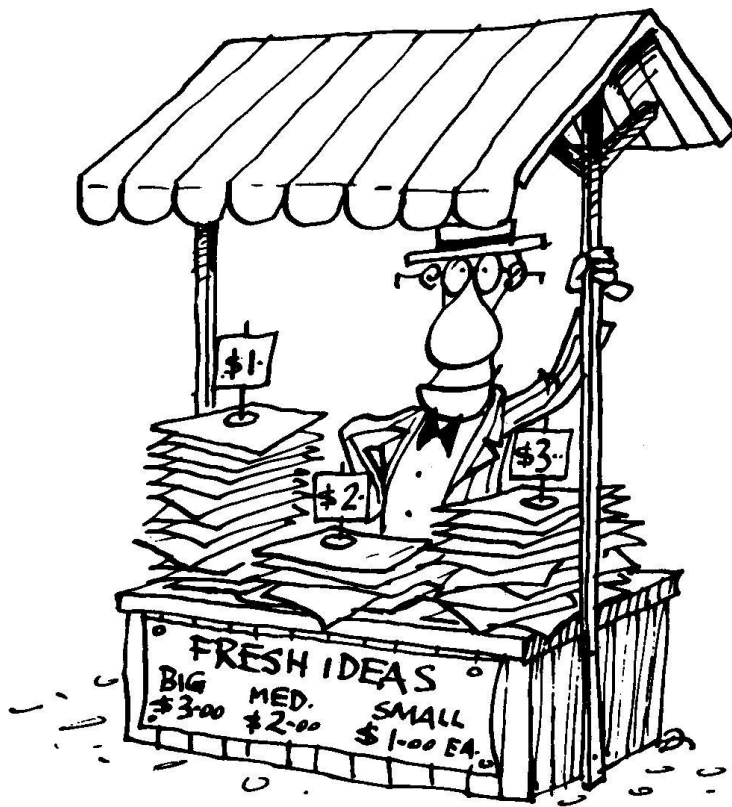


Management for Results

E.W. CORLESS, M.I.E.Aust.



*A new book which compresses in
simple language the key fundamentals
for effective management*

Management for Results

E. W. CORLESS, M.I.E.Aust.

1977



Telecom Australia

Foreword

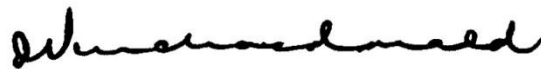
This book deals with those aspects of the fundamentals of management which need to be known by those who are entering the management field, and which can be applied progressively through to middle management levels. It fills a need in outlining many of the essential points without involving the manager in extensive reading and attending over a period a number of management courses. Not all young to middle level managers have the time for either of these activities at the stage when they most need the knowledge.

The author, a professional Engineer with a mechanical and telecommunications background, has been closely involved in the development and application of management techniques in Telecom Australia and its predecessor, the Australian Post Office, since 1940. Despite the views which he expresses in this book on limitations of some management courses and books, he nevertheless has exhibited a high regard for the value of the principles of good management practice. He has a proven record of successful management in areas relating to external plant operations, and for a period of about 22 years he applied these principles to the management of the very large

automotive plant fleet of the Commission. He is currently responsible for the Headquarters operation which covers the Australia-wide telecommunications operations related to Telecom Workshops, Automotive Plant, Methods Engineering, and Drafting Services.

In 1950 he conducted the first series of lectures on management delivered within the Australian Post Office. Many of the views he expresses have been influenced by his interchange of information with working managers in the USA where he found that, despite the tremendous effort devoted to the theoretical aspects, management techniques were broadly oriented towards the achievement of practical results.

The title of this book reflects the constant emphasis on results rather than theory, which is apparent in all the management activities undertaken by the author. It will be useful to people directly concerned with management in Telecom Australia, and to many others who have a need to achieve specific results by the application of sensible, practical and down-to-earth management techniques.



A/g General Manager: Engineering

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Preface: *This Book Should NOT BE Necessary*

In an ocean where fish abound a sailor adrift in a boat will perish if he cannot catch an edible fish; and he will not survive on sea water unless he can separate the water from the salt.

There is a veritable ocean of books on management surrounding us. The question is, how much of it will serve our need? Management information is so often in a form which cannot be utilised by the manager. The purpose of this book is to present some basic information in a form which can be used economically, effectively and at an early phase of manager's career.

It is interesting to discuss the contents of book-cases with executives throughout industry and government departments. Frequently there will be one or more thick, impressive books on some aspects of management. Some of the books claim to give a fairly comprehensive overall coverage of the subject. At least some of them have obviously been written to impress rather than to inform. Most, however, have been written by serious writers such as Peter Drucker, and others of like calibre; the information they contain is valuable to those whose needs match the contents of the books. Much of the information is of a nature expected to be used by people working at high levels of responsibility in organisations operating at an advanced level of management sophistication. Most of these books have been browsed, but not read, by many executives. The reason is simple — managers with heavy responsibilities seldom have time to read long tomes.

Managers at lower levels with the time to study the books are seldom at a stage of their career where the information outlined can be applied or even fully appreciated. To be effective, management theory must be applied as it is digested.

Management theory for use up to a level that would adequately serve most executives for their life-time is relatively straight-forward and funda-

mental. Such theory is well hidden in complex and voluminous textbooks. Management is more than theory — it is solid consistent application of certain attributes, of which first and foremost are:

- A determination to achieve results in line with the objectives of the enterprise.
- The courage to take all action necessary in the management of the operation
- Persistence to drive significant activity to finality
- A practical knowledge of basic management principles

Accountants, engineers, or finance directors and many others need considerable training in their specialist field and the training is meaningful and effective. It brings with it an element of disciplined thinking which will add to their ability as managers. On straight-out management however, the benefits of training beyond the principles outlined in this book will be of little use unless it is backed by the practice of management in a situation where one can continually develop by producing results.

Learning to manage is something like learning to fly. All the theory in the world will be ineffective unless one flies, preferably under the guidance of an able instructor. Understanding of the theory will hasten the rate of learning, but it will not teach a person to fly.

In a publication on management of a specific operation* I stated my doubts on the value of certain management training; I wondered whether I was inviting criticism because of these views. There was remarkable response from practising managers in support of the theories which were put forward.

*Telecom Australia *Information Bulletin No.4* — Management of a Large Fleet of Automotive Plant & Transport.

Two of the supporting letters came from a Business Lawyer/Company Director and a Chief Auditor of the Australian headquarters of a multinational corporation. Among others was a copy of an article by Patrick Cole, who burlesqued the subject by listing and explaining various popular phases of management theory. The list hereunder shows the headings, starting with the original form which worked successfully before the subject of management theory became popular. They were:

- Management of Capability
- Management by Intimidation
- Management by Baksheesh
- Management by Exhortation
- Management by Hibernation
- Management by Objectives.

And lastly, Management by Management – the final and only system that works. The story ends by the proponent, Professor Dolittle (Professor of work watching), struggling in his last breath as he was shot by the gloved hand of a management training expert who cried “Death to all gaffe blowers”.

I favour the study of management theory in the right context, but see the need for a working document to point young managers in the right direction, and to help them sort the wheat from the chaff. I hope these brief papers help achieve this object.

1. What the Boss Wants

In a day and age when individual views on authority vary greatly, there has developed a body of opinion among junior managers and would-be junior managers that authority to manage even a small task involves authority for a large range of responsibilities and for the exercise of a great deal of initiative. The writer would not query these views providing that:

- The objectives and activities of the person concerned are in line with the wishes of the man in charge.
- His authority, actions and objectives are in line with the stated policies and objectives of the organisation.
- The initiatives are within the delegation, the ability and sense of responsibility of the man concerned.

These parameters are not always observed or even understood; at times people are quite oblivious to the rights and responsibilities of their senior officer, and will go their own way almost irresponsibly until it is necessary to firmly restrain them. Most people with this outlook are at the very junior levels of management because these attributes do not fit a person for promotion. An even more dangerous man is the one who appears to be responsible, but whose performance is unpredictable, and who at times makes expensive decisions outside the scope of his competence.

An old cliché attributed to a famous manager states that "the boss may not always be right, but he is always the boss". Taken out of context this statement represents an extreme which is unacceptable to reasoning people. Nevertheless, it makes a legitimate point. Any manager is responsible for the output of people under his control, so where there is difference of opinion, the man with the final responsibility must also exercise the final authority to define objectives, action, priorities, standards, or any other matter affecting the oper-

ation under consideration. Nevertheless, the wise manager gives his staff more and more freedom to make their own decisions as they develop the capacity to use this freedom effectively.

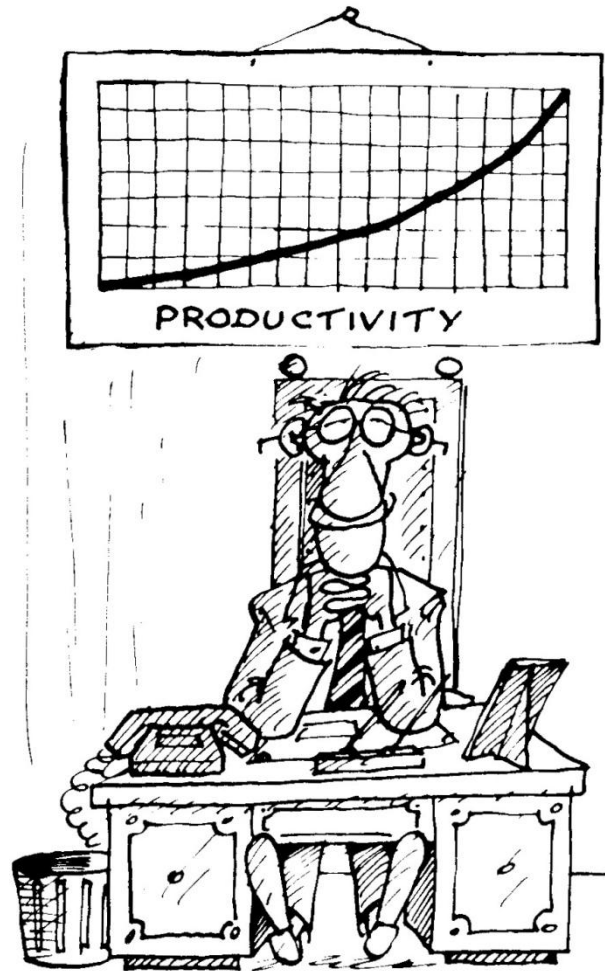
Having said that, junior executives (and those at other levels too) should take the attitude that, if there is any doubt as to the action required by their senior officer, the first responsibility is to fully inform him of the relevant factors and to make a suitable recommendation. If this recommendation is not accepted then they have fulfilled their responsibility and must carry on in the way directed. In general, cases where differences of opinion exist should be infrequent. If too many cases exist either the man in charge and his subordinate are following different lines of thought, or one of them has too many ideas which are unacceptable. If a man and his boss reach this situation too often, the employee will need to seek transfer to another area because the work environment will not be one where results or satisfaction will be achieved.

In general, it should be assumed that responsibilities and workload at higher levels tend to increase even though to the casual observer the higher officer appears to be less loaded and perhaps more relaxed. It is not possible to judge the load of the senior position without occupying this position, and what may appear to be a job with a light workload may simply be a job which requires more solid thinking time. For those who have not done it, thinking out the answers to the more difficult problems at a higher level is in fact a demanding and often an enervating task. If we consider those facets of senior jobs, it becomes self evident that at junior levels, it is important to find ways to be helpful to your boss; some ways are:

- a. Avoid submission of time wasting proposals. Proposals which have no hope of being adopted, or which are too far ahead of their time, which cannot be financed or matched with suf-

ficient resources, simply waste executive time.

- b. Anything you prepare for your senior officer should be easy to understand. Complex submissions not only waste time but frequently fail to achieve their purpose. And never provide information unless you are certain of its accuracy or unless you state the limitations of its reliability.
- c. Try and prepare correspondence which goes to higher levels in such a way that your boss needs to take the minimum of action and time in either studying the detail or in altering your submission. The ideal submission requires of your boss a brief perusal and a signature, and nothing else. We cannot always reach this level of perfection but it should always be the aim.
- d. All requests that come down from higher levels and which require action should be handled in such a way that there will be feedback to the higher level at appropriate times to assure people concerned that the necessary action is in hand and moving toward completion. An off-sider who lets things lapse for inadequate follow-up simply places the need for the follow-up on his boss, and this does not generate any good marks. This failure to follow-up and to provide regular feedback is a common failing among many lower level managers.
- e. Except as a last resort, do not involve those above you in contentious situations with others at their level. Try by direct approach to negotiate problems to the stage where they can be fairly identified in non-emotional terms leaving differences of opinion to be discussed rather than emotional wrangles to be settled. And never involve your boss in a battle he cannot win.
- f. Keep your senior officers informed either verbally or preferably in brief notes about any items which may affect their interests or which



may result in queries being directed to them from other sources. For example, a man in charge of a large operation appreciates being told that certain activities may result in industrial action or may cause variations to expenditure within budgets. Likewise, don't forget the good news of items within his realm of control; typically items such as jobs which are ahead of schedule or of areas in which cost savings are being achieved.

- g. Recognize that managers have different styles. Some like to be very well informed on all matters of any importance at all; others prefer you to act to the limit of your initiative so long as you are sure you are on the right track. This is only one example of different management styles. Try to find out how your own boss likes to operate and endeavour to fit into his style of management.

Perhaps we could sum up the above pointers by saying "do the job well and create a minimum of trouble for the people above you. You get good marks for what you do well and bad marks for the pointless trouble you cause".

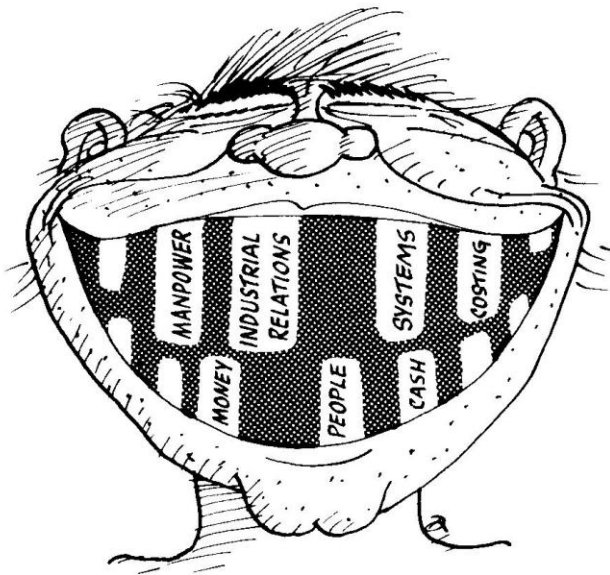
One final point worth noting is that your senior officer wants, with as many of his immediate staff as possible, a sense of security based on mutual trust and on confidence in the integrity, competence and predictability of each individual who reports to him. Those who establish this relationship can be assured of faster progress than those who fail to do so. They can also rely upon receiving an increasing degree of freedom to use their own initiative.

2. Gaps in Management Courses

It is fair observation that there is an increasing resistance among managers of middle and senior levels towards the high cost of releasing competent staff to undertake management courses, many of which produce results which at best are valuable to some of the participants and at worst are an unnecessary and uninformative restatement of commonsense principles in current jargon. This is not to deny the valuable knowledge to be gained from good management courses conducted by competent people which, unfortunately, do not make up a large proportion of courses.

Management courses, as seen by the writer and many others over the last few years, suffer in varying degree from the following weaknesses:

- They are often conducted by professional lecturers who have little experience as professional managers.
- They frequently deal with advanced theories which are not appropriate to the people who attend them.
- They encompass subjects for which there is no feedback of success or failure of the people who



attend them. After questioning 10 executives prior to writing this paper as to the specific benefits of the management courses they attended recently, I found that they were forced to the view, in seven cases, that except for a minority of subjects, the main value of the course was in getting to know certain people. Two others claimed that there was real value in the course, but were unable to precisely and convincingly state the areas of value. One other was enthusiastic and produced evidence of what he had learnt. This man was already a good manager before he attended the course and he benefited considerably. It was significant that the course included a small number of practising managers among its lecturers, and the lectures of these men were the most appreciated.

Fortunately in an organisation like Telecom Australia, it is possible for our course organisers to seek feedback information to eliminate poor performers among our lecturers and inappropriate subjects from our courses, and this is consistently done, but this post-course review could in my view be strengthened.

Some of the questions on the management process which should be raised and seldom are, perhaps because they cannot easily be expressed in sophisticated terms, are:

- How do we sample performance in broad terms by skilful observation, and what are the signs which allow a skilful manager to detect an area in which management is obviously loose?
- How can workload be judged from observation preparatory to going into more intensive study?
- Who are the people who can be most helpful to a manager and how does he enlist their help?
- How do we judge the likelihood of a company keeping promises on price and delivery?
- Is it possible to judge the facts presented in an annual report; if so, how?
- How do we quickly identify the occasional "phoney" among our contacts?

Some of the questions listed above look so elementary that they would certainly not attract high fees for lecturers, and yet in my experience they are among many such matters of basic importance in management development. Many people I have heard lecture on complex management subjects would be lost if asked to talk on these simple concepts; yet recently when I spoke of these and similar subjects to a highly regarded institute of auditors, the response was gratifying indeed. I put this down to the fact that these auditors are charged with the day-to-day job of testing management by actions which are visible to the observing eye. This gives us a clue to finding the answers to the day-to-day management questions; they are found by managers who persistently and conscientiously manage for results.

Having outlined in Section 1 the main needs of senior officers which will need to be considered by managers, the following papers aim to strengthen your ability to meet these needs and other needs of your staff and your organisation without having to find this information over a long period through management courses. They aim to deal with the crux of the various subjects, and as you develop; if you are wise enough to choose good management courses conducted preferably by practising managers, the skills you are using to practice the profession of management will be further polished. But you must start at an early stage in your career to manage, and to manage effectively. Along this path, in day-to-day management, lies the answer to important management questions and rapid development for those who are likely to reach higher management levels.

3. Selling Ideas

Every executive or supervisor is a salesman, whether he likes it or not. He may resent the idea, in which case he may well do the selling very badly. However, unless he is prepared to sell his ideas, he will not succeed. Of course many executives are very good salesmen without ever admitting or realising the fact — they are naturally competent in this field.

Possibly the resentment of being classed as a salesman arises from the concept that a salesman could be a counter hand in a big store, a seller of land or phoney ideas, or a car salesman pressuring people to buy a car which they don't want and which is at best a false bargain. These of course are very limited views of the function of a salesman. In the context of this paper, a salesman is one who has something valuable to sell and who is able to persuade other people who genuinely need the product that it is worth buying, and, most importantly, he is a man who will leave a satisfied customer.

At executive level the things most likely to be in need of selling are:

- Ideas
- Concepts
- Plans for action
- Information.

Here are a few fundamentals for selling these products:

- Decide who the buyer of the product will be. It may be a staff association, your colleagues or staff, people at your level or above in another area, or your own boss or his senior officers.
- Design your approach for the buyer. A staff association may need a long patient personal selling task, whereas your boss's senior officer will need to be sold through your boss with a brief submission which is to the point, with convinc-

ing evidence in a suitable form attached to support the submission.

- Wherever possible, use the "KISS" principle (Keep it Short and Simple).
- Build a reputation for selling only first-class products — second rate products ruin your reputation and limit your market. If you build a reputation of selling "winners" your sales will increase because the opposition will tend to reduce — especially opposition of a trivial nature.
- If the idea is complicated, see if it can be sold in discrete simple phases.
- For a difficult and far-reaching proposal, prepare the ground by finding out those who will be with you or against you before you start the direct selling job. You may be able to soften some of the opposition before the real battle begins.



- The old adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words” can be used and extended by presenting even a model placed in the office to demonstrate the advantage of an idea, or the impracticability or an alternative which you may have to out-sell.
- Make sure your ground work on cost benefits, where applicable, is sound and clearly documented, and in a form which demands attention.
- In selling information, never present too much data at the one time. I am familiar with two sets of control statistics which are regularly distributed; one set is distributed in bound volumes of 100 or more sheets, and except for those who are forced to search for the information they need, these books of statistics are seldom opened; the other set with almost as many sheets is prepared in vividly marked format issued two or three sheets at a time, so that the message is seen before the sheets are filed.
The latter set is much more effective as busy executives find it so much easier to read in the small doses in which it is issued.
- There is room for a discreet touch of humour, even in a rather formal organisation. This may not be important if you are selling candy to kids, but usually an executive is more likely to be trying to sell ice-chests to Eskimos.
- If your product is not selling, don't blame the buyer, blame the salesman; look for another approach. And while doing this, make sure you clearly understand why the product didn't sell the first time; perhaps it is not a good product!

For perspective it is necessary to point out the fundamental difference between the traditional salesman who deals with products such as cars, clothes or cosmetics which he is paid to sell, and the executive or supervisor who has to sell ideas, plans and concepts. The former has little or no control over the quality, value, or long term serviceability

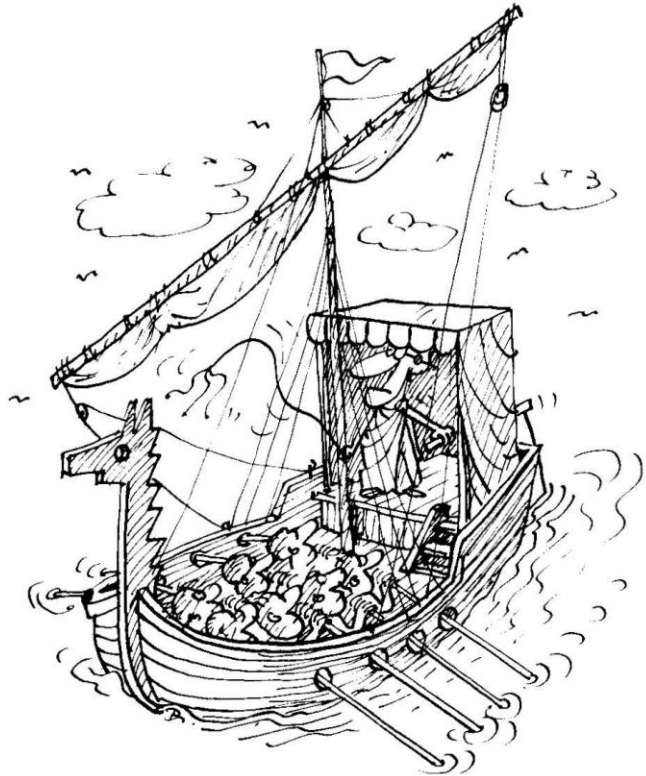
of a product. The latter must carefully choose the items he promotes, because he is responsible for the short and long term viability and value of what he promotes.

4. Management – an Inexact Science

Management, whether it be applied in the field of engineering, research activities or the administration of a large organisation, is not a science. At best it can be described as an art supported by scientific studies of repetitive situations. These studies are often based on such subjects as human behaviour, psychology, staff motivation, and on other activities which are more related to certain apparently exact practices such as accountancy, financial management, engineering and so on. Training and study of any of these subjects will make a good manager better, but will not make a good manager.

Looked at closely, even the group such as accountancy, engineering etc., which use figures and calculations to a great extent to document information to support arguments, are nevertheless based on so many moving parameters, changing theories and estimates that their exactitude must be continually queried by the shrewd manager. A positive avalanche of figures is useless in support of an argument which to the perceptive manager is associated with an illogical or impractical recommendation.

In this regard it is worth repeating a story well known in engineering circles as the "Doriat Question". Doriat is reputed to be a competent engineer to whom an elaborate proposal was submitted which involved the development of an alternative way of shifting trees from the forest where they were grown to the harbour from whence they were shipped to the mills. The statement of the engineering economies and other factors indicated that instead of taking the trees down the road, which was both a long and expensive journey, the trees could be pushed over the hill on to a new track from which they would be slid into the river and floated down to the harbour, from which they would be loaded onto ships with a 30 foot draft. After studying the proposal Doriat who had a reputation for asking the one critical question, asked "How deep is the entrance to the harbour"?



This question (the answer was much less than 30 feet) was the key element not covered in the complex proposal. Since the harbour entrance could not be deepened economically, the whole proposal collapsed.

It might be thought that the above example of the original Doriat question is an extreme or a rare case; it is not. Over the last few years I have seen evidence of a number of proposals in several areas of both government and private organisations which have not stood the test of a suitably phrased "Doriat" question. The skill to readily find such questions relative to critical proposals is one of the most productive skills a manager can develop. Such questions appropriately framed may well have altered the course of our country's development on such grandiose schemes as the Ord River project.

Another aspect of this perceptive capacity shows another side of the coin — its intelligent use is much more effective and much less frustrating to staff than the destructive process of holding up projects for non-legitimate reasons when an uncertain executive is merely afraid to say “yes”, but unable to find a reason for saying “no”. The right question will block an unjustified inactivity and will satisfy staff that the blockage is in fact inherent in the proposal rather than in the management attitude.

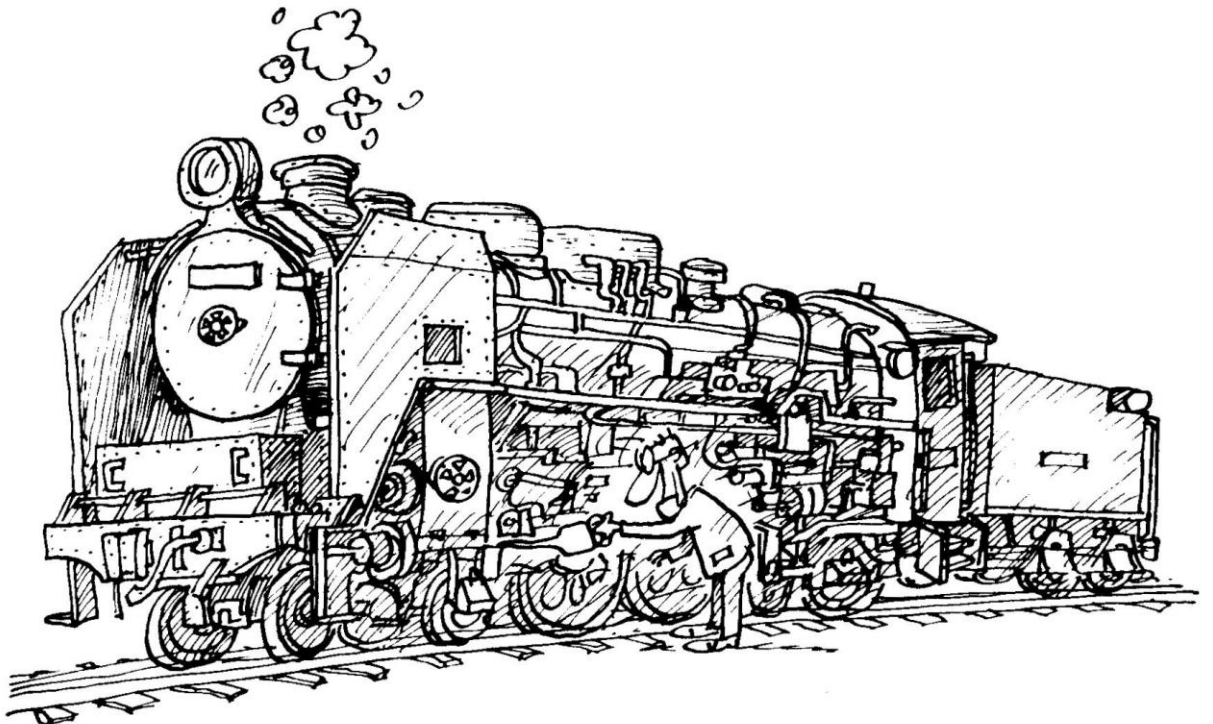
5. Oiling the Wheels of a Large Organisation

The aim in this section is to point up a few of the factors which are common to the workings of most large organisations, so that younger executives can more quickly learn to use, rather than be frustrated by "the machine".

It is easy to be critical of the inefficiencies which often appear in large organisations. Few organisations big or small are free from obvious inefficiencies, but large organisations tend to attract attention more easily by their failings because of their larger field of exposure, or because they are government departments which are fair game for criticism, justified or otherwise; or perhaps they are private concerns which are associated with the tags "Big Business" or "Multi-National".

To those of us who have worked for long years in large organisations, it becomes apparent that the operation handled is often so complex that the wonder is not that they have areas of inefficiency, but rather that they work at all. It surprises many who work at several levels in an organisation to find that at the end of a career, they can still know very little about the workings, the range of tasks, or the management methods of that organisation.

This is an indication of the sheer complexity of an organisation such as Telecom Australia. On the other hand, these organisations by any standards perform with remarkable efficiency most of their functions having regard to the circumstances. Their overall efficiency can be put down to the fact that their highly sophisticated and usually technologically oriented tasks on which they employ the major part of their capital are carried out to a satisfactory level of efficiency; and the inefficiency which is apparent to the observer in their other operations is absorbed in the overall picture.



To achieve results in an organisation it is necessary first and foremost to accept the following as facts of life:

- a. The “system” will not work without people, so learn as a prime task to get the co-operation of people. There are odd folk in organisations who appear to have made a study of how to achieve resistance from everyone they deal with; don’t join this unhappy band. Don’t forget your role as a member of a team.
- b. Any organisation is made up of people in large part just like yourself with minor variations and with elements in differing degrees of pride, sensitivity, reliability, ambition, energy, frustration – tolerance and self control. So don’t expect the other fellow to be all that different from yourself. Even if you think some of your colleagues are inferior in some areas of activity, or performance, don’t be too ready to assume that you are right; and don’t expect the other fellow to accept from you what you will not take from him. “Do unto others” is still a golden rule.
- c. Efficient, effective managers attract efficient and effective staff. The result is a motivated group in which work is more meaningful and pleasurable and in which frustrations tend to decrease.
- d. Every department, branch or group has certain rights and responsibilities; find out which of these areas affect your legitimate interest, study their parameters and develop some contacts. Friends at your level in other groups are invaluable, especially if they are in a group with which your own group tends to have conflicts of interest.
- e. Share the “kudos”. If you have a notable success which is worth writing up, don’t forget to give credits to those groups or individuals who have helped you.

- f. Take time off to say thank you, sometimes in writing at suitable times such as Christmas or if a notable service has been done for you.
- g. Don’t fight the system – get it to work for you.

In seeking the contacts you need to “oil the wheels”, identify those departments whose cooperation you will require. These will usually include the standard list such as:

Accounting
 Budgetary Control
 Costing
 Relevant Engineering groups
 Library Services
 Methods Engineering
 Public Relations
 Personnel Department
 Supply

Having completed the list relevant to your own section, it is a good plan to see the people concerned to establish the contact on a more personal basis, and then find out what problems these people have with the areas under your control, and what you can do to help them. On this approach you will find almost invariably that your problems of obtaining co-operation will tend to lessen considerably, but don’t forget to maintain the level of liaison by occasional contact and by sincerely seeking ways of helping the people in these other areas to meet their responsibilities.

Having made your contacts, there will still be differences of opinion which continually arise in an organisation. Don’t expect to win every point in these administrative contests. It is wise at times to give way on minor issues or even to go out of your way to help the other man at the expense of your own interest; this will help you win support on the important aspects of your own problems.

6. Control Statistics

Without control statistics it is not possible to manage any but the simplest of organisations, but there are traps for the unwary in establishing controls. Like the small boy learning to swim, those wishing to establish controls can jump in at the deep end and hope to float, but at great risk; or they can walk in gently from the shallow end in safety and with reasonable certainty of success. This brief paper points out the gentle, safe and sure approach by outlining some important pointers to effective controls. These pointers are:

- (1) Determine whether a system is necessary and justified. Start by studying broad total figures for an operation to be controlled to ensure that the total system promises sufficient potential cost benefits to justify controls.
- (2) Control systems of any sort must win acceptance from those who use them. Such acceptance is gained more readily from those who partake in the design of the system.
- (3) Crude statistics are adequate for operations which are at a crude level of management effectiveness. A high proportion of management activity falls, in varying degrees, into this category. As the efficiency of management of the operation improves, the statistics can be progressively refined. I am indebted to an American, Richard Neumeier, for the following quotation which explains the importance of avoiding perfection in producing statistics:

“A control that is 80% perfect and 100% accepted will work. One that is 100% perfect and 80% accepted will not work”.
- (4) It is better to build up detailed statistics for selected areas only. Many management information systems have failed because of the attempt to establish “Total Management Information Systems”. Such systems normally call upon expensive techniques (statisti-



cal analysis, computer programmes, etc.) which sometimes take years to become effective during which period an astonishing number of opportunities for savings by use of simpler statistics have been missed or delayed. Some organisations have found to their cost that the final Total Management Information System does not always produce the expected benefits, and the cost and delay have been expensive. Businesses have been forced into near-bankruptcy by this experience.

- (5) Avoid systems for the sake of systems. Remember, systems and statistics do not manage. I have, over the years, had two fairly senior people on my staff who, when faced with a difficult management problem, could always be relied upon to start inventing a new system; the more complex the proposed

system the better because, I suspected, this would protect them from facing the main management problem for much longer.

- (6) Quick results should be obtained from early action as the system points to the opportunities for such action. Choice of areas of known inefficiency for first application of selective crude figures will hasten results. Retrospective figures if available can sometimes be used to indicate failures to achieve adequate performance – such evidence tends to make people more amenable to accepting assistance.
- (7) Statistics should be readily amendable in format or content so that people who find their performance highlighted as unsatisfactory can suggest improvements. If they consider that the statistics present an unfair picture, different presentation to meet objections seldom alters the result, but tends to make the control more acceptable.
- (8) The form of the statistics should trumpet their message in loud, clear and inescapable tones. Appendix 'A' is a typical statistical control used in the Automotive Plant area, and was one of a number which clearly highlighted the trends for different States. A benefit of this presentation is that opposition to these controls decreases because those with the red markings find the issue too sensitive to attract publicity by objections, whereas those with the green markings support publication of their figures.
- (9) There is rarely justification for issuing statistics in large batches, except to a limited number of staff who have the time and the specific responsibility to examine them. Even so, it may be necessary to issue, say, 50 different sheets of statistics to cover a particular activity. Don't issue them in bound volumes; they can be issued in batches of 2 or 3 at a time, and this will ensure broader interest because higher level executives don't have time to look for the message in a pile of papers. I have found this method of distri-

bution most effective because managers at high level can find time to look at one or two statements in which the message is loud and clear, and they need see only statistics selected by you for their particular interest.

- (10) The system must be economical relative to its potential savings and cost benefits and it must be simple. If it is at all complex it will fall into disuse as soon as the interested party (usually the man who develops it) takes his hand off the controls.
- (11) Where possible, control statistics should be collected and culled from existing information. The source should be quoted on the statistics. This approach produces economies and frequently eliminates objections as to the validity of the figures.
- (12) Don't ask work face staff to provide any figures which can possibly be extracted by clerical or other staff from existing returns, pay statements, etc. Where possible, Foremen close to the work face should provide only figures in which they have an interest and those which indicate action which they can take at their point of responsibility.

Finally, let me repeat, systems and statistics do not manage. They are tools for managers. The following quotation shows very clearly the need to keep data systems and other information strictly under control:

"Impart information, not data. Data is an excrescence. Data is the very latest kind of pollution. Data of itself has no value. What has value is the machinery to transform data into information and the machinery by which that information may be used" – Dr Stafford Beer 'Computers and People 1974'.

Remember – systems are an aid to achieving an objective. Don't let enthusiasm for a system divert your attention from the objective.

7. Cost Awareness

In a business or efficiency-oriented government organisation, cost awareness is to a successful executive what a wife is to a successful marriage. There will always be those who prefer the risks, the thrills, the costs, the unpredictability and the fascination of a mistress to a wife; but to those who want to sleep soundly and to achieve success, good health, and happiness in the business world, the counterpart of the wife is the logical choice.

Cost awareness is at the crux of most management situations. This self-evident truth should not require mention among those who aspire to managerial positions; yet among young executives, especially among those who come under the influence of much of the anti-business, anti-materialism influences which were rife in the 1950s and 1960s, one often finds a sad lack of cost-awareness. Some of the hard lessons which started to come home to society in the early 1970s have indicated that despite the validity of some of the anti-materialist arguments, even good arguments for a good cause can be taken to an extreme where they become anti-productive toward their main purpose. Many new groups have been set up in the Australian community, and in some other communities, to carry out activities such as development of the arts, improved staff welfare, better working conditions and so on. Some of these groups have found their powers restricted because their idealism is not balanced by a practical down-to-earth realisation of one of the facts of life; that is, they can do for the community only that for which the community at large can find the resources, and the resources usually boil down to time and effort (work) by those members of the community who pay.

It matters not whether we want to build a bridge, upgrade a factory, improve work surroundings or staff welfare, or to shorten working hours, there will be a cost; and irrespective of our attitude to money, it is in fact the only yardstick we know by



which we can exchange, store and channel into various needs the resources the community provides. In particular, in many areas it is the only simple means of measuring the effectiveness of our endeavour.

Cost awareness is therefore a facility to be engendered in every aspiring manager from shop foreman near the work face to all of the managers of the biggest organisation. Cost awareness is important for certain significant reasons:

- It is one factor which influences suitability for promotion (even though it is seldom mentioned as such).
- It allows us to achieve more with the resources at our command, either in our business life or our private life.
- It increases our ability to determine the priorities of the projects we undertake.

- It is an important factor in our ability to contribute more to the organisation for which we work and the society in which we live. In other words, to produce more with the resources available to us.

Considering the importance of cost awareness, it is amazing that it is not taught at an earlier age in our school life. Even in our private lives, we would be better fitted to handle what we receive in wages if we did not have to find out the hard way (by making gross mistakes in handling our own money) that almost everything we do in life has a cost. The purpose of inclusion of these short notes on the subject is to encourage each young manager to seek out the literature and people who are knowledgeable on this subject so that his or her own awareness of costs in its many aspects will be enhanced. In business life as in private life, cost awareness is much akin to health care; to be fully effective it must be built into the whole being. And the cost-aware manager will have a healthier and happier business life than the one to whom cost is a "nuisance" factor to be taken into account only when trouble arises.

There are several ways of developing cost awareness, not all of which I recommended. So, make your own choice. These methods are:

- (1) Go broke. This applies mainly in private life or in business – (in cost-oriented government departments there are equivalents which bring disfavour on executives who are not aware of costs). In Australia, over 2000 businesses go bankrupt in an average year.
- (2) Develop a severe liquidity problem in your business or a shortage in budgetary allocation, which is the government department counterpart. The liquidity problems are a health hazard to both the business and the manager.
- (3) Make a friend of a competent Accountant or financial man, preferably in your own organisation, and ask him to educate you in the realities of costs. He will be complimented and your friendship will be a considerable asset in getting results, particularly in difficult times.
- (4) Take an interest in business affairs and the daily financial news and learn the language.
- (5) Have an accountant explain to you how to read a company balance sheet. You will enhance this capacity if you hold some small stock exchange investment, because a balance sheet is always more meaningful if it affects your personal interests.
- (6) If you are active in a body such as a Service club or sporting organisation, take an interest in the financial affairs of that body – you may be surprised to find that every successful club is run on tight business lines with a cost-conscious man prominent at committee level.

And, as a final word, when you control staff let them know that you are fully aware of the costs of the group activities and train these people to be cost conscious at all appropriate levels.

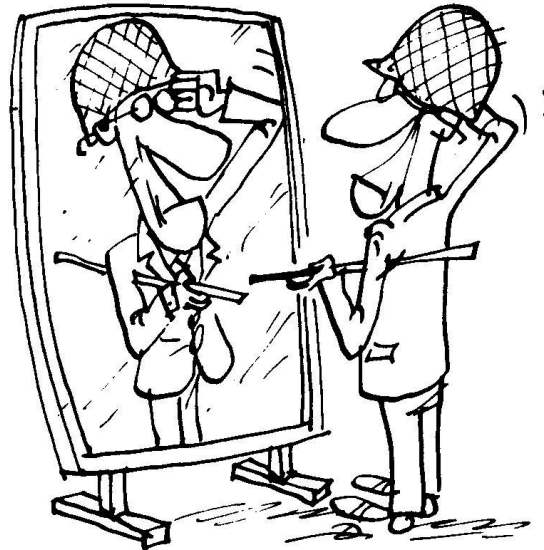
One technique to help do this was recalled recently by the Chief of our Accounting and Supply Department because it had been used on him over 25 years ago and the lesson still remains. His Chief of those days asked him when he was recommending expenditure "If this were your own money, would you spend it in this way?"; and while we are on this subject, don't forget it is your money, and mine. We are all taxpayers.

8. Discipline

In the postwar years, discipline has often been considered a dirty word. I rather think that this attitude has arisen because of an erroneous interpretation of the meaning of the word. Discipline is not necessarily or even desirably a sort of control that is exercised by the sergeant-major on the barracks square or by a dictatorial parent or teacher over school children. As applied to management, the important meaning of discipline is this: If as a result of firm, just and understanding leaders and managers, people in an organisation fit into those parameters and limitations which must be accepted to ensure the success of the organisation and the welfare of the customers and staff, wise discipline can be said to exist. The parameters and limitations may have to do with time keeping, standards of work or of personal behaviour, performance and attitudes, or other matters. They may also extend to personal qualities which affect relationships between members of the team.

This interpretation of discipline gives the purpose and presupposes the benefits which will arise therefrom. And it goes without saying, that the motivation, the standards adhered to and the success of the organisation will depend to a large degree on the extent to which a wise manager has inculcated effective self-discipline into a large cross section of the staff. It could be said that with an individual, family or organisation, discipline must first be instilled by either parents, leaders, teachers or management or a combination of all; whereas with growing maturity, discipline is imposed from within by those people who are likely to become effective managers, leaders or teachers.

It is easy in modern society to quote areas of behaviour where discipline can be breached only at the risk of life and limb. Adherence to road laws is a discipline. Non-adherence quickly brings its penalties; unfortunately the penalties are not always paid by the non-disciplined driver, often



they are paid by an innocent party. The same principles apply to a pilot in charge of a commercial airliner or a small aircraft. Successful landings in a modern airport depend to a very large degree on the discipline of the pilots and the traffic controllers during the approaches made many times each day.

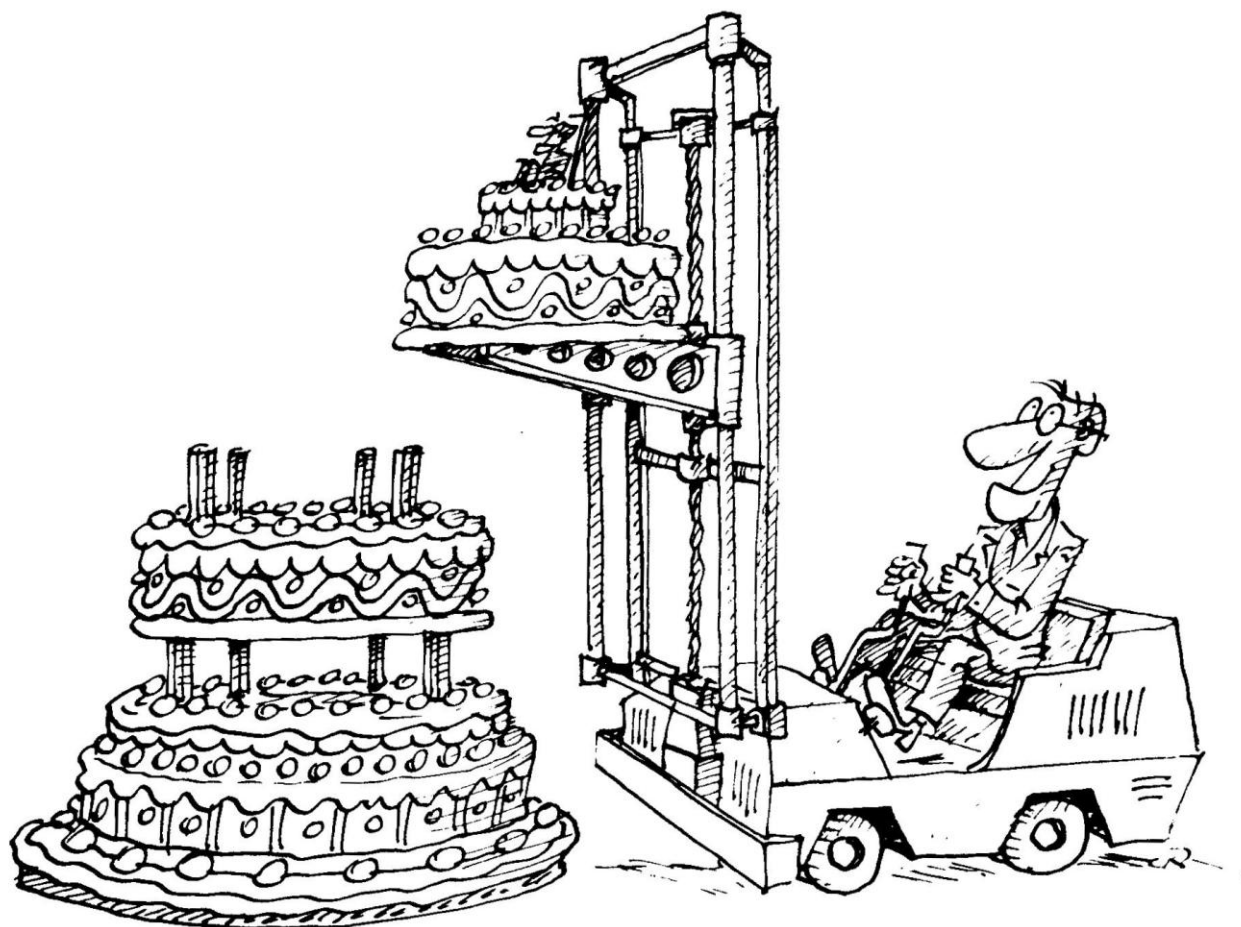
For some reason we do not seem to resent these disciplines – in fact, we would be quite unhappy to travel by air if we were told that our pilot pleased himself about the extent to which he would obey the rules. Likewise, we would not be happy driving on the roads if drivers pleased themselves about road laws (some of course do, especially when reinforced by a little dutch-courage); yet in matters like wearing safety helmets or boots where specified, some people insist on their right “to do their own thing”, even though the only serious losers are likely to be themselves. And in matters of management performance, some will place the future of their employer (and thus their own jobs) in jeopardy rather than accept that the rules are something not imposed by an arbitrary and awkward boss, but by a situation which requires a certain level of performance as a prerequisite for business survival.

9. A Bigger Cake with Less Effort

It has been said with some perception that Hong Kong and Singapore are delightful places for shopping, and the goods there are so inexpensive that a man (or a man and his wife) can go broke saving money. This is not the only field; even in the money saving field of productivity improvement can impoverish an organisation.

After years of confusion of the real meaning of the term, it is at last generally understood that productivity is not production – it is the ratio of output (end product) to input (labour, material, energy or capital), or a combination of some or all of these factors. Productivity therefore, can be improved only by increasing the output or by decreasing the input (or both).

All management in a commercially-oriented organisation, and often in certain other organisations such as the Army, Foreign Affairs Office or even a social welfare group, could benefit from adopting productivity improvement as an objective. Resources would be saved and overall effectiveness could be improved if the resources saved are applied to the achievement of the main objectives of the organisation. While this statement is readily accepted in regard to manufacturing and like activities, there is often resistance, because of unclear thinking, to the thought that there can be improvements in productivity in socially-oriented organisations. Yet, when we come to think of it, in almost any activity, to provide more output for a



given input is a way of freeing the time of people for other activities. Providing certain precautions are taken in defining objectives and the sensible limits of resources together with the effects of their use on the environment, there are only two ways of increasing living standards of the less fortunate end of the community and the leisure of the more fortunate – these are either to take goods from one section of the community and hand them to another (a plan with limited possibilities), or to increase productivity in all appropriate areas of human activity. Even the family garden or the education of children can be handled more efficiently with minimal thought, almost subconsciously applied, by those to whom productivity in their daily lives has become a habit.

A problem we frequently run up against in larger organisations, be they private or public, is the thought that the essential aim is to get the job done and not to worry about efficiencies in minor areas. Such an approach leads to a wasteful use of resources and is counterproductive to the alleged objective which is built into the statement “Get the job done”. In fact, there is no doubt whatever that with given resources many more jobs will be completed in less time if the management is oriented at all levels towards productivity.

At this stage it is necessary to state clearly however, that productivity improvement, like other management devices, will achieve the potential available only if management realises clearly that productivity is not a matter of promises – it is a matter of performance, and without adequate measures and controls, productivity improvement studies will result in purely theoretical savings. Over several years I have taken the trouble to check back on a number of studies which have promised substantial savings; these savings have been promised in terms of staff saved, material saved, or increase of work output. It is surprising that in both government and private organisations,

despite what could have been real improvements, the savings have proved to be theoretical because there was no follow-up to ensure that the staff freed by the improved method were given other meaningful work or alternatively, to ensure that workload was increased with a corresponding increase in material usage and in end product.

The main message for management following a recommendation and action to achieve productivity is to ensure that the savings are achieved in real terms, by the establishment of adequate controls. Any recommendation to achieve savings by productivity improvement or any other method should include a requirement for a system of measurements to be used progressively, and for a post audit of achievement. Investigations leading to cost saving recommendations are often expensive – it is reasonable that the file should not be closed until there is adequate evidence that the proposed results have been achieved in real terms.

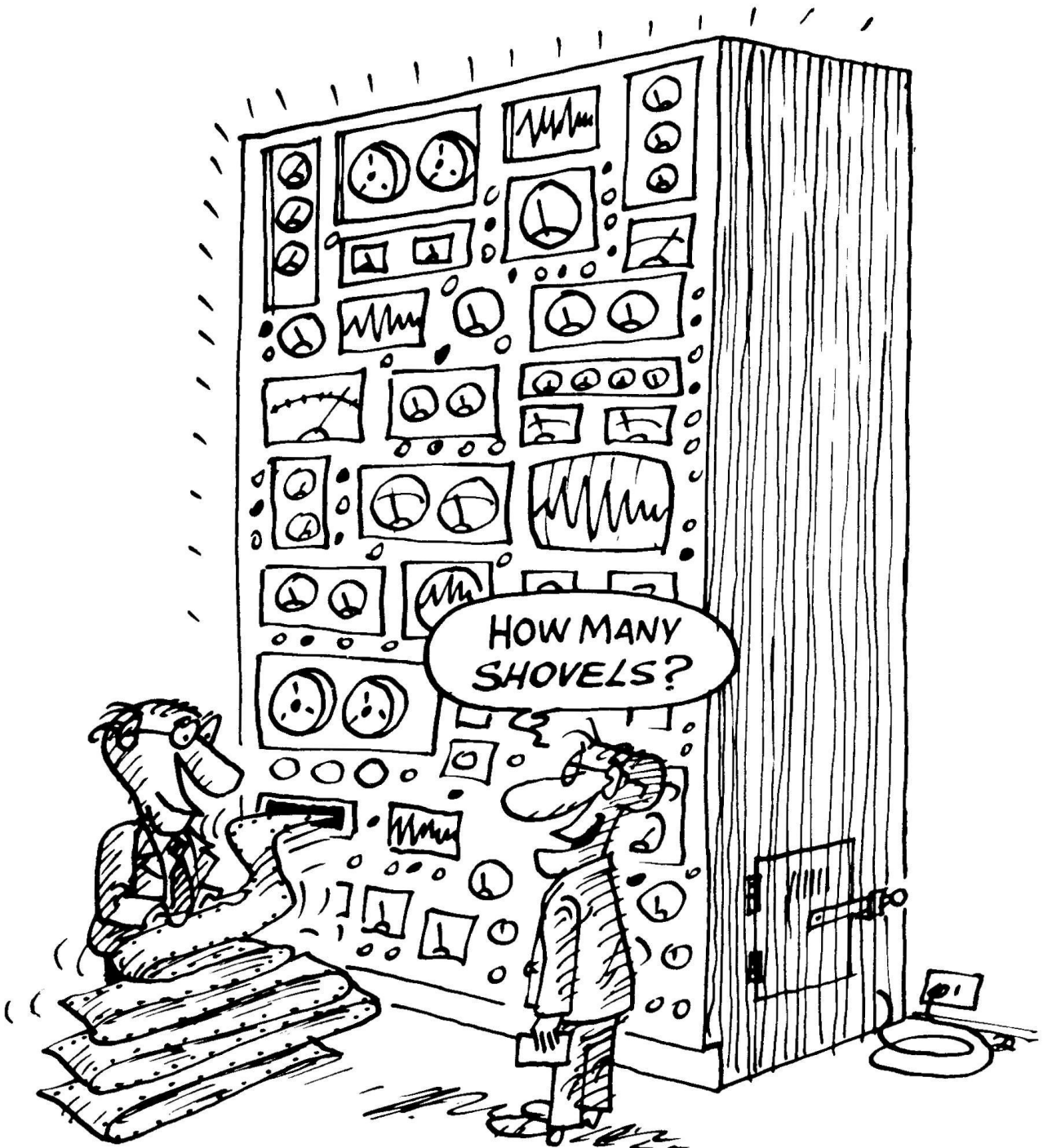
It is necessary to expand a little on the concept of “effectiveness”. Productivity improvement saves resources and opens the way for reducing cost. It does not necessarily, however, improve effectiveness. To quote a specific example, by providing a surgeon with improved techniques for monitoring a patient’s condition while undergoing an operation will perhaps add to the safety of the patient from the viewpoint of respiration, reaction to anaesthetic, etc. If at the same time it allows this monitoring to be done with one less nurse or technician during the operation for a small increase in equipment cost, then inputs to the total operating process have been reduced and the operation would cost less. However, if the surgeon is not very good at his job, the patient may still die. So, while productivity has been improved, effectiveness of the operating team in the one meaningful measure of success is still the same. This example may seem macabre and perhaps slightly irrelevant, but it was deliberately chosen because I have seen

the same thing happen in a business. On one occasion I observed the implementation of an extremely effective productivity improvement plan which halved the costs of running this business over a fairly short period. However, the manager of the business had hidden from the consultant many key figures regarding debts and other liabilities so that despite the improvement in efficiency, the business still went bankrupt. Perhaps both of these examples come under the heading of an old medical story of a report that "the operation was a success, but the patient died".

The finding of areas for productivity increases can safely be left to a professional team of methods engineers or managers. Finding the means is not difficult – achieving the results is the test of the manager.

Perhaps what I have said in the last three paragraphs, and having in mind the opening paragraph of this chapter, I could bring home the point with the short story about the man whose wife was suffering from the after effects of plastic surgery – he had cut off her credit card. Might I suggest that the freedom of people who conduct investigations and management improvements should also be cut off if the investigations do not result in real tangible savings.

10. The Thousand Dollar Answer



During the closing days of the old Australian Post Office I had occasion to discuss with the last Director-General of that organisation, Mr Lane, the problems which a man faced in coming from a State position to a top position in a Commonwealth organisation. Mr Lane was a realist, finding that the things that bothered him were not the problems he expected; as he stated, most of the really difficult decisions were so well documented and investigated and covered with such high quality recommendations when they reached him that the decisions were often fairly straightforward, and only a few gave him real concern.

He did highlight one type of problem which begins to affect managers at the first level when they control significant staff and which becomes increasingly important as they move to higher positions.

The problem was – how does an executive avoid asking questions which, because of his authority in the organisation, tend to attract unnecessarily thorough and costly answers. Mr Lane made the point that this problem placed responsibilities on him as Director-General, and indicated an example on his table. He had telephoned an officer with a simple query to which he expected a telephoned approximate answer within hours; what he received was a report going into great detail with supporting facts and figures. The reply, as he said, must have cost nearly \$1,000 and diverted people from other important work. In his words, it was a fifty cent question wanting a two dollar answer which would have met his need, but the form of answer required was not made clear to the man who prepared the reply.

The lesson is clear for those who want to avoid the problem from their early days at managerial level. If they require information they must observe almost subconsciously the following principles:

- First make sure what you want, and how much time and effort is worth devoting to the answer.
- Arrange where possible to deal directly with the man most likely to give the answer.
- Learn to judge the level of response your own level of authority is likely to evoke. Obviously, the higher the level of officer who asks a question, the greater will be the caution and desire to please; and if parameters are not stated in the question, the thousand dollar answer may be too late to be useful.

The golden rule is – ask the question in terms which specify clearly the form of answer you want. Since the questions tend to be fired at certain groups of staff, respect for the questioner will increase and the performance of the organisation as a whole will benefit; and, results will be achieved more quickly. After all, this is the real reason for asking the question – to get results.

And there is another payoff. When the need arises for an expensive and comprehensive answer, the time will be available to do the work needed, and staff will be more enthusiastic if they are not continually pressured with similar but less meaningful requests for information.

11. Priorities: Critical Considerations

One of the most useful administrative tools for achieving results is the skilful establishment of priorities. While there is general acceptance of the desirability of setting priorities, there is little information promulgated about how to effectively allocate priorities.

From early management levels upwards, it is necessary for a manager to specifically set priorities for both his own time and for the work of those under his control. Some guiding principles to be taken into account are as follows:

- the objectives are firstly to ensure that the priorities of a particular group fit in with those of the total organisation. It is obviously counterproductive for a small group to be very efficient in completing tasks which do not necessarily fit in with the needs of the total organisation.
- The order of tasks should be chosen, subject to the previous point, to optimise the output of the group. For example, any item which involves potential increases in output (e.g. a staffing proposal) should receive high priority; likewise an item on which delay will cause an escalation of costs or of total effort required, (an example would be action on a purchasing programme on which delay may involve extra work through re-examination of tenders).
- The system should aim at regularly completing some tasks if for no other reason than that staff are more motivated when they can see some of their work reaching finality. There are however, two other good reasons. One is that incomplete tasks usually represent an investment of manpower and overheads on which no return can be earned until the task is completed. Manufacturers are well aware that stocks of partly completed items, if allowed to grow, can cause bankruptcy. The same principle applies in a working management group. The other reason is



that if the number of incomplete tasks multiplies, the total number of matters under consideration will increase and efficiency will drop because of the need for staff to encompass a wider range of matters and to switch more frequently between tasks.

- Extra priority is warranted for tasks, the completion of which is necessary to permit work to proceed in other areas, or particularly for work which if incomplete, increases idle facilities or costs or which lose revenue in other areas. Obviously it is foolish to save \$x in one area at the expense of \$2x in another area.
- The priorities should preferably be allocated by the staff primarily concerned with the job and reviewed, of course, by senior staff. This accords with the principle of 'management by objectives' and develops a correct attitude toward priorities when staff are less experienced.

The main benefits of a good priority system can be stated as follows:

- The system increases efficiency by increasing the number of finished tasks.
- A group manager is brought across the critical

activity in his Section and can direct effort into the most profitable channels.

- Investment in unfinished tasks is minimised.
- Any tendency of some staff to fail to bring work to a conclusion is highlighted, and assistance or guidance can be provided.
- Tasks uncompleted because of limited authority or ability at a given level are automatically brought to the attention of a higher level so that appropriate action can be completed.
- Job satisfaction is noticeably increased among those staff members who are result-oriented.

Perhaps what is written above seems so obvious to many readers, that it was not worth recording. The notes have been written, however, because in almost every position I have occupied over the last 30 years I have found that the practical considerations of priority allocation have been grossly misunderstood and underrated by a significant proportion of responsible staff. Arising out of this continual need, we have developed in the General Works Branch, for which I was responsible at the time of writing, a simple but very effective priority system which takes negligible time to operate. Details of this system are available from the General Works Branch at Headquarters of Telecom Australia.

Despite the emphasis placed in this paper on the need to observe priorities, as with most subjects, there is a point of balance. There are people who welcome the setting of priorities, particularly when their senior officer sets them, because in their mind this relieves them of the strain of handling too many jobs at once; they merely stick to the highest priority job, or perhaps one or two of them. In the real world of management, no manager can devote his full time to one or two priorities to the exclusion of day to day matters which cross his table. Many of these matters may hold up

work of other people, or they may be of vital importance but require little time to handle. In any case, since important work may have arisen after the setting of the main priorities, it could not have been taken into consideration at the time. An able manager is expected to plan his time to give an appropriate amount of it to keeping day to day matters running and to balancing the time allocated to top priorities against the other urgent and important needs.

A final point on this subject is the need to realise the difference between the urgent and the important. Some urgent matters (like turning off the tap which is overflowing the bath) may not be very important compared with ensuring that the baby is well nourished, but you had better turn off the tap first or the time you spend undoing the damage may well prejudice the baby's chances of being fed.

12. Balancing the Use of Scarce Resources

Balancing the use of scarce resources (often called optimisation of resources) is an important facet of management and is critical to much of our activity; however, it must not be taken out of perspective.

Some of the scarce resources on which activity depends are:

- Management ability
- Capital (including material and machines)
- Cash (as distinct from capital)
- Staff with particular skills
- Energy
- Drawing Office facilities.

If in a business or an organisation we carry out an alteration to improve efficiency, but in the process call upon resources which are unavailable, then the improvement cannot be achieved. So, before we carry out a management study or a Methods improvement operation, we should check what resources are in short supply and which ones, if any, are in surplus. Armed with this information, we are likely to make a recommendation which has more chance of success. To quote a specific example relevant to the Australian picture in 1977, labour in some areas is plentiful, but skilled labour is in short supply. Engineers and clerical staff are generally available. Therefore any management improvement scheme will be likely to achieve quick results if it uses some spare clerical and engineering capacity, and if at the same time it results in a saving of skilled labour.

Likewise in, say, a workshop which reconditions telephone instruments, it is not logical to improve the efficiency of those parts of the operation in which the inflow of instruments for reconditioning is falling. It may be more appropriate to study the type of equipment which is building up in store to a stage where reconditioning may become viable, and spending other available resources retraining

staff to transfer from the telephone reconditioning line to an operation where work is available.

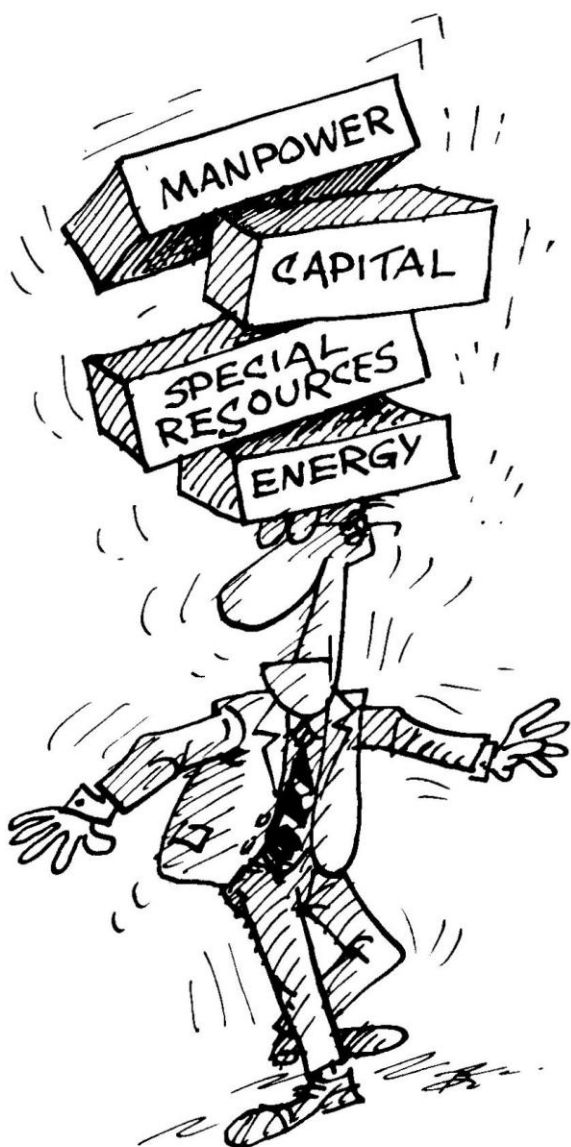
The samples quoted above outline situations in which the pitfalls are so obvious that one would think they were not worth mentioning; nevertheless, it is not uncommon in organisations to see recommendations made which have inbuilt faults as obvious as those outlined. If my readers doubt the realism of the need for this paper, I would invite them to look around in any large organisation or State or Federal jurisdiction to see the idle capital tied up in unfinished projects. In one State at the time of writing, there are miles of unfinished freeways, unfinished bridges, and unoccupied buildings awaiting furniture and tenants, sometimes for many months. Some of these projects have run for several years and are still unusable because they are incomplete; they represent investments of millions of dollars already spent and are costing the government concerned substantial sums in interest and standing charges (security etc.). However, because of the demand they have made for labour at times when labour was scarce, they have been a significant factor in inflationary wage demands. With better planning the authority would surely have handled fewer projects at a time, and achieved more finished projects with less idle capital and less total cost.

Funds are the starting point of our resources management – they encompass our capital needs (see next paragraph), our operating requirements and most other areas of activity. So a manager cannot operate well without an understanding of subjects such as capital funding, funds control, cash flow, sources and allocation of funds, estimating and controlling expenditure and the timing of processes by which each operating manager can ensure his justified share of available funds to pay for the work he is planning.

One of the resources frequently misunderstood is capital. It is not hard to develop schemes which

will save money; to those who work in isolation from the total picture, it is puzzling that capital cannot be found when a proposition shows such potential benefits as to outweigh the general earning rate of the rest of the organisation.

In business and government organisation life however, no matter how good the potential savings



promised, capital is limited. While other capital may well be used to produce relatively less benefit, this alternative less profitable task may be an operation which, for various reasons, the organisation simply must undertake, or to which it is already irrevocably committed.

Consider a hypothetical but realistic example of a proposal to lay a co-axial cable to replace an aerial route on which a management study shows, say, a 35% annual return; all costs would be recouped in three years. Such a project is obviously worth a priority. However, perhaps the cable cannot be manufactured for a year because the factory is fully loaded; or the cable laying equipment may be tied up for a period on projects already committed on more urgent but less profitable work, and could not be economically duplicated. In these circumstances obviously there would not be the planned profit in carrying on immediately with detailed planning of the proposed cable project until the critical elements can be seen to be available on specific dates.

In projects such as those mentioned above, the PERT system of Critical Path Planning is a most useful technique for coordinating the various factors in a project, and for controlling those factors which cause hold-ups and therefore wasted investment on the project in time to correct these critical operations. Every manager could profitably study this effective control system which is simple, well-documented and wellknown.

There is one real danger to avoid in the process of optimisation; it arises when people attempt what in current terminology is called Sub-System Optimisation. An example will make the point. Years ago the Public Service Board set out on a study to optimise the use of typists by pooling them and carrying out work output measurements and other control devices. The system envisaged had to fail for reasons that a hardened executive could have foreshadowed. Some years later a

report by a Methods group in the Board made the point that the target of this particular study was, to say the least, off-beam. Optimising the output of typists was not the objective which should have been sought — the real objective was optimising the output of groups of executives using typists and stenographers; that is, getting the optimum output of the team as a whole.

Building typing pools beyond certain strict limits tends to promote efficiency in the short-term for the typists at the cost of delays to executives, and where stenographers are involved in the pool, the situation is made much worse because expensive managers' time is spent correcting errors which would not be made by stenographers familiar with the words used by people who use them. This is particularly important where technical terms are commonly used.

One net result of over-centralising stenographers and typists is that some executives gradually cease using dictation services and go back to expensive handwriting of memoranda, and the stenographers will gradually deteriorate. The reverse existed in an area with which I am familiar. A pool of three (sometimes four) girls was located close to a group of engineers and others who used their services. Two of the girls were stenographers, and these girls got to know very well the work and terminology of the men for whom they worked. The result was a high morale in the typing pool, very high output of the typists, and more managers than previously used the dictation facilities. Work came back from the pool quickly (frequently within an hour or two). This is the most effective use of a group of typists I have yet observed.

Another example of a situation which we encounter frequently is where a group of men are operating on activities where, in general, motor vehicles produce extra mobility and efficiency. We recognise and have published the statement that in the right circumstances it is less economical to

stand a man idle for an hour than to stand a vehicle idle for a day. However, in a situation where the work team is not fully occupied, providing extra vehicles may make the men concerned more efficient for part of the day, which means that the limited workload will merely ensure more idle time for the men; in such circumstances the money for the vehicle would be better diverted to extra material to increase the total work output. In other words, the total man-vehicle-material-work balance needs optimising — not the time of man in isolation. There is no point in increasing the efficiency of men or machines if they are not fully employed.

13. Helping People to Enjoy Work

This subject has been renamed from time to time to suit the moods of the times. It was originally referred to as "Carrot and Stick", but in a more mature age when we treat staff in a more just and realistic way, at least in some areas, it has become fashionable to refer to "Motivation and Incentives". Even this title, to me, is not quite adequate because it does not place enough stress on work enjoyment – hence the title at the top of this paper. The other title "Motivation and Incentives"

will be used interchangeably. Being a realist I know there are many jobs which cannot be enjoyed; even these can be made a little less unpalatable with the right approach while we are getting round to upgrading or eliminating these jobs altogether. Nevertheless, there are many jobs which can become enjoyable if the conditions surrounding them are adequate and the frame of mind of the workmen is developed.



I do not for a moment think that every person can be made to enjoy work. Enjoyment of work frequently involves elements of physical and mental health and mental maturity. The purpose of the paper is merely to point out that the subject is important, and something can be done if the Manager is aware of the field, and positive in his actions aimed at improving working conditions for his staff in terms which are meaningful to at least some of them. Above all, he must be sincere in his desire to make work more enjoyable for his staff.

The subject is one of the most difficult for a young manager to fully comprehend, yet in the long-term, and often the short-term, it is an important key to performance. Motivation and incentives are difficult to separate in many situations, and the two aspects of the problem are deliberately combined in this paper; there is a general tendency however, to consider incentive as a benefit held out for performing a task faster or better, whereas motivation is usually understood as a more general term indicating factors which motivate a person to better performance in terms other than precise rewards related to particular jobs and tasks. A payment for extra product (as in piece-work payments) is often referred to as an incentive payment, but at the same time it can encourage action against the interests of the employer. On the other hand, wise managers, who from time to time praise good performance in suitable ways, can be said to motivate people, and at the same time to provide incentives to those who value such recognition.

Because man is complex and his interests and the factors which motivate him are so widely variable, a demand exists on the effective manager to develop and maintain a sensitivity to the needs and expectations of those for whom he is responsible. This requires that he maintains a level of communication, even at times crossing supervisory

levels below him so that he can sample the level of motivation of men at lower levels, and explore their views, their needs and their attitudes. In another publication on practical management (*Management of a Large Fleet of Automotive Plant and Transport*)¹, I have dealt with some examples of effective management and leadership which have left a deep impression of the techniques used by certain managers under whom I have worked in the past. The methods exhibited by these leaders are worthy of some study.

On this subject, a most readable book by Sir William Slim² is more valuable than some of the complex management documents.

People differ in their reaction to incentives. What provides incentive to some people is not at all appreciated by other people. Therefore, we list below a number of the items which provide incentives to different people, with a warning that it is the task of every manager at any level to find out which of the incentives can be used where staff below them are obviously in need of motivation:

- Dignity from being treated as a worthwhile person and a valued member of the organisation.
- Acknowledgement of performance through adequate feedback.
- Adequate authority for determining priorities.
- Status represented by such diverse factors as monetary payments and office environment. For example, some firms provide a high quality car in lieu of money.
- The satisfaction of seeing successfully completed jobs.
- Satisfaction from seeing whole items produced (as distinct from components).

¹*Automotive Plant Information Bulletin No. 4, Section 7 (Telecom Australia)*

²*Defeat into Victory – The Burma Campaign (Cassell)*

- Evidence of performance through systems which highlight comparative results.
- Opportunity for development through a steady increase of the scope or difficulty of tasks.
- Working within one's capacity (for some people) or for others working in a challenging atmosphere, slightly beyond one's capacity.
- Expressed appreciation for tasks well done, especially where the tasks affect functions of senior people.
- Variety of work.
- A voice in establishing the organisation of the work place or the work methods.
- Companionship in the work place.
- Monetary rewards. (An overrated incentive where earnings are adequate.)
- A share in the decision making process. (Most important to developing managers.)

There is an aspect of motivation that must not be overlooked. Every large group of people at work will include some who perform poorly in some jobs. Many of these can be encouraged to better performance simply by putting them onto different tasks which optimize the use of their good qualities, and which do not make demands on their weaknesses. A change of job will often produce results with poor performers who cannot be motivated in their present jobs.

For higher levels of management where the manager is motivating other managers on his staff, there is a specific technique which to me seems very important and has been used subconsciously or otherwise by many of the best managers under whom I have worked. This is the capacity to invite and genuinely seek moderate and reasonable criticism and suggestions from one's staff. Apart from

the fact that staff recognise the invitation to comment on aspects of management action by their senior manager, there is a great deal of security for the manager himself in such criticism, providing he is honest in evaluating and recognising contributions through this channel. The following story and quotation will demonstrate the point:

A senior executive in a highly motivated technology-oriented unit transferred to another area and was placed in charge of a large group, few of whom were of the same mental capacity as himself. His new staff had not been encouraged to express even mild disagreement with the previous manager's ideas. Asked later about his new position, he said he felt both lonely and insecure because everything he said, every idea he expressed, was taken as irrefutable fact, or as an expressed unquestionable command; in his previous position his idea and his expressed wishes always had to survive the test of criticism by other people with perceptive minds.

The quotation is from Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American Philosopher, and it reads: "To a wise man criticism is safer than praise".

14. Achieving Output

Achieving output is what management is about. It is a most complex subject involving a wide range of techniques and skills. Nevertheless, there are some ground rules. The comparative effectiveness of the rules used by some managers is evidenced by the fact these managers can walk into almost any area of activity and achieve an increase in output. Without attempting to review the subject comprehensively, I will set out some of the ground rules which in my experience will almost certainly lead to improvements of output in most situations:

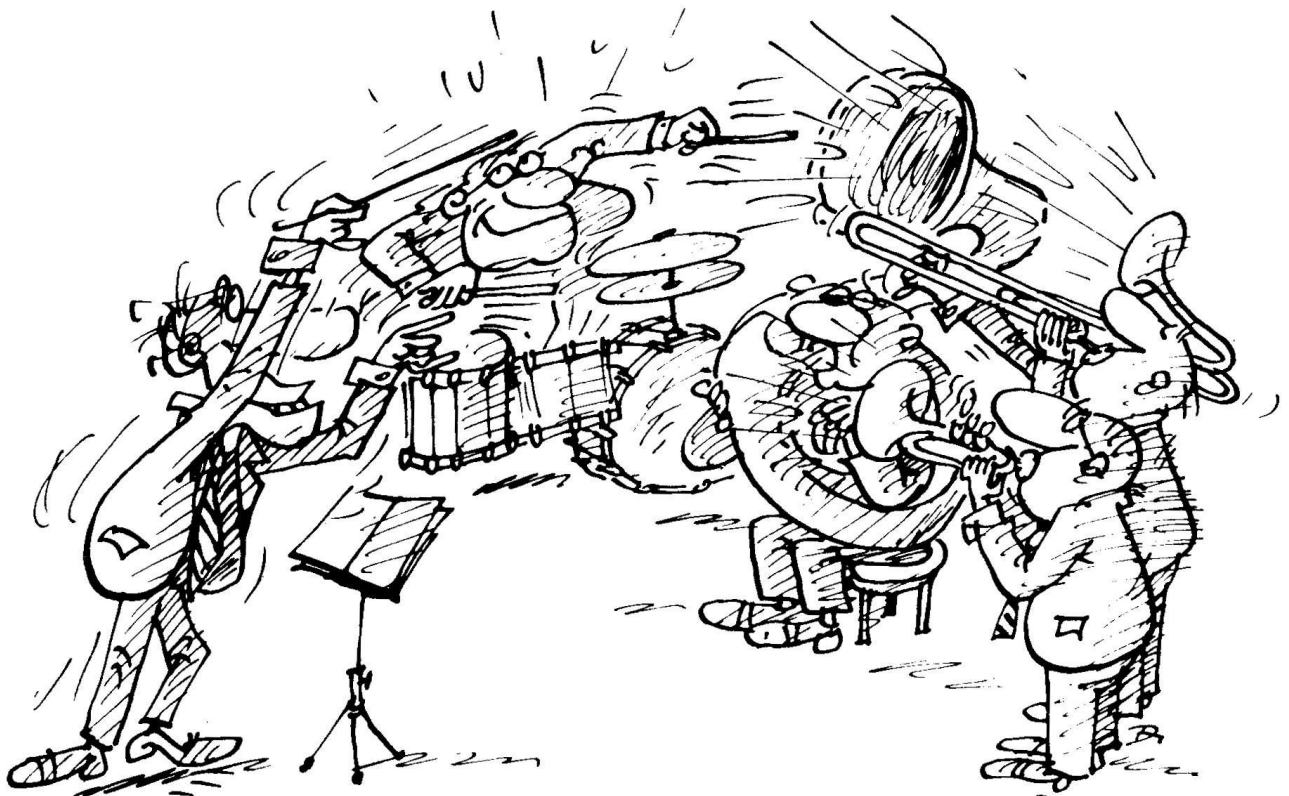
Rule 1:

"If you don't measure it, you won't improve it". This adage is well accepted by most successful managers. It is significant that some of the claims to improvements often glibly and confidently made in the absence of the measurements cannot be proven to be real improvements by any acceptable criteria. A

manager walking into a strange area should start by counting and recording some things which are related to the objectives of the group. It may be the number of telephone connections, the cost of running vehicles, the number of men employed per unit of output, or the value of stockholdings. Any measurement is better than none. On the principle demonstrated in the famous "Hawthorne" experiment, establishing measurements shows staff of all levels that management is taking an interest in the operation, and improvements will occur.

Rule 2: Recognise people at all levels as people

In a time when there is a drive to improve management from a low level of performance in an area, this is more important than ever because there is almost certain to be a morale problem arising from insecurity; in an atmos-



phere of low morale any attempts to improve matters will be suspect and likely to arouse resistance. And one of the best antidotes is communication between staff of all levels. Certainly, without crossing the provinces of managers at various levels, higher management should definitely be seen and should talk to people at work face levels as opportunity occurs.

Rule 3:

One of the fundamental lists of executive responsibilities used in the early days of management training is worth remembering; it is the P.O.S.D.i.C. List:

Planning	} All of these items in varying degree are the responsibility of the manager, and he must take a positive interest in them.
Organising	
Staffing	
Directing	
Controlling	

Rule 4:

While improving management controls, take a sincere interest in the problems of staff and if humanly possible, never discharge staff as a result of productivity improvement – rather let staff waste without replacement or, better still, increase the workload. Conversely a short-term benefit from avoidable discharging of staff will quickly be off-set by resistance to improvements.

Rule 5:

Establish a priority system aimed at achieving quickly some significant benefits in terms of saving of senior staff so that they will be available to help with the drive for further achievements.

Rule 6:

Make sure feedback of results is done meaningfully, frequently and honestly.

Rule 7:

Look carefully at factors which use the time of staff, such as courses, conferences, report writing, etc. and ensure that only those which are genuinely helpful to either the organisation or the person concerned are permitted. I have seen organisations where people have become perpetual students at great cost to the organisation which needed their time in other areas where they would have produced much better results. This is not to say that some of this activity is not well justified; I merely warn that one cannot assume that every course or conference is justified.

Rule 8:

Ensure that all people from supervisory level and up to high levels of management are reasonably loaded. Most managers perform better under load in the same way as most production workers will perform better if they can be sure that they are not working themselves out of a job.

Rule 9:

Ensure that progress in the medium to long term can be carefully recorded; that will mean setting up routine information collection and recording for the earlier stages of establishing long term trends in graphic form.

Rule 10:

Involve all of the supervisory and management staff in drives for increased output. This can be done without excessive time wasting in conferences and so on; well-run conferences produce results quickly without involving excessive time. And while on the subject of conferences, it is a salutary lesson to calculate the cost of each conference per minute. Twelve senior people at a conference, with overheads included, can easily cost five dollars a minute. Knowledge of this figure at the beginning of a conference will encourage a chairman to cut

off discussion before it reaches the “waffle” stage.

Rule 11:

Know what delegations your position carries, and work to their limit if you are sure you are on sound ground and conforming to policy.

Rule 12:

In any area where action is needed, take positive action if at all practicable. For example, in handling a file, don't just pass it on if you can contribute – do something positive.

Rule 13:

Recognise that improved productivity, which is another way of saying increase of output, can come finally in the presence of only two conditions – less input or more output. Without one of these factors applying, any alleged improvement in productivity will prove to be purely theoretical.

15. Management Systems

Management systems are not the sort of thing one has to search for in the present age when, apart from the large number of people who make a living from selling them, they are built into the thinking of most managers. It could be said that a system is as necessary to effective management as

fuel is to a fire. It is equally true that the better the fuel, the better the fire; with management systems the same principle is self-evident. Obversely, as with a fire, a management system well fuelled but operating in the wrong environment can be catastrophic.



A few things need to be said about systems so that those faced with the problem of choice can make the best decisions. The following observations may throw some light on the problem:

- 1) Any repetitive activity requires a system, be it recorded or otherwise. For example, in any group which uses files for its correspondence, it goes without saying that there are advantages in recording movements of the files so that they can always be located. Many of course, observe this rule rather in the breach than in the performance; despite this, if most people in the organisation observe the rule, then the system works.
- 2) The complexity of the system must not outweigh the complexity of the task, (the sledgehammer and peanut principle).
- 3) Simple systems controlling the 'critical few' items of the process are more likely to be successful than complex systems which attempt to control every detail of the total operation. The latter sort of system frequently falls under its own weight and almost invariably is costly to operate.
- 4) A system cannot be judged by the ornate hardware associated with it; the hardware may cost more and look more impressive on the executive's wall, but will not impress the experienced manager, nor will it necessarily get the job done. Some of the most effective systems are extremely simple and economical to operate. A specific example known to me was a system which was designed to be operated by a Senior Motor Mechanic to control the flow of work through a large motor workshop. A critical appraisal of the system by a perceptive manager revealed the surprising fact that the system really only pinpointed the location of the documents related to each unit under repair. This could have been achieved without the system. The real control was exercised by the Section foremen when they were handed the documents by the senior mechanic in charge of the Section when action on the unit was due in the area under their control. In other systems the same end was achieved by handing the document to the foreman from the man responsible for the previous phase of the work.
- 5) The cost of a system is not the cost of making the individual entries, but include also the cost of collecting the information on which the entries are based. Nevertheless, this second cost can be discounted if the information must be collected irrespective of the system.
- 6) Apart from the control value of the system, which on a sound system usually fully justifies its use, there is frequently a hidden benefit; the information in the system often serves other purposes, such as answering quickly and economically the multitude of queries that arise in some operations.
- 7) Information fed out from time to time from a common system as a main source of information provides another advantage; figures given out from one source, although they may not always be exactly right, at least are always the same, and therefore do not raise unnecessary work reconciling apparent contradictions.
- 8) Finally, and most importantly, any system is most effectively operated and accepted if it is invented or at least developed and polished by the people who use it.

16. Negative Power (*The Abominable "No" Man*)

There are various sorts of power (or authority) used in an organisation. Some people, by the nature of a job, have positive power – that is, the power to promote action and to get things done. Such people are invariably among the initiators of major activities or perhaps merely expeditors of routine matters.

A second group exercise negative power. This is the power to handle subjects on which their main contribution should be to expedite matters. However, this action promotes smooth operation and to some personalities it gives no sense of authority if they agree too often without raising objections. The main power they can exercise however, and by far the most troublesome and the most costly, is the negative power of either saying "No", or stalling matters for periods of time while they ask questions and promote studies and work which add little, if anything, to the finished product except cost and delay.

In between these two extremes is a very large group of people who have within their orbit the authority to exercise either positive or negative power at will. It depends largely on the individual attitude whether the preponderance of power is exercised negatively or positively. I have observed on odd occasions positions occupied for long periods by apparently able executives whose main contribution has been to delay almost any project which, for some reason, had to receive their blessing. Then a change of occupant has suddenly cleared the blockage and all the people who previously were frustrated suddenly found that work was flowing through this particular channel at a regular fast rate. When it was necessary for the new occupant to question an idea, his query was more meaningful and potent, with the result that what has been a power exercised negatively previously suddenly became a positive power. Analysis of selected items was done in greater depth and therefore more acceptable, while the less import-



ant items or those less likely to require criticism flowed quickly. The new occupant achieved a high reputation for being right, which did him more good than the previous occupant's reputation for stalling.

In another extreme case (believe it, this was not an isolated case), an able officer on my staff went to another area to relieve for a period. When he returned, he informed me that in the other job he was required never to clear papers without at least a two-week delay because it may give the appearance that the job was underloaded and that the items being dealt with were not very important.

There is an answer to clearing bottlenecks caused through the unwise exercise of negative power. Because of the cost of people adopting this obstructive attitude, positive action to investigate the effect of their actions is a responsibility of effective management. The technique recommended is

to pick out an officer of similar level with a reputation for accelerating action, and when opportunity occurs, use this man to relieve the one suspected of causing the trouble. If the bottleneck reduces substantially, it is a fair indication that the normal occupant is in need of firm and wise counselling. The difficult problem of course, is that these people are not always occupying positions in the lower echelons of the organisation; even up to middle management there have been people with this sort of reputation.

Handling the problem outside the group concerned is not so simple. For those in areas where they must deal regularly with a difficult person, the first move is to get to know the awkward personality and establish a liaison so that favoured treatment can be obtained for the more urgent proposals forwarded. Such a liaison can prove remarkably effective, and while it may not clear the problem for other people, it is the best that can be achieved from the viewpoint of the officer wanting important work expedited.

I recall a lady some years ago with a reputation for handling all documents strictly in turn. Her personality was so powerful that some of the tough outside supervisors who were quite capable of handling obstreperous men on their own staff were quite wary of approaching this person to have an urgent matter expedited. By visiting the lady on several occasions I found that certain work was fed to her carelessly prepared which, in her own words, "messed up a good system" which she had developed. By considering her problem and briefing my staff on her needs, I found that we got favoured treatment. An aspect of this story was that the lady's supervisor saw her as a difficult person (he had a more succinct expression to describe her) and he had in my view failed in his responsibility to seek and remedy the cause of the difficulty.

This subject of negative power is most important

because the end effect is to multiply delay, frustration and illwill between staff. It is not unreasonable to assume that the effectiveness of any organisation can be judged by the extent to which negative power has been minimised by proper attention to such important management problems as organisation, staff supervision, and by encouragement of intergroup co-operation. Another important factor is that in an organisation which is cost-oriented, negative power tends to come under notice more quickly because of its sheer cost to the organisation. In Telecom Australia, since Vesting Day with increased emphasis on costs, we have felt the benefit of this pressure even though under our previous Post Office Administration we did not suffer seriously from this frustrating organisational problem. However, no organisation can afford to ignore the fact that from time to time it will arise unless managers are ever mindful of the possibility.

It must never be overlooked that the tendency of some officers to delay or to block submissions or papers can arise from personality or health problems, and must be handled accordingly. Some of the causes are insecurity arising from a sense of incompetence which at times leads to an unreasonable seeking after perfection, or declining capacity due to ill health; sometimes it arises merely from a sheer inability to communicate with people, or to co-operate with those whom of necessity are forced to make demands upon the person concerned. Recognition of these factors and their significance in relation to achieving progress of work is the first step for managers who will then need to take action according to the problems revealed.

17. Presentation of Information

Whatever work you are doing, it is almost certain that at some time from junior management level upwards you have to present information either in the form of memoranda or recommendations to high levels or to people in other areas, comprehensive reports on complex subjects and investigations, or shorter reports and action memoranda which fall in between these other sorts of documents. Since your effectiveness will depend on, and your efficiency will be judged by, the quality of your written information, it is worth studying ways of improving the method of writing these papers.

First recognise a few simple rules, which are:

- People today are flooded with paper and therefore don't want to read any more than they have to. This applies particularly to higher levels of managers who are required to read great quantities of papers at considerable speed. It is a relief to receive a succinct but complete letter or report which covers the essential information without wasted words.
 - We live in an age of visual education and visual absorption of information because of television, visual aids and other newer communication devices. This has made many people disinclined to be impressed by words. If possible, replace words with graphs, diagrams or illustrations.
 - Where a report going upwards is more than a page or two, consider the possibility of one short main page covering the main points, with appendices or diagrams clearly tabbed for reference.
 - In presenting technical information to non-technical people, ensure that it is written in their language and not in technical terms. A competent technical man can explain what he means in easily understood non-technical language.
 - Avoid long paragraphs and long sentences.
- Short sentences are easier to read and so are short paragraphs. No doubt this publication will contravene these rules; I have tried for years to overcome these bad habits, but with only partial success.
- While verbosity is condemned in the above notes, avoid the other extreme of writing which is so succinct that people will miss the meaning or will find the paper difficult to read. In this regard I recall an executive who some years ago would write memoranda so brief and with so much meaning in each line that frequently the point he was making was missed except by the most perceptive reader. When he was queried about incorrect actions which resulted, he was able to point out that what he asked for or suggested was perfectly correct and complete. However, I think his brevity was misguided; the object of a memorandum or request is to achieve the desired action, not to make it difficult for the uninitiated to find out what is meant.
 - Another aspect of the previous point is the value of "explanatory" words. To one unfamiliar with a subject, the sentence "Expenditure on this item was \$690,000" does not make a point nearly so well and quickly as the sentence "Expenditure on this item was an abnormally high \$690,000". The two extra words save people searching for the point you are trying to make.
 - Never feed information upwards unless either you are certain that it is correct, or unless you quote its limitations. It is much more valuable to say "Mr X estimates that about 20,000 units will be delivered", than just "20,000 units will be delivered". And never use degrees of precision which are not justified by the source or nature of the information; a statement that "next year we will spend \$2,045,420", is a common sort of example, which indicates the degree of accuracy that is not possible in a forward estimate. It is much more meaningful and more easily

comprehended to say "estimated expenditure for next year is \$2.05m".

If the points outlined above are taken into consideration as part of the regular thought process, writing will gradually improve. There is one other thing however that can be done in certain sorts of reports, which by their nature have to be fairly long; that is, even if you are a technical or management-oriented person, try and offset "heaviness" in your writing by an occasional touch of humour or an anecdote if the nature of the document permits. There was a time in the Public Service when one would not have dared to use this approach, but in recent years it has been recognised, certainly in Telecom Australia, as an effective aid to management when appropriately used. For this reason, in this book I have used cartoons to lighten the presentation.

In publications to be read by a broad range of people, recognise that printing layout is most important to visual acceptance and readability. In this Commission we are fortunate to have a group in our Drafting Services area at Telecom Headquarters, and also in some States, who have considerable expertise in this regard and can improve documents tremendously by altering layout, type face, spacing and so on. Incidentally, as I had one document first printed on more orthodox lines based on electric typewriter originals, for a small extra cost in layout and type-setting in the second issue, the experts actually reduced the number of pages by about 30% while still making the finished product much easier to read and more presentable.

As a final check of what you have written, ask the question "What is the purpose of this document, and will it achieve its purpose the way it is written?". This question raises complex issues. It implies a knowledge of the person or persons to whom it is addressed, a check of many of the points raised previously in this chapter – particularly the readability, the correctness and the ease

with which the paper can be read. It also poses the question, "Does this paper make a specific recommendation, or better still, does it provide answers to any questions it raises?". Particularly with a memorandum going upwards, to raise questions without at least suggested answers or alternatives is to load a manager who is probably busier and more remote from the problem than you are.

Only when you are satisfied that the document, whatever its purpose, will have a chance of achieving its purpose should it be passed on. Perhaps the real question is the one to which this book is dedicated: Will this paper produce results?.



Acknowledgements

A publication such as this one is obviously not the work of one man, and apart from the not inconsiderable physical problems of producing the book, much of the information has arisen from a lifetime of experience with people; some of whom have made a great impact on my thinking in terms of the achievement of results in management. Like all large successful organisations, Telecom Australia and that part of the old Australian Post Office which developed into Telecom Australia, have had their share of highly competent managers. It is difficult to single out those who have made outstanding contributions, but two men who have influenced my thinking quite significantly are the late Norman W. V. Hayes and the late Wal Sandbach. Each of these men exhibited a tremendous capacity for ploughing through the wood and finding those trees which were worth nurturing. I must acknowledge posthumously but with gratitude their contribution to the current paper.

I acknowledge also the helpful, close and critical interchange of ideas on management matters in general and the examination of this text by Mr D. P. Bradley, Supervising Engineer, Workshops, Telecom Headquarters. Another significant contribution for which I am grateful is the task carried out by Mr G. Burkett who has done so much extra curricular proof-reading, and has organised many aspects of this and previous publications.

A considerable contribution was also made by the Graphic Design Group in our Headquarters Drafting Section who produced the cartoons and handled the type-setting. Only after some unfavourable feedback on a first edition of a previous publication was I made aware of the contribution this expert group can make to improving presentation and readability of what could otherwise be a heavy document to read.

Perhaps the most important acknowledgement is to the organisation of Telecom Australia which

provides for any executive throughout his career a challenging atmosphere in which to work. It provides a wide range of problems both technical and managerial upon which those who are willing can exercise their abilities and develop their skills. This organisation provides excellent supportive facilities for its managers at all levels. Most of all it provides a wealth of experience which is readily made available from so many executives at middle and senior levels who for many years have managed with results as their main objective. To those willing to learn, the organisation is both demanding and rewarding.

List of References

References of other books considered by the Author to be well worth the time given to them as supplementary reading are:

Defeat into Victory by Sir William Slim

Engineers and Engineering by Lord Hinton of Bankside

The Unwritten Laws of Engineering by Professor W. J. King

Management of a Large Fleet of Automotive Plant & Transport by E. W. Corless (Telecom Automotive Plant *Information Bulletin No. 4*)

APPENDIX A

ENGINEERING MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR (M.V.R.), ACCIDENT COSTS (M.V.A.) AND DRIVER MAINTENANCE COSTS (M.V.H.)

		1954/55	1955/56	1956/57	1957/58	1958/59	1959/60	1960/61	1961/62	1962/63	1963/64	1964/65
Area 1	A	50	54	44	56	50	60	72	74	78	80	94
	B (21)	342 (20)	320 (16)	316 (20)	316 (15)	240 (15)	242 (17)	274 (17)	266 (16)	262 (15)	248 (16)	260
Area 2	A	700	734	906	796	692	664	660	672	664	750	782
	B (32)	512 (32)	505 (35)	560 (27)	432 (22)	348 (18)	292 (17)	274 (18)	298 (17)	266 (18)	278 (17)	280
Area 3	A	522	526	442	430	442	452	480	490	510	462	526
	B (32)	522 (30)	488 (24)	394 (21)	344 (22)	348 (19)	300 (20)	314 (18)	292 (18)	290 (15)	244 (16)	260
Area 4	A	300	310	270	284	294	296	268	264	280	288	278
	B (37)	598 (33)	538 (27)	440 (24)	388 (24)	392 (22)	356 (20)	314 (19)	306 (19)	308 (19)	304 (17)	280
Area 5	A	176	174	144	148	136	116	146	158	138	154	156
	B (33)	532 (30)	482 (23)	370 (22)	348 (18)	294 (13)	208 (15)	244 (16)	252 (13)	206 (14)	222 (12)	194
Area 6	A	104	116	138	144	122	120	116	126	140	156	196
	B (24)	386 (24)	380 (24)	394 (24)	386 (18)	290 (16)	252 (15)	236 (14)	226 (14)	228 (15)	234 (17)	274
Total	A	1884	1916	1942	1954	1734	1708	1742	1834	1810	1894	2032
Average	B (32)	512 (30)	486 (28)	458 (24)	386 (21)	340 (18)	290 (18)	284 (19)	286 (17)	268 (16)	262 (16)	282
B.M.I.	C	100	105	111	108	103	105	105	103	102	103	105
A.W.E.I.	D	100	107	111	115	119	128	134	139	143	150	151

Figures in brackets: \$ per 1,000 km

Highest Costs indicated in red

Lowest Costs indicated in green

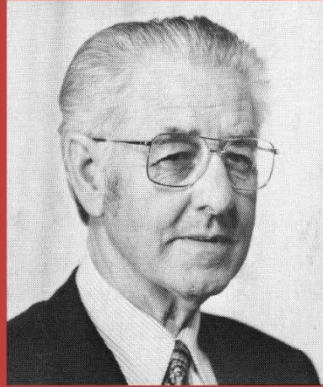
NOTE: A — Expenditure in 1000's of \$'s

B — Expenditure in \$ per 10,000 miles

C — Basic Material Index

D — Average Weekly Earnings Index

Automotive Plant Statistics Table V4 (Non representative sample only)



The Author, Mr E. W. Corless, who occupies a senior position in engineering management in Telecom Australia, has operated at various management levels over a wide field of activity over the past 30 years. During that time he has taken a particular interest in the study, teaching and application of management techniques designed to achieve practical results. He is of the view that for many people there is need for less emphasis on extensive (and expensive) reading and study courses, and more attention to the application of result-oriented management techniques and philosophy. This view is accepted by many practising managers whose need is to produce tangible benefits in the real and demanding world in which they operate. In this book some of the important techniques and philosophy which Mr Corless has used successfully are outlined in brief, readable form.



Telecom Australia