

Several months ago the president of a medium-sized company asked me to help him make an important decision. This executive had built the business by himself and had been functioning as sales manager. Now, with seven salesmen employed, he decided his next step was to promote one of his salesmen to the job of sales manager. He narrowed the choice down to three, all of whom were about equal in experience and sales performance.

My assignment was to spend one day in the field with each man and then report my views on which fellow seemed to be best qualified to lead the group. Each man was told that a consultant would visit him to discuss the overall marketing program. For obvious reasons, they were not told the specific purpose of my visit.

Two of the men reacted pretty much the same way. Both were uncomfortable with me. They seemed to sense that I was there to "change things." Each of these men was a real defender of the status quo. Both approved of the way everything was being done. I raised questions about how the territories were laid out, the compensation program, the sales promotional material—every facet of the marketing effort. But on all points, the response was always "Everything is okay." On specific points these two men explained why the present way couldn't and shouldn't be changed. Summed up, both men wanted the status quo to remain the status quo. One of them said to me as he dropped me by my hotel, "I don't know exactly why you spent the day with me, but tell Mr. M. for me that everything is okay as is. Don't go refiguring anything."

The third man was wonderfully different. He was pleased with the company and proud of its growth. But he was not wholly content. He wanted improvements. All day this third