

MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSE CONFERENCE OUTLINE

NO. 3

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION: (Continued)

- (2) Span of Control
- (3) Homogeneous Assignment
- (4) Delegation of Authority

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Acquaint the group with the Span of Control Principle.
- 2. Develop a knowledge of the Homogeneous Assignment Principle.
- 3. Develop a background regarding the Delegation of Authority Principle.
- 4. Summarize the four basic Principles of Organization.

AIDS AND MATERIALS

- 1. Worksheets 7 and 8.
- 2. Charts 1, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

----- TIME SCHEDULE -----

|        |                                                                                                                    |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 min | I. Review                                                                                                          |
| 40 min | II. Span of Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Numbers</li><li>B. Distance</li><li>C. Time</li></ul> |
| 20 min | III. Homogeneous Assignment                                                                                        |
| 30 min | IV. Delegation of Authority                                                                                        |
| 10 min | V. Summary                                                                                                         |

I. Review  
(10 min.)

|        | Owner<br>Clerk<br>Cashier |   |   |
|--------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Mr. A  |                           | X |   |
| Miss B | X                         |   | X |
| Mr. C  |                           | X |   |

Ask the conferees whether anyone was able to work out a solution for the puzzle in Worksheet 6. If anyone has, then have him explain the procedure he used to solve the problem. The blackboard should be used for any explanation. But do not have the person explain beyond the steps where a chart is drawn up with the list of names vertically and the list of positions horizontally and where two or three of the cross-indices are eliminated with an "x."

If no one has been able to work out a solution, explain the approach to the solution, as above, in which the process of elimination is carried out with a chart as a device.

In either case let the conferees finish the solution after the conference is over. This time practically all the conferees will be able to work out the entire solution.

The Scientific  
Approach

After the final answers are given correctly by one of the conferees, either in today's conference or in the next one, explain that the purpose of Worksheet 6 was to test the ability of the conferees in using a scientific approach to a complicated problem and finding an easy solution to an otherwise difficult problem.

Charts 4, 5 & 6

Quickly review the main points brought up in Conference No. 2 by summarizing the ideas on Charts, Nos. 4, 5 and 6.

II. Span of Control  
(40 min.)

Have "Principles of Organization" written in fairly large letters at the top of the blackboard before the conference begins.

In Conference No. 2 the first principle, "Unity of Command," was covered, so write it in as point No. 1 under the Principles of Organization.

Announce that the second principle to be taken up is "Span of Control." Write it in as point No. 2.

Ask the group what ideas they have from the standpoint of supervisors on "Span of Control."

A. No. of People:  
3 to 7

Ask the conferees what they believe to be the right number of subordinates a supervisor should be in charge of. Discuss this problem from all angles. It is not so difficult to see that there are limits to the amount of physical work a man or a woman can do, but not many people realize that there is a limit to the number of persons a supervisor can direct effectively.

Chart 7  
"Management  
Limitations"

Turn to Chart No. 7, and ask the conferees whether a situation like the one illustrated in the chart exists in their units.

Next, ask the conferees whether they believe that the rule, "3 to 7," based on years of research is applicable in their own units. Is it being violated without any good reason? In what kinds of work are exception to the above rule advisable?

Discuss how violation of "the right number" is harmful not only to the supervisor but to the whole organization.

B. Distance

Ask the conferees how distance affects a supervisor's span of control. Should time spent in travelling to see subordinates be considered when determining the proper work load of a supervisor?

Ask the group what kind of planning is necessary when a man has to supervise widely scattered offices, shops or warehouses. Also point out the similarity of the above problem to that of an operator who has to travel long distances to get his tools and supplies for his daily work.

Discuss the following warning: Don't have subordinates too close. You will be inclined to interfere or oversupervise them.

- C. Time
- Ask the group whether jobs, or work orders, or letters have to be processed through many desks or persons in their respective units. Is there too much red tape? Is it really necessary?
- The farther a requisition, or work order, or resignation goes, the less judgment can be applied to it.
- DISCUSS: Can a supervisor six persons removed from an employee use any judgment at all on whether or not a request for leave be granted? Who knows best if he can be spared and if he deserves some time off?
- D. Summary  
Chart 8  
(50 min. to here)
- Turn to Chart No. 8, "Span of Control," and give a brief summary of the three points under Span of Control
- III. Homogeneous Assignment  
(20 min.)  
Chart 9
- Because the sub-points under Homogeneous Assignment are a little difficult to draw out from the conferees without the use of a teaching aid, turn to Chart No. 9, "Homogeneous Assignment," now instead of using it to summarize the points after the discussion has been completed.
- A. No Overlapping Responsibilities
- Ask the group why the functions of subordinates must not overlap unnecessarily if the work of a unit is to go ahead smoothly.
- B. Specific and Clear-Cut Responsibilities
- This point is closely related to the one above, but bring out to the group the dangers of overloading a person who is assigned all the miscellaneous tasks of a unit. The important point is: Does the individual know exactly what his duties and responsibilities are?
- Worksheet 7
- Distribute Worksheet 7, "Miscellaneous Norma," a case study on what is not a homogeneous assignment.
- C. Individual Responsibilities
- Discuss with the conferees why it is important that each essential job, no matter how small, must be made the responsibility of an individual and not left up to the entire group to take care of.

"MISCELLANEOUS NORMA" — A CASE STUDY

"My stenographic career started in Hangar No. 1 working for Mr. A in the department. Here it was suggested that I be trained for a certain position. I thought this would be a good chance to advance, so I accepted. Of course, this blew up after a few days as they didn't need a girl for that job. I, like all other 'green' employees, did work for everyone in the office and when I was just catching on to things in general, Mr. A called my boss and told him to send me over to his office; he had a few things for me to do that absolutely had to go out. This secondary appointment lasted all of fifteen days and again I was taken to my old job. To my astonishment I stayed here three whole weeks. Then, of course, 'Miscellaneous Norma' was trudging back to Headquarters to work for Mr. A. About this time my EGO got the best of me and I was wondering if they would ever make up their minds. I talked to Mr. A and told him I wanted to be placed permanently at one job and that it was immaterial to me where I worked as long as I could stay in one position. He told me both offices needed me so I could choose between them where I wished to work. The reason I chose Headquarters was that I was already stationed in that office.

"I did work for everyone in that office, not knowing what I was doing for anyone. I was interviewing, taking dictation, filing, copy work, etc. I didn't like to be handy-man to everyone in the office. If they didn't have time to do something, 'Hand it to Norma; she can do it in no time.'

"Later our office was moved to Warehouse No. 12. Here I was information clerk and thoroughly 'Miscellaneous Norma.' One person would throw queer-looking papers at me from one direction. From the other side of the room would come something I had never seen before. If I could have accomplished the same job twice, maybe my morale would have not been completely 'shot.' When I would run out of scrapwork to do and my immediate supervisor and surrounding employees could not rake up another thing to keep me possessed, I was given to another department."

This is an actual transcription of a reason given by a capable stenographer for resigning. Since you have reviewed several principles of organization, see if you can recognize through Norma's attitude, as shown in her words, the violation of some of those principles:

1. She said she had too many bosses. Quote her. What principle was violated?
2. She called herself Miscellaneous Norma. Why? Quote her to indicate her job was a jack-of-all-trades job. What principle was violated?
3. Is there any indication from her story that the span of control principle was involved? Quote.

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

1. Unity of Command

- a. Each person must know to whom he reports and whom he directs.
- b. Authority to direct an individual must be limited to one person.

2. Span of Control

- a. Ordinarily a supervisor should direct 3 to 7 subordinates (right No.).
- b. Distance limits the effectiveness of control (right distance).
- c. Time (red tape) is another limiting factor (right time).

3. Homogeneous Assignment

- a. Functions of subordinates must not overlap unnecessarily.
- b. Functions of a subordinate must be specific and clear cut and similar in nature.
- c. Every necessary function of a unit must be assigned specifically to an individual.
- d. Each day's assignment must be within the range of a safe workload.

4. Delegation of Authority

- a. Responsibilities assigned to a person must carry with them the necessary authority to execute them.
- b. Subordinates must be given opportunities to use initiative.
- c. Assignment of responsibilities should not be passed beyond the second delegation on the operating level.

Conference 3, Worksheet 8

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