

Management Ideas



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a monthly newsletter to key executive-leaders
on practices, possibilities and ideas generally
for stepped up performance

edited by

N. H. ATTHREYA MA PhD

author, educator & consultant

on problem-solving and creative ideas

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3081 **MANAGEMENT POLICY:** According to Hideo Sugiura, of Honda Motor (which has 43 plants in 28 countries) the company's fundamental policy can be explained in four parts :

1. Creating New Markets. We should not try to sell things just because the market is there, but rather we should seek to create a new market by accurately understanding the potential needs of customers and of society, and fully utilize our technology to develop and manufacture products satisfying such needs.

2. Employee Participation in Management. We believe that good corporate management must be based on trust. The management and employees should share a sense of pursuing a common goal, so that each individual will play a specific role and the corporation as a whole will be working in unison to achieve that goal. And this thinking is both understood and supported by our work force, as a way to enhance their individual capabilities and *raison d'etre*.

3. Internationalization and Local Community Relations. As our activities expand internationally, we believe that, as a prerequisite to successfully establishing our overseas operations, we must not only make our products acceptable but also make ourselves well accepted as good corporate citizens in the communities where we operate.

4. Direct Approaches. In achieving goals and solving problems, we have made it a cardinal rule to make direct approaches with straight thinking-free from precedents, customs, or popular views. Thus, we have pursued methods different from those of other companies, based on our own way of thinking, and by reinforcing this difference, we have consolidated our own corporate identity.

✓ 3082 **MEMO GLUT:** A recent survey of managers by Robert Half International, found that **39 percent of all memos** are probably unnecessary and the excess can cost an executive as much as a month of valuable time each year.

Not all memos are bad, obviously. Many are necessary for making announcements or documenting a project. As Half says, "You can't avoid memos, but you can control them." Here are some ways to cut the memo glut in your organization.

Examine your motives: The managers surveyed complained that memos are usually written by the same group of people, that they're too long and that they're too self-serving. So, before you set out to write one, make sure there's a good reason. Are you just reiterating something said in a meeting? Are you merely venting frustration or anger? You may regret sending that memo tomorrow (and remember, you don't have a shredder).

Consider other options: If you need to relay a brief message, pick up the phone and call the person or her assistant. Or just walk down the hall to her office.

Keep them brief: Memos can be as short as a few words or sentences. Using words like "thank you" and "please" takes the edge of short memo that may otherwise seem curt. Another key to brevity is to use plain English. Avoid big words and complex jargon.

Be a selective sender: Access to copy machines, computers and facsimile machines makes it easy to send a memo to any number of people. But, often, most of those people don't really need to see it. "You've wasted valuable time," says Half. "Twelve people had to look at the memo on its way to the garbage pail."

Use the bulletin board: Post general office information - times of staff meetings, news of a sick co-workers, date of a company outing. Make sure employees know they should check the bulletin board regularly.

Return to sender: If you receive a memo that requires an answer, save both time and paper by writing your response on the memo and returning it. (This is a big lesson we can learn from government).

Keep a "maybe" file: If you're unsure about whether to keep a memo, place it in a file marked "miscellaneous." Clean out the file every few weeks. If you haven't missed that memo, chances are you don't need it.

3083 **THE JEKYL/HYDE EMPLOYEE:** There are some employees who are polite when you are around and rude when you are not. They create morale problems.

In many organizations there are one or two such employees. Therefore, it would be a good idea to watch for signs of rudeness behind your back.

Since these employees are selectively rude, you can never tell whether the next victim is one of your valuable customers.

Companies therefore, take preventive steps like the following :-

Institute courtesy training: "The importance of courtesy should be stressed from the moment a new employee begins," advises Letitia Baldrige, author of Complete Guide to Executive Manners. "It should be a normal part of indoctrination A new employee has to sit through training and fill out forms; she should also get a pep talk from senior management about how important courtesy is to your business - and to her success."

Set the right example yourself: Put on your best face not only for clients and superiors but for everyone. Inconsistent behavior indicates that politeness is a pick-and-choose proposition.

Also keep personal temper tantrums - if you must have them - out of the office. The co-worker who hears you speaking angrily into the phone has no way of knowing that the recipient of your harangue is not Larry in accounting but your son who was just suspended from school.

Don't wait until it's too late: Make ratings of subordinate's courtesy a quotients routine part of performance reviews and go out of your way to compliment those who maintain grace under pressure. Positive reinforcement will strengthen employees' recognition of the importance of company manners while it boosts office morale and productivity.

3084 IF JAPAN CAN, WHY CAN'T WE? CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY: After 1982 Japan Air Lines crash, the company president visited the victims in the hospital and their family members, presenting a gift of cash. In 1987 JAL's president attended a memorial service for 520 people killed in a crash the year before, and all employees observed a period of silence and prayer. When things go wrong, it is usually up to the company president in Japan to assume responsibility, **regardless** of where the fault actually lies. This shows sincerity and the desire to make amends. Far from increasing liability, such corporate blame-taking actually reduces claims. And maybe the bosses sleep better at night.

× **3085 THIS TOO IS BUSINESS:** According to plastic surgeon Dr. Henry J. Zackin, the body God gave you is no longer the body you're stuck with. For just \$45,600 (!) you can be a brand new you. Of course, nothing's guaranteed. But the reward is often well worth the risk. What's involved....

Hair-strip transplant: Part of the scalp is surgically shifted to cover a bald spot (usually on the crown). Advantage: Unlike oldfashioned hair transplants, a single procedure does the job. Drawbacks: A strip cannot provide a natural-looking hairline. The patient must have enough hair to cover the surgical scar. \$2,500.

Brow lift. Smooths deep wrinkles on the forehead of removes sagging corners at the upper eyelids. \$3,500.

Nose Job. Not only alters the shape of the nose but can also correct breathing problems. Drawback: Less-talented surgeons often give a nose an artificial look or make it out of proportion to the rest of the face. When it comes to most jobs, less surgery is more. \$4,500.

Face lift. Eliminates jowls and sags by removing excess skin from the face and neck. A face lift often includes a blepharoplasty, which removes bags under the eyes. Drawbacks: If the skin is pulled too tight, the patient will look gaunt and unnatural. Postoperative blood clots, the most common complication with this procedures, may require further surgery. \$7,500.

Ear job. Brings protruding ears closer to the head by cutting the cartilage and folding it in on itself. \$3,500.

Cheekbone lift. A plastic implant creates a more elegant face. \$2,500.

Lip surgery. Makes the lips smaller (by removing lip muscle) or slightly larger (by injecting collagen). \$2,500.

Chin building. A plastic insert creates a more prominent chin. \$1,500.

Breast augmentation. Usually accomplished by inserting plastic envelopes filled with silicone gel. Drawbacks: A small scar is often visible in pigmented area surrounding the nipple. And one patient in 10 complains about the hardness of the implant. \$4,500.

Tummy tuck. Uses a suction procedure to remove excess fatty tissue. Note: This is not designed for obese people, but for people with localized fat deposits. Drawbacks: General anesthesia is required. Major scarring and contour irregularities can develop. Infection is possible. And there is slight risk (1% - 2%) that a life-threatening blood clot will travel to the lungs. \$6,000.

Buttocks tuck. Sucks fat and skin from the thighs, buttocks and love handles. Drawbacks: Similar to those of tummy tuck. \$6,000.

Calf reduction. Sucks fat from below the knee. Drawbacks: Results are unspectacular, since most tissue in this area is muscle, not fat. \$2,000.

X **3086 BOOKS TO CONSIDER:**

1. **Corporate Transformation** : Revitalizing Organizations for a Competitive World by Ralph H. Kilmann, Teresa Joyce Covin, and Associates. Jossey-Bass. 1988. 553 pages \$142.95
2. **High-Tech Society** : The story of the Information Technology Revolution by Tom Forester. MIT Press. 1987. 311 pages. \$19.95
3. **State of the World 1988** : By Lester R. Brown et al. Norton 1988. 250 pages. Paperback. \$9.95
4. **Tomorrow's Global Executives** : By Henry Ferguson. Dow Jones-Irwin. 1988. 265 pages. \$22.95

3087 LAUGHING MATTER ?

A young fellow on Gaetz Ave. in Red Deer was honking his horn repeatedly at an old woman who was taking her time crossing the road. The youth had his window open so the woman leaned over and asked "and what else did you get for Christmas sonny?"

SEASON'S GREETING

*"A bright New Year and a sunny track
Along an upward way,
And a song of praise on looking back,
When the year has passed away,
And golden sheaves, nor small, nor few!
This is my New Year's wish for you!"*



3088 GOOD NEWS GREAT NEWS EXCELLENCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS UNLIMITED:

Many heart-warming things are happening in India. Men and women are making such things happen day after day. Such things are not officially considered news! They are as exciting as the ones that find a place in the printed medium. Or so we think. My invitation is that you send to us such items that comes to your notice. Please give the name and address wherever possible so that the interested may go and visit with them: *N.H. Atthreya.*

A rubber institute on the go

THE Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII), established in 1955, has made phenomenal progress in the last three decades and is now an internationally-recognised body in the field.

The International Rubber Research and Development Board has recognised the RRII as a centre of excellence for imparting advanced training in certain areas of research: People from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, China and Vietnam have undergone training at this institute. A research scientist from Sri Lanka will be joining it shortly.

Outlining some of the RRII's achievements during an informal chat with the TOINS, Dr M. R. Sethuraj, director of the institute, said that by making available high-yielding rubber plants and modern agro-management techniques, the RRII had raised the average productivity to 1,500 kg per hectare in many plantations. Productivity of over 2,000 kg per hectare had been recorded in certain areas. The average yield some 30 years ago was 350 kg per hectare.

This research support, coupled with development schemes of the rubber board, accounted for the increase in total production to 235,000 tonnes per annum from a mere 23,730 tonnes in the 1950s, Dr Sethuraj said.

NATIONAL POLICIES

The research policies of the institute were framed in accordance with national policies and orientated towards achieving the targets fixed for production and productivity of natural rubber in the country for the year 2000 and beyond. It has been estimated that the requirement of natural rubber by the turn of the century would increase to 500,000 tonnes and might further swell to 700,000 tonnes by 2010.

If the area under natural rubber could be increased to 500,000 hectares, of which 400,000 hectares would be under tapping, it would be possible to achieve this target provided the national average productivity could be increased to 1,250 kg per hectare, the RRII director said.

In view of the limitation for expansion in the traditional areas of Kerala and Kanyakumari, emphasis had to be given to extending rubber cultivation to new areas, he added.

This would entail problems such as high temperatures and very low soil moisture during summer, very low temperatures in winter, high-velocity winds, hailstorms and high-altitude conditions.

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Consequently, adequate and well-planned research support for successful cultivation of rubber in such places is imperative. The institute has, therefore, given priority to evolving new clones tolerant to various stress situations and developing location-specific agro-technology.

The RRII has, therefore, established regional research stations in Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam, Mizoram, Maharashtra and Orissa. In addition, there are two hevea tree-breeding stations in Kanyakumari district and Karnataka. Information on the nature of clonal variation with regard to stress tolerance is also being gathered.

Three cold-tolerant clones have been imported from China for use in the breeding programme to evolve suitable high-yielding clones for areas where the temperature is low during winter. The institute is now enriching its genetic base by importing wild Brazilian germ plasm. This is expected to provide ample genetic diversity for breeding local-specific clones.

The normal breeding cycle for rubber-yielding trees being about 25 years, the progress of any breeding work is bound to be slow. The RRII has, therefore, given a thrust to efforts to develop methods for early prediction of yield potential and stress tolerance, Dr Sethuraj said. A multidisciplinary team is working in this area.

BIOTECH DIVISION

An important achievement was the establishment of a bio-technology division with a modern laboratory, to harness modern techniques to shorten

the breeding cycle and develop clones having specific characteristics. The RRII director pointed out that a large tree-to-tree variability had been noticed in monoclonal areas due to variability of stocks and said this defect could be eliminated by introducing plants generated by tissue culture.

The institute also pays adequate attention to problems encountered in the traditional areas. Methods have been developed for protecting plants from all the pests and diseases encountered in India and constant efforts are on to identify cheaper and more effective chemical pesticides. A new cover crop, called *Mucuna* was identified and introduced. Two advantages of this cover crop are that it is drought-tolerant and not palatable to cattle.

He said the RRII's work on yield-component analysis had added to the knowledge on factors influencing productivity. This information could be directly used for planning future breeding programmes.

The institute has also catalogued information on use of the wood of hevea trees, production of honey in rubber plantations and other sources of ancillary income.

On the technology side, Dr Sethuraj said the RRII's thrust was on the conservation of natural rubber. Research projects were therefore, directed towards increasing the life of products made from natural rubber. The institute had also developed many products which could replace imported components.

Another aim of the institute is to chemically modify natural rubber to incorporate desired characteristics as well as to serve as a substitute for certain imported synthetic rubbers. Attempts had also been made to use solar energy for drying of rubber sheets, which promises definite energy-saving advantages.

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