typists transcribing recorded dictation disclose key points by which the executive stands or falls:

1. **PREPARATION.** "Half my time is wasted while my boss shuffles papers around and tries to collect his thoughts." One of the secre-

taries we consulted put her finger on a frequent executive weakness. Some executives dictate without using notes of any kind and manage very well. Others require comprehensive notations in long-hand. Use the method that is best for your own needs. But don't push down the "dictate" lever, or call "Miss Smith!" until you have decided the order of work, and what you want to say in regard to each item.

2. AUDIBILITY. The mumbling, word-chewing, incoherent executive is a bugaboo used to frighten secretarial students. Whether or not the prototype exists in reality, it's a fact that your ability to talk clearly and construct grammatically is an important determinant of the finished job. Listed by secretaries as cause for asking for repeats: poor enunciation, coin-jingling, pacing out of earshot, covering the mouth with the hand, frequent throat clearing.

3. FACILITATION. "He is a common sewer of fine wines." The secretary who is unfamiliar with the word *connoisseur* may struggle valiantly without quite making the grade. Make it easier, either for the secretary or the transcriber, by spelling out unusual words, names, technical data. Indicate the punctuation and spacing that you want used, where you have preferences.

"I'm in trouble when my boss dictates in spurts." An uneven dictating pace can alternately rush a secretary to death one minute and bore her to death the next. You may not be able to dictate without some gaps. But try not to speak too rapidly.

Timing your dictation. The Research Institute ran an experiment which may help you save *two-thirds* of the time you spend answering mail.

Executives were asked to take a batch of correspondence and answer it later in the day or week. Answers prepared in this fashion contained considerable recap material—up to two-thirds in average cases, only one-third constituting a real response to the inquiries. The same executives were then asked to dictate their replies *as they read the morning mail*. Replies took one-third the time. In most cases 90 per cent of the mail can be answered in this fashion.

A BRIDGE OF WORDS

"Technical people are notoriously poor dictators," states Miss K. Roberta White, of the well-known Berkeley School. Miss White's statement can be enlarged to include most of us: in areas where we tend to think in terms of broad concepts, it's often difficult for us to verbalize. The result raises hob with our reading public.

You won't find it mentioned in most books on executive practice, but there's one simple test you can make of your final product, be it report, memo, or letter. Show it to someone in your office and ask, "Do you understand this?" If he does, you're apt to be a successful dictator.

CHECK YOUR DICTATION PRACTICES

A review of your dictating procedures may help you spot habits or practices that, in the interest of efficiency, should be changed. The check list below touches some of the high spots:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Are your dictation periods timed so that they fall in the best possible spot in your daily routine? (For example, does your timing allow ample leeway for transcription before the last mail?) | YES | NO |
| 2. Do you make every effort to prevent unnecessary interruptions while you're dictating? | YES | NO |
| 3. Do you have at your fingertips all the information you require for the dictation you plan to give? | YES | NO |
| 4. Do you clearly state your instructions for each piece of dictated material—whether it's a memo, a letter, a report, or other type of communication? | YES | NO |
| 5. Do you clearly state your priorities—which items are to be rushed, which can be left for last? | YES | NO |
| 6. Do you ask for a rough draft when you anticipate changes in your copy? | YES | NO |
| 7. Do you spell out unusually difficult words, proper names, and technical phrases, and enunciate clearly all critical figures? | YES | NO |

- | | | |
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| 8. If you use a stenographer, do you regulate your dictation speed to her shorthand rate? | YES | NO |
| 9. When appropriate, do you give your stenographer an opportunity to ask questions on points that may not be clear? | YES | NO |
| 10. Do you indicate minor corrections in such a way that letters and reports need not be retyped? | YES | NO |

Although you may have answered all the questions, keep in mind the possibility that some of your replies should be considered subject to review by your stenographer or transcriptionist.

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HELP FROM YOUR SUBORDINATES: BUILDING THE TEAM

The word *team* in management parlance, through overuse and misuse, has lost usefulness. Talk, almost unending talk, of the "Management Team" (note capitals), "team spirit," "team work," "team objectives" has worn away preciseness of meaning.

Who—or what—is this "team" that's been getting so much attention from the management experts? More to the point: What does the "team" mean in terms of your own responsibility?

The team we're talking about is your own immediate staff, the people who assist you in your executive function. Of course, some of these individuals may carry out routine activities. But these are accepted as a matter of course. It's their activity in terms of their direct support to you that we're examining here.

SHOOTING BASKETS ON THE GRIDIRON

Before you build a team, it's a good idea to know just what sport you're involved in. Whether it's baseball, football, or basketball, the effective team is the one that's well organized and capably led. That same fact applies to your group. But first, you must examine the nature of the activity in which you're engaged. Then you can end up by saying, "For me, a well-balanced team would consist of A number of X's, B number of Y's, and C number of Z's."

To determine the ideal make up of your team, you must work out the qualifications necessary to the people represented by the symbols X, Y, and Z.

The answer will come to you in two parts:

What is the nature of your job responsibility?

What kind of "team" can best help you carry out that job responsibility?

THE ROUTINE-CREATIVITY RATIO

When you think about your job, you see that it can be described in a number of ways: the number of hours required to accomplish it, the skills you must have to handle the problems that arise within its orbit.

But from the point of view of efficiency, an aspect of your job that is especially pertinent lies in the degree to which it encompasses routine duties on the one hand, creative activity on the other.

Under the heading of routine might come such elements as answering correspondence, checking the work of employees, recording performance figures. In the creative area arise the search for new methods, planning, solution of problems.

There is likely to be a great variation in the ratio of these two elements: the head of a shipping department might correctly describe his responsibility as 90 per cent routine, 10 per cent creative. An engineering executive, on the other hand, might turn in an opposite estimate—10 per cent routine, 90 per cent creative.

After locating yourself on the routine-creativity continuum, spell out the answer to the second question: "What kind of team can best help you carry out your job responsibility?"

BALANCE FOR EFFICIENCY

You will find many formulas suggested for balancing your team. One that has had its brief moment of glory is the "redskin approach." The "Indian" system is simplicity itself. You make sure your group is made up of both chiefs and braves, in proper proportion.

The solution is apt, but rudimentary. There must be further differentiation of your "players" in order to work out a satisfactory team.

What's needed is a breakdown of roles that will relate to the

routine-creativity ratio. A set of categories of this nature has been devised.

FOUR BASIC TYPES OF ASSISTANTS

The book *Developing Your Executive Skills* by the present writer provides a four-way breakdown of people, based on their ability to contribute according to the routine-creativity ratio. Note how the types, described here, lend themselves to an appraisal of your staff problem:

The innovator. He is creative, imaginative. You have to give him only a faint glimmer of what's on your mind, and he'll grab the ball and run with it. He'll help you clarify your own ideas, then go ahead on his own to work out the details. He is an expert planner. You tell him in general what you're after and he'll have the blueprint in your hands in jig time.

The implementer. While the innovator can be thought of as an architect, the implementer is the general contractor. You give him the plans and he'll build you the house you want. You tell him in clear terms what needs doing and he'll get it done for you, working out the practical details as he goes along. He'll be stopped from time to time because of unforeseen complications. But if you set him back on the track, he'll continue under a full head of steam.

The partial implementer. This type of person can work well within limited areas. You can think of him as the subcontractor, the man capable of doing part of the job. He lacks the mental faculty to grasp any great range of detail. He can't build you a house, but he can install the plumbing. Although his range is comparatively short, his focus tends to be sharp. Within the area of his competence, he'll function efficiently.

The line follower. This individual can do a competent job only when he is given a clear and detailed idea of what has to be done. He's the craftsman, the carpenter, or bricklayer. Any unexpected development will throw him for a total loss. If he can't check back with you to ask questions, he'll be stopped cold. But in general he can do a dependable job.

Remember, there is no objective virtue attached to any one of

these four types. Your requirements alone determine the proportion, the balance, your team should have. You must judge how many of which kind of people you can best use in your particular situation.

The innovator, for example, might be completely misplaced as a member of a team where routine action is primary. On the other hand, if your function is one that demands a constant flow of new ideas, of new solutions to problems, you might find yourself in a tough spot if you're overloaded with line followers.

THE DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION CHART

This is another key that can enlighten you as to team make-up.

Company organization charts may seem commonplace, but for some executives, there is considerable information to be gained by charting the structure of one's work group. Finding out who's responsible to whom and for what—or attempting to—may lead to your discovery that you're:

- overloading your assistants with employees who report to them;
- retaining too much of delegatable responsibility;
- failing to make clear-cut assignments of a given function.

STAFFING

A few more words about putting the right man in the right job. The words happen to be in the form of an anecdote concerning a sales executive eager to fill an important spot in his selling force.

On Sunday, his ad was in all the papers: "Salesman wanted. Must be six feet tall, etc., etc."

And by Tuesday, interviewing was progressing nicely. Candidate after candidate came into his office for the usual preliminary size-up.

Suddenly the door swung open to admit a fellow who could have walked under a five-foot bar without mussing a hair. "Yes, sir, what can I do for you?" inquired the man behind the desk.

"About your ad—"

"Sorry, we're interested in men six feet or over."

"I know—that's why I'm here."

"Ridiculous," he said. "You're so far from being six feet you couldn't make it by jumping."

The little man laughed. "I know what you want—a man with a six-foot personality. Give me five minutes to convince you."

Later that day, the little man's newly acquired boss was describing the incident to a fellow executive:

"The fellow really did have a six-foot personality. But that wasn't the reason I hired him. I suddenly realized I wasn't looking for six-footers at all. I wanted salesmen who were aggressive, hard-hitting. Originally I had used size as a guide to those qualities. I ended up using it as a means of elimination, an end in itself.

"I guess it's a pretty common mistake. We all know the value of setting up rules and standards to help gain certain objectives. But what many of us fail to see is that we can put so much weight on the rules and standards that we lose sight of the results we're after."

TROUBLES OF THE FLESH

The esthetic beauty of the organization chart frequently fails to survive the test of reality. After all, people are people, not little circles neatly drawn on paper.

People, being people, have interpersonal problems. And, as head man, you have to step in and restore team harmony when the organizational gears begin to grind.

"Clash of personalities" is the label you usually see tied to this situation. Most executives nowadays have enough psychological savvy to know that it is hard to adjust personality differences.

Don't let yourself be stymied by a phrase. There are cases that only a psychiatrist or an exit interview could resolve. But frequently the situation lends itself to your personal analysis and cure.

WHERE'S THE RUB?

By pinning down specific causes for friction you often end up with much better understanding and teamwork among the individuals you're dealing with:

Difference in training and work habits. "It used to drive my boss crazy," explained a young executive, "when he saw me doing any paper work. He insisted that the only way to hold down my job was from the field."

The old-timer may sniff at new-fangled ideas, the young man will groan at "stagnation and lack of imagination."

Difference in age. This difference, separate and apart from any contrasts of temperament or work habits, can cause trouble. The steadiness and balance of a seasoned employee can be ruffled by an undiplomatic youngster.

Difference in standards. To the meticulous employee, the man whose only goal is to "finish the job" may seem like a sloppy operator.

Difference in approach. The employee who is a careful planner will become impatient with a co-worker who depends largely on the "let's-do-it" trial-and-error method.

Difference in function. The cost analyst has a different purpose and way of handling figures than, say, the production manager.

OTHER FRICTION AREAS

Here are some additional situations involving personalities that can wreck the balanced performance of your group, regardless of how carefully you have put together the pieces:

People who share a responsibility for facilities. This might be anything from a desk stapler to a fleet of trucks. Unless there is both the will and the clear-cut plan for sharing, dangerous frictions are likely to develop.

People competing for advancement or for the favor of the executive. The ambitious loan clerk who is always on the spot with the answers for the officers, but can't seem to free himself to handle the bank's customers, creates an unfavorable resentment among the other employees.

People who are uninformed about the work of other team members. Ignorance of the other fellow's job often leads to conflict. As a matter of fact, in order for your group to function as a team, it is

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essential that they know at least in large outline the objectives and responsibilities of the other team members.

Incompetence. The man who knows he isn't doing his job well may resent the one who turns in an excellent performance and vice versa.

LUBRICATING THE GEARS

When the smooth functioning of your team is threatened by differences such as those listed above, you have several solutions at hand. Here are some of them:

Frank discussion with people involved. If the problem results from their overcompetitiveness, you may want to point out that they are defeating their own purpose, blocking their advancement.

Separation. When the friction results from deeply rooted personality factors, your only choice may be to reassign the people in order to reduce contacts.

Information. If knowledge of each other's work is lacking, it's up to you to fill the void.

Training. Where the difficulty stems from feelings of job inadequacy—inability to cope with the work—your solution is more and better training.

TEST FOR ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING

They tell this story of France during the occupation. A German manager of a French-manned business organization is asked by his boss:

"How are things here with you?"

"Good, very good," comes the response. "No one has fired a shot at me all day."

But there is a better way to judge the state of mind of your group than by such negative evidence.

Actually, there are many suggestions offered for checking the "state of mind" of a group. One executive will tell you his method is to count the number of *complaints* he gets each month. Another one suggests absenteeism or lateness as an indicator.

EMOTIONAL WEATHERVANE

Here's a method that is viewed with favor by some managers:

List the questions. Keep a record of all questions employees ask, making sure you omit nothing. Even as simple a question as, "What time is it?"—if it turns up frequently enough—indicates a need on the part of your employees, or a situation that requires looking into.

Head of an Order Department in a food products company compiled these queries over a period of several days:

"Do I have to take that assignment?"

"Where are the blank filing cards kept?"

"How much of our product can I buy?"

"Can I take off tomorrow?"

"Is this the only plant the company owns?"

See how the questions stack up. Once you've compiled your list, the next step is to distribute the individual questions into categories as in the chart below.

Put a check for each question you've noted in the appropriate space in the tally column.

TYPE OF QUESTION	TALLY COLUMN	TOTAL
About assignments—more information, clarification, etc., needed	_____	_____
About departmental operations	_____	_____
Requests for privileges	_____	_____
About other departments— what they do, etc.	_____	_____
About the company—history objectives, rules, etc.	_____	_____
Other?	_____	_____
Other?	_____	_____

Analyze the results. Once you've tallied the questions, add up the number in each category. Now you're ready for the final step, interpretation of the results.

In most cases there's no problem. The manager, for example, who finds a large number of questions being asked about assignments can safely conclude that he's been missing a bet in his assignment procedures.

Sometimes, however, you may have to dig to get to the circumstances that are raising questions in the minds of your employees.

One bank executive, for example, noted that, within one week's time, he had been approached by two employees with questions about the future of their jobs. In the chart he tallied these in a category he labeled "Job Prospects."

Realizing that the questions indicated a feeling of insecurity, he looked into the matter, found that unfounded rumors about a bank merger in town was causing concern. A talk with his superior served both to pass this information up the line and to decide on a statement of the facts that would ease the unnecessary worry.

You'll have to use your judgment as to how many questions in a given category signal a trouble spot. A single query may be the tip-off to a serious situation. Or many questions in a given area may pinpoint a minor matter, easily cleared up.

WHAT IS TEAMWORK?

The word *teamwork* is generally taken to mean working together, "cooperating." Certainly that may be an important attribute of your staff. But a study by Science Research Associates conducted among the Young Presidents' Organization has produced an additional number of characteristics. Keep your group in mind, and see how they measure up to the criteria suggested by the Young Presidents' Organization:

Flexibility. Regardless of their training, specialty, or experience within the company, good team players should be receptive to new ideas, should be able to adapt quickly to changing conditions, and should be able to absorb a certain amount of failure or setback without losing drive.

Organizational depth. The "defense-in-depth" concept that flourished in military circles during World War II is appropriate

for your own work group. The absence of one member should never be permitted to paralyze activity or effectiveness.

Minimum of routine supervision. "It shouldn't be necessary," says one bluff old-timer, "to go around wiping their noses." More daintily, perhaps, and equally explicit—you shouldn't have to tell them to come in out of the rain. This quality grows from your original indoctrination or training and the minimum responsibility you give each member of your group, regardless of the nature of his job.

Improvement versus growth. From your expectation and example, your people should press forward on two fronts simultaneously. On the one hand, they should develop a desire for maintaining and improving the *status in quo*. On the other, they should be actively interested in breaking through established patterns, in maintaining a constant search for new methods, new products, new markets, new objectives.

TEAMWORK YARDSTICK

The four characteristics mentioned in the Science Research Associates study provide only one of many possible measures for teamwork. Think back to the last ballgame you saw for other indications: the talk among the players out in the field, aimed at morale boosting and encouragement; putouts or double plays show how well the team members work with one another; and finally, a glance at the scoreboard tells an especially significant story.

Be sure to include yourself in your assessment. It's the cooperation *you* get, the help your group supplies to *you* that is often the best measure of your team's effectiveness.

General Malin Craig, Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army from 1935 to 1939, was known for his direct approach to problems. One day, resplendent in white dress uniform, he started out for an affair of state, accompanied by a new aide, Major Wilton Burton Persons.

"General," explained the young major, "I haven't had much experience in this aiding business."

"Son," responded Craig, "just keep your damn feet off my white shoes and you'll be all right."

WHAT KIND OF HELP DO YOU WANT?

There may be times in which all you expect from your subordinates is that they don't tread on your toes. But by and large you'll want much more in the way of assistance. To some extent you must personally equip them to meet your needs.

When you ponder on the training of one or more of your subordinates, some pointed questions suggest themselves. You must face these questions and try to answer them accurately as a preliminary to upgrading the capabilities of individuals in your group. We say *your* problem because we are concerned here with the efforts that originate with you, rather than through a personnel department or other company unit.

Here are some queries bearing on your training situation, and several possible answers. Check off the responses that represent your present thinking:

1. In general, to what purposes do I really intend to put my assistants?
 - a. Just want them to take care of the routine, thus freeing me of the time-consuming details.

- b. Would like them to function on their own in a pretty circumscribed job area.
 - c. Want them to develop their individual capacities to greatest possible extent, up to and including the limits of my own responsibility.
2. Am I in a position to devote adequate amounts of time to their training?
 - a. Have no time to spare for such purposes.
 - b. Can devote just enough to do a fairly good job.
 - c. Am willing to adjust my personal work schedule to make time for training.
3. Do I really feel my assistants have a potential for improvement?
 - a. No.
 - b. Some.
 - c. Considerable.
4. Do I believe in the efficiency of on-the-job training for my subordinates?
 - a. No.
 - b. It may work for the better-qualified people among them.
 - c. Every man can be improved by on-the-job training.

Obviously the "good" answers to these questions are the "c" choices. But the less positive "a" and "b" answers are not tossed in to shame or provoke the contrary-minded executive.

It's perfectly possible that a tough-minded appraisal of your needs would yield an answer pattern other than all "c's." Purpose of the non-c answers is to help you fashion a policy for the improvement of your people. You properly may feel that improvement should come slowly, by slow absorption of the good experience their regular job duties provide. That's all right. And don't let yourself be pressured into believing that you've failed to meet your obligations.

Learning definitely *can* take place by a kind of intellectual osmosis. And in some cases it's a more dependable and desirable method than a poorly conceived training effort that succeeds only in wasting the time of trainer and trainee.

Let your answers to the previous questions influence your approach to the balance of this chapter.

THEIR PERSONAL SUCCESS FORMULAS

You gain considerable insight by looking at the problem from the viewpoint of your potential trainees.

From where they sit, accomplishment of your training goals represents successful advancement. Accordingly, put yourself in the position of one of your assistants and see how improvement on the job looks to him.

The Research Institute of America questioned 724 "pre-executives"—individuals of a supervisory status—in 53 companies in the United States and Canada.

They were asked, "What does 'getting ahead' mean to you?"

Here are the answers:

Making more money	27 per cent
Having more job security	25
Having more responsibility	19
Using more initiative	16
Having more authority	7
Having more prestige	5

Importance of these figures lies in the view it gives you of the expectations or aspirations of individuals who are generally at the same status level as your assistants.

THEIR LEVEL OF ASPIRATION

Occasionally it comes as a shock to an executive to find that not every assistant wants his boss's job. Some may be perfectly content staying exactly where they are. This does not rule out the likelihood that they do want either to perform more capably or to get a bigger paycheck.

Psychologists speak of an individual's goal, which his ambition sets for him, as his "level of aspiration." It is his future objective as opposed to his present situation.

It has been found that some people like to "play it safe." They set their level of aspiration only slightly above what they have achieved. Success to them may be slight, but on the other hand it

is easily achieved. Others may set their goals excessively high, use an overambitious objective as proof that they've got a lot on the ball, although they seldom reach the goal.

The best course to follow with your assistants is one that steers between the two limits of underambition and overambition. The words of the noted psychologist, Kurt Lewin, can help clarify what is the most effective compromise:

A successful individual typically sets his next goal somewhat, but not too much, above his last achievement . . . Although in the long run he is guided by his ideal goal, which may be rather high, his real goal for the next step is kept realistically close to his present condition.

MAKE GOALS SPECIFIC

The most important preliminary to any efforts you make in developing your subordinates is to be clear as to the direction you want their training to take.

In order for these goals to be realistic, they should not only represent what you feel to be the capabilities of the individual but also must reflect the true level of aspiration of the individual.

It may prove harder than you anticipate to have your subordinates think through to goals that represent real interests. Certainly, with each of us, it may take considerable soul-searching to separate the things we really want from influences others have exerted on us.

Before deciding that you and your assistants have succeeded in pinning down objectives, they would have to be able to answer questions like those below:

If I believe my goal involves a step up the management ladder, am I willing to shoulder the additional responsibility?

If I think I'd rather have a staff than a line job, am I kidding myself into thinking that staff people are free of job pressures?

Do I want advancement, with the fatter pay envelope that goes with it, enough to really sweat for it?

Eventually you might even hope that the individual you selected for improvement could fill out this sentence: "By (add date) . . . , my personal goal is to . . ."

MAPPING THE ROAD

Here's where the well-intentioned executive sometimes gets into trouble. In his eagerness to develop his people, he tends to want to "share the burden." Instead of limiting his role to that of consultant, he tends to move in and take over. And the trainee, consciously or unconsciously, is back in grammar school. He does what "teacher" tells him. The result is a loss of initiative and a failure to grasp the hard-as-nails aspects of business life: the need to operate alone, to depart from cotton-batting niceties.

Once realistic training goals have been established, implementation should largely be left to the man who is supposed to achieve that goal. Certainly you should make yourself available to him for specific information. You may even ask to be kept informed of his plans and progress. But don't overcontrol. One of the greatest benefits may be derived precisely from the experiences your assistant goes through of pinning himself down to an objective and working out the steps by which he will achieve it.

There is good reason for you to be alert to the motivational aspects of training. Too often an executive has assumed an ambition to "get ahead" that simply didn't exist. We sometimes fail to realize that to some individuals, "success" is a dirty word. Confronted by this situation, special steps may be in order.

THE SUBORDINATE WHO WANTS TO STAY PUT

The subordinate who shrinks from growth can block your efforts to increase the efficiency of your department. He may stand squarely in the way of technological advances, new market horizons, or merely normal advances in methods of operation. The chief harm he causes may be interference with the progress of those around him.

To deal with this human drag on efficiency, you must know how to recognize him and how to help him break through the fence he has built around himself.

What's he like? First of all, the man is insecure. He shies away from change and progress because he doesn't feel up to the learn-

ing and doing of new things. Secondly, his self-respect won't let him admit even to himself that he's afraid to grow. So he covers up and makes it hard for others to see just what he is doing.

How does he act? He tries to sabotage any proposals leading to change. And he side-steps responsibility. Specifically, his behavior pattern shapes up like this:

1. He must check every decision with somebody else.
2. He cuts off ideas from subordinates—or worse still, grabs the credit for those he can't sidetrack.
3. He avoids initiating action: he'll never come to you and say, "We ought to be thinking about a new setup."
4. He follows one of two courses in staff meetings—either refuses to commit himself or opposes any suggestions on the ground that "we tried it before and it won't work." That circumstances may have changed doesn't matter to him.
5. He complains about others when standstills are questioned, or when plans he is supposed to implement bog down.
6. He refuses to delegate any of his work. The reason is not only that he thinks his subordinates might show him up but because delegation might give him time to develop new ideas, the very growth he dreads.

A thumbnail case history in an academic setting spells out the story of the man who wants to stay put.

A small town in Illinois has a sadly deficient grammar school. Laxity, low standards, lack of new ideas dominate the institution, the way a host of ghosts dominates a haunted house.

The school principal spends a considerable amount of time every day counting milk bottles. "Got to be done," he explains with a wry smile. "We must keep our accounts straight."

You don't have to visit the scene of the crime to explain it. This unfortunate educator doesn't want to face his more demanding obligations. He doesn't want to sit down and figure out how his school could be made to look better, function better, and turn out better equipped students.

If he took the time to plan, he *might* work out something appropriate, and that would mean *change* (ugh!).

Some of the symptoms of the man who prefers the *status* to remain *quo* may be found in individuals who don't necessarily suffer from fear of change. For example, refusal to delegate may spring solely from underestimating the ability of one's subordinates. But when several of these clues show up consistently, you can be fairly sure you've spotted the man who's scared.

Tailor-made stilts are what the reluctant assistant may need. A large part of the job of supplying them will fall to you. It's not an easy or rapid process. But those who have faced the problem say these approaches are helpful:

1. **HELP HIM HELP HIMSELF.** Build up his confidence in his ability to progress. Emphasize the above-average abilities he possesses. If appropriate, you might start with a subtle reminder that he must have had a lot on the ball to get where he is. You can go on from there to suggest methods leading to moderate gains. For instance, references to current published information in certain areas might get him reading more. There may be occasions to discuss the merits of advanced schooling in his field, and so on.

2. **LEND HIM SOME OF YOUR DRIVE.** When you want to launch him on a new project, face up to his fear, along the lines of, "You may have some qualms, but I don't doubt that you can see it through."

3. **INCREASE HIS LIAISON WITH ASSOCIATES.** Look for opportunities that require him to consult with others on mutual problems.

4. **EXPOSE HIM TO CONTACTS OUTSIDE HIS OWN JOB.** Send him to conventions or visits to other companies. Within your own organization, ease him into work with groups that are developing new projects.

LET WELL ENOUGH ALONE?

Don't conclude that the man who wants to retain the *status in quo*—and proves it by turning down what you consider to be a desirable promotion—is ready for the scrap heap.

Management may be inclined to feel that these men will never amount to anything, but they may be wiser than you think.

Bernard M. Baruch once said, "Most of us can see the obvious

opportunities but only the wise man knows when to turn down a promotion." Here are some reasons an individual might have:

1. He's a better judge of his ability. A man may recognize his own limitations and decide that it's better to turn down the job now than fail.

2. He's not emotionally suited. Not everyone can be a leader. The military recognized this during World War II and never forced a promotion. Their research indicated that some men can do a competent technical job but simply cannot accept the burden of command.

3. He has outside pressures. A man may pass up a promotion because of some factor connected with his family or civic life. If that factor should ever disappear, you may have yourself a man with a revitalized outlook.

4. He may see no real benefit. Some rank-and-filers have weighed what management offers and found it unappealing. Perhaps the incentive doesn't seem worth the effort or increased responsibility.

Of course, it's disappointing when you pick a man you think is right for a spot and he turns it down. But don't let your resentment blind you to what's behind his refusal.

DANGER FROM BELOW?

The executive who goes all out for the good of his subordinates is a management stereotype. But the really competent subordinate may pose a threat to a surprisingly large number of executives. A capable assistant is a blessing only to the executive who is not afraid of him.

Some typical situations highlight the difficulty.

"Squeeze-out." A plant manager is convinced that his assistant is trying to squeeze him out. The subordinate has made himself so helpful that employees now address most of their requests to him instead of the manager.

"Upper hand." The personnel director of an advertising agency had been trying for weeks to get the president's ear to present a profit-sharing idea. As he relates, "You can imagine how I felt

when I ran into my assistant and the president with their heads together on that very subject! The fact that my man later gave me a full report only confirmed, in my mind, how sure he is of having the upper hand."

"Rotation to limbo." A department head in a service organization saw this happen. The vice-president had been holding a series of meetings with half a dozen department heads. To increase participation, someone had suggested that the chairmanship be rotated. But the V.P. froze at the idea—seeing a threat to his own leadership.

To the chief who fears the second in command, it makes little difference what the latter's real motive is. The leader is really afraid of his own shortcomings, even if he won't admit it to himself.

On the other hand, the executive sure of his ground should welcome his right-hand man's activities. He puts himself in position to harness the power.

If you are blessed with a highly motivated subordinate, consider these steps to make his presence pay off:

Take a good, hard look at the way you discharge your responsibilities. Ask yourself whether there are gaps your lieutenant is trying to plug. For example, is his tendency to "run the show" actually a fill-in for poor organizing on your part?

Encourage a subordinate who tends to take over the handling of requests and other communications coming up the line. But make sure he understands and follows your wishes on communications which do require your attention. Within those limits, his readiness to take on additional duties will free you for more important matters.

Use the man with an "in" at the top as your official messenger for particularly urgent matters. But make it quite clear to both parties that the man is acting as your emissary. This can speed communication without in any way detracting from your authority. Don't forsake normal channels on other items.

Look for tip-offs to their basic interests. Assistants who offer to take duties like chairing a meeting, training new comers, etc., *may* be implicitly criticizing your methods, with or without cause. But it

may also be hungry for an opportunity to broaden their own experience. You can satisfy their needs and at the same time guard your prerogatives by controlling the occasions on which they take over part of your work.

BUILDING UP TO A BREAKDOWN

Occasionally, an executive tries to increase the effectiveness of a subordinate without involving himself in the effort. It's a laudable objective, but possibly unrealistic. Let's consider a method that may produce results, but tends to be risky.

"Make your own job!" The genius who first thought up that sink-or-swim advice may really have had something. But in the usual case, the technique of handing a man a shapeless mass of responsibility and asking him to fashion it into a thing of beauty raises serious questions.

Is this technique wise? Is it effective? The arguments can be boiled down to two statements:

Pro: "You really test a subordinate by letting him define his own job. It gives the widest possible latitude to his basic managerial abilities; initiative, understanding of the management function, ability to deal with people, skill at grasping problems."

Con: "A man placed in a new job without any fences staked out for him is bound to wander. Very soon you have a whole organization operating off balance—without clear lines of authority or responsibility, or any recognizable objectives."

The wide differences of opinion on the merits of this technique spring from the fact that *under some circumstances* it may be desirable—in other situations it definitely is not.

In any case, the "make-your-own-job" method of filling a spot is risky unless you take some precautions:

- Roughly stake out the purpose of the move and the boundaries of the position for all who are affected.
- Define the responsibilities of other individuals whose functions impinge on the open area.
- Provide some guidance from above. The trainee should report progress to you or some other executive.

- Don't use the "make-your-own-job" approach just because you have no place for a man and hope he'll help you solve the problem of his placement. In chopping out a spot for himself, he may smash your organization.

HOW DO PEOPLE GROW?

Every live thing we know about grows from within. You can't "paste" a piece of education onto a man and hope that, like grafted tissue, it will become a living part of him.

Your most successful efforts to increase the effectiveness of your subordinates will be those that stimulate this internal process of development.

A *philosophy* of training, expressed or otherwise, clearly must underlie your training efforts. The output of two brilliant minds, taken together, may provide some ideas you may want to include in your thinking.

YOUR GOAL: AN UNCOMMON MAN

The Organization Man by William H. Whyte, Jr., views with alarm the tendency to turn out cookie-cutter versions of a supposedly ideal company team member. Whyte details the qualifications by which an individual rises or falls in our management universe. Aside from the ethical or moral reasons for viewing such a state of affairs with horror, there are indications that the Organization Man is on his way to join the Neanderthal Man and other relics of a culture that generally cannot tolerate rigidity.

The Organization Man, goal of a passing era's training objectives, is basically inefficient. Limited by training and lack of encouragement in developing imagination, initiative, originality, he's not long for this world, because basically he isn't designed to cope with the real problems that beset him.

Now let Crawford H. Greenewalt, president of E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, make a similar point positively and, in doing so, offer a guide to your training efforts—an ideological yardstick by which to measure your people and their progress.

Mr. Greenewalt, addressing the American Newspaper Publishers

Association in New York City, concluded his talk, titled "Key to Progress—the Uncommon Man," with these words:

"Men are not interchangeable parts like so many pinion gears or carburetors; genius, as John Adams said, is bestowed 'imperiously' by nature upon an individual.

"And behind every advance of the human race is a germ of creation growing in the mind of some lone individual, an individual whose dreams waken him in the night while others lie contentedly asleep.

"We need those dreams, for today's dreams represent tomorrow's realities. Yet, in the very nature of our mass effort, there lies this grave danger—not that the individual may circumvent the public will, but that he will himself be conformed and shaped to the general pattern, with the loss of his unique, original contributions.

"The group nature of business enterprise itself will provide adequate safeguards against public affront. The great problem, the great question, is *to develop within the framework of the group the creative genius of the individual.*

"It is a problem for management, for public education, for government, for the church, for the press—for everyone. The stake is both the material one of preserving our most productive source of progress and the spiritual one of insuring to each individual the human dignity which is his birthright.

"I know of no problem so pressing, of no issue so vital. For unless we can guarantee the encouragement and fruitfulness of the uncommon man, the future will lose for all men its virtue, its brightness, and its promise."

MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF SUBORDINATES

The owner of a business hung up a number of "do it now" signs around the office. Later, a friend asked how the scheme was working. "Not good," came the answer. "The cashier skipped off with \$30,000, the head bookkeeper eloped with my private secretary, three clerks asked for a salary raise, and the office boy quit to try his luck in the numbers racket."

MOTIVATION TOWARD WHAT?

Naturally, you want your subordinates to function at a high level of efficiency. Their performance is a direct measure of your own efficiency. But before you start motivating your people, you must give some thought to the content of their contribution.

Maximum utilization of your subordinates' skills is the result of a variety of factors. Some of these factors depend on your work methods and the work methods you've set up for the department. Other factors derive from your relationships with your people.

FIVE KEYS TO INCREASED CONTRIBUTIONS

The effectiveness of your people will vary, depending on how you handle five key elements:

- delegation
- leeway
- criticism
- contact
- initiative

Delegation. Without delegation there can be little contribution by your subordinates. Here's a demonstration of what can happen when the executive misses the delegation boat.

"What the hell are they here for?"

This exclamation erupted from a vice-president who, having run himself into the ground trying to keep up with his duties, wonders why his subordinates fail him in his hour of need. Had he been able to answer his own question, he would have realized that his subordinates were there to have responsibilities delegated to them.

Dr. Earl Brooks of Cornell University studied the practices of a group of top executives. About an equal number of executives were judged excellent as were judged below average. Regarding delegating ability, the reports of the superiors of these executives averaged out in this way:

	<i>Delegated effectively</i>
Excellent executives	75 per cent
Below-average executives	zero

In *Developing Your Executive Skills*, by this author, Chapter 15 titled "Delegation—The Secret of Executive Sanity," describes the basic methods of delegation. The delegatable and nondelegatable areas, benefits, and the specific how-to-do steps are given in detail. If these fundamentals are of interest, refer to this work.

Leeway. Once you delegate, your subordinates must have sufficient freedom of action to function within the limits of their own abilities.

You may think this is a statement of the obvious. But consciously or unconsciously, many executives limit leeway, enforce a pattern of behavior on their subordinates. The fact is easily demonstrated:

There is the "stop-think" executive—a conference leader, for example—who saturates the meeting with his own ideas, opinions, suggestions. His effusions are sure to kill off the ideas, opinions, and suggestions of subordinates.

PSYCHOLOGY OF THE YES MAN

The most common example of the brainwashed subordinate is the one who always agrees with his superior.

The tragedy of the yes man is that he is often the victim of his superior's unconscious and unintended attitudes.

But the superior is not always the villain of the piece. Many yes men have a predisposition for the role. An analysis of the psychology of the yes man can provide both specific and general insights into the executive-subordinate relationship.

FREE RIDE?

A free ride on the boss's coattail is often the real explanation behind the yes man. He figures that what he doesn't "no" won't hurt him. Accordingly he goes along with his neck neatly tucked in, out of danger.

Usually, the yes man is regarded as the victim of a domineering boss. Yet, this explanation often amounts to nothing more than a bit of amiable folklore promoted by yes men.

Probe the psychology of yes men and chances are you will find that the "easy-outers" far outnumber the scared sheep. But either way, yes men are a menace among executive staff, since:

Over a period of time, the yes man becomes worthless as a helper; any qualities of originality or initiative are bound to atrophy.

The entire executive process is handicapped without the benefit of criticism.

Since the steps toward eliminating yes-manism also help develop the caliber of assistants, consider these possibilities:

1. **PULL IN YOUR APRONSTRINGS.** Don't make it easy for subordinates to hang on to you. If they need additional information—available from some other source—or even when it's a matter of weathering some minor crisis, encourage them to stand on their own feet.

2. **DON'T "LEAVE THEM THE DETAILS."** As executives often see it, that's just what assistants are for. But if you continually limit

their chances to assume responsibility by leaving them, nothing but double checking and monotonous routine, you smother the flame of personal drive. If their abilities are to be developed, *the challenge must be real.*

3. **KEEP YOUR OPINIONS UNDER YOUR HAT.** A smile, a nod, or a frown can tip off subordinates to your thinking just as clearly as a full statement. Particularly in conferences, it's important not to choke off the headwork by making your views known too soon.

The old chestnut that a yes man is a fellow whose head is hinged in only one direction does make a point: The man who has the habit of yessing his superior can't be expected to change overnight. With hardened cases, if you get results at all, it will be over a period of time.

Criticism. Criticism as regards both the giver and the target is essentially an emotional problem. The efficiency of a subordinate can be blanked to zero by adverse comment. The usability, even the employability, of a subordinate in a given company, may be ruined by a misdirected adverse appraisal of his efforts. Four rules of criticism can help you avoid harmful results, and gain the improvements that are desired.

1. **FOCUS ON THE ACT, NOT THE PERSON.** When a subordinate has done something that in your opinion calls for criticism, make sure that he understands you're not talking about him but about the situation, the circumstance, or the act involved.

2. **BE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE ERROR.** To tell a subordinate that his "work is no good" fails to help him. He should know exactly what's wrong.

Scientific studies have revealed an important fact, that a man can improve just by knowing how he went wrong, even if he isn't told what he should have done.

3. **BE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE REMEDY.** Where you do have ideas on how a situation can be improved, give them. But try as much as possible to make this a teaching situation rather than one in which you are administering punishment or reproach. You achieve this end by spelling out what the employee can do to better his per-

formance and making sure that he understands why the new approach will yield better results.

4. **EASE THE BLOW.** If there is a sadistic element in a man, it generally shows up in the way he goes about criticizing a subordinate. He'll get full pleasure from laying on the lash, by performing in front of an audience or timing his act in the way that will cause his victim the greatest discomfort. You'd want to move in the opposite direction:

Choose a time and a place that respects the dignity of your subordinate.

Generally, it's unwise to use humor in connection with your comments; your humorous words may sound like sarcasm.

The history books record that even Abraham Lincoln failed when he tried sarcasm in connection with criticism. In an effort to make General McClellan attack the Southern forces, Lincoln wrote to him: "If you are not using the Army, I should like to borrow it for a while." McClellan stayed put and sulked.

Where there has been failure, there is a greater need for follow-up. Tact and consideration are even more necessary where the subordinate is suffering from the open wound of a recent shortcoming. Try to give the man encouragement and the opportunity to check with you should he feel the need to do so.

Contact. For maximum utilization of your entire work group, it's desirable that you establish contact right down to the lowest echelon. Sometimes an executive thinks he's okay in this respect, but he may be mistaken.

The production manager of a small metal products company was sure he had "satisfactory communications" with all his employees. He *did* have excellent contacts with his immediate subordinates, the production foreman and the staff people who reported to him. But his contacts with other employees were through these supervisors, who sometimes unintentionally misrepresented situations. At one point this manager almost had a strike on his hands because he did not realize the feelings stirred up by a company decision to decrease overtime. He had, in fact, been told his employees would welcome the change.

But don't underestimate the difficulties you face in trying to establish these "floor-to-ceiling" communications. Granting the wisdom of establishing effective channels with all the levels below you, there are real difficulties. But points like these can help:

1. **CLEAR UP THE "BY-PASSING" CHARGE.** Assure the people reporting directly to you that your objective is not to undermine their authority or to check up on them. You want information flowing from the rank and file simply to keep your feet on the ground, communicationswise. Let your subordinates know of contacts you are making and what you are learning.

2. **KEEP ON USING SUBORDINATES AS SENDING STATIONS.** Your key men will have no adverse reaction to pulse-feeling or information-gathering contacts with their subordinates. But they are bound to view dimly any efforts of yours to pass along facts, developments in the company, and so on, directly. Except for the "big" company-wide announcements, they feel that the newscasting function is theirs.

3. **BE SELECTIVE, NOT EXCLUSIVE.** You can't make contact with everyone at the lower levels. The difficulty then becomes one of selection without arousing resentment. This problem can be minimized:

- Profit by the normal contacts. Most top executives—including everyone up through the president and the chairman of the board—generally observe the social amenities with the rank-and-file employees with whom they come into contact. Many a misstep has been averted because of a casual chat with a plant guard or elevator operator.

- Recognize the point of view of your employees. Nothing will be thought of your striking up a conversation with old-timers in the company. But there could be some resentment if you select someone who has no "special qualifications" in the eyes of his fellows.

"Why doesn't he talk to me?" becomes the questions of the disgruntled employee who feels he's being done out of a status gesture without reason.

Don't let yourself be stymied by this danger. You can avert

resentment by making contacts spontaneous, not limited to the same people all the time.

- Let your subordinates recommend the good contacts. "Who's a good person to talk to about the lunchroom situation?" A question like this can forestall the edginess of subordinates and save time in getting to the best available information source.

Today, when all are aware of the subtleties of human relations, few executives are likely to gamble on carelessness or insincerity in their contacts. Employees too have an increased awareness. False camaraderie, the too-hearty backslapping and the talking down that an occasional executive thinks of as "meeting them at their own level" is sure to be spotted for what it is. Let both the content and manner of your contacts be dictated by honest interest, feeling, and need.

Initiative. In a sense, initiative is the other side of the delegation coin. The success of your delegation may depend altogether on the ability of your people to act effectively on their own.

You may have to watch yourself with a cold eye to spot the hidden controls sometimes used. Remember the coach who tells his quarterback, "Get in the game and *run that team!* And don't forget to watch me for signals."

Building initiative in your people starts with you—starts with the concept you have of your fellow man. If you believe in the innate worth of the individual, his capacities and native intelligence, you have the foundation on which the initiative of subordinates can be solidly built.

Giving your subordinates the feeling that they're on their own will make them draw more heavily on their own resources. Here's what's involved:

1. **RESPONSIBILITY.** A subordinate requires a sense that the task is "his baby," to feel that he has a personal stake in it. With this feeling comes the ego involvement that results in real dedication to a task. The man who identifies himself with his work considers himself linked so closely to it that he has a personal interest in its success.

2. **ORIGINALITY.** "You can't make an original thinker out of run-

of-the-mill employees." You've undoubtedly heard that idea in one of its many paraphrased versions. Fortunately, it isn't true. Originality, like many of our mental activities, can be reinforced and increased.

You help an employee display originality by barring the humdrum solution or approach. Here, your own standards, your own performance, serve as a direct model. If, in work discussions, you show by example that you set great store by the new idea, the new approach, you provide the greatest possible encouragement to subordinates to do likewise.

3. ACTION. Make it easy, particularly for the beginner, the newcomer. This doesn't mean that you set out to remove all the stones from the road. But try to eliminate the indirect handicaps an individual may face. The better you do, for example, in defining his targets, the more likely your subordinate will be in scoring a bull's eye.

Many executives say that they want initiative from their people—up to the *point of action*, the stage at which a subordinate's ingenuity is put into operation.

But it's important that your subordinates must feel free to act—even free to fail. They must feel that they can take a step without being pushed back into line.

This freedom of action is liable to be a lot tougher on you than on your subordinates. In some cases, it means standing by with your teeth gritted while a man hovers at the edge of thin ice.

But there are no two ways about it. If you want initiative from your people, you have to ease up a little on your control.

You may even have to readjust your attitude towards error. A man with initiative may be guilty of a "stupid mistake"—but you may have to chalk up the cost to "experience."

HOW TO ACHIEVE INTERVIEW OBJECTIVES

Because people are people, the seemingly simple process of face-to-face contact *isn't* simple:

A Washington society woman, sitting next to President Calvin Coolidge at a party, gushed, "Oh, Mr. President, you're so silent. I just made a bet that I could get more than two words out of you."

Replied the President, "You lose."

And then there's the story of the English poet, Samuel Rogers, who, on being told that an acquaintance who was known to be a great talker and a bad listener was going deaf, remarked, "It is from lack of practice."

Many anecdotes highlight two facts about face-to-face communication: for some, there is a great deal of difficulty in speaking; others of us may have to struggle to listen.

DO'S AND DON'TS WON'T DO

Despite the multitude of pitfalls, many experts on face-to-face communication discuss the subject as though its mastery is a simple matter of X number of do's and Y number of don'ts. The truth is, the obstacles that hamper face-to-face contacts are both numerous and complex.

You only have to think back to your own experiences. Recall the emotion-laden atmosphere surcharging the room when your superior called you in for an evaluation session or when you were criticized for the way in which you carried out an assignment. And

for some people, tension arises in the face-to-face situation almost *regardless* of subject matter.

INTERPERSONAL TENSIONS

"Gene, will you step into my office for a moment? There's something I'd like to discuss with you." That may be you speaking, or a fellow executive. What is Gene's reaction? Obviously, it will derive from the past relationship.

If your relations with Gene are relaxed and friendly, chances are good that your business can be transacted effectively. Interviewing *technique* as such becomes a negligible factor: You can launch, develop, and conclude the interview satisfactorily.

Unfortunately, few business relationships, whether with regular members of your staff, others in the company, or the business visitors that cross your threshold, are likely to boast so ideal an understanding.

TROUBLE ON THE CONVERSATIONAL SEAS

Two kinds of problems tend to make the trip from beginning to end of an interview unrewarding, perhaps stormy, or even disastrous:

Problems of pertinence. "How in the world did we get onto this subject?" often wonders the executive. He has started talking to Pete Black for the purpose of getting his assessment of the sales potential in the Chicago area. All at once he snaps out of it and realizes that the conversation has been going on for half an hour, and the subject matter he's interested in hasn't even heaved up over the conversational horizon.

Problems of interaction. "Jack is a regular blabbermouth," exclaims the manager in bewilderment, "but when he sits across the desk from me, he closes up like a clam."

HANDLING PROBLEMS OF PERTINENCE

Don't let anyone kid you into believing that every second of time devoted to face-to-face communication can be "productive time."

Only fifty per cent of the time devoted to an interview may prove "fruitful." In some cases, only a single sentence uttered in an hour-long interview may have value, with the balance representing just so much verbal spinach.

Does that mean, then, that the interviewer who has spent the hour with only a one-sentence "return" has done a poor interviewing job? Not at all. A less skillful executive might have required two hours, or might have been unable to achieve that result despite a much greater time investment.

WHAT'S PERTINENT?

Let's assume your last interview was typed out verbatim and the sheets were placed before you. Could you go over the conversation and indicate the sentences that were appropriate, those that didn't belong in that particular session?

To some extent, you probably could. But it's most likely that you'd hesitate or remain doubtful about a considerable amount of the exchange. The reason is that in your relationship with people, "small talk" or "social talk" serves a perfectly acceptable, desirable function.

"Much of human communication asks for contact—not content," states Joost A. M. Meerloo in *Conversation and Communication*. "And," continues Dr. Meerloo, "this is the danger of words—that people may be unaware of their emotional function."

You are the best judge of what belongs in an exchange with another person, what is extraneous. But in order to make the judgment—and thereby, to streamline your interviews as desired—you *must begin with a well-defined objective*.

Here's why:

Executive A is talking to Henry Smith. His purpose is to assess Smith's value to the organization as a potential employee.

Executive B talks to new employee Henry Smith some weeks later. His purpose is to welcome Smith into the company, to make him feel at home.

Obviously, the content of the two sessions will differ. What is

pertinent in one case—because of the interview objective—will be *unsuitable* in the other—because of its *different objective*.

A list of interview objectives likely to turn up in your job activity might look something like this:

1. Personal evaluation. You want to arrive at a judgment of an individual, his suitability for a particular job.

Examples: hiring interview

promotion assessment

dependability as a supplier of materials or service

2. Fact finding. You want information that reposes in a set of facts in the possession of an individual.

Examples: post-accident interview, to determine cause

exit interview, to find out real reasons for leaving

talk with absentee, to learn reasons for absence

3. Opinion checking. You want to learn the opinions of X on a given situation or subject.

Examples: reaction to a new policy

evaluation of a suggested plan

4. Idea gathering. A situation or problem presents itself that must be acted upon. You want the help of your assistants.

Examples: what to do to appease a dissatisfied customer

how to solve an inter-department feud

5. Attitude-morale assessment. In order to take a particular step, it's often necessary to determine the mood or predisposition of an individual.

Examples: Employee X is performing poorly. What's gone wrong?

Employee Y has become moody, sullen. Why?

The above list by no means exhausts the possibilities. It contains sufficient items, however, to make it clear that we often have *multiple objectives*. In some interviews, you are interested in accomplishing more than one aim. In talking to a potential employee, for example, you might conceivably be interested in all five objectives presented above.

TARGET EMPHASIS

This functional approach to interviewing seeks to overcome the lack of direction in the standard approach to interviewing. Knowing that a talk may be classified as a hiring interview, for example, or an exit interview, doesn't tell you how to proceed and doesn't, therefore, solve the problem of pertinence.

When, however, you understand that you want to emerge from an interview with an *evaluation* of the capabilities of an individual, or that you want to end up with a *set of facts* now in the possession of the interviewee, a direction to your interview is suggested.

You solve the problem of pertinence by deciding on the *objectives* of your face-to-face contact, mapping the conversational *moves you must make to attain your goals*.

This does *not* mean you rule out everything that does not directly contribute to reaching your goal. The amount of additional conversation that takes place depends on *secondary* considerations.

We've already indicated the means of deciding on the objectives. You can write out, if you like, the specifics you hope to achieve as a result of your interview. By way of example, let's say you're interviewing an assistant to enlist his participation in a forthcoming activity.

You might spell out the interview objective in words like these:

"To get Ted to cooperate fully in finishing the Acme job on schedule."

Now, how about "Mapping the conversational moves . . . to attain your goals"?

These consist of a series of questions or statements. Here is the way your notes might read:

- Tell Ted about receipt of Acme order, what's wanted and when.
- Explain why we must deliver.
- Get his appraisal of how well situated he is to pitch in.
- Ask for his ideas to facilitate order filling, removal of obstacles.

- Set up “communications apparatus”—to keep him informed, and to have him inform me of progress.

A practiced executive could judge that a meeting covering the points above might be concluded in five minutes.

But the same executive, assuming he's as keen a judge of people as of time, would decide that a five-minute interview would leave Ted with the bewildered feeling of the individual who has just been buzzed by a fence-clearing jet plane.

HUMAN ELEMENT IN INTERVIEWING

Why the need for the extra time? That's where the human element comes in. A couple of robots *could* finish the business in five minutes. Two people require time to overcome their human frailties:

Time for time's sake. Our inborn respect for ceremony requires that “big” events get big treatment. We expect a matter of importance to take time.

Sacrifice on the social altar. “He brushed me off,” is one of the most damning comments an employee can deliver against a superior. As social beings, we hope for the respect of others. We want to be treated with a lack of haste, even expect others to take relish in our company.

The familiarizing beast in us. Animals become uneasy in unfamiliar surroundings. We, too, have a need to become familiar with a situation before we can relax in it. Again, this adjustment requires time.

For these and similar reasons, your interview will depart from the straight and narrow path. How far you wander—that is, how far afield you go or how much time you occupy in covering subjects not directly related to your basic purpose—depends on your own judgment of need. For example, you have to decide how much small talk it will take to help an interviewee relax. You have to decide how much you must reveal about yourself either by way of direct information or by forthright expression of your feelings, opinions, and so forth, to give the other person the feeling that he knows and trusts you.

In short, the problem of pertinence is *not* solved by ruling out all material that does not logically belong within the framework of a given interview objective. But by pinpointing your objective and spelling out the specific areas you want covered, the questions you want answered, the points of information you want to convey, you put yourself in a position to control the amount of *nonpertinent but nevertheless important* material to be included in the course of your talk.

HANDLING PROBLEMS OF INTERACTION

Some individuals pose practically no face-to-face communications difficulty. We understand them; they understand us. A word, a sentence, a few minutes spent in conversation will suffice to accomplish both our interview objective and the personal overtones of communication that are desirable.

But some individuals pepper our interviews with nettlesome moments and suffuse them with frustrations.

No point in embarking on a fruitless quest represented by the question, Who is at fault? Regardless of the answer, you face the same array of difficulties. And since you're holding the reins, it's up to you to guide the interview along its desired course.

PROBLEM PERSONALITIES

Both for your peace of mind and for the realities of the situation, assume that the difficulty lies with the other person. The problem can then be described by saying that there are a number of typical attitudes or situations that block the successful course of the interview. If you know how to handle the people who exhibit these faults, you can get on with the talk, accomplish the objectives you have in mind. These are the problem people, and some suggestions for dealing with them:

The man who won't talk. If he's naturally phlegmatic, the problem is one of quantity. He is likely to provide whatever information you're seeking but you may have to talk yourself blue in the face to get what you're after.

But when your interviewee isn't giving out, and it's not because

he's taciturn, the implication is that a specific difficulty interferes. You must find out the reason for his silence, and generally this is best accomplished by making it possible for him to reveal what's on his mind. There are a number of common gambits:

"Jim, I have a feeling that our conversation isn't going very well. Is there something on your mind?"

"Is anything wrong?"

"Before we get to the heart of our meeting I would like to ask if there's something you'd like to say first."

There has never been a case where a man who had something bothering him failed to open up when given the opportunity. This isn't to imply that once he has said his piece—voiced his grievance, whatever it is—the road automatically becomes clear. The problem your subordinate raises may wreck your original interview objective. But at least with the obstacle uncovered you are in a better position to deal with it and then continue according to your original intention.

The man who doesn't make sense. Perhaps because he's unnerved by the interview situation, or simply because he may not think logically, you sometimes will find yourself confronted by an incoherent interviewee. He rambles, hops from one subject to another, may even talk inaudibly. If on reconsideration you feel that the expectations you have built up for the interview are not overambitious, that is, if your interviewee is actually capable of helping you achieve the interview objective, you must retrace your steps to the beginning, then proceed by a step-by-step coverage of the points, trying to keep a gentle but firm control of the interviewee's answers. You may have to resort to such devices as:

"Now hold it, Hank, if I understand you correctly, what you've just said is that . . ."

"Would you please repeat that—I don't believe I understood you."

"Do we have any way of checking that last statement to make sure that we're not in error?"

The evader. Generally, there are two reasons for evasiveness during an interview: some individuals, for psychological reasons,

resent being pinned down to anything. They can't commit themselves to a statement of fact simply because they feel incapable of accepting the responsibility of making an unequivocal statement.

Show an individual of this type a piece of black material. A few minutes later ask him to tell you the color of the material.

"It's black," he'll say. If you persist in questioning his statement, he will hedge or qualify it.

There is no dishonesty in such an interviewee's responses. He simply tends to cave in when put under direct pressure.

In dealing with a person of this type you must use velvet gloves, refrain as much as possible from any show of toughness or threat. Remember: his statement, "Yes, it seemed to be sort of black," is the equivalent of another individual's positive "couldn't be blacker."

The other type of evader is generally the man who has some information which for one reason or another he doesn't feel free to communicate. As with the man who won't talk, your problem is to find out why he's being evasive. His reason may be the protection of a friend, fear of the consequences, and so on. You may have to be content with letting him know that you understand he's not being forthright and advance whatever arguments you feel will end his evasiveness.

The man who doesn't seem to understand you. Occasionally an executive will have a startling experience in the course of a conversation. Five minutes, ten minutes, a half-hour may pass during which he has carefully outlined the subject he wants to pursue. Up to this point he has gotten responses of a monosyllabic nature. Finally it's time for the interviewee to speak up. And for all the relevance his remarks carry, you might have been conducting your part of the conversation in ancient Egyptian.

Don't assume that lack of intelligence explains the situation you're up against. It *may* be the reason, and if so, perhaps you have set an interview goal that cannot be achieved with this particular interviewee.

The more common explanation is a decided difference in the approach that you and he have to the subject under discussion. He

may be perfectly qualified to talk about what you want to talk about. But his orientation may be so different from yours that even the words you use represent different ideas to him than they do to you.

To avoid this kind of impasse, avoid technical terms that you are not sure are understood by the other person. Ask yourself whether his experience and orientation would make a given point seem the same to him as it does to you. And if in doubt, use direct questions to check his understanding.

The arguer. This problem interviewee likewise tends to appear under two different headings: the man who argues because of his personal makeup, and the one who argues because of situational factors such as a recent event that has aroused his hostility.

If the interviewee's motivation to argue indicates that he is simply a hostile personality, you can do little with the basic problem.

Occasionally, an old-timer will tell you of a hard-as-nails approach that has turned the trick:

"This fellow came along as hot as a bug on a griddle. I blasted right back at him, gave it to him twice as hard as he was dishing it out, and he quieted down like a lamb."

Psychologists will explain the arguer as an example of an enforced repression of hostility. But shouting down the hostile interviewee is generally not desirable, since it may precipitate an emotional ordeal for him. The most you can hope for is a watering-down of his overheated approach, devoting your talk to a sharply limited aspect of your objective, even postponing the interview altogether.

The person who turns argumentative temporarily is an entirely different kind of problem. Confronted by the *temporary* arguer, you may want to find out the reason for his ire as a preliminary to getting on with your interview, or you may try to have him set aside his gripe temporarily:

"Ray, I can see you're fighting mad about something, but at the moment I have some pressing business that I have got to

settle. Can we go on with our talk now and I'll check back with you as soon as possible on this other matter?"

The liar. This man's name is not legion, but in certain interview situations the problem of getting at the truth can bring you to a dead stop. Remember, Diogenes found the going tough in this area, too.

One aspect of the problem is covered above in the "Man who evades," and you proceed with this type of problem as with the evader.

But a much more sizable chunk of the difficulty has different causes and connotations. And while these considerations are not confined to interviewing, they are so important in face-to-face communication generally that it will be worthwhile to analyze them at some length.

DO YOU FORCE THEM TO LIE?

"Fire the guy," was the foreman's angry decision.

"Give him a medal," said the works manager.

Under discussion was the driver of a forklift truck who had just broken \$35 worth of window glass when he hit a door jamb with his load.

"The man," continued the foreman, "was careless. He's been on the job for ten years and ought to know better."

Replied his boss, "The man was honest. He could have stacked the broken glass in the store room and no one would have been the wiser until the order was picked up. But instead he told you what happened."

The truth about lying. Our vote goes to the works manager. Emphatically!

Too many executives, knowingly or otherwise, behave in such a way as to *encourage the lie* and make the path of the truth-teller bumpy.

Here are a number of typical situations reported by Robert Dobbins, of the Research Institute of America's field staff, gleaned from his field experience:

1. **BOSS BUTTERING.** "One of my department heads," reported a

trucking company manager, "put in a couple of months working out a requisition system. The employees who told him it was fine got their heads patted. The one or two who pointed out flaws practically got their pants kicked."

2. **BLAME PINNING.** "I don't let my men get away with a thing," boasted the head of a maintenance and repair shop in an electric motor plant. "If something goes wrong, I jump right in, find out who's the guilty party, and dish out the punishment."

3. **BROWBEATING.** The head of a print shop was observed to bully his assistant into agreeing with a point of view on a job matter in which he didn't really believe.

Don't get the wrong idea. A policy of laxity is not the desirable alternative to the three approaches above. But there's a much better method available to you to make a lack of forthrightness unnecessary both in the interview situation or any other face-to-face communication.

THREE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE THE TRUTH

The acceptance and application of three principles can create the atmosphere in which truth-telling can flourish:

Understand that honesty grows from good relations. Your relationship with your subordinates is the wellspring of their forthrightness. As your people understand that they can depend on your fairness, your lack of malice, your concern for their well-being, they will seldom feel the need to protect their interests by lying.

Realize that the truth may be secondary. We tend to feel that truth is an end in itself, and always desirable. But in your life as an executive you may find yourself in situations where the need for the truth takes a back seat:

1. It becomes less important to find out who started a feud than to eliminate the friction.

2. It's less important to learn who committed an error than to prevent its recurrence.

Act with the knowledge that your behavior can encourage or discourage truth-telling. Specific things you do are the tip-off to your people as to the conduct you really want:

1. Tolerate failure. Don't act as though the man who fails is guilty of a crime. He *may* be guilty of lack of ability, lack of understanding, lack of effort. But to the extent that these are correctable, take constructive action.

2. Discourage the yes man. Yes men don't happen. They flourish where they have more to gain by yessing than by truth-telling.

3. Don't act in anger. "I was afraid to tell the truth," is a frequent excuse. Try to avoid giving your people the need for such self-justification.

4. Don't be a "head hunter." One of the problems that besets the quick-to-judge executive is the necessity for asking help in tracking down a "guilty" party. And nothing can so demoralize your group as the pressure to inform on a colleague.

That's when the claims and counterclaims fly, and the truth gets crushed between.

WRAP-UP

A brief recap is in order, in view of the many points covered. In general, efficient interviewing depends upon your ability to handle these problems:

Pertinence. You decide what is pertinent by pinning down interview objectives, then by judging the other requirements of the interview situation such as the desirability of relaxing the interviewee.

You can decide how much you want to add to the interview in the way of incidental conversation, "small talk" aimed at putting the interviewee at ease, and so on.

Interaction. Generally this difficulty confronts you in the guise of attitudes or personalities that complicate the communications process. By skill in dealing with each of these situations, you can eliminate the roadblocks and then go on to accomplish your interview goals.

TWO APPRAISAL TOOLS

The Pre-interview Check List and the quiz, *How Effective Is Your Interview Technique*, give you a quick self-appraisal of face-

to-face communications knowledge before and during the interview.

PRE-INTERVIEW CHECK LIST

1. Do you know as much about the interviewee as is necessary in the context of the interview? For some situations, these points are helpful:
 - Name and title?
 - Nature of his responsibility or function?
 - Name of his company and what it does?
 - His superior?
 - His business or work experience?
 - His special interests?
 - His accomplishments?
2. Will the place selected be suitable?
3. Are there others who should be informed of the interview?
4. Are there others who should be present during the talk?
5. Is the information or data you may want to use at hand?
6. Have you taken steps to minimize interruptions?
7. Do you have a list—mental or written—of the points you want to cover?
8. Do you know the objective you're after?
9. Do you know the objective of your interviewee? What does he want to gain from the meeting?
10. Should you decide in advance to what extent you want to help satisfy his objectives?

HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE?

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Do your interviews generally run about as long as you feel they should? | YES | NO |
| 2. Do you concentrate on helping the interviewee relax? | YES | NO |
| 3. Do you check your notes during the meeting to make sure you cover the subpoints of your objective? | YES | NO |
| 4. If unavoidable interruptions occur, do you try to minimize the annoyance for the interviewee—give him a book or magazine to glance at or, still better, material pertinent to your meeting? | YES | NO |

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 5. Do you consider the advisability of terminating an interview short of its goal if an unanticipated problem arises—unusual nervousness or emotional upset of the other person, for example? | YES | NO |
| 6. Do you strive for a positive and usually a satisfying ending to your interview—a pleasant word of thanks, or assurance of an action desired by the interviewee if that's in the cards? | YES | NO |

THE GROUP INTERVIEW: A NEW FACT-FINDING TECHNIQUE

Peter Holland, division head of a Pennsylvania plastics company, shook his head in frustration. Since he was shaving at the time, he opened a half-inch gash in his cheek, and then had two things to be annoyed about.

He applied first aid in the form of a styptic pencil, winced, and returned to his original train of thought:

"Damn! It will take ten minutes per man to cover my supervisors. Two hours shot right out of the day."

Continuing to be preoccupied with the problem, he talked it over with his fellow executive Henry Jonas during their ride to the plant. "I want to get my supervisors' ideas on inventory procedure while it's still fresh in their minds, so that we can iron out the bugs for next year. But what the experts don't tell you about getting the facts is that it takes a hell of a lot of time."

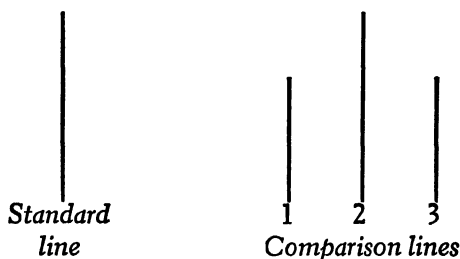
"Cinch," said Jonas. "Trot your people into a conference room and you can get it all taken care of in half an hour. Seventy-five per cent of the time saved right there."

"That won't work for what I'm after," Holland responded. "A conference produces a consensus of opinion. And you know how it sometimes goes. The glib fellows have their say, the nonspeakers get lost in the shuffle. I want their individual, unwatered-down opinions. There's such a strong tendency to conform. . . ."

EVIDENCE FROM THE PSYCHOLOGY LABORATORY

Holland's wariness of the ordinary conference method for his purposes is well founded. Psychologists have created experimental

situations that demonstrate the susceptibility of individuals to the opinions of others. Dr. S. E. Asch, of Swarthmore College, set up a test in which a group of people were to state which one of three lines matched the length of a standard line.



The group was instructed to state, by calling out the number below it, the line at the right equal in length to the standard line at the left.

But the situation was "fixed." The experiment was arranged so that all but one member of the group were instructed to make *incorrect* judgments. The "victim," called the "critical subject," was placed toward the end of the line, so that a succession of unanimous, similar, but incorrect answers was given before his turn came.

Here's a description of the behavior of the "critical subject" as he began to feel the effects of group pressure, as he realized that he had suddenly become a minority of one:

After the first one or two disagreements, the manner and posture of the individual changed. A look of perplexity and bewilderment spread over the individual's face. He fidgets, changes position to look at the lines from different angles. He may turn around and whisper to his neighbor, or smile sheepishly. He may jump up to look more closely at the card. At other times he may become especially quiet and immobile.

And what happens to the nature of the answers given by the "critical subject"? *In many instances, subjects gave answers that were incorrect, because they felt it was more important to conform to group opinion than to stick to their own convictions.*

In the words of one individual, "I did not want to be apart from the group; I did not want to look like a fool . . . Scientifically speaking, I was acting improperly, but my feeling of not wanting to contradict the group overcame me."

Dr. Asch's experiment is a good one to remember, both in relation to conferences in general, and for the specific problem you may face, along with Pete Holland, when you want to get a series of opinions or reports from a number of people on the same subject.

You must take special pains to get unbiased answers.

THE GROUP INTERVIEW

Recently, a new fact-finding technique for the effective solution of the problem faced by Peter Holland has been developed. It is called the group interview.

Although the group interview has as yet received little recognition in management circles, potential benefits may make it a valuable addition to the kit of executive tools.

Chief reason for the late discovery of group interviewing is its close resemblance to the conference situation. But note the differences:

	CONFERENCE	GROUP INTERVIEW
<i>Purpose</i>	Anything from problem solving to enlisting the support of the group on a course of action	Essentially to get the <i>individual</i> views of a number of people
<i>Size of group</i>	Ten to twelve is optimum	Is effective for anywhere from two to fifteen
<i>Information flow</i>	Two way, between conference leader and the group, and also among members of the group	From group to interviewer
<i>Role of leader</i>	Generally the leader tends to submerge his personality, limit his role in deference to group needs	The interviewer runs the show—asks questions, probes for clarification and extension of ideas. Group needs become secondary

Essentially, the group interview is used for getting information from several people simultaneously. It retains the advantage of the face-to-face relationship of an individual interview. But of course it's less time-consuming. Situations common to most executives offer the opportunity for applying the method.

Here's one example:

A personnel executive wants to find out whether it's desirable to adopt a uniform practice of introducing new employees into their departments. He calls together the ten department heads and asks them for their experience with the induction of employees.

Here's another pertinent situation:

A small advertising agency has just had its annual picnic. The head of the firm wants to decide whether or not to repeat the outing next year. He gathers a representative group of employees while their recollections are still fresh and asks for their opinion as to the success of the picnic.

HANDLING THE PROBLEM OF CONTAMINATION

Major problem in group interviewing is the avoidance of *contamination*, of getting each person's ideas unbiased by that of others in the group.

Let's say you are seeking to get a series of opinions on a given situation. The first man to speak up is bound to color the opinions of the others. If a second man agrees with the first, the accumulated weight of opinion almost certainly will influence the expressions of the rest of the group, as indicated by Dr. Asch's experiment.

Here are the best guides to effective group interviewing. The techniques have been most highly developed by attitude- and opinion-research people who use it as a time-saving device.

Establish optimum-sized group. Although you may interview anywhere from two to fifteen people efficiently, you may want to have a smaller or larger group, depending upon such factors as:

1. **TIME AVAILABLE.** The less time, the smaller the group should be.

2. **SUBJECT MATTER.** If you want a large number of "off-the-cuff" reactions on a subject that is clear-cut, a larger group is

desirable. But if the subject requires some thought on the part of your interviewees, you will probably do better with fewer individuals.

Establish a fact-finding atmosphere. Unlike the conference, where you generally want to create an almost social affair that permits interaction, in the interview it is desirable to keep the situation businesslike, minimize interpersonal reactions among the group.

A clear-cut and simple statement of the purpose of the interview helps to set the tone. An executive who wanted to dissipate any thought that the meeting was a regular conference stated his purpose in this manner:

"Gentlemen, I'd like very briefly to get your reactions to the parking situation."

Give individuals time to pin down their personal responses. Since your basic purpose is to get numerous individual reactions instead of group consensus, it's important that participants be limited to their own resources. Two devices make this possible:

1. Emphasize that what you're after is their personal, uninfluenced answers.

2. State your question and ask the interviewees to think out their answers before any individual starts speaking. Instruct them to write notes that will help keep their responses "pure." The notes needn't be comprehensive. One of two key words might do it. But be sure they follow directions on this point.

Encourage and stimulate each group member to voice his real feelings. "Tom, by your hesitation, I get the impression that you're not satisfied that what you've said is the complete and accurate statement of your ideas. Is there anything you'd like to add?"

By methods like the foregoing, by alertness to the nuances of interpersonal communication, you can continue to prod and stimulate expressions of ideas until you are satisfied that the answers you've obtained are adequate for your purposes.

As in a regular conference, you might want to use the direct query to make sure everyone has his chance to speak:

"Harry, you've refrained from expressing your feelings on the last point. What do you think?"

Also, the device of asking for, and thereby encouraging the

expression of, *opposed* views can bring forth a range of views that may exist in reality:

"We've just heard Sid state a most eloquent defense of his judgment. However, the opposite viewpoint, or any ideas in between, may obviously be as worthy and accurate as his. Who of us has different ideas?"

Finally, by emphasizing the value you set on accurate expressions of what each individual thinks, by taking every possible precaution to prevent any person or segment of the group from dominating the interview, you encourage the kind of spontaneous and individual expression you're seeking.

Professor George Horsley Smith of Rutgers University indicates that it is possible to use the group interview situation to break blocks that might exist in the individual face-to-face interview. He points out that ". . . the interviewer, by admitting his own 'sins,' can set up an atmosphere of acceptance that will encourage an individual to admit to attitudes or opinions that he otherwise feel were unacceptable."

Dr. Smith also notes that many individuals, particularly those who lack self-assurance, find in the group interview situation a source of confidence that would be missing if they sat in the "big boss's" office alone.

PLUS FEATURE

A worthwhile side benefit accrues from the technique of group interviewing: you demonstrate to your staff, individually and collectively, that you set a value on the ideas and opinions of each person.

By making it clear that you expect each member of your group to produce individual thoughts, and by encouraging the expression of these ideas, you show that even opinions that are set aside are valuable as "map-making" elements, that they help you get a better picture of the range of possibilities in arriving at a decision.

True, you can make the same point in individual conversation. But in the group setting you proclaim before witnesses, as it were, the regard you have for original thinking.

Every manager knows planning to be one of his chief functions. Every manager knows that planning is essential to the accomplishment of primary objectives. Every executive knows the basic steps of planning:

- Determine your goals.
- Marshal your resources.
- Assign and schedule the people who are to carry the plan forward.
- Start the action.
- Follow up . . . ?

For even the efficient planner, it's in the last step that the trouble starts. Instituting controls is the cheapest insurance you can get for the success of your planning. But although "follow-up" is always urged on the executive, the "how-to" is often lacking.

FOLLOW UP? BUT HOW?

Villain of the piece tends to be the time-cherished management tenet, "get things done." In our rush to do just that, we forget the fragility of the planning process. An unexpected development is always at hand to upset the apple cart.

Actually, planning is only half the job of "getting things done." Keeping a plan rolling and on track requires steps that are at least as important as those in the original planning sessions.

This chapter is devoted to two important adjuncts of the planning process: *follow-up*; and *plan rehabilitation*, or picking up the pieces after a failure.

With these two elements, chances of effective utilization of your resources are greatly increased. Without them, starting even the best-laid plan is not unlike plunking your chips down on a number and hoping that the little white ball will oblige.

FOLLOW-UP

How do you think you rate in your knowledge of follow-up procedures? Here's a chance to rate yourself.

Everybody's always telling everybody else to follow up. But what nobody tells anybody is exactly *how* you do it. The questions below can help you check yourself on some of the ABC's of the process.

- | | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. You give two subordinates assignments. One man is an old-timer, the other has been on the job only six months. Would you, in all cases, check back on the new man rather than on the old-timer? | YES | NO |
| 2. Do money considerations play a part in follow-up practices? | YES | NO |
| 3. Does the fact that a particular job has been done again and again make follow-up unnecessary? | YES | NO |
| 4. Is resentment at having you "breathing down their necks" a necessary consequence of follow-up? | YES | NO |
| 5. Is it possible to toss the "follow-up ball" to the subordinate doing the assignment? | YES | NO |
| 6. Can you delegate the follow-up responsibility? | YES | NO |
| 7. Let's look <i>up</i> the ladder for a moment. Is there anything you can do to ease the follow-up burden of your superior? | YES | NO |

You'll find the correct answers at the end of this chapter, page 184. Meanwhile, the paragraphs ahead will amplify some of the problems, highlight some answers.

SIX STEPS OF FOLLOW-UP

Chief reason for many executives failing to follow up is a kind of ethical-democratic ideal: we "insult" a subordinate by any action that implies he may not be able to carry out an assignment.

True enough, there *are* human relations hazards, the possibility of resentment or ruffled feelings. But proper procedures help you by-pass these.

Six steps help you gain the benefit and avoid the potentially painful kickbacks of follow-up.

Always follow up when an employee may run into trouble. There's no exception to this rule. When you're putting a new man on a job, or putting an old-timer on a job with which he's unfamiliar, you must always check back to see how the work is going.

Check back when an error can be serious. When safety is involved, for example, you have a situation that demands follow-up. An employee engaged in a hazardous job should not be permitted to continue without the benefit of your close supervision. The time interval involved depends, of course, on the nature of the job. But you want to make sure that the worker has the assurance that you are at hand and will be at his elbow if and as needed.

Check back when an error can be costly. A test run of special material, for example, may represent the payoff of months of previous work. You don't want the sums of money represented by months of preliminary testing to go to waste. Your presence at the side of the man doing the work can make the difference.

Make your follow-up matter of fact. This point reflects the manner in which you go about the follow-up. Don't give the employee the feeling that you expect trouble; on the contrary, you should make it clear that your following up on his work is just part of your routine.

Delegate follow-up where possible. Where employees go through routine jobs day after day, there is a tendency to relax, let the entire follow-up procedure slide. Many an executive has discovered this to be suicide.

One by one, your employees will abandon established practices and dream up job changes of their own. The trouble with most of these short cuts is that the quality of the work suffers.

Naturally, your time is limited. If you had to spend it all in follow-up, you wouldn't have a moment to devote to any other aspect of your responsibilities. It goes without saying that the

important jobs require your presence at critical moments. But, in addition to the follow-up you do yourself, the procedure can be delegated to subordinates or an assistant. Even where you don't have a regular right-hand man you can often get some of your experienced people to work along with you and give newer employees the benefit of their know-how.

Make it possible for the subordinate to check back with you. The best kind of follow-up may be to have the worker bring you either the preliminary results, or the final results, of the work he's engaged in. It saves a lot of your own time. For certain operations, this is the most efficient follow-up method of all.

YOUR BOSS AND FOLLOW-UP

Keep in mind that follow-up is a procedure recommended for all executive levels. For example, your own superior undoubtedly keeps tabs on your activities by means of follow-up. In his case it may be a weekly report, or it may be a daily session that you have with him at his desk. You may be able to help him and yourself at the same time. It's a good idea to have at hand the information you're pretty sure he'll want.

By discussing the problems you anticipate, you often can save him the trouble of following up, and save yourself the need to have him breathing down *your* neck.

WHEN PLANS FAIL

The worst happens: after weeks of thought, discussion, and preparations you put Plan X into operation and it falls flat.

What do you do? Forget it? That may be the best thing to do. But you can't think of the job as a game, where a whistle blows to end it whether you've scored or not.

The first thing to do is to recognize that the failure isn't the end of the world. Then look to see what choices you have at hand.

Where time is not against you, you may have a second, a third, even a fourth try. It may be a commonplace but nevertheless an encouraging reminder that Edison tried 50,000 alternatives when he was trying to develop a filament for the first electric light.

Many executives have turned defeat into triumph with just two steps. Here they are:

Analyze your failure. You may call it a review, reappraisal, critique, or post-mortem. In any case, you retrace your steps from your first plans to your last actions. The purpose is to find out why you lost out. In a broad sense, failures spring from two causes:

Imperfect planning

Inadequate implementation

In making your reappraisal you have to ask these questions about your planning:

1. Did you anticipate all eventualities?
2. Were your measures well suited to the needs of the situation?
3. Was the timing of the program okay?
4. Did you have a "built-in control system"—a method of checking work-in-progress or follow-up?

Next look back over what you did to implement the plans, asking yourself:

1. Did your choice of personnel prove satisfactory?
2. Were they equipped with information as well as tools?
3. Was the plan sufficiently well supervised by yourself or an assistant?
4. Was the follow-up performed satisfactorily?
5. Did you maintain good communications, so that difficulties could be reported promptly?

Prepare to make new plans. When you are satisfied in your own mind that you have put your finger on the reasons for failure, you're ready for the next step.

Now you have to choose. Will you—

1. Repeat the same process? "With what we've learned, we can use exactly the same approach, and now the odds favor success," you might say. But you really have to bear down, if this is your decision. You'll have to patch the weak spots. In addition, it's important that you check with those who made the first attempt to see that there are no other possible points of failure. How about some of the narrow escapes, the near misses, for example, that might have hamstrung the operation?

2. Revise? Analysis of your failure may have indicated the desirability of making substantial changes in your plans. These might involve:

Personnel. You may want to switch assignments or give two people the job one man was given before.

Equipment. You may feel it's advisable to make some changes here.

Method of operation. It may seem wise to change the timing, sequence, or location of the work. Or you may need to work out new procedures for particular parts of the plan.

3. Salvage? This alternative is different from the first two. The assumption of those alternatives is that you have the opportunity for a second attempt. When you haven't, you still needn't resign yourself to a total loss.

Look at what you have learned from the operation. Can you use the failure by starting a new program that will fit your people to handle a similar project when the need for it arises in the future? Have you uncovered a communications gap that you can bridge to insure smooth handling of other undertakings?

Or how about work methods? Did your failure highlight a weakness in operations that can be corrected? If you eliminate the weak spot, you may still come out ahead of the game in the long run.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON FOLLOW-UP

1. No. For example, if the old-timer was on a job with which he was unfamiliar and the new employee was on his regular assignment, chances are it would be wiser to check the old employee.
2. Yes. Where sizable sums figure in the outcome of work being done, it's mandatory for you to keep a closer check.
3. No. In addition to the possible dollar penalties of something going wrong, *any* critical operation—one involving risk to the employee, for example—demands your continued attention.
4. No. The manner you use in your follow-up can go a long way toward offsetting employee sensitivity.
5. Yes. Executives frequently use the device of having subordinates check back with them to report on developments or results.

6. **Yes.** In many routine jobs it's definitely in the cards for you to have an assistant or an experienced employee do the checking for you.
7. **Yes.** Give him the information he needs—in the form of a progress report, for example—as soon as it's available.

SCORING:

Give yourself 10 points for each correct answer.

70: You're perfect.

40 to 60: You're good.

0 to 30: Rereading the questions and answers can improve both your score and grasp of the follow-up process.

THE ART OF FAILSMANSHIP

In the lexicon of youth, which fate reserves
For a bright manhood, there is no such word
As "failure."

More executives have been ruined by the attitude toward failure blithely expressed in Edward Bulwer-Lytton's lines than have been pushed over the brink by drink or wild women.

Our feelings about failure are rooted in our Horatio Alger concept of success. In a society that equates success with the ultimate good, failure necessarily becomes the ultimate evil.

FAILSMANSHIP TO THE RESCUE

Dire consequences result from our attitude toward failure. To the executive who must make a decision, for example, the specter of failure is an unnerving presence breathing clammily down his neck. Certainly his ability to reason will not be helped. For the executive upward bound, nothing seems so damaging as the indictment, "He guessed wrong."

Yet, in Chapter 32, "How to Work under Pressure," you will see how tolerance of failure is shown to be one of the stocks in trade of the successful executive. This chapter is devoted to describing and selling the technique of Failsmanship—the art of making failure a constructive experience.

Function of failure. We tend to think of failure as the opposite of success. But if we once agree that the ability to benefit from failure can lead to heightened effectiveness, then failure loses its horror. We can view it more objectively and constructively.

Essentially what we must do is distinguish between the *fact* and *feeling* of failure. Some of our great men have understood quite well the helpful aspects of failure. The English naturalist Thomas Henry Huxley wrote, "There is the greatest practical benefit in making a few failures early in life."

But we must credit the psychologists for giving us an even more helpful view:

"Mistakes are an essential step in the normal learning process." That is the conclusion of Professor Edward L. Thorndike, one of our great scientific pioneers.

CAT AT AN OPEN TIN

Thorndike's conclusion was not a philosophic observation. He based his statement on a series of experiments he conducted on the subject of learning. For example, Thorndike put a hungry cat inside a "puzzle" box. To get to food, the cat had to press a lever that would open the door.

At first the experimental animals made many incorrect attempts. But as time passed, the number of mistakes made before opening the door declined steadily. At last the animal went directly to the lever each time it was put in the box.

Dr. Thorndike concluded that trial and error is a primary law of learning. Errors, he said, serve the important purpose of prompting the learner to try other possibilities.

Thorndike also believed that human learning proceeds in the same way as animal learning, only faster. Most psychologists agree.

THE FEELING OF FAILURE

We would not be true products of our culture if we experienced failure without a feeling of depression or defeat. But it is precisely this *emotional hangover* that prevents us from using mistakes as a learning experience.

Fortunately, failure is one situation in which it may be possible to work on an effect and thereby allay a cause. If, in other words, instead of submitting to the depression that tends to descend after a failure, we set about putting the failure to use, we may be able to

prevent the gloom—and related undesirable consequences—in the first place.

REPERCUSSIONS OF SUCCESS

Success may be as temporary as failure should be, and may bring with it even more destructive results. In *How to Be a Successful Leader*, by this author, an entire chapter is devoted to the exploration of the harmful effects of success. It's a good idea to keep this thought in mind as you are introduced to the ins and outs of Failsmanship.

It's logical that your view of success and failure should complement one another. Therefore, once you adopt a more reasonable attitude toward success, you will at the same time be able to view failure with more understanding.

Please don't construe anything that has been said, or will be said, in this chapter as a glorification of failure. We're not saying failure is desirable. The point of view presented here is that failure can have a constructive side, and should not lead, in any event, to despondency and self-denigration.

WALKING AWAY FROM FAILURE

Your managerial activities provide many opportunities for error. A decision may go wrong, an unanticipated event may destroy results.

What you do will determine the benefits the experience may hold.

Here's what you can do to leave the scene of the mishap unscathed, even make your mistakes profitable:

Look for causes. You want to know exactly what went wrong. The choice is wide:

1. **OUR SENSES.** The eyes, ears, and other organs often betray us. You mean to order a dozen style No. 24 items from a supplier. The shipment arrives and it turns out to be twenty-four No. 12's.

"That's the way your order reads," the supplier tells you. "I have it in your own handwriting."

2. **INCORRECT REASONING** is another possible villain. Because of

lack of information or a mental blind spot, we arrive at a conclusion that gets us into trouble.

3. MISJUDGMENT trips us up. We may incorrectly assess the capabilities of a subordinate, for example. The result is, we give him an assignment we think he can carry out, but he doesn't quite bring it off. His failure prevents the achievement of the over-all objective, leading to a failure for which you feel you must accept the responsibility.

In the same way, we may misjudge an idea, a situation, a time or distance element—and fail in our plan or purpose.

4. SUBCONSCIOUS MOTIVATION is another possible cause of error. The psychologists, both amateur and professional, have been belaboring us with this one, but it is true we sometimes make mistakes which in retrospect we can't seem to explain on a logical basis.

Revealing slips of psychological origin are common to the business office. A typist hands her boss a letter reading, "I would like you to be Frank with me." The next day, compounding the error, he gets back a piece of dictation reading, "I prefer to run this company on a love-and-let-love policy."

Of course executives are as susceptible to the manipulations of their own subconscious as are their girls Friday.

There are other causes for mistakes—carelessness, misunderstandings, a mixup in the signals and so on. Continue your analysis until you are satisfied that you have isolated the causal factors. Once you have determined the cause or causes for the failure, you're in a position to take advantage of the next step.

Block recurrence. You must take positive steps to make a repetition of the failure impossible.

Take the case of the executive in charge of an assembly department. A customer tells him on the phone, "We've got the last shipment with wrong chassis."

Investigation shows that the parts sheet an assistant used is practically worthless. Changes have been written in, crossed out, erased.

The proper course of action is simple—in theory: "Just retype the sheet," might be the preventive action the executive takes.

But it is obvious that if other steps aren't taken, the new parts sheets will also be mangled with alterations until they, too, become illegible.

You have to go a step further: set up a procedure that guarantees *permanent* elimination of the trouble.

In the case of the parts list that becomes quickly obsolete, for example, the foolproof answer might be to make the retyping a weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly routine as the situation warrants.

MAKING PREVENTION PERMANENT

In general, the nature of the cause dictates the remedial steps you should take. Where the error involves a subordinate, a course of training may be your answer. Where an unanticipated development monkey-wrenched your plans, you may be able to set up procedural safeguards that will "sound the alarm" to give you additional time to act or neutralize the impact of the destructive element.

Rechecking will be in order where you're dealing with a nonstatic situation. Make sure the periodicity of your checking is short enough for you to be able to spot trouble before the situation deteriorates too far.

Derive benefits. The final phase of Failsmanship is the one that helps you chalk up items on the plus side of your ledger. A failure discovered and analyzed gives you a chance to spot and eliminate weak points in your methods.

In this respect, a failure performs the same function as pain in the human body. Pain is the medium by which nature reports a difficulty. The doctor pokes a patient's side to see if he can evoke a cry of pain, indicating a dangerous appendix.

In other words, you can use failure as a symptom of deeper problems and as an occasion to go behind the immediate situation on a mission of uplift and improvement.

It's a biological fact that a broken bone after healing is stronger at the break point than it was before. If you can create a similar outcome at your points of failure, you'll be better off after your failure than before.

OPPORTUNITY FOR REASSESSMENT

A depression story illustrates a principle that holds true for any time.

Somewhere about 1935, a bright young executive was slowly going to the dogs. He had entered into a partnership arrangement with another young man. Each contributed half a shoestring to an enterprise sickly from birth.

Their business was a small custom-molding shop. Our ill-fated hero represented the technical brains; his partner was the salesman and administrator.

The problem of the partners was simple—no funds.

By dint of personal sacrifice, the two young hopefuls kept going, month after month. Small orders would come in, and would be filled satisfactorily. But volume wasn't large enough to offset overhead. Survival cash came almost literally out of the partners' hides.

To save the price of railroad commutation, the young executive used to walk a quarter of a mile to the highway and hitch a ride into the city. One winter morning he kissed his possibly too patient wife and set out for work.

A cold rain got to his skin in short order. By the time he reached the highway he was soaked. Car after car rushed wetly past without heeding his beseeching thumb.

Ten minutes went by, and fifteen.

All at once, our hero "got a load" of himself. There he was, cold, wet, frustrated, knocking himself out to beat his way into the city—for what? To get into a cheerless shop that offered little more than head and heartaches.

He turned around and went home. Two weeks later he was on a new job, starting a career that years later saw him happily ensconced as works manager of one of the largest molding plants in the country.

Of course, you don't have to wait until the roof falls in. You don't have to wait for a realization of failure to come as a final link in a completely depressing chain of events. Each failure situation provides you with a chance to come out for a quick look-

around, the opportunity to view your general situation, with the failure incident as a spot in time from which to gain perspective.

QUESTIONS FOR PROFIT

In seeking for ways and means of making failure profitable, questions like these point the way:

Can I eliminate the cause of this failure?

Can I salvage anything from the ruins?

Who can help spell out the "moral" of the failure?

Are there other activities that should be revised in view of what's gone wrong?

Can you use the mistake to teach others?

As the old saying has it, "The wise man benefits from other people's mistakes." The height of Failsmanship is the ability to benefit from failure that you *haven't* made. By applying the same constructive approach to other people's errors, you may be able to gain the benefits without paying the price of absence of success.

"Success is a journey, *not* a destination," says the sage. It can be equally true: "Failure is a temporary stopover on the road to achievement."

TOWARD SUCCESSFUL FAILSMANSHIP

Let's assume the worst has happened. You've fallen on your face—and your "guilt" is known to the world. You have that "bottom-has-dropped-out-of-everything" feeling. You can't look your colleagues in the eye. Your only solution is a South Sea island and peaceful oblivion.

But before laying out the price of a one-way ticket to Balai Hai, see if supplying the answers to some simple questions doesn't do the trick just as well, and without giving up the comforts of home:

1. Just what has been lost as a result of your failure? Write out this answer. Be specific. Mention amounts, time losses, delays in schedule, and so on.
2. Did you include "self-confidence" in your list above? If not, it's probably a serious omission. Add it.

3. Do you agree that as a result of your failure you're *wiser* than you were before?
 4. Write out what you've *gained*, point by point, from your failure.
 5. If you find that you can't list anything in No. 4, just consider the items submitted by an executive who had failed in his all-out attempt to sell his boss on a program designed to expand the facilities in his department:
 - a. learned a lot about the dollar worth of present physical equipment
 - b. learned what was available in the market today
 - c. from boss's objections, got a better understanding of top management's views on cash investment
 - d. improved my ability to present a project in written form
 - e. realized for the first time that my boss has absolutely no imagination
 - f. from boss's questions, realized the need to supply and dramatize facts to support my contentions
 - g. put myself on record as being interested in building the area of my responsibility
 6. Compare your answers to No. 1 and No. 4. Doesn't No. 4 constitute a more important factor in your future moves than No. 1?
 7. Can you minimize or eliminate the items of loss you've noted in answering No. 1?
 8. Can you apply the items, noted in your answer to No. 4, in any future activity?
 9. Don't you agree that the extent to which failure persists as an influence on your behavior is largely within your control?
- If you can honestly answer "Yes" to No. 9, your Failsmanship is already of a high order.

EFFICIENCY IN ACTION: A CASE HISTORY

Let's put the pieces together.

In previous chapters, opportunities for increasing efficiency *in specific areas* have been examined. But what do you do when you're *totally* submerged in a problem situation, when your difficulties confront you in almost every aspect of your job?

Fortunately, such circumstances are infrequent. But the reason for raising the question here is to give us an opportunity of seeing what happens, "how it looks," when an executive responds to a *total situation* efficiently.

Many of the business journals make the success story a standard part of their table of contents. Accordingly, you're pretty sure to have read how President X of the Y Company sailed his organization from red-ink to black-ink business seas by means ranging from clever financing to a reorganization of personnel.

These articles frequently provide you with food for thought, an inspiration for action. Therefore, it makes sense for us to take a case history demonstrating a successful managerial approach to a problem of inefficiency, and analyze the methods that helped alleviate or solve the problem. In so doing, we'll be demonstrating some principles of efficiency in action.

FOOD COMPANY IN A JAM

On March 27, 1956, Robert N. Dobbins of the Research Institute field staff, visited the Red Wing Company of Fredonia, New York. He could scarcely believe what he saw. In a company where no change had taken place for years, a new plant superintendent

had been able to put a limping organization right up on its toes—within *six months*.

“We were in a fantastic mess,” is the way one Red Wing executive described the situation in retrospect. Some of the situations the new regime confronted:

- At peak season the work force numbered almost 500 people, but the company did not have a single permanent supervisor. A supervisory force, an essential in every business organization, simply didn’t exist.

- Plant layout and equipment had not been studied for years. Off-the-cuff arrangements resulted in a haphazard choice of storage areas, in conflict with production needs and strangling efficiency of movement.

- “There was a whole string of lights on the second floor of the plant that hadn’t worked in about ten years,” explained one of the executives. “The bulbs had burned out and no one had changed them.” That was typical.

Recognition of the deteriorated situation had led to the bringing in of a new plant superintendent, Emil Amsler. He was able to revolutionize the picture in six months. He appointed and organized a staff of foremen. Encountering union resistance to the reorganization of personnel he met the issue head-on and won. Sweeping changes in operations yielded immediate gains: *labor-cost reductions of 50 per cent were attained in some processes.*

The results were possible largely because of seven basic principles that are essentially rules of efficient management. The techniques used at Red Wing would fit any kind of operation, but Red Wing aptly illustrates each of them.

USE APPROPRIATE PLANNING TOOLS

Mr. Amsler, the new plant superintendent and secretary of Red Wing, undertook to change plant layout to overcome the bottlenecks of materials movement and processing losses due to strung-out lines.

Processing lines were to be taken down and relocated. New equipment was to be brought in. In Mr. Amsler’s own words:

"I made a model of our entire five-story plant, ¼ inch to the foot. Major equipment was also modeled to scale. Each floor could be lifted out separately. The model did more than shorten the time required to figure out the best layouts. It made it possible for me to use my occasional, short free-time intervals to keep the problems fresh in my mind."

It's becoming clear that more and more, the executive is becoming a tool-wielding professional. (For more on this point see *The Executive Tool Rack*, Chapter 12.)

Models, scale drawings, blackboards, flannel boards, and charts are increasingly replacing purely decorative bric-a-brac in executive offices. These visual aids serve purposes like the following:

- showing subordinates a proposed schedule, with specific assignments.

- working out for yourself or others any physical changes for your area.

DELEGATE AUTHORITY

You'll probably never face the same problem they did at Red Wing. When Mr. Amsler came on the scene there was not a single foreman, permanently assigned as such, in a plant that at peak season employed almost 500 people. Up to that time the practice had been to appoint individuals on a pickup, temporary basis.

"I considered it my biggest job," said Mr. Amsler, "to build a supervisory group that would be able to stand on its own feet."

In the first week after Mr. Amsler had appointed a group of twelve new foremen, the door of his office swung open constantly. Each of his appointees had to consult with him a dozen times a day.

Here is the way Mr. Amsler handled this problem: "Each time a situation like that arose, I tried to make the man feel that he was in charge. I told him he might go wrong a few times—he wouldn't be shot for that. I'd back him up. And if an adjustment had to be made, no one would know the change hadn't been his doing. I didn't advise, 'Go ahead and do it this way.' I merely tried to help

each man see *why* it might be best to handle the problem in a specific fashion."

Luckily, your working relationships with subordinates are pretty well established. But a reappraisal of the ability of various individuals in your group may be in order. For instance, you might want to look into questions along these lines:

Are there new people who've never had a chance to get off on their own?

Are there any individuals, regardless of length of service, who've been around but have never really had an opportunity to tackle a job on their own?

Are there any unsolved problems that might be stimulating tests for your brighter people?

TAP BASIC IDEA SOURCES

In making its changeover, the Red Wing management needed ideas and suggestions by the hundreds to eliminate inefficiencies. Waste was a particularly costly problem.

For example 40,000 pounds were lost annually in conveying grapes from the receiving platform to a "stemmer" five stories up. Production lines were strung out without regard to waste of space or processing losses. Eight per cent of all grape juice processed was wasted daily, just to flush out 800 feet of pipe from the point of processing to bottling stations.

To give everyone a chance to put in his oar about operating difficulties, the Red Wing management decided to take problem-solving meetings out of the formal conference room. In time, *talk about problems* got to be as casual and frequent as talk about the weather.

Weekly meetings for the entire employee group not only described current objectives but also told about changes that were to be made. Suggestions, even at the eleventh hour, were invited.

Also, daily get-togethers for the supervisory group were arranged. These were not scheduled rigidly. In most instances, supervisors were given an hour or so after starting time in which to get their departments going. Then a quick phone check would be made of

operating situations in each department. A meeting time would be set, depending on circumstances.

It would have been possible for Red Wing to try to "buy its way out" of trouble by using outside consultants. Edward C. Steele, vice-president and general manager, envisioned a less costly, possibly less risky way.

"We decided," he says, "that we would use men and ideas instead of money. Specifically, we felt that in the short time available to us, outside help would be unable to come up with any better ideas than we could get from our own people."

The policy paid off:

A local area industry research group had been trying for two years to solve the problem of handling the solids left over in the process of making grape juice. Since Red Wing's centrifuges were located in the basement, a costly process had to transfer the solids upstairs. An ordinary employee, invited to sit in on a discussion of the problem, came up with the answer that had escaped the experts: "Let the centrifuge run wet and pump the residue up to the batching tanks." Since the liquid was returned to the process, there wasn't any loss of juice, much less loss of time.

TRY PROGRAMS OF "SIMULTANEOUS ACTION"

Frequently management wants to get two things accomplished at once. One interferes with the other. A tough decision is made. In one case, it's turning down a big order because of business already in the house. In another context, it's a matter of shutting down a piece of equipment for repair or overhauling.

In Red Wing's situation a similar choice of costly alternatives seemed obvious. There was the need to revamp the plant from basement to roof. But the seasonal nature of their business meant that output lost during a shutdown would be gone forever.

The decision was to try to keep running despite the layout changes.

Here are some of the moves that succeeded:

Temporary installations. Production lines were kept flexible. Machines were hooked into temporary power lines. Some equipment

ordinarily bolted down was held in place by 2 x 4 boards. Thus, it was possible to change the location of production equipment overnight.

Full cooperation of personnel. Employees working on production had a hard time. Cement was being poured a couple of feet away, or welding arcs glared in their eyes. Without willing employees, the effort would have failed.

Liaison between operating heads. The supervisor of the processing line and the man in charge of the installation activities had to establish a successful give-and-take relationship. In some cases production had to shut down for brief periods to permit major movements by the installation group. Or men working on installation had to mark time because of the needs of the production people.

Whenever you have to "do two things at once," review these points:

1. Can you alternate the use of key facilities, to keep both phases moving?
2. Can a "theoretical" impossibility be worked out on a practical basis, by leaving it to the people involved to solve the details?
3. If you can't do two things at once, can you do one-and-a-half things simultaneously, and farm out the remaining half?

MINIMIZE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

In the average working situation, and for the average executive, the slow pace of subordinates who are unwilling to do a job may prolong it to twice its normal length.

Particularly when you start changing things, you'll find resistance. In the Red Wing situation, where practically everything being done was new, this fact was recognized. Management developed a three-step method for winning acceptance of the changes:

Announcement. First move was to tell all the people involved of the contemplated change. The reasons were detailed.

Getting objections. In some cases one or more people would find reasons why a change "wouldn't work" or "was unwise." Here every effort was made to listen and logically counter the objections raised.

Trial period. Changes were often presented as test runs. Suggestions for improvement were encouraged.

Red Wing management reports that this sequence of steps eventually brought about full acceptance. Of course, different individuals were won over at various stages. Some were persuaded by the first step. Others didn't come round until their objections were met. A hard core didn't see the light until the change produced results.

Learn to spot the symptoms of incomplete cooperation among your people. Here are some indications:

- Docile agreement with everything you say
- Complete disagreement with all you say
- Obvious apathy or disinterest
- Unnecessary argument or quibbling
- Opinions that contemplated changes are "impossible" or will kick over a well-established and desirable *status in quo*

FACE ISSUES SQUARELY

Tact and diplomacy should never be sold short. But sometimes the careful approach gets us involved in hesitations that waste time and contribute to misunderstanding.

It was in its union relations that Red Wing found a time-saving in the direct approach.

All of Red Wing's employees are represented by the International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers, C.I.O. The general feeling was that the local union would get tough about the changes contemplated.

Red Wing's management considered the union's fears about changes as "normal and natural." Executives dealt with the union exactly as they had with the employees in general:

"We invited them, almost forced them, to sit down with us in our discussions of the plans, objectives, and problems."

The results were very good. The union helped a great deal when it came to changes in wage rates, merit increases, job-reclassification, etc.

KEEP SOME QUESTIONS OPEN

In the haste to end the critical situation, you're apt to strive for a complete solution. This is escapism. Successful management of a continuing enterprise requires a continuous awareness of new problems.

Despite Red Wing's outstanding progress, its management isn't ready to conclude that the job is done. The statement below indicates the specific quality and farsightedness of top-level thinking:

"I believe that the proper placement of people is likely to be one of our next most important projects. I do believe right now that we're very green at it. Take a typical situation. Just because we have to fill a certain place, we tend to take the first man who's available. We just haven't had time to make a basic study of each man and woman here, and try to place him where we feel he would fit in most successfully. We have done this with some of our key people, perhaps, but we haven't done it with our general help. And that way we're probably missing out on some wonderful performances."

This is thinking that makes for efficiency in executive action.

PART 4

**YOUR
SELF-DICTATED
ACTIVITIES**

YOUR "EDIFICE" COMPLEX

Bennett Cerf is reputedly the perpetrator of the "edifice" complex phrase. The term fills a gap in management jargon. The executive who *doesn't* have an edifice complex probably may be in need of the analyst's couch. It's natural for you to want to enhance your personal domain.

But what is "natural" is not necessarily simple. There are at least three forces that urge us on:

We dote on growth. As a race, we like to see things develop. The week-end gardener, the hobbyist woodworker, operate under the spell of growth.

We dote on monuments. We take pride in being at the head of a going concern—or department. It looks good, and so do we. And when we become sufficiently affluent, we respond to this same motivation by endowing playgrounds, libraries and dormitories—which properly end up bearing our name.

We like to be influential. The manager with a successful department on his hands is a prime contestant in the managerial race for recognition. His opinions are more likely to be sought after; his words carry just that much more weight.

EMPIRE BUILDING

Granted that the desire for empire springs eternal in the executive breast. The three points mentioned above tell us the *why*. But how about the *how*?

Obviously, spontaneous growth is possible. We've seen examples of managerial responsibility increased as a result of organizational shifts:

A staff department, Personnel, for example, may become a more important function in the business if standards of executive performance are raised, a management development program is started, a search for fresh management talent is started, and so on.

A line department, an assembly division, for example, may expand as a result of top management's decision to accept sub-contacts involving assembly.

In each case, the manager in charge of the expanded function has had his borders pushed out for him. But is it possible to bulge out the borders of your area of responsibility by means of growth forces you yourself can generate?

OBSTACLES TO GROWTH

Before the question of do-it-yourself empire building can be answered, it's important to trace the factors that call a halt to growth:

Organizational balance. There's a limit to the size or influence of a department after which further growth tends to upset a desirable size ratio between it and other company functions.

Workload. Simple economics dictate that no company function be expanded much in excess of need. Resulting unnecessary costs represent direct operating losses. With these two limits recognized, is it possible to cultivate any type of growth that is desirable and possible?

The experience of one middle management executive in a business service organization answers the question.

Hugh S—— has headed up half a dozen functions in his company over a ten-year period. His moves have been made in the role of organizational trouble shooter. Weak areas in the company have been turned over to him, one by one, with results highly satisfactory to management.

Goal of Hugh S—— has been not to build the *capacity* but the *capability* of the function put in his charge. The distinction is this:

Capacity can be increased by the simple means of adding manpower, equipment, or both, to a function;

Capability can be increased without incurring additional operating expense, by improving efficiency, know-how, and so on.

Study of Executive Hugh S——'s methods reveals a fact of development that may be directly *opposed* to the work philosophy of many managers.

Ask the average executive how to improve the effectiveness of his function and his answer is likely to paraphrase the idea that "practice makes perfect." He'll tell you that practice of the regular business of the department will eventually pay off in terms of greater capability. But the facts are:

Practice *doesn't* necessarily make perfect; it depends on what you practice.

Activities within the area of your responsibility are of two distinctly different types, and one of them too often gets lost in the shuffle. Failure to understand the difference accounts for most cases of ineffective empire building.

TWO KINDS OF ACTIVITIES

Think for a moment of the basic activity with which your department is preoccupied. Let's say it's purchasing.

If you listed everything being done in your department, you could separate these items into two categories:

Class A. These are the *direct* activities whose immediate purpose is "getting out the work" regardless of what the "work" is. In the case of a Purchasing Department, for example, it would be ascertaining the needs for materials and services of your organization, going out into the market to assess what is available, coming back with the best dollar values you could buy.

Class B. There are many activities in your department that are *not* directly concerned with getting out the work. These activities have no immediate effect on output. Training an assistant, for example, comes under this heading.

WHY $A + B = \text{IMPROVEMENT}$

The Class A activities in the average department are comparatively few; there are perhaps half a dozen basic ones. Class B

activities tend to be numerous. Included is every activity you undertake for an indirect or long-range benefit, from methods improvement to tidiness, from training to planning.

Furthermore, Class B activities support specific Class A functions. The Department Activities chart below, worked out for a clerical operation, shows the supporting role of the Class B activities. However, some indirect activities are of such a basic nature that their influence shows up in many direct areas. These are indicated as across-the-board items on the chart.

DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES CHART

GENERAL OFFICE <i>Name of Operation</i>					
Class A	Getting work in and out of the department	Providing physical facilities, equipment, supplies, data, etc.	Assigning employees	Directing work	Coordinating work within the department
Class B	1. Inter-departmental communications 2. Inter-departmental relations 3. Office arrangement	1. Repair and maintenance 2. Updating of obsolete forms, supplies, etc.	1. Skills training 2. Motivation 3. Absenteeism control 4. Turnover control	1. Delegation of an assistant 2. Training of an assistant 3. Employee relations	1. Employee teamwork 2. Employee cooperation with your assistants 3. Communications within the department

RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

ACROSS-THE-BOARD CLASS B ACTIVITIES: *error control, improvement in systems and procedures, employees' suggestions and ideas, ideas and suggestions from "experts," neatness and order in the office, employee cooperation and rules and regulations.*

CHARTING YOUR FUNCTION

What our approach suggests finally is this: by concentrating on the proper Class B activities, we can apply a strong lever for boosting departmental capabilities.

Of course, your department is different. The answers you work out will not necessarily be the same as those of a fellow executive down the hall, or any other executive in your company.

Your own Department Activities Chart is the tool that helps you pick your points of concentration. Begin by charting your own function, as in the sample chart shown. Then:

Inspect the Class A activities. Do any of these need attention? If so, the Class B activities that affect them should be examined.

Select the Class B activities that, with the smallest effort, will yield the biggest return in improved performance.

In selecting the Class B activities to concentrate on, consider these three factors:

1. "IMPROVABLES." List the indirect activities that could stand improvement. For example, an executive may find that he has been lax in intradepartmental communications. An organized program for a better-informed work group would seem to be desirable.

2. TROUBLE SPOTS. Persistent problems, excessive errors may signal the need for action. The points of difficulty might involve departmental procedures. Clearly it would be wise to include such items.

3. KEY AREAS. Every department has one or two activities on which a great deal depends. If they are satisfactory, then by and large the department clicks along. If they are inadequate, the department tends to fall on its face.

ELEMENTS OF ACTION

The final step, of course, requires positive moves on your part. Your own version of the Department Activities Chart can provide the basis for action. Note the items that you feel will improve the functioning of your department.

As an example, take the activity, "Communications Within the Department."

Ask yourself, "What are the things that can be done to improve department communications?" A list of resulting action ideas might look like this:

Appoint an assistant to study your communications problem

Put up a bulletin board

Hold weekly meetings of the entire department

Get bi-weekly reports from key subordinates

Make your subordinates more communications minded

TIME OUT FOR IMPROVEMENT

Some executives may have been slowed down by what they felt was a hard look at the realities of their situation: "Too busy with the Class A activities to do anything else."

And it may very well be true. "Running dogs can't dig," says the old proverb.

But that's the easy out. Usually it's the one taken by the executive who wants "out" instead of "up."

Of course, it's "easier" to operate your department on the basis of what *must* be done, leaving the matters that *should* be done for some distant day that never arrives.

But it's the painstaking effort of the executive who will find and apply a reserve of energy for the Class B activities that results in a truly improved department, an empire with a greater potential for delivering the goods—whatever they may be.

RATING YOUR SKILLS

Your personal skills are a primary means of achieving executive effectiveness. In addition to the *methods* you use and the *attitude* with which you approach your work, your *ability* to plan, get information, solve problems obviously affects final results.

In *Developing Your Executive Skills*, by this author, a "Skills Rating Chart" was provided. The purpose of this chart was self-assessment by the executive of the skills he uses in day-to-day activities. Numerous requests for reprints of the chart attest to the extreme interest it holds for managers.

The chart has been reproduced here for your benefit (page 213). The intent in so doing is not to suggest a full-fledged course of skills development. It is hoped, however, that your self-rating will lead to a helpful self-analysis.

Further, the breakdown of the 21 skills listed in the chart provides opportunity for an analysis of areas of strength and weakness that can be both revealing and instructive. And minimum remedies may achieve surprisingly large gains.

RATE YOUR ABILITIES

Indicate the degree of proficiency you possess in each item by indicating the dot in the appropriate column.

Be fair with yourself. Don't be too lenient or too harsh in your ratings and make a conscious effort to avoid the "halo effect," whereby your rating of one skill colors your judgment of another. You avoid this rating error when you try to rate each item

separately, calling to mind actual experience involving the skill in question.

Experts in rating point out that a well-balanced distribution is a good indication of accuracy. In the typical case, the majority of checks should fall in the "medium" column with a smattering of checks left over for the "low" and "high" columns. If your skills tend to cluster either in the left or right hand column, chances are you have underestimated or overestimated your abilities.

When you've completed the rating, draw straight lines between the dots circled. You now have a profile of your skills.

COMPARING YOUR PROFILE

Since the chart was originally developed, many executives have rated themselves and have been kind enough to turn back their results. After you get your rating, therefore, you may want to compare your skills profile with that of an "average" (see page 215).

The "average" profile as reproduced on page 215 is that of a group of 143 executives representing a broad range of industries.

Naturally your ratings cannot and should not be judged "good" or "bad" on the basis of the comparison. The primary purpose of the composite is to give you a rough idea of how an "average" group of your fellow executives rated their own abilities.

THREE CATEGORIES OF SKILLS

Notice how the 21 items listed on the chart can be divided among three basic categories:

Human relations skills such as "Working with subordinates" and "Maintaining good relations with your superior."

Procedural or administrative skills such as "Control of paperwork" and "Using work time effectively."

Personal skills such as "Memory" and "Concentration."

It may be helpful to see just how your ratings add up in terms of these three categories. If, for example, you find your strong points fall in the human relations area, that fact has obvious implications for the degree of effectiveness you may expect of yourself.

If, on the other hand, you find yourself relatively weak in the

human relations skills, your conclusion might be that it is precisely in this area in which increased attention would yield the greatest return in heightened effectiveness.

SKILLS RATING CHART

Low Medium High

— 1.	<i>Using the expert</i> —getting information, opinions, ideas from well-informed people inside or outside your company.	•	•	•
— 2.	<i>Building reputation</i> —making yourself known; developing a favorable name for yourself in the company.	•	•	•
— 3.	<i>Activating</i> —getting your people to understand and follow your instructions.	•	•	•
— 4.	<i>Imparting information</i> —making yourself understood by subordinates or superiors.	•	•	•
— 5.	<i>Judging people</i> —gauging individuals so as to be able to establish good relations and increase job satisfaction.	•	•	•
— 6.	<i>Working with subordinates</i> —establishing cordial and effective relationships with those who work for you.	•	•	•
— 7.	<i>Interviewing</i> —talking with people face-to-face.	•	•	•
— 8.	<i>Listening</i> —learning from the words of others how they think and feel.	•	•	•
— 9.	<i>Getting cooperation</i> —motivating people to join you in accomplishing departmental goals.	•	•	•
— 10.	<i>Maintaining good relations with your superior</i> —being both friendly and businesslike in your dealings up the line.	•	•	•
— 11.	<i>Using working time effectively</i> —being able to get 60 minutes of work out of every hour.	•	•	•
— 12.	<i>Decision-making</i> —arriving at a logical conclusion and sticking to it.	•	•	•

for a comparatively moderate gain. Yet, if the skill involved is a key to the objective you've set for yourself, it may be well worth the effort involved.

In general, selecting the skills to improve should be guided by these additional considerations:

Which do you *use* most?

Which play the most important role in the operation of your department?

And finally, this key question that takes your personal objectives into account:

Which are the most important in helping you advance toward your specific goal?

The *Industrial Arts Index*, in its listing of articles appearing in a varied group of business and trade journals, acts as a fever chart of executive interest and concern.

Turn to compilations of the last few years and you'll see how the number of pieces on thought and thinking have been on the increase.

Brainpower and its subheadings—imagineering, brainstorming, creativity—has become a subject of increasing preoccupation to executives. Unlike some subjects that are only fads, it's likely to remain of high-level interest for many years to come.

Reason for this lies in the development of the executive function. If we were called on to supply a one-sentence criterion for the "good executive" up to this decade, we would say he was a man who "got things done." The word executive itself reinforces our choice.

But these days, coincident with the frequent substitution of the word manager for "executive"—the criterion is changing.

Let's not overstate and say that the "doer" is being replaced. What is happening is more a shift in emphasis. The executive or manager must still be a doer. But, increasingly important in his function is the act of *innovation*. And innovation involves dealing with ideas.

THOUGHT TO ACTION—IN THREE STAGES

Because your handling of ideas is central to executive effectiveness, three complete chapters in this book are devoted to the subject.

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IDEAS: HOW TO GET THEM

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THOUGHT TO ACTION—IN THREE STAGES

Because your handling of ideas is central to executive effectiveness, three complete chapters in this book are devoted to the subject.

- “How to Get Ideas” deals with ways and means of getting the mental output required for the problems and plans you face in your job.

- “How to Develop Ideas” discusses the techniques whereby an original glimmer can be helped along until it acquires substance and usability.

- “How to Implement Ideas” takes up the pitfalls that may threaten a sound idea and describes methods for getting maximum return from your mental output.

Expert study offers reasons of personality to justify this separate treatment of three phases of idea development:

“. . . different personality characteristics are associated with the various stages of the creative process,” states Prof. Morris I. Stein of the University of Chicago.

Professor Stein’s studies indicate that while some individuals can fulfill the requirements for all stages, others may be proficient only in a single stage. “It may well be,” asserts Stein, “that one individual is an originator of ideas but a poor methodologist . . . A second person can elaborate the ideas of others and subject them to experimental test . . . A third may be proficient in observing the implications of experimental results and in communicating them to others so that the creative product is brought out for the use of the community at large.”

The results bared by Professor Stein can help us by:

- a. clarifying the nature of the thought-to-action process. It isn’t single and instantaneous, but moves through separate phases.
- b. making us more aware of the points of our greatest strength. If we are outstanding idea producers, for example, we may achieve best total results by leaving to others the two subsequent phases of idea development and idea implementation.

DOLLAR VALUE OF IDEAS

“. . . the realization is growing among management men,” says Lydia Strong in the *Management Review* of March, 1957, “that company growth is almost always related directly or indirectly to innovation of some kind.”

William J. J. Gordon, in the *Harvard Business Review* of November, 1956, points out that the emphasis on creativity has given it a vogue in management thinking. The businessman, bewildered by some aspects of idea production, "is tempted to shrug off the whole thing as a wild dream; but he cannot afford to overlook the possibility that there is some substance here he should grasp. If only a fraction of the promise comes true, the potential is tremendous."

WHAT IS AN IDEA?

When we stop to think of what ideas can and do accomplish, we get some understanding of the status accorded the executive who wins the reputation of being an idea man.

Simple ideas have netted fortunes. Just consider the ridges on a paper clip that prevent it from slipping, the metal tips on shoe laces, the single thread that runs through the lining of a tie to prevent it from wrinkling.

And every executive in merchandising is familiar with the famous story of the soda pop company that was transformed from a small enterprise to an international giant by an idea summed up in two words: "Bottle it."

WHAT IDEAS AREN'T

Prof. John E. Arnold of M.I.T. makes a useful distinction that helps us understand the basic nature of an idea.

Professor Arnold points out that we find ourselves up against two types of problems: *analytical* and *creative*.

An *analytical* problem, says Professor Arnold, is one where all necessary conditions are stated and only one solution is possible. A mathematical computation, a murder mystery are examples.

A *creative* problem, on the other hand, is open to a variety of solutions. How to promote a product, how to package it, how to merchandise it, are examples of this variety. This is the area of *ideas*.

BLOCKS TO CREATIVITY

You know for a fact that some managers come up with ideas readily, others don't. But when you consider three standard obstacles to creative thinking, you'll see that they're not necessarily permanent:

Fear of brainpower. Some people fear the workings of the intellect. They have various derogatory labels to justify this. A "longhair" is an object of ridicule. A "brain" is a peculiar and socially unacceptable individual, definitely not one of the boys.

The mental loafer. Somewhat allied to the anti-intellectual is the person who finds cogitation exhausting. There may be physiological reasons for the low fatigue point. But the fact remains that individuals in this category may be the very ones who tend to be most productive and ingenious when a crisis forces them to think.

UNCORKING INGENUITY

Three college students were selected from a group and sent out of a psychology classroom. They were called back one by one and asked to solve a practical problem. A ball suspended from a string hung six feet above the floor in the center of the room. By how many different methods could the ball be made to touch a stick projecting from the wall?

The distances were so arranged that the student, touching the ball, could not quite reach up to the stick.

Student A, in the time allotted, developed three solutions:

He stood on a chair near the projecting stick, reached out with a window pole, and pulled the ball over to the stick.

He placed a table strategically between the ball and stick and was able to link them while standing on the table.

He batted the ball, making it swing like a pendulum, and, jumping up on the window sill, caught the ball on the upward arc and touched the stick.

Student B was less successful. In the given time period, he was able to work out only the first two solutions improvised by Student A.

Student C was called in and given the problem. He balked. "I can't think of any way of doing it."

The instructor agreed that the problem wasn't easy but urged him to try. Hesitantly, the student worked out the solution using the table. Next, he hit on the chair-and-window-pole solution. With two minutes to go, he duplicated Student A's ball-batting solution. And finally, with seconds to go, he yanked the stick out of the wall support and touched the ball—a solution *not* ruled out by the terms of the problem.

In other words, the individual with the least self-confidence proved to be most productive—*once he could be persuaded to think*.

In real-life situations, too, you'll find that the element of *motivation* plays a big part in mental output. There's real revelation in that fact for the individual who feels mentally under-endowed.

Stereotypy. Our thinking tends to fall into a rut. Psychologists tell us, for example, that in our efforts to understand, we tend to slap labels on things too readily. Ideas like those below tend to mislead us in our evaluations:

"All women are alike."

"Fat men are always jolly."

"Latins are hot-blooded and Scandinavians are cold-blooded."

Our failure to shake off such assumptions prevents us from developing a realistic picture of a problem. And it becomes increasingly less possible that we will be able to produce ideas that will suit the situation.

THE CREATIVE STORM

The world of business has been taken by storm—brainstorm, that is. Brainstorming, the group technique of idea production generally attributed to Alex Osborn of Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn, has been enjoying a great vogue, and will probably continue to do so.

The basic rules of "group-think" that can obviously be adapted to your individual approach are usually stated:

Don't inhibit thinking. Let ideas flow—wild, crazy, or otherwise. Anything goes.

Strive for quantity. The more ideas, as measured by volume, the better.

Combine and refine ideas, as a final step.

The reaction to brainstorming in its original form is already setting in. Dr. Philip R. Marvin, manager of the American Management Association's Research and Development Division, feels that brainstorming is helpful as a stimulant, but that too often fruits of the sessions are superficial. The danger Marvin sees in the technique lies in its acceptance as a substitute for other forms of creative effort.

BIRTH OF AN IDEA

Ideas seldom grow in a vacuum. They emerge into our consciousness because we *call* them. Generally, an idea comes to us because we need it. And as a matter of fact, it is our awareness of the need for an idea that helps give it birth.

It is no coincidence that a chemist's brainstorm is aimed at solving a problem of a distillation process, while a construction engineer suddenly has the solution to a difficult problem of stress pop into his head.

Why doesn't it happen the other way around? If ideas were the result of pure inspiration, wouldn't it be just as likely that the ideas the engineer is seeking would come to the chemist and vice versa?

The answer is that we arrive at answers by digging into a problem. The more we examine and understand a problem or the *nature of the need* that confronts us, the better we prepare our minds for the appearance of a helpful idea.

HOW TO SUMMON IDEAS

Let's assume that you don't think of yourself as an innovator or idea man. Perhaps you haven't been in the past or perhaps your ambitions in this direction have yet to be realized.

Put aside for a moment whatever means you habitually use to

produce ideas. Go on the assumption that the stimulation of your thinking depends *not* in trying to produce ideas directly but rather in going through a series of indirect preliminary steps that will make you mentally more productive.

Here are three steps that expert idea men tend to use:

Dig into your problem. Don't be content to get another person's description of a difficulty. Dig in, jump in with both feet if necessary. Establish the situation you're up against by uncovering facts and verifying them.

Keep asking why. That one word is the best fact-finding tool ever devised. It can get you down to rock bottom in a situation that may have been clogged by misconceptions for years.

Try to formulate your problem in specific language. John Dewey, in his book *How We Think*, said, "The problem well stated is half solved." Many an impossible task has yielded to a re-statement of the objective.

Ever since Pearl Harbor, for example, when Japanese bombers destroyed U. S. planes on the ground, Air Force engineers wrestled with this one: "What's the quickest way to get airplanes out of their hangars?"

One inventive individual changed the question. Instead of asking "How can we get the planes out of the hangars?" he asked, "How can we get the hangars away from the planes?"

The result was a diamond-shaped hangar that could come apart at the widest part of the diamond, leaving the planes free to take off on the open runway.

Examine the whole situation. If the picture of a problem seems incomplete or doesn't make sense, continue to probe for additional information.

In this situation you may find pencil and paper particularly valuable. Write down the facts you know. List the questions that remain unanswered.

Don't lone-wolf it. Information, opinions, suggestions, and assistance from colleagues and your superior can help round out your picture of the problem situation.

Incubate the problem. Some ideas come easily. Others require coaxing. If a sought-after idea doesn't come after a hard try, forget it—for a while. Relax, read, discuss last night's TV show with a fellow executive.

None of this behavior means that you're running out on a problem, or that you're shirking. If you have saturated yourself with the problem, you can be sure that your mind will continue to work on it, unconsciously. Quite unbidden, possibly when you are at home, in a movie, or out on the golf course, the idea you're seeking will explode into your consciousness with all the light and beauty of a Fourth of July skyrocket.

IDEA MAN IN ACTION

Needless to say, there is no one "right" way to get an idea. In addition to the suggestions already made, here are three additional means of getting ideas. The approaches suggested at this point are essentially techniques of *problem manipulation*. You turn the problem this way and that, to give yourself a fresh look and a new chance to get that bulb inside your head to light up.

Stand the problem on its head. To get a new perspective on the landscape, a Japanese artist sometimes looks at it upside down, views the scene with his head between his legs.

This upside-down approach is successful because it helps to break an old frame of reference, makes the situation appear in a new light.

Henry Ford's invention of the assembly line has been ascribed to this technique. Instead of asking, as others were doing, "How can you get people to the material they work on?" he asked, "How can you get the work to the people?"

Challenge your assumptions. The assumption that the world was flat prevented the early explorers from getting the idea of circumnavigating the globe.

Similarly, our assumptions that

"It can't be done that way"

"We must do X if we want to accomplish Y"

"The boss will never go along with that suggestion" are assumptions that block effective thinking.

Go off the deep end. "When I'm up against a tough problem that I can't crack," said the head of the Research Department of a large starch company, "I go off the deep end. I try the most outlandish idea that comes to mind."

He wasn't implying that this device led directly to usable ideas. The results of his testing of the limits of the problem invariably gave him a better idea of what he was up against. Edison also found that discovering what *won't* work is often a preliminary to finding what will.

THE AGGRESSIVE MIND

Your effectiveness in producing, developing, and applying ideas will increase—rapidly and to a large degree—to the extent that you develop a mental attitude of inquiry.

Curiosity may have killed a cat. But it has done a lot of good for managers:

"Why haven't we changed this method in the last ten years?"

"What would happen if we did thus and so?"

"Can we be sure we're on the right track unless we experiment?"

Dr. Hans Selye, world-famous medical researcher, uses the phrase "if this is so . . ." to enlarge the horizon of ideas.

The more your probing aims at basic assumptions and conceptions, the more gratifying can be the answers at which you eventually arrive.

"Believe nothing, test everything, accept things as final only temporarily." Possibly tongue in cheek, this dictum of the head of an appliance manufacturer's engineering department sums up an approach that can make mental obsolescence impossible.

In addition to this somewhat analytical approach, there is another line of action that can start you on a positive quest for ideas.

You'll find that if you become interested in ideas *as* ideas, you can build up a mental reservoir that will be constantly productive.

The other man's idea, ideas developed in another company, an-

other industry; the housewife's ingenuity—the carpenter's, the mechanic's—all these can contribute to a supply that, in adaptation or combination, may contribute to your own mental output.

FROM EGG TO CHICKEN

This chapter has offered numerous suggestions to help stimulate the production of ideas. But "ideas are cheap," says the tough-minded manager. The best idea in the world may produce no benefits. A second-rate idea may become the foundation stone of a highly successful effort.

To help move along the ideas from the moment they are born to the payoff stage requires two more steps, each the subject of a subsequent chapter.

We must know how to take an idea from its swaddling clothes and bring it to the stage where it can stand on its own feet (Chapter 27); and then we must know how to take the finished idea and apply it in such a way as to maximize the benefits (Chapter 28).

IDEAS: HOW TO DEVELOP THEM

Benjamin Franklin, watching the attempts of an eighteenth-century scientist to demonstrate a new idea, heard scoffers around him comment, "But what is its use?"

Said Franklin, "What is the use of a new born baby?"

It's all too true. A new idea, like a new born baby, may be of little use. The first form in which it appears may be weak and ineffectual. But that doesn't mean it may not have a worthwhile future.

This chapter aims to describe some of the procedures that can help keep an idea alive, and to help it grow until it develops into a usable entity.

THE FRAGILITY OF IDEAS

An idea can be the most powerful thing ever created by man. A single concept developed some 2,000 years ago, for example, has done more to influence the affairs of our planet than any other single factor.

But it's also true that an idea can be made of soap bubbles and moonbeams. Unless you know how to keep an idea alive, it may vanish into the limbo out of which it has arisen. It *may* come back at a later date. But that's a gamble you don't have to take.

PUTTING IDEAS ON ICE

An idea must be helped to survive many threats to its existence:

Your memory may be a graveyard. Your own forgetfulness may be one of the biggest hazards your ideas must face.

The obvious remedy is to put the idea down in black and white. When you have the time—as well as pencil and paper—there's no problem. You can usually pin down even the most complicated idea in a page or two, for a permanent record.

But you may be tripped up by your own handwriting. Many an executive turning out the pockets of an old suit will come across notes scribbled on an envelope or a golf scorecard. Trouble is, it would take a cryptographer to figure out the message.

The rule, then, is to force yourself to write plainly—particularly if you're one of the brotherhood of executives whose handwriting bears only a vague resemblance to the writing his kids are practicing in grammar school.

And don't be thrown off by the thought, "I'll fill these notes out tomorrow." If you did reread your scrawl within the next few days, you probably would have no difficulty in translating it. But such intentions often fail to become a reality. The pressure of events forces us to set our notes aside and our potentially fine idea becomes an enigma, tied up in a mysterious scrawl.

IDEA FILE

Horses running wild on the range represent zero utility, compared to a herd available to you because they're well corralled. A scattered collection of notes for ideas has much less chance of seeing the light of application than the same ideas, clearly rewritten and placed in a file.

Managers who give the collection of ideas the same attention they give to cost data, or any other category of useful information, generally have a folder labeled "Ideas" in their personal file. Those who want to take the practice a step further use subheads particularly appropriate to their needs: Ideas—Expansion; Ideas—New Products; Ideas—Personnel Practices.

Another helpful arrangement for preserving ideas is the use of a scrapbook. The content between the covers should obviously reflect your own special areas of interest. Sources for material in such an idea collection may be the daily newspaper, trade papers and journals, magazines, trade association material, and so on.

The question of cataloguing or indexing arises. Naturally, it makes for easier reference if you can segregate the material under functional headings. Admittedly, the procedure can take up a larger amount of time than you'd care to have your secretary spend. You'll get by if you don't make the time investment.

But what *is* important is a periodic refresher. Go through your idea file or scrapbook every few months, or at times when you're wrestling with a problem that's giving you a rough time. You may have an item in your idea material that will help you achieve a breakthrough. But you've got to bring it to your attention to give it a chance to work.

WHEN YOU CAN'T MAKE NOTES

Complications arise when you're unable to write even the few paragraphs that will concretize your mental glimmering. You're at a party, for example, or in a conversation with a friend in a club car. It may be inadvisable to stop everything and make your notes.

Proficient idea men use the key-word method to peg down an idea temporarily. It's simple but effective:

The head of a large food-products company had been troubled by parking problems acquired when the company opened new suburban offices. Although there was sufficient total parking area, squabbles among personnel in their competition for favored spots had caused irritations out of all proportion to the situation.

The manager, out boating one morning, got the idea of marking off individual spaces for automobiles, numbering each space, and allotting them according to rank, and within rank levels, by means of a drawing.

While there was nothing complicated about the idea, the executive knew that without some handle by which to grasp the plan, it might not recur to him. Thinking over the whole idea, he selected the word, "lottery" as the key. He was able, thereafter, to bring it back without difficulty.

SELECTING THE KEY WORD

Use of a key word to identify an idea is usually foolproof. Your key word or key phrase should have these two characteristics:

Represent the idea rather than the problem. For example, if the foods company executive had used the word "parking" as his key word, in a couple of weeks the details of his plan might not have returned to mind.

Be a unique word. A common word has little memorability. In the example above, had the manager used a phrase like "permanent spaces" to represent the first part of his plan, he might have had more difficulty in recalling the key than he had with the distinctive word "lottery."

WHEN TIME'S OUT OF JOINT

There is a second road to premature death for an idea:

The time isn't ripe. "Swell idea, but right now. . . ." That's the death knell of many a sound proposal. The "but" is usually a logical objection and a valid reason for not applying the idea now. For example:

"How would it be," suggests an assistant manager, "if we renovate that old warehouse across the street? Basically, it's a sound structure, and if we can use that space for production we'd be able to expand our facilities in a most desirable fashion. We can then look around for alternate storage space. . . ."

"No good," says the company president. His reason is simple—a low bank balance. But the idea *is* good, particularly since the cash position that has influenced his reaction is only temporarily poor.

REMOVABLE "BUTS"

Times change. Yesterday's impossibility becomes today's commonplace. An idea shelved a month ago for a perfectly valid "but" may have clear sailing now.

Here's how some objections may be dissipated:

"Too expensive." An office manager decided against installing an automatic letter opener because of cost considerations.

Now, even though the machine isn't any cheaper, new conditions have developed that change the situation: the volume of mail

has increased; the department has been unable to find replacements for employees who have left.

"Too much resistance." Personnel reactions change—or may be changed—by an effective line of argument, long range or short range.

In certain situations, a shift in the general atmosphere, may bring about receptivity.

One executive describes a case in point: "I used to have the worst time getting my people to work overtime. In recent months, however, my staff seems to understand that we're really under pressure. Now they buy the overtime situation unhesitatingly."

"Not enough time." A perfectly good idea may be ruled out because its application would take up more time than is thought to be available. If the crisis deepens, however, taking a large immediate loss—in other words, stopping to apply the idea—may prove a saving in the long run.

MATURING A HALF-BAKED IDEA

Another obstacle to making effective use of an idea may lie in the form of its first conception:

The idea isn't ripe. In ordinary circumstances, none of us would expect a boy to do a man's job. And yet, we frequently attempt to make use of an idea that hasn't reached maturity.

An idea is half-baked not necessarily because of its objective form but because of its inappropriateness to the situation at which it's aimed.

In general, there are two reasons that may account for ruling out an idea:

IT FAILS TO MEET ALL CONDITIONS. "What our customers are clamoring for is not a better-quality product but individual service." This statement, made in a policy-setting conference of a dye and pigment company, set the stage for the suggestion of ideas.

One of the executives proposed: "How about our making up a technical handbook that will give our customers all the information they need in the use of our materials?"

From the objections that followed, it seemed clear that the executive's idea did not satisfy all the ramifications of the problem:

"Preparing the handbook would be a monumental job."

"Our customers won't use it."

"How about our Mexican customers? Will we have a foreign language edition?"

The final solution adopted by the dye and pigment company represented a modification of the handbook idea. It was decided to print an informational manual. But instead of attempting to make it comprehensive, only the frequent and major technical difficulties were treated.

To meet the need more fully, salesmen were armed with the manuals and distributed them as a company promotion piece. The salesmen further were instructed to be on the lookout for any difficulties customers encountered in using company products and, when outside the salesmen's own competence, these were to be referred back to the home office.

IDEA BLENDING

In order to make an idea meet the situation at which it is aimed, you may have to add, subtract, modify, develop, or combine additional ideas. In such a case, your original idea may become, in retrospect, merely a *starting point*. But the same may be said of flour, milk, eggs and butter—which doesn't prevent them from ending up as a fully baked cake.

There is another hurdle that your idea may fail to encompass:

IT FAILS TO MEET THE TEST OF PRACTICALITY. Your idea may be perfect—in theory—but practical considerations such as cost, the time factor, space limitations and so on, may prevent application.

There are two things to keep in mind when an idea is threatened with the stigma of impracticality:

You now face a subproblem. The objection has created a problem situation that calls for supplementary ideas.

For example, a divisional head of a plastics-fabricating unit had worked out a plan for the introduction of additional production

equipment. It was a sound idea based on a realistic evaluation of production prospects.

Lack of space, however, seemed to be a real obstacle. The executive set about solving the space problem as a preliminary to implementing his equipment plan.

A large percentage of his departmental area was taken up by the storage of finished stock. True enough, every square foot was being utilized. Talking over the problem with one of his foremen, however, they hit on an answer to space limitations. It involved platforms suspended from the ceiling by poles. Use of these platforms meant that a considerable floor area could be cleared. The executive was now in a position to go through with his equipment program.

In some cases the objection to your idea is based on a factor in the situation that can be modified or eliminated. The important thing to keep in mind is that the charge of impracticality is not sure death to an idea but merely an obstacle that frequently can be removed.

INCUBATOR OR SLAUGHTERHOUSE?

In the average company, the conference room is the maternity ward of the business. Here is where ideas are born. But while our progress in postnatal care for infants is great, we usually do only a so-so job with new born ideas.

The technique of brainstorming emphasizes the need to avoid the chill winds of criticism. Whether it's a simple opinion—"I don't think it's a good idea," or comment that has the added weight of apparent fact—"We tried that once before and it flopped completely," idea mortality tends to zoom when undergoing the cold scrutiny of others.

Obviously, ideas must be evaluated somewhere along the line. And, contrary to the dictates of the brainstorming method, it may not always be wise to treat every idea and suggestion as an object of veneration.

"When an idea is puerile," avers a manager of the old school, "I

don't hesitate to say so." Perhaps none of us would accept the efficacy of such alleged forthrightness.

But many a good idea has found an early grave because of a mistaken understanding of what's suggested.

An idea may be pounced upon and dispatched simply because the critic doesn't understand what's being said. The head of a small ceramics plant provided an example of what's involved:

"A discussion with four of my people ended in accord as to methods to be used in handling a particular problem. Later I was disturbed to have one of the four staff men go off at a tangent totally different from the approach we had discussed. I called the other three people in individually and asked for their interpretations. Believe it or not, they each gave different versions of what I had felt was so positively settled."

Cause of the trouble lies in the individual nature of our perceptions. If you've witnessed an incident or accident, and compared notes with others, you'll recall how cockeyed some of the versions were. *You* couldn't be that wrong—or could you? Our interpretations of ideas and situations tend to depart from objective facts for a number of reasons:

Personal background. "Terrific idea!" exclaims a novice junior executive who has just heard a speaker expound a punishment-reward method of dealing with absenteeism. "A laugh," responds an experienced colleague, familiar with the risks inherent in that solution to the absentee problem.

Standards of judgment. "I thought the call was pretty successful," the salesman tells his boss, "they seemed to be favorably impressed by our pitch." But to his boss, leaving without a signed contract spelled failure.

Perceptual bias. The psychologists have a term, and a definition, for another source of communications failure. "Our perceptual responses," say Wickens and Meyer in their psychology text, "are not always accurate evaluations of the objective stimulus. They are influenced by our motive states, our sets, and our past habits. These characteristics . . . make it possible that we would report quite differently the same event if it were performed by a group

toward whom we are favorable and by a group toward whom we are antagonistic.”

The Wickens and Meyer quote explains a peculiar phenomenon often noted when managers get together: somehow the boss's ideas are always hot. And similarly, the ideas of the less favored members of a management group, from their inception, prove to be duds.

ENSURING UNDERSTANDING

There are several steps you can take to make sure an idea won't be killed by failure of its hearers to comprehend what it is that's actually being proposed. In order to be specific, let's assume you're leading a conference in which one of your assistants has come up with a suggestion:

- Ask for repetition. “Just to make sure there are no differences in the way we see this matter,” you might say to an assistant, “would you mind repeating John's idea as you heard it?”

- Ask for questions. Provide your people with the opportunity to clarify any doubts they may have. And don't simply rely on, “Is that understood?” Few people feel free to admit to ignorance, even in small things:

- Encourage questions by emphasizing the subtlety of a point, or the difficulty you had in grasping the idea, and so on.

- Prefocus their questions by directing their attention to the nub of the matter and asking whether that particular aspect is clear.

- Ask for applications. “If this idea were applied, how do you think it would affect employee attitudes?” By the answers you get, you can judge whether understanding exists.

- Ask for implications. “What would you say this new plan means in terms of Saturday work?” Where your subordinates have correctly understood an idea, the implications or consequences they foresee will be correspondingly realistic.

Basic to the creation of understanding, of course, is the need for ideas or information to be given in specific, unambiguous terms. Here you can help an idea along by sloughing off the irrelevancies and fog that often distort descriptions or explanations.

The Time: The early 1930s.

The Place: The home appliance department of a New York department store.

The Hero: A young merchandising executive.

As the curtain rises, the young executive is in the process of having a brainstorm. He speaks to his superior in rapid, breathless tones.

The Hero: We'll advertise by radio, offering free ice picks to whoever writes in. I've located a cheap source of ice picks that will make the expense negligible. Of course, every person who writes in is a potential customer for a refrigerator.

Superior (shaking the young man's hand): Terrific!

It's two weeks later. The young executive, hair unkempt and a desperate gleam in his eye, is once more addressing his superior.

The Hero: But who would have thought that we'd get requests from Florida, Minnesota, or California?

Superior: We'll have to send out the ice picks even though they're clearly outside our range of operation. If your salary were bigger, I'd consider deducting this unnecessary expense.

(Curtain.)

Don't let the tragic little drama described above sour you on the virtues of a sound idea. Unfortunately, none of us can anticipate all possible reactions to the implementation of our ideas. What we should learn from the lead-off example is a technique for putting our ideas to work so as to get maximum results and to minimize chances for failure.

PREVENTING THE SLIP

Robert Burns observed that slips occur in the best-laid plans of mice and men. One of the most effective preventives lies in pretesting.

The military have their "dry runs," the stage its "dress rehearsals." Here are some points that can help guarantee satisfactory results when the chips are down on one of your ideas:

Work out an accurate "sample." The engineer's pilot model, or mock-up, to get rid of the bugs in machine design, has its parallel at the executive's desk. One company president, for example, working on order processing, had his department heads make a walk-through rehearsal of what would happen to an order as it passed through their hands.

Pick good guinea pigs. "Try that slogan out on my secretary," is fine if you are sure the secretary is really part of the audience at which the slogan's aimed. In making your rule-of-thumb preliminary tests for understandability, customer reaction, or what have you, use only people who actually are members of the groups you're shooting at.

Reproduce the actual operating situation. To the extent that it is possible, you'll want to make your test under the conditions in which the plan will eventually operate. Otherwise, you'll feel like the department-store manager whose selling approach wowed his captive audience in the office—but failed to catch the interest of hurried shoppers at the sales counters.

Start slow? Completely satisfactory pretesting may be out of the question. An alternative is to put your plan into operation on a small scale. Advertising agencies frequently try out a sales campaign in a limited geographical area. Similarly, radio and TV networks will run a program for which they have great hopes on one or two stations as a pretest of its success on a nationwide network.

GETTING THE GO-AHEAD

To the average manager, putting an idea to use usually means presenting it to a superior for his evaluation and approval. For

practical reasons, therefore, presentation of your idea may be considered part of its application.

The timing and manner of your presentation depend, of course, on such factors as the nature of the idea, the extent to which you share responsibility with a superior, and the kind of person your superior happens to be.

PRESENTING YOUR IDEA

Here's a streamlined set of suggestions you can use as a guide in working out a presentation.

There's one preliminary decision you must make. What type of presentation will be more effective—a written or oral one?

The basic point is your superior's preference and habits. You undoubtedly know him well enough to decide whether—

his desk is so jammed up with written material your memorandum represents one more drop in the bucket; or

he is the kind of person who would rather listen than read.

Even if you don't intend to have anybody read it, it pays to write out your idea. Putting it down on paper will help you organize your thoughts. Besides, you can use the written material as notes to which you can refer while talking. And it's usually worthwhile to make your notes presentable and complete enough to leave with the boss for later consideration.

In general, your presentation should be in two parts, consisting of

a covering letter, which sums up your basic points,

supporting material, which clarifies the details.

THE COVERING LETTER

Your covering letter should get to the core of the matter and do it quickly. There are cases on record where a really outstanding proposal has been explained in a few words.

But usually you must be more comprehensive. The points your letter should include are represented in this memo prepared by a front-line executive:

- Statement of the problem: "Considerable time is being wasted in requisitioning standard supply items."

- Statement of your suggestion: "I believe setting up a supply locker in the department would largely overcome this difficulty."

- Statement of advantages: "This procedure would yield the following advantages:

- "1. It would make unnecessary the filling out and filing of requisitions for many items.

- "2. It would save the time now being wasted in work interruptions due to going to and coming from the central supply room."

- Statement of disadvantages: "The following disadvantages may crop up:

- "1. Some kind of bookkeeping system would be needed for inventory purposes.

- "2. Some kind of control would have to be set up to prevent misuse of the materials."

- Why advantages outweigh disadvantages: "The time saved, in dollars and cents, comes to much more than the expense involved."

Wherever possible include the following:

Present method costs

Proposed method costs

Savings

Facts, figures, charts, past records—in short, any data or information that your boss needs to help him understand and judge your idea should go along with the letter.

The items you include depend, of course, on the nature of the proposal. But be sure to label each item clearly:

- "Inventory report of the past six months showing transfer of supplies through the XYZ Department."

- "Record showing actual time spent by employees going to and returning from central supply room."

WISDOM FROM AFRICA

When it comes to making presentations, an African anecdote dealing with the *timing* of a presentation can help us avoid trouble.

Gomaya awoke early. He sat up on his grass mat, scratched himself, and realized he had an idea.

Arising, he went to the chief's hut and pounded on the door post. After a while the chief came out.

"What is it?" he asked of Gomaya.

"Remember the white trader we ate last week?" said Gomaya. "He told us about seals in the northern ocean. Why don't we get those animals and train them to pull our canoes?"

Without replying, the chief walked to the huts of three of his warriors and spoke to them briefly. Spears in hand they approached Gomaya and before he could flee, dispatched him.

The chief went back into his tent.

"What was the matter?" asked his new young wife.

"Gomaya had a good idea," explained the chief, "that I wasn't interested in hearing at the moment."

HARD OR SOFT SELL?

Avoid underselling—and overselling. If you decide to add some personal persuasion to your written presentation, stick to the happy medium. Exaggerated claims for your idea may tend to make your superior discount it in advance. But if you're enthusiastic, don't try to hide the fact. It's contagious. There's no reason why you shouldn't say, "I think this is a good idea and I hope you agree."

The important thing is to avoid arousing expectations that may not be completely satisfied. It's better to have him get a little more than he expects, rather than the other way 'round. Your best guide for keeping your selling slant in the groove is the extent to which you can back up your statements.

If your figures show that your proposal can bring about a significant cost saving, you can really let yourself go. But if your pre-testing has provided only inconclusive evidence of the idea's worth, your statement should be more moderate. "I'm not sure myself just how effective this plan can be. I think it has definite possibilities and I'd like to get your reaction."

Let's assume you've gotten approval for your idea. Implementation now is essentially a matter of planning.

FROM IDEA TO ACTION

The value of an idea lies precisely in one fact: it's a plan of action. To move from words to action calls for a plan.

Obviously a plan may be complex, requiring hundreds of details, or as simple as planning a company picnic. (If you've recently planned one, you'll undoubtedly disagree with the aptness of the example.)

In general, there are a few essential aspects of a plan that fit the average case:

Project name. If your idea involves an operation of some sizable scope, it's usually helpful to give it a name. Of course, you may not be involved in any action as grandiose as a *Manhattan Project* and *Operation Overlord*. Nevertheless, you can gain two benefits from pinning a label on your program:

1. The name acts as a convenient means of identification. Everybody involved in the plan has a common understanding of what is being talked about.

2. There's also a psychological advantage gained. With a name, the project becomes more specific, more concrete in your own mind.

Personnel. People are usually the most important element in advancing a project. Plans have fallen through—or even failed to get into the first action stages—because the right people for the job were lacking.

In thinking in terms of individuals you require to implement your idea, don't overlook the fact that you may have people who are basically qualified but who may need additional specific training to function adequately. Training of personnel then becomes an important subsidiary part of your idea implementation.

Physical facilities. The process of listing the equipment you need to implement an idea may help you pinpoint gaps in the plan. You may need new facilities or you may have to revamp those at hand.

Details of method. An idea may be basically excellent, and yet its application may prove disastrous because it has gone haywire in minor details.

Of course, the pretesting techniques you use for the idea in the large may also be applied to its minor aspects. Most planners find their salvation is to delegate to subordinates the foolproofing of the subordinate lines of action for which they will be responsible.

Controls. It is unwise to start a plan down the road and then forget about it. Whether you call it a progress review or follow-up, you should be prepared to watch for unexpected developments.

Your controls will depend on the nature of your plan. You may want to set up a system of written reports by which your subordinates keep you informed. Or you may prefer to make direct checks on your own.

Either way, your continual evaluation of results can increase the odds for a favorable outcome.

Executives as a group suffer from chronic writer's cramp.

The loss in efficiency that results from this basic fact is incalculable. Let's cover the commonplace items first:

losses due to omissions, incompleteness

losses due to misunderstanding of poorly worded written messages

These losses can be severe. The top executive who tells his subordinate: "But Jim, I couldn't possibly read that emphasis into your report," is saying that failure of the subordinate executive to put into black and white the exact meaning intended led to a failure in communications, and probably a failure in action.

LOSSES DUE TO THE UNWRITTEN WORD

The losses resulting from the poorly written word are bad enough. The losses that arise because the message is never committed to paper at all are much greater.

The editor in chief of one of our top business journals has put the problem in these words: "Know-how measurable in terms of millions of dollars is kept from people who could use the knowledge because the possessor of the information lacks the simple ability to put it in writing."

Here's an example supplied by the editor:

Scott Dickens, head of a production division of a ceramics company, works out an effective cost-cutting program for the five foremen who report to him. The program is simple and flexible and could be adapted to almost any shop situation.

The field editor of the business magazine, in his visit to the ceramics company, hears about the cost-cutting approach and believes it will make an excellent story for his readers. Scott Dickens promises to write out a description of the program.

The field editor, aware of the writing difficulty, sits down with the executive and together they draft the outline the article is to follow.

Weeks go by, but the story doesn't come through. The editorial staff in the home office sends a letter, then a telegram, then phones Dickens person-to-person:

"We're very excited about your idea. Won't you please send us the details? Don't bother about style. Just give us the information suggested by the outline—we'll polish up the writing."

Finally, two weeks later, Scott Dickens delivers. Three pages of illegible longhand arrive at the magazine office. The copy is useless. The editors give up. The story doesn't get told.

YOUR COMPANY LOSSES

The illustration above shows how readers of one business magazine lost out on a good idea because an account of it never saw the printed page. But the same thing happens within an organization.

Just think of the enrichment of your intracompany communications if executives could resort to the written word with the same directness as they do to the spoken word.

If you've just thought, "Just so much more garbage," you're wrong. The very act of putting an idea down in black and white makes for solidity. A flimsy idea can be made to sound pretty good delivered orally by a glib proponent. Writing tests ideas for quality.

The originator of an idea will find that in the very process of committing it to words, he is forced to clarify and develop it, making it more understandable and more substantial.

PUTTING IT IN WRITING

Chapter 6 discusses the problem of writing the interoffice memo. The scope of this chapter is more general. Its aim is to bring you a step closer to writing like a professional.

The principles and suggestions given here are different from but not contradictory to those in the earlier chapter. Although the approach varies, the aims of good writing—brevity, clarity, impact—are present in both chapters.

It's the difference in context that calls for a new treatment. The problem of writing an effective memo, like the problem of writing anything, calls for a systematic approach.

But the less routine writing problems that you may be called on to tackle demand a broader writing skill. The recommendations you'll find in the pages ahead are designed to help fill that need.

One thing we can promise. You won't emerge from these pages a Hemingway. But once you understand some of the false assumptions that block the writing efforts of many executives, and you absorb the simple techniques by which the routine problems of writing can be overcome, you will find yourself adding new force to your writing effectiveness.

You may never be asked to write a magazine article on some phase of your executive accomplishment. Then again, it may happen tomorrow.

Besides, writing is a skill that can help you out in a dozen different ways. Aside from routine writing chores, the occasions when you might pull down a top assignment because you possess an acknowledged writing skill may add a new row of feathers to your executive cap.

The purpose of the foregoing paragraphs is not to make it seem that writing is easy. The point is, it can be made easier.

WRITING LIKE A PROFESSIONAL

Two misconceptions about professional writing flourish like the weed:

The inspirational theory. The writer's head, it is thought, floats among the clouds. Alternately absorbing lightning flashes of revelation and giving out same, the hand merely condescends to put down what the lofty mind dictates.

The perspiration theory. He's just a common mug. His activity

is akin to the ditch digger's. Using words with the same mechanical application as the wielder of the pickax, he punches out his copy between cigarettes and slubs of an amber-colored liquid. He in variably ends up a masterpiece with a nonchalant, "just another job," and "30 30."

Funny part of it is, you'll probably find some writers whose approach bears resemblance to both these exaggerations. But now let's talk about you.

The kind of writing you're interested in doing lends itself to an approach similar to that of many professionals. Your willingness to go through three steps can lead you to a satisfactory opus, whether it be a report, a project description, a company handbook, or a magazine article.

You write your piece by considering:

- Content. You ascertain the points you want to make.
- Order. You arrange your material for maximum effectiveness.
- Readability. You use words and phrases that insure clarity and understanding by your reader.

You achieve each of these steps by series of writing acts. Expect the going to be a little rough at first. However, you can be sure of one thing: the more you accustom yourself to the approach, the easier it becomes, and the better your finished product will be. Another point: you'll soon see that by using these three steps in your writing, you will enrich your material.

Desirable consequences, you'll agree.

FROM FALL GUY TO HERO

To see how the method works, let's go back to Scott Dickens, the ceramics executive. By solving his writing problem, we'll gain the benefits of learning his cost control program, and seeing how the three-step method works.

The cost control approach Dickens had used with his subordinates was simple: "Spot the cost leaks in your departments," he had told them, "and it becomes a cinch to plug them."

To see this idea transformed into an explanatory article, let's transform Dickens from fall guy to hero. Let's say that when he

was asked to write a piece describing his cost-trimming program, he had read this chapter.

Confident in the knowledge that he possessed the technique needed to tackle the writing chore, he would have avoided the weeks of hesitation and self-doubt. After settling himself comfortably at his desk, he would have proceeded confidently to undertake the task at hand.

Content. Dickens would begin by listing all the points he wanted to cover in his article. His rough notes might have turned out like this:

- many costs are controllable by supervision
- supervisors are closest to operations
- supervisors who are sold on cost control can sell employees
- method only touches cost areas for which supervisors are responsible
- employees can participate
- look for waste of time
- look for waste of materials
- supervisors are key men in cost control
- once cost leaks are found, usually simple to plug up
- method in use for three months, savings are considerable
- mention some difficulties men had in applying
- leads to greater awareness of departmental functioning
- communications are necessary for employee participation

Executive Scott Dickens might have stopped right there, and gone on to the second step. But there is a substep possible at this point that can add greatly to the solidity of the finished article.

THICKENING THE BROTH

Once you've broken ground by listing all the points that come to mind, you can use the items you've listed to stimulate you to add other items. Dickens went through the list, stopped at, ". . . look for waste of time," and ". . . look for waste of materials."

What other wastes might be included? And although in the plan used by his subordinates, only time and materials waste were

investigated, once Dickens had his wind up, he was able to add three other types of cost leaks:

- waste of effort
- waste of talent
- waste of money

You usually can work out additional points by scanning your list of items, and asking questions like these:

Who: who else is involved; who should be notified; who will benefit?

What: what can be done; what was the cause; what facts must be considered?

Why: why must the effort be made; why should anyone be interested; why take course A rather than course B?

Where: where must it be done; where must it not be done?

When: when is the best time; when must action be avoided?

How: how should the situation be met; how should the move be made?

How much, how many? By clearing up questions of quantity, your material becomes more specific.

With his list made more comprehensive, Dickens was now in position to take the next step, the order of handling content.

Order. There is a quality found in most amateur writing that makes the reader feel he's undertaken an obstacle course built in a maze. Essentially, it's a lack of *logical sequence* that's to blame.

Arranging the details into a smooth-flowing narrative is the toughest part of writing, even for the professional. What usually happens is that our grip on the material grows lax. We lose sight of what it is we really want to communicate. W. Somerset Maugham describes the remedy in these words:

"Stick to the point and whenever you can, cut. The first of these demands a logical mind. Few of us have it. One idea suggests another: it is very pleasant to pursue it, even though it is not directly concerned with the subject. The inclination to digress is human."

The best solution is to outline. Even a rough outline is better than none at all. And a fairly complete outline that covers your subject to your satisfaction, will ease the job still further.

HOW TO OUTLINE

Here's how to work out an order, or structure, for your piece, starting with the list of items you've developed:

Check the main points. As you read through your notes, you'll notice that some of your items are important, some trivial. Some may be covered in a sentence, others may require several paragraphs or pages.

In Dickens' list, the item ". . . many costs are controllable by supervision . . ." is clearly a point to be made in passing. But ". . . look for waste of time . . ." as well as the other wastes mentioned deserve major emphasis.

Look for a central idea or theme. You probably know what this is from the outset. But with the list before you, you can test the assumption that you know exactly what it is you want to write about.

Just assume, for example, that Dickens mistakenly thought that he was going to do an article on employee participation. Scanning his notes, he'd be struck by the fact that the preponderance of his material related to departmental costs rather than participation. He'd have to revise either his list or his concept of the nature of the piece he was going to write.

Keeping in mind what it is you intend to write about, and noting the nature of the items listed, try to express your subject in a single sentence. Speaking for Scott Dickens, we can state his theme as, "Supervisors can cut costs by spotting instances of departmental waste and eliminating them."

USING THE THEME

Value of a brief statement of your theme is that it guides you in developing your structure. While your notes help you verify your theme, a statement of your theme in turn helps you reappraise your list:

Deletions. The last item in Dickens' original list ". . . communications are necessary for employee participation . . ." seems to him now, in view of his theme, to represent an unnecessary digression. He strikes it out.

Repetitions. “. . . supervisors are closest to operations . . .” and “. . . supervisors are key men in cost control . . .” are overlapping statements of the same idea. One or the other should be cut.

Cluster the items according to relatedness. Go through your notes, linking together the points that may be grouped under a common heading. Scott Dickens, in going through his list, devised these headings: need for supervisors to be cost-conscious; what the plan accomplishes; the major steps in the plan; results.

OUTLINE POSSIBILITIES

With headings worked out to your satisfaction, the next question is, In what sequence shall I present them?

There are several “systems of arrangement” that satisfy our sense of logic:

Chronology. Any narrative that involves elements related to each other in time usually should be structured to permit a normal time sequence. If, for example, you’re writing about a subject with a past, present and future, logic suggests that your narrative cover the time elements in the sequence of past, present, future.

Dramatic effect. Let’s say you have a series of points to make. Some of the points pack punch; others, although pertinent, are less effective. Your own reading reactions probably suggest the best arrangement; start and finish with your strongest points—ending with a clincher, as you know, often saves the day. Place your less impactful ideas in the middle.

“Sell-tell-bell.” This method, tagged alliteratively by a writer friend, is described by him this way: “Sell the importance of your subject, tell your story, ring the bell and end it on a strong motivating note.”

Digestibility. Some of the points you make may be easier to describe or sell. Usually these should come first, so that your reader is in an accepting frame of mind when he comes to the more complicated or controversial points.

There are many other possible sequences. Essentially, it’s the nature of your material that helps you determine the order of

presentation. But whatever outline you work out, *follow it*, or you run the risk of spoiling the fruits of your labors.

If you've gone through the preliminaries carefully, the actual writing will now take only a small amount of time because you know exactly what you want to say. Stay with your outline, elaborating on each item. As you write your draft, forget about the rules of writing. Just concentrate on expressing the outlined items.

Above all, don't let yourself get stuck for a word or a phrase. Keep right on going. When you're finished with the draft, you will have time to concern yourself with the details.

Readability. There is a technique used by professional writers that accounts for the high quality of their writing. This one simple technique is little known to the nonprofessional.

In a word, the secret is *rewrite*.

Using the art of rewrite, you can turn your rough draft into a finished product. When you rewrite, you assume the role of both reader and author. You must pass judgment on what you have written and then if it is unsatisfactory, change it.

THE SHARP BLUE PENCIL

In improving on your first draft, you read with an eye to eliminating weaknesses in your copy. Even if what you have written is satisfactory, you may be able to increase effectiveness by a stronger word or a more vivid phrase.

Your editing should be guided by considerations like these:

- Did you quickly tell your reader exactly what your subject is?
- Did you buttonhole your reader early by pinpointing the importance of your subject *for him*?
- Can you eliminate unnecessary repetitions of words or ideas?
- Can you increase emphasis? To make an important point stand out, you may want to repeat. But be sure it is important and warrants such treatment.
- Is your line of thought clear? If your reader will get bogged down in a too-meaty paragraph, you'll want to rework the paragraph looking for simpler words and phrases. And keep in mind

that two short sentences generally are easier to understand than one long one.

• Can you make one word do the work of two? Heavy trite phrases clog up your copy, make dull reading.

Doubtless you can make up a list of your own pet aversions of the literary cliché, but here are some possible substitutions that can brighten copy considerably:

NO	YES
experience has indicated that	we learned
in view of the fact that	since
accompanied by	with
at the present time	now
meets with our approval	we approve

THE PROFESSIONAL WRITER SPEAKS

Ask a group of professional writers for their methods and you will find that no two of them write in the same way.

It is even safe to say that were you to describe the approach to writing set forth in this chapter, the professionals would tend to disavow any resemblance between their work pattern and the three steps of Content, Order, and Readability.

Undoubtedly your professional friends will be giving you honest answers. For many, the habit pattern is ingrained to the point that they go through their paces without awareness.

But the fact remains that no matter how well developed or vestigial the form, the writer who approaches an assignment in the spirit of craftsmanship must necessarily work through phases such as have been described here.

Of all the ideas offered, the one of rewrite will probably make the biggest contribution to your writing effectiveness. Getting your thoughts down on paper, working and reworking to strengthen your message will inevitably lead to a more effective product.

HOW TO HAVE TIME FOR EVERYTHING

"Your idea about saving time is excellent," said the personnel officer of a large upper New York State bank, "but people won't use it."

"You think it involves doing too much work?"

"It's not the work. As I see it, you're like a doctor who tells me, 'Cut down on the calories.' I know I'd benefit, but still, I can't help sneaking that irresistible pie à la mode or cream puff.

"I know I should be more methodical in my use of time. Lord knows, my efficiency could be increased considerably. But I find it difficult to change old habits . . ."

TIME IN YOUR LAP

The problem of time saving for the executive is not so much one of method as it is *motivation*. Almost any systematized approach to better time utilization would improve the effectiveness of the average manager.

But, in addition to the old-habits-never-die obstacle, another one rears its interfering head:

"Executive activity," goes the old refrain, "cannot be regimented."

Maybe. Maybe the reasons against self-regulation by the executive are strong—logically and psychologically. But listen to the outcries on the opposite side, the words of hard-pressed managers:

"If I could only get a half-hour a day in which to think . . ."

"Time pressure accounts for more ulcers and fewer sound decisions in this business than any other factor."

"I defer a dozen important matters a day to have the time to handle the essentials."

"The world of management is waiting to hail the great genius who invents a twenty-five-hour day."

In *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare speaks of

A fortified residence 'gainst the tooth of time
And rasure of oblivion . . .

Any protection the harried manager can find against the tooth of time will simultaneously save him from the oblivion that Shakespeare so aptly links with it.

HOW TO BEAT THE CLOCK

Robert Dobbins and William Shepherd, of the Research Institute's field staff, researched and pretested a novel approach to the problem of executive time utilization. As described in the paragraphs below, it represents the suggestions and revisions of many executives at all management levels. Perhaps it can help you minimize some of the more harmful consequences of the "work versus time" battle.

The new approach to executive time saving lies in the old idea, "Time is money." Executives sometimes talk of "budgeting their time." But if they *really* spent money as they do time, they'd end up in the poor house.

Ninety-nine out of one hundred executives spend time on a "whim-buying" basis. In the course of an average day or week they will make almost every time expenditure that seems necessary. Then, by means of working late, week-end work, and plugging away on buses and trains, they try to find the time to cover their "expenses."

The money parallel is the executive who buys every item that catches his fancy, then tries to make ends meet by scrambling around to amass the income to meet his bills.

MINUTES INTO DOLLARS

You can save time by spending it like money. By accepting the "time is money" adage literally, we're led to a new concept of executive time-saving.

Just see, for example, how concepts of money usage can yield new insights and new methods of time saving:

Installment plan. We want to work out an improved community-relations program for the company. Instead of laying out all the time in one lump, we do it in installments, tackle the task two or three hours a week, stretched out over several weeks.

Borrowing. "I can't possibly make the sales conference today," you tell a colleague. "Can you sit in for me, and present the ideas we've discussed?" If your fellow manager is in a position to "lend" you some time, the manner and date of repayment is a logical question of mutual agreement.

Application of terms like these to time expenditures hold out the possibility of time conservation in specific matters that may help conserve a sizable percentage of your work week—to reinvest in other ways—as you prefer.

Later on we'll take up some of the other money-handling procedures that can have a time-saving payoff. But now, let's examine a method of making a fuller application of the concept.

FIVE STEPS TO TIME PROSPERITY

Five steps help us apply the spend-time-like-money idea. Properly used, the approach can help end the usual symptoms of being strapped for time: excessive hours, oversize backlog, insufficient time for long-range job objectives. Basically, the idea involves a "time budget," and the concept of calculated time spending.

Here is the plan:

Work out a weekly time "income." The starting point of your time budget is your reasoned decision as to how much time you *want* to spend on your job—thirty, forty, or fifty hours. Let your decision represent a balance between realistic job demands and your health or fatigue limitations.

Distribute your time expenditures under basic categories. Three headings typify your time obligations: fixed, semiflexible, variable.

1. **FIXED.** These are items in your work week that come up regularly and cannot be cut down. Regularly scheduled meetings and routine administrative matters come under this heading.

2. **SEMIFLEXIBLE.** Items properly belonging in this group, like maintenance expenses in your cash budget, can be adjusted within limits. In the case of home maintenance, for example, there's an irreducible minimum. But you have some leeway: in making up a given report, for example, you may decide to do an adequate job that will require two hours, rather than spend five hours for what may not be a commensurate return in value.

3. **VARIABLE.** Your entries under this heading are those that you can control completely. An idea you have for improving a work procedure may be assigned just a few moments of on-the-job time, and tabled for later action, or you may want to immerse yourself completely in investigating the possibilities.

Using the Time Expenditures chart below, list the job activities that make up your week under the appropriate headings, indicating the time spent weekly, per item. Note our examples as a starter.

WEEKLY TIME EXPENDITURES

<i>Fixed</i>		<i>Semiflexible</i>		<i>Variable</i>	
Regular conferences with your superior	10 hr	Time spent supervising subordinates	7½ hr	Long-range planning	1 hr
Regular meetings with subordinates	12 hr	Handling daily mail	5 hr	Personal time—shopping, barber, etc.	2 hr

Prune expenses. With your time expenditures broken down according to the fixed, semiflexible, and variable categories, you're in a better position to take a minute-pinching view of each item. This is the point in the approach where you can increase effectiveness by shifting the pattern of your spending.

Apply questions like the following to determine where your spending has been unwise—either too liberal or too miserly:

- Is the time allotted in keeping with importance?

- Would a slight increase in time spent on an item yield a decided improvement in results?

- Could an item in the fixed category be shifted to the semiflexible list, as the result of a reassessment that indicates an old routine is keeping you to a pattern that is now outgrown? Do you, for example, still have to spend one hour a week with Mr. X for a briefing, when the whole subject has become less important and a few minutes on the highlights would be adequate?

- Could an item considered to be semiflexible properly be re-assigned to the fixed category—and be treated accordingly? You may want to do this with a too-easily neglected activity like planning, for example.

- Are any items classified as variable that can be dropped altogether? Unnecessary activities tend to cluster in this group.

Plan an "ideal" time budget. Note that the *time budget* described below is *not* a schedule. On the contrary, it's a tool for the executive who cannot tie himself down to a rigid routine.

Purpose of the budget is not an hour-by-hour daily program, but rather a means of getting a quick look at how you're set at any point in the week. Primary objective of the budget is to help you build flexibility into your work day.

Let the following considerations guide your time budgeting:

- Even out time commitments. As much as possible, spot your large time expenditures at points in the week where they do not conflict with one another. For example, pinning yourself down to two three-hour meetings in the same day would mean trouble in case a special matter came up requiring half the day.

In general, keep a critical eye open for any tendency to undertake time commitments when you have no "income" available.

- Fill out the day with a combination of fixed, semiflexible, and variable elements. You accomplish this by writing in initials F, S, and V beside each item, then checking to make sure no day is top-heavy with F items. Reason for the mixture is to make possible a quick reapportionment of time in case of unexpected time demands.

Use the time budget as a tool for adjusting to changing time demands. Value of the time budget, as with the money budget, lies in

TIME BUDGET

<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
F __	F __	F __	F __	F __
S __	S __	S __	S __	S __
V __	V __	V __	V __	V __
F __	F __	F __	F __	F __
S __	S __	S __	S __	S __
V __	V __	V __	V __	V __
F __	F __	F __	F __	F __
S __	S __	S __	S __	S __
V __	V __	V __	V __	V __
F __	F __	F __	F __	F __
S __	S __	S __	S __	V __
V __	V __	V __	V __	S __
F __	F __	F __	F __	F __
S __	S __	S __	S __	S __
V __	V __	V __	V __	V __
F __	F __	F __	F __	F __
S __	S __	S __	S __	S __
V __	V __	V __	V __	V __
F __	F __	F __	F __	F __
S __	S __	S __	S __	S __
V __	V __	V __	V __	V __

its control function. It's all right for you to take \$10 set aside for other purposes and spend it for entertainment if it will be made by pulling and hauling from other items. Your time budget forces a similar time conservation upon you.

Assume a "must" expenditure: your boss calls you into an unexpected meeting that runs for three hours. If you then make the other time expenditures that were on your daily calendar, you'd run into three hours of overtime. But consider some alternatives the time budget makes possible:

1. **CUT DOWN ON VARIABLES?** A glance at your time budget should tell you whether there are items that belong in the variable category. If so, you may for this special occasion trim them way down, or eliminate them altogether, or transfer them to another day.

2. **APPORTION YOUR TIME?** Looking over your budget may indicate the possibility of working overtime in small doses. After adjusting the variables downward, for example, you may still find it desirable to put in an extra hour. But you can decide to put that hour in on one day, or two half-hours on subsequent days.

3. **EXPAND YOUR DELEGATION?** Consulting your time budget can tell you whether there are some duties ordinarily not delegated that for this emergency you would like to pass along to your subordinates.

MORE SECRETS OF SAVING

Now let's return to a point made earlier—that many of the methods of high, or low, finance may be applied to time manipulation. Already pointed out was the applicability of paying off time expenditures by the "installment plan," and the possibility of "borrowing." There are others:

- "Discounting for early payment": "Jim, I can spend five minutes with you right now. Will that do as well as the half-hour you asked for tomorrow?"

- "A minute used is something learned": If it's true that a dollar saved is a dollar earned, it follows that avoidance of the frittering away of your time is similarly worthwhile. Time waste, like

money waste, leaves you doubly bereft: you not only lose your principal, but you lose the potential fruits of wise usage.

- "Investment": Some applications of time just don't pay off. Whether it's straining to train an assistant who, regardless of how well you can guide his performance, lacks the basic qualifications to perform up to the level required, or devoting time to an assignment better performed by someone else, your ability to call a halt will prevent you from throwing good time after bad.

From here on, you can think up your own favorite phrases relating to money use and work out their implications for time saving. Just to start you off: "Dutch treat," interest rate, mortgage, "building up credit."

THE EXECUTIVE WHO SPREAD-EAGLES THE STATES

"I like the time budget concept but it won't fit my job. I'm responsible for a dozen divisional offices in three states. I never know from one hour to the next what emergency situation will arise in any one of these offices. For instance, I wasn't certain this morning if I'd be able to see you" [Mr. Dobbins].

The executive, head of a far-flung service organization, continued, "I'm afraid my case is like the old lady who noted her income in her budget book and in the opposite column wrote, 'Spent all.' I might note a careful list of projected time expenditures, and I'd have to put alongside them, 'Did none.'"

There's no doubt about it. The executive who, in effect, is on emergency call every minute of his day is up against a tough problem of efficiency and self-coordination.

Yet, even this manager was able to introduce a considerable amount of order into a chaotic time situation. He did it, essentially, by *anticipating* and *recording* the demands on his time.

Made more aware of the nature of his time use by the time-budget concept, he requested his contact people in the branch offices to keep him informed of attention-demanding developments at the earliest possible moment.

By recording these in the time budget form (he substituted priority symbols—A, B, C—for the F, S, and V indications) he

was able to forestall developments by checking back periodically for briefing.

If you have a secretary or assistant aware of the value of a minute of time, he or she may be able to help you spend your time even more wisely.

Let him read these pages, and get his suggestions as to ways and means of tightening up on the purse strings.

The executive walked into the office and sat down at the desk across from the psychiatrist.

"What seems to be the trouble?" asked the doctor.

"It's hard to say. I feel under a constant strain. I have trouble sleeping nights. Even when I go away for vacations, I find I can't unwind enough to feel really comfortable."

"Do I understand that you work for the XYZ Company?"

"That's right."

"Then what you tell me is of particular interest. The company has a fine reputation, is run by an enlightened management. I understand they have a great awareness of the emotional needs of their executives, do everything possible to make it a good place to work. Have you discussed your problems with the president?"

"I am the president . . ."

THE DISSATISFACTION OF MANAGERS

A study made by the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, does violence to the popular belief that executives, with their greater job security and a stronger sense of purpose, are more satisfied than other company personnel.

The Research Center survey revealed:

More than one out of five in the executive category said they were dissatisfied.

Dissatisfaction among managers was *double* that of sales personnel and more than *triple* that among salaried professionals such as engineers, lawyers, and others in professional positions.

Why are managers less happy than sales and professional personnel? Here are some possible reasons:

1. The burden of responsibility. While both sales and professional people have their own brands of on-the-job pressures, they enjoy a certain amount of emotional autonomy.

The average executive, on the other hand, is the filling of an organizational sandwich. He gets the pressures from the top down and from the bottom up. In addition, the need to make decisions and to map out plans of action that subsequently must stand up to the test of results produced exposes him to a constant drumfire of criticism.

2. The burden of status. "The guys you used to kid around with leave you alone." With that lead sentence, *Business Week* of June 9, 1956, started an article entitled "Top Office Is a Lonely Pinnacle."

The feeling of loneliness is not confined to the top spot in a company. Certainly, every manager is aware of the *benefits* of status. But at a less conscious level, he is also aware of the *barriers* of status.

As you go up the ladder, you inevitably leave behind a lot of intimate friends. It may be difficult to make new ones.

Also, on the higher rungs, the workload tends to mount and the worries likewise. Despite everything that an intelligent and well-intentioned spouse may do, it becomes difficult to keep your job from encroaching on social time.

THE ROAD BLOCK OF DISCONTENT

The importance of the situations described above lies in the fact that enjoyment of your job is desirable for its own sake. But in addition, failure to find pleasure in job accomplishment eventually develops as a factor detrimental to performance.

Discontent can be the single most important inhibitor of job effectiveness. "The more you like it, the better you do it," is as true in the executive office as it is on the fencing mat or in front of a painting easel.

Let's now consider one of the greatest efficiency destroyers in the book.

WORRY

The human being capable of slaying a dragon may shrink from a shadow. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in one of her poems, wrote, "We walk upon the shadow of hills across a level thrown, and pant like climbers." The worrier puts out emotional energy for insufficient or illogical reasons.

In *Psychosomatic Medicine*, a textbook by Weiss and English, there are many cases quoted proving that chronic worry can bring on dyspepsia, ulcers, common colds, arthritis, asthma, and a number of other diseases.

Most common result of worry is fatigue. Subtly and without overt signs, fatigue can act on the body like poison.

One of the interesting aspects of emotional fatigue is that physical rest may be of no help at all. The chronic worrier, for example, is apt to wake up tired after a full night's sleep. He may even be more tired during a vacation than he is when the going gets hot and heavy on the job.

THE INEFFICIENT WORRIER

The inefficiency that derives from worry may show up in very direct terms. The worrier sometimes doubts whether he can trust his own senses. He is forever returning to see if he has locked his safe, signed a check, made a necessary appointment, and so on.

To the worrier, decisions are hell. No matter how wisely he has gone about selecting an alternative, he cannot close the books with the satisfied feeling that he has done the best he possibly could. His worrisomeness forces him to believe that he *never* has done as well as he possibly could. And so the fires of worry continue to feed on self-generated doubt.

The usual prescription for the worrier is, "Don't worry." It's a fine medicine—but no one has yet succeeded in putting it in a bottle.

The wellsprings of worry may be so deep in individual per-

sonality as to elude the efforts of any but a psychiatrist. However, there are many individuals who can benefit from self-treatment that includes these two steps:

Ask yourself, "What are you worried about?" Frequently the simple act of identifying the source of our uneasiness can help us minimize or eliminate it. The executive who asks himself this question may find a pleasantly surprising answer. A manager, who had been as nervous as a novice actor on opening night, on investigating the basis for his feelings found it all centered on a decision he had made involving an expenditure of five dollars. Once identified and put in proper perspective, this source of concern was nullified completely.

Ask yourself, "What if the worst happens?" In the example mentioned above, the worst consequence was a loss of five dollars. In many situations, a realistic appraisal of the cause of our concern will indicate that our disturbance is out of all proportion to the possible ultimate loss.

In the chapter entitled "The Art of Failsmanship," you'll find a more detailed treatment of this point that can help you still further dispense with illogical worry.

RUNG OUT OF REACH

Fortune of October, 1956, in an article entitled "Executive Discontent," pointed out that for many middle-rank executives comes a time when they finally realize that they are not going to go much further. The shock can be great.

Dissatisfaction with the way the job is going or with its future can add another emotional drag to job satisfaction. And facing up to the situation realistically, it must be admitted that no matter how high we go, there must always come an end of the line.

But the point is, it's our reaction to this situation that's important, much more important than the fact itself.

JOY ON THE JOB

Generally it can be said that the executive who has a feeling of progress and achievement will be happy in his work. Your sense

of progress should be well enough developed so that staying in the same job doesn't mean an end of growth. There are many ways in which you can gain job satisfaction while standing on the same organizational rung of the ladder:

Increase in skill or talent. The quality of the job you're doing may be improved. If you're a good personnel man, you may become a better one. If you're an outstanding purchasing executive, that fact may be translated into terms that will win you recognition *outside* the company, in business associations, and other ways.

Developing other people. Many an executive has seen his ambitions realized in the success he has helped create for others. This is likely to be true of individuals of a high order of maturity. But the paternal or fraternal feelings we develop for subordinates may be instrumental in providing vicarious success through the achievement of others.

Developing the level of job performance. An executive, in the same job for ten years, recently explained: "I'm doing my job in a completely different manner today from when I handled it at first. In the beginning I tried to do it all by myself. Since then, I've learned that the real art of being an executive lies in organization and delegation." He's a different—and more effective—executive now.

BOREDOM

"I've gone stale on the job."

Even the best of us may feel that way from time to time. In most cases we are rescued by the natural changes that take place in executive activity. The job's always undergoing subtle changes. Shifts in emphasis and new demands made on us make for a continuing change of purpose and effort.

The threat of boredom for the average executive is fortunately much slighter than the threat of worry. Nevertheless, even an occasional "I'm-in-a-rut" feeling deserves some treatment.

Don't oversimplify, or arbitrarily limit, the cures for that fed-up feeling. We're dealing now with the human mind and spirit. Miracles in this area are not unusual. While the case of Eddie

Arcaro below may not merit the miracle tag, you'll probably agree that some unmeasurable element swung the balance for him.

CONTENTMENT ON HORSEBACK

"Last spring I was thinking seriously of quitting," reported Eddie Arcaro, considered the best racing jockey by many experts. Continued Arcaro, during an interview in the summer of 1956: "I was lackadaisical. I didn't care if I rode or not.

"I'm not a psychiatrist, but I psychoanalyzed myself. I got to thinking what I would do if I quit. And I realized that I don't know anything else in life I'd rather do. But I saw I was fighting my work. Now, I want to go on with it and I'm riding better than I have in the past two or three years. I've got a lot more energy. And my whole outlook is different."

Borrow Eddie Arcaro's system of psychoanalysis. Stop and ask yourself what you would do if you were to quit your job. And as he did, you may come to realize that there is actually nothing else in life you'd rather do. It can be a revitalizing insight.

The antidote to boredom is always change. And every executive's job has elements that may be refurbished without changing basic goals.

You can add zest to an old job by seeking ways and means of adding new elements to your job landscape. A new project, a series of experiments to bear out some ideas you've always had, suggesting new areas for development within the frontiers of your responsibility—moves such as these can clear your job of the smog of staleness.

PREREQUISITE FOR CONTENTMENT

Every human being is bound to experience some disappointment and frustration. It happens both in our professional and private lives.

Yet the normal, healthy human being does not let individual situations throw him. He judges from the perspectives of time and over-all accomplishment. The wisest among us are content if they end up with more satisfactions than disappointments.

And it's usually the height of folly, regardless of how dedicated we are to our work, to try to find all our satisfactions in our jobs.

SONGS ON THE SIDE

Talk hobbies to the average man who hasn't got one and his lips curl in disdain. He is thinking, of course, in terms of whittling and string saving. But the activity sometimes called "outside interests" need by no means be mundane.

Take the case of Danny Wolfe, 1949 co-captain of the University of Texas football team. He went into his family's business, Wolfe Nursery, Inc., Stephenville, Texas.

In the course of testing nursery workers for job aptitude, Wolfe, on an impulse, took the test himself. Unexpectedly, he found his musical aptitude rated high.

Wolfe bought a piano and started taking lessons. In the two years since the movers wheeled the piano into his house, he has sold fifty-six tunes to publishers.

Wolfe is still managing the nursery business. But increasing the scope of his interests has added another dimension to a general enjoyment of living that can't help but reflect favorably in his work.

"Hobbies Develop the Executive," proclaims the title of a recent piece by Margaret L. Jones in *Dun's Review and Modern Industry*. She describes the outstanding work done in bird photography by du Pont's President Crawford H. Greenewalt; U.S. Rubber's Vice-president John E. Caskey, a successful dual hobbyist pursuing both gardening and painting; Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) Personnel Counselor Robert L. B. Roessle, whose current interest is drawing plans for and constructing a 25-room ski lodge in Vermont.

It's a wide world. Many of our needs can be satisfied only in the privacy of our families and in a circle of friends; the pleasures of art, music and literature; the embracing peace of religious worship; the excitement of sports and the theater.

“Executive Crack-up”

“Your Next Promotion Can Kill You”

“Why Executives Die Young”

These are the titles of some recent articles in national magazines. Judging from current literature, including TV and movie scripts, pressure on the executive is an explosive problem. Is the popular writer, in seeking for dramatic effects, pounding out on the drums a theme better suited to the strings?

ULCER GULCH

A fast look around at the executive scene forces the reluctant judgment that the scribes are not exaggerating.

The ulcer has been accepted as both the symbol and symptom of executive strain. Indeed, in the folklore of management, the ailment has taken on a curiously perverse aura.

Some executives sport their ailment with the same coy pride as the duelist's scar or the gamehunter's moosehead. An executive, asked his profession, will respond with the admission that he's a member of the “ulcer set.”

And one advertising company, to convey to the public an image of its feverish pace, characterizes itself with the slogan, “Even our office boys have ulcers.”

WHEN PRESSURE ISN'T FUNNY

To the physician, an ulcer is an expression of the body's failure under stress. The so-called nervous breakdown, also an occupa-

tional hazard of the executive, is another form of inability to withstand the turns of the screw.

Many executives will admit that the effectiveness of their work is hampered by both the fact and feeling of high pressure.

What's the solution? Obviously there can be no easy answer. The elements contributing to the problem include a heavy workload, and in many cases an expanding area of responsibility. Neither of these can be easily shrugged off.

But, in addition, the very nature of managerial activity, the risk of high-stake decisions, the need to fly blind in a smog compounded of self-doubt and insufficient facts, also heighten the sense of crisis.

Accordingly, where ulcers are not treated with the circumspection of a social disease, they are an executive commonplace, like the discussion of measles at the PTA.

MR. EXECUTIVE, YOUR HEALTH

The consequences of work pressure on executive health is of concern both to the executive and his company. Where an executive has health problems, doctors are agreed that often the trouble lies in job stress. However, physicians believe the answer to pressure is not to be found only in the doctor's office, but in the executive's as well.

DECOMPRESSION TECHNIQUES

Professor Chris Argyris of Yale University published a study (*Personnel Journal*, June, 1953) that has therapeutic implications for the pressure-ridden executive.

Professor Argyris attended a series of top-executive workshops. In the course of his observations at these meetings, as well as in interviews with business leaders in numerous organizations, he was unable to uncover a list of characteristics of "successful executives."

Professor Argyris lists seven characteristics that make for executive achievement. But implicit in the Argyris picture of the successful executive is the fact that the *successful executive is successful because he has developed the means of working under pressure.*

In other words, the seven characteristics offered as “qualities of success” can be regarded as seven techniques top executives use in offsetting job strain.

THE DURABLE EXECUTIVE

Here are the qualities Professor Argyris identifies with executives of superior accomplishment. Consider each item in the context of your own pressure problem:

Frustration tolerance. “All that work and nothing to show for it,” is a statement that often precedes executive rage and frustration. But the successful performer is able to work hard on a project knowing that his hard work might gain him nothing in the end.

In other manifestations of the same frustration tolerance, executives accepted a temporary frustration—not being able to realize immediate objectives, for example—in order to achieve long-range goals.

The frustration resistance of successful executives was shown by their ability to avoid blowing up under the needling of small provocations. When they found it necessary to hold back their feelings, they were able to do it without paying the price in emotional upsets that impaired clear thinking.

You’d be right in assuming that this ability to sit on one’s emotions cannot exist as a permanent situation. Short term, however, it would help overcome the dozen minor crises that beset your daily path.

The ability to release tension built up by frustration is, of course, an allied aspect of high frustration tolerance. It may even be said that knowing how to “work it off” creates the ability to tolerate frustration.

Methods used to release tensions are significant. “Taking it out on the wife and kids”—making a hapless subordinate a whipping boy—isn’t desirable. Socially acceptable means—participation in or watching sporting events, long walks, immersion in social activities—are examples of acceptable release methods.

Encouraging participation. The effective executive shucks off pressure by encouraging his subordinates to share in the control and

development of the department. Especially noteworthy: subordinates were permitted to discuss and pull apart decisions without the executive feeling that his personal worth was being threatened.

Acceptance of suggestions and criticism of others applies both up and down the line. The executive, in dealing with his superior, uses the same open discussion of problems and decisions without in any way lessening his sense of responsibility.

Professor Argyris's description of the executive in this situation is particularly revealing:

When the executives called a meeting with their subordinates to solve a problem, they never began the meeting with a few "suggested solutions." First they would find whether the subordinates actually saw the problem as they did, then they would help the subordinates develop as many reasons as possible for the existence of the problem.

Finally, they would encourage the subordinates to suggest solutions to the problem in the light of their own analysis. The executives participated but they tried to present their ideas after all the others were "on the table."

To the experienced executive, the conference method of maximizing subordinates' participation is standard operating procedure. Nevertheless, it takes on new significance in the context of an anti-pressure device. Examined from this point of view, two things become clear:

Participation by subordinates makes it possible for the executive to sit back and be more judicious and objective in his consideration of problems.

The ideas, the back-and-forth discussions, have the obvious virtue of assisting the executive in arriving at an understanding and a solution to operating problems.

Both these results tend to lessen strain.

Self-questioning. The effective executive is not above criticism—even from himself. "I continually ask myself embarrassing questions."

This does not mean that capable managers are constantly critical or disapproving of themselves. On the contrary, they seem to hold

themselves in high esteem. As a result of their self-respect, they try to understand their mistakes without becoming upset over their personal responsibility for them.

Their rationale might be put into words: "Sure I made a mistake. But when I made it, I was doing the best I could with the resources available to me. Now, what can I do to prevent another similar error?"

Effective managers exhibit an interesting broadmindedness. True, they have personal bias, but they are keenly aware of this; they realize that preferences are personal ways of seeing the world, and concede that their views are not necessarily the best ones available.

Harry Stack Sullivan, in an article in *Psychiatry*, once wrote, "It is not 'as you judge so shall ye be judged,' but as you judge yourself so shall you judge others." The executives in our select group seem to bear out Sullivan's thesis. Their own self-respect enables them to respect others.

Professor Argyris's observations also confirm a general psychological belief, that a person tends to feel about others as he feels about himself. That principle explains the efficacy of self-respect.

The executive who operates in a world of estimable people is better able to handle self-criticism and criticism of others. Feelings of guilt and punishment associated with failure are minimized.

Living with your competition. Managers accept a competitive world. Although they do not feel the dog-eat-dog label is altogether appropriate, most agree that they have been "nibbled at." They recognize and accept a set of rules for executive warfare. Moreover, few of them see any likelihood that the situation and the rules will change.

For most of the executives in the select group, a competitive situation represents no grave threat. If another executive shows competitive spirit, or when they compete with colleagues for specific objectives—anything from acceptance of an idea to promotion—they don't become hostile toward that person. It's part of the game.

They are able to accept hostility from others without feeling a

need either to show that they are hurt or to respond in kind beyond the logical needs of the situation.

The handling of hostility seems to be a key to the emotional balance of effective executives. The more successful the executive, the more he can dish out hostility, and accept it, gracefully.

Where successful managers did express irritation or hostility, they did so without permitting it to smash their self-control. They were able, for example, to let the competing executive know, and in no uncertain terms, that they didn't like his tactics. But they did this with a minimum of hostility.

Lawyers have long developed the habit of compartmentalizing competitive and personal relations. You see opposed attorneys in courtroom action, violently assailing each other in every way save the physical. Ten minutes later they're lunching together, discussing one another's tactics with the objectivity of theatergoers commenting on the night's performance.

Mastering victory and defeat. The capable executive never displays wild elation in moments of triumph. Certainly they celebrate, they "feel good inside." But they don't feel victory is a reason for blowing off the lid.

At the same time, they are able to take defeat without feeling "this is the end." They face a loss, even a tough one, without feeling they are washed up.

This does not mean that failure doesn't hurt. They are discouraged and make no bones about it. But the very fact of being able to express their feelings enables them to get back on an even keel and start planning a salvage operation, or to face up to other problems.

The durable manager exhibits a realistic acceptance of a competitive world in which there are bound to be unfavorable decisions coming his way. Related to his understanding of the likelihood of unfavorable decisions is the acceptance of limits. He can operate despite being fenced in—in authority, for example. However, this knowledge was not translated into the feeling that "people were against him" or that "someone"—probably a superior—"was out to keep him down."

Identification with groups. Part of the strength required to withstand pressure derives from the executives' relationship to colleagues and superiors as a group. By anchoring to the group they are able to retain a sense of stability despite the ups and downs characteristic of a competitive business life.

The nature of the groups tended to vary among executives from a small knot of close friends within the company to an encompassing group thought of as the "managerial profession."

The mechanism of the anchoring can be described in simple terms: the executives identified themselves strongly (became closely attached) with these groups and thereby gained a sense of security (a feeling that they were wanted).

Realistic goal setting. It's human nature to try for perfection, particularly when the concept of efficiency is accepted as a standard. In that case, error and failure become pressure producers.

Successful executives, however, are satisfied if they can move toward perfection and do not fret if their efforts fall short. It's in this connection that sound goal setting becomes a key to effective handling of executive responsibility. Executive well-being developed when energies could be directed toward a goal sufficiently challenging to create a will to fight, but one that could be reached.

Level of aspiration, in other words, was in line with capabilities and with the realities of the situation.

MANAGER OFF BALANCE

The seven characteristics described by Professor Argyris tell an important part of the pressure-resistant manager's story. There's more.

Another investigation reveals an unexpected cause for executive pressure.

According to observations made by the Field Research Staff of the Research Institute, the executive tends to lose control of his job because he applies himself to areas not necessarily critical to total performance.

Here are the specific questions asked, together with the three

most typical answers to each, which reveal another aspect of managerial stress. Note the item in question 3 particularly:

1. What's the most important part of your job as an executive?

"Making decisions."

"Seeing that department heads and supervisors do their jobs."

"Planning activities."

2. What's the least important part of your job?

"Detail work."

"Working. I mean that literally: anything that takes me away from planning or making decisions."

"Everything I do is important, or I wouldn't do it."

3. What takes the most out of you on your job?

"Doing the petty jobs that should have been done without me."

"Writing reports."

"People."

In the course of giving these answers, executives indicated that they pay the greatest personal price to accomplish the least important parts of their jobs.

It's interesting to compare the conclusions of RIA's Research Staff as to the causes for the harried existence of executives with the seven points suggested in the Argyris study:

Inadequate delegation

Pursuit of personal preferences

Inaccurate priorities among important items

Inadequate communications with others in the company

GLORY IN PRESSURE?

There is one aspect of pressure that must not be overlooked. Some managers delight in the sense of drive that results from working under pressure. Basis of this satisfaction in many cases is the idea that "I'm getting the job done." Another version of this same idea might be stated: "I glory in the challenge of my job."

This may or may not be a realistic appraisal. But let's not overlook the possibility that some of these executives are kidding themselves.

A feeling of drive may indeed be enjoyed. But how, if at all,

does this feeling relate to efficiency? If the sense of drive coincides with satisfactory results, then possibly the sense of satisfaction is warranted. Does it? Dr. Donald A. Laird explains why a sense of drive, in and of itself, may be a snare and a delusion:

Hard workers are usually inefficient workers since much of their exertion is waste energy. Their excessive effort causes an irradiation of nervous impulses which stimulate too many muscles. They are tense all over while working.

For personal efficiency, the stimulation should be channeled to the fewest possible muscles. Tensing muscles not needed or using needed muscles with excess forcing are poor work habits.

Needless to say, Dr. Laird's statement applies just as well to brain "muscles."

HIGH ROAD, LOW ROAD

The chapter you've just read and the one that follows are both devoted to maintenance of your personal efficiency despite the wear and tear of executive responsibility. The special importance of the problem, as well as the fact that there are two basic methods of alleviation suggest the double coverage.

You'll note, however, that although both chapters deal with the subject of job stress, the suggested remedies differ. The fact is, either approach can be independently effective. You may find one of the two methods will produce better results than the other in your particular case, or that the methods complement one another.

The difference in approach between the two chapters is this: the present chapter is job-oriented; it examines the job factors by which pressure may be decreased. The next chapter describes in detail personal measures you may adopt to get out from under the dead weight of unrelenting schedules and responsibility.

RELAXATION FOR EXECUTIVES

Charles H. Percy, president of Bell & Howell, has described a typical day in the life of a harassed administrator:

The morning mail comes in, including a request for a speech before a local association. A shareowner writes for information on dividend policy. A group of teachers wants to tour the plant and exchange ideas with company executives. The phone rings steadily. An irate customer can't get service in Mule Shoe, Texas. More mail, and then meetings. Back to the office to decide what to do about a pressing budget problem. Review a new product release. Turn down gracefully (impossible!) a request to introduce a friend to the director of purchases, discuss two new appointments in the Manufacturing Division and a major capital equipment acquisition. End of the day. Into the briefcase goes the balance of the day's mail (or yesterday's), along with reading matter marked "Must."

It surely happens in your own experience that the hanging up of your hat starts a daily rat race that promises to leave you exhausted in short order. Many an executive, before the job is an hour old, is already wound up like a spring. How in Sam Hill is he going to last till five o'clock?

EXECUTIVE BENDS

An executive, like a diver, generally accepts pressure as part of his normal working situation. Divers get bends. Executives suffer from ulcers, nervous breakdowns, lowered efficiency, and that symptom known as "taking it out on the wife and kids."

Whether you call it tension, aggravation, or worry, the conse-

quences are real and painful. "It is not work that kills men," said Henry Ward Beecher, "it's worry."

To which some executives reply, "True enough, but nothing worries me so much as work."

Of course you've been given a sure-fire antidote. Whether it comes from a medical man or a well-intentioned friend, you've been told, "Take it easy. Relax."

You know you should. But well-meant advice doesn't seem to do the trick.

Is it possible to ease the severe tensions that typically harass the executive? Generally, yes—and in some cases to a large degree.

IS TENSION BAD?

Before we slay the dragon of tension, there's an important point that must be stressed: Tension is not necessarily bad. There are two kinds:

Constructive tension. When faced with a difficult situation, our bodies and minds react. Our heartbeat picks up. The adrenal glands dump a goodly dose of adrenalin into our system. Biologically, we are now *prepared for action*. This kind of tension is the survival mechanism that gives us the energy we need to sail over a six-foot fence just ahead of a charging bull. It makes it possible for us to wind up a vital task before the deadline.

"I wouldn't give you two cents," says a theatrical director, "for the actor or actress who isn't nervous before a performance." It's the same idea the public-speaking teacher has in mind when he says:

"You convert your tension before a speech into forcefulness, once you get going."

Destructive tension. This kind paralyzes the will. It constricts and prevents action.

Joe Smith starts walking confidently across an eight-inch plank. He's going along fine. Suddenly he looks down, sees he's fifty feet up in the air. The tension resulting from his fear makes it almost impossible for him to control his actions. He barely makes it across to the other side.

Similarly, you find the executive who could handle a tough situation with ease if he were relaxed. But he messes it up fearfully when he's under tension. His perceptions are off. His actions are no longer under control.

YOU GOT "TENIGUE"?

We're not concerned here with the tension that stimulates. We want to concentrate on the destructive variety. The following is a good example:

You come home after a tough day at the plant. It's been the usual routine as far as you're aware. But suddenly you decide you'd better have your wife call off your bridge date for the evening. Before you know it, you've dozed off over the evening paper.

This type of conking out is what one authority calls "tenigue." Some time ago the Associated Press described it as a "new disease, a combination of emotional tension and physical fatigue causing an increasing number of traffic fatalities." But it's not limited to the man behind the wheel. Executives sitting behind their desks can come down with a bad case.

TENSION SYMPTOMS

Your doctor can tick off a string of them. He'll tell you about respiration rate, vague body pains. And he'll add the "feelings" of tension—uneasiness, discomfort, restlessness, irritability.

Most executives know how nervous tension makes them feel. Some put it positively, some negatively. Here's a sample:

"I feel as though I'm going through the day with a hundred pound weight on each shoulder."

"My mind clouds up."

"It strangles my self-confidence."

A common symptom is the knotting of the neck and shoulder muscles. For another executive, tension takes the form of dissatisfaction with everything subordinates say and do.

There is no one "bug" that brings on the symptoms. There are almost as many causes of the ailment as there are victims.

SELECTIVITY FACTOR

Your dentist can give you a lot of firsthand information about tension. He'll tell you about the patient who tenses up so terrifically in the chair that he digs his nails clear through his skin—before a hand has been laid on him. And the patient who follows him falls asleep while being worked on.

Similar contradictions exist on the business scene:

Joe Smith faces up to anything—well, almost anything—without a twinge. But he can no more tell an employee he's through than he can cut his own throat. Truth is, the second task seems easier.

Henry Smith sees it differently. He's a master of the firing process. He suffers not the slightest pang. His entire focus is on the employee's need to save face, to accept the alternative in its best light. But Henry sweats bullets when he's got to blister his purchasing agent for botching up a transaction.

Each of us, in fact, has a purely personal trigger mechanism. A situation that turns one executive into a bundle of nerves may leave the next unruffled.

It's unlikely that you'll ever be able to eliminate all your tension. On the other hand, anything you can do to minimize it is bound to be a major advance both in your health and efficiency. Steps like these can be adapted into a personal program:

Spot the tension-causer. Recognize the situations that make you tense. One executive reports that working with certain people creates tension for him. Sometimes the element of pressure—a job to be finished at a given time—is the tension-producer. Or “a dozen things to do at once” may be the tension-causer. Learn to spot the people, situations, and crises that get you going.

Look for the reason. Try to understand the reasons behind your tension. This isn't easy. The usual answer is: “I guess it's the kind of person I am.” Most times, though, you can do better than that. Perhaps arguing with your boss ties you up in knots. Why? Win, lose, or draw—chances are it isn't going to affect your future in the slightest. But you unconsciously assume that arguing with him

will make him like you less. Stick with it, and you'll probably conclude you've been worrying for insufficient reasons.

Take direct action. Treat the tension-causing situation directly. Here are suggestions for two ways of doing that.

One is to *avoid it if you can*. There are some circumstances you can spot a mile away. Don't get involved. One man arranges to be out of the house when his in-laws, who rile him, come to visit his wife. On the work scene, the same principle applies. If you find yourself becoming annoyed, tensing up when you have to hang on to a phone while someone on the other end fumbles around for some information, hand the instrument over to your secretary while you go on to something else.

A word of warning: Avoidance doesn't mean trying to "control yourself." Bottling up your feelings is frequently the worst thing you can do. Doctors know that the individual who tries to repress his aggravation only intensifies it. That's what causes ulcers.

Another way to tackle the situation is to *blow off steam*. Giving vent to your feelings often affords a safe release. That's why the man who can break into a hearty laugh when the going gets tough will last longer. If there's nothing to laugh about, gripe. And if the circumstances are such that you can't complain, sound off to a colleague.

Or shift the focus from your own tension to the tension of your subordinates. Encouraging them—telling them that everything's going to be okay—can lessen your tension as well as theirs.

Work it off. Physical activity is a method many people instinctively use to ease tensions. For example, the executive who puts his shoulder to the wheel at a critical moment has not only given a boost to his assistants but has also dissipated his tension. The working-it-off approach can also be used off the job.

You probably couldn't say that Winston Churchill's greatness was due to his ability to relax. But there's little question that Churchill's publicized ability to work it off was a major reason for his being able to withstand the greatest emotional assaults ever experienced by any one man. Churchill's methods of relaxation are

well known: a nap after lunch, painting as a pastime, hand work like bricklaying and carpentry.

Whether you resort to the Churchillian paintbox or do it with bowling balls, you'll find that physical activity or a mind-casing hobby helps a great deal.

Breathe deeply. Some people scoff at this idea. Others swear by it. But listen to Jack Lacy, nationally known trainer of salesmen. He conducts sales clinics all over the country, with 700 to 1700 men attending. He runs up to a hundred of these sessions in a year.

Says Jack Lacy: "I attribute a very large part of my ability to carry on to the fact that I know how to control and subdue nervous tension. I know how to give myself a great deal of energy, endurance, and vitality by breathing deeply."

Try it yourself next time you feel tense. Let's say you're about to deliver a critical address to a group of top executives. The symptoms of tension have set in already. You feel slightly dizzy. The palms of your hands are wet. Your knees are shaking like a pair of pants on a clothesline in a gale. Now just inhale deeply. Then exhale.

It's the second part of the breathing cycle that most people neglect. Test it on a couple of people you know. Ask them to breathe deeply. You'll find they have no difficulty swelling up their chests with air. But, when they exhale, they merely bring the chest level back to normal. A deep exhalation should actually depress your chest, leave you almost gasping.

When you've exhaled deeply, you may find you even become a little dizzy. But that's only temporary. As soon as the dizziness goes away, repeat your breathing—a full inhalation and a deep exhalation.

There's a biological reason for the effectiveness of this procedure. Most people under tension tend to develop a tightening of the chest muscles. Their breathing becomes shallow, resulting in oxygen lack. Deep breathing tends to bring your oxygen supply up to normal, thus offsetting one of the key symptoms of tension.

Banish uncertainty. Don't put up with the "unknown threat." A frequent cause of tension is uncertainty. We tend to give fearful

shape to the unfamiliar. From your own experience, just compare the attitude of a first-time blood donor with that of the man who's done it before.

Banish the threat of uncertainty. Try to fill in the unknown by the facts. You have an appointment, say, to see A. J. Smith, the big man in his field. He has an awesome reputation. As you sit in his outer office, you find yourself assailed by all kinds of doubts. How will you handle him?

But if you can get some dope on A. J., you'll find the man shrinking down to human proportions. If you know his education background, hobbies, how long he's been doing what he's doing, you'll find the threat of the unknown quickly disappears. Now you're waiting to see a man, not a monster.

Never lose perspective. Poet Robinson Jeffers put it this way: "Look up at the night; starlight is a steadying draught for nerves at angry tension." Keep this in mind: Most of the tough-looking situations you worry about are being viewed through the magnifying glass of the present. If you can convince yourself that your tension is largely due to a temporary exaggeration of the stakes involved, you'll find you can take a good deal more in stride.

TENSION QUIZ

Here's an amazing fact: Many executives, including those laboring under greatest tension, don't know they're tensed up. A famous psychologist has said, "A person can be entirely unaware of a fear that is actually all-consuming." The same is true of tension. You may have to check to see how badly tension gets you down. The questions and multiple-choice answers below can help you find out the truth about yourself. Check your choice of answers, then score yourself using the directions on page 286.

1. Your superior has asked you to see him. As you sit outside his office, what would be in your mind?
 - a. "I wonder what's wrong."
 - b. "I hope the boss has good news for me."
 - c. Your mind turns to other matters completely unrelated to the coming sessions.

2. An employee asks for permission to see your superior because he wants to complain about your handling of a situation. You're sure in your own mind that you are beyond blame. Which move would you be most likely to make?
 - a. Tell the employee flatly that he is not to go to the boss.
 - b. Try to persuade him that it would be better if you and he could settle the question between yourselves.
 - c. Say, "I always want you to feel free to see the boss at any time. Go right ahead."
3. You've suggested a new service policy to your boss. He likes the idea and suggests that you explain it to the board of directors. You're now sitting in a conference room with a dozen big shots. You feel:
 - a. As though you'd like to sink into the floor.
 - b. Completely calm.
 - c. Somewhat jittery, but exhilarated at the challenge you're facing.
4. You're sitting home reading. It's eleven P.M. Unexpectedly the phone rings. Which reaction would be most likely for you?
 - a. "I wonder who's calling at this hour?"
 - b. "Oh, oh. Here comes trouble!"
 - c. "Probably a wrong number."
5. In the course of discussing a problem, you suggest a solution. A fellow executive takes violent exception to the idea, attacks it as "stupid." Your reaction:
 - a. You drop your wraps and come out fighting for your idea.
 - b. You're so upset that it takes a few seconds for you to recover.
 - c. You laugh and say: "Now that you've told us what's wrong with the idea, Bill, let's see if we can't incorporate the good points into our solution."
6. You've recently chosen a new assistant. He turns in an outstanding performance. Your reaction:
 - a. You're very pleased.
 - b. You go out of your way to tell your boss about your assistant's accomplishments.
 - c. You think maybe he's been more successful than you really want him to be. Now the man is beginning to show you up in your own executive performance.

7. You and two other executives are being considered for promotion. The phone rings and it's the call that's to give you the decision. As you answer:
- a. You feel pretty good because you're reasonably sure you got the nod.
 - b. Your hand is shaking and you almost drop the receiver.
 - c. You're reasonably calm because you know even if you missed out this time, eventually you'll make the grade.
8. You have to make a key decision that will affect the operation of your department for the entire year. Now, as in other decision-making situations, you are:
- a. Nervous and worried.
 - b. So intent on digging into the facts and figures that you're not particularly aware you're doing anything special.
 - c. In a Napoleonian mood in which you feel yourself to be master of the situation.

SCORING DIRECTIONS

Unlike most other self-tests, a "normal" score in this test is not one where all your answers indicate an absence of anxiety or tension is normal. You'll find this fact reflected in the scoring directions below.

Answers that indicate you are predisposed toward tension 1 a, 2 a, 3 a, 4 b, 5 b, 6 c, 7 b, 8 a.

For each question answered as above, deduct 10 points from a total of 80. Then rate yourself:

40 or less: You're too anxious

50 to 70: You're anxious, but about average.

80: You're too perfect. Chances are you didn't answer the questions frankly, or you approach crises with an unnatural calm.

THE NEWFANGLED EXECUTIVE

"Executives, Can You Use \$1500 or More for Tuition?"

That headline was recently carried by the *New York World Telegram and Sun* over an advertisement of the Industrial Bank of Commerce.

The advertisement was well directed. Considerable sums of money and vast amounts of time will be spent in the days ahead for the education and re-education of executives. Fifteen hundred dollars, or ten times that amount, would be paid gladly by executives like those below who have just had the daylight scared out of them by any one of a number of crises:

- A sales manager. Plant engineers have just succeeded in automating the company's basic production operation. What must he know, what must he do, to be able to sell the vastly increased output?

- A personnel manager. His boss has become interested in the possible benefits to be derived from screening tests. He flunked Psych 1 in college. But he's confronted by the necessity of figuring out how meaningful the measure of abstract reasoning ability in Thurstone's Primary Mental Abilities Test is for certain job classifications.

- A controller. He has been forced to go along with the president's decision to purchase data-processing equipment. His background is accounting, not engineering. Is he going to be snowed under by an avalanche of punchcards?

- Head of production control. His world has been transformed: the company is scheduling by computer. He's not "technical-

mind ed." He's an ex-production man who came up from the ranks. Is he going to get tossed out, along with his old hand-drawn production forms?

Of course, the question is not always survival. In many cases, you see the problem dramatized by an unprepared executive whose promotion prospects are starting to wither. His young assistant takes to the new ways like ducks to water. What can he do to stay in the swim?

WHY THE EXECUTIVE'S JOB IS CHANGING

The difficulties facing many executives today, as well as the related problems harassing those responsible for executive development programs, are partly explained if we look at what's happening to the executive's job. Several factors are forcing an increasing rate of change:

Automation and the executive function. Company operations are becoming more technical. And this is true despite the fact that the automatic factory is still a thing of the future.

The word automation could pass out of the vocabulary overnight, without minimizing the face-lifting that's going on in our basic working methods. Fate of the word is immaterial. You don't alter the effects of castor oil by relabeling the bottle.

Executive technology. Hundreds, even thousands of individual efforts are helping to develop the information that constitutes the working knowledge of the executive. Research in the universities and in corporate enterprises are yielding new approaches and techniques.

In another direction is the increasing acceptance of such technical tools as operations research. By helping executives quantify their problems, O. R. insures a more fact-centered approach to problem solving and decision making. With this technical advance comes the outdating of the "hunch" approach to executive planning. Your use of intuition will not cease, but its area of application will shift.

Dollar logic. As a result of larger capital investments of typical companies today, ownership will be more intolerant of mediocre

executive performance. As the dollar stakes increase, companies must redouble their efforts to minimize dollar risk and dollar loss due to ineffective executive action.

DIRECTION OF THE CHANGE

The three factors described in the previous paragraphs by no means tell the whole story of the evolution of the executive function taking place before our very eyes. A number of less direct but potent influences are playing their part: our intensified industrial competition with the U.S.S.R.: the interindustry battle for marketing advantages; speedup of the separation between ownership and management of corporate enterprises.

Add to the factors as you will. Their total effect is a pressure buildup to which business executives can only respond by a constantly rising standard of performance.

Executive Barkis is willing. We may even go further and say that, alerted by the emotional seismograph of insecurity, he is eager to bolster his position by new information, new insights.

Which brings us back to the ad offering funds for tuition. Despite the undoubted success of the advertising campaign by the Industrial Bank of Commerce of New York, there would have been even *more* takers if executives could have answered the question, "Tuition? what kind?"

EDUCATION—FOR WHAT?

You get some inkling of the answer by taking the historical view:

Yesterday's executive. The typical manager of yesterday survived and thrived by reason of his aggressiveness. Hardheaded, hard-fisted, a go-getter, he lived in a frontier world where the opposition was most successfully handled by direct assault.

Today's executive. With the growth of management organization, the executive functions less as a lone wolf, more as a member of a group. As his area of operations becomes more crowded, his elbow room becomes curtailed. Having less elbow room, he has had to substitute perspicuity for force. He has had to learn to persuade

rather than push. Human relations concepts become at once his prod and his staff.

Considering, as we have, the nature of the factors that are working on him, and the course of his past growth, the direction the manager is going becomes clear. Our typical executive of tomorrow will be a *professional* in a dictionary sense of the word: "professional: pertaining to a calling or occupation requiring a superior education."

The know-how, the savvy that was the stock in trade of yesterday's executive is changing from a haphazard store of experience and common sense to something quite different. The new manager will operate from a much better organized fund of knowledge. As Peter Drucker has pointed out in *Management Science*, January, 1955: "It [management science] promises to do in an organized way what has hitherto been done piecemeal, to do systematically and in a form that is accessible to everybody, what hitherto has been done by 'flash of genius' and unusually perceptive imagination."

INFANCY OF A PROFESSION

Compare the profession of management to that of medicine, to get some idea of the transition we face. The old-fashioned manager is akin to the barber-surgeon of the sixteenth century. He sought to cope with the hundred-and-one ailments of modern industry with the equivalent of leeches and herbs.

Today the instruments and curatives of the management world are far from the "wonder" stage. But it may be said that we're approaching the era that parallels the discoveries of a Pasteur or Lister. The stage is set for great innovators, and on cue, they will appear.

Meanwhile, the world of the future is forming around us.

EXECUTIVE OF THE FUTURE

You don't have to be a crystal gazer to see the executive of the twenty-first century seated at his monolithic control desk. All you have to do is skim quickly through the publicity releases of

various organizations that have decided to let some of their research and development people sound off. From these you learn the executive of the future will:

- sit in an office surrounded by push buttons and personal-use machines;
- dictate copy that will be typed out by a gadget that translates his spoken words directly into a printed message;
- keep his files, his library, his reference material on microfilm stacked in dispenser files that can be selected by a dial system;
- communicate with others in his organization, far or near, through a visi-phone, the prototype of which has been made public at the National Business Show held at New York's Coliseum October, 1956.

The Bell Laboratories equipment sported a 2-by-3-inch screen. You can hear the twenty-first-century manager booming into the instrument what his twentieth-century forebear could only utter face to face: "Show me, don't tell me!"

But before we arrive at the state of gadgetry that will make the manager at his desk resemble a pilot at his plane controls, change already will have revolutionized the nature of the executive's function.

ROAD TO THE FUTURE

Your future, as we've indicated, is being influenced by the professionalization of executive activity. Let's examine the adjustments you'll have to make in order to maintain efficiency.

Many executives accept the professionalization idea without being quite sure of its meaning to them personally. Compare the "new executive" to other professionals and it's possible to draw parallels.

- Ethical limitations. All professionals—the lawyer, for example—must hew to a code of ethics as a matter of acceptable professional practice. So, too, the contemporary executive has abandoned the brass-knuckles aggressiveness of his predecessors in favor of principles of fairness and consideration.

- The executive as general practitioner. The doctor in general

practice must have broad training in various specialties so that he knows how and when to make use of them—even though he is not proficient in the specialized field. Similarly, the sales executive doesn't have to know the specifics of a market research study, but must know enough to use the findings of the specialist.

- The "intern" approach to executive training. Many companies consciously or unconsciously duplicate the intern approach in their management development programs. The typical medical school graduate takes a rotating internship, spending two months each in six different specialties—surgery, obstetrics, psychiatry, and so on. The young executive now does likewise, regardless of the spot he is destined to fill; he is exposed to sales, production, engineering, personnel functions, and so on.

- Refresher course. The doctor who wants to keep abreast of advances must take active steps—attend seminars, read periodical literature. Many universities—Harvard, the University of California, the University of Chicago's Management Development Program, the University of Cincinnati's Advanced Management for Executives, the Public Utility Executive Course at Georgia Institute of Technology—provide refresher courses for executives for similar purposes. And a management library is becoming just as important for the professional executive as the technical library is for the engineer. Behind the academic activity lies a basic idea: management is a profession that can be taught and learned.

GUIDE TO GROWTH

Points like those below help the executive become the professional manager of the future:

Education and the executive. College and university curricula are moving ahead; education for management is no longer the old business-school curriculum but attempts to educate for the responsibilities as a manager. Decision making and new trends in organizational thinking are reviewed, discussed, and analyzed.

Dr. Thomas L. Norton, Dean of New York University School of Commerce, addressing a group of educators on his research ex-

periences as a special State Department representative, made this major recommendation for the future of German industry:

"It is essential for the improvement of German industry that there be established a German Institute for Executive Development, aimed to change the attitudes of participating executives and otherwise develop them in the purely management skills already a recognized part of the American scene."

The trained manager, in other words, is being recognized as a prerequisite for the contemporary creation of productive enterprise on a national scale.

The science of the executive. The executive no longer moves over unexplored terrain. Analysis and system have mapped the way.

For example, the head of a personnel department must know the techniques of salary administration, testing, and so on as a necessary adjunct of his responsibility. Similarly, the production executive is impelled by mechanization and automation to acquire a larger knowledge of technical processes.

Even less technical areas are developing more technical approaches. Take the problem of turnover, for example. There are available to you literally hundreds of articles describing ways and means for handling this problem. Want to start a suggestion system? Case histories of dozens of companies are available to you.

Standards of performance are solidifying. Just as degrees of competency can be ascribed to physicians by their peers and their patients, executive behavior can be rated. Tests for spotting executive capacities are riding this trend.

The Rorschach test and other projective techniques administered by competent psychologists are being used for determinations of middle and top executive qualifications. At lower levels, paper-and-pencil tests are being increasingly used: the Supervisory Judgment Test (forced choice) by Richardson, Bellows and Henry; the Gordon Personal Inventory, testing for original thinking and personal relations, are particularly valuable in estimating management potential.

Your fraternity is growing. Just as the medical man has his groups, professional associations for the executive are mushrooming all

over the landscape. For the sales executive there is the National Sales Executive Club, purchasing agents have their associations, paralleled in practically every other management function.

The art of the professional executive. The practice of a profession involves art as well as science. You survive and prosper as an executive not only by what you know but by the personal skill with which you apply your knowledge. The doctor benefits by employment of medical arts—his ability to diagnose or prescribe by his “feel” of a case rather than by pure logic. So, too, the executive deals with people and, therefore, has to use the arts of persuasion, empathy, and his sensitivity in the entire broad area of human relationships.

THE COOKY-CUTTER EXECUTIVE

But along with the development of the things which the manager does we mustn't overlook the framework in which he does them.

The executive, hanging like a ripe fruit from the organizational tree, must obviously be affected by the condition of the plant. Recently, some of our keener observers have been remarking that all is not well.

William H. Whyte, Jr., in his *The Organization Man* has detailed for us in all its smooth horror the plight of the manager who succumbs to the enveloping embrace of the vast and loving organization.

In exchange for being bright (in moderation), gregarious (within reasonable limits), and original (but not disturbingly so), the manager who plays the game of conformity is rewarded with the whole Santa Claus pack of goodies: automatic salary increases, easy hours, liberal vacations, insurance, pensions. But, constriction of the spirit is the price one must pay for security under these conditions.

Whyte offers his own solution: *fight*. He says:

Not stupidly, or selfishly, for the defects of individual self-regard are no more to be venerated than the defects of cooperation.

But fight [the Organization Man] must. . . . It is wretched, dispiriting advice to hold before him the dream that ideally there need be no conflict between him and society. There always is; there always must be. . . . The peace of mind offered by organization remains a surrender, and no less so for being offered in benevolence. . . .

Salvation, however, may come from an entirely unexpected quarter. It's likely to be the continuing struggle for efficiency that will free the Organization Man from his bondage in Lotus Land.

The point is, compared to a no-holds-barred, rut-busting challenger of the *status quo*, the conforming executive is likely to seem unproductive and ineffective. And so it will be our pressure for increased efficiency that may cause the placing of Organization Man in a glass case alongside the Dodo and the short-necked giraffe.

The hazard of the one-mold manager will not be the last ethical threat to confront us. At each major plateau of our advance, a new situation will arise to tease or torture us. Perhaps our next question will be: "How shall I use the power vested in me by virtue of my control of the want-satisfying mechanisms of the world?"

And for that, too, we will find an answer.

Now let's return to the manager on his march, down the rocky but adventurous road toward the future.

IF EVENTUALLY, WHY NOT NOW?

An implicit question underlies what's been said here about our professional growth. With many of the executive tools of tomorrow already at hand, what's holding us back?

A simple and partial answer is, "Yesterday." We are still haunted by the shadow image of the executive of yesterday—the glamorous, free-swinging manager whose strongest weapon was hunch, whose second strongest was plain physical drive. The memory is colorful, impressive, and still secretly cherished in some quarters.

But tomorrow's executive will be more successful in splitting with the past. He will be under a professional compulsion to use the new techniques that are available.

Let's go back to our medical parallel again:

The modern physician who loses a patient despite the most in-

telligent and energetic applications of the best available therapy must be considered blameless. But the physician who flouts tested techniques and fails must expect harsher judgment. Similarly, the professional executive will stand or fall by the skill with which he uses the tools of his calling. Failure to use established techniques will be regarded as a mental aberration.

THE BENIGN CYCLE

Once the process of professionalism begins, it tends to be self-feeding. The more professional we become, the more professional we become. While our knowledge of executive methods has not yet been consolidated, and no comprehensive text can yet be printed of prescribed executive behavior, we're getting closer to both objectives.

We're becoming more aware not only of what we are doing, but of what remains to be done. We pay more attention, for example, to research in executive methods. We strive to refine our techniques.

Development of professional standards is on the verge of beginning. And for the executive asking himself the question, "How shall I educate myself?" the beginning of the answer is: "Realize that you are a member of the newest profession. Approach the problem of your training as any professional does. Realize that your executive skills must lie not in spontaneous performance, but, as is true of the physician, by excelling in the techniques of your profession."

HORIZON BUILDING

The executive who knows how to broaden his horizons is usually the one who sets himself up for the brightest future. Generally, the future-minded executive carries out a two-pronged attack: He develops abilities he does not now have; he creates opportunities for applying his abilities.

Deepening your background is one way to make sure that you are not standing still. The questions below may suggest lines of endeavor that will help keep you abreast of change:

1. In your industry have you increased your contacts by:
 - a. reading the trade journals in your field? YES NO
 - b. increasing your participation in a professional group or association of men who do similar work? YES NO
 - c. attending conferences and lectures, or interviewing experts, to keep up with changes in your industry? YES NO
2. Inside your company have you shown signs of personal growth by:
 - a. talking shop regularly with your colleagues? YES NO
 - b. making changes in your way of handling assignments? YES NO
 - c. taking on new assignments? YES NO
3. In your quest for job knowledge, have you:
 - a. visited other companies that are now working on problems you may soon be encountering? YES NO
 - b. kept up with the stream of ideas available in current management literature—for example, *Harvard Business Review*, *Fortune*, *Dun's Review* and *Modern Industry*? YES NO
 - c. investigated what's available at local schools? YES NO
 - d. made suggestions, either to a top company executive or to schools, for studies of interest to you? YES NO
4. In pursuit of your professional interests, have you:
 - a. experimented in the application of new methods to executive problems? YES NO
 - b. experimented in the development of new methods to complete your daily tasks? YES NO
 - c. tried as much as possible to substitute method and system for casualness and the impromptu solution? YES NO
 - d. kept in touch with the kind of thinking going on at Arden House, at Harvard Business School, the University of Chicago's Management Development Program, and so on? YES NO

In trying to solve the problem of tomorrow, you will have to look two ways at once. Keep one eye on the growing professionalization of executive activity and standards; keep the other eye on home base.

Don't forget that your organization is also feeling the pressures that make for change. In the developmental influences that appear, and the organizational reactions called forth, you have an excellent "model" for study.

Put on, in other words, the scientist's white lab coat. Use your company, and your own job as a laboratory for observation, analysis, and—within the limits of practicality—experimentation.

Your own delving into problems of management may produce answers both for you and your colleagues in the profession.

A few words about two words.

Throughout this book the words *efficiency* and *effectiveness* have been used interchangeably. They are to some extent synonymous. But they do have connotations that differ. Unfortunately, this is one of the cases where the dictionary isn't of much help. Webster's *New International Dictionary*, for example, uses one word to define the other. There are, however, differences in connotation that can be helpful, and revealing:

Efficiency implies action with a minimum of waste. The efficient factory worker, for example, is the one who goes through the motions of his job operation without waste motion. Similarly, the efficient manager is one whose activity involves no waste of time or effort.

Effectiveness relates to results achieved. The effective ball player, for example, is the one who has the best batting average at the end of the season. The effective executive likewise is the one who scores high when you rate him on the basis of results achieved.

The manager, however, may be effective and not be efficient.

The manager who sets out to reorganize his division may achieve at the end of six months the objectives he has set for himself. He has "got results." But we may find his *effectiveness* to be more apparent than real.

True, he has achieved the goals he sought. But these results may have been achieved at a cost in injured feelings, demoralization, and discontent—the payment for which at a later date may mean nullification of his achievement.

The manager may be efficient but not effective.

The efficient executive, in running his department, may function with a minimum loss of dollars or whatever the element used to measure achievement. But results may be lacking, even though he has done the "correct" thing.

He may, for example, have succeeded in keeping within his budget, or avoided any signal loss of time or effort, and so on. But how does his *accomplishment* measure up in terms of *potential achievement*?

The way out of this pair of paradoxes is the understanding that executive action may be *both efficient and effective*. Even further, we may say that your performance must aim to be *both* efficient and effective to be satisfactory to those of your colleagues who judge your merit. And also to that executive likely to be your severest critic—yourself.

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