

OFFICE OF PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Labor Division
“Training Within Industry”

Bulletin #4-A

EXPANDING THE MANAGERIAL ORGANIZATION

Expanding the organization in the initial stages is a simple problem. However, when expansion is required to the point, where as one company executive expresses it, “The supervisory organization is stretched beyond the elastic limit,” the problem becomes crucial. Further expansion and use of inexperienced men may mean failure of certain operation or departments. It may mean the tie-up of the whole plant, high scrap losses, and serious difficulties in meeting production and quality standards.

The following plans have been found to be successful in many companies, and are such that they may be adapted to most any organization. There are many companies to which these will not be new.

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PLANNING FOR EXPANSION

The following four steps are ones normally encountered when expanding an organization. The plans thereunder are basic enough to be adapted to various situations.

1. Give each present supervisor more responsibility.

When production volume increases, of course, the first obvious method of handling it is to give each present supervisor more responsibility, i.e., more men, more equipment, more floor space, and often, more authority. Occasionally, sections or departments are combined and placed under one supervisor where previously there were two or more supervisors.

2. Select men from the present supervisory force to fill new positions or positions with greater responsibilities.

Usually, there is a limited number of qualified supervisors from which men may be selected; competent to take full charge of new departments or new plants; or to assume newly created functions.

Immediate attention to replacement and the preparation of understudies is essential. In fact, many executives find it practical to draw an organization chart, and to place under each strategic position the names of several men who could fill such position, in the order of their availability and competence. On one or two successive charts, plans are drawn showing how the organization would be expanded and men shifted under anticipated contingencies. Thus, the department head, General Superintendent, or Works Manager, may specifically plan his understudies and moves, and avoid “getting in a pinch” when faced with a large order or an important expansion. Where there is a Personnel or Industrial Relations Department, this department can be particularly helpful by developing such confidential charts and plans and submitting them to line executives for suggestions and approval.

This procedure also makes it possible to give the maximum amount of organized training to understudies and men who are to be shifted or promoted. The personnel officer, in collaboration with operating executives can then prepare job rotation, progression, and observation training, and institute organized instruction in the fundamentals of supervision and technical information.

3. Select and train beginning supervisors

When it becomes necessary, new supervisors must be selected and appointed. Each company management shows the best source in each instance, whether from the ranks of the workers, engineers, technicians, or others.

Experience proves conclusively that intelligence, personality, vitality, and other leadership abilities should outweigh technical or trade ability when such selections are made. Of course, there are some functions where technical knowledge is essential, and in such cases it must be recognized.

The following approach represents the principal features of a successful plan now being widely used, by which properly chosen appointees are developed into quite competent supervisors in 8 or 10 weeks.

a. Assign the new appointees to elementary supervisory work—2 to 3 weeks.

It has been found that special training for a new supervisor in the principles of supervision, labor policies, and similar fields, is more effective AFTER he has had a taste of supervisory responsibility. For the first two or three weeks, therefore, he should be given supervision of a normal experienced group of workmen where there are no exceptional problems of production, discipline, or worker training. During this first assignment, he should be made responsible for routine duties such as—shop orders, time tickets, material ordering, work assignment, routine production, quality, and schedule control. He should be closely guided and coached in these matters by an experienced supervisor. He should NOT be thrown into problems or controversies on wage payment, grievances, discipline, employee selection, transfer or dismissal, maintenance, cost analysis, and like questions.

b. Give the supervisor intensive instruction—1 to 2 weeks

Take the beginning supervisor (in groups of 3 or 4, up to 12) off the job 4 hours a day for 15 to 18 consecutive days or full time for 6 to 10 days. Give him concentrated instruction in the principal features of his new supervisory job. This will prepare him to deal more confidently with difficult situations as they arise. Otherwise it may be months before he encounters them and learns how to deal with them through costly trial and error. Discussion of typical operating cases, problems, and questions should be lifted directly out of job situations. An experienced training specialist, using suitable training quarters, can thus help beginning supervisors to acquire much of the knowledge and judgment which would otherwise require months or years to gain.

This intensive instruction should be scheduled approximately as follows:

Supervisory job planning	- 6 hours
Theory and practice of instructing workers	- 48 hours
Personnel responsibilities	- 6 hours
Labor policies and procedures	- 6 hours

This plan particularly requires the careful attention of management, training specialists, and foreman alike. While it is difficult to take the new man off the job, companies find that the long term advantage outweighs the short term inconvenience. After such instruction, men are able to accept full responsibility sooner and make fewer mistakes in the meantime.

- c. Assign the new supervisor to more difficult and responsible work—4 to 6 weeks

The new supervisor now has begun to have a basis for judgment and should be placed in a position where he is responsible for a normal working group including some inexperienced workers. He should have contact with the full range of supervisory problems, and under experienced coaching, should be given responsibility for them just as rapidly as he is able to handle them properly.

In some situations, it may be found at this stage that it will expedite production if the new supervisor is given the special assignment of instructing new workers. It is sometimes advantageous to use him on such work for several weeks or several months.

- d. Put the new supervisor “on his own”

At this stage, the new supervisor may be given normal line responsibility under normal supervisory guidance and share in whatever staff meetings, supervisory conference, or other organized aides are available.

3. Develop a reserve or pool of potential supervisors

Future needs for supervisors should be anticipated and a pool of qualified men developed.

Many men are broadening their outlook and scope of knowledge through out-of-hour study in university extension, correspondence schools, company classes, and through individual study of company products and producing methods. Often among such men there are excellent candidates for beginning supervisory jobs.

It has been found advantageous to make arrangements to use an outside service—state university or state vocational education department—for a course in “Foremanship” adapted to their particular needs. Under such outside auspices, enrollees do not expect immediate recognition by the company and yet the company has a pool of interested and partially trained potential supervisors from which to draw.

When pre-supervisory training is set up and offered by a company and open to voluntary enrollment, men who take the training will expect recognition. This is true in spite of the fact that no job offers are made or implied, yet their disappointment is a serious morale factor when they are not selected for supervisory positions.

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