

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
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on problem-solving and creative ideas

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3200 EXIT INTERVIEW
- 3201 HOW TO CHECK REFERENCES
- 3202 A PAGEFUL OF RECOMMENDED BOOKS
- 3203 VIDEOTAPING
- 3204 LAUGHING MATTER?

3200 EXIT INTERVIEW: Mr. Lawrence Knauff, (President, Omnisystems Inc. International Management Consultants, U.S.A.) comments as follows on an item presented in the May issue of Management Ideas: "The AT&T way (reference:IDEA 3179) is a good way. There is one which is even better.

One thing that happens when companies do exit interviews the day that someone is leaving or the day before is that they do not get honest information. I know that the AT&T people address that issue by being very cautious and asking the right kind of question, but the reality of things in America at least and I know in Great Britain and probably everywhere is this.

If you are fixing to leave my company and I bring you in, I may say Mr. Atthreya, we enjoy having you work here. I know you are leaving to go to another firm and we would like to know how come you are leaving.

Well, typically, you can tell me one of three things: You can tell me that you get a higher position, more money or have personal reasons. Those are the three options people offer up and I might be a very adept questioner and I ask some probing questions but you still are going to come back to one of those three issues. You are going to be real safe in saying anything to me. You are going to be very cautious and conservative about anything you might say, until you are safely ensconced in a new position and have passed the probationary period or the training period or the orientation period.

My contention is that exit interviews should not be done on the day when someone leaves unless one wants to just find out some surface issues.

The important time to do the exit interview is a few months after the person has been in the new job. I suggest too that a representative meets the person over a meal and say Mr. Atthreya, I know that when you left our company a few months ago you told me you opted for a promotion and a little more money and that there were few other reasons as well. How are things now in your new company?

After a general discussion, I ask you the question that really gives me the information I need to retain good employees.

I say Mr. Atthreya, I have got a three part question that I want to ask you. What could my company have done that it didn't do or not done that we did do or done differently that we did that would have caused you to stay with us.

Well, that is a powerful question and because I have asked it the way I have, you have the option of giving me three different kinds of feedback, three different kinds of useful information that I can carry back now and change things in my company. There are some things I can start doing now that we are not doing now or stop doing or do differently because I know if I had been doing those before you would not have left, you would have stayed.

So all the exit interviews that people do generally do not capture the real issues. To capture them you have to wait till the person feels safe enough to tell you about them. He sees he has to put my company as a reference. He still knows that someone is going to check with his previous boss about him as a reference check. So the exit interviews are just not going to be an open and honest unless and until he is already settled on the new job.

3201 HOW TO CHECK REFERENCES: It's not enough to ask a consultant for references; you need to check them carefully. The most important questions to ask the consultant's previous-and, if possible, current-clients are:

- * Was the project similar to what I need?
- * Did the consultant readily comprehend your business?
- * Could he communicate with you?
- * Were there any personality clashes between the consultant and your staff?
- * Was the original estimate on target? If not, what was the source of the overrun?
- * Was the project completed on time?
- * If you had it to do over again, would you hire the same consultant?

Some overrun on time or budget and a few reservations are to be expected. But listen carefully to complaints and determine how the consultant resolved the problems.

3202 A PAGEFUL OF RECOMMENDED BOOKS: The following titles can be had from **The Futurist Bookstore**, World Future Society, 4916 Saint Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, U.S.A. Annual Membership fee is \$30.

ON LEADERSHIP by John W. Gardner. Free Press/Macmillan. 1990. 220 pages. Price; \$19.95

ON BECOMING: A LEADER by Warren Bennis. Addison-Wesley. 1989. 226 pages. Price; \$19.95

LEADERS: THE STRATEGIES FOR TAKING CHARGE by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus. Harper & Row . 1985. 224 Pages. Price; \$9.95

THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN ORGANIZATION: UNLEASHING THE POWER OF DIRECTION AND COMMITMENT by Perry Pascarella and Mark A. Frohman. Jossey-Bass. 1998. 177 Pages. Price; \$28,50

THE LEADER'S EDGE: THE SEVEN KEYS TO LEADERSHIP IN A TURBULENT WORLD by Burt Nanus. Contemporary Books. 1989. 224 pages. Price; \$17.95

MEGATRENDS 2000: Ten New Directions for the 1990's by John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdence. Morrow. 1990- 384 pages. Price; \$21.95

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE FUTURE by W. Warren Wanger The University of Chicago Press. 1989. 323 pages. Price; \$24.95

THREE FACES OF POWER by Kenneth E. Boulding. Sage. 1989. 259 Pages. Price; \$47.95

WHEN GIANTS LEARN TO DANCE: MASTERING THE CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY, MANAGEMENT, AND CAREERS IN THE 1990s by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Simon and Schuster 1989. 415 pages. Price: \$21.95

BUSINESS IS NOT AS USUAL by Ian I. Mitroff. Jossey-Bass. 1987. 194 pages.. Price \$28.75

FORWARD THINKING: THE PRAGMATIST'S GUIDE TO TODAY'S BUSINESS TRENDS by Robert D. Gilbreath. McGraw-Hill. 1987. 184 pages. Price; \$19.95

INSIDE IBM: THE WATSON YEARS. A PERSONAL MEMOIR by William W. Simmons with Richard B. Elsberry. Dorrance & Company 1988 202 pages.Price; \$15.95

THE KNOWLEDGE EXECUTIVE: LEADERSHIP IN AN INFORMATION SOCIETY by Harlan Cleveland. Truman Talley/NAL. 1985. 261 pages. Price \$10.05

SUPERMANAGING: HOW TO HARNESS CHANGE FOR PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH by Arnold Brown and Edith Weiner. NAL. 1984. 283 pages. Price; \$4.95

TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP: FROM VISION TO RESULTS by John D. Adams. Miles River Press. 1986. 314 pages. Price \$22.95

THE INNOVATORS: THE DISCOVERIES, INVENTIONS, AND BREAKTHROUGHS OF OUR TIME by John Diebold. Truman Talley/E.P. Dutton. 1990. 303 pages. Price; \$19.95

3203 VIDEOTAPING: There's more to keeping a videotape in good condition than not using it as a coaster. Here are guidelines to keep tapes lives longer.

Storage: Videotape storage cabinets create more problems than they solve because the tape packages come in a wide variety of sizes. Models that accommodate tapes packaged in cardboard or plastic slipcovers often can't hold larger-sized clamshell boxes of high-quality tapes. **Best:** Basic bookshelves. Videotapes don't need to be protected by special cabinets.

Keep tapes in their covers to keep them dust-free (dust can cause interference and clog VCR heads)...and out of direct sunlight (which can warp the cassette shell and compromise playback). Room temperature should be consistent—temperature changes weaken tape strength.

Line the tapes up like books, vertically, with the spine facing out. Never pile them one on top of another. Position the tape so the empty reel sits over the full reel, to lessen the pull of gravity and tension on the tape. Contrary to some reports, periodically winding and rewinding the tapes will not help prolong their life.

Stereo speakers can scramble a tape's magnetic signals, so don't place tapes on top of speakers. Although many speakers are now being manufactured with magnetic shields, yours may not be among them.

It's a myth that placing a VCR tape on a television will scramble the tape's magnetic signals. Televisions don't contain magnets, so this can't happen. TVs with big speakers are generally magnetically shielded.

Catalog Your Tapes: Organize tapes on the shelves by category—drama, horror, action, science fiction, documentary, comedy, etc. When combining two programs on the same tape, keep the content similar. Don't, for instance, put the Smothers Brothers on a tape with Madame Bovary.

As you make tapes, write the first initial of the category, and the tape number on its spine. **Example:** The tenth tape of horror films you record will be labeled H-10. To create a simple filing system, use two boxes of index cards: **Alphabetical cards.** Each card should contain the name of the program, and tell you what tape it can be found on. **Example:** You'll find Madame Bovary filed under M. The card will tell you that's on tape D-1. **Category/tape number cards.** Each card should list the recordings that appear on one particular tape. **Example:** On tape D-1 you'll find Madame Bovary and Wuthering Heights....If that's the other drama recorded on the same tape. If you prefer, you can keep your index on computer. Recommended programs: Right Soft (IBM and IBM clones) and Macintosh Hypercard.

3204 LAUGHING MATTER?

Parents of two teenagers are worried about their eyesight. The daughter can't find anything to wear in a closet full of clothes and the son can't find anything to eat in a refrigerator full of food.

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