

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

SEASONS GREETINGS

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3284 **MAN OF THE YEAR:** The periodical **THE WEEK** has one significant annual feature; and that is the **PERSON OF THE YEAR**. First week of every year, the publication comes out with a heartwarming write-up about a person who is doing significant work in some part of India.

Such a person is often a non-VIP. The person is doing sustained and silent work in one or another 'corner' of India, answering a higher call.

The Man of the Year for 1991 is **A.R.PALANISWAMY**. Palaniswamy is the founder of Society for Educational and Economic Development (Irungattukottai, Tamil Nadu), where the children of life convicts and leprosy and cancer patients get a chance to piece together their fragmented lives and grow up to dream once again of hope and happiness. (For a 16 page feature on him, please see **THE WEEK** of December 29, 1991.)

Here are some thoughts for the Readers of Management Ideas. We can arrange a visit to such persons by a representative group from our organization... We can enquire whether in some way we can give their cause some support... We can ask our company personnel to identify and give a write-up about people who can be considered for a "Man of the Year Award" from our own organization.

3285 **100 PERCENT AMERICAN:** For reasons sentimental, one can talk of 100 % American products or 100% Indian products. The practical situation some are more alert to. One such is the author (Ralph Linton) of the book, The Study of Man. He humorously handles the phenomenon in the following passage:

Our solid American citizen awakens in a bed built on a pattern which originated in the Near East but which was modified in Northern Europe before it was transmitted to America. He throws back the covers made from cotton, domesticated in India, or linen, domesticated in the Near East, or wool from sheep, also domesticated in the Near East, or silk, the use of which was discovered in China. All of these materials have been spun and woven by processes invented in the Near East. He slips into his moccasins, invented by the Indians of the Eastern woodlands, and goes to the bathroom, whose fixtures are a mixture of European and American invention, both of recent date. He takes off his pajamas, a garment invented in India, and washes with soap invented by the ancient Gauls. He then shaves, a masochistic rite which seems to have been derived from either Sumer or ancient Egypt.

Returning to the bedroom, he removes his clothes from a chair of southern European type and proceeds to dress. He puts on garments whose form originally derived from the skin clothing of the nomads of the Asiatic steppes, puts on shoes made from skins tanned by a process invented in ancient Egypt and cut to a pattern derived from the classical civilizations of the Mediterranean, and ties around his neck a strip of bright-colored cloth which is a vestigial survival of the shoulder shawls worn by the seventeenth century Croats. Before going out for breakfast he glances through the window, made of glass invented in Egypt, and if it is raining, puts on overshoes made of rubber discovered by the Central American Indians and takes an umbrella, invented in southeastern Asia. Upon his head he puts a hat made of felt, a material invented in the Asiatic steppes.

On his way to breakfast he stops to buy a paper, paying for it with coins, an ancient Lydian invention. At the restaurant a whole new series of borrowed elements confronts him. His plate is made of a form of pottery invented in China. His knife is of steel, an alloy first made in southern India, his fork a medieval Italian invention, and his spoon a derivative of a Roman original. He begins breakfast with an orange, from the eastern Mediterranean, a cantaloupe from Persia, or perhaps a piece of American watermelon. With this he has coffee, an Abyssinian plant, with cream and sugar. Both the domestication of cows and the idea of milking them originated in the Near East, while sugar was first made in India. After his fruit and coffee he goes on to waffles, cakes made by a Scandinavian technique from wheat domesticated in Asia Minor. Over these he pours maple syrup, invented by the Indians of the Eastern woodlands. As a side dish he may have the eggs of a species of bird domesticated in Indo-China, or thin strips of the flesh of an animal domesticated in Eastern Asia which have been salted and smoked by a process developed in northern Europe.

When our friend has finished eating, he settles back to smoke, an American Indian habit, consuming a plant domesticated in Brazil in either a pipe, derived from the Indians of Virginia, or a cigarette

derived from Mexico. If he is hardy enough he may even attempt a cigar, transmitted to us from the Antilles by way of Spain. While smoking he reads the news of the day, imprinted in characters invented in Germany. As he absorbs the accounts of foreign troubles he will, if he is a good conservative citizen, thank a Hebrew deity in an Indo-European language that he is 100 per cent American.

3286 MEETING PRACTICES: Meetings tend to waste peoples' time. Executives constantly keep innovating. One executive schedules the meeting at odd hours, 10.10 say. Another starts on time, no matter who is missing. A third closes the door when the meeting begins. A fourth keeps the most important agenda items first.

3287 A HELPFUL DOCUMENT: An organisation in Madras, which was earlier located in Kumbakonam, Tamilnadu, has been doing for years a fine job of shareholders education. Recently, they have brought out a Family Investment Kit. It is "a concise and convenient record of all vital information concerning your family, what you own, important documents and papers - knowing what, why and where they are and whom to contact." It is given away gratis. You may request for a copy from Integrated Enterprises (India) Ltd., 5 A Vasam Street, T. Nagar, Madras 600 017.

3288 ISO 9000: Export will become a necessity for most of us. And if we have to export to Europe, ISO 9000 requirement will be there in two years from now. What is ISO 9000 and how does one go about?

A Madras computer consultancy firm has produced a Teach Yourself Tutorial Software on ISO 9000, Standards on Quality Management System. You can run this software in a PC or XT or AT computer in DOS environment. Topics covered in 150 screens of information are: Basic vocabulary, Guidelines for selection of standards, Elements of quality management system, Installation of Quality Systems, and Quality Systems Registration. They have a demonstration diskette. You may communicate for your requirements with: VIPA Statistics And Systems Consultancy, Hiranmaya, 32 Cross Road, Besantnagar, Madras 600 090.

3289 TERRORISM SELF DEFENSE: Terrorism and impersonal violence is now nearer home. Any one can be a target - one need not be a VIP to be singled out for the treatment. Are there precautions prudent Readers can take?

According to one leading authority (Peter Savage: Author of The Safe Travel Book), here are some suggestions. They are slanted for the American traveller. We can modify them to suit our needs.

Is terrorism more or less of a threat this year than it was last summer?

That's a difficult question to answer. Although there are more enemies out there, they have lost much of their support and funding from countries in the Mideast and the Eastern Bloc. Security is also tighter, making it much more difficult for terrorists to act.

Example: In the past, American airlines have been somewhat lax in their security procedures. But during the past few years they've instituted much more rigorous security checks.

Does this mean we can all relax?

No! One of the reasons terrorism has declined a bit is that people are more aware of the threat. We have learned not to travel to risky parts of the globe, how to act in a busy airport, etc.

How safe is it to travel abroad this summer?

That all depends where you're going. There are, quite obviously, some spots to avoid--the Mideast, Peru, etc. Street crime should also be a concern in European and Latin American cities.

How can I find out where not to travel?

Before you plan a trip and again before you leave, make at least two phone calls.

.Call the Regional Security Officer (RSO) at the American embassy or consulate in the country to which you're traveling. Yes, it's a very-long-distance call, but the RSO will best know the local security conditions.

.Call a big US bank that does business in that part of the world. Citibank in New York and Bank of America in San Francisco are good examples.

Ask to speak with the officer who deals with the bank's business in that area or who has traveled there recently. I've never had a bank officer refuse to give me the inside scoop on the security situation in a foreign country.

.Call the State Department Advisory Hotline (202-647-5225) The hotline provides recorded advisories about dangerous countries.

What else can people travelling abroad do to protect themselves?

There are several important steps you can take.

.Fly into and leave from a smaller airport. Avoid high-profile facilities--use Orly rather than de Gaulle Airport in Paris, Gatwick rather than Heathrow in London and avoid departing from Frankfurt Airport in Germany. These are the facilities which headline hungry terrorists prefer to strike, because of their large concentrations of Americans. Note: Finding alternatives to Frankfurt Airport can be difficult. Good News: The level of security there has been dramatically increased in recent months by both airport authorities and the airlines using this hub.

.Be careful what airlines you fly. Those under financial pressures are weak links in the security chain.

.Fly nonstop to your destination, whenever possible. The more airports you land at and take off from, the more you expose yourself to risk.

.Be discreet. Leave the expensive jewelry and fancy luggage at home. Or at least don't flash them around on the street.

.Vary your daily schedule. Come and go at different times, take different routes, do not make your moves predictable. This will make it more difficult for potential terrorists to focus on you and will drive them to easier prey.

What about the terrorist threat here at home--how has it changed?

Despite years of terrorism overseas, terrorists really haven't been successful in the US. And I don't see that changing in the near future, especially with the evaporation of Eastern-Bloc help.

Terrorist groups have never been able to get themselves well positioned here. They don't have the people or the supplies necessary to act. And it takes years to set up such an organization.

Also, groups living in the US that might be sympathetic to a terrorist's cause have, at least so far, ignored calls for action.

Reason: They don't want to jeopardize their comfortable living and all they've accomplished here.

Example: Palestinians in America may hate the US-Israeli alliance, but they want no part in assisting a terrorist who urges using violent means to disrupt it.

Is there any way to find out about terrorist threats here in the US?

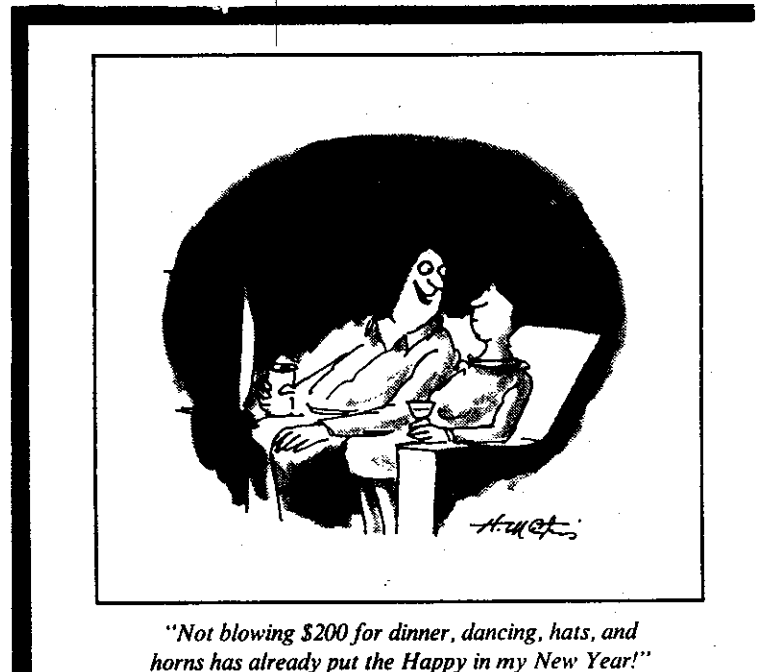
Most major cities operate rumor control bureaus that act as clearinghouses for terrorist information. You can call and ask them if there have been any threats of terrorism.

In an emergency, your best sources of aid is the local emergency police number.

3290 LAUGHING MATTER?

A budding playwright who had a new show opening sent a couple of tickets for the first night to the mayor of the city with a note suggesting that he could bring a friend "if he had one."

The mayor returned the tickets with a courteous letter stating that previous engagements made it impossible for him to see the show the opening night but he would purchase two tickets for the second performance "if there was one!"



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