

are not chosen for their ability to be—or even interest in becoming—managers. They are chosen for their superior technical skills, their business-getting ability, their financial orientation, or because they “deserved the promotion.” When management is a reward, then everyone competes for the position—even those who have no interest in performing the role.

What should we be looking for in an effective manager or supervisor? Since the job of a manager is to get things done through other people, we need someone who can get his fulfillment and satisfaction from the success of others. This requires the ability to suppress one’s own ego needs, a trait not always found in those who have succeeded in the junior ranks.

To be effective, a manager must be capable—by creating energy, excitement, and enthusiasm in those being

managed—to get people to achieve everything they are capable of achieving. Fundamentally, this is about managing people’s emotions. Managing is not a logical, rational, or intellectual ability but, rather, a social, interpersonal, and emotional skill. Few businesses use these criteria when selecting managers, and fewer still have selection processes capable of diagnosing them accurately.

careers. In many businesses, unfortunately, those who show an “excessive” people orientation are screened out as candidates for managerial or supervisory positions as being insufficiently “businesslike.”

MR. MAISTER is a consultant, author of Managing the Professional Service Firm and Practice What You Preach, and co-author of First Among Equals: How to Manage a Group of Professionals.

Flushing Out The C Players

Bradford D. Smart:

Over the past 31 years, I have assessed, in-depth (four-hour interviews plus, in half of the cases, extensive 360-degree interviews), more than 5,500 managers. My sense is that managers, overall, are doing a much

better job, despite the horrible press directed at C-player CEOs such as Ken Lay and Rich McGinn.

tries where there are many inefficient companies and perform rollups, either spreading the influence of the best existing managers or parachuting in superior management.

There just aren’t many places where weak or even “average” managers can hide these days. There is one serious vacuum in management, though, and that is corporate governance. Incompetent boards ignore talent in the companies that they have legal and moral authority to oversee. Enron is an extremely visible example of the Achilles heel of our economic system: C-player boards. The A-player standard is proliferating within companies, and our economic system will be a lot stronger when boards embrace top talent for themselves.

MR. SMART is a consultant and author of Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People.

managed—to get people to achieve everything they are capable of achieving. Fundamentally, this is about managing people’s emotions. Managing is not a logical, rational, or intellectual ability but, rather, a social, interpersonal, and emotional skill. Few businesses use these criteria when selecting managers, and fewer still have selection processes capable of diagnosing them accurately.

better job, despite the horrible press directed at C-player CEOs such as Ken Lay and Rich McGinn.

In the 1990s, companies simply couldn’t find enough talented managers, so they did a better job of identifying top talent and paid them more for the results they achieved. Intense global competition made talent an obvious necessity, not a luxury. Companies like General Electric, Lincoln Financial, and Hillenbrand made it mandatory for a manager to qualify as an A player. C players were flushed out, and B players were helped with aggressive development plans to get them into the A category, into a different job where they’d be an A, or out of the company altogether.

Mergers and acquisitions have also contributed to improved talent by putting a premium on it. Entire C-player industries in which zillions of local businesses predominated (grocery retailing, real estate, propane gas, accounting, temp services) were bought out, streamlined, and infused with better managers. Some private equity firms, like Aurora Capital, target stable indus-

The Scientific Method

Aubrey C. Daniels:

Managing people may not be rocket science, but it’s close. If behavior is lawful—and it is—those who understand the science of human behavior and put it into practice will be more successful than those who don’t.

In the average company, people management is far from a science. Organizations are still flailing around, trying one corporative initiative after another, hoping to find an answer to the perennial problems of motivation and morale. For example, in the last 50 years, the performance appraisal, the bane of most managers’ existence, has changed only cosmetically. Both those who give them and those who receive them despise the process.

Additional evidence that we have changed little is that in very large organizations, employees often are selected

to develop a more effective reward-and-recognition program. Clearly, managers have given up on being able to motivate employees and pass the problem to the employees to motivate themselves. And just as clearly, most managers think that people management is really just so much common sense: All you have to do is get a group together, and they will have enough knowledge about people to come up with the correct answer. American companies spend more than \$46 billion on reward-and-recognition programs every year, yet few companies can demonstrate a direct link between them and performance.

When these things exist, how can we say that management is getting better?

I have been on a crusade for the last 30 years to help managers move from a commonsense database to a scientific one—behavior analysis—in managing people. Although the thought of managers “doing science” while managing day-to-day sounds unreasonable and unrealis-

tic, it eventually saves time in reduced firefighting and not having to work on the same problems year after year. All science requires is that we specify the valuable behavior we want from an employee, determine the current rate of the behavior, intervene in a precise way, track progress, and evaluate the results. This may sound like common management practice, but it is not. Until managers practice science on a daily basis, organizations will still be trying to solve the “human equation” at work 50 years from now.

PROFESSOR DANIELS is founder and CEO of Aubrey Daniels International, a consultancy based in Tucker, Ga., and author of Performance Management: Improving Quality Productivity Through Positive Reinforcement and Bringing Out the Best in People: How to Apply the Astonishing Power of Positive Reinforcement. He teaches at Harvard, Florida State, North Texas State, and West Michigan Universities.

Training—Too Little, Too Late

Madelyn Burley-Allen:

Today’s managers often receive the technical skills to perform their job, but for many of them, the training needed to be more effective in managing people is still an issue. Since 1996, I have compiled data from approximately 1,500 managers—all with five years or less on the job—pertaining to the types of behaviors, actions, and techniques that they thought would be important for them to be more successful. The data is clear: A major area of not feeling competent is the lack of good people skills.

Many of the managers, it turned out, had been promoted because they were hard workers who didn’t cause problems, not because they knew how to handle or manage others well. Those with at least a year’s experience complained that the training they were

now getting should have happened before they were promoted or within six months of the promotion. They also complained about inheriting a problem employee who had long gotten away with violating the rules or performing poorly; but when they wanted to discipline the employee, they received little support from their boss. Often they were told, “Don’t rock the boat,” “Don’t worry about it,” or, “We don’t want to get sued.”

In addition, in the last three to five years, another factor has arisen that is causing stress, frustration, and an inability to effectively handle people. This factor is the increase in laws that closely govern what they can do: sexual harassment, ISO 9000, OSHA, and the fear of being sued by a disgruntled employee.

MS. BURLEY-ALLEN is founder of Dynamics of Human Behavior, a con-

sultancy, and author of Listening: The Forgotten Skill, Managing Assertively: How to Improve Your People Skills, and Memory Skills in Business.

No Success Without Respect

Brian G. Mulvaney:

Are we better at managing? The simple answer is *yes*, and the evidence is the extraordinary gains in productivity we have witnessed. Some might counter that such increases are in large part due to gains in the technology arena, but that is a self-defeating argument. Where did the gains in technology come from? From the efforts of people who work in environments that are positive and conducive to bringing forth their best efforts. Such environments certainly are the product of good management.

There are hundreds of varieties of instruments such as performance evaluations or SMART goals, and many are better than those of 10 and 20 years ago.

But the real issue is whether or not the manager is respected. Do employees view the manager as competent? Do they like working with that person? Do they feel the manager is challenging them? Does the manager make work fun? If so, workers feel good about their manager. If not, they don’t.

I have seen managers do an incredible job of giving feedback and developing people without formal systems. Likewise, I have witnessed others using the latest management techniques and failing miserably. If you are fortunate enough to have talented managers who have access to good programs, the result can be terrific. However, the best programs in the world won’t save a manager who isn’t respected.

MR. MULVANEY is executive vice president of human resources and public affairs at Aramark Corp., a Fortune 300 managed-services company based in Philadelphia.

Copyright © 2002 EBSCO Publishing