

PLANNING AND
ASSIGNING TASKS
FOR THE FIRST TIME

A STEP BY STEP
APPROACH FOR
BEGINNING MANAGERS

A.G.B. SIMIME

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INTRODUCTION

WHY THIS HANDBOOK

Many managers, particularly novices, that is those young in the management career, fail to achieve better results through their subordinates. While many factors exist to explain this phenomenon, a fundamental predisposing factor is lack of adequate planning and assigning of tasks. The common factor with management novices is that they do not possess the know how as well as the ability to properly plan and assign tasks.

This handbook is written to help them do so with easy and comfort. It draws up a fashionable approach, which if followed, in the light of the other existing extenuating circumstances, will facilitate effective and efficient task accomplishment.

The author is aware and conscious of the amount of time available to managers vis a vis the amount of work they have to get done. A busy working day leaves the manager little, if any, energy for a manager to spare time in the evening to read professional materials related to his or her work. For this reason the author intentionally avoids to present in this book the minute details of planning and assigning tasks. What is contained in this book is the twenty percent (20%) of the things that managers must do to achieve the eighty percent (80%) of effective planning and assigning of tasks. It is for this reason that the book is the size it is.

The handbook recommends that managers have a number of decisions to make at different stages of assigning tasks. The recommendations appear in a logical sequence of chapters as outlined below:-

Chapter One

This is primarily an introductory part of the book. The chapter starts with an analysis of a new work environment and the challenges that face new managers in their jobs. One of the things considered in the chapter is how old folks who become

subordinates of the new managers look at them and the opportunities and threats created by the old folks with long experience in the organization. The capability of new managers to fit in the new work environment and command respect as well as to enforce compliance is considered.

Chapter Two

The chapter starts with a general overview of the planning function and labels it as a number one management function permeating all other functions. Five crucial decisions for effecting planning are outlined. At the end the chapter provides the purpose of planning.

Chapter Three

Chapter three looks at the spade work that must be done before work is actually assigned to subordinates. The chapter explores what managers must do at the time before assigning tasks. The author recommends the need for managers to critically analyze the jobs and ascertain on the goals, objectives, targets and activities to accomplish the tasks. The importance of determining the requirements for task accomplishment and assistance required from assigning managers as well as other people are emphasized. In this chapter the author advises managers to be familiar with the tasks before they give them to others to perform.

Chapter Four

In this part of the book the author takes managers through the activities that must be done at the time during assigning tasks. This is the time when tasks are actually given and the assignees are told what jobs are to be done. The need to clarify the tasks to the assignees is stressed so much so that the performers of the tasks must understand the bottom line of the tasks. The performers of the tasks ought to know the goals, objectives, targets and the activities to achieve the objectives of the tasks. The author points out that people who perform tasks have to know also all the requirements and the assistance available for successful accomplishment of the tasks and the managers who assign the tasks are the ones who are required to provide subordinates with this information.

Chapter Five

The idea of working with and through other people is reflected here. Time during implementation of tasks is important to managers. Managers are supposed to work with the people they assign tasks to. This is done to ensure that the assignees are doing the right things, in the right ways, and that the requirements for effective accomplishment of the tasks are ascertained.

Chapter Six

The author is advising managers on what to do at the time when the task is ending. Essentially the question of verifying on standards, quality and ascertaining on quantity where applicable is emphasized. The author advises managers to ask a number of questions like, has the work really been done? Is the work done acceptable? Only when these and other questions have been answered in the affirmative way have the tasks really ended.

Chapter Seven

The chapter urges managers to think about what should be done after the task is done. People who perform tasks expect something as acknowledgement for their performance. They expect some rewards. Managers, therefore, should consider what options are available for rewarding people. However, the author cautions that only those options within the powers of the managers should be considered first.

Chapter Eight

In this chapter the author presents three cases of planning and assigning tasks. He analyses the degree of success in the performance of the tasks and points out the reasons behind each level of performance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing books has never, and will never be done in solitude. Surely, this book has never been a solitary product. It fulfills, therefore, the reputation of this book as a product of the time and minds of many people to mention all those whose contributions made this book what it is.

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Having mentioned all those people, I wish to declare that I remain accountable for all the omissions and errors that this book contains.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MANAGER'S NEW WORK ENVIRONMENT

Main points of the chapter

- Who is a Manager.
- The New Managers.
- Sources of New Managers.
- New Managers from Inside the Organization.
- New Managers from Outside the Organization

WHO IS A MANAGER

Handy (1976) says that it has never been easy to define what a manager is, or even what he does. Indeed, it may be difficult to come up with a discrete meaning of a manager in this chapter and much so in this book. However, we shall make reference to a few authorities of management to see what they say about the subject.

Schermerhorn et al (1982) define a manager as a person in an organization who is responsible for the performance of one or more subordinates. They say managers are identified by various titles like supervisors, group leaders, general managers, heads of departments and so on. Like Schermerhorn, Rabey (1994) proposes that a manager has different titles including unit head, charge hand, leading hand, foreman, supervisor or something else. Both Schermerhorn and Rabey agree that managers are responsible and have authority for planning and controlling the work of a number of people in their work units for achieving the objectives set by management. Rabey makes a distinction by pointing out that a mere employee is directly responsible for doing the job assigned to him or her. When the same employee becomes a manager he or she works through other people, the subordinates, to get work done to agreed standards. Managers get paid for ensuring that the jobs are done as required.

We see from these two references that managers have different names. So Handy is right in saying that it is not easy to give a discrete definition of a manager. It really depends on the person talking about a manager, the organization in which one belongs and therefore the culture of the organization. But how do we complete the definition of a manager?

Roethlisberger (1985) observes something with regard to the position of the manager whom he calls foreman. He observes that a manager is a master and victim of double talk. As a foreman the manager is a link between management (top management) and the shop floor or the employees. The foreman as a manager does not belong to any group but has to work with both. Roethlisberger's notion of a manager's double talk is shared by Schermerhorn (1982) who points out that managers are sometimes simultaneously subordinates and superiors. As subordinates they themselves have superior managers who assign tasks to them. In this way they are held accountable by their superiors for the degree of success of their units. At the same time they have subordinates and they depend upon them to make possible the results of their work units.

We may conclude by saying that managers plan the work to be done by subordinates. So the planning function is crucial in the work of the manager. This presupposes that the manager is knowledgeable about the jobs that subordinates must do. That subordinates will do those jobs indicates that managers do assign the jobs to them. This again suggests that managers know how to assign tasks to subordinates, otherwise they will only plan and end there. The fact that they have to ensure that jobs are done to the required standards reveals that managers know or set the standards for effective performance. Much more, a manager must be able to influence subordinates to perform jobs to the required standards to achieve organizational objectives, to achieve desired results.

No manager is born a manager. A manager is a product of the employment function in that managers come from employees in organizations. In the formal employment sector, or in formal organizations, all managers have at some point been

subordinates. They have depended upon their supervisors or managers to tell them what to do and the results expected out of what they did.

When they become managers themselves, voluntarily or involuntarily, they assume the role of telling their subordinates what to do and what is expected out of what they tell them to do. How easy or difficult is this to them?

Before we discuss more about the new manager's work environment let us look at their levels. For simplicity we will group them into three strata, top, middle and first level strata. In this book we have assumed that top management has necessarily gone through the two lower strata and so they are familiar with planning and assigning tasks. They are for this matter excluded from the group of managers referred to here. It is sometimes possible for a person to be appointed to middle management level and in that way become a manager for the first time and thereby be required to plan and assign tasks for the first time. First line managers are more of operational staff foremen and mainly technical staff. They do not do much thinking in terms of planning and assigning tasks. But whatever little they do, they plan and assign tasks. Our focus of managers in this book, therefore, is on first and middle level management strata. However, top management may benefit from reading this book to up-date and refresh themselves from obsolescent-itis.

THE NEW EXECUTIVE

In his article, "Problems of a New Executive", Edmund P.L. (1985) points out that when executives start new jobs they have a varied number of tasks to complete. For instance, he says, they have to get to know the people with whom they will have to work, they have to know the bureaucratic ropes and they have to find the path of least resistance to these ends. Indeed, these tasks cannot be regarded as simple, essentially, because they place upon the new executives competing demands which must be attended simultaneously. Definitely, these demands, put the executives in

great difficult during the early days of their new jobs. New managers, of whatever rank, are confronted with problems similar to those faced by Edmund's New Executives.

Are all managers faced with the same type of problems or does each manager face problems unique to oneself? If we borrow the idea of contingency management it may not be correct to say all managers face the same problems. The kind of problems one will face will depend on a number of situational variables pertaining to the organization at some obtaining time. For instance, the source or origin, and so the organizational culture of the new manager; the entry's socialization process of the new manager; the internal culture of the organization in which the new manager takes the job; and the exercise of personal and professional competence of the new manager in the new organization. Because managers will take up jobs in different work settings it is appropriate to use the concept of similarity in discussing problems of new managers than that of the same, unless all of them are experiencing the same contingency variables.

SOURCES OF NEW MANAGERS

Where do new managers come from? This is a question of recruitment. There are many sources of recruitment of managers. But for our purposes we will group the sources into two: internal and external sources of recruitment. It is not our intention to discuss recruitment in this chapter and particularly so in this book. What we want to show here is what problems the two new managers, one from inside the organization (internal recruitment) and the other from outside the organization (external recruitment) are likely to face.

NEW MANAGERS FROM INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

There is a saying that a man is known by the company he keeps. This applies to managers recruited from within the organization. According to Terry, et al (1990), the process of recruiting from within the organization involves either a promotion, a demotion or

a transfer. So, an employee may be promoted from one lower rank to a higher rank and assumes a managerial role there. He or she is from among the employees of the organization and, therefore, is known by fellow employees. Terry et al point out that internal recruitment often entails decisions made by superiors without the active and voluntary participation of the employees. This is essentially so if the available position has not been advertised internally. The decision to promote an employee assumes, based on successful performance in a lower post, a successful performance of that employee in a higher post.

So, what are the problems facing this type of managers? An employee who becomes a manager through this process suffers or may suffer several kinds of problems. Borrowing from Peter et al (1969) he or she may have risen to the highest level of incompetence. The new position may have new demands which are completely different from those experienced in the lower job performed earlier. For instance, the job may require managerial responsibilities and so demand different interpersonal relations as opposed to the first and lower job. If this new manager does not possess both managerial and interpersonal skills the new role demands immediately become incompatible with the person leading to incompetence.

As a manager, now the employee has to work with and through others, subordinates, who once were his or her equals. This requires the new manager to assign tasks to the subordinates. But he or she must do so as appropriately as possible so that they may perform tasks effectively and in the right way. Being the first time to assign tasks the new manager may not be able to do so because one does not have the skills to do so. If the skills are not there it means that the assignment of tasks will be done so poorly so that performance is not effective. The blame for the low degree of performance eventually lies with the manager so that his or her superiors blast him or her for failure. The manager becomes frustrated and this further affects performance of his or her responsibilities.

Then there is the problem arising from the subordinates' understanding of the manager. Subordinates who know the

manager may take advantage of his or her weaknesses to play him or her down. Knowing that they know his or her weaknesses he or she may not be very affirmative in assigning jobs to them particularly if the manager is not very conversant with the jobs that must be assigned to the subordinates. And when they go wrong in the course of performing the jobs they may defend themselves by pointing out the weak points of the manager. All these affect not only the manager's performance but also the performance of the subordinates.

But there is another problem with internally recruited managers. This has to do with the relationship that the new manager has had with the subordinates before promotion to managerial position. If the relationship had been a poor one then the manager is in great danger of failure. The manager's previous poor public relations with colleagues may deny the manager acceptance by ones former colleagues. Definitely in this case subordinates will want to see the manager failing in discharging duties. They will pretend not to know things and thus will refer everything to the manager. Such a manager will easily accept the problems of the subordinates and will want to solve them. But because the manager may not have readily available solutions to the problems the manager is likely to respond "oh I see, give me time and come later or tomorrow". Next time the subordinates come and ask how far the manager has gone in sorting out things about the problems. If this happens often and with more subordinates the manager may end up doing all the jobs for the subordinates and thus becoming a subordinate of his or her own subordinates.

Sometimes they may refuse to take up an assigned task on the pretence of lack of skills and propose that another subordinate be given the task. In some instances they may deny the manager inputs in the form of crucial information for making important decisions about what must be done. All these behaviours are intended to force the manager to falter in performing duties.

Elton T Reeves (1971) looks into what happens during the first critical months when an employee is promoted to managerial position and becomes the head of department under which he has been working. He observes that the advantages that one will have

include not only knowing the overall business of the department but also his or her subordinates. He or she knows their strengths as well as their weaknesses. Such a manager is at ease in terms of taking advantage of the available strengths when assigning tasks. The manager knows what people to be assigned what tasks. As for weaknesses the manager knows what subordinates need what assistance.

However, a manager who rises through the ranks through promotion to become a head of his or her co-workers has one trouble to overcome. Such a manager had a peer-to-peer relationship with his or her co-workers before becoming a manager. As soon as one becomes a manager the roles change and thus the relationships. As such the manager will have to adjust to this new relationships with his or her former co-workers. The relationships will shift from peer-to-peer to superior-subordinate relationships. A manager will have to keep some social distance from subordinates something which is likely to provoke discontent in them. But if the adjustment does not take place the manager is prone to jeopardize the seriousness in subordinates' compliance to instructions and performance of tasks assigned to them.

In as far as managers from inside the organizations are concerned we have chosen to look at the ones who are raised or promoted to managerial positions for the first time. Those who are transferred or demoted are managers already. So they do not fit the context of our new managers. That is why we do not discuss them here.

NEW MANAGERS FROM OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

Unlike new managers from inside the organization, the process of obtaining new managers from outside the organization entails an active and voluntary participation of the new managers. The process involves the advertisement of the job with adequate job descriptions, job specifications and the conditions under which the job will be performed are defined. Another advantage of this form

of recruitment is that experience relevant to the jobs is stated in the advert.

We can correctly assume, therefore, that new managers from outside the organization have enough familiarity with the kind of jobs to be performed and voluntarily decide to offer themselves for the jobs. If the selection criteria are good, new managers will necessarily have adequate experience about the jobs applied for. But should we assume then that new managers from outside the organization will be successful in performing the jobs they seek without trouble? No, not at all. They also will face problems.

The problems that confront new managers from outside the organizations revolve around a number of factors. The first type of problems have to do with the people new managers encounter in the organizations. People who are already in the organizations have expectations, aspirations and they have developed hopes to succession. They want to raise from lower levels to higher levels in the hierarchies of those organizations. To them managers from outside those organizations that snatch job openings are judged to be blocking their chances of moving up to higher positions. Such people will develop negative behavioural domains towards the new managers. When the people who think that their chances have been blocked by the outsiders, they will tend to reject them at first. They will, but covertly, refuse to take up assignments, they will conceal information and they will not readily cooperate with the new managers. Sometimes they may even sabotage the operations of the enterprise. All these will contribute to the ineffectiveness of the performance of the new managers.

Not all insiders will reject new comers. There are those opportunist insiders who will want to take advantage of the organization's novelty to the managers. These will want to ride with the new managers. They will frequent the new managers' offices, residences or even the new managers' preferred social places. They will want to give new managers information about the organizations they have joined, give them presents or offers as gestures of welcoming them. All these are intended to solicit counter offers from the new managers. But sometimes these behaviours are insinuations and destroy the image of other

managers or subordinates resulting into clashes between new managers and those they find in the organizations or between new managers and subordinates. This again is inclined to lead the managers into trouble and finally into failure.

Then there is the question of culture. Every organization has a defined culture expressed in the form of dominant values espoused by organizations, basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of the organizations or simply shared practices like, for instance, assigning tasks to subordinates. Cultural patterns evolve over time and create common understandings among members of organizations. They convey to organizational members what behaviours to engage in thus creating behavioural consistency. New managers from outside organizations join them with yet their own culture gained while working with other organizations. If the two cultures are incompatible there definitely will be clashes in which the new managers will be disturbing the culture of the organizations they join and they are themselves disturbed by the cultures they find in the new organizations they join.

Although these new managers may have done well in the selection processes, usually done outside the context of work settings, they will be confronted with real situations, which will require them to change. They will have to admit to divestiture, to drop some of the values, behaviours and expectations they had held before joining the organizations. They will have to learn, to come to terms and to internalize the cultures they find in the organizations they join and to which they will be a part. The problem of culture coupled with the old folks' negative attitude towards the new comers will hinder the performance of the managers.

It is true that sometimes managers from outside organizations bring with them into the new organizations values acceptable by the organizations they join. In this case the new managers will have the advantage of being accepted. But this may not be that easy. Those values will have to be known and understood by the people they find in the new organizations and this will take time. So with or without values acknowledged by the insiders of the new organizations, the first days of new managers in new organizations

will be clouded by prejudice, rejection, and mistrust and even attempted favour-winning behaviour, all of which may affect the performance of new managers.

Jobs may not be detached from the environment in which they are performed. Although managers from outside organizations have on their own will volunteered to offer themselves for the jobs, and even if they may have some experience on those jobs, the contexts in which their new jobs must be done initially make them misfits. One of the initial problems new managers from outside the organizations are likely to face has to do with technology. The levels of technological installations differ between one organization and another. If a manager moves from a low technology to a high technology organization the chances that he or she will be confronted with incompatible challenges are quite high. These will affect the new manager's effectiveness. So new managers necessarily have to undergo comprehensive socialization programmes to prepare them catch up with the new work settings. If these outsider-insider adaptation programmes are informal and disjunctive, new managers may not be able to do their new jobs.

We may summarize by saying that managers from outside the organization are entering a completely new work setting. They do not know their supervisors under whom they will work. They do not know the subordinates with whom and through whom they will work. This lack of knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of subordinates puts managers under difficult position during the first months of their work. For they may not know what responsibilities to assign to whom.

Anyway, in both cases, (managers from inside the organization and managers from outside the organization), the need for the confidence and good will of the subordinates exists. Managers should show that they want the suggestions and recommendations of their subordinates. It is this revelation that will win managers the confidence and good will of the subordinates.

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CHAPTER TWO

PLANNING AND ASSIGNING TASKS: AN OVERVIEW

Main points of the chapter

- Management, planning and assigning tasks: how they relate
- Effective planning
- The FIVE planning decisions
- Purpose of planning
- Assigning Tasks

Management, Planning and Assigning Tasks: how they relate

Planning is a number one management function. Planning is an inevitable function for it acts as a path maker or pathfinder to the organization's desired destination. As McConkey, D.D. (1983) puts it, planning helps the organization determine what it must do or what management must accomplish. In other words, planning determines output. McConkey holds that other management functions, those of organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, coordinating, reporting, budgeting and maintaining environmental relationships, are secondary to the first function. These functions determine how management should accomplish what must be done. In other words, they determine inputs and processes. But planning is not only a prima facie function, it is more than that. It permeates all other functions of management mentioned above. None of them can be discharged without planning. It is true, therefore, that no manager can escape, abdicate or avoid planning. Robbins, S.P. (1991) defines management as the process of getting activities completed efficiently with and through other people. We learn from this concept that managers do not necessarily do what must be done all by themselves. They use other people in their organizations to accomplish what must be done; they work through other people, usually their subordinates. From this fact derives the question of managers assigning tasks to their subordinates.

Robbins' definition contains three more fundamental issues. One such issue is that of working with the people. The impression of this expression is that managers have to continuously be in touch with the subordinates to whom they have assigned tasks. Assigning tasks does not mean that managers would have their subordinates to accomplish the tasks all alone. Managers, when assigning tasks, do not say, 'you are on your own, swim or drown'. They have to be around, to help them swim or to rescue them when they are about to drown, if it happens.

The idea of getting activities completed connotes the concern of management with the bottom line. That is, achieving desired end results. Managers, with their subordinates, and through them, are concerned with doing the right things, that is being effective, or hitting predetermined targets. Effectiveness urges managers to move away from low to high attainment in performance.

As will be discussed in chapter three, managers must be concerned with resources. In our definition of management this is explained by the efficiency concept. Efficiency requires management to strike a positive balance between resources or inputs and outputs. Efficiency seeks managers to minimize resource costs by getting more outputs for given inputs or getting the same outputs from less inputs. Efficiency demands management to move away from high wastage to low wastage of resources.

We see from the above overview of the management concept the unavoidable need for managers to assign tasks to the subordinates. Assigning tasks is not as simple as reciting the roman alphabet. Rather it requires rational and systematic processes, which address task operational issues, and sets out a programme of action with implied deployment of emphasis, resources and their sources, to attain desired results. In simpler terms it requires effective planning.

Effective Planning

Let us use the analogy of a journey. First we imagine that we have just wedded and have decided to travel away from home for a honey-moon. McMahan R, Barton E., and Piot M. (1992) suggest

that before we travel we would have to decide, among other things, on:-

- Destination
- Route
- Mode of transport and accommodation
- Equipment and clothing
- Cost of travel and how much we can afford to pay
- Day-to-day schedule
- Obstacles, difficulties and how to avoid or
- Overcome them.

The rationale behind this sequence of thinking is to establish the probability of successful engagement in the decision to travel. We do not want to embark on a journey which will be abortive. Only when the above decision areas have been rationally analyzed will our honeymoon be successfully completed.

What then is effective planning? It is the type of planning in which the implementation of planning actions lead into desired results or outputs. Effective planning may also be defined as one in which implementation of the plan is effective, one in which the plan can be successfully carried out.

Where tasks are concerned, managers are confronted with five planning decisions, summarized into what, why, how, when and who questions or the five planning decisions.

THE FIVE PLANNING DECISIONS

1. The WHAT Planning Decisions

The what planning decisions seek managers to clarify in advance what is to be done. At this point managers decide on the output or the desired end result. This is analogous to the destination typical to that of a traveler. Where is it that the traveler wants to be before one starts a journey? For a manager the question is what is it that one wants to achieve before engaging in a particular action.

2. The WHY Planning Decisions

Managers have to appreciate the fact that the people they work with and work through enjoy doing something when they know the reasons for doing it. There must always be a purpose of doing that something. People must be given the purpose of doing something and if need be what will happen if what must be done is not done. Managers should not ask people to do things that will not change the status quo. So managers must know, as well as let those they assign tasks to know why it is significant to perform those tasks.

3. The HOW Planning Decisions

These decisions have nothing to do with the techniques of planning. The focus of these decisions is on the detailed analysis of the task in order to determine the activities that must be engaged in towards accomplishing it. Managers must identify all key activities critical to the intended successful performance of the task that they assign to their subordinates. We argue that in this course of action managers should refrain from conjecture.

In connection with determination of activities, decisions are needed about other inputs and their combination towards positive task accomplishment. At this juncture managers have to think about the type and amount of each resource required for each activity as well as their sources. Further decisions concern the techniques and methodology of combining the resources with the processes of transformation into desired outputs.

4. The WHEN Planning Decisions

Tasks must have a time dimension. It is important, therefore, to estimate the amount of time necessary to complete each task. This helps to set the target dates, the time when specified end results are expected to be out. During this time it will be necessary to consider timing for the acquisition and mobilization of required resources.

5. The WHO Planning Decisions

The What, How and even When planning decisions are attempting to establish the nature of the task. They are decisions searching for a proper description of the task. From these decisions information is obtained which will assist in specifying the qualities of a person suitable to perform it. The who planning decisions are concerned with identifying the right persons for the right tasks. To complete a task successfully, a manager needs a well-qualified and motivated staff.

In a nutshell then, planning is a process through which managers decide on desired outputs, key activities contributing to the outputs, translate the tasks into resources and the framework for allocation of resources. Activities are scheduled and responsibilities assigned to appropriate personalities for effective implementation of the tasks. To avoid delays time spans are mapped out. All these things that may be decided are then agreed upon in order to win commitment of all concerned for concerted effort.

Purpose of Planning

Srinivasan S., et al (1982) provide a useful summary of why planning is needed. They note that planning compels managers to anticipate the future, that is, what is expected or the output in our case. They infer that this prediction reduces uncertainties. For a careful determination of the future creates a position in which the managers are able to say with confidence what results are expected. The benefits of planning spill over to the staff managers work with and work through. When expected results are communicated to them planning clarifies tasks and invites them towards higher performance.

Managers must appreciate the fact that it is human nature to strive for excellence. Subordinates for that matter will always want to impress their superiors by performing better. But this they can do only when they know with no uncertainty what their jobs are and that they see meaning in their jobs, there is a well-defined time perspective. They will stick to work schedules and avoid delays. Eventually, managers will, at some point, want to see what has

been done, what has been achieved. Planning may, therefore, be said to provide the basis for reviewing performance.

Briefly, the purpose of planning includes, among other things, to:-

- Minimize risks by reducing uncertainties
- Avoid delays from lack of time schedules
- Reduce costs from lack of planned resource requirements
- Reduce dissipation of resources from non-starter tasks.
- Establish coordination of effort within the organization.
- Increase the degree of effective performance.
- Increase efficiency.

Effective planning and assigning tasks determine what must be accomplished (output) and arranges for others to do so efficiently. It ensures that everyone who is assigned a task is doing the right thing. It also attempts to make sure that everyone is doing the right thing right.

Assigning tasks

The dictionary of Business and Management (1983) defines an 'assignment' as a given task. So to assign is to give a task to somebody to perform. Also the Webster's New World Dictionary of American Language defines the word assign as 'to give out as a task'.

Tasks have to be assigned to others for a number of reasons. We know managers are responsible for a number of responsibilities. So they may not be able to carry out all the responsibilities themselves. As a result they have to give some of their responsibilities to others.

We also know that managers may not have the knowledge and ability to perform all the tasks. Therefore, they have to look for someone who can do the tasks better than managers themselves and than anyone else. So they have to assign tasks.

The giving of tasks to others to perform cannot be avoided. The giving of tasks to others to do cannot be done in a perfunctory manner lest expected results are not realized. So managers need

to learn the art of giving work to others in the manner that will encourage and facilitate effective performance. That better way to assign tasks is the intention of this book and is discussed in the following chapters.

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CHAPTER THREE

TIME BEFORE ASSIGNING THE TASK

Main Points of the Chapter

- Define objectives of the task
- Establish standards of successful performance
- Determine sub-tasks or activities
- Define key result areas (KRAs)
- Identify requirements for task accomplishment
- Determine assistance required to accomplish task.

The time before assigning any task is very crucial for any manager. This time constitutes a brain stage where the spadework is done. The manager is deeply engaged in thinking to establish a baseline for subsequent task performance by the subordinate. During this time the manager determines what must be done and the outputs.

Define Objectives of the Task

The degree of understanding of a task is absolutely important for effective task assignment. The manager has to clarify on the objectives of the task. According to Dale D. McConkey (1983) an objective is a specific description of an end result to be achieved. It states what – the specified end result to be achieved – and when – a target date or period by which the objective will be achieved. The description of a task by Jaques and Clement (1991) supports McConkey's definition of objectives above. They say a task is an assignment to produce a what – by when, that is to say, a specified output (including quantity and quality) within a targeted completion time with allocated resources and methods, and within prescribed limits. The key expressions according to this definition are: a specific quality; in a specific quantity; within a specific time.

The expression specific description of objectives is important. Objectives should be stated in terms of what must be achieved.

To the maximum extent possible, they should be quantified, that is, they should be stated in the form of measurable amounts.

Target dates are crucial as they indicate the appropriate time for assessing whether or not results have been accomplished. As it is for objectives, target dates must be realistic. They should permit sufficient time for the assignee to perform the activities that contribute to the achievement of the objectives.

MacMahon et al (1992) point out the significance for setting objectives. The first is that a clear objective is essential to a definite plan. The second is that objectives enable results to be evaluated. Analogous to these reasons, John Adair (1988) says that if you do not know where you want to go you may take any road. But it will be difficult for you to know whether you have got there or not.

Borrowing expressions from D. Flahault et al (1988), if an activity is to be performed satisfactorily, there must be agreement as regards its objectives. Lack of objectives will result in poor performance.

Another thing of guidance when setting effective objectives is that they should be realistic. Realistic objectives are those that are possible to be accomplished. They should be within the ability of the task assignee. However, they should contain enough stretch so that the performer is required to expend maximum effort to get the task done. Put it another way, objectives should be challenging.

Realistic objectives are not easy to set. Because individual subordinates have different capabilities they demand the manager's adequate understanding of individual differences. However, it would not look equitable to set different objectives for different subordinates within the same work setting. To avoid this problem it is proposed that the average performance of the functionaries should be used.

Objectives should not be too long and fuzzy. Blanchard (1981, 1982) writing about "The One Minute Manager" suggests simplicity. We learn from him that objectives should be stated in simple but comprehensive terms. He says it should be possible to

record an objective on no more than one page and that objectives and their performance standards should take no more than 250 words to express. The essence of his one minute goal and, therefore, objective setting is that anyone should be able to read them in one minute.

In summary, let us borrow from the suggestion by John Adair who tabulates the requirements for effective objectives as follows:-

Hallmarks of Good Objectives	
Clear	Realistic
Specific	Challenging
Measurable	Consistent
Attainable	Worthwhile
Written	Participative
Time-Bound	Agreed

From John Adair; Effective Time Management

Objectives are derived from goals. The starting point in defining objectives is to look at the overall goals of the organization. Goals are broad statements of intention and they should be downsized for purposes of operationalisation. For each goal there may be an objective or a set of objectives. So in defining task objectives the overall objectives of the organization, the department or unit must be considered. All task objectives must fit into the whole picture, that is the objectives of the organization. The achievement of individual objectives must contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the organization. If individual task objectives are not achieved eventually the objectives of the organization will not be achieved. In the following section we shall demonstrate effective objective setting from identified goals.

Suppose we take the case of the National Bank of Commerce, which intends to improve performance by reducing complaints. A broad statement of the goal would be: "To reduce customer dissatisfaction with bank teller services".

This intention is good. But it leaves a lot of questions unanswered. For instance, it doesn't indicate the current level of performance. Also it does not say how much is to be accomplished. In this way it renders the measurement of the degree of success difficult. To make the performance toward this goal measurable a number of objectives could be set. For example

1. To reduce the number of complaints from customers from the present level of 50 per week to 25 per week by the end of the current year.
2. To reduce the time customers spend in the bank from the present 60 minutes to 30 minutes by the end of the current year.

These statements of objectives make clear several things not shown in the statement of the goal:

- (a) the present level of performance
- (b) what is to be accomplished
- (c) how much is to be accomplished
- (d) by when it is to be accomplished

Establish Standards of Performance

It is not enough to spell out what you want to achieve at the end of a particular task or job. It is necessary to establish and clearly describe the standard of whatever you want to achieve at the end of each task or job. A standard is an attribute used to test or measure qualities for the required degree of excellence. So establishing standards is determining the quality of performance required. Standards do measure the level of achievement of the objectives. We may also described standards as yardsticks of the quality of work or task performance.

Determine Sub-Tasks or Activities to Achieve Objectives

The task activities that contribute to successful achievement of the objectives must then be identified. After setting objectives managers should identify and clarify what operations are to be engaged in as well as some processes involved. In our case the activities could be:-

- receiving the customers
- providing them with deposit and withdraw forms
- collecting customer books/bank cards from counters
- processing deposit and withdraw orders
- cashing money to customers
- courteously listening to customers
- answering customer questions
- counseling and assisting customers with difficulties.

Defining Key Result Areas (KRAs)

It is a useful thing for managers to put extra effort in the definition of tasks by defining key result areas for each task. A key result area is an important area of a task which a person must perform well in order to succeed in the task. It is the twenty percent (20%) of the job that must be done well to achieve eighty percent (80%) of the results of the whole task. In the following examples we shall demonstrate key result areas of tasks of selected positions.

The Institute of Development Management (IDM), had a department of Short Courses and Consultancy. The person responsible for the overall conduct of short courses was the Principal Trainer. Some of his key tasks were as indicated below. Against each key task are selected key result areas.

KEY TASKS	KEY RESULT AREAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Promoting and marketing IDM's short courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Courses announcements • Enrollments in short courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Appointing the faculty to facilitate in short courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of faculty appointed (effectiveness of faculty)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating revenues from short courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income from short courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profit from short

short courses expenditures	courses
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Let us also look at the Family Planning Programme of the ministry of health of Tanzania. The District Maternal and Child Health Coordinator (DMCHCO) was responsible for family planning services at the district level. Some of the key tasks are indicated below with selected key result areas against each task.

KEY TASKS	KEY RESULT AREAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storing contraceptives at district warehouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contraceptive supply status. • Status/condition of contraceptives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing contraceptives to service delivery points (SDPs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply status at SDPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and marketing contraceptives in the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular awareness of contraceptives • Contraceptive acceptance/usage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervising personnel at SDPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisory Visits • Supervisory reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing and submitting reports and requests to the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports and requests • Quality of reports and requests.

Key result areas are useful during making an evaluation of the performance of the subordinate. By looking at the key result areas the manager can easily establish the degree of successful performance of subordinates.

Determining Procedures for Task Accomplishment.

It is quite important to think about the job in terms of what standard procedures are available to successfully accomplish a task. These may be processes to be followed or merely methodology to do something. If they are not there try to establish them. In establishing procedures seek help from other managers who are familiar with the task in question.

Determining Requirements for Task Accomplishment.

At this point in time the manager focuses attention on three things: the means to accomplish tasks, the competencies to accomplish tasks and the time frame within which tasks must be accomplished.

The means to accomplish tasks refer to the physical resources with which to do the job. These may be the tools, equipment and other materials required to accomplish the tasks. Very often, particularly in the Tanzanian environment, many jobholders fail to perform their tasks because they lack the working gear. Identification and specification of the physical means of appropriate technology is not enough. The acquisition and the availing of the means to the task holder at the right time is of crucial significance.

Then the manager shifts attention to the jobholder. He or she is concerned with determining and specifying the minimum acceptable qualifications a job incumbent must possess to perform a given task successfully. Caird (1990) equates this process with competency identification. Caird identifies competency as generally composed of knowledge, skills; personality and any other relevant ability variables transferable to a job situation. Other writers: Robbins (1991) and Chruden et al (1990) refer to this process as job specification.

Defining acceptable qualifications is important when it comes to staffing or assigning the tasks. Tasks must be assigned to the right persons. As Wolff, et al (1991) point out, no matter how well the tasks have been designed, tasks will only be effectively accomplished if they have been properly assigned to the appropriate staff.

It is not sufficient to compile job specifications in terms of academic or professional qualifications alone. The effort requirement of a task is highly recommended for inclusion in job specifications. Here we are referring to things like the mental demands of the task. For instance, the mental and visual concentration and the endurance of physical as well as psychological stress should be described.

Job specifications are important for a number of things. According to Graham (1984), the most important of them are: the identification and selection of the performance standards and identification and/or design of appropriate training programmes where subordinates have a shortfall in the required qualities to do the tasks.

Task accomplishment must have a time frame. This is the time within which the task implementation must be completed. It is advisable to draw up a logical schedule of activities. Remember the Impertinent PERT Chart? The Impertinent PERT Chart is nothing but an Action Plan. The significance of action planning will be realized when we discuss Time During Implementation of Tasks in chapter 5.

Determine Assistance Required to Accomplish Task

Managers ought to remember that nobody can do it all by himself or herself. People in organizations depend on each other for better work performance. So assisting subordinates in their course of task performance must be accorded enough attention.

One assumption we make is that managers know the tasks that they assign to subordinates. We emphatically caution managers not to assign tasks that they do not themselves know. Our argument is that if they don't know the nature of the tasks they will first, not assign effectively, and second, not know the assistance that will be needed. During this process managers should determine:-

- Assistance required
- Assistance for what

- Assistance from whom
- Are sources of assistance informed
- Do sources of assistance have authority

It should be fairly easy to determine assistance required if managers know their subordinates relative to task requirements. To determine assistance from whom requires self-awareness on the part of the managers themselves, what they can offer and what they cannot offer to subordinates. Knowing the potentials of other functionaries helps managers identify other sources of assistance. Those other sources must be informed and requested well in advance about:-

- The assistance they have to offer
- To whom they have to offer it
- When they have to offer it
- The authority to offer assistance

There are three ways of informing or requesting assistance from other sources. If the source of assistance is a subordinate person under the assigning manager the easiest way is for the manager to instruct the subordinate source to provide the assistance as will be required. If the source is a peer manager, the assigning manager may seek assistance from his peer. Sometimes the manager may ask the task assignee to go individually to the source of assistance and request for the same. In the worst case the assigning manager may appeal to the higher authorities to instruct his or her peer managers or senior managers to provide assistance to a subordinate who has been assigned some task to perform. As a matter of advice, managers should assess the situation and from it decide upon the best way of informing the sources of assistance what assistance is required of them, by whom and when.

The above requirements are fundamental in assigning tasks. It is recommended that all the steps should involve the persons to be assigned the tasks. However, this assumes that the manager has in the first place identified the task assignee. But managers may not identify a person for a particular task unless they know well in advance the nature of the tasks. So we suggest that managers

should go through the above processes before identifying persons for the tasks. When they have identified persons for the tasks they should then go through the same processes with the identified persons. The manager is likely to get best results when he or she involves the persons who will carry out the tasks during this planning stage because:

- The task is made clear to them
- The persons to do the task get more prepared
- They get more committed to the task
- It is a moral incentive to them
- It prepares the way for effective supervision

When the manager is satisfied that the planning phase has been gone through properly he or she should then determine when to assign. But before that an abridged plan of action should be carefully worked out.

SCHEDULING

Scheduling is the determination of when activities should begin, how long they should take, and when they should be completed. In scheduling, the rate at which resources are expended is determined. Scheduling is an aspect of control because through schedules the managers can limit the subordinates' behaviour by authorizing when an event or an expenditure should occur.

Scheduling is a preliminary control activity because through it a manager minimizes variations from plans. If his or her time estimates for an activity are reasonably accurate and resources are available when needed he or she can improve overall performance by effective scheduling.

ACTIVITY TIME ESTIMATES

We have seen that activity time estimates must be reasonably accurate. There is no generic reasonably accurate activity time. Each activity time must be determined while taking into account existing extenuating circumstances.

Nevertheless, managers have three alternative activity time estimates. According to Henry and Stephen (1982) they are:-

1. optimistic time estimate
2. the most likely time estimate
3. the pessimistic time estimate

In optimistic time estimation managers assume that the performance of an activity will proceed without any problems. That there will be no interferences, or obstacles or constraints. In this case the circumstances are quite certain. Managers attempt to estimate the least time that the activity would take.

In determining the most likely time estimate managers think about normal circumstances. They anticipate certain problems, interferences, obstacles and some degree of unknown constraints. After all those they estimate realistic time requirements to complete a task or activity.

In pessimistic time scales managers take the worst-case scenario. They think in terms of the possibility of things going very wrong. On the basis of this possibility they attempt to estimate the maximum time that tasks would require. The question most often asked is "Given the worst conditions, how much time should the task take"?

ACTION PLAN

An action plan is called differently by different people. It may be called a work plan or operational plan. James A Wolff et al (1991) define a work plan as a document required by the manager and staff, which lists all planned activities, the date on which they will occur, the resources they will require, and the person who is responsible for carrying them out. An action plan is a step-by-step plan, which transforms objectives into day-to-day actions of a person performing a particular task.

From the description above it is evident that an action (work) plan is highly critical to make the objectives come true. In an action plan the manager spells out how the objectives will be achieved.

Planning to achieve objectives is a vital part in planning and assigning tasks for quite a number of reasons. According to McConkey the reasons include:-

- An action plan provides a timetable for action. It establishes when must certain actions be started and finished.
- An action plan provides a control basis in that specifying action steps and timetable permits the manager to determine if the task assignee is on schedule or not.
- An action plan spells out resources required to accomplish a task.
- An action plan provides other departments and managers who may be involved with a guide as to what may be required from them.
- An action plan enables managers to see the whole picture of a job or task at one glance. The format of an action plan is provided below:

SUGGESTED FORMAT OF ACTION PLAN

TASK:					
Objective	Actions Required	Resources and Coordination Needed	Time Line for Implementing Actions		Remarks
			Start	End	
1.	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
2.	1.				
	2.				
	3.				

When the action plan has been written it should be made available to all the people who will participate in one form or another in the implementation of the task. In short all the people who will appear under the column Resources and Coordination Needed must be given a copy. The format above is in no way standard and does not suggest the ideal. It should only be taken as an example.

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CHAPTER FOUR

TIME DURING ASSIGNING TASK

Main Points of the Chapter

- Identify task assignee
- Explain task and objectives
- Clarify on activities to be engaged in
- Explain key result areas
- Provide standard procedure manual
- Ascertain on requirements for task accomplishment.
- Check on assistance needed to accomplish task
- Give chance to assignee to ask questions (feedback)
- Give chance to assignee to explain what is required to be done (feedback)

TIME DURING ASSIGNING TASK

It is a risk to assume that effective planning as indicated in chapters two and three always guarantees out-performance of tasks by subordinates in the assigning of the task. Time during assigning it is crucial and managers should carefully calculate their manoeuvre. It is important that we stress upon managers the need to clarify the central role of the job and the authority levels expected for each job. It is imperative to define assignments with appropriate dates, planning sheets, giving appropriate discretion to subordinates and the ideal of adopting an open door policy in case subordinates require more resources or help during the assignments.

Time during assigning tasks is the stage when the task is actually given out, the assignee is told what work there is to be performed. Assigning tasks is not dumping, that is, it is not just giving somebody a task, without guidance, and then leaving him to sink or swim. It is a well-thought, step-by-step process involving a number of stages.

Identification of Assignee

Many task performance failures are a result of the manager's poor decisions about the right candidates for the tasks. Decisions about who should do what jobs are very important because they determine the degree of success in achieving task objectives. As Drucker (1985) says, of all the decisions a manager makes, none are more important than the decisions about people because they determine the performance capacity of the organization. He argues the need to give task assignments to someone not only whose formal qualification meets the minimum requirement but also whose behaviour and habits are known and who has earned trust and credibility within the organization.

So, a careful identification of the person to be assigned responsibility for a particular task is only second to effective planning of that task. A given task can only be effectively completed by a subordinate who possesses appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and attitude to the task. As for attitudes, the manager ought to consider the person's cognitive domain (way one thinks), the person's emotional domain (way one is likely to behave). The identification of the assignees of tasks should emphasize on the personal attributes because it is only positive personal attributes combined with formal qualifications that will produce a high degree of success in task performance.

As it is in problem solving, the selection of a candidate for a given task must be systematic. The following steps must, therefore, be followed:-

- (i) **Think about the Task**
Carefully analyze the task to be performed. The product of the analysis should be a comprehensive job description as well as job specification (see chapter three).
- (ii) **Identify Potential Candidates**
Find out how many people among your subordinates meet the minimum formal qualifications required. This demands good current personnel records. Pick a few candidates who

show high probability for successful performance. That is, short-list them.

(iii) Assess Each Candidate

Not every candidate who meets the minimum formal qualification will fit a given task assignment. The managers must assess the comparative advantages of each candidate by looking into each ones' strengths. Like Drucker, we emphasize the need to search more for strengths than for weaknesses because strengths determine the ability to carry out the assignment. It is always easy to remove weaknesses than to create strengths.

There are several questions to ask in assessing each candidate for a task. Some of them are:

- Does the person know how to do the task? (know-how or knowledge)
- Does the person have the ability to perform the task? (do-how or skills)
- Will the person fit well or cooperate with those he or she will work with (cooperativeness)
- Is the person accepted by the people he will work with (acceptability).

(iv) Seek Reference

Reliance on the judgement of one person is always limited. People have prejudices, likes and dislikes about others. All those affect negatively rationality in decision-making. So every manager is advised to always go for a second opinion. He or she should seek opinions of other managers who have worked with the candidates. References may also be sought from subordinates who have worked with prospective candidates.

(v) Develop Selection Criteria

Selection of the candidate to be assigned the task should never be based on hunches. As much as possible, it should be impartial and impersonal. The manager must decide on factors that he or she will use to pick the ultimate task assignee.

Selection criteria need not be complicated. Managers may decide to use the following criteria. Very Good, Good and Poor. They may also assign numerical criteria like 3 for Very Good, 2 for Good and 1 for Poor. Then a selection matrix may be developed.

Criteria \ Factor	Very Good (3)	Good (2)	Poor (1)
Knowledge			
Skills			
Willingness			
Cooperation			
Acceptability			
Total			

A person who scores the highest total for 'very good' (3) will most likely be the best for the task and should be selected.

Explain Task and Objectives

When you have established confidence in your subordinates' competencies and motivation let them know that you have chosen them for a particular task. It is good to let them know why you have picked them for the task lest they think you are trying to fix them, particularly if one is a nasty task.

Then explain the nature of the task. Describe clearly and precisely the work that has to be done. Brief the assignee why you think the task is important and the demands of the job. If there are

sacrifices that the assignee has to make don't hesitate to point them out but, of course, with tact.

Next, move on to the objectives of the task. Here the manager is seeking agreement on the objectives of the task with those involved in its implementation. The importance of letting assignees know and agree on the objectives of any task was made clear by Tanzania's former President Mwalimu Nyerere while opening the Friendship Textile Mill in Dar es Salaam in 1968 when he said:- " I believe that when our people have a clear target in front of them and they can see how far they have exceeded or how far they fall short of it they will respond to this challenge. ... They will want to beat the target...".

The idea of agreeing on objectives has been well discussed under Management By Objectives. George S. Odiorne (1995) insists on the need for the manager and his subordinate to have personal conference, review and agree on objectives. Koontz, et al (1980) also shows good expression on the importance of the manager or superior agreeing on the objectives of the subordinate's tasks. Authors on management by objectives point out its advantage as eliciting subordinate's commitment. Koontz et al further acknowledge that agreeing on objectives ensures subordinates that they no longer are just doing work, following instructions, and waiting for guidance and decision, instead they are individuals with clearly defined purposes. They have taken part in their formulation and that they are working toward their own objectives.

The points above correspond to Peter Drucker's (1986) basic principles of picking people for various jobs. Drucker points out that of all the decisions that managers make none is as important as decisions about people because they determine the performance capacity of the organizations. He argues that most of the performance failures are a result of failures of managers in making people decisions that is in picking people to carry out assignments. Drucker warns that if the manager puts a person into a job and the person does not perform, the manager has made a mistake. He or she has no business blaming that person, no business involving the Peter Principle.

Drucker suggests a few sequential decision steps to be followed in picking the right people for the right assignments. The steps are:-

- Think about the assignment e.g. job descriptions and job specifications.
- Look at the number of potentially qualified people.
- Think ahead at how to look at these candidates. Focus on the strengths each person has and whether they are the right strengths for the assignment. Do not concentrate on weaknesses.
- Discuss each of the candidates with several people who have worked with them.
- Make sure the appointees understand the job.

Clarifying on Activities

Activities are actions that must be undertaken by the assignee in order to achieve task objectives. (Refer to the section on determining task activities to achieve objectives in chapter three).

Explain Key Result Areas

Inform the task assignee the key result areas for each task as defined in chapter three. Agree on them with the subordinate.

Provide Standard Procedure Manual

If there is a manual containing standard procedures for performing the task it should be availed to the task assignee for quick reference during performing the job.

Ascertaining on Requirements for Task Accomplishment

The assignee must be assured of the requirements to perform the task. First, the manager must confirm that the requirements are available and in place for use. Then he must convince the subordinates that the requirements are there and that they will be availed to them as will be needed.

Check on Assistance Needed

In chapter three we outlined the need to determine what assistance would be required by task assignees to accomplish their tasks. We also pointed out that the process should also

identify the sources of assistance and the point in time that such assistance would be desired.

At this juncture managers have to approach all sources of assistance and to request them to provide the assistance they have to provide. Managers ought to explain to every person who will be required to give assistance, the type of assistance needed, why it will be needed, when it will be needed and who will need it. It may be necessary to agree on how the assistance will be offered. Each of those people will have to be given a work plan for them to see when and where they will be required to assist.

When this has been done, managers should then go back to their subordinates to inform them about it. It may be a good idea to take assignees for a tour of all the sources of the assistance they will need.

Feedback

Feedback is an important requirement for effective communication. The responsibility for seeking feedback rests with the manager in the first place. Herbert S. Kindler (1988) says that clarifying critical issues is necessary in order to learn if views are shared or not. He suggests that superiors must ask for feedback from their subordinates. He cautions, however, that subordinates may not freely volunteer critical feedback and suggests the need for superiors to explain why they want feedback.

There are two levels of feedback from the assignee. At level one the assignee is given a chance to ask questions. The manager clarifies the assignment on the basis of the questions. At the second level, the assignee is given another chance, this time to explain what is required of him or her to do in the assignment.

Note that the last step, that is, explaining the requirements, can be jumped to, omitting previous steps, if the assignee was involved in planning the task.

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CHAPTER FIVE

TIME DURING IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK

Major points of the chapter

- Give assignee chance to perform
- Ensure assignee has needed requirements and assistance to perform task
- Monitor implementation of task
- Supervise subordinate
- Give performance feedback

The implementation period ensures that task activities are executed as planned and results are achieved as desired. So it is not enough to tell people to do things and then to sit back or assume a laissez faire stance. Things may go wrong any time and managers should not at any time risk this to happen. It may be too late to call in corrective intervention and the cost may be high. Managers must note that time during implementation of task is as important as time both before and during assigning tasks. While time during planning tasks is concerned with deciding where to go, time during implementation may be likened to navigation into high seas with storms and sharks roving around. So steering the vessel in the right course is crucial to get to the right destination. Our destination in our case is the bottom line, that is, achieving desired end results. To do this it takes more than only careful planning and asking someone to perform the tasks.

Elliot et al (1991), are emphatic on the question of letting alone subordinates to do their jobs. They say work concerns the discretion and judgement that the person has to use in carrying out tasks. In short, they say, work is the use of discretion and judgement in making decisions in order to proceed toward goal achievement.

In chapter two we considered the idea of managers working through other people. This is the fundamental idea behind giving assignees tasks to do. Unfortunately, some managers fail to let

subordinates do what they ask them to do. They become gatekeepers to the subordinates' performance by issuing many don'ts. Don't do this, don't do that, unless you have cleared this with me, and so on.

Don'ts are not bad but if they are too many they interfere with the ability, creativity, and discretion of the subordinates to perform tasks assigned to them. Don'ts develop into the subordinates a sense of lack of confidence, a sense of insecurity and a feeling of hopelessness. Surely, this erodes, in turn, confidence in themselves about jobs they have to do. As such subordinates are compelled to make excessive referrals to their superiors something which eats away the time of many managers in most of our organizations.

Task assignments that contain excessive don'ts are a revelation that managers are breathing down on the subordinates' necks. This is a major disease in which managers are doing work that the subordinates ought to be doing. In effective planning and assigning of tasks managers must first get rid of this disease. The immediate and best way to do this is for them to learn from Kenneth et al (1989) about their prescription concerning Monkey Management.

The idea behind Monkey Management is that managers should avoid taking on problems if the problems are not theirs. Those problems (Monkeys as they label them), don't belong to them. In other words, managers should refrain from taking initiatives away from their subordinates for the jobs they have assigned them to do. In fact, the imposition of many don'ts to the subordinates implies that many parts of the subordinates' jobs will have to be done by the managers something contrary to the management delegation principle.

Planning and assigning tasks should always be followed by adequate delegation. Kanani et al (1984), provide a summary of steps that should always be observed by delegators in order to avoid failure in that process. The steps are:-

- Define clearly in your mind the task to be assigned and related authority to be delegated;
- Choose a person willing and capable of accepting responsibility and carrying out the task;
- Provide the person with sufficient authority as well as time to obtain the results;
- Give clear instructions and check understanding;
- Make delegation known to all parties concerned;
- Monitor progress but do not interfere except in emergency.

Jack, D.F (1980), while discussing effective delegation stresses the principle of leaving the subordinates alone. He says that once delegation has been made managers should leave subordinates to do it. From now on they make the day-to-day decisions, they get headaches and they have free reign to use their own resourcefulness. He warns managers against pestering them. Staff assigned to tasks is, in fact, authorized to undertake those tasks. They should, therefore, be allowed to use the authority granted to them to do those tasks.

We may say that the steps outlined above provide a systematic approach to delegation and the same steps are followed in planning and assigning tasks to subordinates. So if managers follow this systematic model, there are no reasons not to give chance to subordinates to carry out what have been assigned to them to do. Why then the many don't's?

Again, failure to let subordinates do their jobs is not different from failure to delegate authority. There are several reasons for this failure.

Kanani et al, suggest that managers may be confronted by purely subjective constraints which prevent them from letting subordinates do what have been assigned to them. Such constraints include:-

- Managers believing that only themselves can do the jobs in the right way. That is, they lack confidence in their subordinates;
- The need to maintain status. Managers are constrained by the prestige power consciousness so that they fear losing them.

We wish to observe here that some tasks are accompanied by access to resources, or simply channels to resources. So managers fear that giving chance to subordinates to carry out tasks on their own would mean for the managers losing the siege of the channels to resources.

Other managers do not give chance to subordinates to perform as a result of previous experience. Subordinates may have failed in the past to do the right things in the right way. So managers fear that mistakes may be repeated. For sure this may be the result of poor planning and assigning of tasks. Kanani et al attribute such failure to the managers' lack of skills in communication to instruct subordinates to perform the tasks.

Before subordinates embark on the performance of their assigned tasks managers should create accountability for them. We define accountability as the obligation to continuously update managers on the degree of success toward task objectives. Managers need to be informed on a continuous basis how things are happening. Accountability may take many forms. We shall look at only three forms of accountability.

One form of accountability could be daily briefings. In this form subordinates may be required to brief their superiors on the performance of the tasks on a daily basis. On these occasions task assignees will report about their experiences with the new task outlining success stories as well as problems encountered. This form of accountability is suitable during the early days of task implementation.

The other way could be to ask subordinates to periodically report to the managers in written form. At the beginning of task

implementation reporting intervals will be short depending on the nature of the tasks. This will enable managers to spot problems that may result from lack of task-relevant experience in subordinates. When the subordinates get used to their new tasks, chances to make serious mistakes are minimal. Reporting time may be increased to allow for substantial amount of work to be completed between each reporting interval.

Managers may also require subordinates to appeal for assistance only in circumstances exceptionally difficult in their jobs or only in cases of seriously sensitive and critical stages of task performance. It is only in those circumstances that managers will instruct subordinates not to proceed without their approval. This is what people have called Management By Exception.

In all forms of accountability, briefings and written reports, task assignees explain to managers successes and failures or problems. Subordinates should be required to give reasons for each case of success and to explain each case of failure or each problem. The need to explain for each difficulty or each problem is going to discourage subordinates from giving up easily and making unnecessary referrals to their managers. Much more it is going to encourage them to be creative and to explore available opportunities to accomplish their tasks.

ENSURE ASSIGNEE HAS NEEDED REQUIREMENTS TO PERFORM TASK

We have seen that one of the stages in planning tasks is to identify the resources requirements needed to perform the tasks successfully. Resources are the means with which assignees of tasks can expedite their responsibilities to achieve end results. Indeed, many subordinates are given responsibilities without sufficient means with which to carry them out. This results into poor performance for which they are blamed or even severely punished.

Elliot et al define a task as an assignment in which someone has to produce a given output within a given time, and has to do it with

the method and with the financial, physical and organizational resources that have been given. So without requisite resources it may correctly be assumed that no task can be accomplished.

The need for managers to ensure that assignees have the needed requirements to perform their tasks entails more than just identifying resources and their sources. It involves the mobilization and allocation of the tangible resources needed to perform the activities of the tasks to be accomplished. Tangible resources include financial and other physical resources. But intangible resources such as time should not be ignored. All task activities need time to be completed. Therefore, managers should give sufficient time to subordinates to work on the tasks they have been assigned to accomplish.

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK

Rosemary et al (1992), describe monitoring as a management function concerned with work progress. Beach (1993), propounds that monitoring involves the periodic checking to see if progress is being made toward accomplishment of specific activities that make up a task. It also consists of checking progress in the total task accomplishment usually measured in terms of output. Roger et al (1993) on their part point out that monitoring is concerned with looking at what is going on during the implementation period.

It has been pointed out that work or tasks of any kind can only be completed over a given span of time. Monitoring, therefore, is not a one-off thing. Monitoring is periodic, it continues at specified intervals throughout the duration of task implementation. Beach suggests that monitoring should take place as frequently as possible. He asserts that the frequency of checking progress assures greater accuracy because it permits timely correction of deviations from the most efficient path. We may conclude that monitoring is the checking on regular basis to ensure that activities are carried out in order to accomplish assigned tasks.

The purpose of monitoring is to determine whether task activities are carried out as planned and have expected effects on the

targets. Also monitoring looks at the resources being used to accomplish tasks, the amount of products being made, the quality of the products being made and the time being spent to accomplish task activities. These actual resources and quality components will then be compared with planned ones to determine whether or not the right tasks are being performed in the right way. If not, corrective measures will have to be taken immediately. A work plan or action plan will be very useful in monitoring progress (see chapter 3). In monitoring the plan is important.

As Beth et al (1993) put to us, the principal purpose of monitoring is to check that everything is running to plan and to take decisions about the plan. Such alternative decisions may be whether to go on with the plan; whether to abandon the plan or whether to change the plan in some way. Basically, monitoring tries to answer the following questions:-

- Are the planned activities carried out?
- Are they carried out according to schedule?
- Are the activities using the planned inputs?
- Are the planned outputs obtained?

Supervision is closely related to monitoring. That is why we propose here that the two concepts should be treated together. That is they should appear in the format, monitoring and supervision. However, our proposition does not suggest that the two are the same, no way. We have seen already that monitoring looks at task activities.

What is Supervision? Supervision is the process of ensuring that subordinates who are assigned tasks have the knowledge and skills required to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This is followed by providing immediate on-the-job training needed. So while managers monitor activities they supervise the people who carry out these activities.

The purpose of supervision may be summarized as follows:-

- To check performance and identify performance strengths and weaknesses.
- To analyze whether performance weaknesses are a result of lack of knowledge or not.
- To analyze whether performance weaknesses are a result of lack of skills or not.

If performance weaknesses are a result of lack of knowledge, or skills or both,

- To provide immediate on-the-job training in order to build knowledge and skills required to perform a job.

Now let us assume that during monitoring a manager discovers that a particular subordinate is not carrying out the planned activities correctly, is behind schedule and is not achieving the desired outputs. Will the manager stop at the discoveries? No, not at all.

When the manager has discovered a performance shortfall, he will go further to find out what causes the deficiency. The manager might ask a series of questions:

- What is the knowledge required to perform this task?
- Does the subordinate possess the knowledge required to perform the job?
- What are the skills required to perform this task?
- Does the subordinate possess the skills required to perform the job?

Only where the manager finds out that the subordinate lacks knowledge or skill or both that he or she requires to perform a job will he or she make immediate on-the-job training. In providing on-the-job training the manager is helping the subordinate to improve his or her performance by training him or her in the correct way to do a task (skills) or by providing the correct knowledge.

On-the-job training is informal and takes place on the job through the manager working closely with the subordinate. To be effective on-the-job training should take place as soon as the performance problem is identified. This is exactly what Rosemay et al (1972) suggest. They say that supervision is a way of ensuring staff competence, effectiveness and efficiency through observation, discussion, support and guidance. Discussion, support and guidance connote the exchange of information between a superior and a subordinate. This is clarified by Shortel et al (1983) when they say supervision involves the exchange of information between two people where one is responsible for the work of the other.

From the above accounts we learn the following distinction between monitoring and supervision. Monitoring can be done away from where the tasks are performed, for instance, from the office. This can be done by looking at the reports or the frequency of the reports submitted by subordinates. By reviewing reports managers can determine the inputs to and outputs of activities and thereby judge whether or not the right things are being done in the right way. Supervision, however, can only be done in the presence of the persons performing the tasks. Managers have to be with the subordinates to be able to analyze the causes of performance problems, to decide whether or not they required training and if so to provide immediate on-the-job training.

Give Assignee Performance Feedback

In chapter four we touched briefly on the question of feedback. Our focus was on the need for managers to confirm understanding of the subordinates of the tasks they are assigned to perform. This time we are looking at a different kind of the same concept, feedback. Our focus now shifts to informing subordinates about how they are faring in their performance of the tasks. While in the former the subordinate was giving feedback to the manager, in the latter the manager is giving feedback to the subordinate. In simpler terms, in performance feedback, a worker is informed about the degree of success in accomplishing tasks. In performance feedback the manager

informs his or her subordinates how well they are progressing toward their goals.

Schein (1980) describes feedback as the degree to which the worker gets information about the effectiveness of his or her efforts either directly from the work itself (such as when a quality test is run by the worker on the work) or from supervisors, co-workers, quality control inspectors or others in the work flow. It is evident from this definition that feedback is not selective. In feedback managers should tell subordinates what they did right (positive feedback) as well as what they did wrong (negative feedback).

Managers treat positive and negative feedback in different ways. Some managers can readily provide positive feedback but fear providing negative feedback. Of course this is because some people hate and resist negative feedback. On the contrary other managers are biased and will always search for wrong deeds and provide negative feedback. Both cases are not healthy for the purpose of feedback is not informing for the sake of it. The ultimate purpose is to help people reach their full potential.

Blanchard et al (1982) suggest that in feedback tell people what they did right (be specific) and encourage them to do more of the same. This is for positive feedback. They go on suggesting that tell people what they did wrong (be specific) and remind them how much you value them. This is negative feedback but at the same time the manager encourages people to try their best because he believes they can do more than what they have done. So both scenarios encourage people to do their best and, indeed, this helps them struggle to reach their full potential. To emphasize, feedback must be constructive, that is, it should help people to perform better.

Robbins (1989) provides guidelines for giving feedback. Some of them are:-

- Use descriptive rather than judgemental language. That is feedback should be impersonal. It should be job-related and describe the performance shortfall.

- Feedback should focus on specific behaviours. Make specific statements and support them with concrete examples.
- Feedback should be goal-oriented.
- Be direct, clear and to the point. This is to make sure that the recipient understands. Seek feedback.
- Feedback should be well timed. That is, the interval between the behaviour and the feedback should be short (the hot stove rule).

In all cases it is important for managers to carefully plan how they will give feedback to subordinates so that it has a positive rather than a negative impact.

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CHAPTER SIX

TIME AT TASK END

Main points of the chapter

- Check on objectives
- Check on Standards
- Dimensions of Quality
- Ascertain on Quantity
- Ascertain on Time Taken
- Check on Resources Used

We would like to begin this chapter by using analogies. The first analogy we want to share with you is that of a person who drives a car for the first time. He or she is a learner. Traffic rules require that he or she has a visible 'L' (learner) sticker both at the front and at the rear of the car. He or she also has to have an experienced driver sitting beside him or her to guide in the controls of the car. We know also that any new driver finds a lot of trouble in starting the car as well as stopping it in the early days of driving. That is why a lot of help and guidance is needed during that time. Otherwise, the car will get out of control and cause serious accidents.

The second example has to do with flying. We hear that in flying most accidents occur during take-off and during landing. We the authors, are not aircraft engineers, we do not know the scientific explanation of the same. So we give no details. But surely, this world is replete with examples of accidents occurring during those moments.

A third example is related to industrial settings. Studies looking at industrial accidents have revealed that many accidents happen either at the beginning of the shift or at the end of it. Otherwise they happen at night for which there is sufficient explanation.

Even in the building industry we are told that the foundation and the finishing are critical for a house. They say a good foundation

is the pillar of the house. We may conclude that if you have a weak foundation and poor finishing then you don't have a good house.

There are so many real life examples which indicate that both beginnings and endings are critical moments in what one does. It is also true that managers make great mistakes during their first days as managers. So in planning and assigning tasks the beginning and the end of a task performance are critical to a job well done.

In chapter three and four we discussed about things that must be done at the time before assigning tasks and at the time during assigning tasks. These two chapters do focus attention on the beginning of task performance. The chapter on Time At Task End shifts attention toward actions that managers should take at the time when the performance of each task is ending.

In a way chapter six is a continuation of the actions undertaken in chapter five. However, the actions discussed in chapter five are formative actions. They take place at the beginning of the task through to actual performance of the job before it ends. These actions are intended to ensure that things are happening and to improve on them. The idea, for instance, of giving on-the-job training is a typical example of strengthening competence to improve performance. Instead, the actions at Task End are summative actions. They help the manager decide whether the task assignee should continue or stop doing the job in question.

However, we would like to make one important note here. There are two kinds of activities that managers do assign to subordinates, namely, one-off activities, that is activities that are done once and for all and repetitive or routine activities. For one-off activities formative and summative evaluations are combined so that there is critical evaluation of the performance of the assignee right from the beginning so that if one does not do it in the right way one is substituted immediately. If this person is left to continue to do the job the desired results will never be achieved. For routine activities managers may buy time and through on-the-

job training improve both the knowledge and skills of the assignee to facilitate effective task performance.

Check on standards

One of the important actions is to check and ensure that quality is being maintained. But what is quality? Different people define quality in many different ways. To some people quality is associated with value attached to the task performed. The task performed may be in the form of a service or a good produced. As Gordon (1994) puts, quality refers to the presence of value and fitness for use as perceived by the customer. Also quality may be defined as the degree of excellence which satisfies the customers. Kaluzny et al (1982) point out that in general quality refers to the ability to provide services according to accepted professional standards and in a manner that is acceptable to a client. Juran (1974) agrees with the above when he says, "Of all the quality functions, none is so far-reaching or vital as fitness for use". He defines fitness for use as the extent to which the product or service successfully serves the purposes of the user during usage.

We learn from Gordon and from Kaluzny et al in the definitions of quality that the customer cannot be omitted. Whatever professional and technical the standards may be they must not only reflect but also strike the feeling, the taste and the satisfaction of the customers. Richard Mottram (1995) and Dominique Turpin (1995) place much emphasis on the question of customer satisfaction. Richard suggests that there should be published explicit standards for services that individual users can reasonably expect and publication of the actual performance achieved against them. On the other hand Dominique elaborates on the emphasis of Japanese industries in the nineties. He observes that in the 1980s competition among Japanese firms was centered on reaching a zero defect level in product quality. Today, he goes on saying, the emphasis is on achieving zero defects in customer services, the focus being on customer satisfaction.

We may conclude by defining quality as conformance to requirements (that is established professional and ethical standards), zero defects and fitness for use (that is products and services must meet the customers' needs). So in order to judge

about the quality of any piece of work the customers must come into the picture. Customers both internal and external must be asked about quality.

Dimensions of Quality

Quality may be discussed in the context of physical and tangible goods or products. Also the concept may be applied to none physical and intangible services as in the delivery of health care. The dimensions are different for each case. The dimensions are easy in physical products than in services and intangible products.

In physical products the dimensions of quality are mainly aesthetics, reliability, technicality and durability. Aesthetics refers to the look and appearance of the product and how it feels on touching. Also it may refer to the taste if eaten and how it sounds if it can produce sound or how it smells if it can be smelt. Reliability refers to what and how much it can do if it is used to produce other goods or services. Durability explains the longevity, that is, its life span. That is, how long it will last. The technical dimensions of a product or good considers its technical feasibility in terms of the competence of the customers to use it, maintain it and repair it if it breaks down.

In as far as services are concerned the dimensions of quality refer to the way the services are provided, specifically the way the providers give the services, technical feasibility, service environment and accessibility. In judging the quality of services customers will consider how courteously the services are given. They will also look at the competence of the providers in terms of how accurate they can provide the services. As for environment customers consider the pleasance of the place where services are being provided, the cleanliness, the availability of staff and working gear. Accessibility assesses the convenience in terms of time, that is, are the times of service provision convenient to clients?

In previous chapters we have talked, briefly though, about establishing standards of performance. Our first definition of quality, therefore, is that task performance must meet the established standards of successful performance. So in checking to ensure that quality is maintained the manager is comparing a

piece of work completed against standards of good work usually using a checklist of standard work pre-determined well in advance. We may conclude by saying that quality, in as far as we are concerned, has to do with doing the right task in the right way to produce the right service or right goods in the right way. This will ensure that the service or good to be produced contains the value, benefit and thus its acceptability by customers.

Ascertain on Quality

This is probably easier to do than ensuring quality. For quality is psychological and perceptual. So it is difficulty to measure. In ascertaining quantity the manager is looking at numerical targets. In order to assess quantity managers must compare what has been achieved with the objectives, that is, the desired end results. The idea is to compare set targets against actual achievements in performance. In our case of bank tellers, it is expected that one of the targets would be for each teller to serve a certain number of customers in a given time, say an hour. The other way round would be to establish a standard service time for each client. For example, it will take five minutes to serve a customer with a savings account.

Both cases are examples of targets, the former stating the number of customers to be served in an hour, and the other stating the duration it would take to serve one customer, which ultimately gives us the number of customers to be served in an hour and eventually in a day. So what the bank tellers actually do is eventually compared to these targets.

Ascertain on Time Taken

In chapter three we discussed the need to set time estimates for accomplishing each activity. These time estimates were then used in drawing up action plans in which starting and ending times for an activity were indicated. At this point the manager tries to assess the amount of time a particular assignee took to accomplish a given task against estimated time. Reasons for the difference must be established.

Check on Resources Used

Like ascertaining on time taken to do a job, it is equally important to check on the amount of resources used against those planned for in chapter three. The resources used will determine the cost per task or the production cost per service or per unit. More resources and less resources imply higher and lower cost per service or unit respectively. Assistance offered to the task assignees should be counted as a resource.

Time at Task End involves asking a number of questions aimed at determining the effectiveness and efficiency with which task assignees accomplish their work. What are some of these questions? The following are some of the question, which managers want to answer at this stage.

- Has the work really been done? Here managers want to establish whether the bottom line has been hit. Has the task been accomplished?
- Is the work done acceptable? That is, does the work that has been accomplished meet the specified standards of good workmanship? Here managers are looking at the quality of the work done.
- Have the tasks been accomplished within the appointed time and other resources including assistance needed?

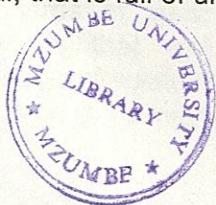
The above may be regarded as hard facts. But it may not be fair to consider hard facts alone. Other factors contributing to the degree of success in the performance of subordinates in their tasks ought to be considered as well.

Some of the questions are:-

- Were the circumstances under which the subordinates performed the tasks to produce the results normal or abnormal, that is full of unexpected difficulties?

- If abnormal, were the subordinates able to cope with the circumstances or were they not able to cope with them?
- Were subordinates allowed to exercise sufficient discretion on assigned tasks or were they denied discretion thus constraining their initiative or creativity in achieving results?
- Did subordinates receive the needed assistance and other resources required to perform their tasks on time or not?

The kind of questions that managers have to ask will depend on several things. They include the type of tasks performed, and the conditions under which the tasks were to be performed. This is to say that the questions suggested above do not exhaust and limit the number of questions to be asked. It is important to note here that each manager will have to ask a series of questions appropriate to the situation.



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CHAPTER SEVEN

TIME AFTER TASK IS DONE

Main points of the chapter

- Rewards
- Verbal Praise
- Written Praise
- Presents
- Bonus Payments
- Study tours
- Housing Allocation
- Promotion

A farmer would not grow maize if he or she knew that there was not going to be any harvest. Like the farmer a worker has expectations of some reward for completing a task assigned to perform. So one of the significant areas of proper concern to the manager is the importance both of objectively measuring performance of subordinates and of rewarding good performance. But we know that a family of a farmer who does not harvest from his or her cultivation, probably because of poor farming technologies employed, will suffer from hunger. So will the worker whose performance will be poor. Managers need not only reward good performance but also impose sanctions on poor performance and provide corrective actions for better task performance in the future.

In this chapter we would like to stress the need for managers to reward workers who demonstrate good work performance. Our choice to stress positive rewards is founded on the need to reinforce positive behaviour. To inspire upon good workers to want to perform to their best. We also think that rewards for good performance will influence poor performers to work diligently and to their stretch so that they too may be rewarded in some future days.

As we pointed out in the introduction managers must be selective in their choice of rewards. We will also be selective in our proposal of alternative rewards to be considered by managers for their good workers. However, the buck stops at each manager in that every manager has to decide on the basis of what is available within ones powers what rewards to award to his or her subordinates. We shall consider only the following options.

- Praise or congratulations
- Giving Presents
- Bonus Payments
- Promotions and Salary Increments
- Study Tours
- Priority in Housing Allocations

Praise or Congratulations

Praise or congratulations is the easiest reward that can be given. Giving praise or congratulations to an employee does not cost the organization or the praising manager anything other than the good words and the time it takes to speak them to the subordinate. Praise should be given immediately after the task is successfully completed. Incidentally, it should be given at the work spot right in the presence of co-workers. Alternatively it may be given in the office of the manager assigning the task. In extreme cases and depending on the nature of the task performed, it may be given in the presence of all employees in a sectional or departmental meeting.

Praise given in the presence of other workers probably carries more weight than that given in camera. It informs not only the incumbent worker but also other workers of the recognition and appreciation of the manager for the excellent performance of the worker. Thus it acts as a reinforcement for him or her to continuously pursue diligence in ones work. It also encourages other workers to copy from their co-worker a performance behaviour that will eventually reward them too. They will want to compete to achieve results and incidentally rewards.

Praises or congratulations may sometimes be accompanied by a shake of hands or a pat on the back. However, care must be taken when a pat on the back is desired. For some cultures or individuals may not like it. For Americans, for instance, a pat on the back without proper consent may be construed as interference with what they call personal or body space. They may not want to be touched just like that. Unfortunately, verbal praises or congratulations do not constitute a permanent record of the employees.

Written Praise or Congratulations

The word of mouth and the manager's memory are no longer able to maintain adequately the details of employees. For this reason it is necessary for the story of an employee to be written accurately and in sufficient detail. Written praises or congratulations are more preferred than verbal ones. They provide permanent record which remains in the file of the employee. Such information may be used by the assigning manager, a manager from another department, a manager from the above stratum or a new manager in case, for various reasons, the assigning manager is not available.

A written praise is the who, what, why, where, when and how of a worker. As a permanent record it can be retrieved and referred to in future decisions about a worker. It can be presented to higher authorities as supportive evidence in recommendations for special assignments, for promotions or for special salary increment.

Presents

Perhaps, to many workers, mere praises whether verbal or written are not valuable. Physical, tangible presents, which can contribute positively to the liabilities of a worker, contain more value and satisfaction than empty verbal and written praises. Presents are an improved reward system from praises.

A present is a gift offered to an employee who performs unusually well. That is, he or she performs above expected level of successful performance under normal circumstances. Presents as rewards are given as a recognition and appreciation of best work performance.

Giving presents for rewards to best employees is a common phenomenon in Tanzania. The National Productivity Council (1988, 1989) reports that Government Paper No. 1 of 1981 paragraph 56 requires National recognition and appreciation of the best workers at every place of work. The awards are given out every year as part of May Day (Workers Day) celebrations. Presents that have been given have included bicycles, radio sets, radio cassettes, money and other household paraphernalia. Unlike verbal and written praises presents cost money. Because of the cost involved this may not be within the powers of most junior managers.

A bonus payment is always linked to productivity. Ambrose (1983) describes productivity as the relationship between economic outputs and economic inputs. Thus productivity is realized by:-

- Increasing the economic output with the same economic inputs, or
- Maintaining the economic output with a reduced economic input, or
- Increasing the economic output with a proportionately less increased economic input.

A bonus is one method of payment by results. Graham (1983) describes how the method works. He says, for each job a standard is set. The standard is expressed in terms of:

- Quantity produced per unit of time, or
- The time taken to do the job.

The standard serves as the basis for a bonus which becomes payable when the employee exceeds it.

According to McGregor (1960) a bonus is a differential pay based on individual contribution to an objective. Differentiation is determined by variations in performance among individuals on any job. The rewards, in this case bonuses, are related to these variations.

Richard (1984) defines a bonus as payment within the current operating year to an employee in addition to his or her regular earnings for superior performance or an above-expected achievement. The bonus relates to the particular contribution for which the bonus is awarded. Also a bonus is any payment in addition to regular or base earnings or wages. It may be in the form of a Christmas bonus or other annual allotment or it may consist in higher rates paid for night-work, overtime or hazardous work. Also it is used in connection with incentive wage systems to designate amounts earned in excess of base or guaranteed rates.

Bonuses reinforce desired levels of performance. But for bonuses to be truly a reinforcement, managers must establish appropriate relationship between demonstrated employee performance and provided rewards. Standards must be realistic and clear as well as appropriate measures of performance. For if managers do not link rewards to performance the meaning of a bonus pay no longer exists. There won't be any reinforcing impact and workers may not demonstrate high degree of performance in future.

Study Tours

Another way of recognizing good performance is to arrange for study tours for those employees who do better in their jobs. The tours should be planned in such a way that employees do learn something out of them to improve further on their performance. It is recommended that if the tours are to have a reinforcing effect on the behaviour of the employees, then they should be done with organizations of similar or the same nature of work. Care must be taken not to send employees to organizations using advanced technology because this will only discourage them.

Housing Allocation

Some organizations are located in remote rural areas where the private housing market has not penetrated. Such organizations may include in their staff policies the provision of housing to their employees. But over time the growth in the size of the housing stocks is slower than the growth in the size of employees and problems arise in the process of allocating houses to employees.

Good performance at work may then be taken as a criterion for priority considerations in allocating housing to employees.

Promotion

Most employees expect to advance to positions offering higher pay and status during their work careers. They struggle to achieve better results to qualify for promotion. For successful performances of the jobs promotion is a reward for a job well done. Promotion, which is based on outstanding performance, is referred to as merit promotion.

We shall define promotion as a raise in a job position that is from a lower level job to a higher/level job. Pigors and Myers (1977) refer to this raise as the advancement of an employee to a better job in terms of greater responsibility, greater skills, more status or prestige with increased rate of pay or salary.

Promotion involves a change of assignment from a job of a lower level to one of a higher level within the organization. The new job is normally one that provides an employee with an increased pay and status and is more demanding in terms of skills or responsibility.

Promotion is a way of recognizing the ability and good performance of an employee. It serves as a reward and as an evidence of appreciation for good achievements. However, successful performance in a lower stratum job is not always a perfect indicator of successful performance in a higher stratum job. As we have seen above, jobs in higher levels are more complex than those in lower levels. Their demands are of superior nature than lower level jobs. Care must be taken not to promote workers to their level of incompetence.

Also the decision to promote may not rest on the assigning managers. Promotions follow established procedures and observe certain standards like the establishment of an organization. These must be observed before any promotional move is undertaken.

We would like to note here that the options for recognizing best performance of task assignees are not the same for all

organizations. Those given above are mere examples, which may not be common to all organizations. What is important, however, is our stress on the need for managers to think about ways to sound out their recognition of superb performance by task assignees within their organizational available options.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

SELECTED EXAMPLES FROM TANZANIA

Main cases in the chapter

- The Academic Staff Improvement Office
- The National Family Planning Programme
- The National AIDS Control Programme

In this last part of the book we would like to share with you selected real life examples of assigning tasks. We will attempt to provide a limited analysis to explore why there was either failure or success. The first example comes from the former Institute of Development Management (IDM), Mzumbe.

Academic Staff Improvement Office

In 1988, while realizing the need to improve and strengthen the capability of the Institute in implementing its objectives towards the fulfillment of its mission of conducting management training, IDM established a special office to coordinate all academic staff activities called Academic Staff Improvement Office (ASIO). The office bearer had the title of ASIOCO, standing for Academic Staff Improvement Office Coordinator.

The post was advertised internally. Unfortunately the advertisement did not contain sufficient information to attract applicants from members of the faculty who were the only source of prospective jobholders. For instance, the responsibilities were not clearly spelt out, authority definition was not authentic and the creation of accountability was not definite. Specifically, only senior lecturers and above qualified to apply. Nobody applied.

Eventually, the management of the Institute decided to make a direct appointment without voluntary participation of the appointee. The following was the letter of appointment.

Dear Mr.....

APPOINTMENT TO THE POST OF COORDINATOR OF THE
ACADEMIC STAFF IMPROVEMENT OFFICE (ASIO)

You are aware that sometime back a decision was made by the institute to establish the Academic Staff Improvement Office.

The main purpose for this decision is to assist Tutorial Assistants and new staff to improve their teaching and other curriculum activities by acquiring methodologies and other professional approaches.

The post was advertised in July last year and I am pleased to note that your name was proposed for this post.

I am therefore hereby appointing you as Coordinator of ASIO for a period of three (3) years effective from the date of this letter. You will be eligible for reappointment for a further maximum period of three years, subject to satisfactory performance during the initial period.

You will be responsible to the Director of Studies and your responsibility will be to execute the activities of ASIO as contained in the appendix to this letter.

It is stressed that this is an entirely new activity within the Institute and you will therefore be expected to plan the take off thoroughly from the beginning. In this regard, you are therefore advised to have extensive and full consultation with the Director of Studies, Heads of Department and even Subject Panel Chairmen in order to chart out a clear start.

I have noted from your CV that you were trained as a teacher and you will therefore find this post quite in line with that training.

I wish you success.

Yours sincerely,

Signed
PRINCIPAL

Copy to: Director of Studies (DS)
Director of Manpower Development and Administration
(DMDA).

IDM
INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
MZUMBE

The Activities of the Academic Staff Improvement Office

- (i) To organize courses in basic pedagogy any learning psychology, preferably based on one basic textbook. The library should be requested to provide literature on recommended readings as suggested by ASIO.
- (ii) To organizes courses or workshops in course preparation, goal setting procedures, course outlining and evaluation procedures, (including formal IDM procedures).
- (iii) To organize courses or workshops in practical use of different learning methods, preparation of learning materials (hand-outs, transparencies, role-plays, case studies, self-study manuals, group-work problems etc).
- (iv) To make provisions to assign each new and less experience teacher to a tutor to be responsible for the practical training. This is to be organized through the appropriate Subject Panel. The tutor and the new member are expected to work out a training programme to be recognized by ASIO.
- (v) To collect data from each session and activity mentioned above to evaluate the new staff member's potential as a teacher.
- (vi) ASIO may be given other responsibilities; for example plan and implement TOT as the need is felt, introducing all new staff members to the Institute by working out an introductory programme including a handbook with all IDM procedures and other important information, etc.
- (vii) ASIO may also be made the formal administrative body to liaise with the Subject Panel Chairmen and the

appointed Advisors on the professional, academic training. ASIO should receive copies of all individual programmes and collect the evaluation reports.

Question: What was the task here?

As the letter of appointment indicates this was a completely new task at the institute. The objective of the task was clearly spelt out, that is to improve the training capability of the members of academic staff through organizing and conducting courses, workshops, and assigning new and less experienced faculty to senior tutors. We also learn that specific activities to achieve the objectives were indicated.

The appointment also outlines the coordination or assistance needed to accomplish the task through the people mentioned under the activities, that is:-

- The Director of Studies (DS)
- The Director of Manpower Development and Administration (DMDA)
- The Heads of Department (HODs)
- The Panel chairpersons
- The Chief Librarian
- Senior members of the faculty

After the appointment of the ASIOCO all members of the faculty and all those listed above were informed about it. So one may say as far as the initial stages were concerned the task had been planned and assigned.

Let us now move on to the implementation stage. As the letter of appointment indicates ASIOCO was supposed to plan a smooth take off of the programme. To do this effectively ASIOCO conducted an extensive and full consultation with the DS, HODs, Panel Chairpersons and Senior Members of the Faculty. After the extensive and full consultation as suggested in the appointment letter ASIOCO drew up a work plan to the first year of his term of

office. Among other things the work plan included the following activities:-

- To visit neighbouring sister institutions for consultation with them about their staff improvement programmes,
- To identify development courses conducted by other institutions and recommend IDM members of the faculty to attend.
- To identify training, relevant workshops, conferences and inform members of the same so that they could apply and attend.

Other activities were from the list of responsibilities. Copies of the elaborate work plan were distributed to the Principal, the DS and the DMDA. No sooner had the Principal gone through the plan did he summon the ASIOCO to his office. He told ASIOCO that he was interfering with the responsibilities of the DMDA. He clarified what ASIOCO was to do and when. Usually every year there was at the institute what was called Agreed Plan of Activities, which were drawn up and agreed between IDM and another collaborating institution. In that document there were activities that were earmarked to be implemented by ASIOCO. The Principal emphatically instructed ASIOCO to do those, and only those activities unless otherwise directed.

Historically, the establishment of the Academic Staff Improvement Office was preceded by a series of committee meetings, which tried to establish what activities could be carried out by the office. The faculty wanted most of the academic related functions held by non-academic functionaries under the office of the DMDA be moved to ASIO. Management was against it. So it appeared that the office was not going to have much responsibility and discretion. This is probably the reason why senior members of the faculty did not apply. The appointee was then an Assistant Lecturer.

What we learn here is that ASIOCO had no discretion and initiative was restricted to activities in the Agreed Plan of Action. In practice the activities for ASIO in the three years of the life of the office had

been limited to at most five and the number depended on what the Project decided to be included in the plan. Before the end of the third year, in 1990, ASIOCO resigned. Since then ASIO has never operated.

THE NATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME

In 1994 the Ministry of Health embarked on the introduction of an improved Family Planning Logistics System. The main objective of the improved system was to ensure that contraceptives were available at all times, at the right place and in the best possible conditions. The improved Logistics system had four levels, namely, central level, regional level, district level and service delivery point or SDP level. We shall focus our example at the district level.

At each district level there was a District Maternal and Child Health Coordinator (DMCHCO). In matters related to contraceptive logistics management the responsibilities of the DMCHCO were to:

1. Complete all logistics records and reports and submit to appropriate places.
2. Monitor contraceptive supply status for the district and SDP levels.
3. Determine contraceptive order quantities for the district and for SDP levels during monthly visits in consultation with SDP personnel.
4. Issue contraceptives to SDPs during monthly visits.
5. Store contraceptives at the district level following accepted storage guidelines, and monitor contraceptives stored at Pharmaceutical Stores to ensure that storage guidelines are followed.
6. Conduct supply and supervisory visits each month to each SDP.
7. Manage and coordinate transport of contraceptives on a monthly basis to SDPs with the EPI District Cold Chain Officer (DCCO).
8. Monitor logistics-related activities at district and SDP levels, including developing a monthly work plan detailing logistics activities to be monitored.
9. Provide regular supportive supervision to district and SDP personnel in matters related to logistics management, including providing immediate informal

on-the-job training to improve performance of personnel at these levels.

To prepare family planning personnel carry out the responsibilities in the improved logistics systems, a training programme was designed and conducted. The training covered all the nine responsibilities outlined above. At the end of the training necessary record and report forms were supplied. They included:-

- The Day-to-day book
- The inventory record book
- The issue voucher
- The report and request for contraceptives

A job reference manual was also given to each participant to which she should go back and remind herself of important procedures and formulas to calculate quantities of contraceptives for various reasons. Also each district was given Toyota pick-up to conduct supervisory visits and transport contraceptive supplies shared with the Expanded programme on Immunisation (EPI).

Question: What was the task in this example?

The task was to obtain and distribute contraceptives in the districts. The objective was clear, that is to ensure that contraceptives were available at all times, at all places and in the best possible conditions. The task activities were clearly described by responsibilities.

The standards and procedures for carrying out the task were contained in the manual that every DMCHCO was provided with, knowledge and skills for doing the task were provided during training. The requirements for task accomplishment, like necessary record and report forms, operating manuals, storage guidelines, calculators and transport were defined and availed to each DMCHCO.

Six months after training an evaluation was carried out. It was found out that the DMCHCOs were doing their jobs quite

satisfactorily. For instance, every DMCHCO kept an inventory for each brand of contraceptive available, over 80 percent completed the Report and Request for contraceptives on monthly basis as required, about 48 per cent of DMCHCOs conducted supervisory visits to SDPs. Of course some of them failed to do things for quite unavoidable reasons like breakdowns of their trucks.

THE NATIONAL AIDS CONTROL PROGRAMME

A parallel programme to that of the National Family Planning was the National AIDS Control Programme. The introduction of the improved AIDS control logistics system was aimed at ensuring that condoms were available at all times, at all places and in the best possible conditions. Like the National Family Planning Programme the improved National AIDS Control Programme had four levels, Central level, regional level, district level and Service Delivery Point (SDP) level.

At each district level there was a District AIDS Control Coordinator (DACC). In matters related to condom logistics management the responsibilities of the DACC were to:-

1. Complete all logistics records and reports and submit to appropriate places.
2. Monitor condom supply status for the district and SDPs.
3. Identify service delivery points (SDPs) for condom distribution.
4. Determine condom order quantities for the district level and for SDPs.
5. Issue condoms to SDPs on a monthly basis.
6. Store condoms at the district level following accepted storage guidelines, and monitor condoms stored at Pharmaceutical Stores to ensure that storage guidelines are followed.
7. Manage and coordinate transport of condoms to SDPs with the District Medical Officer, DCCO, or other appropriate source of transport.
8. Monitor logistics-related activities at district and SDP levels, including developing a monthly work plan detailing logistics activities to be monitored.
9. Provide regular supportive supervision to district personnel in matters related to logistics management, including providing immediate informal on-the-job training to improve performance of personnel at these levels.

To prepare National AIDS Control personnel to carry out the responsibilities in the improved logistics system, all DACCs attended training on Management of the Tanzanian Family Planning and AIDS control logistics systems. At the end of the training the following necessary record and report forms were supposed to be supplied to each DACC.

- The Inventory Record Book
- The Issue Voucher
- The Report and Request for Supplies

Unfortunately, unlike National Family Planning Personnel, National AIDS Control Personnel were neither given the issue voucher nor the report and request for supplies. Of course they were given the Family Planning Job Reference Manual with definitions, procedures and formulas for calculating quantities of condoms, for various purposes. DACCs, unlike DMCHCOs were not given the Toyota Pick-ups designated for supervision and for distributing condoms to the levels below the district.

Question: What was the task in this case?

The task was to obtain and distribute condoms for AIDS control in the districts. The objective was clear, that is to ensure that condoms were available at all places, at all times and in the best possible conditions. The task activities were described by the responsibilities outlined above.

The standards and procedures for carrying out the task were contained in the Job Reference Manual that was given to each DACC. Knowledge and skills for carrying out the work were provided during the training. Requirements for task accomplishment were stated but only the inventory handbook, a calculator and the Job Reference Manual were provided to each DACC.

Six months after the training an evaluation was carried out. It was found out that the performance of the DACCs was not satisfactory comparing to the established standard of performance as well as

compared to the performance of the DMCHCOs. For instance only 50 per cent of the DACCs completed the Report and Request for condoms on monthly basis as required. The main reason for those who did not complete the Report and Request for condoms was that they did not have the forms. Actually those who completed the Report and Request for condoms had photocopied the forms they remained with from the training. Probably as a result of not reporting and requesting many districts were out of stock of condoms. Unlike DMCHCOs, DACCs had no means of transport to distribute condoms. As such the supply status of condoms at the lower levels was very low.

PLANNING AND ASSIGNING TASKS FOR THE FIRST TIME

A STEP BY STEP APPROACH FOR BEGINNING MANAGERS

The bottom line of performance management is better results, hence, management by results. What it means really is that the performance of the manager is measured by the degree of success towards expected outputs or results. Successful performance reaches stated goals, objectives and targets and demonstrates visible and measurable contributions to an organization.

There are no magical rules for performance management. There are, however, process steps that managers ought to know that are likely to inspire effective commitment of the people to their jobs. If these process steps are followed management by results will be ensured.

This small volume describes the eight step-by-step approach to assigning tasks as part of implementing performance management. The book outlines what managers who assign tasks to subordinates ought to do at each of the eight process steps in order to establish understanding, win their agreement and inspire their commitment to work for better results. At the end the book provides cases of success stories in planning and assigning tasks.