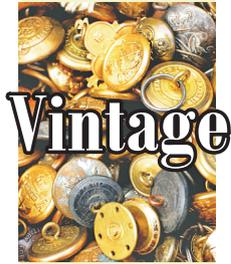


Mercuri Mail

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The good general manager does not spell out detailed objectives for his organization, nor does he make master plans. He seldom makes forthright statements of policy. He is an opportunist and he tends to muddle through problems- although he muddles with a purpose. He enmeshes himself in many operating matters and does not limit himself to the 'big picture'.

The upper reaches of management are a land of mystery and intrigue. Very few people have ever been there, and the present inhabitants frequently send back messages that are incoherent to other levels of management and to the world in general. This may account for the myths, illusions and caricatures that permeate the literature of management. For example such widely held notions such as these

- * Life gets less complicated as a manager reaches the top of the pyramid.
- * The manager at the top level knows everything that is going on in the organization, can command whatever resources he may need, and therefore can be more decisive.
- * The general manager's day is taken up with making broad policy decisions and formulating precise objectives.
- * The top executive's primary activity is conceptualizing long-range plans.
- * In a large company, the top executive may be seen mediating about the role of his organization in society.

I suggest that none of these versions alone, or in combination, is an accurate portrayal of what a general manager does. Perhaps students of the management process have been overly eager to develop a theory and a discipline.

As one executive I know puts it" I guess I do some of the things described in the books and articles, but the descriptions are lifeless and my job isn't."

What common characteristics, then, do successful executives exhibit in reality? I shall identify five skills or talents which in my experience seem especially significant.

Keeping well informed

First each of my heroes has a special talent for keeping himself informed about a wide range of operating decisions being made at different levels in the company.

Good Managers don't make policy decisions

H. Edward Wrapp
HBR Classic



As he moves up the ladder, he develops a network of information sources in many different departments. He cultivates these sources and keeps them open no matter how high he climbs up the ladder.

When the need arises, he bypasses the lines on the organization chart to seek more than one version of a situation.

Focusing time and energy

The second skill of the good manager is that he knows how to save his energy and hours for those few particular issues, decisions or problems to which he should be giving his personal attention.

He knows the fine and subtle distinction between keeping fully informed about operating decisions and allowing the organization to force him into participating in these decisions, or even worse, making them.

Recognizing that he can bring his special talents to bear on only a limited number of matters, he chooses those issues which he believes will have the greatest long term impact on the company, and on which his special abilities are most productive.

Under normal circumstances, he will limit himself to three or four objectives during any single period of sustained activity.

Playing the power game

To what extent do successful top executives push their ideas and proposals through the organization? The rather common notion that the "prime mover" continually creates and forces through new programs, like a powerful majority leader in a liberal congress, is in my opinion very misleading.

The successful manager is sensitive to the power structure in the organization. In considering any major current proposal, he can plot the position of the various individuals and units in the organization, on a scale ranging from complete, outspoken support to determined, sometimes bitter and often times well cloaked opposition. In the middle of the scale is an area of comparative indifference. Usually several aspects of a proposal will fall into this area, and here is where he knows he can operate. He assesses the depth and nature of the blocs in the organization. His perception permits him to move through what I call corridors of comparative indifference. He seldom challenges when a corridor is blocked, preferring to pause until it is opened up.

contd next page....

Our Thoughts

Find out who is a good manager in **VINTAGE**

FOCUS elaborates the art of great management

Must Read will teach us how to wake the seagull within us

Read the story 'About being Responsible' in the last page

Related to this skill is his ability to recognize the need for a few trial balloon-launchers in the organization. As he studies the reactions of key individuals and groups to the trial balloons, he is able to make a better assessment of how to limit the emasculation of the various proposals. For seldom does he find a proposal that is supported by all quarters of the organization. The emergence of strong support in certain quarters is almost sure to evoke strong opposition in others.

The Art of Imprecision

The fourth skill of the successful manager is knowing how to satisfy the organization that it has a sense of direction without ever actually getting himself committed publicly to a specific set of objectives.

This is not to say that he does not have objectives—personal and corporate, long term and short term. They are significant guides to his thinking and he modifies them continually as he better understands the resources he is working with, the competition and the changing market demands.

Muddling with a purpose

The fifth and most important skill I shall describe bears little relation to the doctrine that management is (or should be) a comprehensive, systematic, logical, well-programmed science. Of all the heresies set forth here, this should strike doctrinaires as the rankest of all!

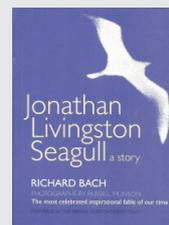
The successful manager, in my observation recognizes the futility of trying to push total packages or programs through the organization. He is willing to take less than total acceptance in order to achieve modest progress towards his goals. Avoiding debates on principles, he tries to piece together particles that may appear to be incidentals into a program that moves at least part of the way toward his objectives. His attitude is based on optimism and persistence. Over and over he says to himself, "There must be some parts of this proposal on which we can capitalize."

Seagulls are marvellous creatures. They glide over the sandy shores and soar over crests of waves. A seagull is a bird that flies only for the sake of food. For most gulls it is not flying that matters but eating. But for Jonathan Livingston seagull, it was not eating that mattered, but flight.

Jonathan Livingston seagull is a good motivational book that emphasizes on having freedom in whatever we do. Every desire is fulfilled by the will power within us. Anything is possible, don't be limited by anything. If there is a plateau blocking your path, push through it.

Must Read

Jonathan Livingston Seagull
A Story - By Richard Bach



It's amazing that so many things that Jonathan learns are so applicable in human life: resilience, tenacity, situations where you have to take path no one around you has taken before, persuading the entire group about your idea, ability

to fight back, sharing your learning with others and more than anything pursuing your passion.

We recommend this book to anyone in need of some inspiration. Read it, embody it. It's also a great book to gift, only 96 pages, a third of which are photographs of seagulls in flight. The author dedicate this parable "To the Real Jonathan Seagull, who lives within us all".

Happy Reading!

Ravi's Corner



My gardener Elumalai

Three narrow strips of earth
And Yet so much beauty abounds
Moonbeams display their star-like petals with pride
Violet lilies nod with the wind, not to be outdone
Red, orange and pink hibiscus jostle for space
Madurai malli, mogras and the pink-hued jasmine spread their heavenly fragrance
The dainty parijata casts a spell with its subtle scent
Oleanders-pink and red, rejoice in the sunshine
The velvety alamandas and white plumerias form a nice pair
Ixoras-deep pink and yellow-blattantly seek attention
The sweet cassandras mingle with the bluebells along the fence
What a riot of colours and smells
My tiny garden gives me great joy and peace

My gardener Elumalai -Thankyou!

Horstman's laws

The art of great management

The observations and aphorisms that comprise Horstman's laws, represent 30 years of professional development, leavened with a life time of leadership experiences.

When we act in accordance with them success follows. When we ignore or forget them consequences follow.

1. It's all about people

An hour spent with people is a better investment than an hour spent on systems, processes or people.

Great people can overcome average systems. Average people won't live up to great systems.

Action-Spend time with your people every week, understand their strengths and weaknesses. Find out their children's names. Learn their projects.

2. More communication is better

No matter what the situation, work or home, personal or professional, boss or subordinate, it is always more communication that solves the problem or clinches the deal. And think about this: communication is what the listener does. Action-pick up the phone, provide an update, admit you are behind

3. You are not that smart, they are not that dumb

You can't fool people. EVER. The fact is that they know when you mislead them. Yes they may go along with you. But they know that it doesn't feel right. That you don't feel right. After all didn't you used to be them.

Action-Tell the whole truth, don't leave anything out, when in doubt, tell everyone. Use candor as an advantage, rather than seeing it as a weakness.



4. Control is an illusion

There is not a single person whom you think you control, who would agree with you. If you think you are so good as to control another, then who in your organization thinks that way about you.

Stop trying to control. You are wasting your time. Build relationships that allow you to influence. Action- build relationships based on trust. Say "I trust you". Let your team choose their path, at times, even when you disagree.

5. The river is wide, the currents messy but all the water ends up in the ocean

Your organization is organic-it's made up of people. Just like the river. Your projects and timelines are going to be messy and defy control. Stop fighting it.

Action- Don't worry about or punish every deadline, wait for a pattern. Sometimes a light touch is the way out, let go 'flow' to stay ahead.

6. There are no secrets

What everyone is talking about is what is not being said. Everyone knows everything already.

Action -Tell everybody everything. Don't go off the record

7. How you feel is your fault

They did something and you decided how to respond. Think about the word responsibility- response-ability. You are able to choose your response.

Action - Choose the right response. Choose not to get angry. Choose to understand why they behave the way they do. Your response will be more powerful.

8. The 'other' way often works just fine

Your opinion that your way is the right way is routinely controverted. You think your way is right because it is yours.

Action- try the other way once in a while. After the first thought, have the -second-different one.

IT'S ALL ABOUT PEOPLE AND MORE COMMUNICATION IS BETTER.

Notes from all over

* "Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility. For the person who is unwilling to grow up, the person who does not want to carry his own weight, this is a frightening prospect."

- **Eleanor Roosevelt**

* "Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity."

- **Khalil Gibran**

* "We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future."

- **George Bernard Shaw**

* "The price of greatness is responsibility."

- **Winston Churchill**

* "If you take responsibility for yourself you will develop a hunger to accomplish your dreams."

- **Les Brown**

* "Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained."

- **Helen Keller**

* "Find joy in everything you choose to do. Every job, relationship, home... it's your responsibility to love it, or change it."

- **Chuck Palahniuk**

* "Leadership - leadership is about taking responsibility, not making excuses."

- **Mitt Romney**

* "One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes... and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility."

- **Eleanor Roosevelt**

* "Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life."

- **Dalai Lama**



HERE IS A STORY ABOUT BEING RESPONSIBLE

The day when the jobs were handed out was one of the most exciting for all the children in the class. It took place during the first week of the term. On that day, every boy and girl was given a job for which they would be responsible for the rest of that school year.

As with everything, some jobs were more interesting than others, and the children were eager to be given one of the best ones. When giving them out, the teacher took into account which pupils had been most responsible during the previous year, and those children were the ones who most looked forward to this day. Among them Rita stood out. She was a kind and quiet girl; and during the previous year she had carried out the teacher's instructions perfectly. All the children knew Rita was the favorite to be given the best job of all: to look after the class dog.

But that year there was a big surprise. Each child received one of the normal jobs, like preparing the books or the radio for the lessons, telling the time, cleaning the blackboard, or looking after one of the pets. But Rita's job was very different. She was given a little box containing some sand and one ant. And even though the teacher insisted that this ant was a very special ant, Rita could not help feeling disappointed. Most of her classmates felt sorry for her. They sympathised with her, and remarked at how unfair it was that she had been given that job. Even her father became very angry with the teacher, and, as an act of protest, he encouraged Rita to pay no attention to this insignificant pet. However, Rita, who liked her teacher very much, preferred to show the teacher her error by doing something special with that job of such little interest. "I will turn this little task into something great," Rita said to herself.

So it was that Rita started investigating all about her little ant. She learned about the different species, and studied everything about their habitats and behaviour. She modified the little box to make it perfect for the ant. Rita gave the ant the very best food, and it ended up growing quite a bit bigger than anyone had expected...

One day in spring, when they were in the classroom, the door opened, revealing a man who looked rather important. The teacher interrupted the class with great joy, and said, "This is Doctor Martinez. He has come to tell us a wonderful piece of news, isn't that right?" "Exactly", said the Doctor. "Today they have published the results of the competition, and this class has been chosen to accompany me, this summer, on a journey to the tropical rainforest, where we will be investigating all kinds of insects. Among all the schools of this region, without doubt it is this one which has best cared for the delicate little ant given to you. Congratulations! You will be wonderful assistants!"

That day the school was filled with joy and celebration. Everyone congratulated the teacher for thinking of entering them in the competition, and they thanked Rita for having been so patient and responsible. And so it was that many children learnt that to be given the most important tasks you have to know how to be responsible even in what are apparently the smallest tasks. And without doubt, it was Rita who was most pleased at this, having said to herself so many times "I will turn this little job into something really great". So what have learned from this story? Responsibility is to be measured by how we approach the seemingly less important tasks in life.

~ Devi



Mercuri Goldmann (India) Pvt. Ltd.

1217, 4th Cross, 1st Block, HAL 3rd Stage, Bangalore - 560 075, India.

Bangalore: Ph: 080-2526 0192, 2529 6568, 2526 2053. Fax: 080-2527 8492.

E-mail: mercuriindia@vsnl.com **Pune:** Ph: 020-2567 4395, 2567 1235, 2567 4505.

Fax: 020-2567 5054. E-mail: mercuripune@vsnl.com **Chennai:** Telefax: 044-2489 9852.

E-mail: malathys@mercuri-india.com **Mumbai:** 022-2613 9744 / 2613 9309,

Fax No.022-2613 9755. E-mail: mercurimumbai@vsnl.net, *Website:* www.mercuriindia.com

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