

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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3384 ONCE A YEAR: The Chief of one Bombay company does the following once a year, "just to keep in touch with ground reality that my people may be facing practically every working day".

"I travel by second class to and from work. I travel by bus to and from work. I sit at the telephone reception desk. I do the registration work at the postal counter. I go to pay the electricity bill. I go to deposit cheques at the bank."

"I know", he says, "that one day is not equal to every working day but even this little stint improves my communication with my people, especially the tone of my communication. I cannot make their life easier; but I can certainly avoid adding to the pressures by my unthinking, impatient behaviour to them."

3385 HOW TO READ A BOOK: *The following is an extract from the book 79 Ways to Calm A Crying Baby (by Diana S. Greene \$6.00) The title caught my eye because I had three occasions to see mothers literally in tears.*

What it says on how to use this book can be as much applicable to many books on Management.

Don't Expect Every One To Work. These are methods that have worked for me or someone else at one point or another. Some may never work for your child. Others will work at one time but not another. It is sometimes said of calming techniques that everything works, but only for a while. That's why you need a wide variety to choose from.

Don't Be Embarrassed. Easier said than done, because a number of these will make you feel a little silly in public and will attract attention. Realize that this is less embarrassing and disruptive than the scene caused by a hysterical child. Rather than worrying that people are thinking you are a terrible parent, you can take pride in the thought that others will marvel at your inventiveness and persistence. Also, remember that if people stare, they are truly interested. It is only when they self-consciously look away that you have something to worry about.

Don't Give Up Too Easily. Some techniques take a few minutes to catch on. Others only work at a milder level of upset. Therefore, you may have to persist for a while or come back to them after you have baby partially calmed down. An obvious example is a baby who is too upset to go to sleep. Similarly, parents can overlook the fact that a baby quite often will become too upset from hunger to eat.

Don't Be Stubborn. If it doesn't work after five minutes or so, try something else. Just because it worked yesterday doesn't mean it will today. There's no logic to some of these kids. If you have tried several methods from different categories, for a total of about twenty or thirty minutes, and none have worked, you should not exhaust yourself by mechanically going through the entire book. Select a technique or two that you like and try to stick it out. However, if it becomes unbearable, take a break, for however long you need, even if it means leaving the baby with someone else.

3386 INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE EXPO: There are approximately 3,000 active franchise systems headquartered in the United States. The industry is so large in America that it accounts for 35% of ALL retail spending, and enjoys a success rate of 94%!

The U.S. franchise industry is almost unexploited in other countries; yet the demand for American-style retail products and services is very high in most countries. Now is the time to take advantage of the enormous number of unexported franchise systems!

You may like to take advantage of a forthcoming opportunity. The IFA International Franchise Expo is ("IFE"), to be held at the Washington D.C. Convention Center on April 23-25 1993. Admission: (1-day) \$15 (3-day) \$25. The fee includes FREE Show Catalog & Entry to ALL Seminars & Tutorials. No pre-registration is required. For more information, you can call 407/647-8521.

The 1993 IFE will feature hundreds of franchise companies in dozens of different industries, including many of the "big names". There will be investments to suit almost any budget, and the IFE will feature a wide range of seminars aimed at all aspects of international franchising.

3387 CRAFTING THE FUTURE: *We often bemoan the lack of pride in their work on the part of our manufacturing operations. This is partly because of the way modern industry is structured. World over, restructuring is being reconsidered.*

The following is a report by Humphrey McQueen on a recent conference on the subject, held in Perth, Australia, by Humphrey McQueen.

CAN traditional craft practices contribute to the restructuring of our manufacturing industry? Or must innovations flood from the new model factory over the craft workshop?

Even if craft-scale production has lessons for the third industrial revolution, how do they apply beyond the factories in which a diminishing percentage of our workforce will be employed? Craft as therapy will continue to play its part for the unemployed, for retirees seeking hobbies, and for the overemployed in need of relaxation. But what benefits can craft practices bring to the work of bank tellers or other service industries?

Similar questions were debated last week in Perth at the Crafts Council of Australia's conference.

In its pre-industrial sense "craft" meant the work of people such as the anonymous carvers on the Gothic cathedrals. The nineteenth-century art and social critic John Ruskin valued those crafts for their roughness and their never being exact copies of one another. Ruskin's values had formed in opposition to the factory standardisation of his times.

By then, craft had acquired the added meaning of precision within a narrow range. Workers were divided, through status and reward, by the particularised tasks they performed. Those subdivisions appeared in union organisation so that in the boot trade Rough Stuff Cutters had their own tiny association. These craft unions maintained strict borders between themselves and those in adjoining trades. Since the 1987 ACTU Congress, amalgamations have aimed to end up with only 20 unions as one way of eliminating restrictive work practices.

Another aim is the creation of multiskilled workers who will be paid according to the number of competencies they acquire. In the past, firms have had to employ an electrician who, on some days, might do little more than throw a switch. Under the new arrangements, a boilermaker becomes both able and permitted to perform tasks once reserved for a plumber.

For the employer, total labour costs are lowered. For the individual employee, wages will increase because of added loadings for each newly acquired competency. The firm also benefits because its workforce is more flexible and hence more adept.

There might seem to be very little difference between these newfangled factories and most old-fashioned craft workshops where one person did everything from the book keeping to repairs on the loom. So, are our larger manufacturers going backwards to the condition of the

pre-industrial workshop? And does this apparent retreat contain any possibility for restoring dignity to workers?

New working arrangements indeed pose broader challenges the workers to expand their influence beyond the point of production towards decisions over investment, marketing and environmental consequences.

One result should be greater pride in work and hence a securing of the quality needed if firms are to obtain repeat orders. That outcome has prospective benefits for our balance of payments. To succeed with exporting goods or providing services, Australian enterprise has to compete on quality rather than price. For the kinds of product we can expect to export, expensive skilled labour is cheaper than so-called cheap labour.

An ill-motivated and untrained workforce cannot produce quality-assured items. To secure repeat sales, each piece has to meet precise specifications, yet every method of operation has to be flexible enough to service the shifting variety of needs among purchasers. Lifelong retraining becomes an essential component in tomorrow's manufacture.

No technological lead now lasts longer than five years. Hence, Japanese managers are as worried about the continued quality of their products as we are over Australian ones. A new generation of Japan Rail's highspeed trains has experienced setting-in problems. The leading Japanese business newspaper carried an article last month under the heading, "Is Japan losing its craftsmanship?" after the latest bullet train broke down.

"Skills and knowledge that were once passed down from senior workers to newcomers are being lost."

That journalist had not identified the crucial problem if he was lamenting no more than the loss of particular skills. Welding techniques used on the first bullet trains 30 years ago would cause bigger breakdowns if applied today. The question is whether a certain habit of mind towards the quality of work is at risk. Are young workers taught to pay as much attention to detail as was once the case in factories and is still true in craft workshops?

At a folk arts township north of Tokyo. I visited one of two surviving wood-fired kilns where the ceramics are still turned by hand. A man in his early 40s was shaping a large bowl on a wheel. With a blade, he removed excess clay from the base. He knew when to stop cutting because the pitch of the noise made by the wheeling pot altered. I could hear the sound but not distinguish its variations. After 20 years, he was still an apprentice. What is being lost with automation is a willingness to attend to similar minute signs to listen for the silence.

Here is one "world best" practice, which could feed from craft workshop back to factory floor. In the rush towards the glorious future, the less spectacular, yet tangible, benefits of past attainments of craft will be discarded at our peril.

3388 RECOMMENDED READING: A Better Idea: by Donald E. Petersen (Houghton Mifflin, N.Y.). The author is the former C.E.O of Ford Motor Company. The 'story' is about the radical transformation of a company which resulted in the market share rising from 17 to 22 per cent. Petersen described as "the most successful boss since the original Henry in his prime" details what he did, how he did and why he did. The book is a book on The Practice of Management as also one on The Philosophy of Management - and Philosophy in the Indian (application) sense. The subtitle of the book reads "Redefining the Way Americans Work." When we read the book, we found that Indians do not work very differently - both have similar aspirations and both respond to similar approaches.

3389 TIME WITH CHILDREN: *Fathers used to have problems sparing time for their children. Now mothers too have - even the nonworking ones! To them all, this little article has a pragmatic message. (The author, Thomas R. Lee is a professor in the college of Family Life at Utah State University).*

You come home from work, exhausted as usual. You're greeted enthusiastically by your young child. You bend over, give your child a hug, and say "I love you."

You then start toward the other room to put down your things and get started on the next thing in your busy day. But, your child follows and says, "I don't want you to love me. I want you to play with me!"

Apparently, your expression of love was not what your child had in mind.

There are differences in the way people express love. Some of us are more task centered - we DO something for someone to show love. Others are more verbally oriented - we TELL others of our love. In general though, children spell love T-I-M-E. If you asked a young girl how she knows her daddy loves her, she might say "Because he took me to the park and pushed me in the swing." Or a young boy might say his mommy loves him because she took him on a picnic. To children, the currency of love is TIME.

There has been a lot of attention given to the idea of "quality" time. Quality time is important, but it doesn't always happen on schedule. There needs to be a lot of just hanging around time for quality to be there.

Here are some ideas on putting more time with your children into your schedule:

- * Make dinner a priority. As much as possible, avoid planning things over it. It provides a time to talk and to be in touch with each other.
- * Limit TV watching. The hours can disappear in front of the tube. Consider limiting yourself (not just the kids) to one or two hours a night.
- * Volunteer to coach your child's team or lead your child's club. That kind of commitment will ensure that you spend time together.

- * Choose exercise routines or other activities that include your child.
- * Make time together a priority. Write it in your day-planner. When someone else wants your time, say "I already have a commitment there." Don't leave your children to fit in when everyone else is done with you.
- * Spend some individual time with each child if you have more than one child. Ask them to list some things they would like to do with you, how much the activities would cost, and how long they would take. Rank them based on affordability, or interest, or feasibility, but choose something, schedule it and do it.

There's a saying that "The best thing you can spend on children is your time." What are the happiest memories you have about your childhood? Can you remember the things you got for Christmas, or do happy memories involve time with your family? Give your child the gift of your time.

3390 OVERSEAS INDIANS SHOW WAY TO HARMONY: *The following article by Joel Kotkin is from a recent issue of Wall Street Journal. We reproduce it here because of its topical and wider value.*

India's violent tumult has raised once again the question of its future in the post-Cold War world. With the failure of Nehruite socialism, India sorely needs not only capital and technical assistance, but a new kind of secular ideal that will inspire it to develop a competitive economy in the decade to come,

Like the overseas Chinese now transforming the mainland, the roughly 20 million expatriate Indians, up from a mere five million three decades ago, constitute a powerful force for the shift of their homeland from a socialist backwater to a strong, rapidly growing economy. These overseas Indians have performed well in commerce, technology and the professions in virtually every country where they have settled, even in xenophobic Japan.

In the United Kingdom, they have managed to scale the class barriers more quickly than virtually every other major ethnic group, including the Anglo-Saxons themselves; Indian and Pakistani males in Britain have a 60% higher rate of self-employment than their white counterparts and a 300% higher rate than other nonwhite immigrants. World-wide, according to New Jersey investment banker Prakash Shah, Indians have accumulated roughly \$100 billion in real estate, much of it in prime locations in California, Britain and the New York area.

In the U.S., the roughly one million Indians arguably constitute the best-educated of all Asian immigrant groups; in the 1980s alone, the number of Indian students studying in the U.S. quadrupled to more than 26,000, many of them in the sciences and engineering. These graduates have become particularly prominent in Silicon Valley, which has spawned more than 100 Indian-born millionaires, including founders of such key firms as Sun Microsystems.

These nearly 20 million overseas Indians--the Indian global tribe--seem to have largely overcome the intense ethnic and racial antipathies that divide their counterparts back home. "Personally we really have no problem with the Sikhs or Hindus," observes Mohammed Khokar, a Pakistani who runs a small trading firm in the grim British industrial city of Sheffield with his Sikh partner. "On the personal level, we get here to an area where most of the people are different and what gets us together - the food, the language, the way of dressing - is basically the same."

In contrast to the chaos and mayhem in places like Bombay, there have been few disturbances in such key diaspora communities as New York, San Francisco, London, Hong Kong or Singapore, where Muslims, Hindus and Sri Lankans often share common cultural resources, newspapers and political institutions.

"This business of breaking down in religious tribes is simply nonsense to most people here," explains Prakash Chandra, president of the 1000 member Silicon Valley Indian Professionals Association. Mr. Chandra points to firms such as Mylex Corp., a leading PC board manufacturer, whose CEO, Akram Chowdry, Pakistani Muslim, supervises a largely Hindu technical staff. Mylex's boards, largely designed in India, are manufactured by the usual multihued workforce common to San Jose. Like many immigrants from the subcontinent, Mr. Chowdry blames much of the current inter-ethnic strife on chronic economic mismanagement.

Mr. Chowdry sees India's two million strong community of engineers and scientists - the world's second largest community of English-speaking technologists as the subcontinent's equivalent of "oil," the raw material that could shape a bright future for the subcontinent. "If you can change the problems you have with the government, you'd have money there."

Mr. Chowdry, whose firm's backing comes largely from the Muslim Middle East, explained. "If the Indians have money, they'd start to forget these problems about Hindus or Muslims. They could dominate the computer industry."

Such entrepreneurs hope India will continue the economic reform process now under way. With the easing of investment and import restrictions, many leading figures in the Indian business diaspora - such as Gulu Lalvani of consumer electronics maker Binatone and the Hong Kong-based Harilela family have made major investments in India, including the setting up of new factories.

But even more important than capital and technology may be the attitudes toward ethnicity and business management that the expatriate Indians bring with them. After a decade working as an engineer in California, Anupam Saranwala returned home last year to take care of his aging parents and help establish a new factory for Silicon Valley Technologies, a start-up firm founded by Anil and Sucheta Kapuria, a San Jose-based husband-and-wife team bankrolled by the Harilelas and other leading Indian trading families.

At Silicon Valley Technology's new factory, rising amid the dust and squalor of Bhangel, a small village in rural Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Saranwala and his collaborators are developing not only new products, but a new cosmopolitan spirit among their employees. For one thing, he seeks to break down the traditional nationalist mentality of Indians. Instead, he has his Indian engineers and employees working closely with a Chinese manufacturing expert brought in from a Harilela backed firm in Hong Kong to teach them how to use the latest Japanese and American industrial processes.

"We can transfer the results-oriented culture of California to the time-oriented culture of India," he claims as he walks through the crowded, pre-industrial streets of Bhangel. "India has the people and the talent; what they need is the opportunity to perform. We know the Indians in America and elsewhere have done it. We know that model works. Then let India take off, inevitably, in its own direction."

Of course, the massive problems facing India with its huge impoverished population, its legacy of monumental misrule and corruption, make it easy to dismiss the likes of Mr. Saranwala as hopeless dreamers, pushing against centuries of social and cultural inertia.

Yet the recent history of other global tribes, notably the Chinese, has revealed the enormous possibilities for change unleashed by the experience of migration and the development of a truly global economy. With satellite dishes, telephones and jet aircraft accelerating the process, the distance between Silicon Valley and Bhangel can be telescoped in an unprecedented manner. Given the new opportunities for future transformations, even among the poorest and least cosmopolitan of peoples, India's revival, led by its wayward sons, could yet become a powerful reality.

3391 LAUGHING MATTER?

A bishop on his travels once visited Palestine and Rome. On his return, he was asked for comments. He said:

"In Palestine Muslims pray in the streets, whenever there's a call to prayer from the mosques. In crowded Rome, Romans pray whenever they have to cross a street."

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