

Management Ideas



FOR STILL BETTER

RESULTS

RELATIONS

REPUTATION

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3049 ON THEIR OWN TIME
- 3050 HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS
- 3051 WHERE HEADACHES COME FROM
- 3052 LAUGHING MATTER?
- 3053 MULTIPLIER MODELS (NEW FEATURE)

3049 ON THEIR OWN TIME: *This piece by Chairman of Exxon Mr. L.G. Rawl has a number of pointers to Corporations, large and small - private and public, in our country. Encouraging employees to volunteer activities is a virtual three-in-one - good PR, effective Human Resources Development, and increasing organisational goodwill. May be, we are already having this policy. There is, however, scope for more conscious, systematic, sustained, and officially blessed efforts.*

"In the early 19th century, the French Government dispatched a young man to the United States to study our prison system. As it turned out, he was far more impressed with a different feature of our national culture -- the pervasive spirit of voluntarism. "The wealth of a democratic society," Alexis de Tocqueville decided, "may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens."

"He found it "peculiar" that Americans examine their own communities' needs, then spontaneously join hands to meet those needs without involving any government bureaucracy. It remains deeply embedded in our national character. And I believe it is well represented in the interest and enthusiasm with which Exxon volunteers undertake a broad range of community services.

"Most Exxon people recognise and appreciate the fact that they work for a company whose business activities are vital to the nation's and the world's economic and social well-being. They tend to be socially concerned, energetic, highly motivated, and ready for challenges that will test them on and off job. Many of our employees, therefore, find it a valid extension of their working day to apply themselves, on their own time, to human needs within their own communities. Moreover, they know that their company supports and encourages such volunteer efforts.

"The full range of activities undertaken by Exxon's corps of volunteers can only be suggested, but these are typical:

- * A toxicologist with the Medical and Environmental Health facility in New Jersey teams with his wife during weekend retreats to serve as discussion leaders for a marriage counselling service.
- * In Houston, a marketing analyst is recruiting Big Brothers for fatherless boys while an engineer serves on a Red Cross disaster relief team and trains similar teams around the country.
- * An annuitant in Connecticut helped to raise funds to replace the roof on a resident house where inner-city minority students are given special tutoring.
- * Another annuitant in Verona, New York, has served as a volunteer member of the town's rescue squad over three decades, helping to provide vital emergency services to communities within a 60-mile radius.
- * In Palestine, Texas, employees and retirees worked together to repair and paint the town's historical library.

"Other Exxon volunteers contribute time and talent by: Reading for the blind, Driving the elderly to medical appointments, "Adopting" disadvantaged families for the holidays, Working with Junior Achievement organizations to help equip young people to move into the economic mainstream, Serving as guides on nature trails, Enlisting new donors for blood drives, Providing magic shows for abused or terminally ill children. And much, much more.

"Some volunteer activities -- fund raising for an animal shelter or being a Big Brother or Big Sister to a child in need of companionship -- require mainly time and a generous spirit. Other company volunteers, however, utilize their specialised professional training....

"The personal satisfaction that Exxon volunteers derive from applying their on-the-job skills to the needs of worthwhile civic and charitable organizations is substantial. In fact, the most frequent comment heard from our volunteers is that they get back in a renewed sense of purpose and a feeling of well-being, much more than they give.

"In addition to what their individual employees contribute as volunteers, corporations also recognize that they have a responsibility to extend a helping hand to solve community problems. They do so directly, through donations of money and services, and indirectly, by setting up internal programs to coordinate and support the activities of individual volunteers.

"Exxon is among the more than 600 major corporations that have established such programs covering a broad range to volunteer activities by employees and annuitants, Corporations, like individuals, undertake such volunteer activities because they are "the right thing to do." But here, too, important benefits flow back to the company.

"The active involvement of its employees and annuitants in helping to solve community problems provides a company with greater acceptance and a healthier environment in which to live, work and market products. Moreover, while working for voluntary organizations and public sector agencies, employees often acquire new leadership skills. The practical experience gained in goal-setting, teamwork and decision-making can enhance the volunteers' own careers by making them more valuable to the company.

"In some cases, Exxon matches up a willing volunteer's interests and skills with an appropriate nonprofit agency. In other cases, employees bring to our attention community service organizations in which they are already active. If the organization is eligible to receive tax-deductible corporate contributions, the volunteer may apply for a cash grant to support its activities. Last year, well over 600 employees and annuitants arranged for such grants from our Volunteer Involvement Fund.

"Exxon also supports programs and agencies outside the company that promote voluntarism in the broader community. For example, grants are made to a national centre for citizen involvement in Virginia and to a volunteer consulting and training group in New York. In a special efforts to expand the volunteer ranks while providing meaningful activity of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. Project PROMPT (Putting Retired Older Men and Place-ments Together) will encourage men to become as active as women are in volunteer work.

"In a broader sense, all of the grants made by Exxon and its divisions and affiliates around the world are voluntary contributions to the same goal that motivates individual volunteers - a better quality of life in a healthier and more productive society. This year, those corporate contributions will total approximately \$ 40 million, about half of which will go to support educational institutions and programmes.

"Grants and organized activities of concerned corporations contribute importantly to the overall volunteer effort. But the sustaining thrust of voluntarism remains - as ever - the personal desire to help a less fortunate neighbour, the belief that there are valuable skills and time to contribute, and the tremendous rewards that can be experienced. These considerations are important to all volunteers whether they join company sponsored programs or individually seek out opportunities to serve - in hospitals, on school boards, with volunteer fire brigades, and in countless other ways.

"Some people choose to make their contributions quietly -- avoiding recognition -- simply because the need is there. As a result, we do not know exactly how many Exxon people around the world are actively serving as volunteers in their own communities. But we are proud of each one of them. We appreciate the many benefits they are generating, not only for themselves and their neighbours, but as ambassadors of goodwill for the company!"

Courtesy: THE LAMP

3050 HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS: The American Management Association has completed a study of executives which shows the following skills to be most important in managing people.

- * Self Assessment, the ability to evaluate your own skills and weaknesses and find where improvement is needed.
- * Self-control, being capable of holding back emotions such as anger for the good of any situation.
- * Stamina, maintaining high performance standards for a prolonged time but still remaining flexible to change.
- * Objectivity, the ability to accurately restate both sides of a discussion or argument.
- * Positive evaluation of people, expresses belief in a person's ability to do a job or improve performance.

- * Managing groups, can communicate the need for teamwork and promote cooperation with other groups.
- * Socialized power, uses a network of contacts to accomplish goals and influence disputes.

When people are the most important component in any work, being able to get along with others and manage others effectively are indispensable qualities.

Everyone who manages people, from a few to hundreds, can benefit from a self-check of these human resource skills.

Leadership skills called most important were :

- * Self-confidence, being assured and unhesitating, not regretful about past decisions.
- * Ability to develop new concepts, to explain situations and problem situations.
- * Logical thinking, use of cause and effect relationship to illustrate what happened in the past and what could happen with future plans.
- * Oral skill, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively, use charts and aids to illustrate.

3051 WHERE HEADACHES COME FROM: About one in eight North Americans - the same ratio holds for Indian executives, says a company doctor - experience headaches ranging from nagging pains to severe migraines. The causes are often surprising - and controllable.

This list of triggers is compiled from information given by Marek Gawel, M.D., assistant professor of neurology at the University of Toronto; Dr. Robert Kunkel, director of the headache section at Cleveland Clinic, and authors John B. Brainard, M.D. and Robert M. Giller, M.D.

There is no drug that can prevent a headache all the time, but avoiding these headache triggers can help.

- * Salt overload. Sudden overload caused by salty snacks causes headaches in some people. Salt cooked in food doesn't seem to. Some people get headaches from eating ham, caused by sodium chloride in the meat.
- * Caffeine withdrawal. Sudden withdrawal from caffeine-containing substances causes blood vessels in the head to dilate. The headache may be intensified by bending over, napping or lying down. Aspirin helps. Overall, the health benefits of reducing caffeine are worth the initial pain.
- * Ice Cream. A headache that comes after eating ice cream is caused by sudden cooling of the roof of the mouth and throat, but ice cream also contains a lot of salt.
- * Cheese. This favourite food causes more headaches than people suspect. The fermentation process produces tyramine which causes headaches in some people. There's more tyramine in yellow cheese than white. Tyramine is responsible for the "pizza headache".

- * Alcohol. Though it dilates blood vessels, it is often chemicals in the liquor, acting with alcohol that trigger headaches. Many headache sufferers can drink vodka because it is pure ethyl alcohol. If it is ingested rapidly, as in martinis, it is a good headache trigger. Wines, especially red wines, contain tryamine and histamine, well-known to cause vasodilation.
- * Other foods. Frequent headache sufferers should check their diets for offending foods. Triggers for some people include Chinese food, hot dogs, dairy products, eggs, chocolate, and citrus fruit including pineapple. Coconut oil, used in many products, causes headache in some people.
- * Hunger. People with headaches often aren't eating regularly. This may cause blood sugar to go down, causing a headache.
- * Soap, detergent, perfume. Noxious fumes from any source can cause headaches, even those in very expensive perfumes.
- * Bright or flickering light. Sun glare on snow or water, oncoming headlights, or a flickering TV screen can trigger a headache in some people.
- * High altitude. Tourists visiting high elevations often suffer headaches.

3052 LAUGHING MATTER?

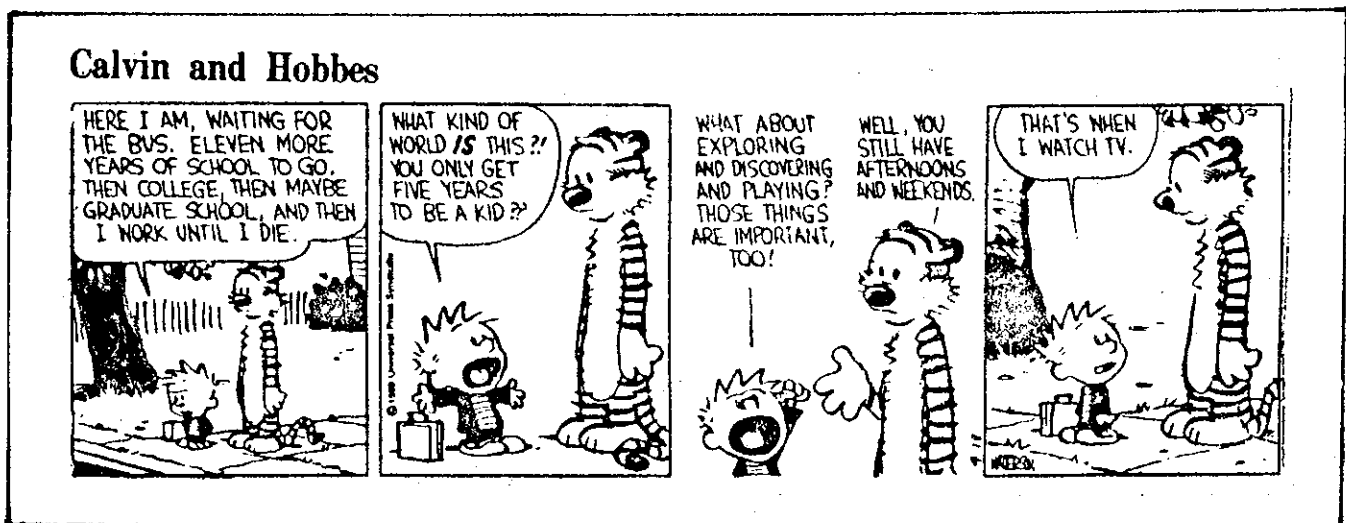
A traveller stopped at a historic old hotel and requested the nightly rates.

"A room on the first floor is \$60; on the second floor, \$50; and on the third floor, \$40," said the desk clerk.

The traveller said thank you and turned to go.

"Don't you like our hotel?" asked the clerk.

"Oh, it's beautiful," exclaimed the traveller. "It just isn't tall enough."



3053 MULTIPLIER MODELS: Some wants are almost universal. We have them. Other have them. May be, they realised they had them a little earlier. More importantly, they felt they could do something about them.

Some of them got together. One or two of them gave a lead - meaning agreed to play the wet-nurse! Now they have a well-laid organization.

They may be willing to share their experience if one of us (whose organization skill is of a high order) will take the initiative and seek their help. (The assumption is that people around us have a similar need.)

Alternatively, an organization can take it up as a Community Relations or Civic Welfare project and second one of the up and coming young persons to the job. Once the project has been set up and well, the person can get back to the main stream. This may prove to be an effective executive development programme as well.

In this new feature, we will give brief details of such multiplier modes. Where the title is self-explanatory, only the address of the voluntary organization is given.

MM 01: ENCOURAGING CREATIVE EXPRESSION: ILAKIYA CHINTHANAI ("A forum of literature thinkers"), an organization set up by a literature enthusiast had its 18th Annual Day Celebration on the Solar New Year Day, 13th April 1988, at Madras.

During these years, month after month - for 219 unbroken months since 28-2-1970, on the last Saturday of every month at 6.30 p.m. - this organization arranged a meeting that will give a glimpse of the assessment of the short stories published in Tamil that month and declare "the best story of the month". The winner is given a token award and so the referee.

At the end of the year, the 12 stories are assessed together and the best story of the year is chosen. The writer of the best story is given a cash award. The twelve stories are published as a volume, with a critical forward. As of 1988, 18 such books of short stories have been published. One is reminded of the O. Henry Awards of U.S.A.

Ilakiya Chinthamani keeps adding to this delicious and disciplined effort from time to time. For example, since 1981 a 5,000 rupees prize is offered to a novel or research MMS, published or otherwise.

Such like effort can be repeated in several parts of India. Those who organise such efforts will have the great advantage of the sound experience of Ilakiya Chinthanai. They need not go outside India either for inspiration or guidance. The interested may write to Mr. P. Lakshmanan, Trustee, Ilakiya Chinthanai, 5 A Chittaranjan Road, Madras 600 018.

The following organizations have been working in the respective fields for some years now. The latest known addresses are given:

MM 02: Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) 669 Airport Freeway, Suits 310, Hurst TX 76053*

MM 03: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:
1500 Massachusetts Avenue NW Room 35, Washington DC 20005.*

Edited, printed and published by N.H. Atthreya of **MMC Shool of Management**, Court Chambers, 3rd floor, 35, New Marine Lines, Bombay 400 020. Xeroxed at **DAKS COPY SERVICE PVT. LTD.**, Apeejay House, 3rd floor, 130, S. Bhagat Singh Marg, Bombay 23.

By Subscription - Annual Subscription - Rs.120/-

REG. NO. M-790