

Management Ideas



FOR STILL BETTER

RESULTS

RELATIONS

REPUTATION

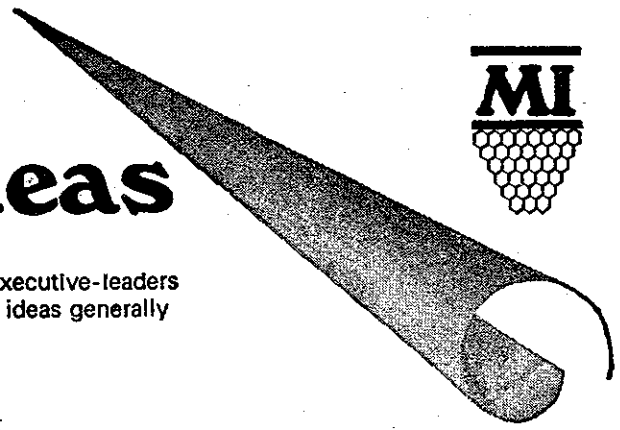
a monthly newsletter to key executive-leaders
on practices, possibilities and ideas generally
for stepped up performance

edited by

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on problem-solving and creative ideas



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3272 THINGS IN THE MAKING: Group Decisions By Computer: Computers may make group decision making more creative and effective by allowing all members to participate - and not just the "leaders" or a few aggressive talkers. In experiments at the University of Illinois, students were divided into computer-mediated and face-to-face groups to solve a problem. In the face-to-face groups, one or two people tended to dominate; in the computer groups, more people actively participated in decision making. The experiment's coordinator, Bonita Law Daly, a visiting accountancy professor, says that the computer groups were also better at brainstorming.

(Source: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, News Bureau, 807 South Wright Street, Champaign, Illinois 61820.)

Tilt Monitors: A computerized device that constantly measures tilt in dams, bridges, and coliseums may save lives by warning officials of an impending failure. Arrays of tiltmeters could provide an ongoing safety inspection of an entire structural system - not just individual beams and girders. Structural failures are caused by earthquakes and other natural phenomena, but humans can also create problems. For instance, hanging tons of lighting and sound equipment to the roof of a coliseum changes the structure's load distribution. According to the device's manufacturer,

Applied Geomechanics of Santa Cruz, California, tiltmeters enhance safety and thus may lower insurance costs for structures that must accommodate many people. Among the sites where tiltmeters are now used are the Golden Gate Bridge, the Hoover Dam, and the Dane County Coliseum in Madison, Wisconsin.

(Source: Applied Geomechanics, Inc., 1336 Brommer Street, Santa Cruz, California 95062.)

Dial-an-Invention: Patent searches will soon be faster and cheaper, thanks to a new dial-in system providing on-line access to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's database. The Automated Patent System will be available free to users at 14 libraries in the United States during a one-year tryout of the service. Currently, the cost of a patent search ranges between \$80 and \$400 and may take several days, according to Sheila Curl, science reference librarian at Arizona State University, one of the participating libraries. The automated system will "obtain fast results" she says. "It will permit on-line access to the full text of patents dating back to 1790".

Here is an idea for an enterprising government official.

(Source: Arizona State University, News Bureau, Tempe, Arizona 85287).

Software for the "Mad as Hell": If you're mad as hell and not going to take it anymore, a software package will help you start a letter-writing campaign to 3,000 top public officials. Speak Out Software includes names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers of U.S. senators, representatives, governors, agency officials, foreign leaders, and other power-wielders, along with sample letters for expressing views. Speak Out president Ken Rosmarin hopes that the software will promote political awareness and participatory democracy, reversing a longterm trend toward political apathy.

Here is an idea for an Indian enterpriser or two.

(Source: Speak Out Software Company, P.O. Box 272705, Houston, Texas 77277-2705.)

3273 A MASTER SPEAKS: Joe Mather of Hershey Company was recently declared the Technical Trainer of the Year by the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD).

Some of his reported professional initiatives are:

- * Changed training department focus from theory-based to hands-on and skill-based training.
- * Moved equipment into the classroom so employees could practice skills immediately. The result was improved retention and a better attitude toward training.
- * Changed department focus from instruction to consultation. Trainers provide instruction to other plant facilities, thereby improving their knowledge of the operation at the same time that they assist line staff.

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- * Created in-house training production facility to produce customized training videos for production employees. Using actual employees for the demonstration scenes in the video contributed to their positive impact on learners.
- * Provided adult basic education in math and English using department staff as instructors and tutors.
- * Developed a programmable equipment course that has become a standard in the area, used by a number of other manufacturers.
- * Worked with local vo-tech program to improve curricula and skill-based training and to increase the number of vo-tech graduates going into the skilled trades.

Here are snapshots of his approach to his work and role:

Choosing Technical Trainers.

"You have to know the technical field, and the best way to know it is to get out there and do it. And you have to know the audience."

"I've developed a number of trainers since I've been manager at the Hershey plant. One fellow was an air conditioning mechanic at the plant who I wanted to hire as a trainer. Some folks said, 'Wait a minute. This guy doesn't know anything about training. You're making a big mistake.' But my philosophy is that if you have someone who's strong in the skill area, open to learning, and willing to work hard, then the question is how much time you have to teach them. How far behind are they? I look for seminars that provide the missing skills. In the end this person worked out as a terrific trainer."

Training the Training Staff.

"You can never overtrain your own trainers. Every one of my trainers must go to some type of professional development seminar every year. Sometimes they request a particular seminar, sometimes I suggest one. Before they go, we sit down and discuss what they want to get out of it. You can go to a seminar and learn all of the skills in your head, but if you don't use them shortly afterward, they're gone. So before my trainers go to a seminar, they're already scheduled to teach a course using the new skills soon after they get back."

The role of the training department.

"We want everybody to look at our training department as the resource of resources, always there to be of service to them. In the past, training tried to be the expert in everything. I don't believe in that. No one is an expert in everything. It's improved our image because no more do trainers go out and say, 'This is the way it is.' They say 'Here's what one authority says and here's what another one says.'"

Hourly employees.

"The hourly employees want to do a good job. They know how to do a good job. In some areas they need training, and we've got to get that training

to them. They want to take on the responsibility of running their lives and making recommendations for changes, but we haven't given them that opportunity. Supervisors need to do more of the managerial tasks and let the day-to-day control tasks be taken over by the hourly workforce."

Training for new processes.

"In the past, the philosophy was that when you put in high technology, you didn't train till the system was up and running. Not long ago when we introduced a new process, I was able to convince management to let us pull people off the job three months early and train them in some of the basic technical skills, the basic overview of the process.

"The employees were very enthusiastic and learned a lot. Before the project was scheduled to go on-line, they came back to engineering and said, 'We have some mechanical layout concerns.' Afterwards we interviewed all of the engineers on the team. Although they had been skeptical about the training, they were pleased with the results.

Downsizing.

"We've been downsizing for the last seven years. I have five to eight times the number of responsibilities of the fellow who was here before me. If someone had told me five years ago this is what you have to do, I'd say it couldn't be done. But you find out that having more and more responsibilities, your job is more enjoyable. And I've become a better time manager."

Managing technical trainers.

"If you have a good staff, you should give them freedom to make decisions and allow them to own their jobs. I don't tell any of my people what to do. I give them guidelines, and we sit down every year and talk about what we want to do and what our goals are as a training department."

3274 **WORTH ATTENDING:** ASTD conducts National Conference on Technical and Skills Training about this period of the year. At the last year conference, there were 125 concurrent sessions. Sessions were grouped into seven tracks to let you create a program that concentrates on one subject or that gives you a sampling across a broad range of topics. Each session is offered twice to give you a greater opportunity to go to all of the sessions you want. The tracks were:

Instructional design.... Successful training techniques.... Delivery systems for technical training.... Training for customer support.... Managing technical training.... Continuing education for scientists and engineers.... Manufacturing training.

You may write for information from American Society of Training and Development, 1630 Duke Street, Box 1443 Alexandria VA 22313.

3275 **THIS WORKS FOR ME:** A thoughtful Reader writes: I used to assume that my subordinates will execute an assignment without any reminders. I again and again found too late that it is not the case. This is what I do NOW; and it works for me.

I write up a master list of every task, including the date assigned, the date due, the person responsible and depending on the length of the project, atleast two "progress report" dates when a checkup date arrives, I say to him: My friend, your project is due in two weeks. Are there any delays I should know about?

I have seen one executive tacking the list on a central bulletin board, offering a visual reminder of the deadline. From mentally keeping track of every project I farm out, I have come upto this and this is enough for my purpose."

A REPEAT REQUEST FROM THE EDITOR: Dear Reader, you will have a number of practices that work for you. When you feel like sharing, please drop a note.

3276 A GOOD EMPLOYEE MOTIVATOR: A study of more than 700 professional and hourly employees, conducted by researchers at the University of Delaware found that the more workers feel genuinely valued, the more they are willing to give back in both time and creativity.

Not only did nurtured employees work harder and call in sick less frequently, but they were much more likely to volunteer innovative, constructive ideas for boosting productivity and profits for their companies.

To promote such emotional bonding and the creativity and commitment it sparks, the researcher, Professor Robert Kisenburger, says, managers must actively demonstrate concern for their employees "not just as workers but as individuals, with a variety of legitimate needs." One of the most important ways companies can demonstrate concern is through fitness and stress management programs. Such measures show concern for employees' well-being both on and off the job.

OUR EXPERIENCE IN INDIA confirms this finding. A few companies responded to our suggestion that we conduct a programme for the work force with the theme: Caring for oneself, Caring for the family and Caring for the society. The work force responded positively. Our hypothesis is that attitude to work is influenced by attitude to life and such programmes impact attitude to life AND work and therefore makes a sound investment.

3277 LAUGHING MATTER?

The ten-year old son of a physician was playing with a friend in his father's office when suddenly he threw open a closet door and disclosed, to the terrified gaze of his young friend, an articulated skeleton.

When his friend recovered from the initial shock of seeing the skeleton the physician's son explained that his father was extremely proud of that skeleton.

"Is he," asked the friend. "Why?" "I don't know," replied the boy, "maybe it was his first patient?"

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COMPLAIN NOT
ABOUT DARKNESS.
LIGHT A CANDLE

Hopeful & Helpful

*Positively Exciting
Personally Useful*

Good News From Anywhere

Inspiring multiplier models and exemplary acts of excellence are found all over the country. They are hardly written up.

Many miss the point that the positively exciting is also news.

Also, adequate efforts are not made to bring useful information to the literate public.

There is a case for collecting and spreading hopeful and helpful information and news.

May I invite our Readers to join me in this quest and share their discoveries and findings through these columns?

NH ATTREYA Editor

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WORTH ADMIRING: The Indian tradition has Swan as its bird of wisdom. When diluted milk is placed before it, the bird takes the milk, so the story goes, and leaves the water alone. The story has a pointer. Every country, every society, every organization has its milk of life.

Tommy T.B. Koh, till recently Ambassador to the U.S. from Singapore, talks of five things he admires about U.S.A.

First, no other country has welcomed as many refugees and immigrants and none has assimilated them so easily as America. Since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the U.S. has welcomed over 850,000 Indochinese refugees to her shores. Many of the children of these refugees, often of humble origin, have topped their classes in schools and have been awarded scholarships to study at America's elite colleges and universities. The Asian-American community is the fastest growing community in America. Because of their devotion to hardwork, the high value they attach to education and the availability of opportunities, the Asian Americans will provide America with a new infusion of brainpower, especially in the areas in which the United States is in danger of losing its lead, mathematics, science and engineering. Not all the countries in the world accept immigrants. Of those which do, none is able to match the manner in which the United States assimilates them. In some countries, the immigrant, his son and even his grandson will always be treated as outsiders. In the United States, the moment a person becomes a U.S. citizen, he or she is treated just like any other American. The absence of an aristocracy or an aristocratic past frees America of social barriers against upward mobility. As a result, it is possible for an American child, no matter what his ethnic origin and how adverse his family circumstances, to aspire to fulfill the American Dream.

Second, America is a nation of warm-hearted and generous people who have shared their wealth, technology and markets with others. Between 1945 and 1986, the United States gave a total of \$344 billion in economic assistance to other countries. No other country has been as generous in sharing its technology with other countries. Senator Jay Rockefeller (Democrat-West Virginia) has estimated that Japan has been able to purchase all the technology she wanted from the United States for between \$10 billion and \$17 billion. This has enabled Japan to catch up with the U.S. and, in some areas, even to surpass the U.S. in the technological race. American capital, technology and markets have enabled the

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economies of East and Southeast Asia to grow and prosper.

Third, America is a nation of volunteers. More than 80 million Americans volunteer some of their time to a cause. The average time spent is 5 hours a week. Half of all private high schools in the United States, including the two my sons attended, require a specified number of hours spent in community service as a graduation requirement.

Fourth, there is a strong tradition in America of giving to charity. The term "charity" includes churches, hospitals, schools, colleges, universities, public libraries, museums, symphonies, operas, ballets etc. In 1987, American corporations, foundations, and individuals gave a total of \$93 billion to charity. In 1988, the figure exceeded \$100 billion. As a proportion of their incomes, the poor gave more to charity than the rich.

Fifth, there is a strong spirit of entrepreneurship in America. Since 1980, 19 million new jobs have been created in America. About 75 percent of these jobs have been created by small businesses. Americans are willing to take risks. The society encourages the spirit of entrepreneurship by rewarding those who succeed and, just as importantly, by not penalizing those who fail. There is no social stigma which is attached to failure. The society gives the entrepreneur as many chances as he or she has the courage and the resources to try until he or she succeeds.

*** ALACRITY FOUNDATIONS PVT. LTD., is a construction company that went into operation in 1981, with a corporate philosophy* based on human values.

The chief (Mr. Amol Karnad) reports: "It pays to be decent. We have now 25% of the share of the business in Madras city. We don't bribe and, more importantly, nobody expects bribe from us." Hats off!

*

1. The quality of life of the individual is truly enhanced only when the quality of life of the society in which he lives is improved.
2. Professional fulfilment for any institution is attainable only when it accepts public accountability for its contribution to social/national causes.
3. A business mission can be worthwhile and enduring only if it is in line with national goals and priorities.
4. In the conduct of business, integrity - 'not knowingly to do harm' - is the only moral touchstone and excellence the only performance touchstone.
5. Business development can be integrated with social/national development only if there is uncompromising respect for laws and regulations and faithful compliance therewith.