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What do Managers do?

Understanding Organisations

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1 The Nature of Managerial Work

1.1 Introduction

Many people call themselves managers. It looks good on a business card and it can impress the neighbours. But what is a manager? What does he or she actually do? Why are they usually paid more than lesser mortals and what challenges and opportunities do they face as part of the management structure. Sometimes, managers have developed over the years with the organisation, sometimes they are brought in especially because they have specific knowledge of a certain skill which the organisation is lacking.

In this chapter we will examine the role of the manager, briefly explore the development of the role and the skills and see how far these traditional views colour today's managers. Since the practice has taken several centuries to develop, it stands to reason that only some of the development process may be relevant to today's world. Which parts might be most relevant and how can we project into the future which parts could be even more relevant for the organisation of tomorrow? Management will continue to evolve, based on the lesson of the past; which of those lessons will be most useful in years to come?

1.2 What managers do

So, what do managers actually do? And how has this role – or roles – evolved over the years? Has it always been as it is now or were there other phases of managerial activity which are now less popular than they used to be?

Management has, apparently, changed a lot over the years. In practice however, on closer examination, most of the activities have always been broadly similar with trends in management-speak giving them differing names as management has developed as an art.

But this does not mean that it is useless to retrace the steps of former practitioners and thinkers about management.

To start at the very beginning would be a fairly ruthless history lesson. There is evidence for example that the Roman Republic had a fairly well-developed crisis management strategy in place around 240 BC – and the Ancient Greeks could probably teach us a thing or two about both management and its philosophies even today.

However, there is a point beyond which tracing the development of management is not sensible – and the ancient world seems to be rather too long ago to include here in any detail. Any good history book will tell us as much as we really need to know about this early form of management – JP Bury's History of the Roman Empire is probably as good a place to start as any other. So we will come up to date rather more, although we will still start in the Fifteenth century.

1.3 Machiavelli

More modern management trends have their origins about 500 years ago in Renaissance Italy. The best place to start is with a man to whom history has been particularly cruel – Machiavelli. He flourished around the end of the fifteenth century, being Secretary to the Florentine Republic from 1496–1512; as such, he was one of the first career civil servants and, although his life is not as well documented as we would like, he has left behind one of the great political/ managerial works of all time entitled "The Prince".

The Prince of the title was one Cesare Borgia – a man it did not pay to take lightly in late fifteenth century Italy. He was the quintessence of Renaissance princes – hugely powerful, wealthy, artistic and utterly ruthless. He built a formidable principality in central Italy in just a few years, forming a counterbalance to the powerful Florentine Republic.

While building this principality it was certainly no handicap that Borgia's father happened to be the Pope, Alexander VI. To Cesare's undoubted military brilliance was added the very real threat of excommunication by his father to any who withstood him. Machiavelli, undaunted, refused to see this as some kind of divine treaty and accorded his hero with very earthy if unusual talent.

In "The Prince" Machiavelli outlined the kind of qualities a great leader needed to succeed in those opportunistic days. And they are nearly all qualities which a strong manager needs to master in the early days of the 21st century just as much as in the first days of the sixteenth century. Foremost was a management principle that many modern managers must wish they had – cohesive organisation.

In any organisation, cohesion can be something of a mirage. What Borgia tried to achieve was a structure which suited the times, the turbulent circumstances and the objectives of his duchy. Although an autocrat, he appointed advisers for distinct areas – such as law – in much the same way as a large corporate organisation would do today.

He bound to himself men of talent whose futures were inextricably intertwined with his own. Some were condottieri – military leaders in charge of companies or regiments of soldiers, usually mercenaries. Others were experts on aspects of life – such as law, the arts, banking and finance, mercantile trading and the rapidly developing sciences – which enhanced his possessions and made him not only wealthy but also the natural leader of central Italy.

What Machiavelli perceived as one of Borgia's great strengths was his ability to bind people to him and his cause. It is one thing to capture a country by force of arms but quite another to rule it as a settled state – just look at Iraq today. Borgia accepted that force alone was not enough and perfected the ability of binding to him statesmen, leaders and diplomats who realised where their own self-interest lay and served him accordingly.

There is an apt analogy with India at the height of the Raj. For most of the Nineteenth century, around 80 million Indians were ruled by about 3,500 British civil and military officials. Clearly, the British did not carry out this government by force of arms; the odds were simply too great, but they did engage with the population, listen to any grievances and attempt to redress any obvious social, economic or political disadvantage. They were echoing Borgia's policies of 400 years earlier – and he, in turn was echoing the great secrets of success of the Roman Empire 1,000 years before him. So, management really does go back that far.

Nor was this all that Machiavelli attributed to Borgia. A prince, according to Machiavelli, needed to show strength when necessary because people appreciate and usually follow a firm lead. Moreover, in the tumultuous world of Renaissance Italy, there were many intrigues attempting to unseat unwary rulers. Some of the methods employed were devious and subtle. So Borgia developed a sophisticated system of intelligence, gained through paid informers, and had the knack of knowing when to be firm and when to be sympathetic.

Many modern day leaders – in business as well as in politics – either have, or would benefit from, such a knack. For example, although many people disliked Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister on the 1980s, equally many admired her strength of purpose; if she said that something would happen, it did. Compare that to the bewildering number of costly and indecisive U-turns performed by the Blair and Brown administrations.

Above all, Borgia was, according to Machiavelli, a true leader and history bears him out on this point. To rise above the general level of other petty dukes and princelings would not have been easy in his time, even with the support of the Pope. We can take some of Machiavelli's tributes to Borgia with a pinch of salt – he had much to lose by alienating the most powerful man in Italy and had already been imprisoned and tortured once in his life so was probably not keen to repeat the experience – but, even allowing for this and using other historical sources, Borgia seems to have been a genuinely charismatic man.

So, Machiavelli gave us leadership, strength and the ability to create power axes, or groups of self-interested supporters. There are many parallels in the modern world for this approach, not only in the public sector but in private business management as well.

Stop and Think

Look at the organisation for which you work – public, private or voluntary sector – and you will probably see evidence of this without having to look too hard. What kind of evidence do you see? How does it manifest itself in day to day activities? How does the head of your organisation seem to build on a power base? Does he or she surround himself/herself with a small group of powerful senior managers? If so do they show respect for their leader?

But Machiavelli lived about 500 years ago. Human nature might not have changed very much but managerial circumstances certainly have. And our next innovators bring us nearer to our own time. Bolton and Watt are central names in the Industrial Revolution of the late Eighteenth century.

Boulton and Watt

In 1800 Boulton and Watt constructed a factory to build the great new invention – the steam engine. By the standards of the day – and even now – steam engines are complicated things with a large number of components having to be added at each stage of the manufacturing process. In 1800 this was a totally new concept in industrial engineering and there were no factories capable of handling such a complex idea. Consequently, Boulton and Watt (he who had earlier invented the steam kettle) had to design their new factory from scratch.

They broke all the rules of the day by laying out the factory floor in a large oval shape and designing an assembly track to work all the way round in concentric loops so that the engine could process along the oval track, gaining parts and functions as it went. Thus was born the first evidence of the industrial volume manufacturing principle in which finished engineering products assumed a shape and form as they processed along an assembly track. Products such as cars are still largely made in that way today. This flow of work was to be of inestimable value to virtually all the industrialists who followed Boulton and Watt.

But they achieved more than this. By 1800, the concept of wages in return for work was not well developed. Britain had been a predominantly agrarian society for at least 2,000 years and this was reflected in the way that people were rewarded for work. Much of the reward was barter based – so that people received goods in exchange for labour. Farm workers (and by far the majority of the population worked on farms or in related agricultural industries) had traditionally received a small piece of land on which they could grow their own crops or feed their own livestock. Agricultural produce – meat, eggs, fish, vegetables, fruit and so on – were often given in part exchange to ensure that those who were lacking in these commodities had the chance to redress the balance of their diets. Some of the dues owing to labourers in those still-feudal days was in the form of tallow and candles, to enable people to light their homes, especially during the winter. Fear of the night and darkness was that strong!

Boulton and Watt were aware that they could not compete with this type of agricultural bartering; they were engineers, not farmers. So they introduced the concept of wages -each worker was given a fixed sum of money in exchange for his work so that he could buy whatever he felt he and his family needed, rather than accept produce which might not have been necessary. Jobs were graded – fairly roughly compared to now – so that different grades earned different wages accordingly. And the wage system was born.

A few further refinements followed. Clearly, some workers were worth more than others depending on what kind of job they did and how quickly and efficiently they worked. So, the idea of piece work was introduced – that is every worker was paid for how much he had done that day or that week. Piece work became the foundation of manufacturing wages throughout the world and was only phased out of practice during the 1980s in the UK. In many other parts of the world, especially in Asia, it is still the predominant method of paying a workforce.

Finally, Boulton and Watt also started to keep proper written records of what the factory had done, what worked best and how they could repeat the process successfully. Strange as it may seem, this was the first time that an industrial organisation had been properly recorded and, as we would say now, audited. Without this tracking of successes and failures, the future of manufacturing and industry in general would have been much slower and less productive.

Test yourself

Which key inventions and developments of both Machiavelli and Boulton ad Watt are still in practice today somewhere in the world? Why do you think nobody has seen fit to change this way of working?

1.4 Taylor

To come up to more recent times, the next thinker to consider is F.W. Taylor. He was an American, working around the turn of the Twentieth Century and notable for helping Henry Ford. He was the first to consciously try to make management a scientific art form and he did it with remarkable success mainly through three major innovations. These were:-

*An emphasis on productivity. He observed what the best workers did and how they did it and then tried to roll this process out to all other workers in the factory.

- Selection and training; it followed from productivity that some people could work faster and better than others, so Taylor was the first to try to ensure that only the best workers were recruited in the first place. Partly this was about skills but mainly about attitude. He maintained that skills could be learned but that attitude was instinctive and inherent in individuals. However, training was also high on his agenda so that he could extract the best efforts from workers.

- Job analysis. Although we take this for granted now, Taylor was the inventor of the job analysis process. He monitored each worker – rather like a time and motion study – noting the difficulties faced and also the method used to overcome them. In this way he built up a picture of how most people could be trained to become proficient and productive workers.

The nett result of all Taylor's work was impressive. At the time, (about 1906) Ford was making the Model T motor car – the first mass produced car in the world. Taylor looked initially at the time it took to machine a chassis for this car and managed to reduce the time needed from 13 man hours to just four man hours.

The consequences of this were enormous. For the first time, a car could be built at such a relatively low cost that many more people could afford to buy it. His work democratised the car industry. Shortly afterwards, Ford introduced a car selling at just £100 to the UK. Vehicles which had previously been purely the preserve of the rich were now affordable by almost anyone because they could be manufactured so cheaply.

Taylor further developed his thinking into what he called the Traditional Framework. In 1911, he wrote that there were four key stages to success in manufacturing:-

1. Develop a science for each element of a man's work which replaces the old rule of thumbs method. In other words, apply similar standards to all work and ensure that they are adhered to.
2. Scientifically select, then train and develop the workman. In the past he had chosen his own work and trained himself as best he could. Here, then is the beginning of the current Learning and Development movement.
3. "Heartily (– his words) cooperate" with the men so as to ensure that all work is done in accordance with the principles which have been developed. Quite how managers "heartily cooperate" these days is a matter of intriguing speculation
4. There is an almost equal division of work and responsibility between the management and the workmen. The management must take over all work for which they are better fitted than the workmen who in the past have been given most of that work and take fuller responsibility for it.

So here, rather quaintly put, is the birth of managerial responsibility. Strange though it might seem this was the first time – 100 years ago – that managers had been responsible for the work that went on in their factories. The trend has continued to this day.

Stop and Think

What does your manager do that is reminiscent of Taylor? Does he/she portion out the work fairly so that everyone has a share? Does he/she take responsibility for the successful completion of the work even though other people are doing the majority of it?

1.5 Fayol

Henri Fayol was a Frenchman who wrote a book entitled "General and Industrial Administration" which was published in 1916. The immediate contradiction in this is that, in 1916, the invading German army was only about 40 miles away from Paris – surely Fayol had something better to do?

However, he apparently did not and his book has become a model for most of the managerial administration that followed in the 20th century. In it he outlined what became known as the Traditional Framework of management which consisted mainly of five key points:-

1. Planning – predicting what will happen in the future and devising courses of action to meet that situation
2. Organising – mobilizing materials and resources by allocating separate tasks to departments units and individuals

3. Coordinating – ensuring that activities and resources are working effectively towards the overall goals
4. Commanding – what we would now call directing, providing direction to employees
5. Controlling – monitoring progress to ensure that plans are being carried out properly.

It seems fairly obvious that all these activities interconnect and that achieving one while ignoring the others is likely to be counterproductive. Nevertheless, Fayol's work has lasted for over a century and has laid the foundation of much of the routine managerial process that is now seen in many organisations.

1.6 Luther Gullick

Gullick took Fayol as his basis 20 years later and, in 1937, redeveloped Fayol's thoughts into a newer form which he called POSDCORB. While not exactly tripping off the tongue, this acronym did, at least, gain some lasting weight with management thinkers and has been relentlessly regurgitated by many of them ever since. In essence he amended Fayol to read:-

Planning
Organising
Staffing – a newer view of the human resource needed to carry out the job and one on which HR managers frequently fasten as giving legitimacy to their demands to be strategically involved with the organisation's policy making
Directing
Coordinating
Reporting – on progress achieved an warning of problems encountered
Budgeting – so that jobs are achieved within a specified financial limit

While the last two are also new, they do not require much explanation to anyone who has ever worked in a managerial or administrative role

Test yourself

How are the innovations of Fayol and Gullick applied today? If they were reincarnated now would they still recognise the developments they pioneered?

1.7 Peters and Waterman

To come up to date – nearly – we need to review the work of two of the world's more prominent managerial analysts – Peters and Waterman. In 1982, they created a list of the top 43 companies in the world – generally accepted as the most successful 43 companies at that time – and analysed what, if anything they had in common. It was at once a hugely successful and yet very simple idea.

Unsurprisingly, they concluded that there was no magic potion or spell to create success where none had existed before. Instead, they advocated two fairly basic maxims that companies could observe.:-

First, be brilliant at the basics of what you do – because, probably competitors are not going to be quite as brilliant and

Second, work hard at the fundamentals of management, however it is organised in your organisation. By doing so continuously you almost can't help but improve.

Two very simple ideas – deceptively so. But two ideas that more organisations could do well to embrace if they want to maximise their success.

1.8 Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell

Shortly after Peters and Waterman completed their survey, a further development on the role of the manager was suggested by Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell, which acts as a summary of most of the key roles managers have to play. They called this simply "Eleven Qualities of a Successful Manager" and it is a fair guide to the basics. These are:-

1. Command of basic facts (usually of management and the sector in which the organisation operates) – without this, one cannot be a manager
2. Relevant professional knowledge – ditto
3. Continuing sensitivity to events – and the ability to know when to act and when to ignore an event.
4. Analytical problem solving, decision/judgement making skills – which is what most employees believe a manager should have anyway
5. Social skills and abilities – in virtually any circumstances
6. Emotional resilience – probably the hardest aspect to master is being able to bounce back after a setback. All careers have setbacks and the measure of how good a manager is can often be quickly and successfully he/she re-emerges as a key player
7. Proactivity – responding purposefully to events, or, better still anticipating them and taking action before they even happen
8. Creativity – can be taught but probably only with a creative spark already present
9. Mental agility – is very similar to creativity; most experts agree that some kind of talent is needed before it can be developed. Very rarely, if ever, can it be instilled from scratch.
10. Balanced learning habits and skills – can be acquired
11. Self-knowledge – can also be acquired, often as circumstances provoke it.

This is as near to a definitive managerial job description as we are likely to get for some time. The full version and a number of interesting exercises in aspects such as self awareness can be found in their seminal book "A Manager's Guide to Self Development" which is well worth a read.

A final summary of the planning area – one of the most important in any manager's working life – can be quoted as a conclusion to this brief survey. It sets out the key stages in any planning process.:-

- SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Agreed, Realistic/Reaching, Timed) Objectives in a practical timescale
- Activity analysis – what to do to achieve the objectives
- Forecasts of workload
- Scheduling tasks
- Resourcing – people, money equipment, materials
- Procedure (or Strategic) planning – how to do it
- Targets and standards of performance
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures – what could we improve for next time?

2 Personal Management Competencies

2.1 Introduction

Many managers find that, at some stage in their careers, they wish they knew a bit more about a particular skill. It might be that they are having a difficult time with a subordinate who is proving troublesome to manage and they would like to know the secrets of good delegation.

Or they might find that they never seem to have time to do anything properly or to spend more time with their families, in which case time management could be useful to them.

Equally, an opportunity might arise to give a presentation that might, if it's good enough, convince a major client to retain their services, in which case the manager might wish he/she was a little more polished in front of an audience.

So, in this chapter we will cast an eye over these skills – delegation, time management and presentation skills. Even if a manager is already capable in some of these areas, he/she can always improve; they are skills at which we can all, always, improve. The principles are not hard, the application to a given job might be harder but, once mastered, most of these skills will remain for life.

So, we will consider, in order:-

- Delegation to colleagues
- Time management
- Presentation and public speaking skills

2.2 Delegation

There are often objections among managers, especially junior and middle managers, to delegating work to others. One of the most common complaints is that they "haven't got time" and, "by the time they have explained what has to be done, they could have done the job themselves." This is, of course, nonsense. Where would Virgin be now if Sir Richard Branson had never delegated anything? Probably still being run from a public phone box in South London. All managers have to delegate and to do that, they need to know when to let go and when to intervene.

So, why would managers delegate? There are perhaps four main reasons:-

1. You have more work then you can effectively do yourself in the time available – probably the most common reason.
2. You cannot make enough time for your priority tasks
3. You believe that the task can be done adequately – or better – by somebody else, especially someone who is paid less and, so, saves the organisation money.
4. You want to develop an individual's skills, competencies and confidence as well as empowering that person to achieve things without referring back to you all the time.

It seems simple put like that. The snag is that many managers don't think through this process logically and prefer to carry on trying to do everything themselves and, often, digging an early grave. So, how do managers decide what they can delegate? There is a fairly simple format for this as well. Managers can delegate:-

- Tasks that they don't have to do themselves
- Tasks which will develop others
- Authority to do the task
- Tasks which somebody else could do as well as or even better than they could
- Resources to achieve the task
- Information to achieve the task
- But, never, responsibility for the task, if it goes wrong it is still the manager's fault and the buck stops there.

So, there is probably far more scope for most managers to delegate than they often think there is. Keeping tasks and knowledge close to one's chest can often be a mistake in management. Apart, from anything else how is the job going to get done if anything happens to that manager?

Stop and Think

Do all the managers that you know delegate as often as they could or should do? If not, why do you think this is?

Delegation is, therefore, best approached as a key managerial duty, rather than one which will offload a good deal of tedious work on to somebody else. That is not on. Managers cannot just dump the drudgery and low-interest level work on to a subordinate and expect that person to be happy or properly motivated in a job. Yet some try to, unfairly and, usually, with disastrous results.

Effective delegation, therefore, requires an agreement between the manager who is doing the delegating and the person to whom the task is being delegated. Without such an agreement, (normally negotiated rather than imposed), the process is likely to be both unworkable and unpleasant. Thus, the parties involved, have to agree on:-

- The nature and scope of the task involved
- The exact results to be achieved
- The timescale by which they need to be achieved
- The method which will be used for evaluating the performance – in other words, what success will look like
- The nature and extent of the authority needed to enable the task to be successfully completed.

Once these parameters have been established, there is no reason why the task cannot be taken ahead and successfully completed. But one thing the delegating manager cannot do is sit in the back seat and try to drive the car. Once delegated, he/she has to leave the person to whom it is delegated well alone to get on with the job without undue interference. Back seat drivers have no place in successful management.

There is even a case for allowing people to make mistakes, provided they will not be too damaging to the organisation. Only by making mistakes will some people learn. It is sometimes better to allow the odd error than to jump in as soon as it is seen coming to avoid it. Jumping in will often destroy a person's belief in the manager as someone who will not leave well alone.

There is a good seven point plan which many managers find useful when delegating:-

1. Ask, "Should I be doing this job?"
2. Plan thoroughly before delegating
3. Identify the right person(s) – someone with most of the required skills, with the time to do the job and with the interest to do the job.
4. Establish appropriate reporting links, responsibility and authority
5. Delegate and brief in full, without holding back any important information
6. Set progress reviews at reasonable times and also set a series of completion targets and dates
7. Praise good work in public or semi-public at least three times; deliver a reprimand in private only once. Many people do not at first realise that it is they who is being praised so often the statement needs to be repeated so that it can sink in.

Stop and Think

When someone has delegated a task to you, have they left you alone to get on with it?
If they have interfered, what was your reaction?

Finally, a good question to ask at convenient junctures – weekly, monthly or as a new responsibility appears on the horizon – is "Can I delegate more?" Very often, the answer is in the affirmative, provided the manager keeps an open mind.

The questioning process could be something like this:-

- Is there someone who could the task better than me? Am I – and is the organisation – really benefiting from the expertise of other people in the office?
- Is there someone who could do the task just as well as me, albeit in a different way?
- Could the task be done by someone who is paid less than me, thus saving money for the organisation?
- If I can't do it today – or soon – could somebody else do it more quickly than I could?
- Would somebody else's personal development benefit from being able to do this task? Could it form part of their development programme?

2.3 Delegating upwards

Finally, delegation does not just flow downwards; it can also be leveraged upwards. Without wishing to "boss the boss" there are ways of demonstrating that delegation can be successful at many levels. Delegating upwards is not as difficult as it might sound, even with an autocratic boss.

But it needs to be handled carefully, even discreetly. There are a few stages which might help the process:-

- agree your working relationships; this will demonstrate how far you can go and where you need to be more tactful
- Respond to your boss's motivation needs; e.g. what motivates him/her? How can you help him/her to achieve those goals? How can you make yourself, first useful and, later, invaluable?
- Be proactive – make your boss aware of issues before it is too late to affect them
- Keep your boss aware of your activities so that he/she doesn't get a surprise, especially an unpleasant one
- Clearly demonstrate that you are taking responsibility where it is desirable and leaving more important issues to him/her where it is not

- Say "no" if it is appropriate but do it politely and tactfully and offer some kind of acceptable alternative
- Where appropriate, ask for help to complete tasks
- Communicate with him/her regularly; your boss should not have to chase you for progress reports
- Always take the initiative

This should ensure at least a good working relationship; it might even allow you to exert reasonable influence over your boss. At all events it is worth a protracted try.

Personal Organisation

What is usually meant by this term is the way in which a manager organises him/herself to extract the maximum benefit from the working day. Many managers are not terribly good at it, especially when it comes to time management, usually doing the most obvious – but not necessarily the most important – task next. So we will consider time management here – briefly – as a useful skill that most managers could improve. Following that we will also look at presentation skills because all the knowledge in the world is of little use unless you can communicate it successfully.

2.4 Time Management

Closely linked to delegation in some ways is time management, in that more time can be freed up for key tasks if more delegation can be achieved.

Time is one of those commodities which can seem endlessly elastic; but it is also one which disappears very rapidly once major work programmes have got under way.

A key part of time management is deciding what to do next; prioritisation, in other words. Ideally, time management is about:-

- planning and allocating key events as early as possible
- breaking down core tasks into smaller steps, then allocating and scheduling them
- reviewing progress at regular intervals – perhaps the start and end of every day
- using the best quality time that your body clock dictates to do the hardest tasks.
- Planning for social and relaxation time to help recharge the batteries.

This is easy to write but much harder to put into practice. Keeping some kind of diary and "to do" lists will help, but they need to be kept up to date frequently – which can, in itself, be a drain on time. Allocating jobs according to goals is another key device to get the work done in an orderly but timely manner. Travel time implications are also a factor to take into account – especially in the South-East of England, for example, where all journeys seem to take far longer than they should do.

Weekly project lists might help to achieve a good time balance, as can daily lists of key tasks, but these have to identified and entered into the log at an early stage. A seductive – but ultimately, fairly useless – school of thought is an American model called the Schwab Principle. This states that we identify the key priority, go to work, start on that priority as soon as we get there and do nothing else – not even answer the phone or talk to somebody – until we have achieved that key task. Clearly, this can put the practitioner well outside the human race, and telling your boss to go away because you are busy is unlikely to stand in your favour for long. So, Schwab, while appearing seductive in the pages of a management text book, is strictly confined to that text book rather than applicable to real life.

A good guide to the fundamentals of time management is to:-

- identify your quality work times. When are you feeling mentally and physically alert and "up for it"? For many people, this is first thing in the morning when they get into work. That is when the key priority task needs to be done. But what do many people do when they first arrive at work? Talk about last night's football match, where they went for dinner or how their love life is developing. This is all very human and helps the world to go around more pleasantly – but it is not getting the hard work done. More people regard the afternoon, straight after lunch as the downtime of the day; lunch and a full morning's work have often made them, if not drowsy, then more relaxed than at other times. It is no coincidence that siestas are taken after lunch in hot countries or that, in the Middle East, office hours are often 8.00–1.00 and then 5.0–8.00, with a few hours off in the hottest part of the day.
- Prevent displacement activity. But we all like doing displacement activity – that is, doing pleasant things (which may, or may not, be part of work). Talking to old friends on the phone, perhaps with a work excuse, playing Solitaire on the computer, (apparently the most accessed computer programme in the Western world), catching up on emails, or filling in a few forms might be easy and pleasant ways to spend some time, but they are unlikely to help to get the work done.
- Minimise interruptions and time robbers. Again this is harder to apply than to write. Most time robbers are usually other people wanting your attention – maybe even your boss, so ignoring them is not exactly easy. Another major interrupter is the telephone; many people feel the need to answer this whenever it rings, otherwise there may not be much point in having it. One colleague, when in a meeting, simply puts the whole machine, receiver and all, unanswered into the drawer of her desk when it rings. That might be allowed in her world of banking – it certainly shows the view bankers have of the world – but it might be much less practicable for lesser mortals. Perhaps a discreet compromise of allowing an answer phone or voice mail system to take the call for you might be a practical solution.
- Use saved tine constructively. But do we? What happens to all the time we save with modern, time saving technology? We usually find a pleasant way of spending it without necessarily focusing on work. That in itself is no bad thing; life cannot be all work. But it does beg the question of what we do with all the time we save and what the point was of saving it in the first place.

So, prioritising tasks is a key skill in this area of time management. There is a good model developed by Steven Covey some years ago which might help to achieve this.

First list all the tasks you have to do over the next week. Usually, this means work-related tasks but it could be extended to family, social and recreational tasks if necessary. Number them for easy reference later, from 1 to whatever you end up with. It is best to have at least a dozen or so tasks listed as this makes the model run more easily.

Now grade them for importance. If they are important, put a capital "I" against them. If they are critically important put an asterisk against the I – but be sparing with asterisks. And remember the task giver when deciding importance. A simple task – like making a cup of coffee – might seem unimportant but, if the requester is the Chair and the coffee is for the most important client your firm has, then the task assumes disproportionate importance.

Now grade them for urgency – clearly, not the same thing. Again if a task is urgent put a capital "U" against it and if it is critically urgent, as asterisk against the U – but again be sparing with asterisks. Now you have a long, numbered list with some Is and some Us and a few asterisks. Draw a rectangle, similar to the one in Fig 1 with an Importance axis on the left hand side and an Urgent one at the top, Please note that the urgent axis goes the opposite way to normal graphs in that, the more urgent the task is, the nearer to the left it goes, not the right.

Then load your tasks on to the matrix, using the numbers you originally gave them. Don't arrange them in any particular order, just dot them around in a scattergram. Clearly, the urgent ones will go near the left and the important ones near the top. Asterisked items will also go to the extremes of the grid.

Now add in the central dividing lines – the crosshairs. For some reason, probably buried deep in the human psyche, loading the numbers after you have added the crosshairs is not a good idea because people try to force their tasks into one quadrant or another when, in reality, thy need to be allowed to settle wherever is most fitting. Now you have an obvious and clear pattern; everything you have toward the top and towards the left is clearly both urgent and important so they must be done first. The bottom right hand quadrant is least important so can be done fourth. Otherwise, Importance takes priority over urgency so number two is top right and number three is bottom left.

And there you have a Covey Grid with a clear and logical divide between the various tasks. Perhaps 80%–90% of people to whom this model is introduced find it helps them significantly in deciding their priorities, so it may well work for you.

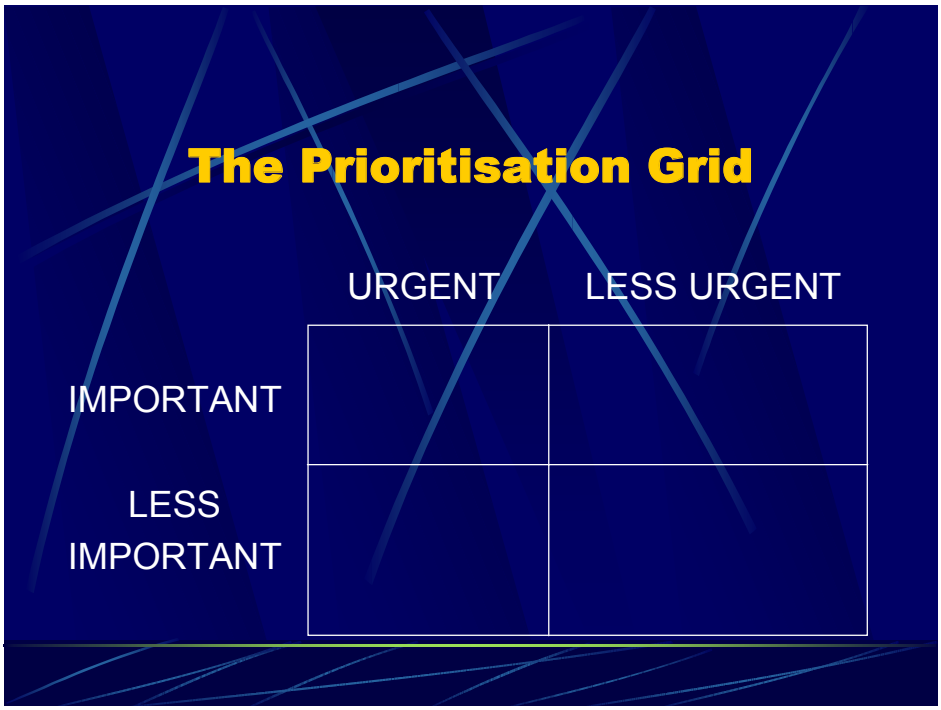

Fig.1; The Covey grid

Another aspect of Covey is that it helps us to relax in the knowledge that our time planning has been done. If this grid is completed towards the end of a Friday, it is surprising how relaxing and enjoyable the weekend becomes because there are no nagging doubts about what to do when going in to work the following Monday. So it helps to create peace of mind and alleviate stress as well as enabling us to tcvkle the workload with some sense of logic.

Finally, on Time Management, try to keep some sort of diary to enable you to see what you have done with the time available over the past period of time. A good idea is to keep this for at least seven consecutive working days, otherwise it may not be representative enough to do much good as an analytical tool. Can you save time by combining tasks, by eliminating other tasks and by delegating yet others? How does what your diary – or time log – tell you fit in with your job description, your boss and his/her demands on your time and on what you know the workload to be? How can you improve the balance between what you have done in the recent past and what you know you'll need to do in the near future?

Once you can answer some of these questions, time management should not be a problem.

Stop and Think

How do you allocate your time at work to key tasks and to less important tasks? Do you keep some kind of diary? If so, how frequently do you fill it in?

2.5 Presentation and public speaking skills

At least 75% of the secret of good presentation techniques lies not in delivering the material but in preparing the material properly first. Once the material is prepared and familiar, very little can really go wrong. When speakers fail to make a good impression it is usually a sign that they are under prepared, do not know their subject matter thoroughly or are otherwise caught having not done enough work in advance.

Consequently we will examine the key stages of preparation before examining the accepted delivery techniques.

Preparation

1. Identifying the objective

Why are you there? Why are you speaking to these people? Without knowing the answers to these questions, the whole presentation might well go awry.

Are you there to:-

- teach
- inform
- sell or persuade
- inspire
- convince
- entertain
- some other reason

Most speakers are there to carry out a combination of all these things – selling is usually present in terms of the image of the organisation which the speaker represents, if in no other way. Whatever the reason, there is no excuse for a boring, turgid presentation – and the audience will probably not stand for it anyway. So, to help establish the answers:-

1. Think about the audience
2. Why are they there? Do they want to be there or have they been told to attend? (If so, you'll have to work twice as hard to make them believe its worth their while)
3. Have they paid to be there – even indirectly? If so, again you'll have to work twice as hard to demonstrate value for money
4. What do they expect from you? Authority, probably, expertise, maybe entertainment and a good time. You are the specialist in the subject; they are there to learn. So make them concentrate and give them value
5. How many of them are there? Does it matter? Only in so far as some speakers prefer smaller groups (up to 20) others prefer large groups which are, by definition, more impersonal. Once the audience has reached around 100, they cease to be individuals and become little dots beyond the spotlights. This can be daunting – but, equally, it can also be stimulating.

2. Develop your theme creatively.

Long lists in linear writing format – like shopping lists – are probably too conventional and restricting for a presentation. Try a Mind Map (Buzan) which frees up the creative juices somewhat and is ideal for presentations. It forces you to stick to the main theme and allows a more imaginative approach to prevail. Just Google Mind map or Buzan and you'll be inundated with websites about it.

3. Establish a clear structure.

Audiences and speakers alike benefit from structure. It gives both parties an idea of what is coming next, how much more there might be and where to hit the heights. It also lends itself to mind mapping – or vice versa – and ensure that you don't depart from the script too far, which is a common problem with ad hoc speakers.

4. Do you need notes?

Yes, you do. Only an idiot would try to speak for any length of time without anything to remind him/her where the presentation is now and where it is going. There are some speakers who look effortless without apparently referring to anything. Don't be fooled. Most have a subtle but nonetheless, distinct set of crib sheets secreted somewhere about their persons. Remembering what comes next is not easy on your feet in front of a lot of expectant looking people.

Some speakers, thinking they know it all, do without notes and usually embark upon long rambling backwaters which, while possibly fascinating to them, are often hugely soporific to their audiences. The average length of an adult audience's attention span is just 12 minutes. You don't have time for rambling backwaters, attractive though they might seem at the time.

There are three commonly-used kinds of notes – verbatim script, headlines and detailed notes. Verbatim script is difficult to deliver well. Newsreaders on TV do it all the time – but that is all they do, they are professionals and it has taken many of them a long time to master the art. Most lesser mortals find verbatim script leads to a wooden delivery, especially if they use Autocue without having practiced it properly.

Detailed notes can be difficult to follow – and, in front of a demanding audience, you don't want anything to be more difficult than it is already. Unless they're clearly typed in block caps with double spacing, it's very easy to lose your way – and very easy for the audience to lose interest.

Headline notes are probably the best compromise for most people. They can be based on Power Point slides, brief notes or anything that can provide logical and clear speaker slides. Short, simple bullet points are best; these can be recognised easily and bestow a confidence on speakers that may not, in fact, be present otherwise. There are no hard rules for headline notes, but block caps. Plenty of white space between lines and paragraphs and colour coding of key areas are all good ideas. Whatever is easiest for you to read in a hurry while being rather more nervous than usual is likely to work best.

5. Notes – the mechanics

Whatever form you have, tag the pages together. It is all too easy for notes pages to become detached at the very time that you wish them not to.

Putting it into practice – or not…

I once saw a very senior captain of industry deliver a speech to about 3,500 people at Wembley Conference Centre. Because it was a very important, keynote speech, he had it all printed out verbatim on 46 pages of A4. These were not attached to each other except by a paper clip. While on page 16, he made an expansive gesture with his right hand and forearm and swept all the pages right off the podium, off the stage over the boxes of flowers and down into the front row of the auditorium. A number of acolytes desperately gathered up all the loose pages and returned them to him.

He kept on talking – but started again at the first page handed back to him – which turned out to be page 43. Clearly, this did not bear much resemblance to the point at which he had stopped on page 16. The audience soon realised this and began to laugh, tittering softly at first and then more openly. The captain of industry became more and more agitated and eventually lost his temper altogether. The following week he lost his job as well. Captains of industry are paid a lot of money to keep both their notes and their tempers under control.

6. Beginning with impact.

The opening of a presentation is critical. The audience will size up a speaker within a couple of seconds of him/her appearing on stage or in front of them. If the speaker looks nervous, the audience will catch this mood and worry. So, look confident; even if you don't feel it you soon will if you look it. And the audience does not want to see a cringing, wee slickit, timorous beastie, to borrow a phrase from Burns; it wants to see an authoritative, calm and inspiring speaker.

One well-used device is to start with impact:-

A – Attention; grab their attention with something slightly off the wall – but not too frivolous or silly.

B – Benefits; share the benefits of the audience paying attention to you; maybe they will learn something that could be useful to them. Tell them what's in it for them

C – Credentials – tell them why you have a right to tell them about the topic, what qualifications you have and your relevant experience. Don't give them a full autobiography though, you don't have time for that.

D – Design – share the design of the presentation with them so that they can anticipate what is coming next, how much longer it will go on and when they had better sit up and take notice. It will enhance audience attention no end.

7. Keeping their interest in the middle.

This is the hard part. Most audiences, when asked, will remember something of what you said when you first stood up and some of what you said just before you finished; many will totally forget the bits in the middle. This does not mean that you can forget about the middle or load any old irrelevant facts in there. It must still be accurate, but you can gloss over some of the detail and treat the middle as the place to put the lightweight stuff. Most audiences will become totally confused over detail, especially technical detail. As de Gaulle said; "No empire has ever yet been built on details" – and he should have known.

So, try to involve the audience with humour, anecdotes, examples which will be relatively familiar to them, anything which will keep them on-side for another few minutes. When you think you've said enough, you probably have, so stop. As Alice in Wonderland famously said: "Start at the beginning, go on to the end and then stop"; more speakers could usefully observe that rule.

But beware of humour. One person's humour is another person's insult, especially these days when political correctness appears to lurk in many alleyways, waiting for the chance to pounce on the unwary. Avoid jokes about race, religion, age, sexual orientation and politics, unless you know and are very sure of your audience. Even then, there may be a few guests whom you don't know and who could be offended so take care. Several high profile careers have been jeapordised by unguarded comments, which were probably meant innocently but which have been taken out of context.

8. Positive and powerful endings

The last points you make will be the culmination of your presentation and will leave the audience with the impact that you have planned – so they must be strong comments. Try ending with a call to arms of some sort. Ask the audience to do something as a result of what you have been talking about. Ask them to think, act, speak or do something different as a result of your presentation; if you do not do this, what was the point of the presentation?

You can also employ the odd device to show them that you are finishing. A good phrase to use here is "…and finally" but then make sure that you do finish quite soon and not go on to make another 16 points. The phrase will alert the audience to an ending and they will re-double their attention and expect an imminent closure. So give them one.

Delivery

The key to delivery is to look confident. Being confident helps too, but is more likely to follow if you look it first. If anyone ever tells you that they don't suffer from nerves before giving a presentation, don't believe them; they're either lying or stupid – or possibly both. Everyone needs some nervous energy, some adrenalin to flow to make it a special occasion. Giving presentations is a little piece of theatre – and you need all the drama that goes with a performance like that to make it memorable and successful. So, don't deny that you are nervous but use the nervous energy to rise to a higher level when you present.

Sometimes if you're horribly nervous, it's a good idea to build a horror floor. Imagine the worst that could happen – but not as you go on to the stage. What would be the result? You might make a bit of a fool of yourself – that happens regularly to all of us. It isn't the end of the world. The sun will still rise in the East tomorrow. In all probability, you won't be sacked for one imperfect presentation. If you are, you didn't want that job anyway. So, the risk is relatively limited.

Someone researched the most common phobias in the US a few years ago and discovered that public speaking was the second worst phobia among businessmen (the first being crippled in an accident) Why? What is there to worry about to that extent? Things go wrong occasionally – that's life. But there is no reason why your presentation should go wrong, certainly no more so than anyone else's. If you've fully prepared and you know your subject, the likelihood is that it will be a perfectly professional performance – and nobody can do better than that.

Body Language

Much of the success of a presentation comes from what you look like when you deliver a script. Body language counts for 55% of the impact of a presentation so you have to look good – confident, relaxed, professional. Within the context of the occasion, wear whatever makes you feel confident and professional. The recent trend for dressing down might not accord with audience's expectations of you – and it may not do wonders for your confidence either. Power dressing was no isolated feature of the 1980s and, for a lot of people, it worked well. Tee-shirts and jeans have their place, but that place is probably not on the platform in front of a fairly distinguished audiences. So, dress up, within reason.

Body language – better described as communication without words – can be segmented into several areas:-

- Eyes
- Face
- Posture
- Hands
- Voice
- Pause

We will briefly look at each in turn.

Eyes

The window to the soul and all that – but true enough. What do you think of people who refuse to make eye contact with you? Well, that is what an audience will feel if you don't make eye contact with them. So, be generous with your eye contact. Try to bring in every member of the audience with your gaze at some time – this is more difficult in a very large auditorium with hundreds of people so pick key areas of the room and talk to them in turn. Don't overdo this and pick on one ore two people all the time; they may become quite paranoid that you are singling them out for special attention.

The really important aspect of your eyes is that they must make contact with your audience before you speak, before you even get across the stage to the podium. The audience will have judged you before you have had time to say anything verbally, so let your eyes speak for you and captivate the audience before you even open your speech. Speakers who do not do this always have a very hard job to establish a rapport with their audience.

Face

Relax the face so that it is expressive and use the full range of your facial expression. This might feel unduly theatrical while you are on stage but, in fact, with the physical gap between you and the audience, it will not come over as anything other than natural to an audience. A smile, for instance – a highly useful weapon in presenting – will only come over as a smile if you overdo it slightly; otherwise it might appear as more of a grimace, which could have unfortunate consequences.

Smiles are nearly always appropriate. They relax the audience into thinking that you are confident, posed and in command of your subject matter – even if you are none of those things – and they relax you into a more secure and confident frame of mind, so both parties win. They can also disarm aggression – if you are unfortunate to encounter any; this is comparatively rare, however, most audiences want their speakers to succeed; only in political speeches, or hustings, do any audiences really bear a grudge.

Don't obscure your face. Even a pair of spectacles could have an unfortunate effect of masking part of your expression. Most audiences want to see how you are treating your subject matter and this cannot be done if part or most of your face is hidden in any way. So, push or tie back hair if it obscures part your face. Spectacles can also create an artificial lens in front of the eye, meaning that it can be difficult for an audience to see your real expression, especially if the stage lights are also reflecting off the glasses. If you can wear contact lenses instead, then do so. If you don't need glasses to read a set of notes a couple of feet away, then do without them.

Posture

Stand tall if possible. Audiences resent speakers slouching in a casual, disrespectful or inattentive way in front of them. Audiences usually expect to see respect reflected in a speaker's body language and that definitely includes posture. It will also help you to breathe well, allowing your voice to be projected effortlessly. If you don't look alert and enthusiastic, it is somewhat unreasonable to expect your audience to look alert and enthusiastic.

Imagine that your spine is being supported by hanging from a hook in the ceiling above you – without the pain. That will help you to stand tall, breath easily and support your diaphragm without it appearing that you are on a parade ground. Keep your shoulders back and down, because that will also help your posture and your breathing. Leave your hands by your side and, if you ever feel really nervous, just touch the podium or a chair with the tips of your fingers. You don't need to put any weight on them; the act of touching the furniture earths you and makes you feel reassuringly grounded. The finger tips are very tactile and this act is hugely comforting.

Hands

Don't fiddle with notes, pens, glasses or anything else. Use your hands to extend your gestures and don't be afraid of using gestures. Very few speakers overdo this, although many are fearful that they will. Hands reinforce words in a unique way and should be allowed, even encouraged, to do so. It is unlikely that you will end up being mistaken for Mussolini just because you are employing hand gestures, Holding your notes in one hand can emphasise the gesture even more, because an A4 sheet of white paper is probably more visible to the audience than your bare hand.

When you are not gesturing, let your hands fall naturally down to your sides or on to the podium. Do not put your hand into your pocket (let alone two hands); this appears to be too casual and disrespectful to the audience and many people dislike seeing it at a relatively formal occasion. Don't grip your podium or your notes – or anything else – for grim death. Some speakers grasp the podium so tightly that it looks as though they are on a white knuckle ride – which doesn't do much to encourage the audience's confidence in them. The podium is unlikely to fall over if you don't grip it; so let gravity do its work while you do yours. And don't clasp your hands together in a supplicating gesture; you are not Uriah Heep.

Voice

Vary the pace, the tone and the volume. Your voice is a musical instrument and can be used as such. Reserve more volume for the important bits and slow down for these sections to give them more weight. Use a lighter, faster tone and pitch for the detailed bits – assuming you've left any in. A higher tone is usually lighter; faster can also help to wake up the audience – if you need to do so. But too fast for too long can have the opposite effect so only use it sparingly.

Project your voice to the far wall of the room. This will usually ensure that everyone sitting between you and that wall will be able to hear without straining their ears. This is also easier if the voice has enough air in the windpipe to be able to breathe easily, making posture even more important. Check that the audience can hear you before you start, but do be prepared to do something about it if they say they cannot.

If you are using an unfamiliar venue, get there early and check out that you know whether there are microphones and a full or partial public address (PA) system. Get used to using it and practice for a couple of minutes if you have never used one before. They take a little getting used to, especially if they start to feed back your voice as you are speaking. A sound technician will often be on hand to remedy this, but, if one is not, just stand a little further back, away from the microphone and that will usually stop the problem.

And, don't forget, the microphone will be switched on unless you switch it off, so never say anything remotely contentious if you are unsure whether it is on or off. Several high profile careers have been suddenly extinguished by an unwary comment which the speaker thought was inaudible. Jokes, especially, need to be aired only privately (if at all) never if there is the slightest possibility that the microphone might be still switched on.

Pause

Silence is, arguably, the most effective part of your presentation. Silence prepares the ear for whatever you are going to say next. Just as, in music, it prepares the ear for the next notes. So use it tactically; slow down before a really important point, perhaps even give a bit of a pause and then let the audience have that point with redoubled volume and distinct clarity. It will almost always work well. Some speakers seem to be afraid of a pause; in fact, it is possible to pause for up to three seconds without the audience realising that anything is wrong. Pauses, therefore, can work well to your advantage.

If you sense that an audience has lost a little interest, use a pause to refocus them. Silence will often reawaken their attention and allow you to proceed with a renewed interest. Most audience are usually about one-third of a second behind the speaker, in that this is the time it takes them to listen to your words, process and translate them into an imaginable context and, perhaps, file them away for use later. So, you can nearly always leave a gap of up to three seconds without worrying. This might help you to find your place again or it might just help you to refocus your own thoughts, but it can be a useful device to employ.

If you are going to take questions at the end and answer them – sometimes a brave option but often a successful one, never let this Q and A session finish with the last answer to the last question. You have written a conclusion to your original presentation so, after all the questions, give them this conclusion again. That is the impact with which you originally wished to leave them and that is the impact, therefore, with which you must leave them.

Finally, be well prepared, know your subject and the environment in which you are speaking and enjoy the presentation. It will almost always be a success.

3 Managing Groups and teams

Chapter content

Definitions of teams.
Formal and informal groups
Theories of team working Belbin, Price, Janis, Tuckman

3.1 Introduction

Working alone is increasingly uncommon in today's commercial environment. Consequently, many tasks that people feel confident about if they were to tackle them single handed become more complex when handled by a team of people.

Managing groups and teams has been a vexed question for some time in management thinking. There are a number of accepted theories – and we will examine some of the more common ones shortly – but there is still no single accepted route by which to maximise team contribution to assist the corporate effort. Tasks which appear simple to one person will often seem considerably more complicated to others; hence the need to ensure that teams work together as effectively as possible.

3.2 Formal and informal groups

In recent years there has been a higher level of concentration on groups and how to ensure that they add value to both the organisation and its employees. Some writers have backed a theory of formal and informal groupings, possibly rather too much emphasis has been placed on this idea (which is hardly revolutionary) but, for the sake of completeness, the essential difference is that formal groups are created to achieve specific objectives and are usually, therefore, concerned with the organisation of task activities. A project team would be a good example of this formal grouping where a specific target – such as a new product launch – is the avowed aim of the team.

Informal groups, tend to be based more on personal relationships – people with whom other employees "get on well" and are happy to work with. Inevitably there is less control over an informal group from a managerial point of view and there can be circumstances in which such a group can act against the overall good of the organisation, if it becomes too influential for instance. Informal groups satisfy social and psychological needs and can be huge motivators but are not necessarily related to the overall task of the organisation. Many find fulfillment in social outings and gatherings – which is fine but has nothing to do with the organisation's management.

Another factor of informal groups is that they can cut across the organisation's formal structure, often without intending to. Employees from different departments may simply enjoy each others' company – or have few other social outlets – and want to socialise together. On occasion this can lead to higher levels of gossip and uncertainty among employees, unsettled by what they believe to be the truth. This may or may not be advantageous to the overall running of the organisation (clearly, usually it is not) but, in practice, there is little or nothing that management can do about it.

So, groups can have several different definitions. Perhaps the most popular is "a number of people who:-

- interact with one another
- are psychologically and professionally aware of one another and
- perceive themselves to be a group. (Mullins. p. 180)

A slightly different way of defining a group is to set out the commonly-found characteristics:-

- a definable membership
- group consciousness
- a sense of shared purpose
- interdependence (on each other, especially in a work role)
- interaction (again in a working role)
- the ability to act in a unitary manner (as though all the members were thinking as one) (Adair, cited in Mullins p. 180)

3.3 Practicality

From practical considerations, too, many tasks are just too formidable to be tackled by only one person. A number of different skills might be required, for example, and, consequently, several people, each with some of those skills, might be required to form a suitable task force – or team.

Team management is one of the more challenging aspects of managerial life. Too often, managers duck the issue by trying to do everything themselves. This leads to inefficiency, overwork on the part of the manager with consequences for health and home life and a vulnerability for the organisation. If that manager falls under a bus tomorrow, who can take over the essential work that he/she has been doing?

In this chapter we will look at some of the more usual models of team management and identify some limited self analysis tools to try to determine the type of team worker that we are. By doing this it is easier to determine what kind of teams we will function in to the best of our ability – and this can lead to benefits not just for us but also for the organisation for which we are working.

Consider a team – or a group of people – with whom you are or have been associated. What worked well and what did not work so well? Why do you think this was?

3.4 Tuckman

Of all the group theorists, Tuckman is perhaps the most widely used and applied. This may be partly because he strikes resounding chords with many managers and team workers alike. Most teams conform to Tuckman's theory at some time or other. Bruce Tuckman is an educational psychologist who first formulated and published his now famous model of group development as long ago as 1965. He revised it 12 years later and it still forms the basis of much group analysis work even 30 years later. In essence Tuckman suggested that there are four main phases of a group which form its lifecycle. These are:-

Forming

The early stages of a team when people are unsure of one another, and of their own roles in the team. Ground rules have to be agreed, as have methods of working and, perhaps sub-consciously sometimes, personal alliances are set up. Often, people are understandably eager to avoid conflict at this stage; this can lead to some serious issues or problems being ignored, covered over or pushed under the carpet. Team members gather information and impressions of each other, and about the team's key tasks, but often more time is taken up with preliminary skirmishing than in actually getting on with the job of doing the work.

Storming

This phase marks the end of the honeymoon period. Team members become more frustrated with one another – or with the team's task – and start to spar and argue. Minor confrontations will arise; some are solved, others are avoided and may well recur later. Structural clarity is sometimes introduced at this stage, as are rules to prevent conflict either within the team or with the task. Niggling discontent may appear and could break out into public arguments or could be suppressed. While suppression may be more comfortable at the time, these niggles seldom go away and may arise again at critical moments later in the life of the task; so they are better addressed head on at the time at which they occur, if possible.

Norming

At this phase, rules of engagement become established and the team begins to perform as a unit rather than as a series of individuals. Now that the heated debates are over, the team individuals understand one another better and can work together at a higher plane than before. Mutual support become more common, pre-conceived views are less intrusive and the team begins to mold into an efficient unit. Problems are less personalised and collective responsibility takes over. Nothing is now "your fault" or "his fault" but a situation which all parties are prepared to work together to resolve.

Performing

This is the ultimate stage of team development. It is characterised by interdependence and flexibility. Everyone knows one another well enough to be able to trust and rely on other team members. Tasks are achieved with a minimum of fuss and deceptively easy cooperation. Roles and responsibilities may change as necessary in a way which appears seamless to observers. The team's energy is directed solely at the task in hand not eroded by in-fighting or by playing politics. Mutual trust and cooperation are the natural way of working and team efficiency has reached its pinnacle.

It is worth noting that some teams never reach this latter stage. Some simply remain in one of the earlier stages without ever managing to achieve the Performing target. Often, this can be due to an imbalance of characteristics among the team members, an issue which was first identified by Belbin and which we shall examine later in this chapter.

Some 12 years after having published his work on team stages, Tuckman came out with a fifth stage which is variously called, Mourning or Adjourning. It describes the sense of loss once a close team has been dissolved, perhaps after the completion of a project. Members have grown so used to working with one another, on one project and perhaps at one venue that they feel a great sense of deprivation once the team has fulfilled its task. The success or otherwise of the project is almost irrelevant; it is the removal of the team and its ethic from their lives that saddens the former team members.

Have you ever worked in a team or group that was broken up and felt the sense of loss that this led to? Perhaps a close group of school or college friends? Or a sports team? What was your feeling when it was disbanded? How did it conform to Tuckman's stages of development?

Tuckman is not, of course, the only academic to have devoted much time to analysing how groups and teams work best. There are others, such as Rice who, having studied military ways of working, recommended that teams should be no more than six people strong and should have easily identifiable lines of communication. This precludes linear reporting strategies which, he argues are too rigid and prevent free communication from one end of the line to the other, whether the lines are horizontal or, more usually, vertical.

X-------X-------X--------X

Here, the four people in a small team are disadvantaged by not being able to communicate with one another on a horizontal axis. Yet there are only four of them and they should be able to share concerns and ideas as easily as possible. Even worse is the following model:-

X
1
1
X
1
1
X
1
1
X

Here there are still four people but the vertical structure of the reporting relationship is even more forbidding than that of a horizontal structure. Hierarchical models such as this used to be more common than they are now. But they still discourage easy, open communication, without which, arguably, most teams will not work well.

3.5 Janis

Janis was also concerned with what he called "Groupthink"; that is the process of a group of people to sublimate their own opinions to that of the group around them. The most common example of this is perhaps a sporting crowd, especially a fervent one in, say, a football match. The ultimate is the frenzy of a mob – both the French and Russian Revolutions are good examples of this – where the rational mind of the individual is overtaken, often fatally, by the frenzied blood lust of the uncontrolled mob. Once allowed to take over, a groupthink-style atmosphere is very difficult to manage, if it can be managed at all. And it really does overtake some perfectly intelligent and rational people, often without their realising it.

Making it work

An agricultural show committee in the UK met shortly after the show had taken place to assess how well various aspects had gone on the day. It had been a relatively well-organised and well-attended event with no great problems arising that would not be taken care of in the normal manner of progress. This being the case, the committee's thoughts turned to charity. It was traditional to donate a proportion of the profits to a number of local charities; the exact amounts and the final selection of charitable causes was always debated and decided at this particular committee meeting.

On this occasion, a committee member set the ball rolling by pointing out that this had been a particularly successful year financially and suggested that, as a result, the amount donated to charity should be increased by 25%. Another member, catching the mood of the committee, suggested that 25% was rather a low increase and proposed a rise in the monies donated by 50%. A third member, becoming carried away with altruistic zeal, then suggested that these were both insignificant amounts and that the money should be raised by 100%.

In one short debate, therefore the amount of money to be donated to charity had, in fact, doubled. In practice, however, several more hard-headed members perceived what was happening, waited for the meeting to become calmer and then suggested that a figure of 50% was most appropriate. This was the figure finally settled on.

3.6 Belbin

But one of the most famous writers on teams is Belbin, an Oxford academic who has spent several decades researching teams and their behaviours. Belbin's main contention is that what a team needs is not necessarily well balanced individuals (although that would, presumably, be an advantage) but a well balanced team. His theory is that there are eight categories of team members and that, preferably, all eight types should be present if the team is to function well. This does not necessarily mean that the team must have at least eight people because one person can personify more than one of the characteristics.

It is interesting to see what kind of person you are in a team situation and Belbin's questionnaire has acquired a highly popular status as the most usual way of discovering this. See what your score suggests:-

BELBIN TEAM ROLES

This questionnaire measures the intensity with which you play a range of roles within a team. Please complete it , then score the answers.

Directions

For each section distribute a total of ten points among the sentences, **which you think best describe your behaviour**. These points may be distributed among several sentences. In extreme cases, they might be spread among all the sentences or ten points may be given to a single sentence, but this is not recommended.

Then enter the points in the Scoring table against the appropriate lower case letter. When you have entered all the points, please add the column totals vertically.

To determine your team role preferences, circle the range of scores within which your score for each role falls. The two highest scoring roles are usually those which describe your team role preferences. See the final section for an explanation of these roles.

1. **WHAT I BELIEVE I CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A TEAM**
   a) I think I can quickly see and take advantage of new opportunities.
   b) I can work well with a very wide range or people.
   c) Producing ideas is one of my natural assets.
   d) My ability rests in being able to draw people out whenever I detect they have something of value to contribute to group objectives.
   e) My capacity to follow through has much to do with my personal effectiveness.
   f) I am ready to face temporary unpopularity if it leads to worthwhile results in the end.
   g) I am quick to sense what is likely to work in a situation with which I am familiar.
   h) I can offer a reasoned case for alternative courses of action without introducing bias or prejudice.

2. **IF I HAVE A POSSIBLE SHORTCOMING IN TEAMWORK, IT COULD BE THAT:**
   a) I am not at ease unless meetings are well structured, controlled and generally well conducted.
   b) I am inclined to be too generous towards others who have a valid viewpoint that has not been given a proper airing.
   c) I have a tendency to talk a lot once the group gets on to new ideas.
   d) My objective outlook makes it difficult for me to join in readily and enthusiastically with colleagues.
   e) I am sometimes seen as forceful and authoritarian if there is a need to get something done.
   f) I find it difficult to lead from the front, perhaps because I am over responsive to group atmosphere.
   g) I am apt to get too caught up in ideas that occur to me and so lose track of what is happening.
   h) My colleagues tend to see me as worrying unnecessarily over detail and the possibility that things may go wrong.

3. **WHEN INVOLVED IN A PROJECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE:**
   a) I have an aptitude for influencing people without pressurising them.
   b) My general vigilance prevents careless mistakes and omissions being made.
   c) I am ready to press for action to make sure that the meeting does not waste time or lose sight of the main objective.
   d) I can be counted on to contribute something original.

e) I am always ready to back a good suggestion in the common interest.
f) I am keen to look for the latest in new ideas and developments.
g) I believe others appreciate my capacity for cool judgement.
h) I can be relied upon to see that all essential work is organised.

4. **MY CHARACTERISTIC APPROACH TO GROUP WORK IS THAT:**
   a) I have a quiet interest in getting to know colleagues better.
   b) I am not reluctant to challenge the views of others or to hold a minority view myself.
   c) I can usually find a line or argument to refute unsound propositions.
   d) I think I have a talent for making things work once a plan has to be put into operation.
   e) I have a tendency to avoid the obvious and to come out with the unexpected.
   f) I bring a touch of perfectionism to any team job I undertake.
   g) I am ready to make use of contacts outside the group itself.
   h) While I am interested in all views I have no hesitation in making up my mind once a decision has to be made.

5. **I GAIN SATISFACTION IN A JOB BECAUSE:**
   a) I enjoy analysing situations and weighing up all the possible choices.
   b) I am interested in finding practical solutions to problems.
   c) I like to feel I am fostering good working relationships.

d) I can have a strong influence on decisions.
e) I can meet people who may have something new to offer.
f) I can meet people to agree on a necessary course of action.
g) I feel in my element where I can give a task my full attention.
h) I like to find a field that stretches my imagination.

6. **IF I AM SUDDENLY GIVEN A DIFFICULT TASK WITH LIMITED TIME AND UNFAMILIAR PEOPLE:**
   a) I would feel like retiring to a corner to devise a way out of the impasse before developing a line.
   b) I would be ready to work with the person who showed the most positive approach, however difficult he might be.
   c) I would find some way of reducing the size of the task by establishing what different individuals might best contribute.
   d) My natural sense of urgency would help to ensure that we did not fall behind schedule.
   e) I believe I would keep cool and maintain my capacity to think straight.
   f) I would retain a steadiness of purpose in spite of the pressures.
   g) I would be prepared to take a positive lead if I felt the group was making no progress.
   h) I would open up discussions with a view to stimulating new thoughts and get something moving.

7. **WITH REFERENCE TO THE PROBLEMS TO WHICH I AM SUBJECT IN WORKING IN GROUPS**

a) I am apt to show my impatience with those who are obstructing progress.
b) Others may criticise me for being too analytical and sufficiently intuitive.
c) My desire to ensure that work is properly done can hold up proceedings.
d) I tend to get bored rather easily and rely on one or two stimulating members to spark me off.
e) I find it difficult to get started unless the goals are clear.
f) I am sometimes poor at explaining and clarifying complex points that occur to me.
g) I am conscious of demanding from others the things I cannot do myself.
h) I hesitate to get my points across when I run up against real opposition.

SCORING TABLE: DO NOT COMPLETE THIS UNTIL YOU HAVE ALLOCATED 10 POINTS TO EACH OF THE EARLIER 7 SECTIONS.

SECTION	CH	SH	PL	ME	CW	TW	RI	CF
I	d	f	c	h	g	b	a	e
II	b	e	g	d	a	f	c	h
III	a	c	d	g	h	e	f	b
IV	h	b	e	c	d	a	g	f
V	f	d	h	a	b	c	e	g
VI	c	g	a	e	f	b	h	d
VII	g	a	f	b	e	h	d	c
TOTAL								

TABLE OF NORMS

Based on scores of a cross section of managers from various functions and industries.

	Low 0–33%	Average 33–66%	High 66–85%	Very High 85–100%	Average Score
CH	0–6	7–10	11–13	14–18	8.8
SH	0–8	9–13	14–17	18–36	11.6
PL	0–4	5–8	9–12	13–29	7.3
ME	0–5	6–9	10–12	13–19	8.2
CW	0–6	7–11	12–16	17–23	10.0
TW	0–8	9–12	13–16	17–25	10.9
RI	0–6	7–9	10–11	12–21	7.8
CF	0–3	4–6	7–9	10–17	5.5

TEAM ROLE SPECIFICATIONS

Attached is a description of the eight main roles, which people play within a team. Each describes the type of role that is played and the attributes and potential weaknesses that someone performing that role may have. Individuals are capable of playing a number of roles within a team.

To identify your preferred role within a team relate your highest range score to the appropriate definition. Your second highest score determine your second strongest team preference. Other roles with which you are likely to feel confident and will play within a team may be those where your score appears at average or above.

TEAM ROLE SPECIFICATIONS

1 CHAIRMAN/Coordinator

ROLE: Controlling the way in which a team moves forward towards the group objectives by making the best of team resources;

Recognisin where the team's strengths and weaknesses lie and ensuring that the best use is made of each team member's potential.

ATTRIBUTES: Strengths – an ability to command respect and to inspire enthusiasm, a sense of timing and balance and capacity for communicating easily with others.

Tolerable weaknesses – no marked creative or intellectual power.

2 Shaper

Role: Shaping the way in which team effort is applied, directing attention generally to the setting of objectives and priorities and seeking to impose some shape or pattern on group discussion and on the outcome of group activities.

Attributes: Strengths – drive and self – confidence.

Tolerable weaknesses – intolerance – towards vague ideas and people.

3 Plant

Role: Advancing new ideas and strengths with special attention to major issues and looking for possible breaks in approach to the problems with which the group is confronted.

Attributes: Strengths – independence of outlook, high intelligence imagination.

Tolerable weaknesses – a tendency to be impractical or to be "up in the clouds" at times and to be weak in communicating with others.

4 Monitor-Evaluator

Role: 1 Analysing problems;

2 Carrying out agreed plans systematically and efficiently.

Attributes: Strengths – critical thinking ability, including the ability to see the complications of proposals; an objective mind.

Tolerable weaknesses – hypercritical: unexciting; a little over – serious.

5 Company Worker

Role: 1 Turning concepts and plans into practical working procedures.

2 Carrying out agreed plans systematically and efficiently.

Attributes: Strengths – self-control and self discipline combined with realism and practical common sense.

Tolerable weaknesses – lack of flexibility and unresponsiveness to new ideas that remain unproven.

6 Team Worker

Role: Supporting members in their strengths (e.g. building on suggestions), underpinning members in their short – comings, improving communications between members and fostering team spirit generally.

Attributes: Strengths – humility, flexibility, popularity and good listening skills.

Tolerable weaknesses – lack of decisiveness and toughness; a distaste for friction and competition.

7 Resource Investigator

Role**:** Exploring and reporting on ideas, developments and resources outside the group; creating external contacts that may be useful to the team and conducting any subsequent negotiations.

Attributes**:** Strengths – an out going relaxed personality, with a strong inquisitive sense, and a readiness to seek the possibilities inherent in anything new.

Tolerable weaknesses – over-enthusiasm and a lack of follow-up.

8 Completer / Finisher

Role**:** Ensuring that the team is protected as far as possible from mistakes of both commission and omission; actively searching for aspects of work which need a more than usual degree of attention; and maintaining a sense of urgency within the team.

Attributes**:** Strengths – an ability to combine a sense of concern with a sense of order and purpose; self-control and strength of character.

Tolerable weaknesses – impatience and an intolerance towards those of casual disposition and habits.

Have you completed the Belbin questionnaire and have you identified your preferred team role? Does it accord with your own view of yourself as a team player? If not, what factors do you think could explain this?

Making it work

It is interesting to see how teams gel in the Belbin context – or even, whether they do gel. I was once a board director of a well-known advertising agency which sent all seven of us board directors on an away day to learn about team working. The board had not, in fact, been working well together as a team and there were a number of factions even within the board which we were unable to understand.

After completing the Belbin test, we began to realise that it was a badly constructed board in that, of the seven directors, no less than five of us were strongly Chair (or Coordinator) roles.

Consequently, we all spent most of our time telling other people what to do – but were, perhaps, not quick to take on the responsibility for finishing off jobs ourselves. There was a common feeling that other people carried out the detail while we "simply" agreed the strategy. Clearly, a team needs to have Indians as well as chiefs. Of the other two directors, the Finance Director was a Monitor Evaluator – which was logical but we never listened to anything he said anyway. The Chief Executive was a Completer Finisher, which was, to our way of thinking, symptomatic of his fixation with (often irritating) detail and ignorance of the bigger picture.

Many teams must also have an equally difficult imbalance, and it is this that Belbin can identify, thereby allowing for remedial action to be taken (we solved the agency's problem by being taken over).

An interesting point here is how many people a manager should have reporting to him/her.

Price doing work for a number of organisations a while ago, came up with the belief that six is enough. More than that and he believed that the ability to interact successfully is blunted. So, all those managers out there with scores of people reporting directly to them may not be in the best position to manage them.

Making it work

Finally, a test of team effectiveness. Try sorting people into two groups of around half a dozen each and ask them to create as many paper models as possible using an origami-type of instruction. They'll probably need about 20 minutes to practice and rehearse and then a production run of, say, five minutes, depending on the complexity of the paper model to be produced.

Afterwards, try asking questions like:-

- What went well?
- What held you back?
- Did leadership emerge in the team?
- Did disagreement emerge? If so, how did the team cope with it?
- Which created the greater pressure, the clock (assuming the test is run against the clock) or the other team (assuming there are two or more teams taking part)?

The results will be interesting and this is a fairly widespread management game to play, tried and tested the world over. You can do it twice, once before doing the Belbin questionnaire and once afterwards having re-structured the teams to include as many of his "team types" as possible. The results might surprise you.

4 Effective Leadership

Chapter content

What is leadership?
What kinds of leaders are there?
Shackleton
Edwardes
Case study.

4.1 Introduction

Much time has been spent and several rain forests have been felled in the quest for that Holy Grail of business management, the perfect leader. It is quite likely that such a person does not exist. All that most managers can really do is to attempt to emulate the best characteristics of managers to whom they, in turn, look up with admiration.

Of necessity this brings a character to an organisation based on the individual leader's own characteristics. We shall explore some the more commonly found aspects of this incidence in this chapter. We shall also look at some of the accepted norms of leadership behaviour and endeavour to identify those which are most relevant and most easily reproduced in other organisations – a sort of leadership transfer process. This will be illustrated with case studies of how good – and not so good – leaders behave.

We will also look at the art of delegation, which is an essential skill for most leaders. Without it, they would hardly be leaders.

4.2 What is leadership?

There are lots of different answers to this question, depending on the context in which it is asked.

In a nutshell, the text book answer is "the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals" (Capon, 2004, P. 95). Notice "influence" not "direct", "manage" or even "dictate". Leadership therefore is a more subtle art than simply telling someone to do something.

Influencing in its turn requires some key skills. Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell (1998) believe that these include eleven distinct qualities:-

1. Command of basic facts – not only about the job but also about the environment and sector within which the organisation operates.
2. Relevant professional knowledge – something with which nobody can be expected to be equipped without some kind of study towards this goal. This kind of knowledge is simply not taught in schools and probably never could be. Hence, professional, vocational and/or university courses are rapidly filling the void.
3. Continuing sensitivity to events – the key word being "continuing"; anyone (or most people at least) can understand a set of principles and key issues once, but a really good leadership figure must continue to expand his/her skills in this respect as the career develops. Consequently the manager's skill develops in direct proportion to the additional responsibility which he/she acquires.
4. Analytical problem solving, decision/judgement making skills; to ensure that the leader can really grasp the nettle when it is offered, act decisively and give a good lead.
5. Social skills and abilities; perhaps the key to really good leaders is that they never seem to be overtly engaged in the process of leading. People simply and naturally do as the leaders wish them to do. The recent England cricket captain, Michael Vaughan, is a good example of this, seemingly effortless, style of leadership. This is a very highly developed art in itself, based on the leader's ability to carry a gathering of strong minded people down a particular route. Opinions vary about whether this skills can be taught or whether it is inherent in natural leaders, such as Churchill.

6. Emotional resilience; not everything will always go the way a leader wishes it to go. There will be setbacks and reverses, sometimes, major ones. However, true leaders will finds ways of overcoming these setbacks and emerging as strong as – or even stronger then – ever.
7. Pro-activity by responding purposefully to events. Job adverts often carry phrases such as "must be a self-starter" which is a way of saying much the same thing. True leaders will make things happen and respond to pressures of all sorts firmly, rapidly and decisively. As the old proverb has it, "more businesses have gone bankrupt by sitting at home waiting for the phone to ring than by any other means".
8. Creativity. There are all sorts of schools of thought on creativity, many of them becoming globally famous – such as Edward de Bono's Thinking Hats model. All presume that the leader must adopt a certain and decisive approach to issues like problem solving. There are echoes here of Machiavelli's Prince again.
9. Mental agility. The ability to think on ones' feet, to outwit the opposition, to be able to reconcile differences in partners and to achieve a lasting and recognised solution at very short notice are critical to a genuine leader. Often there is very little time in which to prepare for a particularly difficult decision or situation. Leaders cannot complain about not being ready. The world will not wait for them.
10. Balanced learning habits and skills – rather like the Honey and Mumford approach set out in the last chapter it is useful if a leader knows his or her best type of learning behaviour so that he/she can minimise the learning period and smooth out the process.
11. 1Self-knowledge. Perhaps the hardest of all skills to master, this is also the subject of many studies and theories. One good starting point is "A Manager's Guide to Self-Development" also by Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell. Try some of the self analytical exercises to see where your own strengths and weaknesses lie.

Stop and Think

Do you – or do your managers – regularly display any of these traits in leadership?
What do you think you could do to develop your won leadership style?

From this it seems fairly evident that charismatic leadership can clarify tasks and roles while motivating employees to a high level of effort and commitment. Being positive and self-confident will clearly help the leader in this respect; not many people are likely to follow a leader with evident self-doubts and a lack of self-confidence. That was one of the many theories put forward concerning England's famous victory in the Ashes series over Australia in 2005; Michael Vaughan, the then-England captain, exuded belief and confidence even though his personal batting form was some way below his best – although he did record the series' highest score of 166 at Old Trafford.

Charismatic leaders also need to be committed to their vision – especially if they expect anyone else to be so committed. Sometimes this might involve bearing personal risk, perhaps financially, for instance, which is also part of the role. Above all, a charismatic leader will often be seen as a change champion – that is, someone who is the architect of serious change in an organisation – rather than a custodian of the status quo. Consequently, many charismatic managers are happiest in a Power culture or, possibly a Task culture but are unlikely to flourish in a Role culture.

But, any leader, no matter how strong and visionary, requires a strategic approach to succeed.

4.3 Shackleton

An oft-quoted leader who has recently captured the imagination of many management thinkers and trainers is an Edwardian naval officer who might be more obviously associated with the sunset of empire rather than the 21st century.

Sir Ernest Shackleton is often linked with Scott as a courageous but ultimately unsuccessful leader of polar expeditions to the South Pole just before the First World War. However, while both men failed in their avowed goal – of being the first man to set foot on the South Pole – both acquired an immortality by the very nature for their supposed failures.

Shackleton never reached the Pole and, given that this expedition was mounted during the first two years of the Great War (1914–16) was regarded with suspicion on some fronts concerning his ill-advised timing. The Royal Navy, then the strongest navy on earth, presumably felt that it could do without him for a while.

Superficially, the facts of Shackleton's voyage do not make successful reading. The aim of his 1914–16 expedition (he had already led two earlier ventures) was to cross the Antarctic from one side to the other, passing directly through the South Pole on the way. He lost his ship (the Endurance) before ever reaching Antarctica – a mishap that even Scott had avoided. From then on however, his fortunes improved.

First, he led all his crew away from the ship trapped in the pack-ice to the edge of the Weddell Sea ice shelf using dog sledges. Then he commanded both the ships' boats (open rowing boats) and all the crew on an 800 mile voyage through some of the stormiest and coldest seas in the world (average temperatures were -17 to -45 degrees C) until they reached Elephant Island, near South Georgia. The total journey took 639 days, of almost unceasing cold, short rations and extremely hard physical work.

On arrival at Elephant Island, they refurbished one of the boats and Shackleton took a volunteer crew on a further two month voyage in a six metre open boat all the way to South Georgia. They landed on the Southern coast which was then – and largely still is – uninhabited and made their way right across the mountainous spine of the island on foot, a journey which took a further 36 hours of non-stop climbing, no easy feat for men who were already exhausted.

Shackleton then persuaded a Chilean naval vessel to sail for Elephant Island – with him on board – to rescue the remaining 22 members of his crew who had spent the intervening time sheltering underneath the remaining boat, upturned on the foreshore. This rescue attempt alone took a further 22 months because of bad weather and heavy seas. Finally, Shackleton led his crew back to England having been away for over two years. He had not lost a single man from his crew, despite the atrocious weather and terrain with which he had had to contend.

Shackleton died of a heart attack on his fifth Antarctic expedition in 1922. He was just 48 years old. His expedition of 1914–6 has recently been made into a feature film directed by and starring, Kenneth Branagh.

4.4 The Leadership

Why is Shackleton now regarded as a supreme leader of men? There are a number of reasons, First he did not lose a single member of his crew on his most famous third expedition – and that was an unheard of record in the early years of Antarctic exploration. Second, he did not over-promise his public and his sponsors to achieve feats of which he was not confident of success. These days we would call it under-promising and over achieving, which is much better than attempting matters the other way round.

His leadership style is widely regarded as being one of the most influential in recent history and there are some aspects of it which can be analysed and used as exempla for future leaders. Notably these include:-

- Thoughtful leadership. Shackleton knew better than most the dangers faced in Antarctica and planned accordingly.
- Leading by example. He gave himself no favours in matters such as food – eating only the same meagre rations as his men and sleeping in the same cold and damp conditions. He also shared the same heavy workload, giving himself heavier tasks, very often than he gave to his crew.
- Turned bad experiences into valuable work lessons; he learned by his and others' mistakes and ensured that the same mistakes were not made twice.
- He insisted on respectful competition – to maintain morale and keep his crews fit and interested in achieving goals.
- He hired outstanding people and surrounded himself with a hard core of experienced Antarctic hands, all of whom showed strong character.
- He looked for optimism and cheerfulness in his men, so that spirits could be kept up even when the future appeared to be hopeless.
- He equipped his crew with the best equipment that he could prise out of the Admiralty such as using dogs and sledges instead of ponies or manpower. Also, his ship "Endurance" was Norwegian-built only two years before the expedition set sail and believed to be the strongest ever completed for naval expeditions.
- He also worked hard to create a spirit of cameraderie – partly by selecting the right sort of crew member in the first place but also by his own actions during the expedition.
- He established order and routine so that nobody had too much time to brood over their perilous position.
- He was not only fair but seen to be fair in dealings with all his crew.
- He used informal gatherings to reinforce esprit de corps.
- He understood and accepted his crews' personal quirks and preferences – so that he treated them as individuals.
- He made wide use of informal one-to-one talks to build a bond with his crew members.
- He was always willing to help others to get their work done and helped each and to achieve his potential.

4.5 Leadership in times of Crises

His behaviour in a crisis, too, was exemplary (most of the expedition was one long crisis). He let everyone know, for example that he was not only in charge but confident of success at every opportunity – which must have taken a considerable effort of will power at times. He inspired confidence and minimised any dissent by keeping any malcontents close to him and involving them in planning for survival. Importantly, he managed to persuade everyone to let go of the past and focus on the present and the future – a powerful if fundamental approach. Often, he would find work for those who would otherwise mope and despair of ever seeing home and family again.

For further first hand information on Shackleton see his own book "The Heart of the Antarctic", first published in 1909 or any of the more modern biographies, especially Leading at the Edge: Leadership Lessons from the Extraordinary Saga of Shackleton's Antarctic Voyages by Perkins, Holtman, Kessler & MacCarthy. (American Management Association, 2000, ISBN 0-8144-0543-6) from which some of this material is taken.

Other leaders

So, Shackleton has given us a legacy of how to behave in a crisis and of how to lead people who have almost given up hope of any successful outcome. But the example is not one from everyday life. Most organisations do not venture anywhere near the Antarctic and the problems they face are of a more humdrum nature. Leadership must be able to take advantage of normal conditions as well as extreme crises. In this respect there is a more modern counterpart for Shackleton in Sir Michael Edwardes.

4.6 Edwardes

Edwards was Chairman of BL Cars from 1978–1982. This was a time of major upheaval in the UK automotive industry. Imports had soared by 535% during the previous seven years, there were, on average, 1.6 strikes every working day somewhere in the unwieldy group, of about 212,000 employees and some of the key models, such as the Mini and the MGB, had been so badly costed financially, that they were losing money on every unit sold. On top of that the, then, new Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher was sorely tempted to allow the whole industry to go bankrupt partly as a lesson to others and partly to aid the war on militancy in UK manufacturing industry. It would take a whole book to catalogue the struggles which Edwardes fought to simply keep the group in existence. One such book already exists (Back from the Brink. Edwardes, 1983, Collins) although it does not tell the whole story.

Put simply Edwardes saved the organisation from itself and from the financial and political vultures which were waiting to feed off the scraps. In his own account of this commercial crusade, he wrote: "I believe that BL does have a future. It is a company which has talent at all levels. Talent that can and must be fully utilised. It is an enormous task, some would say impossible. Given the right support from the company and the government, which could mean facing up to some tough decisions, it is still possible to restore its growth and realise its full potential."

That potential was eventually realised by a long process of restoring management to its proper role, gaining approval from investor and customers alike and, crucially, securing the support of the workforce who voted in a secret ballot by 87% to accept the Edwardes' recovery plan which, effectively meant that at least 20% of the employees would face redundancy. That was a hard vote to secure. But Edwardes succeeded and is, arguably one of the most successful leaders in British industry of recent years. He led from the front, usually working long hours and stinting neither himself nor his management team. Above all, he had genuine charisma, a quality that cannot be learned or acquired but which is, probably inbred.

What Edwardes did

Edwardes re-defined management and leadership within the confines of the 1970s and 1980s. He:-

- asserted the rights of management to manage
- kept all his promises on actions designed for the good of the business
- identified strong young managers and promoted them, giving them a remit to succeed

- invested heavily in areas for future success such as computerised systems, industrial relations and flexible management structures
- did not attempt, to drive from the back seat but, cone he had delegated a task, allowed the managers concerned to get on with it without interference.
- Under-promised and over-delivered
- Kept his word. Once he had committed to a course of action, he ensured that it was carried out. Employees might not have liked all that he did; but they did understand that, if he said he would do something, he did it.

Special qualities

Edwardes was the embodiment of dynamism and drive. He worked very long hours himself and expected all his staff to do likewise. Past failures counted for nothing He would nearly always start with a clean sheet and allow everyone a voice in debating the desired route to be followed – what we would now call a pathway or strategic direction.

4.7 Contemporary Practice

There are, of course, a large number of recent and current management views on leadership which bear further investigation. We do not have to go back 100 years with Shackleton or even, as with Edwardes, 25 years to learn how to lead workforces. A recent exercise at Porsche Cars GB conducted with a broad range of senior middle management identified a number of truths about leadership which are probably representative of most managers in a similar position.

The survey took in a cross section of middle managers, selected for their balance of age, gender, discipline, specialisation and education levels. It asked what qualities they most valued in leaders. Unsurprisingly, many of the answers could have been written before the exercise. The participants divided the answer into two distinct sections, leadership roles for tasks and leadership roles for relationships. The contributions were:-

Tasks

Organising the team
Setting goals
Giving or seeking opinions
Giving and seeking information
Summarising and clarifying
Co-ordinating
Controlling timescales
Outlining rules and procedures

Relationships

Seeking consensus
Resolving conflicts
Seeking compromise or other mutual solutions
Seeking opinion and information
Encouraging other team members
Processing the group's work
Enabling the team to perform to the best of its ability

There is nothing terribly surprising here, perhaps. It represents a snapshot in time of a busy management team in a highly competitive industry. These findings have never before been published but they accord, almost spookily, with the very summary of leadership qualities identified by Shackleton, either directly or indirectly. His list included:-

- Team building
- Inspiring others
- Taking responsibility
- Doing the right thing
- Allowing the team to make mistakes (but not many or serious or fatal ones)
- Assessing performance

- Taking painful decisions (and thus saving others from having to do so)
- Having courage
- Selling and persuading
- Being determined
- Giving praise where it is due (an obvious area but one ignored by too many modern managers)
- Working alongside the team
- Giving constructive feedback
- Explaining decisions
- Taking responsibility for others (and for one's own decisions)
- Being honest
- Taking responsibility for the mistakes of other people in one's team (but not praise for their successes)
- Motivating others
- Sharing a vision with team members
- Acting with integrity
- Determining direction
- Nurturing and growing people (to the extent of even developing successors)

Clearly there is a strong incidence of similarity between these two lists which is not coincidental. In Hamlet's words, "there is nothing new in heaven or hell Horatio…" and, certainly not on earth or in business management.

Stop and Think

Which of these qualities do you believe to be the most important? Howe many of your own organisation's leaders do you think show some or all of these qualities from time to time? Could you add this list. If so what would your additions be?

Finally, to continue the theme of great leaders from the past, here is a quote from Napoleon. "A leader is a dealer in hope". Some of Napoleon's own campaigns could be said to bear this out and, when it all went wrong – as in the ill-fated Russian expedition of 1812 – it went very badly wrong. But there might be some truth in his words. Perhaps all leaders rely to a certain extent on hope – and, by definition an element of luck as well. Napoleon also said that the greatest quality a general could have was to be lucky – and many leaders will have some empathy with that.

To take it to a final step, there is a good statement from Kouzes and Posner in a book called "The Leadership Challenge"; it reads: "Leadership is the art of mobilising others to want to struggle for shared aspirations", the key word here being "want". Unless employees want to achieve something, they are unlikely to do so as we saw in Chapter 5 on motivation. Certainly Sir Michael Edwardes would probably be the first to agree with that; his distinctive brand of leadership relied heavily on gaining the hearts and minds of the workforce.

As a summary, it is a good quote.

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