

# 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

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**3291 MAN OF THE YEAR:** Some Readers have asked for the postal address of the Man of the Year (M.I. 3284) Here it is:

**A.R. PALANISWAMI**

Opp. PWD Inspection Bungalow  
V R Pillai Chattiram  
Sriperumbudur 602 105

**3292 THIS PRACTICE HELPS US:** In response to our editorial invitation to this feature, a Reader writes: "Our President & the Managing Director invites once in 2 years all the Management employees in groups along with their families, over a brunch get-together at his residence. It provides a wonderful opportunity for all employees and their families not only to enjoy the hospitality & warmth of the Chief & his family in an informal & stimulating environment but also get acquainted with other employees & their families."

Some may say: This is not a big deal. In our perception, every little counts; and this is NOT little in the receivers' eyes.

Please do take time off to share (in writing) management practices that have helped.

**3293 BETTER AND FASTER LEARNING:** According to Ronald Gross (author of PEAK LEARNING; A MASTER COURSE IN LEARNING HOW TO LEARN), you don't have to read a book from cover to cover to get value from it. He suggests a strategy: Read first the inside front of the dust jacket (what the publisher says the book is about) and the back of the dust jacket (the author's credentials). Read the front matter to get the author's or editor's orientation to the book, scan the table of contents, leaf through the important chapters and read the paragraphs that interest you the most. Then write out three key questions of interest that you'd like the book to answer for you. Check the index for where your first question might be answered and read those parts. Do the same with your other questions. Now you will know if the book is worth reading further or if you have gotten from it all that is meaningful to you.

**3294 ONE MAN'S PROBLEM:** One man's problem is another man's opportunity. Those of us who are thinking of globalising their business may like to know of the several problems that the world is facing.

More than 13000 problems plaguing the world are outlined in an encyclopedia compiled by the Union of International Associations (Brussels, KG Saur, Postfach 71 10 09, D-8000 Muenchen 70, Germany). Two volumes, 2133 pages. \$415 or DM 598. The encyclopedia can also be had from Bowker / Saur 245 West 17th St. New York NY 10011.

The Futurist Editor Edward Cornish comments thus on this book... It is not for the person looking for something light to read at the beach.... The Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential should prove an outstanding new tool for social thinkers and idea seekers of all kinds, because it is different from the usual reference works. In fact, it is really less a tool than a new world for readers to explore.

**3295 STROKES FOR BOSS:** Bosses are human too and stroke hunger is common human hunger. Andrew J DuBrin (author of WINNING OFFICE POLITICS) suggests: Reward your boss with a sincere compliment or a note of appreciation when he has done something outstanding (effecting a major collection, for example) or something particularly helpful to the organization.

**3296 OUTLOOK '92:** Peeping into the future is an organized activity. There are over a dozen learned journals in this area of futurology. There is a well-respected association - The World Future Society. Washington.

According to this Society's publications, the following are some of the indications for 1992 and beyond.

Automation and computers:

- \* "Information jukeboxes" -- intelligent machines that integrate a myriad of information technologies and capabilities such as the telephone, fax, and computer -- will soon be common in business offices.

- \* Computers will increasingly be used for decision making by groups. Computer-mediated decision making allows more members of a group to participate, rather than just a few aggressive talkers dominating discussion, as often occurs in face-to-face groups.
- \* Information "superhighways" connected by fiber-optic cable will link scientists, business people, educators, and students. Current computer networks only link a few computers; in the future, everyone could log on.
- \* In the near future, computers will be programmed to generate simple but entertaining children's stories and do a significant amount of work on mysteries, thrillers, and other genre fiction.

#### Business and the Economy:

- \* "Microbusinesses" -- entrepreneurial ventures started up by people displaced by companies' restructuring--will be common in the early twenty-first century.
- \* By 2000 or so, all national currencies will be convertible, following a model similar to the European Community's Exchange Rate Mechanism.

#### Technology:

- \* Video cameras the size of postage stamps -- utilizing image sensors with other camera electronics on a single silicon chip--will be manufactured for less than \$50.
- \* Public libraries may increasingly be replaced by technologies that integrate information sources and make them more accessible to individuals.
- \* Telephones that instantly translate foreign languages may emerge within the next 20 years.

#### Transportation:

- \* A two-wheeled, one-seat automobile that resembles a recumbent motorcycle may become the vehicle of choice for commuters and other urban riders, such as couriers and paramedics.
- \* The world's car population has increased seven times since 1950, while human population has merely doubled. The fleet of cars is expected to climb from 400 million currently to 700 million in the next 20 years.

#### Energy:

- \* Oil will lose its starring role in the energy picture in the next 20 to 50 years as other energy sources such as hydrogen begin to take center stage.
- \* The rapid growth in developing countries' energy use may seriously damage the environment. The consumption of coal, oil, gas, and electricity by Third World countries is expected to triple in the next 30 years.

### Environment and Resources:

- \* Underground architecture may become more popular, providing energy-efficient shelter for humans while allowing the surface of the earth to recover from the damage caused by asphalt, concrete, and fertilizers.
- \* Rising sea levels will threaten coastal cities throughout the world, in rich and poor countries alike. Among the world's cities most at risk are Miami, New Orleans, Bangkok, Hamburg, London, Leningrad, Shanghai, Sydney, Alexandria, and Dhaka.

### Space:

- \* Satellites increasingly will be used to help predict natural disasters such as volcanoes, hurricanes, and even insect infestations (based on rainfall patterns).

### Demographics:

- \* India will overtake China as the world's most populous country by 2030.

**3297 PRESUMED GUILTY:** Economic journalism has become popular. Company happenings are hot news and the worse the happening, the hotter the news!

We should be ready to open the business fortnightly and even the morning newspaper and discover that our company has joined the ranks of crisis-plagued businesses - an environmental disaster, a confidence shaking scandal or a takeover attempt.

Most companies respond by dispatching the PR department to keep the media in check but overlook the party hit hardest by the turmoil - the company's employees. "Employees become demoralized and unmotivated and tend to shut down". What can be done to minimize the impact and maintain the morale? Here are suggestions from Anne Donnellon, a professor of organizational behaviour:

[ ] Communicate frankly and frequently. "I'm a firm believer in a manager giving all the information she can as soon as possible," says Harry Levinson, an organizational psychologist and chairman of the Levinson Institute in Belmont, Mass. Managers should share key information with staffers while it's hot; that way, by the time word hits the street, employees feel it's old news. If, because of legal constraints, it isn't possible to tell employees everything, managers should tell employees exactly that.

[ ] Encourage employees to share their concerns. Open discussion sessions can keep anger from interfering with productivity. Levinson says such sessions are helpful because employees "start to feel like they are attacking the attacker" and channel some of that energy into their jobs.

[ ] Exercise caution in sharing personal opinions. While managers must communicate honestly with staffers, they shouldn't reveal personal views or predictions. Doing so, says Levinson, can pit employees against senior management.

**3298 WATCH YOUR BACK:** Customers can be a pain in the neck. That's just an expression, of course, but there are times when working with customers can cause you pain in another part of your body--your back.

Anyone who spends long hours sitting at a desk can be susceptible to back pain, because sitting for long periods causes pressure on the spinal disks. But don't think that if you stand all day you'll avoid back problems--especially if you make sudden twisting or bending motions, or use improper lifting techniques, which can cause muscle spasms or nerve inflammations.

If you have chronic back pain, you're not alone. Eighty percent in one country alone have back pain at some time in their lives, and two million of them chronic back pain. Back pain is second only to colds as a cause of lost work time.

Back problems are such common ailments that it pays to give some thought to preventing them. Here are a few helpful tips:

> **Avoid sitting or standing for long periods.** If you sit at a desk all day, get up and walk around for a few minutes every hour. If you have to stand for a long time, get a chair or stool and use it when you can.

> **Sleep on a firm mattress, with knees bent.** A mattress that's too soft won't give you enough support. A good, firm mattress will alleviate pressure on the back muscles.

> **Use proper lifting techniques.** Squat down to pick up objects on the floor, and bend at the knees, not the waist.

> **Loosen up before and after exercising.** This is vitally important to prevent muscle pulls and strains. One technique: use a gentle side-to-side swaying motion, swinging your arms, for several minutes.

> **Act your age.** Erratic exercise programs, combined with lessening flexibility of the back, cause many back problems for people in the 30-to-60 age group. To prevent these problems, remember that you're not 16 anymore and you can't ignore your body's needs. A regular, moderate level of exercise with proper warm-up and warm-down periods, plus careful lifting, will help greatly.

> **Relax.** Tension is a factor in back pain. Learn to relax. Do meditation, deep breathing, or visualization. Don't let stress build up; your health is too important.

Except for pain caused by disease (arthritis or osteoporosis, for example), general fitness and common sense will do much to alleviate or ward off back discomfort.

### **3299 LAUGHING MATTER?**

A great lawyer was constantly ill and was becoming quite disgusted and frustrated with his declining health. A concerned friend anxiously advised him to rest for a few months, saying, "Then your constitution might be rebuilt".

To this the lawyer barked, "My constitution was destroyed long ago. I am now living under the by-laws!"

