

# tools of the trade

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**New Time Management Methods** *New Time Management Methods for You and Your Staff.* R. Alec MacKenzie. Chicago: The Dartnell Corporation, 1975. 313 pp. \$50.

Here's an excellent "how-to" manual to improve time effectiveness. More than 100 time wasters are identified and strategies to control or eliminate them are suggested.

The notebook introduces tools for assessing managerial effectiveness, meeting productivity, and handling delegation. Emphasis is given learning where time goes, boss-secretary teamwork, and allocating time to accomplish priorities. Distinctive sections on time management in education and in the home are included.

MacKenzie writes well and does a good job of blending theory with practical suggestions. The notebook contains a number of work sheets, check lists, and suggested activities.

The cost may be prohibitive for county purchase, but regional offices or the state staff development unit may want to consider this helpful resource.

**Executive Seminars in Sound** *Executive Seminars in Sound. Washington, D.C.: Chamber of Commerce of the United States, 1971. 8 audio cassettes. \$85.*

*(The content of "Executive Seminars in Sound" was adapted from management material appearing in Nation's Business. Editorial coordinator for the series is Guy L. Yolton of Yolton Associates, Washington, D.C.; cassettes are produced by Magnetix, Inc., Winter Garden, Florida.)*

"Executive Seminars in Sound" is a series of eight cassettes focusing on management skills, organizational problems, and the managerial role. Each cassette is a unit unto itself so tapes

can be played in order of interest or critical need.

The cassettes aren't a series of management lectures. They're dialogues or case studies in which people are confronting management problems in work situations. From time to time a narrator intersperses comments concerning what went wrong and why and suggests what the listener can do when facing a similar dilemma.

Tapes develop the following topics:

1. How to get your ideas across.
2. Make the most of your time.
3. Your role as a decision maker.
4. *Guide to better people management.*
5. *Mastering the art of delegating.*
6. Organizing your plans and planning your organizations.
7. Strategies of moving ahead.
8. How to live with your own success.

This series of cassettes could provide some basic management skill training for those interested in self-directed learning projects or those who have multicounty or district assignments and spend lots of time traveling.

**Staffing for  
Strength**

*Staffing for Strength. Rockville, Maryland: BNA Films. Film (color), 25 minutes. \$75 for three-day rental. \$430 purchase.*

Many consider this the most important film in Peter Drucker's five-part film series, *The Effective Executive*. Drucker defines an executive as "any member of the organization who makes decisions that materially affect the capacity of the organization to perform and obtain results." This definition includes most Extension professionals at county, district, and state levels. Supervisors and personnel officers will find it particularly interesting.

"Staffing for Strength" makes the following suggestions for maximizing human resources:

1. Focus on what workers *can do*, not on what they can't do.
2. It never pays to kick a worker upstairs to a bigger job if he/she isn't performing well at present.
3. Discard the myth that says you can't pay a scientist or other professional worker more than his/her manager.
4. Don't judge a worker by whether or not you like him/her personally; judge by how well he/she performs.
5. In acting within the scope of your authority, always ask yourself, "What information must I give my

associates and my boss so they can be effective in their jobs?"

6. If you're a manager, don't play assistant to every one of your subordinates; instead ask, "What can I do? What is *my* strength? How can it best be used?"

Other films in this series are: "Managing Time," "What Can I Contribute?" "Focus on Tomorrow," and "Effective Decisions." The series is based on Peter Drucker's three books, published by Harper and Row: *The Effective Executive*, *Managing for Results*, and the *Practice of Management*.

**That's Not My Job** *That's Not My Job. Beverly Hills, California: Round Table Films, Inc. Film (color), 26 minutes. \$55 rental/week. \$325 purchase.*

This film focuses on the importance of teamwork and shows how cooperation can be affected by the supervisor's ability to define employee jobs so that "overlap zones" are understood.

The film uses a case study to point up the problems that arise when roles conflict or are ambiguous. It compares the cooperation of a volunteer fire fighting unit with that needed in most jobs.

The film could be used in orienting new workers, as a training film for supervisors, or as a media intervention to improve staff teamwork.

**Employment Interviewer** *Be a Better Employment Interviewer. Arthur R. Pell. Hunting, New York: Personnel Publications, 1977-78 Edition. 72 pp. \$5.95 (paper).*

Pell's guide for the screening interview is a handy book for anyone who has to interview prospective employees. The book includes information on how to evaluate a resume, establish rapport with an interviewee, control the interview, handle problem applicants, check references, avoid legal problems in interviews, and conduct telephone interviews.

Questions you shouldn't ask, questions you should ask and how to ask them, and special considerations to keep in mind when interviewing women and minority persons are also covered.

This expanded and updated version of *Be a Better Employment Interviewer* includes new material on: the how and why of keeping interview records, hiring the physically handicapped and mentally retarded, new legal requirements,

sources of minority personnel, and job-related questions on 15 more job categories.

The following four reviews have been prepared by Gregory Dela Cruz, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University. Dela Cruz has been a consultant for "Management Education: A Three Phase Approach," an ES-USDA funded project at Michigan State University.

**MBO for Nonprofit Organizations** *MBO for Nonprofit Organizations. Dale D. McConkey. New York: American Management Association, 1975. 223 pp. \$12.95.*

Managerial effectiveness is a demand not reserved exclusively for profit-oriented organizations. McConkey predicts that a major breakthrough in the application of effective managerial practices will occur in the nonprofit sector. Management of nonprofit organizations has no special rights to practice ineffectiveness. Nonprofit organizations aren't generally unique. Like profit-making organizations, they too have a mission to perform, must set and achieve goals and objectives, coordinate the efforts of key personnel, evaluate performance, and must be accountable for results.

How can managers of nonprofit organizations achieve performance improvements in their own organization? McConkey suggests the consideration of management by objectives (MBO). "Management" is the key word, McConkey advises, not "objectives." When "objectives" are overemphasized, MBO typically degenerates into an unmeaningful, annoying program of list writing.

McConkey explains how MBO as a system of management can be applied to nonprofit organizations and provides several case studies.

Overall, the book is well-written in understandable form. It fills the real need of providing nonprofit managers with meaningful guidance on how they can proceed in bringing about improved managerial effectiveness. McConkey's contention is persuasive.

The oft-heard disclaimer that "my organization is unique" can no longer be tolerated as an excuse for the practice of managerial incompetency in nonprofit organizations.

**Team Building** *Team Building: Issues and Alternatives. William G. Dyer. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1977. \$4.95.*

Teamwork, team building, and team development are currently popular terms within the lexicon of organizational

development specialists. This book is written for the manager interested in the what, how to, and why of team building. It's organized into five parts.

In part one, the author points out the varied nature of teams, discusses the emergence of the team concept in management, and highlights the rising popularity of team development programs.

Part two focuses on the team development process. The process begins with a systematic needs assessment for a team development program, data gathering, problem diagnosis, and action planning as preparatory steps. Action taking and evaluation comprise the follow-up activities. Consultant roles and various team development design options are also discussed.

Part three describes some special circumstances where team building efforts are appropriate. Such instances include: the creation of a new team (that is, committees formed for a specific task), when role expectations are unclear or in conflict, when the inability to manage agreement and disagreement results in organization dysfunction, and when a team has become complacent, uncreative, and unaggressive. These special circumstances call for different types of team development activity.

Part four deals with strategies designed to encourage teamwork between units.

In part five, some roadblocks and pitfalls involved in starting up team building efforts are discussed.

This book is pragmatic. Teamwork is seen as one alternative to enhance job performance. Dyer's approach can help practitioners determine the relevancy of teamwork and assess the appropriateness of the various kinds of team building programs offered by behavioral scientists and consultants.

**Analyzing Performance Problems** *Analyzing Performance Problems or "You Really Oughta Wanna."* Robert F. Mager and Peter Pipe. Belmont, Calif.: Lear Siegler, Inc./Fearon Publishers, 1973. 111 pp. \$2.75.

Human performance problems involve differences between what people actually do and what others want them to do. Although people problems have many causes and are thus resolved by different methods, the typical inclination is to apply pet solutions such as training, exhorting workers that they really should want to perform better, or terminating employment. Depending on luck, sometimes this haphazard way of dealing with performance problems works. But most of the time, it doesn't—and the mismatch between problems and solutions can be quite costly.

This book stresses the importance of properly matching people problems and solutions and provides a step-by-step procedure on how to handle performance discrepancies. Along each step of the procedure, diagnostic questions are provided together with a quick reference check list identifying the probable correct solution.

The first step is to analyze the nature, the importance, and the causes of performance discrepancies. A performance discrepancy is the difference between actual performance and desired performance. If the performance discrepancy is important enough to warrant further analysis, the next step involves determining the cause of the discrepancy.

In this pivotal step, one must decide whether the performance discrepancy is due to a skill deficiency or whether the solution lies in a change of conditions or the consequences surrounding the desired performance. In isolating these two different sets of causes, one must ask the question: "Could the focal person perform as desired if his/her life depended on it?" If the answer is "no," then the remedy lies in getting rid of a skill deficiency.

Given the identification of genuine skill deficiency, the authors caution that it's premature to assume that a formal training program is needed. Further diagnosis is needed to determine the form of the lack of skill. One must also determine if there's a simpler and less expensive way of developing skills and knowledge before resorting to an elaborate, expensive, training program.

In addition to determining whether a person has what it takes to do a job correctly, it's also useful to determine whether there has been a proper match between the person and the mental and motivational aspects of the job itself. A realistic matching of people and jobs, for example, can avoid the problems of boredom and lack of challenge that lead to performance discrepancies. Thus, training, transferring, or firing people isn't always a straightforward solution and should be preceded by careful diagnosis.

If the answer to the pivotal question: "Could the focal person perform as desired if his/her life depended on it?" is "yes," then a different class of solutions should be considered. This class of solutions, called performance management, essentially involves making desired performance more attractive, significant, desirable, and easier to do from the performer's viewpoint.

There are four things to look for when a person knows how to perform as desired, but isn't doing so and ought to: (1) it's punishing to perform as desired, (2) it's rewarding not

to perform as desired, (3) it doesn't matter one way or the other, and (4) there are obstacles to desired performance.

Given what looks like an appropriate remedy to a performance discrepancy, diagnosis still remains unfinished. One must now consider whether the remedial treatment is practical and worthwhile. Solutions may outstrip resources, be politically unfeasible, or create more problems than they solve. Thus, once a solution is found, it's worthwhile to consider whether the remedy is one most likely to yield greater benefits for the amount of time, energy, money, and other resources invested.

This is an excellent book and is highly recommended as a "must" for one's personal library. Lucid examples accompany each step of the authors' trouble-shooting procedure. Mager and Pipe's method of diagnosis can lead to the reduction of unnecessary formal training problems and embarrassment arising from the implementation of solutions that create more headaches than they resolve.

**Analyzing  
Problems and  
Making Decisions**

*Executive Problem Analysis and Decision Making.* Charles H. Kepner and Charles B. Tregoe. Princeton, New Jersey: Kepner and Tregoe, Inc., 1973. 112 pp. No price given.

This book deals with an important managerial function: analyzing problems and making decisions. The authors provide a practical, down-to-earth, step-by-step approach. Their model calls for distinguishing three processes: problem analysis, decision analysis, and potential problem analysis.

*Problem analysis* involves an eight-step procedure. The first step is identifying the problem. The second and third steps involve specifying the deviation and defining the boundaries of the trouble in terms of what the problem is, where it is located, when the problem started, and the size or magnitude of the problem. Steps four through eight require examining distinctions between what the problem is and is not, looking for change which could have produced the deviation, and verifying probable cause-and-effect relationships.

While problem analysis deals with the explanation of past events, *decision analysis* is concerned with the process of determining what future events should be. This is a seven-step process. The first step is stating the decision statement in a way that provides focus, direction, and guidance of data gathering. The second and third steps involve specifying the attributes of the ideal situation and classifying and weighing

criteria into "musts" and "wants" categories. The fourth and fifth steps deal with generating alternatives and comparing them against the "musts" and "wants" criteria. The sixth step involves analyzing each alternative according to seriousness and probability of adverse consequences if the choice were implemented. The seventh step is choosing the preferred alternative.

*Potential problem analysis* is a process designed to minimize surprise and regret following the implementation of a decision. This process requires some imagination. The decision maker must try to visualize events as they would probably occur assuming the decision has been implemented. During this visualization, attention is focused on identifying important, probable, threatening problems that can accompany the solution. Once such problems have been identified, one can develop contingency and preventive action plans. Contingency action plans assume that potential problems will, in fact, occur. They're designed to contain or soften adverse effects. Preventative action plans are aimed at reducing the likelihood that problems will materialize. They reduce the chance that adverse, foreseeable effects might, in fact, come about.

The authors also discuss how to conduct *situation appraisal* . . . determining that situations should be worked on, separating the issues, setting priorities, and judging which of the three analyses to apply. They also demonstrate how problem analysis may be used to handle people problems. The appendix contains a sales pitch on how managers stand to benefit by enrolling in Kepner and Tregoe courses.

This book doesn't pretend to be a scholarly one concerned with theory and research on problem solving and decision making. Yet managers can benefit from the authors' pragmatic approach. They should be commended for their efforts in helping managers solve problems and make effective decisions. This book isn't readily available in bookstores and libraries. It can be obtained by enrolling in a Kepner-Tregoe course. As an alternative, readers may refer to the 1965 Kepner-Tregoe book entitled *The Rational Manager*.