KF

KFC 81/204

BY ALL MEANS MANAGE

- a half day seminar on

MANAGEMENT BY DEMOCRACY, CRISIS AND POLITICS

5th November, 1981

DR. SHIRLEY CHATER
VICE CHANCELLOR of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

November 1981

King's Fund Centre
126 Albert Street
London NW1 7NF

JH
a

Shirley Chater

3
Competence in Organizational Roles

Only a few days after I assumed my present management position I was asked to walk across a campus street to test the timing of a newly installed traffic light. On another occasion I served on a committee to determine where a tree should be planted. Another time during a regular lunch at the faculty club I heard an unusual conversation that proved to be the beginning of a major campus issue. These were sample events that preceded hundreds of other seemingly insignificant events that occurred in the day-to-day routine of management. None of these incidents was referred to in the description of my position. My calendar was another case in point. It was filled with 15-minute-, 30-minute-, and hour-long appointments. Each appointment dealt with a subject different from the rest. There was no time between appointments to think or prepare for the next meeting. There were telephone calls to take and to make between appointments. Lucky the days when one went to lunch.

My reactions to events unanticipated in the ambiguity surrounding management in the university were excitement and puzzlement, not frustration. Over time, these reactions led to questions about management roles and management theories. Why didn't the actions and outcomes fit specific management theories? What happened to plans that never seemed to materialize? Although problems were solved, they were not always solved systematically

From: Primary Care, A Contemporary Nursing Perspective. Edited by I. G. Mauksch, Grune & Stratton, New York, 1981

or logically. Decisions were made, but not necessarily with the appropriate people during a definite time span. Despite problems solved and decisions made, there was little sense of task completion.

Sayles' summary validates these observations:

> Thus managerial work is hectic and fragmented and requires the ability to shift continually from person to person, from one subject or problem to another. It is almost the diametric opposite of the studied, analytical, persisting work pattern of the professional who expects and demands closure: the time to do a careful and complete job that will provide pride of authorship. While the professional moves logically and sequentially to fulfill an explicit or implicit work plan, the executive responds to one unanticipated event after another and even at high levels is at the mercy of the situation—fulfilling an open-ended job.*

Thus began my search for truth in management.

MANAGER ROLES

A manager is one who organizes, directs, plans, coordinates, and controls, so says the literature. Thus, deans, department chairs, program directors, and project investigators are managers. While management and leadership are sometimes used synonymously, leadership is only one aspect of management. A manager's role includes mostly activities within the organization as well as some that are external to the institution. A role is defined as an organized set of behaviors identified with a position.

Mintzburg (1975) studied how managers spend their time. His synthesis of research findings produced a list of 10 managerial roles. He categorized these under three main headings: interpersonal, informational, and decisional.

The interpersonal roles come directly from the formal authority vested in the person by virtue of the title and its accompanying

*From *Leadership, What Effective Managers Really Do and How They Do It* by L. R. Sayles. Copyright © 1979 McGraw-Hill. Used with the permission of the McGraw-Hill Book Company.

status. First, Mintzburg describes the *figurehead* role. This role includes duties of a ceremonial nature, such as greeting and hosting dignitaries and conferring degrees at graduations. The second interpersonal role is that of *leader*. Influencing the activities of others to achieve a goal or task is the essence of leadership. According to Mintzburg (1975), "the influence of the manager is most clearly seen in the leader role. Formal authority vests him with great potential power; leadership determines in large part how much of it he will realize" (p. 55). Third, Mintzburg lists the *liaison* role, in which the manager makes contacts outside the vertical chain of command.

The informational roles played by the manager include those of *monitor*, *disseminator*, and *spokesman*. As monitor, the manager collects information from a variety of formal and informal sources, including gossip, hearsay, and speculation. The disseminator shares and distributes information to subordinates. The spokesman speaks on behalf of the organization to people outside the unit.

Information that comes to the manager provides basic input to the decision-making roles played. The manager plays the major role in decision making for the unit as *entrepreneur* who initiates new ideas, as *disturbance handler* who responds to pressures, and as *resource allocator* who decides who will get what. Finally, there is the decisional role of *negotiator* between and among competing persons or groups.

Rarely does a manager play one role at a time. Rarely does a manager function effectively in all roles. The important point for the student of manager roles to recognize is that all 10 roles exist and each can be learned.

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND MANAGEMENT STYLES

Do those competent in management roles exhibit special traits or personalities? Does individual management style relate to role competence? Moloney's (1979) excellent overview of behavioral science research on the subject of leadership provides evidence that both personality characteristics and leadership styles contribute to good management, but neither causes good management.

Stogdill's (1974) research based on trait theory identified certain characteristics associated with the successful leader: achievement, responsibility, capacity, intelligence judgment, personal integrity, and self-confidence. Stogdill concluded that even though specific traits may be important for success, the situations in which leadership is exercised are important variables to consider.

Since the mid-1970s, trait theory has been resurrected as a background against which to study female managers. Since it has not proved to be successful in the study of male managers, it seems unlikely that it will prove useful to study female managers. It seems doubtful that gender-related characteristics will differentiate between successful and unsuccessful managers when there remains a lack of valid criteria for measuring success.

Leadership or management style has been described as primarily autocratic or participatory. Autocratic style is directive. The manager derives power from the title or position. Participatory style includes the group members in the decision-making processes. The participatory style is sometimes called democratic or collegial. The autocratic style probably achieves more, faster. The participatory style takes longer for consultation with colleagues. Decisions are said to receive greater acceptance if made through the participatory style.

Missing in this discussion thus far is any consideration of the situation in which the management style is practiced and the personal characteristics of the manager are demonstrated. According to Moloney (1979):

> When the situation tends to remain fairly stable, the adoption and consistent use of a specific leader style is usually most effective. In other words, if the situation sometimes requires flexibility, it is important for the leader to appropriately employ a different style to meet situational demands. Undoubtedly, the growing acceptance of a situational theory of leadership represents a forward movement in the leadership literatures.*

*From *Leadership in Nursing: Theories, Strategies, Action* by M. Moloney. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Co., 1979, pp. 34–35. Copyright 1979 by C. V. Mosby Co. With permission.

SITUATIONAL THEORY

Managers perform their jobs within complex settings called organizations. "An organization is the rational coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal, through division of labor and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility" (Schein, 1970, p. 9). Organizations are characteristically described as either bureaucratic or political. Benner (1974) presents an overview of both models, noting that bureaucratic structures focus on rules, supervision, and work groups or committees. Bureaucratic organizations strive to control and stabilize the environment through rules of operation. Political organizations are characterized by partisan or factional intrigues within the group as well as other influences from the environment upon decision making. Change and instability are descriptive of political organizations.

Litterer's Model and Benner's Model

Litterer (1963) notes that organizations tend to operate under one of three types of conditions: stable, dynamic, or critical. A decision to be made is done so within the situational context of stability, dynamism, or crisis. Benner's thesis is that each of these three "issue conditions" is characterized by a particular decision-making structure and process. He equates the bureaucratic structure with general stability, the political model with dynamic exchanges. He adds the third condition, crisis, and suggests that this condition is intensely critical. His model suggests that an issue moves from one condition to another, from stable to dynamic to critical, and that different decision-making strategies are required for each stage.

An example may clarify this model. If an organization is in a stable state, a manager conducts the day-to-day operations in a routine and ordinary way. In a dynamic state, a manager must be cognizant of the political forces exerting pressures on the decision outcome. If an organization is in a critical state, the decision must be made promptly, quickly, and decisively. Benner utilizes the case study method to illustrate how one issue moved through the stages of stability to dynamism to crisis. He shows that style,

level, and process of management changed according to each stage. He notes that different personalities played different roles during the entire event. Benner (1974) concludes that "the structure and process of decision making are situationally determined by the state of the issue condition (stable, dynamic, critical). It is the mark of the capable administrator to be aware of these changes however subtle they may be" (p. 367).

Benner's model is an interesting integration of pertinent theories and descriptions of decision making in a university setting. It provides a useful framework against which to study the style of the manager, the situation of the setting, and the intensity of the issue. Benner utilizes theory to make sense of reality through the study of a single issue.

Additional Considerations

Managers, unfortunately, seldom have the privilege of dealing with one issue at a time, or of devoting time to the decision-making role alone. Time pressures cause issues to collide with daily activities, both planned and unplanned, and all 10 management roles demand to be acknowledged, sometimes simultaneously. In addition to the overlap of issues, the decision regarding one issue invariably leads to new problems. Further, the consequences from one solved problem color the input to the next one. Finally, making a decision is not the end but the beginning of a process, for the decision must be communicated, implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

The situational model of Litterer and Benner might be modified in three ways. First, the 10 managerial roles described by Mintzberg (1975) must be woven into the fabric of the situation. Second, a dynamic or political state of the situation exists at all times, however bureaucratic or stable the organization and however critical the crisis. Like a piece of raw silk, the thick strands that emerge and run through the woven fabric are political variables and they are prominent in day-to-day activities as well as in isolated instances. Third, I favor a situational theory of management that focuses on problems to be solved rather than on decisions to be made.

Manager Roles and Administrative Situations

As discussed earlier, the interpersonal, informational, and decisional (problem-solving) roles of manager include those sets of organized behaviors called figurehead, leader, liaison, monitor, disseminator, spokesman, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator. All of these mix with issues or problems that vary in intensity from stability to crisis. To know when and in which situation to play which role is a mark of a good manager, yet, there is no easy answer. For example, while it may appear on the surface that one would not become the entrepreneur at the same time as the disturbance handler, given a specific problem to solve, the entrepreneural role, during which a good idea is generated, may be exactly right to handle the disturbance. Similarly, the roles of leader and negotiator may appear contradictory. On the other hand, what better way of leading than to influence the activities of others with the process of negotiation, especially if the situation is highly political.

Politics and Administrative Situations

Politics in university settings have been more covert than overt. The idea of politics as it refers to the operations of the university tends to be viewed as unfitting and inappropriate, yet politics is a driving force behind much administrative behavior (Baldridge, (1974); and Rehfuss, (1973)) and needs to be acknowledged openly. Walker (1979) makes the following observations to describe the university as political:

> (1) The climate, spirit and mood of problem solving and conflict resolution on campus tend to be heavily political. (2) On any campus people compete for scarce resources. (3) Underlying this competition is a basic assumption that all have an equal right to compete and to know at least generally the rules of competition. (4) The fact that dialectic change strategies are frequently apparent results in an appreciation of the value of coalitions. (5) The end of the competition for resources is not the elimination of the competition. (6) The right of each self-aware unit

within the University to make its own decisions when other groups are not affected is generally respected and supported.*

Acknowledging the political nature of the organization is equally important in dealing with the bureaucratic stable conditions of the unit or the crisis-oriented problems to be solved. The political mode calls for action characterized by extraordinary communications, liaison with vertical and lateral managers, negotiation, and facilitation. While decisions may have to be made quickly and without consultation during crisis events, understanding the political nature of the organization reminds the administrator to backtrack and explain, justify, convince, and persuade.

Problem Solving Versus Decision Making

Problem solving versus decision making is a topic too extensive for discussion here. Seldom does one have the opportunity to literally make a decision. Most often, problems are identified, and managers create opportunities for them to be solved. Creating the opportunities involves exercising several managerial roles such as those categorized as interpersonal and informational. The role of liaison is often enough for the problem to be solved by the people involved. Sometimes the leader role is the appropriate one to bring the right people together or to create the appropriate setting in which the problem can be solved. Problem solving is facilitative, it enables those closest to the issues to assume responsibility for finding solutions to their own problems.

COMPETENCE IN MANAGEMENT ROLES

The manager does not exactly organize, plan, direct, coordinate, and control, although the ambiguous, unanticipated, fragmented, give-and-take activities can ultimately lead to plans, directions, and coordinated and controlled achievement of objec-

*From The *Effective Administrator* by D. E. Walker. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1979, pp. 36–37. With permission.

tives. Opportunity for successful management and competence in organizational roles exists in those day-to-day activities, but the opportunity must be sought and firmly grasped. Opportunities do not just happen. Competence does not just emerge.

How can the peripatetic flurry of daily activities be turned into a set of meaningful actions that achieve the goals of the institution? First, one should acknowledge that the unexpected, the trivia, and the ambiguity are the reality of management. These small and seemingly inconsequential activities are sources of information and are often the antecedents to managerial problems. The appointments, the unexpected visitors, the telephone calls provide the cement for interpersonal relationships and roles. If multiple activities described as management are treated as actual realities, the frustration levels of managers can be reduced and the expectations of the position can be changed. One must accept the fact that there is no closure from most activities; there is no inactivity; there is no situation free from politics; there is no problem to be solved in isolation from all the rest. Management is a complex set of actions requiring a sense of challenge, enthusiasm, and a high level of energy.

Time for planning and organizing can be made. It must be made, for it never just happens. Control of one's calendar is paramount. Just as it is important to schedule meetings and appointments, it is important to schedule think time.

Mid-level managers and assistants to the manager can provide valuable collegial relationships by being sounding boards and advisory bodies. Managers who facilitate and negotiate require a broad base of knowledge, not all of which the manager needs to know; some can be acquired from others. Hence, regular team meetings promote a sense of inclusion and teamwork. Analysts and administrative assistants are valuable assets to a management team, for they provide background data and analyses in timely, accurate, and specialized summaries.

An understanding of the multiplicity of the manager's roles together with an understanding of the complexity of the situations in which management is carried out is required. To have a mentor is ideal. Experience brings knowledge together with opportunities to make judgments. Personality variables can also be maximized if properly used. Providing a high level of expectation

and a sense of enthusiasm for goal achievement is motivating and challenging.

Managers also need to understand roles and situations to be able to predict events over time. By predicting events and the behaviors of people regarding those events, the manager is able to control or shape the outcomes. The predictive power of management reduces uncertainty and ultimately the ambiguity surrounding management lessens.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that there is no one best theory of management. Nevertheless, managers can be cognizant of the roles they play and the settings in which those roles are enacted. Situations can be maximized to achieve goals and the environment modified to facilitate change. Opportunities must be sought and grasped; they cannot be happened upon.

REFERENCES

Baldridge, J. V. *Power and conflict in the university: Research in the sociology of complex organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971.

Benner, R. V. *The strategy and structure of change in the university: theory and research on decision making in complex organizations.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1974.

Litterer, J. A. *Organizations: Structure & behavior.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1963.

Mintzburg, H. The manager's job: Folklore and fact. *Harvard Business Review,* July–August 1975, pp. 49–61.

Moloney, M. *Leadership in nursing; Theories, strategies, action.* St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Co., 1979.

Rehfuss, J. *Public administration as a political process.* New York: Scribner, 1973.

Sayles, L. R. *Leadership, What effective managers really do and how they do it.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979.

Schein, E. H. *Organizational psychology.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970.

Stogdill, R. M. *Handbook leadership.* New York: The Free Press, 1974.

Walker, D. E., *The effective administrator.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1979.

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London is an independent charity founded in 1897 and incorporated by Act of Parliament. It seeks to encourage good practice and innovation in health care through research, experiment, education and direct grants.

The King's Fund Centre was established in 1963 to provide an information service and a forum for discussion of hospital problems and for the advancement of inquiry, experiment and the formation of new ideas. The Centre now has a broader interest in problems of health and related social care and its permanent accommodation in Camden Town has excellent facilities for conferences and meetings. Allied to the Centre's work is the Fund's Project Committee which sponsors work of an experimental nature.