THE SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EXECUTIVES*

GENERAL DISCUSSION


A stimulating discussion of what the author believes are the most urgent educational needs of the modern executive with particular reference to the dynamic social-economic-political situation. Development of the following qualities is emphasized: broad interests and imagination, superior intellectual capacities, understanding of human relations, recognition of the importance of persuasion, and understanding of what constitutes rational behavior toward the unknown and the unknowable.


A study of the discrepancy between the educational needs of students destined for business and industrial leadership and the academic training now provided. The author states that it is imperative that schools of business develop among their graduates a professional attitude and standards as a means of improving the proficiency with which economic affairs are conducted in our complex system.

Cleeton, Glen U. and Mason, Charles W. Executive ability; its discovery and development. The Antioch Press (Yellow Springs, Ohio). 1934. 183 pp. $2.00.

A study of the methods used to determine and develop executive ability with particular emphasis on the use of psychological tests. Discusses testing procedures, training methods used for grooming men for executive functions, and plans for the self-development of executive personnel. A sample battery of tests is given in the appendix.


*Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.
Part A deals with the general principles of "individualized" executive selection, training, and follow-up. Part B describes the following techniques and states that they must be synchronized into a well-functioning entity: mental, physical and personality examinations; job efficiency evaluation and analysis; objective tests of job knowledge and performance; prognostic interviews; formal training; follow-up staff conferences; and centralized records.


"More and more," the author states, "those who are given the responsibility of managing local industrial plants have been graduates of technical schools." Technical schools, however, have neglected training in human organization, and executive training must therefore be greatly broadened to develop sound understanding of human relations.


The author writes: "The surest way to secure an improvement in our labor relations lies in the assertion of more effective leadership by management. This leadership must originate at the top, be effectively translated and transmitted from there to every other level of management." Suggests a problem-study method of training with emphasis on executive development in five fundamentals of management: analysis, planning, selling ideas, following-through, and developing subordinates.


Especially important as a background for modern executive training programs. Points to the overwhelming necessity for the emotionally mature industrial manager who is defined as "one who accepts unpleasant facts, whatever their genesis, as concrete situations to be handled rather than hated." States that in the face of the rapidly changing balance of social and economic forces, we cannot wait to develop a new generation of administrators schooled in the complex forces that make for conflict and cooperation. Suggests that those now on the job be given leaves of absence for full-time attendance at university courses in human relations—"courses perhaps especially devised for such practical men, and planned within a time limit which will not make them prohibitive for the companies concerned."

The author, then Chairman of the Finance Committee of the U.S. Steel Corporation, underlines the importance and advantages of executive training to industry and to the individuals participating. Recommends the establishment of an executive personnel officer reporting directly to the president of the organization and charged with the responsibility for the recruitment, selection, development, rating, and promotion of executive officers.


Chapter VII points to the growing recognition of the fact that the top executive must not only be a technician but also, and more importantly, a coordinator of “human interrelationships.” Chapter VIII presents an examination of some of the elements of good teaching and points out that effective training can take the place of order-giving. Chapter XVI suggests planned organization for training under competent leadership and states that at least four elements are essential: training in psychology, training in self-knowledge, training in attitude, and training to make group objectives more attractive.


A summary of arguments for and against formal executive training programs based on a comprehensive study made by the Society for the Advancement of Management and the Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University. Outlines a training plan characteristic of the most thorough-going plans of the 65 executive training programs surveyed.


Stresses the importance of executives as key men in the industrial organization and the consequent necessity for their proper recruitment, selection, and training. Gives four essentials to a successful executive training program: (1) management’s active and continuous interest, (2) competent training leadership, (3) carefully selected groups of a size insuring intimacy, and (4) a curriculum closely related to practical necessities. Training plans of five organizations are briefly discussed.
SPECIFIC COMPANY TRAINING PLANS


Describes the current training program for developing top executives in the General Foods Corporation. The program is presented in a series of conference courses covering two main topics: (1) executive leadership and (2) specialized departmental functions. It is felt the program has resulted in increased managerial efficiency and improved interdepartmental cooperation and understanding.


A discussion of the selection, training, and continuing development of executives based on the experience of the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation.


A study of the top-management organization and functions in 31 companies. Section 5 summarizes methods used in the selection, training, development, and rating of key personnel and recommends a carefully directed, well coordinated executive training program to assure that all responsible positions are capably filled.


The experiences of McCormick & Company with “junior boards of directors” as a device to facilitate the development of young executives.


An analysis of executive and supervisory training programs in six manufacturing companies followed by general comments and a bibliography.