

# 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

- 3308 TIPS ON TIME MANAGEMENT
- 3309 WORKING IN JAPANESE ORGANIZATIONS
- 3310 LESSONS FROM THE BAD TIMES FOR THE GOOD TIMES
- 3311 PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE PRACTICES
- 3312 EVERY LITTLE COUNTS
- 3313 LAUGHING MATTER?
- \*\*\*\* GOOD NEWS FROM ANYWHERE

**3308 TIPS ON TIME MANAGEMENT:** This time it is from a practitioner, Harvey Mackay, author of the New York Times Bestseller, SWIM WITH THE SHARKS.

01. Put a phone in your car. (When you can, if you can:ED.)
02. Always phone ahead when you make a call on a customer or prospect.
03. Always park your car in a getaway position.
04. Use the car's cassette deck to listen to tapes that teach you something.
05. Never travel without a tape recorder at your side so you can "write notes" to yourself while you're driving.

**Add a few noncar time-savers to that list:**

06. Drop that tape recorder into your coat pocket and keep it by your bedside. You've now doubled the number of hours you can be getting ahead of your competition.
07. Always carry something useful to read.
08. Never go to the bank during the Friday lunch hour.
09. Never have coffee with another salesperson, only with a customer.
10. Just for the hell of it, for an entire week, substitute reading a business publication for the time you spend reading the sports page or the variety section.

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11. Take a speed reading course.
12. Use your answering machine, even when you're home, to screen out time-wasting calls.
13. Schedule phone meetings instead of physical meetings as much as possible. Be as prompt and attentive for these meetings as you would for a face-to-face.
14. Always get the name of the person to whom you're talking when you are making a service or product complaint. It will cut down the number of follow-up calls and speed up the process. People pay attention when they know you're "taking notes."
15. Always ask your subordinates to report their conclusions and recommendations in two sentences first, then decide if you really need any explanations.
16. Listen to business tapes or radio broadcasts while you jog or exercise.
17. Reprioritize and revise your schedule at noon every day.
18. If a sales person starts to pitch you something you know you don't want, interrupt them with: "Excuse me... I respect your time and my time too much to let you continue. I know that I couldn't possibly use this. Good luck with your next prospect and good-bye."
19. Praise subordinates who transact their business with you quickly and reprimand those who don't. Many people think the more time they spend with the boss shows their importance. Don't reinforce that idea.
20. Avoid people who waste time.
21. Schedule any meetings with time wasters shortly before they must leave the building.
22. Watch the morning business news instead of the morning news shows. The business reports generally carry the leading headlines anyway.
23. Always look at the line-up at the grocery store checkout, before you decide to shop in the store.

**3309 WORKING IN JAPANESE ORGANIZATIONS:** More and more Japanese collaborations are coming and those who wish to work with them would do well to know what they prefer.

While conducting research in Japanese companies in Southeast Asia, Takashi Kawatani, president of Diversity Management Institute in Tokyo, found Asian employees puzzled by Japanese communication styles and workplace expectations. For those who wish to do business with Japanese companies in any sense, he has seven pieces of advice:

1. **Be Modest.** From the Japanese perspective, excessive self-promotion shows a basic lack of confidence and immaturity.
2. **Give Credit to others.** Alone, no one can succeed. Realize that someone who is of no significance to you today may be of great importance tomorrow.
3. **Be Appreciative.** This means always returning favors and being sensitive to the needs of others.

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4. **Know the Meaning of B.M.W.** Ba means knowing the proper behavior for each situation. Ma means giving adequate pause to avoid surprises. Wa means supporting your behavior by group consensus.

5. **Behave like Family.** There are no "outsiders" in the office and there is no Japanese word for privacy.

6. **Be your real self.** Being sincere, honest, and loyal will win you the respect of others in your company.

7. **Join in.** Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty. The Japanese expect effective managers to lead by "walking around."

**3310 LESSONS FROM THE BAD TIMES FOR THE GOOD TIMES:** Things have been tough for corporations in the west and they hope they are turning the corner. Meanwhile, they have learnt some useful lessons. Their hindsight can be our foresight.

Laurel Allison Touby reports eight such lessons:

{ } **BELLY UP TO THE NUMBERS.** When business is good, it doesn't matter that you're not managing your cash flow. You've always got money coming in, so even if you make some mistakes, you can easily recover.

Do a weekly cash-flow analysis and prioritizes bill paying.

{ } **WASTE NOT.** One often-overlooked cost chopper is simple:waste reduction. "Start by having employees scrutinize what's lying around in desk drawers, closets, filing cabinets and storage rooms." Other areas to audit:the use of messenger services and overnight delivery, long-distance phone calls, travel-and-entertainment expenses, excessive freight charges and electric bills. "You'll get the best results if you involve employees as much as possible in the process."

{ } **LOP OFF EXCESS INVENTORY.** It's best to get rid of aging inventory fast in most cases. "Try to return it to the manufacturer and swallow the service charge, and avoid overstocking by finding suppliers who are close by or who can deliver fast.

{ } **MILK A NEW CASH COW.** Not every smart strategy involves cost cutting and retrenchment. Performing a product-line analysis can yield surprising results.

{ } **MAKE FLEXIBILITY A PRIORITY.** While many small-business owners have turned to part-time labor, few have capitalized on the vast supply of executive and professional temps. Ranging from accountants to engineers to marketing specialists, these professionals can help with special projects, such as launching a new product or service or creating a marketing campaign. They can also fill in when a key executive has taken a leave of absence.

{ } **CUT EMPLOYEE OVERLAP.** Another strategy to reduce unnecessary work force expenses is to perform a human-resources audit. Ask each person to write down all the tasks and responsibilities that he or she handles; then determine what is unnecessary or could be handled by a single person rather than by two or three.

- { } RETHINK INCENTIVES. After a few years in business, many owners find that productivity has stagnated. No matter how hard they crack the whip or how sweet the carrots they dangle, people are not stirred to action. "There's no better way to motivate, up or down the management hierarchy, than by tying performance to ownership,. Companies have several options: They can issue nonvoting common shares, offer limited partnership units or establish an employee stock-ownership plan (ESOP)."
- { } EXPAND YOUR MARKET. Companies should also be thinking new products or services to offer that can offset the cyclicity of their current lines during a downturn.

**3311 PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE PRACTICES:** Industry Week recently named ten American plants as best in performance. An analysis of their practices has led to the following findings of traits in them:

- \* In all ten plants, employee participation is not only encouraged--it's practically demanded, and expected of everyone! Plant workers suggest ideas on safety measures and quality improvements.
- \* In the case of Kennametal Inc., employees are given a great deal of autonomy to develop the best way to organize and set up the machines they run. Instead of instructing employees on the one and only way to do a certain job, management stresses the goals employees should work toward and then lets them find the best way to bring about improvements in those areas.
- \* At Steelcase's Context Division, employees, not management, run the day-to-day operations. Also Steelcase management wanted workers and managers at Context to be one team and for there to be no walls between so-called white-collar and blue-collar workers. That's why the main meeting room at the plant is positioned between the offices and the plant with an entire wall that's a window into the factory.
- \* Empowerment is backed up by rigorous plant-wide training, such as JJMI's Quality Education System and SPX Corp.'s Operator Certification program.
- \* Visual aids displaying team achievements, key performance indicators, and comparisons between their products and that of the competitors' abound in each plant, serving as motivators and source of information to the plant workers.
- \* Workers have a sense of "ownership" and pride of craftsmanship. The key here is, as Kennametal found, flexibility and good communication. Managers at the plant realize that, like the craftsmen of old, today's production specialists need to shape products themselves and to take ownership of their work.
- \* At Tennessee Eastman Co., the key to implementing total productive maintenance is "interface management"-breaking down organizational barriers between operators and maintenance specialists and overcoming the "that's not my job" syndrome.

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\* A market orientation is also key. At Stone Construction Equipment, "everyone understands the importance of customers and gets involved with them through customer visits, by fixing equipment at job sites and having employees sit in on customer-complaint committees."

\* Nippondenso takes customer orientation even further. With their defect corrective-action system, wherein "all defects found by a customer are evaluated by a team from manufacturing, engineering, and quality assurance," the corrective actions for which are later evaluated by top management. "Our customers know that every time a defect has been found, our president and others on the executive staff have approved the corrective action."

\* A shift of emphasis from detection to prevention is another major change. A quality-assurance manager of Engelhard Corp., a producer of silver chemicals, among other things, says, "In 1980, we had people checking people, trying to detect problems. That doesn't solve the problem--and it's very labor-intensive. Now quality responsibility lies with the person doing the job." Result: an outstanding safety record of eight years without a lost-day injury.

\* America's best plants promote the team concept, and have clearly benefitted a lot from it. Lord Corp.'s self-directed work teams schedule their own work, perform all jobs within their manufacturing cells, hire their own team members, and select their own equipment. The results were practically miraculous: Scrap worth \$350,000 a year was reduced to virtually none today; leadtime was slashed from 160 days to 32; and work-in process inventory was reduced from \$3.5 million to \$150,000!

**3312 EVERY LITTLE COUNTS:** A Reader has asked for a few more samples from the illustrated-calendar we talked about in an earlier issue (3306)

If you want maximum energy efficiency when considering the design of a new house, one simple idea is to look for a plan that's square rather than rectangular--other factors being equal, it will usually be more efficient.

"In remaking the world in the likeness of a steam-heated, air-conditioned metropolis of apartment buildings, we have violated one of our essential attributes--our kinship with nature." **Ross Parmenter**

Put your money where your mouth is. Cash contributions to environmental groups are badly needed--the Wall Street Journal says environmental causes receive less than 1% of all charitable giving in the United States.

### **3313 LAUGHING MATTER?**

The burglars had tied and gagged the bank cashier after extracting the combination to the safe and had herded the other employees into a separate room under guard. After they rifled the safe and were about to leave, the cashier made desperate pleading noises through the gag. Moved by curiosity one of the burglars loosened the gag.

"Please!" whispered the cashier, "take the books too. I'm Rs.6,500 short."

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 ATTHREYA Editor**

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Dr. N.H. Atthreya,  
EDITOR - Management Ideas,  
PB No. 11269, Bombay 400 020.

NO RECRIMINATIONS,  
NO REGRETS,  
ONLY REACHING OUT:

### What one MAN can do and has done.

My late-lamented friend Adi Lakshmanan who saw this fine human being in action told me: I wish I can convey the manliness I saw. You have to see to believe the indomitable spirit of this young man. No Bharat Darshan tour\* will be complete without a visit to his creation.

We reproduce, below extracts from two reports on this path-breaking Son of India.

The day was January 10, the year 1975, For 21 year-old S. Ramakrishnan or Ramani, as he is popularly known, a brilliant and active young man doing his fourth year at the Government College of Technology at Coimbatore, it was one of the most exciting moments of his life. He was just about to clear the tenth and the final test in the obstacle course for the naval officers' selection at the SSB (Service Selection Board) in Bangalore. After having crossed the hurdles and ditches and climbed walls, jumping down from a platform on a tree 25 feet from the ground seemed remarkably easy. But it was not to be. Ramani injured himself badly: he had fracture dislocation with complete tetraplegia which really means that he become completely incapacitated below his neck. But for Ramani there are no recriminations, reprisals or even regrets. "There is no question of blaming anyone," says he. "The SSB must continue to conduct such tests."

During the initial 19 excruciating months when Ramani was shunted from hospital to paraplegy homes, he had all the time to ponder on what could have been a bleak future. Sitting in his wheelchair in his aunt's place in Valsaravalkam in Madras, Ramani recalls, "I used to give a lot of thought to what I could do. I kept telling myself I must be useful to society and that I must spend my time usefully." And he did. In 1981, which was also the International Year of the Disabled, he started a charitable institution called the Amar Seva Sangham which runs the Siva Saraswathy Nursery School, a tuition centre, a Hindi centre, an adult education centre and a library.

Located in his native village Ayikudy in Tamil Nadu, the institution is named after Lt.Gen.Amarject Singh Chahal, the orthopaedician who looked after him in the Air Force Force Command Hospital in Bangalore.

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Financed completely by donations, the institution has a number of volunteers. Earlier, Ramani had started a nursery school with just five students. Today, his Siva Saraswathy Nursey School has 200 students. The library has more than 1500 books and there are also development courses for individuals. The institution also conducts regular health camps for the disabled.

How could he achieve all this sitting in a wheel chair? "It was simple," says Ramani modestly. "Whenever I have wanted to do something, I have always done it. When I start something I always finish it. If I cannot do something, I tell myself that it is God's will and leave it at that."

Though Ramani has achieved so much, he himself is very dependent on others for every small thing. His frail body in the wheelchair has to be pushed back constantly into position. Flies have to be swished away from his face and body and someone has to help him during the frequent spasms that attack him.

Every now and then Ramani calls out for Sridhar, his younger brother, who is his constant companion.

Wearing just a dhoti because "I depend that much less on another person," Ramani says he tonsures his hair every month. "It is just that with long hair I would feel like scratching it often and when I would have to call someone to do it for me," he explains.

"When I returned home in 1976 I thought I would be a burden to my family, but I realised I would have given them greater mental worries if I had stayed away in some home for the paraplegics".

Being the eldest son in the family, Ramakrishnan tell he could not sit idle in his wheelchair, waiting for life to pass by.

He started off by giving free tuition to the children of his 6,000 strong village. Five years later, he started a nursery school with 75 students. He now had definite plans on how he wanted to live the rest of his life.

**Amar Seva Sangam:** In June 1981, he set up the Amar Seva Sangam and registered it under the TN Societies Act. The aim of the Sangam was to promote education, help poor students, provide medical aid to villagers, promote family planning and help people during natural disasters.

Now his school is being run in a thatched shed and an old building. He has built up the institution with funds from well wishers. Apart from regular classes up to the second standard (strength 100 students), he has organised free tuition classes for 50 poor students and adult education classes for 30 persons.

Like anyone else, Ramani too has his dreams. Nothing very ambitious, just "a school for orphans and the handicapped". Ramani is confident he will achieve his ambition all on his own. "I have always believed in standing on my own legs." It may sound ironical coming from him, but then how many incapacitated people will no fallback are running social service organisations?

\* For those who wish to do the tour in one sense or another, here is the address:**Amar Seva Sangam (Regd)**

56, East Street, Ayikudy 627 852, Tamil Nadu. Phone:8360  
(Idaikal) STD. Code: 04633