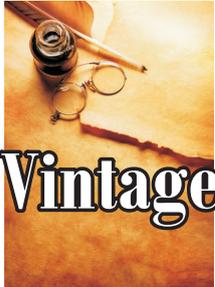


# Mercuri Mail

The India Journal of Mercuri International July - Sept 2013



1. Where do I get my information and how? Can I make greater use of my contacts to get information? Can other people do some of the scanning for me?

In what areas is my knowledge the weakest, and how can I get others to provide me with the information I need? Do I have powerful enough mental models of those things I must understand within the organization and in its environment.

2. What information do I disseminate in my organization? How important is that my subordinates get my information? Do I keep too much information to myself because dissemination of it is time-consuming or inconvenient? How can I get more information to others so they can make better decisions?

3. Do I balance information collecting with action taking? Do I tend to act before information is in? Or do I wait so long for all the information that opportunities pass me by and I become a bottleneck in my organization?

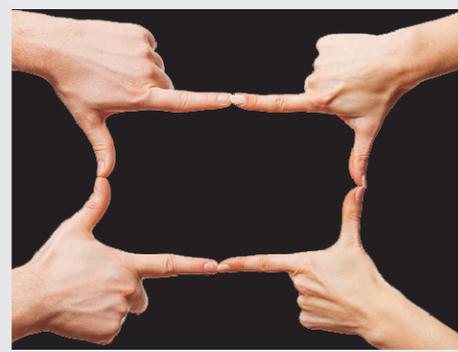
4. What pace of change am I asking my organization to tolerate? Is this change balanced so that our operations are neither excessively static nor overly disrupted? Have we sufficiently analyzed the impact of this change on the future of our organization?

5. Am I sufficiently well informed to pass judgment on the proposals that my subordinates make? Is it possible to leave final authorization for more of the proposals with subordinates? Do we have problems of coordination because subordinates in fact now make too many of these decisions independently?

6. What is my vision of direction for this organization? Are these primarily in my own mind in a loose form? Should I make them explicit in order to guide the decisions of others in the organization better? Or do I need flexibility to change them at will.

7. How do my subordinates react to my managerial style? Am I sufficiently sensitive to the powerful influence my actions have on them? Do I fully understand their reactions to my actions? Do I find an appropriate balance between encouragement and pressure? Do I stifle their initiative?

8. What kind of external relationships do I maintain, and how? Do I spend too much of my time maintaining these relationships? Are there certain types of people whom I should get to know better?



Self-Study questions for Managers  
Harvard Business Review On Human Relations

9. Is there any system to my scheduling, or am I just reacting to the pressures of the moment? Do I find the appropriate mix of activities or do I tend to concentrate on one particular function or one type of problem just because I find it interesting? Am I more efficient with particular kinds of work at special times of the day or week? Does my schedule reflect this? Can someone else (in addition to my secretary) take responsibility for much of my scheduling and do it more systematically?

10. Do I overwork? What effect does my workload have on my efficiency? Should I force myself to take breaks or to reduce the pace of my activity?

11. Am I too superficial in what I do? Can I really shift moods as quickly and frequently as my work patterns require? Should I attempt to decrease the amount of fragmentation and interruption in my work?

12. Do I orient myself too much toward current tangible activities? Am I a slave to the action and excitement of my work, so that I am no longer able to concentrate on issues. Do key problems receive the attention they deserve? Should I spend more time reading and probing deeper into certain issues? Could I be more reflective? Should I be?

13. Do I use different media appropriately? Do I spend enough time to observe activity at first hand? Am I too detached from the heart of my organization's activities, seeing things only in an abstract way?

14. How do I blend my personal rights and duties? Do my obligations consume all my time? How can I turn my obligations to my advantage.

## Our Thoughts

Read about Human Relations in **VINTAGE**

**FOCUS** answers the question-who's got the monkey

**Must Read** reviews a classic on management

Turn to the last page for Leadership Secrets from the Mahabharata

This book, by means of case studies, explains how revolutions in management are carried out, highlighting achievements such as those of Lee Iacocca, who saved Chrysler from bankruptcy; Ash and Thornton, builders of Litton, the American giant Paul Chambers who revitalized Imperial Chemical Industries and Konosuke Matsushita, the Japanese Managerial genius. It also penetratingly analyses management failures such as that of Concorde and many others.

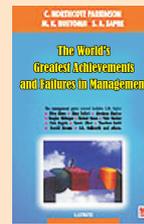
This is an engrossing book and will be useful to executives and students of management at all levels.

The unique feature of this book which is the positive guidance it gives managers for achieving success in business.

The first case study described in the book is that of Iacocca. At the end of the case description, Iacocca's approach to management is highlighted:

- \* Ask your key people what their objectives are for the next three months and let them ask the same question to their key people. This ensures that key people throughout the organization constantly think in terms of their goals and the way to achieve them.
- \* It is necessary to write down precisely what it is to be discussed. Mere verbal discussions can be altogether confusing and misleading.
- \* At the same time paper work should be kept within proper limits. For instance every document need not be circulated to all.
- \* Every executive should undertake a quarterly review of his performance as against the targets. It enables him to reorient his activities suitably. He develops a sense of pride and can have the joy of achievement.
- \* Discussions with subordinates can be the source of new ideas. They stimulate fresh thinking. Mutual exchange of views also develops team spirit and inter personal relations.
- \* Periodic reviews provide an objective basis for evaluating the performance of executives.

## Must Read



The World's Greatest Achievements and Failures in Management

Parkinson, Rustomji and Sapre

India Book House 204 pages, Rs. 50/-

- \* Specialisation is key to success.
- \* A question can be usefully discussed in a committee but it is for the chief executive to make the decision ultimately. He has to be decisive.
- \* The executive must be able to communicate in a language everyone understands, he must also be able to listen with interest and attention.
- \* The key to success is people and not information.

What is given above is a synopsis of a case study.

Likewise there are many case studies of success and failure described in the book. The style is simple and down to earth.

The book ends with a very apt quote :

“Management is one of the highest of the arts, because of its simultaneous demands upon character, upon intelligence and upon experience. Deficiencies in management are therefore difficult to remedy. Some of the requirements can be taught in business schools, such as the tricks of the factory layout, or of conducting interviews, or of keeping books. But much can be learnt only by experience. And those requirements which depend on personality and upon character can be met only by people whose outlook on life is appropriate.”

*Happy Reading!*

## Ravi's Corner



### Leader in you !!

Leader in you; where are you !  
 Amidst chaos, capable you are to survive  
 Your foresightedness, your vision  
 Your preparedness, seeking and visualising  
 Many more. The world is missing.  
 Birds without wings, Trees without fruits  
 Plants without flowers, flowers without scents  
 All are like, you without the leader in you.  
 Where are you!  
 Manager with his position can do some,  
 Leader without title can do MANY.  
 Where are you ???



## Management Time - Who's got the monkey

Why is it that typically managers are running out of time and subordinates are running out of work?

Here we shall explore the meaning of management time as it relates to interaction between managers and their bosses, their peers and their subordinates.

Specifically we shall deal with three types of management time.

**Boss imposed time-**used to accomplish those activities that the boss requires and which the manager cannot disregard without swift and direct penalty.

**System imposed time-** used to accommodate requests from peers for active support. Neglecting these requests will also result in penalties, though not always as direct or swift.

**Self Imposed time-** used to do things that the manager originates or agrees to do. A certain portion of this time, however, is taken by the subordinates and is called subordinate imposed time.

The remaining portion of the time will be the manager's own and is called discretionary time. Self imposed time is not subject to penalty, since neither the boss nor the system can discipline the manager for not doing what they didn't know he had intended to do in the first place.

To accommodate those demands, the manager needs to control the content and timing of what they do. Since what their bosses and system impose on them are subject to penalty, managers cannot tamper with those requirements. Thus their self imposed time becomes their major area of concern.

Managers should try to increase the discretionary component of their self imposed time by minimizing or doing away with subordinate time. They will then use the added increment to get better control over their boss imposed and system imposed activities.

Most managers spend much more time on their subordinates' activities than they faintly realize. Here we use the monkey-on-the-back metaphor to examine how the subordinate imposed time comes into being and what the superior can do about it.

There are five degrees of initiative that the manager can exercise with regard to the boss and system.

- 1) Wait until told-lowest initiative.
- 2) Ask what to do.
- 3) Recommend and then take resulting action.
- 4) Act but advise at once.
- 5) Act on own and routinely report (highest initiative).

Clearly the manager should be professional enough not to do steps 1 and 2 in relation to the boss or system. A manager who uses initiative 1 has no control over either the content or the timing of the boss imposed or system imposed time and thereby forfeits the right to complain about what he or she is told to do or when.

The Manager who uses initiative 2 has control over timing but not over the content. The Manager who uses initiatives 3,4, and 5 has control over both, with the greatest level of control exercised with initiative 5.

In relation to subordinates, the manager's job is two fold- first to outlaw the initiatives 1 & 2, thus giving subordinates no other choice, but to learn and master" completed staff work."

Second to see that each problem leaving his or her office, there is an agreed upon level of initiative assigned to it, in addition to an agreed upon time and place for the next manager-subordinate conference.

The conference date should be duly noted in the manager's calendar.

The Manager can now see with the clarity of revelation on the mountain top that the more he gets caught up, the more he is left behind.

*William Oncken Jr and Donald L Wass*





### Notes from all over

- \* "To be a success in business, be daring, be first, be different."  
- **Marchant**
- \* "The greatest genius is never so great as when it is chastised and subdued by the highest reason."  
- **Charles Colton**
- \* "Genius is little more than the faculty of perceiving in an unhabitual way."  
- **William James**
- \* "A man is rich in proportion to the things he can afford to let alone."  
- **Henry Thoreau**
- \* "Happiness is the interval between periods of unhappiness."  
"Happiness is not a state to arrive at. It is a manner of arriving."  
- **Margaret Runbeck**
- \* "All great ideas are controversial, or have been at one time."  
- **George Seldes**
- \* "it is impossible to defeat an ignorant man in argument."  
- **William Macadoo**
- \* "Men tend to treat all their opinions as principles."  
- **Henry Agar**
- \* "Science is the refusal to believe on the basis of hope."  
- **C P Snow**

## Leadership Secrets from the Mahabharata

1. Kings must ascertain the strength and weakness of all friends and foes and learn to distinguish between right and wrong.
2. No foe should be neglected through disdain.
3. One should never wish to subdue one's foe by quarrel. Only boys seek to quarrel.
4. He is the best of kings whose subjects do not hide their wealth and who are engaged in their respective duties.
5. Persons of crooked minds cannot bear the burden of an extensive empire.
6. A king should always act with promptitude, for without promptitude of action, mere destiny never accomplishes the objects cherished by kings.
7. Maintain equanimity in all action.
8. The king should place his wealth in charge of an ascetic.
9. The fame of a king who displays forgiveness after a conquest, spreads far and wide.
10. A king should never disclose his counsels to a minister who is not devoted to him.

- Meera Uberoi



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