Chapter 70

Management Training Insights Emerging From Spiritual Concerns

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ABSTRACT

Traditional management training stresses what could be called the impersonal aspects of organizational life. Managers come to see people as one part of a greater overall organizational system that they can create, control, and change as needed. People become assets to allocate and control. The more personal aspects of peoples' lives are ignored at best and dismissed at worst. By reshaping or rethinking management training to include the more personal, even spiritual, side of workers, today's managers will see both productivity improvements as well as more engaged employees. Insights emerging from spiritual concerns can help organizations understand the content and intent of their current training programs in new ways. Such insights even suggest new categories of issues that can drive management training efforts. With this new understanding, managers can prepare themselves to help workers be productive and useful while also helping them find meaning and personal fulfillment in the work.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional management in the extreme focuses on making every person, system, activity, program, and policy countable, measurable, and predictable. Given the dramatic changes in the nature of the work we do today – including technological advances, the rise of knowledge workers, and the implications of a multicultural workforce – managing in the "same way" is a formula for failure. Neither management theory nor the educational and training programs now in place to prepare operational managers for their tasks of control are adequate to meet existing and future demands.

Simple observation supports the contention that managers do not merely plan, direct, budget, and the like. In studies of general managers, Kotter (1990) found they spend much of their time interacting personally with workers. The manager's activities were often unplanned and the result of diversions such

as unscheduled meetings and telephone calls. These conversations tended to be short, disjointed, and concerned with a variety of issues and concerns not always easily linked to the "countable" functions of the organization (Mintzberg, 1975). Management is not only about influencing the actions of others in functional, routine, systemic, or procedural ways, but managers are also in the business of influencing, even changing, the values and standards of workers and their corresponding outward behavior.

Management is more than it has been made out to be; it involves the intimate and personal as much as or more than the technical and routine (see for example, Norman, 2016; Bondoc, 2016; Fairholm & Gronau, 2015; Kalagnanam & Venne, 2015; Pietersen, 2014; Fairholm, 2013; Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009; Gibbons, 1999; Herzberg, 1984; Korac-Kakabadse, N., Kouzmin, A., & Kakabadse, A., 2002; Schein, 1996; Vaill, 1989). Doing and even defining the work of managers are intensely personal activities (not to mention how workers respond to that managerial work). It engages us in incorporating our whole self, even our spiritual self, into our managerial thoughts and actions.

Management training will benefit from including a mindset that accepts both the traditional call to control *and* the need to be responsive to the core values – the spiritual side – of both manager and employees. The goal is to introduce the reader to theoretical and practical ideas, only recently emergent in professional writings, already present in the workplace about the spiritual elements of the managerial functions and competencies needed to fit the realities of today.

THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN MANAGEMENT THOUGHT

In general conversation, we use the term management in two ways stemming from past management definitions. First, management refers to what we do in terms of ensuring controlled, predictable, measurable behavior to achieve a level of productivity. Good managers get things done through the resources provided by the organization, including the people who, traditionally, have been considered only a bundle of skills useful to the organization's success. Second, management refers to the placement of individuals within the hierarchy of an organization – those with management titles and ranks. This allows them a better view of the systems and resources at play and allows them access to others who have that enhanced perspective – in essence supervision. We often refer to them as "the management" and it is offered in comparison to those who are not "the management," meaning in a generic sense "labor." Therefore, much of the training for managers focuses on the nuts and bolts of getting things done through resources use (including human resources) with emphasis on direction, control, and measurement from a hierarchical position.

Traditional training gives attention to the people side of the organizational equation mainly in terms of system and productivity improvements, like motivation, diversity, and group work. However, people are significant in the organization not only because of our physical and technical attributes, but also because of the unique values-sets that define our character and perspective on life (Salehzadeh, R., Pool, J. K., Lashaki, J.K., Dolati, H., & Jamkhaneh, H. B., 2015; Bindlish, Dutt & Pardasani, 2012). In a practical sense, much of the current training on the stuff of people, misses this more personal side of equation. That is what needs to be changed because business is made up of people and people are personal (Chawla, 2016; Vallabh & Singhal, 2014).

It is difficult, though, to make these changes given our history of management theory. The modern manager came out of the cauldron of the Industrial Revolution and the creativity of a few pioneer thinkers about the workplace, its operations, and its control. Led by the likes of Taylor (1915) and a few acolytes,

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