Vocational Education and Training Reform in the Republic of Serbia

Manual 1

VET MANAGEMENT MANUAL FOR SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS

Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme – Phase II

May, 2008.

FORWARD

The Ministry of Education has well-established procedures for the conduct of its core activities. The management of staff, financial and other resources are the subject of detailed, published regulations. It is not the purpose of this Manual to revisit these existing arrangements, but rather to consider the broader management responsibilities which senior staff of all organisations are increasing required to address.

Regardless of position, all staff have some involvement in the managing of resources. Furthermore, all senior staff, by definition, interact with others and influence them. Although such terms as “managing change” may not feature in formal job descriptions, it is clear, particularly in times of uncertainty, that success depends upon ones ability to get the best out.

The aim is to provide Ministry of Education senior managers with ‘food for thought’ on modern management, and a reference point of ideas. As in public service organisations throughout Europe, there is a movement away from simply managing process, towards a broader management role. The new manager is responsible not just for how their department operates, but also for the results it achieves. For not just managing the resource at his/her disposal, but for maximising its potential.

The days when a manager was appointed because they were a good expert have, or should have, passed. The management job will of course, become much more challenging, but at the same time much more rewarding. Hopefully, some of the information contained here, will help you meet the challenges of your future role.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

01 Management and Leadership
02 Performance Management
03 Leadership in Public Service

01 MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The degree and quality of management and leadership is of crucial importance to the success of industry, commerce or the public sector. Management status reflects this. Yet in practice, the development of these vital managerial and leadership skills is frequently left to chance.

Organisations which would not accept an untrained draughtsman, teacher or driver, are often managed by people totally untrained to do their job. **Often individuals are promoted into managerial positions because they are good experts and not because they have demonstrated management skills or leadership qualities.**

Of course, there are some natural leaders, who need little instruction, but these are few and far between. What we know is that the vast majority of people in leadership positions can and do benefit from practical training in what needs to be done in order that their workpeople can become involved and willing to give of their best. Modern management is now recognised academically and includes a whole range of knowledge and skill of a very technical nature such as:

- project management;
- manpower planning;
- job evaluation;
- strategic planning;
- human resource development etc.

Modern leaders are no longer just managing a process. They are now responsible and accountable for results. Given that, it is vital that they are properly prepared for their role.

LEADERSHIP

Efficiency, whether in the public or private sectors, depends upon the maximization of the resources available – financial, technical or human. The most important, usually most costly and most difficult is the maximization of human resource, which, at its best, amounts to effective leadership.

As previously stated, too often people are made managers because they are good chemists, engineers or accountants. Little wonder that they sometimes fail, or manage without distinction. Managers must, of course, have the technical competence necessary to achieve the results required, but they must also have the understanding and skill needed in their unique position of having to get work done by others, that is, to lead others.

More and more managers have to stand or fall by their performance as leaders. The responsibility for ensuring that people give their best rests squarely with them, whether they are called department heads, chief accountants, office managers or foreman. **They are responsible and accountable for the work of their subordinates.** Managers have to get work done through them, and their aim must be to make full use of their subordinates, strengths, abilities and qualities, minimize the effects of their deficiencies and, where possible, constantly try to improve their performance. This is the objective of effective leadership.

It makes sense both psychologically and economically. For most individuals it is important that their abilities should be fully used. For the ministry and for the country it is essential that human resources are not wasted. There is an ever increasing need for managers who are effective leaders.

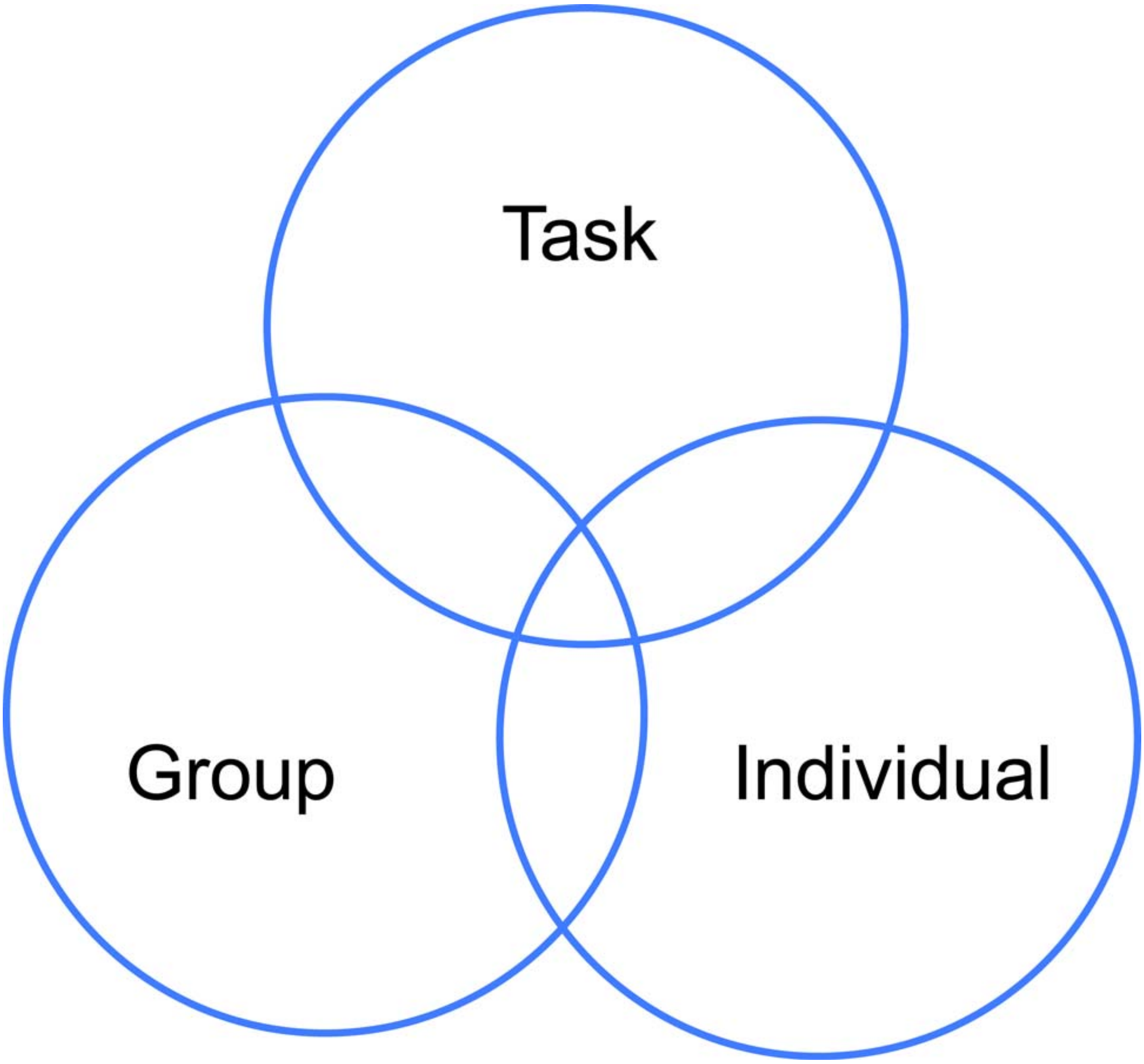
A working leadership model:

How then can managers improve their performance as leaders? Basically a manager’s effectiveness as a leader depends on the ability to influence and be influenced by the team and its members in the implementation of a common task.

In practice this means:

- ensuring that the required **TASKS** are continually achieved
- building and reinforcing the **TEAM / GROUP** and fostering team-work and team-spirit
- developing each **INDIVIDUAL** member of the team.

The successful leader acts in all three areas, often simultaneously. These three areas interact upon each other. A simple model illustrates this:



John Adair's leadership model

The circles overlap. If the task circle is blacked out, so too are large segments of the group and individual circles. Thus lack of attention to the task causes demoralization and frustration within the group and dissatisfaction to the individual. Conversely, achievement of objectives is essential if group and individual morale is to be high.

Black out the group circle from the model and the other two are affected. Unless the leader actively sees that an effective team with good team spirit is built, chances of achieving the required results, in the long term, are jeopardized. Ignore the development of the individual and effectiveness of both task and team are reduced.

The group and individual circles may also be looked on as storage batteries, which may from time to time become exhausted – for instance after a period of high pressure. In this case the leader must see that they are recharged by paying them extra attention.

In the next three sections the significance of the three interlocking circles for practicing will be explained in terms, not of personal qualities, but of action which can be taken. The emphasis is not on what leaders are, nor on what they know, but upon what they actually do to achieve the required tasks through their own efforts and those of subordinates.

The checklists are designed to help managers improve their own performance as leaders. Because the three circles are so interrelated, questions raised in one list may also have relevance in another. For practical purposes they have been grouped under the circle to which they mainly relate. The lists are of course not exhaustive.

Achieving the task:

The need to accomplish the tasks for which the department / unit / organisation exists is the primary and most obvious duty of the manager.

However, in their zeal to reach the objectives for which they are responsible, managers will too often yield to the temptation to ‘do it themselves’. But this is not the job of the leader and if managers find themselves doing this, they should stop and consider why.

The leader’s main contributions to achieving the task lie in:

- being clear what the task is, explaining it with enthusiasm and reminding people of it often
- understanding how the task fits into the overall short- and long-term objectives of the organisation
- planning how to accomplish it
- defining and providing the resources needed, including the time and authority required
- doing everything possible to ensure the organisational structure allows the task to be done efficiently
- pacing progress towards achievement of the task
- evaluating results and comparing them with the original plans and the objectives of the organisation

Checklist for achieving the task:

1. Am I clear about my own responsibilities and my own authority?
2. Am I clear about the objectives of my team now and for the next few months and have I discussed them with my boss?
3. Have I worked out a programme for reaching these objectives?
4. Can jobs be designed to encourage the commitment of individuals and the team?
5. Are the physical work conditions, layout, equipment, lighting, etc, right for the job?
6. Does everybody know exactly what their job is? Has every member of the team clearly defined targets and performance standards after consultation between them and me? Have I they same from my boss?
7. Does everybody know to whom they are accountable?
8. Are there gaps in the abilities of the team necessary to complete the task? If so, am I taking steps to fill them by training or providing additional staff?
9. Am I aware of how my team are spending their time? Is it the best way? Are our priorities right?
10. On those occasions when I am directly involved with the ‘technical’ work, do I make arrangements so that the team functions well and the requirements of its members are not ignored or overlooked?
11. Do I receive regular records which enable me to check progress and to spot weaknesses or deviations?
12. What arrangements do I make for continuity of leadership in my absence?
13. Do I periodically take stock? Have I achieved the tasks set previously? If not, why not?
14. Do my own work and behaviour standards set the best possible example to the team?

Developing individuals:

We must not forget that all members of the team need to continue to live and express themselves as individuals; to provide for those dependent upon them; to find satisfaction in their work and recreation: to win acceptance by those with whom they work and play. In order to satisfy these needs people must exert themselves – they must get involved.

Fortunately for the manager, there is a high coincidence between these needs and the management obligation to achieve results through the best use of resources – in this case, human.

If the degree of motivation is to be sufficient to give satisfaction at work all individuals:

- must be able to experience personal achievement in the job they are doing, that they are a making a worthwhile contribution to the objectives of the team and the organisation
- must feel that the job itself is challenging, is demanding the best of them, is giving them the responsibility to match their capabilities
- must receive recognition for their achievements
- must have control over those aspects of their job which have been allocated to them
- must feel that they, as individuals, are developing, that they are advancing experience and ability.

To provide the right conditions and opportunities for these needs to be met for each individual in the team is possibly the most difficult and certainly the most challenging and rewarding of the leaders tasks.

Checklist for developing individuals:

For each member of the team:

1. Have I set all of my subordinates their main responsibilities (expressed as results) and standards of performance by which both parties can recognise success?
2. Have my subordinates continuing lists of short-term targets for the improvement of their performance, each with its own maturity date?
3. Do they have the resources necessary to achieve the standards and targets, including sufficient authority?
4. Have I made provision for the training of each person?
5. In the event of success, do I acknowledge it and build on it? In the case of failure do I criticize constructively and give guidance on improving future performance?
6. Does the individual see some pattern of career development?
7. Can I remove some controls, though still retaining my accountability? Can I cut down the amount of checking I do, holding subordinates more responsible for quality and accuracy of their work?
8. Can I delegate more decisions to individuals?
9. Where I cannot delegate decisions, do I consult those affected?
10. Can I increase team members' accountability for their own work?
11. Can I give additional authority?
12. Is the performance of each individual reviewed regularly through face-to-face discussion?
13. If after training someone is still not meeting the requirements of the job, do I try to find a position for them matching their capacity?
14. Do I know enough about individuals to access their aptitudes and attitudes at work?
15. Do I design jobs to make the best use of peoples aptitudes, skills and interest, in order to involve them and gain commitment?
16. Do I give sufficient time and personal attention to matters of direct concern to the individual?
17. Do I regularly visit each person's place of work to observe, listen and give feedback?
18. Do I know the name of each individual?
19. Do I smile and say 'good morning' and mean it?

Building the team:

Although we are employed as individuals, the majority of us work in teams. Teams exist as an entity and, as with individuals; no two teams are the same. A team has power to set its own standards of behaviour and performance and to impose them even when contrary to the interest of individual and the organisation. Successful leaders understand that a team has its own needs. They achieve success by taking these things into account.

The key actions of the leader in building the team are:

- to set and maintain the team's objectives and standards
- to involve the team as a whole in the achievement of objectives
- to maintain the unity of the team and see that dissident activity is minimized
- to communicate efficiently with the team and brief them as a team at least once a month on matters which affect them
- consult with the team whenever time permits, before taking decisions that affect them.

Checklist for building the team:

1. Do I set objectives with the team and ensure everybody understands them?
2. Is the team clear as to the working standards expected from them e.g. quality of work, timekeeping etc?
3. Is the size of the team correct, and are the right people working together? Is there a need for more teams to be established?
4. Do I look for opportunities for building teamwork into the job?
5. Do I take action on matters likely to disrupt the team e.g. uneven workloads?
6. Do I welcome and encourage new ideas and suggestions from the team?
7. Do I provide regular opportunities for genuine consultation with the team before taking decisions affecting them?
8. Do I explain decisions to help people apply them?
9. Do I regularly brief the team on progress, people, policy, points for action etc?

By doing one becomes:

Most of what has been written up to now and in particular the checklists, concern the leaders analysis of what needs to be done to achieve the task, build the team and develop individuals. The leader then decides and acts.

So far so good, but very often leaders worry whether they have the right 'personality' or set of personal qualities to do the job well. This need not be a worry.

We are all born with certain individual talents. There are others we can acquire as we go through life, there are we cannot. Some people never acquire a sense of humour for instance, or much imagination. While these are valuable, many successful leaders manage perfectly well without them.

On occasions we have to modify the way in which we act. The way we would go about setting the task in an emergency would be quite different to the way we would go about the same leadership action when arranging a routine event. Our commonsense will guide us here. The most important thing is to be sincere and be ourselves.

It is encouraging that over the years it has become clear that by carrying out leadership actions in their own way, and becoming more skilful and confident as experience grows, people undoubtedly do become more effective leaders and start to acquire and develop the talents and qualities that are needed.

Summary:

The job of the leader is not just to manage process but to get results by achieving the **task,** to build an effective and cohesive **team and** develop **individuals**. These are the actions of a leader. This is the work a manager has to perform to be a successful leader. They are not inborn traits, they are skills which can be recognised, practiced and developed.

By practicing the skills and actions suggested and by becoming more confident as experience is gained, there is no doubt that a manager will become a more effective leader. The emphasis is on the actions leaders take, upon what they do rather than the sort of people they are. It has been shown time and time again that by doing one becomes a more effective leader.

02 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

As organisations, public or private, develop modern management systems, they move away from process delivery towards achieving performance results. This can be a traumatic experience for some managers, as process management is relatively safe, whilst failure to reach performance targets seems to imply a degree of responsibility and even the dreaded accountability.

The process of managing performance, seeks to improve organisational effectiveness, by assessing and developing the individuals and teams within it. It is about understanding and managing performance in a systematic and integrated way, in order to achieve the aims and standards of the organisation. This chapter briefly examines the nature of performance management and its benefits.

Performance management does not necessarily mean introducing a performance appraisal system; it is more about introducing an approach to management. It is a mistake to start designing appraisal forms and writing rules and regulations, when what is needed is training managers in the concept of performance management.

Appraising performance:

Performance appraisal is a human judgment about the effectiveness of an individuals work. We have to accept that it is inherently a subjective process**,** but one in which we must trust in the managers (properly trained) being as objective as possible. Also, if standards are properly set and agreed in advance, the risks of subjectivity are greatly reduced. The basis of the system is discussion, agreement and clarification of the following questions:

- What are the essential requirements for effective performance?
- What does the individual have to demonstrate to show effective performance?
- Is the individual aware of these requirements?
- Has he/she accepted them?
- What did he/she actually achieve against agreed standards?
- How conclusive is the evidence?
- Is remedial action necessary?

Properly handled, performance management will not only improve individual and organisational performance, but also motivates, facilitates communication and identifies training and develop needs.

Benefits of appraisal for individuals:

For individuals the benefits of performance appraisal are that it provides:

- an opportunity to find out what their manager thinks of their performance;
- an opportunity to have their achievements recognised;
- an opportunity to discuss barriers, frustrations and problems to effective performance;
- an opportunity to discuss ambitions and aspirations;
- an indication that their needs are being understood and acted upon;
- an opportunity to obtain guidance and direction for the future;
- an opportunity to discuss future training needs;
- an opportunity to talk to their manager.

Benefits of appraisal for the manager:

For the manager performance appraisal provides an opportunity for the following:

- to identify performance discrepancies;
- to learn what staff feel about their jobs and factors affecting their performance and motivation;
- to give staff feedback and praise their performance and encourage improvement;
- to identify development needs;
- to improve communication and develop closer working relationships with team members;
- to clarify and agree future performance objectives;
- to identify potential.

Benefits of appraisal for the public service:

The benefits of performance appraisal are as follows:

- it provides a consistent method of measuring and assessing performance;
- it provides an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of the individual by giving clear targets to achieve;
- it highlights priorities;
- it can increase motivation;
- it improves communication;
- it identifies future training needs.

Open systems of performance appraisal:

Modern appraisal is either fully open or mostly so. This has obvious advantages in terms of fairness and in providing individuals with opportunities to discuss differences and seek redress of any grievances which may arise. The obvious disadvantage is that some managers may be less frank in making their assessments.

Managing poor performance:

From time to time every manager will be faced with a subordinate who for one reason or another is not performing satisfactorily. This will be a major concern as, if not addressed, the situation can have a de-motivating effect on others within a work team. In addition, problems can become bigger and take up a disproportionate amount of managerial time. The employee may not be aware that his or her performance is below standard and therefore continues in blissful ignorance. Alternatively, the employee is aware that things are not up to scratch but hopes that it will go unnoticed, or at least, nobody will make too much of a fuss.

Often employees are aware that their performance is lacking in some way but do not know how to bring it up to standard. It is vital that the manager gathers evidence to substantiate that there is a clear gap between what is required and what has actually been delivered.

Before dealing with the issue as a performance problem, it is worth considering if the problem is in reality a performance issue, or is it caused by external factors which may be outside of the employees' control. Typical examples would include stress, medical conditions or personal or domestic problems. It may also be the result of a lack of effort (motivational or attitudinal causes) or a lack of knowledge or skill.

A standard approach to appraisal interviewing:

Purpose and rapport building:	Agree purpose with subordinate. Agree structure for the meeting. Check preparation is adequate.
Factual review:	Review known facts about performance. Check for unknown facts.
Subordinate views:	Get comments on performance. What has gone well? What has not? What could be improved?

	Work preferences and reasons. Possible new key result areas.
Manager's views:	Manager adds own perspective. Disagreements discussed.
Joint problem solving:	Discussion of differences and how they can be resolved. Development needs and how the boss can help.
Goal setting:	Development of revised goals. Development plan with allocated responsibility.

In very simple terms, performance management is about telling people what you want them to do, and to what standard. Reviewing their performance, comparing it to the standards set and feeding it back to them. As the individuals develop and improve, so does the organisation as a whole.

03 LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC SERVICE

How can the senior staff of a government organisation like the Ministry of Education improve its performance and have a positive effect on results achieved? This is an important question about leadership.

As we develop as managers within public service, our training exposes us to a wide range of leadership models, some of which are not particularly relevant to public sector organisations. The following ideas, however, are based on a paper, written by Dr Robert D. Behn of Harvard University, specifically for public service organisations. His approach to performance leadership encompasses eleven “better practices” he has observed in use by successful public managers over the years.

Rather than developing public sector managers with the leadership capacity to improve the performance of their organisations, we have sought to create performance systems that will impose such improvements. Thus we have tended to ignore the leadership question and, instead, have focused on systems.

Administrative requirements (or systems) are not designed to elicit discernment and adaptation; they are created to impose obedience and conformity. Moreover, the senior managers upon whom such compliance is imposed have seen all this before. They have learned how to cope. Indeed, they became senior managers precisely because they learned how to cope. Still, some of those who have mastered coping may desire to do more. They may seek to progress from complying with the requirements of the latest performance management system to do something that might help improve the performance of their organisation. What is being proposed here are proven approaches which have been successful in a wide range of public sector organisations?

This approach to performance leadership contains little that is wholly novel or overwhelmingly revolutionary. Indeed, most of its eleven components have been advocated by numerous scholars. Yet, too few public sector managers exploit the advantages of these practices. Fewer still exploit the advantages that may accrue from employing several of these practices simultaneously.

The 11 practices are organised into three categories:

- Four practices to create a **performance framework**
- Four further practices to **mobilize the organisation’s resources** to tangibly improve performance
- Three additional practices to **learn how to improve** performance

Together, all 11 offer one approach to performance leadership.

One Approach to Performance Leadership:
11 Practices to Improve Performance

Creating the Performance Framework:
What would it mean to do a better job?

Practice 1: Articulate the organisation’s mission.
Proclaim, clearly and frequently, what the organisation is trying to accomplish.

Practice 2: Identify the organisation’s most consequential performance deficit.
Determine what key failure is keeping the organisation from achieving its mission.

Practice 3: Establish a specific performance target.
Specify what new level of success the organisation needs to achieve next.

Practice 4: Clarify your theoretical link between target and mission.
Define (for yourself at least) your mental model that explains how meeting the target will help accomplish the mission.

Driving Performance Improvement:
How can we mobilize our people?

Practice 5: Monitor and report progress frequently, personally and publicly.
Publish the data so that every team knows that you know (and that everyone else knows) how well every team is doing.

Practice 6: Build operational capacity.
Provide your teams with what they need to achieve the targets.

Practice 7: Take advantage of small wins to reward success.
Find lots of reasons to demonstrate that you recognise and appreciate what teams have accomplished.

Practice 8: Create ‘esteem’ opportunities.
Ensure that people can earn a sense of accomplishment and thus gain both self-esteem and the esteem of their peers.

Learning to Enhance Performance:
How much must we change to do even better?

Practice 9: Check for distortions and mission accomplishment.
Verify that people are achieving their targets in a way that furthers the mission.

Practice 10: Analyze a large number and wide variety of indicators.
Examine many forms of data – both quantitative and qualitative – to learn how your organisation can improve.

Practice 11: Adjust mission, target, monitoring and reporting, operational capacity, rewards, esteem opportunities, and / or analysis.
Act on this learning; make the modifications necessary to improve performance again.

This approach is not a neatly drawn annual cycle, but effectively a performance treadmill, for its leaders and its employees. Once they jump on the treadmill, they cannot get off. They have to keep running, with the success on one lap requiring even more success on the next. In effect, it introduces private sector business community practices into the public sector. But whereas the businessman has his quantitative profit targets we may have qualitative targets for public service.

If the Ministry of Education leaders do wish to improve performance, and decide to jump on the treadmill, these 11 practices offer one approach that they can employ.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

04 Developing People
05 Job Descriptions
06 Work Design
07 Manpower Planning
08 Setting Objectives
09 Assigning Duties

04 DEVELOPING PEOPLE

Developing people within any sector or organisation is not just about training, but corporate vision, an appropriate HRD strategy, a management style focused on development, ongoing assessment and training needs analysis, as well as the provision of suitable delivery mechanisms.

It is the role of all managers to maximize the resources, human and otherwise, that have been provided to them, in order that they achieve their operational goals. This requires commitment at all levels and a willingness to experience a major organisational change.

To start this process, and demonstrate commitment, it is a good idea to produce a mission statement, setting out clear guidelines for the different levels of the organisation. A fictional example of such a mission statement is illustrated below.

VET MODEL HUMAN RESOURSE DEVELOPMENT MISSION STATEMENT

1. The Ministry of Education has a significant contribution to make to improve the nation's business competitiveness at home and abroad.
2. One of our main purposes is to help secure a skilled, flexible and adaptable workforce capable of responding rapidly to change and exploiting the business opportunities which the future offers.
3. Our attention is focused on the vocational education and training and development of the nation's workforce, including young people before they enter the labour market, during their early years at work and the adult population employed or unemployed.
4. Our major strategic objectives:
   - to enhance vocational relevance in the education system
   - to improve the skills and employability of unemployed people
   - to increase employers commitment to training
   - to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the VET system
   - to develop systems and initiatives which enhance the quality of VET
   - to improve the quality and availability of information on which decisions about training are taken
   - to protect the position of disadvantaged groups in achieving access to VET
5. Just as we encourage others to invest in people, we acknowledge that a crucial factor in the achievement of our objectives will be realizing the potential within our staff.
6. We therefore seek to establish a workforce that is committed to MoE objectives and competent to perform their roles and contribute to the development of new programmes and policies.
7. The following paragraphs set out what will be expected of top management, line managers, individuals and training and personnel support services.
8. Top management must accept responsibility for creating an environment in which staff are recognised to have a valuable contribution to make to the achievement of organizational objectives. In addition they should support the setting of clear objectives at all levels and the provision of opportunities for staff to enhance their skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to undertake present and future roles. Top managers will also be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of measures taken.
9. Line managers must play their role in developing effective work teams. This means identifying and communicating what is required of staff to meet operational objectives and implementing and reviewing measures to equip staff for present and future positions. Line managers agree Individual Development Plans.
10. Personnel and training support teams must ensure that a menu of opportunities is available to meet development needs.

With a clear Mission Statement agreed, the next stage is to develop and present a Human Resource Development Strategy for MoE.

HRD STRATEGY - TYPICAL FORMAT:

Given below is a fairly typical format for a public sector HRD strategy document.

Part 1 introduces the concept and points to the aim of establishing a clear, coherent and widely accepted strategy and the reasons why that is thought to be necessary. There will also be a discussion on the methodology used to develop the strategy.

Part 2 sets out the context within which the strategy will operate, referring to priorities, the effects of continual change and the anticipated response.

Part 3 sets out the main objectives of the strategy, typically the development of individual competence, commitment to the goals of the organization and an enhanced capacity for change.

Part 4 describes the components of the HRD strategy, most certainly referring to the HRD Mission Statement. Likely to be included are references to corporate and operational planning, career planning, succession planning, training for specific target groups, performance management, role of the Personnel Department and a menu of development opportunities.

Part 5 will introduce the mechanisms for implementation and control.

Part 6 generally refers to resource issues and particularly the crucial decision to be addressed by top management; to what extent it is prepared to devote time and staff resource away from mainstream operations towards HRD activity. Clearly this is a balance that requires great care. As an example, when one government department in Serbia recently fell badly behind their performance targets, the office manager pointed out that he had lost close to 25% of his available staff time to training. Whilst such a commitment may have long term benefits, the operational implications were clearly unacceptable.

Part 7 will typically be a summary of recommendations.

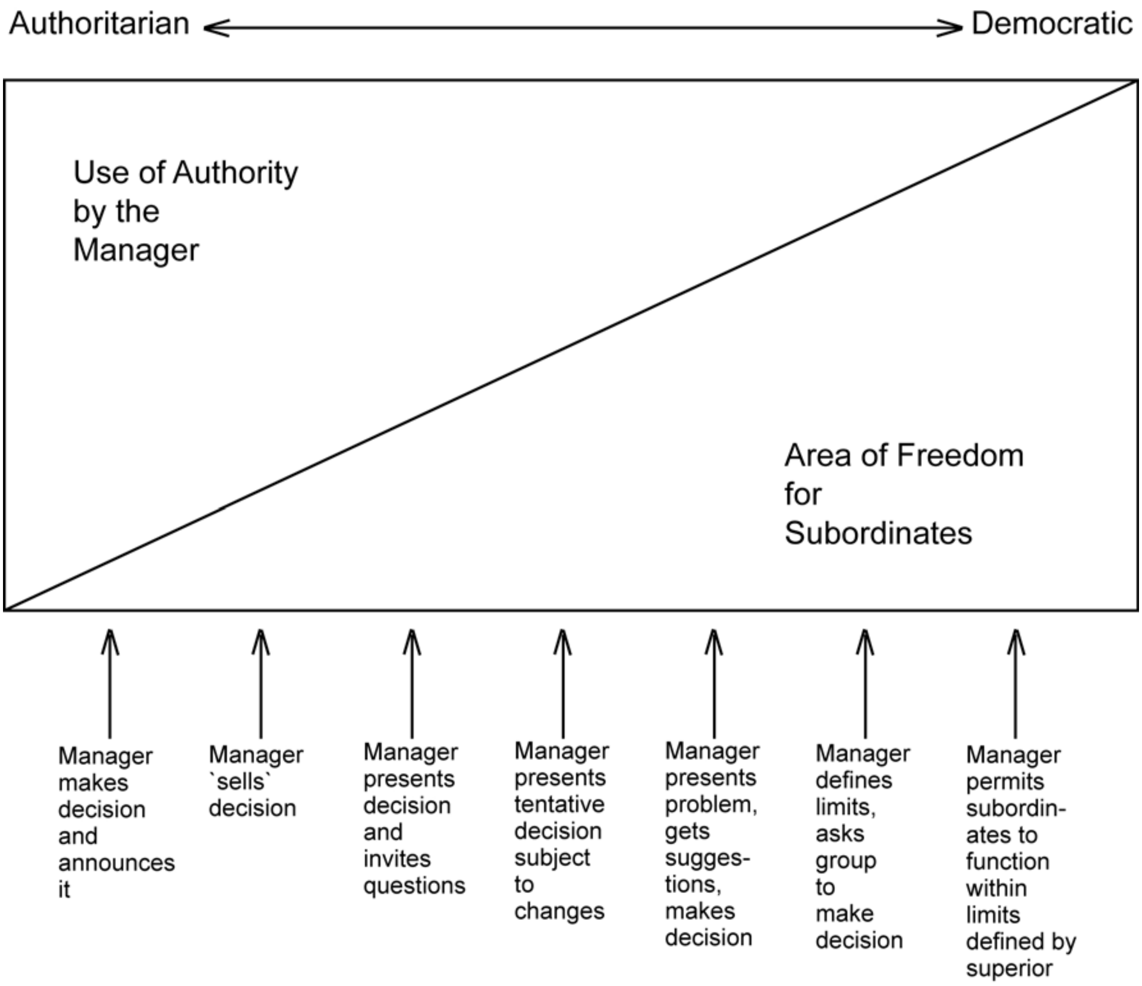
Of course the development of an HRD Strategy and a Mission Statement will not by itself result in coherent development taking place, but without this demonstration of top management support, it most certainly won’t happen. It is also crucial that senior management actively demonstrate personal commitment to the concept. Management’s actions must reflect the message being presented.

MANAGEMENT STYLE

Before moving on, reference was made in paragraph one to management style, and line managers will certainly need to see that developing the human resource at their disposal is a key responsibility. However, we should not forget that Human Resource Development is primarily about improving the performance of the organization through the development of individuals. It is not simply the introduction of a new management style.

It is perhaps worth saying at this point that there has been a prevailing view that so called ‘democratic’ management is the correct modern approach, but as is often the case, this is now recognised as an over simplification.

Consider the following diagram which is attributed to Tannenbaum and Schmidt.



The implication that ‘democratic’ is best is rather artificial, as there are clearly times when an authoritarian approach is necessary. The skilled manager therefore will see the Tannenbaum/ Schmidt model as a sliding scale, which he or she moves up and down depending on circumstances. Even within a development context, whilst obviously it is preferred to have the staff member on board with any training need, there will be occasions when the managers assessment of an individuals weakness are not shared. As we will discuss later however, the dilemma is that training not considered necessary by the recipient, loses much of its value.

TRAINING

Under the influence of international donors, many Serbian public service institutions are now recognising the need for internal training.

Training has the important dual function of improving both utilisation and motivation. By improving employees’ ability to perform the tasks required by the organisation, training allows better use to be made of human resources; by giving employees a feeling of mastery over their work and of recognition by management, their job satisfaction is increased. Of course these results may not be achieved if the trainee sees no purpose in the training or considers it irrelevant to their needs.
Arguments against training are that it is expensive, takes resources away from the frontline and increases expectations. I was once told by a senior official – “if you train my staff you will make them effective so they will leave”. Standing that statement on its head – if I keep my staff ineffective they will stay.

There are many reasons for training, examples including:

- the installation of new equipment requiring additional skills
- a change in working methods
- a realisation that performance is inadequate
- a shortage of staff necessitating increased productivity from the current team
- promotion, transfer or general labour turnover

A systematic approach to training:

Like any other process, training can be expensive and wasteful if it is not carefully planned and managed. If training is to be introduced, it is suggested that the most suitable method would be what is know as the ***Systematic Approach***, which follows this logical programme:

1. Individual jobs within MoE are analysed and defined.
2. Acceptable performance standards are established.
3. Employees being considered for training are assessed against agreed standards.
4. The difference between 2 and 3 is considered to be the training need, although other reasons are possible.
5. Training programmes developed to meet the need.
6. Training provided.
7. The training is validated in terms of improvement in standards.
8. The training is evaluated in terms of value for money or cost benefit.

Author's note: although the words evaluation and validation are the same in the Serbian and other Slavic languages, in English (particularly in the training community) evaluation means to validate and assess value for money.

The assessment of individual training needs:

This would start by examining jobs within MoE, in order to assess required performance standards in terms of knowledge, skill and attitude (behaviour). The performance being achieved by individual employees is then assessed, most commonly through some form of appraisal system, or alternatively through questionnaires or structured interviews. Often of course the assessment is done almost by intuition, particularly when an individual employee's performance could obviously be improved. Validation of the training may be equally straightforward in such cases.

On-the-job versus off-the-job training:

On-the-job training is given in the normal workplace, using the actual equipment, documents or materials they will use when fully trained. The trainee being regarded as partly productive during such training. One clear benefit is that it is less costly than off-the-job training, but the disadvantage is that the quality of the training providers (or desk trainers) will be variable. Experience in Serbia also suggests that training in the workplace results in participants being distracted or even called away from training. Organisations new to in-house training will often select this approach for financial reasons. However the most skilled at any given process may not be the most skilled coach and it is strongly recommended that all coaches are provided with appropriate trainer training. Off-the-job training is costly, particularly in terms of employee down time, but is usually delivered by properly trained trainers, which can result in it being more cost effective in the long term.

Validation and evaluation:

Unfortunately, training programmes are often extremely difficult to validate. Many jobs are not measurable and therefore validation tends to be subjective. For example, the performance of a manager who has attended a management training course may be assessed by his or her superiors before and after the event. They may well agree that an improvement has been noted, but other factors may have contributed. The more specific the training, the easier the validation becomes. By calculating the cost of training and comparing it with the financial benefits to the organisation from the improved performance of the trainees, validation may be extended to become evaluation.

Training methods:

Type of training	Methods
Knowledge	Coaching Formal lectures Visits and study tours Manuals and charts Simulation such as in-tray exercises Computer based training Interactive video
Skill	On-job desk training with experienced worker / coach Demonstration tell – show – do Discovery method Simulations Practice and feedback Experiential learning
Attitude	On-the-job training with employees with appropriate attitudes. Attaching to a senior employee / mentor / coach Case studies Role playing Self examination groups (T-groups) Experiential learning

Attitude training is particularly difficult because many attitudes are deep-rooted and cannot be easily changed in a short time. For example, a few days training may not result in the changing of discriminatory views. In such a case, the initial concentration would be on changing the behaviours that demonstrate his or her discriminatory attitude.

Development without training:

Development need not involve direct training, particularly at more senior levels. Typical opportunities include:

- shadowing senior managers
- job rotation
- secondments to other ministries
- short term attachments to external organisations public / private sector
- study tours
- project management
- delegation from senior management
- exchanges with counterpart ministries in other countries
- management development programmes
- career development planning

Conclusion:

We have tried in this section to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of training, with the weight coming down most definitely on the positive side. If a decision is taken to move down the HRD route, it will be an example of MoE investing in itself, with the purpose of improving its performance and the service it provides. Examining the experiences and reviewing the benefits to other ministries that have made this choice would be informative and beneficial. As an organisation, which by definition promotes education for all, it is time to recognise that this includes the management and staff of the Ministry of Education.

EXERCISE

During a large number of Training Needs Analysis exercises throughout the region, managers have been asked about their development needs, and those of their staff. Whilst they may readily identify needs in others, it is to be expected that they find it more difficult to admit to their own. It seems that they see development need as admitting weakness and acknowledging weakness as making them vulnerable.

One way round this is to ask people to grade 10 aspects of their job from 1 – 10, with 1 being the strongest and 10 being weakest. Try this yourself with the following random issues.

Planning
Decision making / problem solving
Delegating and allocating tasks
Communication
Leadership
Managing meetings
Presentation skills
Influencing
Negotiating
Managing change

Now without showing anybody your result, ask colleagues as a group to grade you on the same 10 items. A comparison will give you food for thought.

As Robert Burns, a famous Scottish poet once said “Oh to see ourselves as others see us”.

05 JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The job description or job specification is of fundamental importance in personnel management, though it should be used with discretion. It is crucially used for:

- selection
- promotion
- appraisal
- setting performance standards
- job evaluation
- training

There are few organisations where job descriptions can genuinely remain unchanged for any length of time, since they are partly the result of the organisational needs (which frequently change) and partly the result of the way in which successive employees have carried out the job.

When relations are poor between manager and subordinates, the latter may use their job descriptions as defensive shields, refusing tasks or responsibilities because they do not appear in the document. This should be avoided at all costs. The job description should be a guiding framework and not a protective cage. In writing job descriptions today, most organisations take measures to prevent this. Typical solutions include:

1. specify a percentage of time which management can allocate for additional tasks or out of grade working
2. include a simple statement at the end of the job description – “at the discretion of management”.

Drawing up a job description:

Before we can start to write a job description the job must be analysed in detail. Job Analysis is the process of collecting and analysing information about the tasks, responsibilities and the context of jobs. Information is gathered on:

- job identification data – job title, department etc;
- relationships with others – reporting and supervisory relationships up and down;
- job content – actual tasks, level, importance;
- working conditions – physical and social environment, health risks, working alone or in group, salary and hours etc;
- performance standards/objectives – expressed in quantitative or qualitative terms;
- human requirements etc – the physical and psychological characteristics of the individual who could fulfil the demands of the job.

Sources of information include the job incumbent, line management, peers and subordinates, technical experts and existing records. The objective is to report this information in the form of a written job description. *An example of a Job Analysis Checklist can be found at the end of this chapter.*

There is no standard layout or set of headings for a job description; variations will be necessary according to the type of work e.g. manual / non-manual. Most important however, the document should emphasise activity and behaviour and not vague non-specific terms like “responsible for”. Whenever possible the job description should show what the person does and by what means.

One possible structure:

Job Description

Name:
Personnel details: national insurance number etc.
Job title:
Scope of the job: a broad narrative statement of purpose, scope, duties and responsibilities.
Reporting to: line manager.
Responsible for: any staff responsible for.
Major responsibilities and results expected: expressed in terms of activities, behaviours and results to be achieved.
Routine duties: under same headings as above.
Non-routine/infrequent duties: under same headings as above. To include an indication of frequency.
Working conditions: environment.
Equipment and materials used: e.g. desk top computer, power point projector etc.
Personal contacts:
NB. For appraisal and training purposes, performance standards should also be included.

An example of an actual job description is given at the end of this chapter.

Performance standards:

It is sometimes necessary to specify the quantity or quality of work which should be attained by the jobholder. As stated in the note above, the most frequent use of performance standards is found in appraisal and training; to assess an employee in his or her normal work or after training it is essential to have a criterion against which to compare actual performance. Performance standards are also used in some wage systems.

Performance standards are most easy to set when some kind of physical activity takes place. They can state how many articles should be produced, how many documents processed or how many sales calls should be made. At other levels, setting standards can become more complicated. For example if teachers were set student examination success as a standard, lets say 75% success rate, for the top stream of students 76% would in reality be very poor performance, but 74% for the bottom stream would be an outstanding success. If you start varying targets by stream, it is remarkably difficult to guarantee a fair balance is achieved. Equally it is very difficult to set standards for managers and supervisors, as achievement of targets can be influenced by an incredibly broad range of factors.

It is often claimed that careful analysis aided by ingenuity will show that any job contains elements for which performance standards can be expressed in terms of measurable behaviour, and some approaches to appraisal and training are based on this assumption. The danger of course is that rather artificial and non-key standards are set.

For example, a target was set for interviews conducted. Two offices were reviewed. Office A achieved its targets Office B fell more then 20% short. On the face of it the result was clear, but further analysis changed the evaluation. Less than 10% of Office A’s interviews had a positive result, but more than 30% of Office B’s did. Sadly, the only target set had been interviews conducted. To make matters worse, when a third office was visited, the manager had not even measured how successful the interviews were, because it was not a required indicator.

EXERCISE:

Review your own job description against the guidance given above, particularly in terms of specific activities and behaviours language.

AN EXAMPLE OF A JOB DESCRIPTION:

Job title: Senior Sales Assistant

Context: One of 13 high technology shops owned by ‘Savatext’
Location – New Belgrade
Supervised by, and reporting to the Shop Manager
Responsible for one direct subordinate – a Sales Assistant

Job summary: To assist and advise customers in the selection of computer hardware and software, and to arrange delivery and finance were appropriate.
Objective is to sell as much as possible, and for customer and potential customers to see ‘Savatext’ staff as helpful and efficient.

Job content: *Most frequent duties in order of importance*
Advise customers about hardware and software
Demonstrate equipment and software
Organise delivery of equipment by liaising with distribution department
Answer all after-sales queries from customers
Contact each customer two weeks after delivery to see if they need help
Advise customers about payment methods
Develop and keep up to date a computerized stock control system
Occasional duties in order of importance
Arrange for faulty equipment to be replaced
Complete deferred payment forms
Responsibility for others
Check that junior sales assistant carried out all duties in job description
Monitor performance as defined
Advice and guide, train and assess as required

Work Conditions: Pleasant environment in new shop in centre of New Belgrade
There are 6 other staff
Will have regular contact with Head Office and Delivery Department
Salary 80,000 dinars per month plus twice yearly sales bonus
4 weeks holiday per year plus public holidays
6 day working week Monday – Saturday

Other Information: Opportunities for promotion to shop manager in another branch

Performance Standards: There are two critically important areas
Sales volume must reach 30,000,000 dinars over each 6 month accounting period
Relations with customers:
Customers’ queries answered immediately
Customers always given demonstration on request
Complaints investigated immediately
Unresolved problems referred to manager

AN EXAMPLE OF A JOB ANALYSIS CHECKLIST:

Job title and identification

Organisational context:	company name department location supervision reporting relationships direct subordinates
Job summary:	purpose and objectives of the job
Job content:	tasks/duties frequency relative importance equipment / methods used scope of responsibility
Working conditions:	physical conditions, hours and holidays social conditions economic conditions
Other information:	promotion opportunities possible transfers training / development opportunities scope for developing the job
Performance standards:	specific objectives expectations assessment standards
Individual requirements:	physical and psychological characteristics required for an individual to do the job

Note that this particular Job Analysis Checklist was designed for use in the selection process.

06 WORK DESIGN

Boredom at work is a major de-motivator, with direct and obvious impact on effective functioning. A recent study which included public servants and government employees identified the following factors as contributing to boredom:

- Constraints in the job – having to carry out tasks which management felt were essential, but which employees considered uninteresting.
- Meaningless tasks – considered unnecessary by employees.
- Lack of interest and challenge – such as filing and form filling.
- Repetitive tasks.
- Never-ending nature of the job – lack of any sense of completion.

Another public sector study identified the following characteristics as being crucial for job satisfaction:

- There should be some degree of autonomy over the way tasks are to be achieved.
- Individuals should be responsible for their own work and the resources they use.
- An element of variety should be present in the job, so as to permit variations in task, pace and method.
- Employees must be given feedback on performance.
- The job should enable the completion of a complete task wherever practicable.
- Some degree of social contact should be available to the jobholder.
- Learning opportunities should be built into the job so as to provide an element of challenge as well as the opportunity to extend a person's repertoire of knowledge and skills.
- The jobholder's role should be clear, particularly in terms of management expectations.
- Every job should have goals to aim for.

Given the above information and famous researches by such as Frederick Herzberg, modern managers have explored ways of increasing job satisfaction through what is called task restructuring. The most common methods are:

- job enrichment;
- job enlargement;
- autonomous work groups.

Of course there are other methods of enhancing job satisfaction such as improved consultation, involvement in decision-making, delegation etc. The concepts of task restructuring are both logical and easy to understand. The hard part is for managers to recognise that it is their job to maximize the human resource at their disposal and that bored or frustrated staff will naturally be less productive than those that are motivated.

Job enrichment:

The term 'job enrichment' is usually applied to the vertical extension of job responsibilities. Herzberg saw it in terms of building motivators, such as opportunities for achievement, recognition and responsibility, into the job. The main benefits for individuals are felt in terms of increased job satisfaction resulting from increased intrinsic rewards. Organisations benefit through increased productivity and a reduction of overhead costs caused by absenteeism, lateness, lack of attention to quality and other negative features of poor morale.

Job enlargement:

In contrast, job enlargement, is the horizontal extension of jobs, that is to add extra tasks of the same general level. Of course the benefit is increased variety, although there is no real increase in responsibility. The approach nevertheless has many supporters, not least because it often works in practice to bring about improved morale and / or productivity.

Autonomous work groups:

The idea behind autonomous work groups is that job satisfaction and hence employee morale can be enhanced if employees work together in a group to achieve their goals. Such groups are self organised and responsible for the outputs achieved. First tried in the British coal industry, and subsequently adopted with enthusiasm in Norway and Sweden, notably in the Volvo car plant. Volvo particularly showed that such groups improved quality and reduced overheads as well as providing greater job satisfaction for the employees involved.

Conclusions:

Redesigning jobs is not easy. Changes in one party of a job hierarchy are bound to bring changes elsewhere. Change may be welcome in one group, but not in another. Individuals may initially welcome change, but then feel less enthusiastic if related job conditions, such as pay or training, do not meet their need. Also when expectations are raised there is no going back.

However, when work can be redesigned effectively, the rewards are twofold. For individuals, there is the opportunity to find personally satisfying and challenging work. For organisations, there is the opportunity to achieve lower costs, better quality and improved productivity.

Having used work design techniques in large, often de-motivated and always badly paid government departments, in several countries over many years, I know that they can be very effective if properly applied. As referred to previously, much depends on individual managers recognizing their broadening role within human resource management.

07 MANPOWER PLANNING

Manpower Planning, like any form of planning, is a means to an end. In this case the end is a secure supply of manpower, able to undertake all the activities required to achieve the organisation's objectives. In organisations that have adopted corporate planning as the fundamental basis of the management process, the manpower situation will have been assessed at the top management level. Many other organisations will not have adopted the comprehensive approach of corporate planning, but may have been forced for economic or social reasons to consider the flow of manpower through their institutions.

Whatever the nature of the organisation, if it is of a size where changes in the workforce will have a significant effect on results, then it will need to undertake some kind of manpower planning. In this chapter, manpower planning is taken to mean a rational approach to the recruitment, retention, utilization, improvement and disposal of an organisation's human resources. It is as concerned with quality as it is with quantity. If anything, more time should be spent on the qualitative aspects, in particular the different requirements for knowledge and skills.

It is worth considering what are the questions which manpower planning aims to address.

- What kind of people does the organisation require and in what numbers?
- Over what time span are these people required?
- How many are currently employed?
- How can any shortfall be addressed?
- What changes are taking place in the external labour market which might affect the supply of manpower?

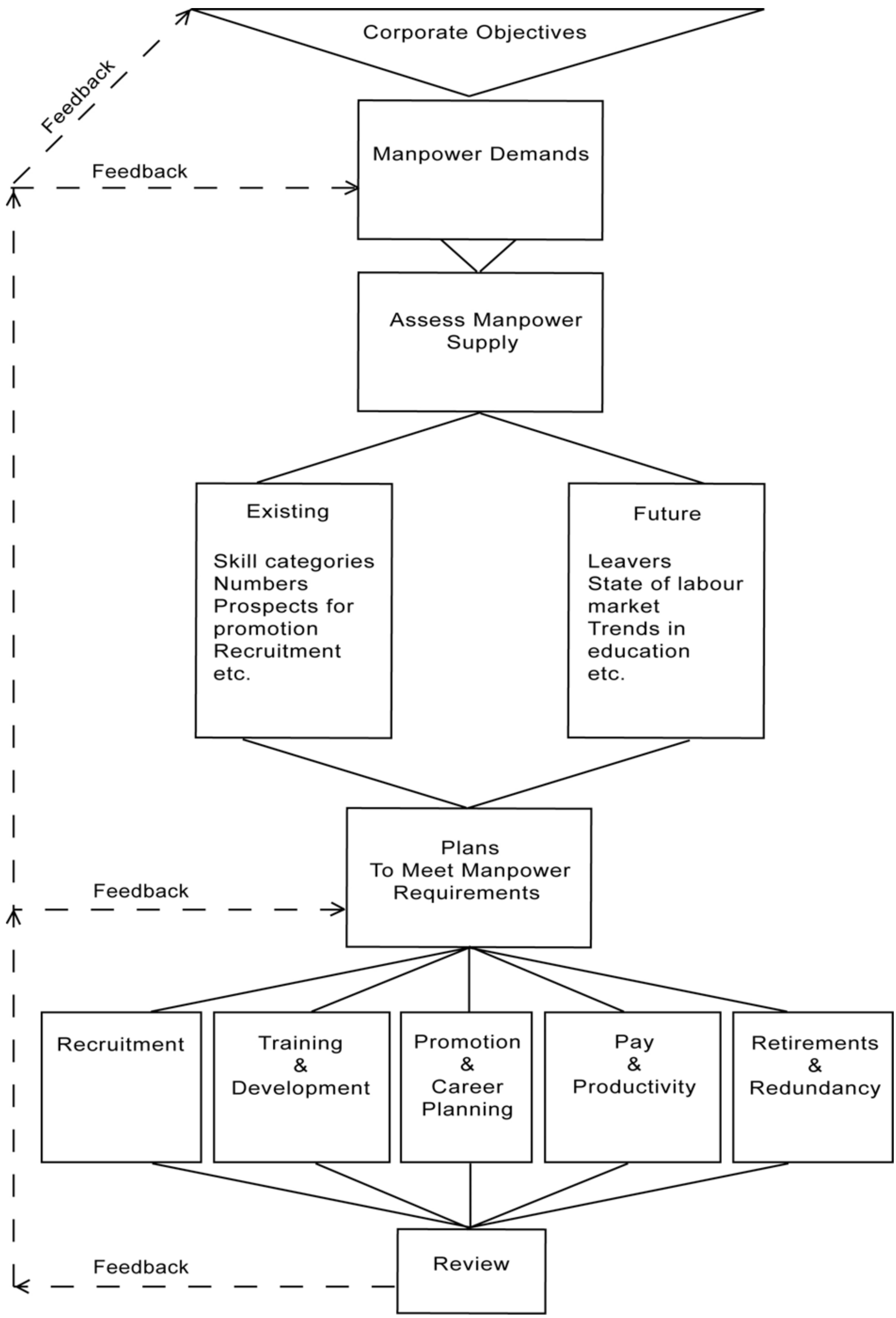
If these are the key questions, then manpower planning is essentially concerned with four major activities - analysing existing manpower situations, forecasting future demand, assessing the external labour market and forecasting manpower supply.

The manpower planning process:

Whether a commercial organisation or a government institution, manpower planning can only make sense when seen in relation to business objectives. The basic demand for people springs from the organisations need to supply goods or services.

As previously stated, manpower planning is not just concerned with numbers. Plans for training, for promotion and productivity all indicate the importance of getting the right kind of staff as well as the right numbers.

Consider the manpower planning model on the next page, which shows key features of each of the major stages of the manpower planning cycle.


Corporate Objectives
Feedback
Feedback
Manpower Demands
Assess Manpower Supply
Existing
Skill categories
Numbers
Prospects for promotion
Recruitment
etc.
Future
Leavers
State of labour market
Trends in education
etc.
Plans To Meet Manpower Requirements
Feedback
Recruitment
Training & Development
Promotion & Career Planning
Pay & Productivity
Retirements & Redundancy
Review
Feedback

The demand for manpower:

Although there are often continuous short-term demands, a longer term view of manpower is essential for ensuring that the organisation is supplied with skills which may take time to develop. Most professional jobs for example will require at least some period of training.

Manpower supply:

Any analysis of the supply of manpower must commence with a review of the existing position. Answers need to be sought to such questions as:

- What categories of staff do we have?
- What are the numbers in each category?
- What skills and qualifications exist?
- What about age and sex distribution?
- How many staff are suitable for promotion or redeployment?
- How successful are we at recruiting particular categories of staff?

These are important questions for both immediate and future needs. If, for example, a contraction is planned, it might be an advantage to have an older workforce. Equally, if an expansion is envisaged, an aging workforce would be a disadvantage.

When considering the existing supply of manpower available, we are not just considering the numbers and categories at a particular point in time. We are also considering:

- the organisation's ability to continue to attract suitable recruits;
- the rate at which employees are leaving and why;

The analysis of the existing supply of manpower must also take account of the potentialities of existing staff to undertake other roles in the organisation.

Planning to meet future need:

Having considered the existing supply of manpower, an organisation will know how far short its requirements for the future are. At that point it may be necessary to look at the external labour market. There are a number of important issues here. For example, what is the overall employment situation likely to be over the longer term? How is this likely to affect the local labour market? Are there any trends in the education sector which might affect recruitment plans?

Once the supply position has been assessed, a plan to meet future need can be drawn up. Most manpower plans are developed on a rolling five year basis and updated annually. Detailed plans for securing sufficient and suitable employees for current needs are laid for a one year period in line with current budgets. Less detailed plans are laid for the five year period, but at least major contingencies are prepared for in line with the organisation's strategy.

Factors to be taken into account in planning include:

- Recruitment.
- Training and development.
- Promotion and career planning.
- Pay and productivity.
- Retirement and redundancy.

Manpower planning is a rational approach to the recruitment, retention, utilization, improvement and disposal of the human resources of an organisation. Its purpose is to secure the organisations manpower in both the short and long terms in order to meet corporate objectives.

Within Serbia a number of ministries have quite high staff turnovers, sadly often it being the more skilled staff which are moving out. The quality of staff is sometimes considered low, with poor salaries being given as a contributory factor. A more scientific approach to manpower planning across the public sector could go some way towards improving this situation.

08 SETTING OBJECTIVES

Activity is only useful if it contributes to an agreed purpose. As the overall purpose of an organisation will be far-reaching and require time to achieve, activity should be directed towards the meeting of discrete objectives. These objectives constitute understandable targets for individuals, targets which they can themselves contribute to the achievement of. Although setting objectives takes time itself, this is a small investment considering the benefits to be gained.

There are five criteria which should be met, if objectives are to be of value.

Objectives should be:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Results orientated**
- **To a timescale**

Specific: the objective must state specifically what is to be achieved, what is to be do and by whom.
Measurable: how will all parties know when the objective has been achieved? Will the end result be a report, a change in behaviour, a new skill acquires or a statistical target reached?
Achievable: whilst an objective should stretch those seeking to achieve it must be realistic within the resources allocated.
Results orientated: why is the objective being set, what for, for whom? There must be a benefit resulting from the objective being achieved.
To a timescale: a deadline should be set. In the case of a large scale, interim timescales may also be included.

Setting individual objectives:

Good objectives enable the individual to recognise their contribution to the organisation's strategic aims, ensures that everyone is working to achieve those aims and provide both a challenge and motivation. The process of setting good objectives can be divided into three stages:

- preparation
- writing
- analysing

The following is a formula to help individuals to set objectives.

Preparation	Writing	Analysing
Make sure you are familiar with the objectives for your organisation and your unit Agree your job purpose and key activities with your line manager and ensure you are working appropriately to help achieve the organisation and unit objectives Agree the importance and priority of your key activities	Look at your key activities, and your list of results, behaviours and tasks and decide which must be covered by the setting of objectives You should aim for five or six objectives and their priority should reflect the priority areas of your job Your objectives must state: • **What** you will do in clear terms	Analyse each objective by asking the following questions – if you've written a good objective the answer will be 'yes'. Is your objective appropriate for the organisation? Does it fit the organisation's main aims and objectives, as well as those of your operational unit? Is your objective relevant to your

List the specific results, behaviours and tasks which you must achieve. These should relate to your key activities. You must be sure that you are capable of achieving all the items on your list – will you have to rely on someone else or are they all within your remit to achieve? Isolate those aspects which are specifically down to you – if there are none, then you must re-think your list. Should you need to acquire additional knowledge and skills, you will probably have to write a separate objective. **Objectives may be work / task based, or competence based.**	• **How** you will do it • **When** you are going to do it by Make sure that your performance indicators lay down the standards for measuring your success Do they state quality, quantity, behaviour, time or resource measures which will enable you and your line management to determine whether your objective has been achieved? **Remember to use clear, concise 'action language' and avoid jargon.**	job? Does it fit with your job purpose and key activities? Is your contribution to the achievement of the unit's objectives clear and is achievement within your scope? Does your objective explain: • **What** you will do (output)? • **How** you will do it (input)? • **When** you will do it by? Do your performance indicators clearly describe a successful performance? Is your objective specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-related? Is the objective challenging or stretching? Does it present a motivating challenge which you feel is achievable?

Objectives need to be reviewed on a regular basis, and changed by agreement with line management when necessary. They should also be abandoned if it becomes clear that they are no longer relevant to the organisation.

Setting aims and objectives for a unit:

The setting of objectives for a unit or department will clearly follow the same basic principles as set out above, but it can be more complicated.

Firstly it is important to know the objectives of the overall organisation, then the purpose of the unit, and how it fits into the whole. This may seem very obvious, but it is surprising how often the original purpose of a unit tends to get lost with the passage of time. If the reason for the unit's existence is not clear, it is impossible to identify those jobs which have to be done and which are of the highest priority. When this is understood a broad aim should be prepared. An example of an aim for a unit within an accounts section is given below.

"To authorize claims for repayment of official expenses in a way which gives value for money and keeps within the departmental budget and provides a good service to staff by processing claims quickly and accurately and giving advice on the most efficient and cost effective method of travel".

From this aim it is possible to identify a number of things which will help the unit manager make progress towards meeting the aim. These can be set out as objectives, a more detailed set of statements generally concerned with elements of cost, time, quality and quantity. The list below is by no means exhaustive and you may well be able to think of others.

Objectives for the unit might be:

1. to process 80% of claims within two working days of receipt;
2. to reduce the number of additional requests for information from staff by 10%;
3. to reduce the level of complaints by 1%;
4. to issue clear and concise guidance on completion of claim forms;
5. to reduce the number of outstanding claims at the end of each week by 5%;
6. to ensure that all unit staff have received appropriate training and retraining by the end of the year;
7. to undertake complete checks of all claims over a specified amount and 20% of all other claims;
8. to reduce the cost of processing claims by 5% over the next year;
9. to set up a system, which can be easily updated, costing the options available for the most commonly used journeys and issuing guidance to staff by June next year;
10. to produce a report within 5 working days of the end of each month for the Head of Accounts indicating travel expenses payments made against the budget allocation and giving a projection of the budget position at the end of the financial year.

In the examples shown above, objectives 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 can be measured precisely through a management information system. These objectives may be in conflict with objective 8 if to achieve them increases cost, so a judgment will have to be made about the relative importance of each.

Objective 4 cannot be easily measured and will need a subjective assessment of the quality of the guidance given with the help of the results of objectives 2 and 3.

Objective 6 is entirely within the control of the unit manager. This objective may have an impact on the output of work and therefore affect objectives 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7.

Objective 9 is also within the control of the unit manager and needs only some self discipline to achieve.

Objectives 8 and 10 are easily measured.

Hopefully the value of aims and objectives is illustrated by the examples above. They give a clear view of what the unit is trying to accomplish, and what is needed to succeed. Your aims and objectives should of course be agreed through line management and records must be kept to demonstrate achievements or explain failure. It is important to remember that if conditions change, objectives can be amended.

Aims and objectives can be described as the hooks on which the work of a unit or department can be hung and can be used as the basis for subsequent performance measurement.

09 ASSIGNING DUTIES

One of the most basic management tasks is to assign duties to staff. It becomes such a natural activity that sometimes it is done almost automatically, perhaps too automatically. One unfortunate practice can become so widespread as to be accepted as the norm. This is the practice of identifying the most capable staff and directing all important tasks to them, resulting in 80% of work being done by 20% (or less) of the people.

The effects of this approach include:

- highly capable staff are overworked and stressed, often with the result that they look for other employment;
- they feel resentful, particularly towards their colleagues who seem to spend most of their time playing computer games and reading newspapers;
- staff turnover is high and sadly it is usually the most valuable staff that go;
- underworked staff resent their colleagues who they see as favourites, as a result, failing to support or actively blocking their work;
- with experience they become progressively less effective and as they rush towards the reward of retirement, they feel increasingly invulnerable;
- the staff member who we should say has 20 years experience, becomes one whose experience is 20 years old;
- managers feel it is beyond their control and by their actions, stimulate the process further.

To some extent this situation is understandable. Managers under pressure need jobs doing well and quickly, and one major criterion for allocating tasks is that it should be within the competence of the employee. However another criterion is that tasks should be allocated fairly, so that individuals are not overloaded or under-utilised.

Most commonly, when discussing this issue with senior management, training is proposed. Certainly if it is a matter of lack of competence, this is a possible solution. Research however, suggests that very often this is a question of behaviour. The individual cannot or will not adapt to new work practices or is simply unwilling to work. This makes it a management rather than a training issue and frankly a matter of discipline. When such behaviour is tolerated or accepted it is in effect reinforced and often replicated.

As managers we are given tasks, to enable us to carry them out we are given resource, in the form of equipment, budgets and people. It is our responsibility to maximize the potential of all the resource at our disposal. In human resource terms that mean ensuring all staff are capable of doing the job for which they receive their salaries. What we cannot do is simply abandon them as lost causes for all the reasons listed above.

The first step is therefore to establish whether the individual problem is based on knowledge, skill or behaviour. If it is a knowledge or skill deficiency, this can be addressed by training, either off-the-job or perhaps using competent staff as coaches. Certainly this involves an investment in time, but if successful, well worth it in the long term. If it is about behaviour, the following steps should be followed:

- make it clear that the undesired behaviour is not acceptable;
- if necessary verbally warning the individual;
- select a stretching but non-critical task and explain your expectations fully;
- set and if possible agree, a realistic deadline;
- set a review date to monitor progress;
- ensure you follow up on both of these dates;
- review the completed task giving feedback;
- if the task is not completed to your expectations, warn again this time in writing;
- repeat the above.

By going through this process the individual should get the idea that they must raise their standard to a point that will reduce your direct attention. If this does not happen you will need to set a deadline for improvement in writing, making any disciplinary consequences clear. At the end of the day, the staff member must recognise that unacceptable performance will not be tolerated and will bring a response.

During this process it is essential that managers know that they will have the support of their line managers. This means the management team directly agreeing a level and strategy for performance improvement.

Although you will have to invest a great deal of your time in this, as individuals improve, you will be rewarded by what amounts to an increase in resource. Allowing a more equitable allocation of tasks and reducing pressure on your more talented people.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

10	**Managing Change**
11	**Delegation**
12	**Teamwork**

10 MANAGING CHANGE

All organisations change, whether we like it or not, whether for better or worse.. To make a controlled change, based on a clear strategy is an altogether more difficult process. Consider the following story.

> One day the great artist Michelangelo was awarded an important commission. He acquired a large block of marble and for days sat looking at it. When his friends asked him what he was doing he answered that he was working. At last he started to work on the block and over time the famous statue of David emerged. What is clear was that Michelangelo did not start chipping away at the marble to see what he would come up with, he visualized the finished statue and only when he could see it finished in his mind did he start creating it.

Learning from this example we will explore a simple model for change often referred to as **Gap Theory**. There are three basic steps, which seem straightforward, but in reality are much more complicated to carry through.

Change is the process of moving an organisation from where it is now (the present state) to where you want it to be (the desired state). In between will be certain problems and resistances to overcome. A strategy is needed to bring about the change so that the desired future state happens in the form intended.

Present State ——— **Strategy** ———→ **Desired Future State**

Present state:

Where is the organisation now? We need to understand this very clearly in order to predict how it and its members will react to the proposed change. What is required is an analysis of how the organisation works, the attitudes of the people working for it, its history and in particular its readiness for change. Perhaps surprisingly, this ‘present state’ is often the most difficult phase of the operation, and it can be shocking to find out how little we know about where we are now.

Desired future state:

This is where visualization comes in, it is where whoever initiated the change, thinks the organisation should go. It is not assumed it is desired by everyone. Identifying what is different about the future state is crucial: it leads into considering how people will evaluate and react to it. The intended change is often just the tip of the iceberg. There are usually implications for the whole organisation and it is important to identify these and build them into your plan rather than let them emerge as responses to new pressures.

Resistances:

No matter how positive the change there will always be resistances. These are obstacles to change, things which make change difficult to achieve. Identifying these is crucial to forming the correct strategy. They may concern:

- Resources, premises, money, staff security and jobs.
- Attitudes and feelings of people affected by the change, either directly or indirectly. Examine the ‘stakeholders’ – people or groups with an interest in the change.

Clearly the magnitude of the change and its consequence for people will reflect the level of resistance to be anticipated.

Strategy:

A strategy needs to be developed to ensure that the desired state is achieved. It might contain ways of:

- Creating a readiness for change.
- Overcoming specific resistances.
- Getting agreement from interested parties.
- Equipping people to make the new system work.
- Plans for implementation.
- Selling the change.

When dealing with particular resistances, two things should be kept in mind. It is necessary to address the major issues; it is no good talking about new work plans if people are primarily worried about their job security. Also simply pushing change through by applying more pressure rarely works, but results in strengthened resistance. Weakening the resistance by information or discrediting it is much more likely to bring success.

Transitional period:

Viewing change as being about bridging a gap brings with it the idea of a transitional period. This can be defined as starting when people know that change is in the offing and only ending when implementation is complete. As such, a transitional period can be seen to have different characteristics from a pre or post change state, mainly to do with uncertainty and the need to put resources into preparing for change (planning, training etc) whilst keeping the existing system running. This may require a different management style and different organisational structure.

There are many alternatives approaches such as **Incremental Theory** or **Kurt Lewin's Theory**, but the Gap Theory is perhaps the most straightforward.

SOURCES OF RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Psychological factors:

Some individuals are, by virtue of their personalities, more resistant to change than others. Psychologists describe such people as having "rigid" personalities and as being intolerant of ambiguity. They will be people who value order, stability, certainty, predictability, who believe in there being only one best way of doing things. They are likely to experience change as a personal threat or indeed criticism. "What's wrong with the way we've always done it?" Change may also threaten people who feel unable to cope with increased responsibilities or learning new skills.

Interests:

Perhaps the primary reason for changes being resisted is that people's interests are threatened by them; they fear they will lose something they value as a result of the change. For example:

- Intrinsic job satisfaction. Changes which reduce autonomy, variety, discretion opportunities for sociability, or require extra effort are particularly likely to be opposed, although it must be stressed that people do vary in what they value in a job.
- Extrinsic rewards from the job – notably pay, security, promotion prospects etc. linked to the question of pay is often the idea of an appropriate amount of effort required to earn it.
- Some rewards are at best semi-legitimate e.g. status, opportunities for informal flexible working hours, car expenses claims, opportunities for foreign travel etc. These may be the real reasons for opposition, although they may not be acknowledged as such.
- Change may create conflict between the demands of work and the individual's other roles e.g. by requiring longer or less convenient hours.

From the individuals point of view it is perfectly rational to oppose change which benefits the organisation as a whole but threatens his or her personal interests.

Values:

Individuals and groups may oppose change which conflict with their values (these might include professional standards).

Misunderstandings:

People often resist change when they do not understand its implications and think it will cost them more than they will gain. This is perhaps particularly likely when the level of trust in management is low.

Different assessments:

Resistance, particularly among members of management, is often based on a different assessment of the situation; the need for change, the most appropriate form for change or the effect. Underlying this may be unresolved differences of opinion or uncertainty about organisational goals.

Group influences:

A change may threaten:

- Group identity e.g. breaking up an established group.
- Differentials between groups, particularly with regard to pay.
- Group norms of behaviour.

In addition, group solidarity may lead to opposition by people who are not individually opposed to the change in question.

The way change is introduced:

Change may be resisted simply because of the way it was introduced. If it is felt that:

- insufficient warning was given
- there was insufficient consultation
- insufficient information given

History:

People's attitudes towards change will be influenced by their previous experience of change, both in general and of particular types e.g. new technology. It is important therefore, to be aware of how much change the organisation has been through, how it went and whether there are any lingering resentments or conflict.

AN EXAMPLE OF A PUBLIC SECTOR CHANGE SCENARIO

So how do public sector organisations change themselves? Typically the answer is incrementally. One obvious reason is that the top official is only likely to be there for a fixed term, so may see no benefit in improving things for a successor.

Such organisations are by definition bureaucracies, a word which requires some discussion. In much of the world the word bureaucracy has started to be used with largely negative connotation, which is probably unfair. Bureaucracy is the structure and order needed to operate a large, regional, national or international organisation. The problems emerge when the bureaucratic structure stops being a frame and becomes a cage, or stops serving and starts processes to feed itself. Things are routinely done and nobody can remember why.

An insightful comment was made by organisations guru Charles Handy in his book 'Understanding Organisations':

“In a bureaucracy, it is more important that everybody performs to the same standard than that some people excel”.

Bureaucracies are indeed comfortable places to live. It’s no secret that the most difficult group of people to engage in an organisational transformation are the middle managers. They have been socialized to behave in a way that rewards them for knowing the rules, for solving problems by applying past experience, for playing safe. It isn’t easy for them to make the transition. It’s easy to ignore that the years invested by today’s middle managers have enabled the organisation to reach a stage of development where it can afford to say “thanks but now we need something different”. Often, of course, those responsible for implementing such major change are one generation younger than the middle managers.

Of course, having been involved in such a transformation, somebody has to be able to look at the block of marble and see ‘David’. As a result, many ministries and public bodies will wait decades before real change is effected. Within the Ministry of Education it may not be needed, or may just not be ready, but it is perhaps a good idea to compare your organisation with the following statements, which seek to show how bureaucracy disables people.

Bureaucracy …

- encourages people to say “I didn’t do it because nobody told me I could” or “I didn’t do it because it’s not in the rule book”.
- judges and rewards people on their conformity to the prescribed processes, rather than to the outcome of their activities.
- is more concerned with enforcing minimum standards of performance than rewarding excellence, so people feel that their mistakes are noticed more than their successes.
- encourage the spirit where managers evaluate themselves on the size of the department or budget they control, and not on the impact of the work they do.
- thereby encourages interdepartmental rivalries and non-cooperation.
- encourages spending their energies giving the system the information it needs rather than reporting the true state of affairs.
- encourages people to evaluate one another on their relative positions in the hierarchy, rather than on their contribution, and to collect status symbols.
- demands proof in advance that innovations will be successful, thereby ensuring that little or no real innovation takes place.

So how do you compare?

When contemplating major organisational reform, the first response is often to commission a report or put together a working party. In practice this often turns out to be the only response, a process popularly known as ***paralysis by analysis***.

When implementing major change remember the advice of the escapologist. “You test the knots one by one” he said. “There’s always one knot that’s easier than the others. This is the one you start with, and working on it frees the ones nearby, and so on”.

11 DELEGATION

During management training, the following question is often asked.

Do you know what delegation is?

The answer is always yes, but when students are asked to write a definition, 9/10 will miss the critical point. Commonly it is defined as giving tasks to more junior staff, but this is allocation, not delegation. The critical factor in delegation is that you are giving **your** task to a more junior colleague. So is delegation just a way of making your life easier?

There is much more to delegation than that. We need to remember that whilst the senior manager can delegate responsibility, he or she remains accountable. It is after all, their task. For the most part, delegation will be taking place without any difficulty, as part of the normal work flow. But you should constantly be looking for opportunities to delegate more. The advantages of delegation are:

- it gives junior staff greater responsibility and job satisfaction and so helps their development
- it releases time for you to do other, more demanding or urgent tasks.

Definition: delegation is the process by which an individual manager transfers part of his legitimate authority to a subordinate but without passing on the ultimate responsibility which has been entrusted to him by his own superior. 'Management Theory and Practice' G.A.Cole.

Obviously there is a balance to be struck. Delegate too much and you will overload your staff and, perhaps, not have enough to do yourself. Not delegating enough will mean that you will be overloaded and staff will be frustrated at their lack of responsibility and authority.

The key issue is to delegate work properly. Consider the following checklist.

Delegation checklist:

Work should be delegated where:

- staff are competent to do the work, by having the resources, skills and equipment to carry it through;
- you have given proper and adequate guidance about what you expect from them;
- you have set the limits on what can be done without prior authority from you;
- you have established a system to monitor what is being done.

Within these guidelines we should encourage delegation of work and also encourage our more junior colleagues to do the same.

The demands of delegation:

Rather than an easy option, delegation makes many demands on the senior manager, particularly in terms of time. He / she may also feel a certain loss of control and feel vulnerable, after all, what if the subordinate does a bad job? The manager must communicate effectively, anticipate potential difficulties and have a good knowledge of the strength and weakness of their staff members. A fine balance is needed between keeping a hands-off approach, but at the same time monitoring progress. It must also be remembered, that feedback should also be given, offering advice and recognition for the job done. Without monitoring and feedback, the delegation process looks more like abdication.

For the subordinate, they must balance the new task with existing work and be able to gain cooperation from colleagues. If they are unsure of themselves, the whole process could feel very threatening.

What can and cannot be delegated?

Providing the terms of the checklist above apply, most tasks can be reasonably delegated. There are however, exceptions. There may for instance be a legal requirement or a regulation that a particular task should only be completed by a senior manager. It would also be inappropriate to ask a junior staff member to deal with a HR issue concerning a peer, or monitor another’s work If you have been given a job with a very tight or unrealistic deadline, it would not be fair to delegate that and it would also increase the prospect of the task being late. Of course, given the development objective of delegation, it is logical to vary the kind of thing you give to an individual, increasing complexity as the individual gains in confidence and experience.

Conclusion:

Delegation is a useful even essential management tool, but one that makes demands on all involved. It needs to be done consistently; it should include a broad range, not just tasks the manager doesn’t like. It is also important, where possible, to delegate ’whole pieces’ of work, enriching the subordinates job, stimulating motivation and making control and coordination.

As managers consider the following question:

Do I delegate?
Do I delegate enough?
Do I delegate broadly in line with the checklist given above?
Do my more junior managers delegate and do they do it properly?
Do the job descriptions of my subordinates hamper delegation in any way?

12 TEAMWORK

> "The team comes together in an endeavour to produce a level of performance greater than that which could be produced by individual members working alone. The whole should be greater than the sum of its parts".
> 'Successful Team Building'.

The very word **team** is often applied as a blanket term for any group or section of an organisation. However, calling a group of people a team does not make it one.

In a recent survey of 1,000 leading organisations it emerged that they saw top teams rather than individuals were considered the key to success. "Management styles have moved away from the multi-level hierarchy of command and control management, towards a close working relationship in a radically compressed structure". The public sector has long tended to work in departments or teams, though perhaps for operational expedience and for historical reasons, rather than because of any real appreciation of the merit of the team concept. In fact they usually try to operate their teams within the multi-level hierarchies so discredited in the much of the private sector.

Following an academic analysis of successful work teams, the following definition was drawn up. In a successful team you will see that:

- **Everyone pulls together, each contribution different yet equally valued.**
- **Elements of leadership come from each member, appropriate to the needs of the team's activities at every stage. Adapting and developing as the capabilities and objectives change, they are willing to grow as a team and take on new challenges.**
- **Goals are understood and accepted and they are not simply the vision of a single leader, however talented.**
- **They are an effective group who can generate a sustained effort to achieve their teams objectives on time, on budget and to the highest possible quality.**
- **Being the boss of such a team should mean that others are encouraged to step forward and lead in their major area of knowledge and contribution. Only those who feel insecure will feel uncomfortable with this.**

Perhaps the type of team we are most familiar with is the sports team, and we can draw some useful parallels here.

Consider the following typical football team formation:

1

2 5 6 3

7 4 8 11

9 10

So typically we have a goalkeeper, four defenders, four midfield players and two strikers. Each position requires different skills of the player, agility and ball handling for the goalkeeper, speed and tackling for defenders, stamina and good passing for midfielders, scoring goals for strikers. Although very simplified, the concept is clear enough, teams are made up of people with different but equally important skills and characteristics.

Now imagine that the above is the strongest football team in the world. So let's keep the same 11 players, but make some positional changes. Consider this team:

4

1 10 7 8

9 5 6 3

10 2

This is the same 11 players but a weaker team because players are not playing in positions which suit their skills.

In finishing with the sporting reference, how many times have we seen a collection of brilliant individuals in whatever sport, lose a match to a less talented opposition, who simply play as a team?

These lessons apply equally to our work team. It needs to play as a team, contain different skills; in order to meet the task needs and individual members need to be operating in roles that suit them. Of course the football manager gets to pick his own team, which is a luxury we often don’t have, as we are more likely to inherit an existing team.

In such a situation, you must first of all establish what are the knowledge, skills and attitudes or personal characteristics needed for your department to operate successfully. You may well need intuitive decision makers as well as logical and analytical thinkers. You may need persuasive people who accept change easily or systematic realists or good administrators. Depending on the nature of your department, you may well need all of these.

You must then review your personnel to identify their qualities under the same headings. When you find significant gaps, it is then all about developing options and strategies to bridge the gaps. Obviously these could include training, coaching, transferring in additional staff, recruit, role share, redesign jobs etc.

How big should a team be?

As you would expect there are differing views here, but 10 – 12 is generally accepted as maximum. Big teams are rarely teams and often fragment into smaller more workable units. Numbers should be small enough so all can contribute and communicate. Close working relationships can rarely be sustained if the team is too big. Managers attracted to big teams are often most interested in personal power.

How to make teams work?

There can be many reasons why teams don’t work. Some lack necessary qualities, there may be too many individualists, their expectations for themselves may be too low, they may be dominated by one or two individuals etc. As before, reasons need to be identified and strategies developed.

There are many do’s and don’ts involved in team development. Crucial is to meet regularly as a team and talk openly about it and their roles in it. Explain you want to ‘empower’ them, take your hands off the wheel etc. Of course, if you say it, do it, if you want credibility. Clarify what individuals see as team objectives, making sure there is a common and correct understanding. Brainstorm new approaches to meeting objectives and try some of the new ideas in practice. You might want to draw up a team profile in order to clarify roles within the team. Ensure they are comfortable with their role and check nobody is feeling left out.

As the leader you must **avoid creating an “inner circle”, nobody must see themselves as second class team members** (an issue often raised in all types of organisation). In giving more power to the team, avoid isolating yourself from it and watch for barriers emerging between you and them. Regularly review team activity, listening to all team members views, and reacting positively to them where possible.

Another common trap is that managers often recruit people who remind them of themselves. This can be very dangerous if you end up with a whole team intuitive and innovative people, but nobody actually doing any work. Remember the football analogy, you need creativity in midfield, clinical finishing in attack and solidity in defence. Your team is likely to want / need a similar range of qualities.

The concept of a team where people are valued equally for their contribution, by its very nature leads towards an open and mutually supportive culture. This is considered to be the key to greater productivity and reduced stress.

Extended teams:

A concluding word about the idea of an extended team. You may well be head of a departmental team, working very closely with it and getting rewarding results. It is important however, not to lose sight of the fact, that although you technically lead that team, you are also a member of another team, a management team, with a real contribution to make as a team player. Too often, managers, particularly senior ones can forget that, and even see their peers simply as rivals. This is organizationally very unhelpful and if it happens, needs resolution.

A well functioning team can be operationally very successful and a nice environment in which to work.

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

13 Managing Time
14 Managing Meetings
15 Problem Solving
16 Managing Stress

13 MANAGING TIME

All organisations have goals, plus resources to meet those goals. These are likely to include buildings, equipment, budgets, staff and time, all of which need to be focused on achieving the goals. Whilst we would never think of abusing the budgets or equipment, we do in practice, tend to abuse the time allocated to us. We also work in bureaucracies, which by definition tend to steal our time. They establish structures and procedures which take time but are not questioned, and which make access to the decision makers more difficult. The purpose of this section is to make you think about your own time management. But first we will illustrate part of the problem with a story which illustrates quite well how bureaucracies work.

Many years ago in Asia a religious leader was conducting his service. Half way through a cat entered the temple and walked in front of him, distracting both him and the congregation. The holy man was angry, particularly when it happened the next day too. He decided to take action, instructing his servant to tie the cat up during the service. This ritual continued for years, until one day the cat sadly died. The servants quickly purchased another cat so that it could be tied up during the service.

In our bureaucracies, how many cats do we tie up every day, for reasons no longer remembered?

There is an old saying ‘time is money’, and we must start by recognizing this. The managers and staff of an organisation are almost always the most costly of its resources. When a job is done it can be costed by calculating what proportion of the salary of the individual doing it was spent on the task. It follows therefore, that if a decision is taken by the manager which could equally well be taken by a more junior employee, that decision cost more than it needed to.

It is estimated that even quite a good time manager wastes up to one hour per day. Think of the following calculation. Take the average one hour salary for a Ministry of Education employee, multiply it by the number of working days per year and then by the number of ministry staff. You will be left with a very large figure, so improving time management saves money.

Time pressure can also be directly linked to stress and stress related illness is increasing rapidly in the modern world. As an example, more than 34% of all absence from work in the United Kingdom is stress related. In recent years it has increased 200% in men and 370% in women.

Given below are suggested approaches to improve your time management. There is also a questionnaire to help you to establish your main areas of concern, and a task scheduling exercise to give you more specific information.

WAYS OF CONTROLLING AND SAVING TIME

Question the jobs you undertake:

Does it really need to be done by you, or is it a case of restraining another cat?
Does it contribute to your main job purpose?
Even if it does, is it a priority at this point in time?
Can it be modified to save time, or can it be delegated?

Analyse crises:

What are the main causes of crisis and are you contributing to them?

Question interruptions:

Why were you interrupted, was it necessary, could it have been avoided?
Learn to be assertive when interrupted.
Use your secretary (if you have one) to protect your time, or even establish a window of availability, when people know you will be able to see them.
Use your open and closed door as a way of signalling your availability or need for privacy.

Plan:

Allocate time in advance for main priorities.
At the start of the day, give yourself time to think and plan your day.
At the end of each day review what happened.
Develop a diary system and use it for daily planning not just appointments. See example at the end of this chapter.

Self discipline:

Read carefully only the most relevant information, scan other things and ignore unimportant materials. File only what you have to.
Don’t take too long over decisions.
Telephone rather than visit, and control meetings effectively.
Keep your desk tidy so you don’t waste time looking for things.
Delegate where appropriate and agree only realistic deadlines.
Never deal with the same piece of paper twice and if you spend time reading it, deal with it there and then.

Administrative aids:

Schedule your time with fixed appointments, then review remaining time and make a realistic ‘to do’ list.
Block out time for yourself in your diary.
Agree a strategy with your secretary to screen post, so you only deal with what is necessary.

Manage 24 hours:

It is no good managing work if you neglect your home life, as in the long run that can be far more costly if neglected. You must ensure quality time with your family, as a stressful domestic situation tends to transfer itself to the workplace. Some managers feel they are demonstrating their commitment by working very long hours, whereas they may be signalling that they can’t do their job within the time allocated for it.

Now read the Time Management Checklist at the end of this section.
TIME MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick the appropriate column for each question.

Item	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
1. Other people always come to me for advice				
2. My work tends to pile up				
3. I never seem to have time to myself				
4. I spend too much time in meetings				
5. I always seem to be trying to do too many things at the same time				
6. I tend to put off unpleasant jobs				
7. I tend to lose or mislay papers, memos etc				
8. I never have time to think				
9. The telephone never seems to stop				
10. I am always writing letters and reports				
11. I spend too much time travelling				
12. I have to start and stop jobs frequently				
13. I find it difficult to say ‘no’ to people’s requests				
14. I have too much paper work to deal with				
15. I find it hard to prioritize tasks				
16. If I want a job doing well I have to do it myself				
17. I don’t spend enough time talking to the				
18. People I manage				
19. Work tends to get in the way of my social life				
20. I constantly get interrupted at work				
21. There just aren’t enough hours in the day				

TASK SCHEDULING ANALYSIS

1. Scheduled time

% time spent per day

% time spent over three days

2. Unscheduled time

% time spent per day

% time spent over three days

3. List of stakeholders making most unscheduled demands

4. Conclusions

TIME MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

1. Get to know your job purpose and objectives.
2. Set yourself short, medium and long term goals.
3. Write a list of your main objectives.
4. Prioritize the objectives and schedule time to begin work on important but non-urgent tasks.
5. Set priorities in terms of importance as well as urgency.
6. Schedule thinking time into your working day.
7. Identify your main time management problems by using a time log.
8. Encourage your manager to prioritize your work tasks.
9. Deal with interruptions positively. Learn to say no.

10. Organise your workspace so you can concentrate on one job at a time. Put all other work papers away.
11. Create a 'dump draw' for non-important, non-urgent items. Schedule a time to go through it once a month.
12. Use a diary to schedule time and keep to it.
13. Use a bring forward system to remind you of things to be done on a specific date.
14. Plan the working day, setting priorities at the beginning of the day.
15. Work faster, especially on routine tasks that do not require a high degree of perfection.
16. Concentrate on one thing at a time.
17. Combine similar tasks such as telephone calls or visits.
18. Produce checklists or written routines for recurring jobs.
19. Set deadlines for work you are given. Challenge unrealistic deadlines.
20. Don't rely on memory, write things down.
21. Measure opportunity cost. If you weren't doing your current task what else could you do? Which is more important?
22. Don't worry about what you can't influence. Concentrate on areas within your control.
23. Prevent recurring problems by solving the underlying problem.
24. Communicate what you are doing to your manager, your team and others.
25. Decide which jobs are unnecessary and don't do them.
26. Allocate tasks to team members and delegate.
27. Break large jobs into a series of smaller, more manageable actions.
28. Set aside time to talk to your team, as a group and as individuals.
29. Seek ideas from others, both inside and outside of your team.
30. Invest in your own self development.

DIARY PAGE

Thursday 6 August 2007

8.00		*Tasks for day:*
9.00	*Clear post and e-mails.*	*1. Prepare for 13.00 budget meeting*.
		2. Monthly report contribution.
10.00	*Meeting managers 10-11*	*3. Arrange planning meeting.* *4. Arrange meeting with Ilic.*
11.00		*5. Update statistical report.*
		6. Read progress report.
12.00		
13.00	*Meeting with Lalic Ref budget*	
14.00	*Available 2 - 4 in case of*	
15.00	*staff need*	
16.00	*Personal time for planning*	
17.00	*Update diary for tomorrow*	

Arrange minute taker for 1 pm meeting
Pick Sonja up 17.45 at school

14 MANAGING MEETINGS

It is common for people to complain about meetings. Indeed given the amount of time which meetings may take up, often not productively, this complaint is often justified. Meetings are only as effective and useful as people allow them to be, and therefore those of us who organise and/or attend meetings are ultimately responsible.

So what are the key issues of managing successful meetings?

Preparation:

- The meeting should have a real purpose which should be set out clearly in an agenda which whenever possible is circulated in advance. Meetings are expensive in terms of time, and as we know “time is money”.
- Is the meeting necessary at all, or could it be done in a different way?
- Avoid routine meetings unless the value is very clear.
- Decide on the optimum number of participants required.
- Those invited to the meeting should have a stake in the topic and be capable of contributing to it. Ensure substitutes are empowered to make decisions and make a full contribution.
- Set a realistic time for the meeting and inform those attending, in that way they can plan the remainder of their day.
- Arrange for a minute taker or reporter.

Running the meeting:

- Chair the meeting - do not dominate it.
- Set out goals from the outset.
- Keep everybody focused on the key issues and time constraints set (retain control).
- Listen carefully and observe body language, people often communicate without speaking.
- Is everybody contributing constructively or are some just ‘blocking’?
- Prevent individuals dominating the discussion.
- Don’t be afraid to play “devil’s advocate” to broaden perspectives
- Try and get all parties to contribute, particularly as all invited are stakeholders. If necessary use the “and what do you think about that” approach.
- Summarise occasionally in order to check understanding and check on consensus.
- Thank contributors.
- Finish on time.

Post meeting:

- Have minutes written up as short action points, showing clearly who is responsible for doing what.
- Follow up on action points.
- Start any follow up meeting with a review of action points.
- Review the meeting. Was it useful / effective? If not why not? Don’t make the same mistake again.

Effective / ineffective groups / meetings:

It is sometimes useful to consider a meeting as a group of people looking to complete a task or tasks. In his classic work ‘The Human Side of Enterprise’ 1960, Douglas McGregor provided a perceptive account of the difference between effective and ineffective groups. A summary of the most important features appears below:

Effective groups	Ineffective groups
Informal relaxed atmosphere Relevant discussion with high degree of participation Group tasks or objective clearly understood and commitment to it obtained. Members listen to each other Conflict is not avoided but brought into the open and dealt with constructively Most decisions reached by general consensus with minimum of formal voting Ideas expressed freely and openly Leadership not always with the chairman but shared as appropriate The group examines its own progress and behaviour	Bored or tense atmosphere Discussion dominated by one or two people No clear common objective Members tend not to listen to each other Conflict is either avoided or is allowed to develop into open warfare Simple majorities are seen as sufficient basis for group decisions which the minority have to accept Personal feelings are kept hidden and criticism is embarrassing Leadership only provided by the chairman The group avoids any discussion about its own behaviour.

Although meetings are generally seen as more formal than small working groups, there are clear similarities and many organisations are working towards to more informal approach. Perhaps the bottom line is that either approach if it effective and achieves the desired result.

Next time you attend a meeting particularly as a participant, validate it against all criteria given above.

15 PROBLEM SOLVING

Before looking at this interesting topic, consider the following question: when faced with a problem, what will be the result of no solution? The answer will go some way towards showing you just how important this problem is, or even whether it is indeed, a problem at all.

On a day to day basis we are all faced with a series of problems, real or imagined, varying in terms of severity and importance. These could include advising a minister on a major policy decision or selecting a venue for a meeting. How we react to this torrent of problems will affect both our professional success and general quality of life. To make matters worse, some issues are clearly best decided by individuals, whilst others are often most effectively or creatively tackled by groups. Given below is a brief guidance which hopefully will help you feel more confident when dealing with your own never ending list of problems.

Are problems best solved by groups or individuals?

The simple answer is that it depends on the problem. Certainly there is no point in setting up a group if the problem or issue to be resolved has one answer that can be diagnosed quicker and more effectively by one person, and there is no requirement for others to understand or be committed to the solution. Group problem solving is the best way of tackling issues in three main circumstances. Firstly there are many problems that concern more than one person. In such situations, each of those involved is likely to have a legitimate view, and it is always wise to take these different perceptions into account in arriving at the solution. Secondly, there are problems where there is no straightforward single answer, and the right approach needs to be an amalgam of the views of different people. Thirdly, there are situations where it is important that those involved are committed to the solution, and sometimes this is more relevant than the solution itself. There are a number of very real advantages that group problem solving offers when it is used in the right situations and with properly equipped people. Often when dealing with problem we need to learn to think creatively rather than analytically and collectively rather than individually.

THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS:

The following is a simple example of a problem solving model:

- Define the problem
- Analyse the problem
- Collect data
- Interpret data
- Find solutions
- Cost benefit analysis
- Presenting solutions
- Monitor and evaluate

Let’s consider this model in a little more detail.

Define the problem. Many problems remain unsolved because too little attention is paid to defining the real problem. Sometimes assumptions made at the beginning of the process result in the wrong issues being tackled. Also within group problem solving individual members may have different perceptions of what they are working on. One useful three step process which can be very helpful:

- Step 1: establish the broad problem area
- Step 2: having agreed the broad problem area, get back to core issues by precisely defining the problem in writing
- Step 3: ask the question is the problem worth solving at all.

Remember, if you don't know where you are going, you won't know when you arrive!

Analyze the problem. The willingness of individuals within groups to see a problem from different perspectives from their own adds considerably to the practicality of the solutions they propose, and helps in overcoming the biggest potential hurdle to successful implementation, people's attitudes. There are a number of approaches to problem analysis, perhaps the best known being the ***Fishbone Diagram***. A simpler alternative is to brainstorm 6 words based on answering 12 questions. The six words from a poem being:

I keep six honest serving men
They taught me all I knew;
*Their names are **What** and **Why** and **When***
*And **How** and **Where** and **Who**.*

This technique, developed by Mike Robson, is known as the **Six-Word Diagram** or the **Six Honest Serving-men**. The 12 questions to facilitate analysis being:

- What is the problem and what is not the problem?
- When does it happen and when does it not happen?
- Why does it happen and why does it not happen?
- Where does it happen and where does it not happen?
- Who contributes to causing the problem and who contributes to stopping it?
- How do you recognize when the problem is present and how do you recognise when it is not?

You will be surprised just how much clearer the problem becomes when you go through this simple process.

Collect data. When solving problems it is important to present arguments in terms of facts rather than opinions. It is well known that opinion based arguments are very difficult to resolve. Questions like who was Serbia's greatest ever sportsman, will bring varying opinions and end with people holding even more firmly to their original opinions. While some questions are difficult to collect reliable facts about, this tends not to be the case with most problems.

The main tool for collecting problem solving are check sheets, simply an organised way of collecting information. There are many different types in common use, such as quality records and examination achievement records. Of course, care must be taken to ensure that the information being collected is indeed relevant to problem solution.

Interpreting data. Unfortunately, many people have a prejudice against numbers; particularly as they can be manipulated to support different positions on the same issue. In fact many managers use statistics in just those way – more for support than illumination. With this in mind, there is a need for some organised tools for looking at data and exploring it to reap the most benefit from it. Two typical examples being:

- Pareto Charts
- Histograms

The Pareto Chart is a way of showing data graphically to see if a few of the causes really are contributing too much of the effect. The Histogram is a kind of bar chart, looking at one issue or problem.

The reader would find it a useful exercise to explore and research these concepts for themselves. Pareto Charts particularly are becoming increasingly well used and a brief description can be found at the end of this chapter.

Finding solutions. Of course tools and techniques for finding solutions are available, some such as Force Field Analysis and of course, Brainstorming (covered later), are well known. Other examples include in very simplified terms:

The Modified Delphi which involves 5 steps:

- Review the problem analysis and data
- Generate solution ideas individually
- Combine ideas onto one list
- Individual ranking and recording of ideas
- Discuss rankings and agree solutions by consensus

Swapping also has 5 steps:

- Brief team members
- Prepare presentations of opposing views (each team presents the opposite view to their own)
- Present as fairly as possible
- Critique presentations and record on flip charts
- Agree new solutions through consensus

Cost benefits analysis. The idea is not just to solve problems, but also to have our recommendations accepted. The acceptance of the solution proposed depends ultimately on an assessment what will be achieved as compared to the resources invested. In other words, the decision will rest on a cost-benefit analysis. Once this completed all aspects need to be pulled together for the final presentation of the proposed solution.

Presenting solutions. Of course the presentation may be on a face-to-face basis (the preferred choice) or in writing. Whatever the decision it must be well prepared. Clear objectives are needed, the problem should be outlined, analysis summarized, facts explained and possible solutions listed. The preferred solution is then highlighted and benefits stressed. Actions needed for implementation and a proposed action plan should then be provided. Post presentation there will usually be time set aside for questions and for deciding on the next steps. In effect such presentations act as a bridge between theoretical problem solving activities and actually getting something done.

Monitoring and evaluating results. This is often the weakest area of the problem solving process. It is often assumed that agreed actions will naturally happen and that the problem will remain solved forever. With this in mind, it is essential that we recognise monitoring and evaluation as a vital part of the process and until it is built in, the problem should not be deemed solved. A monitoring action plan should be agreed and the evaluation carried out against criteria set out in the cost benefit analysis. The review therefore takes place against previously predicted results.

BRAINSTORMING:

We have not until now considered ‘Brainstorming’ within the Problem Solving process, but it is clearly a very important technique which can be used during many of the stages discussed. It is a core creative technique used by groups. It is very useful for generating large numbers of ideas in a short time and ensures everybody can contribute. Brainstorming, developed in the 1930’s, is a well known but often badly practiced technique, and it is important that problem solving groups learn to use it properly. All too often such sessions involve no more than making lists of the obvious possibilities.

The rules of brainstorming:

1) There should be no criticism of any idea put forward.
2) Often referred to as ‘freewheeling’ or letting the mind roam free.
3) Generate as many ideas as possible.
4) Each idea must be written down.
5) Allow the ideas to incubate before evaluating them.

Before a brainstorming session, restate and write up the rules of brainstorming and always write up the subject to be brainstormed.

TYPES OF PROBLEM SOLVING GROUPS

There are many types of problem solving groups, varying in terms of purpose, composition, leadership etc. Some examples:-

Department groups: formed to look at specific issues by a senior manager, to deal with a specific problem. Usually the group will disband when the problem is solved.

Task Force groups: as above except it is cross functional.

Quality Circles: usually made up of volunteers who meet regularly to identify, analyse and solve their own job related problems. Quality Circles tend to be ongoing.

Quality Improvement Teams: tend to be voluntary, cross functional, deal with specific issues and can be made up of people at different levels.

All four of these groups have a role to play in the process of improving the performance of the organization, and they can all use the same basic problem-solving process outlined above. The process provides an appropriate blend of creative and analytical tools that will enable the group to think both imaginatively and rigorously.

DECISION MAKING

It is quite obvious that decision making and problem solving are not only inter-related, sometimes they are one and the same thing. Compare the Problem Solving Process given above, with the Decision Making Model given by G. A. Cole in 'Management Theory and Practice'.

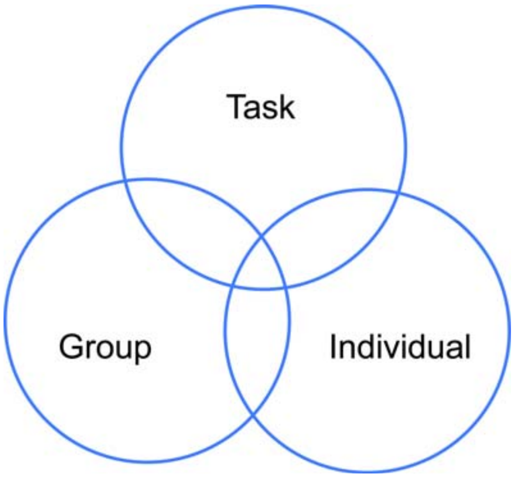
- Define the problem
- Collect relevant data
- Develop alternative solutions
- Assess consequences
- Select optimum solution
- Implement solution
- Measure results

Decision making is an accepted part of everyday human life. As individuals we may make decisions on the spur of the moment or after much thought and deliberation. Our decisions may be influenced by emotions, by reasoning or a combination of the two. In organisations, people with managerial roles are expected, among other things, to make decisions as an important part of their responsibilities. Whilst it may be affected by feelings and interpersonal relationships, managerial decision making tends to be rational in approach. Considerable time and effort may be spent in assessing problems, developing alternative solutions and evaluating before arriving at a decision.

John Adair exercise

A famous management model developed by Professor John Adair is based on three interlocking circles, illustrating the link between the manager's focus on completing the task, the needs of the individual staff member and the needs of groups (teams).

See the diagram below.



It is outside the terms of reference of this chapter to go into detail of the model here (see 01 Management and Leadership for a more detailed explanation), but it can be useful within the decision making and problem solving sphere. When faced with a problem or decision it is important to know, which has priority, the task the group or the individual. Consider the following exercises, answering yes or no as to whether the manager made the correct choice. As a point of interest, each one of these examples actually occurred in a public sector organisation.

Example	Yes / No
1) Staff member: “I must go; my wife’s just been involved in an accident”. Head of Department: “Don’t forget we have a meeting at 3 pm”. The managers focus was on task, was he correct? 2) The minister calls ten minutes before the end of the working day asking for briefing data. The Head of Department asks if anybody will volunteer to stay and gather it. After some minutes discussion a volunteer is found. The Head of Department’s focus was on the needs of the group, was he correct? 3) One member of staff was constantly leaving early. The individual had problems at home and the HoD was sympathetic, but after several weeks the other staff were feeling that they were having to do too much extra to compensate for their absent colleague. The HoD decided he had to take action to stop the early finishing. The HoD focus was on the needs of the group, was he correct? (4) The HoD was to attend a study visit to Ireland. His deputy and good friend had always wanted to see Ireland, so he is selected. The HoD focus was on the individual, was he correct?	

The author’s assessment is given on the next page.

John Adair exercise answers:

1) No, the focus in this case should have been on the individual, who cannot reasonably be expected to focus on work in a situation like that.

2) No, the focus should have been on the task and time was wasted. Management style is often required to swing towards a more autocratic style when deadlines are very tight.

3) Yes, the manager had been sympathetic, but the needs of the group had become the priority and so action was necessary.

4) No, when he was away from work, he allowed his deputy to go with him for largely personal reasons, sacrificing the task.

PARETO CHARTS:

As discussed in the section on 'interpreting data' above, Pareto Charts can be an extremely useful tool within problem solving. The Pareto principle, sometimes referred to as the 80:20 law, is a way of showing information graphically. They aim is to show that often just a small percentage of causes contribute a disproportionate amount to the problem.

The example below comes from a small printing firm dealing with a large number of problems.
First problems are identified then placed by frequency in a descending order.

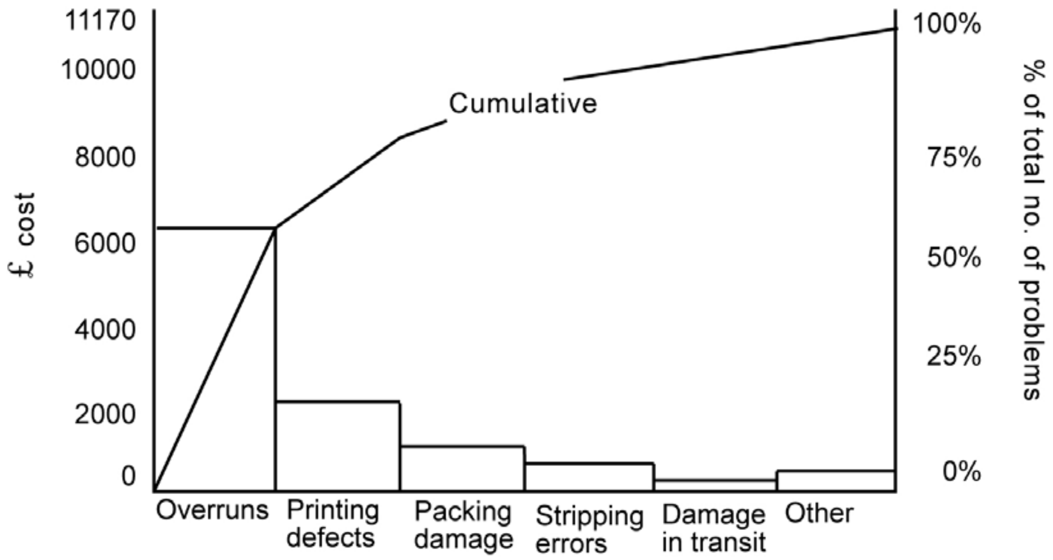
Problem	**Number of occasions**
Printing defects	38
Overruns	13
Stripping errors	12
Packing damage	7
Wrong paper	4
Ink problems	3
Damage in transit	3
Falling off conveyor	2
Sticky paper	2
Platen balance	1
Total	**85**

Now we must distinguish where the cut off point should come between the vital few and the trivial many. Having done that, the cumulative column is filled in to give a running total.

Problem	**Number of occasions**	**Cumulative**
Printing defects	38	38
Overruns	13	51
Stripping errors	12	63
Packing damage	7	70
Wrong paper	4	
Ink problems	3	
Damage in transit	3	
Falling off conveyor	2	
Sticky paper	2	
Platen balance	1	
Total	**85**	

So far we have identified that 82% of the problems are caused by just four factors. This information will then be plotted onto a graph in percentage terms. To this will be added the cost of each type of defect. In this famous example, at the conclusion of the exercise 20% of the problems (overruns and printing defects) accounted for 80% of the cost. Clearly this would make the problem solving groups recommendations both easier to agree upon and more convincing when presenting them to senior management.

The final chart for this exercise is given as an example.



16 MANAGING STRESS

As a general principal, employers internationally are increasingly paying greater attention than in the past to the effects of stress on their staff, especially on their key management personnel. The educational environment can be especially stressful, particularly in deprived areas with large class numbers, problems of discipline and poor equipment. Add to that the particularly low salary levels, a feeling of being undervalued with consequent impact on self esteem, and we have a fertile environment for stress-related problems. As a result, absenteeism grows, incurring further strain on already limited resources.

What is stress?

It can be described as ***the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in individuals as a result of being unable to cope with the demands being made on them***. Stress is triggered not by the external problems faced by individuals, but by the way they cope or fail to cope with those problems. Thus, most people can cope with a variety of pressures in their life, and many seem to thrive on pressure, especially at work. However, once individuals fail to deal adequately with pressure, then symptoms of stress appear. In the short term these can be manifested in such conditions as indigestion, nausea, headaches, back pain, loss of appetite, loss of sleep and increased irritability. In the longer term, such symptoms can lead to coronary heart disease, stomach ulcers, depression and other serious conditions. Clearly the effects of stress, whether triggered by work or domestic problems, will eventually lead to reduced employee performance at work, increased sickness absence and even to an early death.

Sources of stress at work:

The main sources of stress at work are located in a number of groupings. These may arise from environmental factors, job and organisational factors, workplace relationships, domestic situation or personal factors. A random selection of examples of factors could include:

- the economic situation,
- development of new technology,
- political changes,
- lack of communication,
- management style,
- lack of management support,
- career development,
- physical conditions,
- job demands,
- degree of autonomy,
- role conflict,
- superiors,
- colleagues,
- own staff,
- home life,
- personality type,
- ability to adapt to change,
- motivation,
- physical fear,
- tolerance for ambiguity.

Symptoms of stress:

Physiological – increased heart beat, tensed muscles, extra adrenalin, high blood pressure, heart disease etc.
Psychological – anxiety states, depression, job dissatisfaction, boredom, tension etc.
Behavioural – loss of appetite, increased smoking and alcohol consumption, sleeplessness, increased absences, aggression towards colleagues, increased errors etc.

Coping with stress:

Strategies for coping with stress can be considered under two headings – personal and organisational.

Personal coping strategies	**Organisational strategies**
Relaxation techniques Exercise Talking to somebody you know Humour Music Leaving the work area Assertiveness Personal planning Time management	Change individuals responsibilities more/ less Allow greater autonomy Set agreed job targets Provide training in assertiveness and time management Flexible working time Reduce time away from home Stop bullying – sexual / racial Produce a clear policy statement on harassment Establish a confidential system for reporting harassment Improve working conditions Relocate employees Provide counselling facilities Provide fitness centres and programmes Relaxation classes Team workshops Sports and social facilities Provide canteen and rest-room facilities Medical checks Stress management training Staff help lines Staff welfare officers

Given current economic circumstances in Serbia, some of the organisational strategies listed above, may seem impractical on cost grounds. However, very often such investments more than pay for themselves through reduced absenteeism and improved outputs. It is also noticeable that personal strategies such as improving personal organisation and assertiveness have been shown by studies to be particularly effective.

Managers may sometimes wonder why they have to spend time dealing with employees whose problems are domestically related, but the fact of the matter is that employees cannot help but bring personal problems to work. Most people are too embarrassed to admit to domestic problems and try to suppress anxiety. Often it is only when performance is affected, or sickness absence increases, that the manager becomes aware that something is wrong.

Most managers are not trained counsellors. However, it is important for the well-being of a team that the leader should take time out to listen to a stressed employee's story, agree that the immediate situation should be taken into account in respect of performance and workload and proposes that the employee seeks professional help. In other words, the managers job in such circumstances is to reassure himself / herself that the employee's situation is not being allowed to drift, but is being managed, both by the individual concerned and the manager.

On a positive note, the Serbian education system does of course include professional psychologists, some of whom could be tasked with supporting stressed staff and managers, possibly through a telephone help-line service. Also the education programmes include physical training facilities and instructors, who could be encouraged to provide exercise or relaxation opportunities for staff members. Equally educationalists should surely be able to organise in-house training courses in such as assertiveness, personal organisation, team building and stress management. A policy on harassment and a confidential reporting system is already in place, but everybody should be reminded of the standards from time to time.

Whilst encouraging assertiveness, managers must be willing to accept more assertive behaviour from their subordinates, if not, they may simply heighten the stress.

Typically within schools, a major cause of stress can be indiscipline and anti-social behaviour. Staff must have clear guidelines on how to react and must feel supported when they follow them. Behaviour, attendance, parental support etc, will, of course, vary from school to school, but where good practice does exist, it should be cascaded as a priority throughout the system. Similarly, abuse of staff, both physical and verbal, must be monitored and dealt with firmly and consistently with zero tolerance. There is little more stressful than real physical fear or open disrespect of authority.

Also typically, as a professional group, many teachers find themselves in the profession as a second choice. After a longer period of qualification, they then start work, only to find that although not suited to teaching, they feel trapped in it. As an example, in the United Kingdom, a careers guidance organisation reported that up to half of its clients were qualified as teachers. Once again teachers who do not see teaching as a vocation, on particularly poor salaries, are likely to find their day to day jobs difficult to manage, making them vulnerable to stress. Sometimes the coping mechanism is to ‘switch-off’, with a knock-on effect for colleagues and pupils. To counter this, sound careers advice and substantial teaching practice in schools needs to be a major part of their training programme.

Counselling at work:

In essence counselling is a joint activity in which a person seeking help, support or advice in dealing with personal problems, shares his or her dilemma with a trained helper or counsellor. It is of prime importance to recognise that counselling is not intended to do anything to individuals; its role is to enable them to get their problems into perspective and to see what they themselves can do to solve them. Essentially counselling is a process in which the counsellor helps the client to:

- identify the problem,
- agree what would be the ideal, or preferred , outcome,
- consider ways by which the client might achieve that outcome.

The role of managers is to recognise when a problem may require employee counselling, provide immediate support but then facilitate professional counselling arrangements.

Why should an employer, whether public or private sector, provide such services for its employees? The answer is primarily one of enlightened self interest i.e. unhappy, anxious or over stressed employees, are not going to be able to achieve high performance in their jobs, the may take more time off for sickness and may even decide top change their job. It is therefore in an organisations interest to avoid such uneconomic use of their human resources, and the provision of counselling services may be one way of sustaining performance and showing commitment to employees as individuals. In the final analysis an organisation must weigh up the costs, both direct and indirect, of providing such support against the perceived benefits.

Summary:

The impact of stress related illness or performance impairment is both real and very expensive for many organisations. Managers need to be sensitive to this and at least be able to identify symptoms and in more serious cases, recommend professional help. In some countries, particularly within the public sector, stress is not directly addressed, as it is believed that if you highlight it, everybody will get it. In reality however, if the symptoms exist this will not be changed by labelling it ‘stress’. As managers it is part of our role to maximize all resource at our disposal. Recognising and trying to reduce stress in our human resource is an important part of that responsibility.