

# research in brief

## **The Successful Manager**

This is an important book on developing management skills in business and government by a distinguished expert who has trained literally thousands of supervisory and managerial personnel. Van Dersal's new book gives us a basic short course for training managers that will serve with equal effectiveness in business schools, private industry, and government agencies.

Applying the same sort of excellent common-sense thinking that characterized his widely used book *The Successful Supervisor*, Van Dersal treats with intelligence and resourcefulness all the basic problems involved in acquiring and applying sound management techniques. Among the important subjects covered are organizations, career development, training systems, how to develop supervisors, the span of control, staff work, communications systems, reports, conferences, inspections, and more.

Van Dersal's chapter on "The New Knowledge" reviews the results of scientific research and findings in the management and business arena from 1960 to date. This chapter focuses on the major findings of management and supervisory research that can be applied to on-the-job situations. Specific research results are categorized into: (1) expectations, (2) motivation, (3) participation, (4) improving work, and (5) communications.

Van Dersal discusses some specific case studies contrasting American and Japanese managerial systems. He notes that while employee productivity in the United States has increased by only 3.3%, productivity for Japanese workers has increased by 10.7%. He also points out that analysis of the managerial approach points to a much greater use in Japan of the principle of participation, of greatly improved communications, virtual elimination of authority, and much greater concern for the individual employee. He says these basic management principles are what are social scientists and psychologists have been telling us for many years.

Van Dersal brings in the comfortable, anecdotal approach to his writing. The book's a lively, good-humored manual of responsive and productive management practice.

"The Successful Manager." William R. Van Dersal. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

*Thomas Trail*