References


TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

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Management, basically, is getting things done through people. People, therefore, are the most important resource available to management and the managing of people is one of the most important functions of management. The “tips for effective management” which are presented here are concerned primarily with management’s dealings with subordinates. These tips, if followed, should help the manager do his job better in building an alert, effective, and responsible staff.

1. Emphasize skill, not rules, in your organization. Judge your own actions and those of your subordinates by their effects—effects in terms of increasing both the competitive strength of your business and the satisfaction of the human needs of the people who work in it. Go easy on pat rules for running a business. Doing it “by the book” isn’t always the most satisfactory way. If an unorthodox solution works effectively and pleases the people who use it, don’t discount it just because it doesn’t seem exactly “according to Hoyle.”

2. Set a high standard for your organization. If you are irregular in your work habits, late for appointments, fuzzy in expressing yourself, careless about facts, or bored in attitude, your subordinates probably will be, too. If, on the other hand, you set a high standard for the organization, in all probability your subordinates will be eager to follow your good example.

3. Know your subordinates and try to determine what is important to each. Continuous study of individuals is a “must” for getting things done through people. Motives and attitudes are important tools for the executive, and they can be determined only by study. Since security is the main drive in many people, giving recognition to the contribution of others and to their role in your concern is a useful starting point in getting the best from men of future executive caliber.

4. Give your subordinates objectives and a sense of direction. Subordinates should know where they’re going, what they’re doing, and why they’re doing it, in order to plan their time intelligently and to work effectively. Good junior executives seldom enjoy working just day-to-day. Therefore, make clear the relation between their day-to-day work and the larger company objectives.

For example, don’t merely ask people to analyze the variable costs of a particular department. Tell them also that it’s part of a longer-range plan to provide leeway for salary increases, and that the knowledge they provide will strengthen the operating efficiency of your company.

5. Try to listen thoughtfully and objectively. The executive who knows his people—their habits, worries, ambitions, touchy points, and pet prides—comes to appreciate why they behave as they do and what motives stir them. The best and fastest way to know them is to encourage them to talk freely, without fear of ridicule or disapproval. Try to understand how others actually feel on a subject, whether or not you feel the same way. Never dominate a conversation or meeting by doing all the talking yourself if you want to find out where your people stand.


261
If both you and one of your people start to say something at the same time, give him the right of way.

One objection to the idea of being a good listener is that it takes time to draw people out. The answer is that it takes time to plan, too. Both are essential in the executive's job. The time invested will pay big dividends.

6. Be considerate. Few things contribute more to building a hard-working executive team than a considerate boss. Try to be calm and courteous toward your subordinates. Consider the effects on them of any decisions you make. Take into account the problems they have of their own, both business and personal. Try to build up their pride in their work, and their self-respect. Start by treating personal characteristics as assets and being careful not to trample on them.

You and your junior executives are in the position of a leader and his followers. One wants to follow only the leader whose course is steady and whose actions are predictable.

8. Build up subordinates' sense of the value of their work. Most people need to think their jobs are important. Many even have to feel that they not only have an important job, but are essential in it, before they start clicking.

9. Give your directions in terms of suggestions or requests. If your people have initiative and ability, you will get vastly better results in this way than you will by giving orders or commands. Issue the latter only as a last resort. If you find that you have to give orders all the time, maybe you'd better look for some new assistants—or reexamine the way you have been handling your own job. Be sure, also, to tell why you want certain things done. Informal, oral explanations are often as good or better than written ones; let the individual circumstances be your guide here.

10. Delegate responsibility for details to subordinates. This is another "obvious" point that is frequently overlooked. Delegating responsibility is basic to competent management. You are not doing your real job as an executive if you do not delegate. As the chief executive, if you insist on keeping your hand in details, you discourage your subordinates by competing with them. Moreover, by doing everything yourself, you prevent subordinates from learning to make their own decisions. Sooner or later the capable ones will quit and the other will sit back and let you do all the work. Ultimately, you will have no time for the thinking and the planning that are the most important parts of your job. Think of your executives as working with you, not for you.

11. Show your staff that you have faith in them and that you expect them to do their best. Junior executives, and everyone else for that matter, tend to perform according to what is expected of them. If they know you have the confidence in them to expect a first-rate job, that's what they will usually try to give you.

12. Keep your subordinates informed. Bring them up to date constantly on new developments and let them know well in advance whenever changes are in the offing. As members of a team, they are entitled to know what is going on. If they do, their thinking will be geared more closely to reality and their attitudes will be more flexible. Give them enough information about conditions and events in your organization to let them see themselves and their work in perspective.

13. Let your assistants in on your plans at an early stage. It's true that many plans can't be discussed very far in advance. They should, however, be discussed with subordinates before they are in final form. It will give your assistants that all-important chance to participate. Furthermore, because they will have taken part in shaping the plan, it will be as much theirs as yours and they will feel a personal responsibility for its success. Hence, they will usually carry out the program with vigor and precision.

14. Ask subordinates for their counsel and help. Bring them actively into the picture. It will help to give them a feeling of "belonging" and to build their self-confidence. It will often make them anxious to work harder than ever. What is just as important, they may well have good ideas which may never be utilized unless you ask for them.

15. Let your people know where they stand. The day of "treat 'em rough and tell 'em nothing" has passed. A system providing periodic ratings for employees is the first step. However, the full value of such a system is realized only if ratings are discussed with each person individually so that each can bolster weak points, clear up misunderstandings, and recognize his particular talents.

A formal rating system may be worth while, but is not necessarily essential if the chief executive talks at least once a year with each assistant about his performance during the past period.

16. Give a courteous hearing to ideas from subordinates. Many ideas may sound fantastic to you, but it's important not to act scornful or impatient. There's no surer way to discourage original thinking by a subordinate than to disparage or ridicule a suggestion he makes. His next idea might well be the
very one you want—make it easy for that next idea to come to you.

17. Give your subordinates a chance to take part in decisions. When your people feel they have had a say in a decision, they are much more likely to go along with it cooperatively. If they agree with the decision, they will look at it as their own and back it to the hilt. If they don’t agree, they may still back it more strongly than otherwise because of the fact that their point of view was given full and fair consideration.

18. Tell the originator of an idea what action was taken and why. If you do so, he’ll study other problems and make suggestions on ways to solve them. If his idea is accepted, he will be encouraged by seeing the results of his thinking put into effect. If his idea is not adopted, he will accept that fact more readily and with fuller understanding if you show him that the reasons for rejection are clear and sound. In addition, knowing exactly why his idea was impractical will help the suggester analyze the next problem more clearly.

19. Pass the credit on down to the operating people. Taking for yourself credit that really belongs to one of your operating people tends to destroy his initiative and willingness to take responsibility. Giving him fair recognition for what he does has a double benefit; he gets appreciation for doing a good job, and you get the help and support of a loyal staff. If you take all the bows when somebody else played the leading role, you can rapidly lose the respect of your executives.

20. Try to let people carry out their own ideas. It occasionally happens that equally good suggestions on a particular problem come from two individuals at the same time, one person directly responsible in the situation the other person essentially detached from it. In such cases, it’s usually desirable to choose the recommendation developed by the person who will ultimately carry it out. He will then have a personal stake in proving that his idea is, in fact, workable. It’s good administrative practice, therefore, to keep subordinates constantly aware of your willingness to have them work out their own solutions to problems in their particular operating areas.

21. Criticize or reprove in private. This may perhaps seem obvious but administrators forget to do it every day in hundreds of organizations. Reprimands in the presence of others cause humiliation and resentment instead of a desire to do better next time. Criticizing a subordinate when people from his department are present undermines his authority, his morale, and his enthusiasm to do his best for your company.

22. Criticize or reprove constructively. First, get all the facts, review them with those concerned, and reach an agreement on them. Then be ready to suggest a constructive course of action for the future. When you criticize, concentrate on the method or results, not on personalities. If you can precede the criticism by a bit of honest praise, so much the better. Note, however, that some executives do this so regularly and unimaginatively that the compliments lose their value.

23. Praise in public. Most people thrive on appreciation. Praise before others often has a multiple impact. It tends to raise morale, increase prestige, and strengthen self-confidence—important factors in the development of capable junior officers. But be sure that those you praise are really the ones who deserve it, and that you don’t encourage “credit grabbing.”

24. Accept moderate “gripping” as healthy. In small doses, griping can serve as a safety valve for your people. If they worked under a perfect administrator they would probably still complain, just because he was perfect. Vicious personal sniping is, of course, another matter; here, you should make every effort to have the cause discovered and rooted out. Remember, too, that without some dissatisfaction there would be little incentive to do or get something better.