

COMMUNICATIONS AND HUMAN RELATIONS

17 September 1954

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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

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Mr. William Oncken, Jr., Coordinator, Civilian Career Development Programs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, was born in Buffalo, N. Y., 1912. He was graduated from Princeton University, 1934, with a B.S. degree in Physics (with honors) and did graduate work at Columbia University, 1941. He was a geophysicist with the Geophysical Research Corporation, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1934-36; became head of the Science Department, Stony Brook Preparatory School for Boys, Long Island, N. Y., 1936; and was a visiting research assistant with Palmer Physical Laboratory at Princeton University, 1942. He was commissioned in the U. S. Naval Reserve in February 1943 and served at the U. S. Naval Ordnance Laboratory and with U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan. He was released to inactive duty in 1946 as a lieutenant commander. Mr. Oncken was director of Training at the U. S. Naval Ordnance Laboratory, 1946-50; director of Civilian Training, U. S. Navy Bureau of Ordnance, 1950-53. He has been coordinator, Civilian Career Development Programs, Office, Assistant Secretary of the Army since 1953. He is a member of the American Ordnance Association; the American Institute of Physics; the Society for Personnel Administration; and the American Society for Engineering Education. Mr. Oncken has published articles on professional executive development in such journals as "Mechanical Engineering" and "Industrial Training"; has lectured on "Communications" at the Air Force Management Training program conducted at George Washington University for the past three years; and has been featured on the programs of National Conferences of such organizations as: American Institute of Electrical Engineers; American Society of Mechanical Engineers; The Speech Association of America; Super Market Institute and others. This is his first lecture at the Industrial College.

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COLONEL CONNER: As this week draws to a close, I believe that all of us have realized from the evidence that there is no approved solution to these problems in human relations. There are principles to be applied, sure, but no formulae. Among all the principles that have been woven into these situations of human relations during the week, I believe there has been one common thread, that of communication. For that reason, I think it is appropriate that we take a look at this subject this morning and look into it a little more thoroughly.

From our speaker's biography, you will note that he has had long experience in this field. In addition his qualifications are a matter of record to this college. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to this class and to our guests Mr. Oncken, who will speak on the subject, "Communications and Human Relations." Mr. Oncken.

MR. ONCKEN: Good morning. As you have heard, our topic is "Communications and Human Relations." We shall start by offering a definition of communications. There are lots of them. This one won't satisfy you completely but, since I have control of this situation for 45 minutes, my definition is going to stand, for I am going to have to build my presentation on it. Later, you may make your own definition. My definition is: "Communications is the chain of understanding that integrates an organization from top to bottom, from bottom to top, and from side to side."

Now I used the phrase "chain of understanding" on purpose because, by association of words, it recalls another phrase, "chain of command," with which everyone of us is familiar. Chains of command are easy to devise. All one has to have is a certain amount of management know-how, a divider, a T square, a piece of paper, something flat to draw on, and one can multiply them as fast as one can draw. First, you draw lines vertically, then horizontally, connecting boxes into just the right levels; in those boxes you write the names of people, and when you are finished, you have a chain of command.

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We all know that it is possible to have a chain of command with no chain of understanding whatever. If you go back in your experience, you will remember an impossible situation where you were a link in a chain of command in which there was no chain of understanding at all. It is also possible to have a chain of understanding with no chain of command, as, for example, in an old ladies' sewing circle. There, no chain of command is necessary. So it is possible to have a chain of understanding without a chain of command or a chain of command without a chain of understanding.

I think you will all agree with me that no organization can accomplish anything without a chain of understanding which supports the chain of command. While the chains of command are easy to design, chains of understanding are not easy to design nor to maintain.

There are many communications techniques which you read about in textbooks, such as memoranda, station newspapers, conferences, employee opinion polls, and speeches in the auditorium by the Old Man, but unless they build a chain of understanding in the organization, a communications program using textbook techniques may be purely an illusion. Lots of "yackety-yack" may be going on, but no chain of understanding is being developed. We will examine this chain of understanding this morning in the light of its importance to the accomplishment of a mission.

When two individuals are talking, a chain of understanding can be forged between them only if they are speaking the same language. For example, if I go to a foreign country, say, France, and talk to a Frenchman in English, and he knows no English, he must obviously be listening in French. Consequently, we don't understand each other. Or if he is talking in French and I am listening in English, there is no chain of understanding being forged, or, as we say in Navy parlance, it is snafu.

You may say to yourself, "How does this apply in this country where we all speak English? We don't have that problem." I would like to suggest to you that we do have language problems. Everyone of you has sat down in cafeterias or officers' clubs and you have heard someone say, "I have been in my particular MOS for a long time. But the people I work with--we just don't talk the same language." What he is really saying is, his wheels are spinning and he isn't getting anything done.

Or some individual in charge of a shop says, "So and so came here highly recommended; you should see that fellow's qualifications; yet he has been here nine months and he and I still don't talk the same language."

(If he is a military man, you can get rid of him, but if he is a civilian like I am, you may be stuck!) Their wheels are spinning. They're not getting much accomplished.

You say, "All right, Bill, what are some of these languages which make it difficult for links in the chain of understanding to be forged?" Two of these languages are described on the two blackboards up here on the platform.

On the left-hand blackboard is the "language of motivation." On the right-hand blackboard is the "language of production and efficiency." The words basic to the language of production and efficiency are: planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling, with which everyone of you is very familiar. I personally am familiar with them because I have read them in textbooks and have heard lectures on them in classrooms; but even without courses and books I would have been familiar with them long before because of the treatment I get from my bosses.

My boss may say to me, "Bill, if you had only planned this better, we wouldn't be where we are now." So I guess planning is important. My boss may say to me, "Bill, let us get organized a little bit better," so I guess organizing is important. He may say, "Bill, let's have a little better supervision," so I guess supervision, or directing, is my job. Or, "Bill, let us get coordinated. The boys over here have nothing to do and the boys over there are putting in for overtime," so I guess coordinating is important. Or he says, "Bill, you don't know what is going on in your own organization" so I guess controlling is important. He rarely talks to me in any other terms. I have done very careful research on my last five bosses; they have rarely talked to me in any other language than that of production and efficiency, and, between you and me, I am getting tired of it. This language holds no thrill for me; in fact I become apathetic when addressed in the language described on the right-hand blackboard.

You will say, "What language does give you a thrill, Bill?"

The language I understand, the language in which I listen is described on the left-hand blackboard. The things I am interested in, in my job, consciously or unconsciously, day after day, are these four things:

First, I want an "opportunity" to do something of significance and importance as measured by my own standards. And I want a fair opportunity to get ahead in my field, whatever it may be. I think that is true of everyone in this room and of almost everyone in the world, at least of every normal civilized human being.

Second, I want "recognition." I don't want to be medaled or to acquire a file full of commendations, but I want a job to do which will be recognized when well done; a job which is accorded its proper occupational status in the organization and which is "wired into" other correlative functions; and a job which recognizes my personal dignity as an individual. These things cannot be written into a job description; but when I look at my job, I look for them just the same.

Third, I want to "belong." I am not a joiner, but still I want to belong to an organization that is going places and is taking its people along with it. I am frankly looking for bandwagons; if I find one to my liking, I will want to climb on board.

Fourth is "security." My definition for security, which will stand for the next 35 minutes, is "Security is the ability to plan ahead with confidence." I can do that on the economic side because I am a civil servant. I can plan ahead financially with confidence. This is called "economic security." I have Civil Service status and veterans' preference.

There is however another kind of security. I get emotional security out of my ability to plan ahead with confidence in my relationships with my boss and with the organization for which I work. I cannot work for a boss, who, on important policy matters, blows hot on Tuesday, lukewarm on Wednesday, sideways on Thursday and on Friday wants to know why I'm not following the policy. This breeds ulcers, which, it is said, are caused not by what you are eating but by what is eating you. There would be plenty eating me in those circumstances. I wouldn't be able to "case" the Old Man. But I must be able to "case" the Old Man in order to be able to plan ahead with confidence in my relationships with him.

All I am saying is this: What my boss is looking at in my job is the planning, organization, direction, coordination, and control of the function I'm responsible for. These words are basic to his language, the language of production and efficiency. But what I am looking at in the same job is the opportunity, recognition, belonging, and security it affords me. These words are basic to the language of motivation.

What must these four motivation factors add up to in my own case to keep me interested in my present job? I happen to be the type who is more interested in opportunity and recognition than in belonging and security; your requirements may be different. In my case they have to add up to at least my minimum requirements or I will start looking for

another job that does. And I feel sure that each of you has reacted the same way at one time or another.

In looking at my job, I ask myself, "What is the opportunity picture? Does it meet my minimum requirements?" You can't measure opportunity on a numerical scale, so you don't answer that question by arithmetic. Instead you feel the answer somewhere in your viscera. So instead of assigning a numerical value to the amount of opportunity your job gives you, you assign a "feel" value. For me, in my present job, this "feel" value can be represented by the symbol "A." It happens to meet, indeed it exceeds, my minimum requirements. In the same way, I assign values B, C, D, and E to the other motivational factors and arrange them in such a way that I can add them up, thus:

<u>My Army job</u>	
<u>Factor</u>	<u>Value</u>
Opportunity	A
Recognition	B
Belonging	C
Security (economic)	D
Security (emotional)	E
	—
Total psychic income	F

You will see I have coined a term, "psychic income," to identify the sum F. I call it "income" in the assumption that all five values are forms of income since I look for all of them in my job. We can now add the column as we are dealing with a common-denominator income.

If the overall value F meets my minimum requirements, I am getting what I want from my job. If it doesn't, I will want out.

I can see by the expressions on the faces of some of you that you are saying, "Bill, what you're really saying is that people work for other things besides money, that money isn't everything. But I'm older

than you are--I've had more experience. I've found that in the end, its the old green stuff that finally gets a man off his extremity. So, Bill, don't deceive the people on this point. You and I know better."

Those of you who may think this way I'll deal with for the next five minutes; if you're still not with me after that I'll have to leave you where you are and proceed.

I could, if I wished, get a job at Union Station as a floor swabber. I qualify, as I have been married for 13 years. Mrs. Oncken need not know anything about floor swabbing. All she needs to know is how to supervise (it says here).

In "casing" such a job possibility for the psychic income it would offer me, I would find no "opportunity." Others will see it differently, no doubt, but the job would not allow me to stand back occasionally and take pride in an enduring accomplishment. Thousands of people every day would rob me of that satisfaction by leaving their footprints all over the results of my labors.

Second, my "recognition" would be zero. Do not misunderstand me: I believe in our ideals of a social democracy in which all forms of legitimate labor are of equal dignity. In the United States the mechanic, professor, and businessman alike put their shoulder to the American democratic wheel. But my esteemed friends have not found out about this. So when they learn that I am now a floor swabber, they are embarrassed for me. And since they are the ones to whom I look for recognition, I don't get much of it.

Third, I have no hankering to belong to the Floor Swabber's Union, nor has Mrs. Oncken any desire to belong to the Union Women's Auxiliary. We are not social snobs. We are merely in a firmly fixed social rut. No matter how democratic our social predispositions may be, we are not going to change our social pattern at this late stage in life. So the "belonging" factor would be zero.

Skipping the economic factor for a moment, let's see what emotional security such a job might afford me. I am told that when a floor swabber gets a promotion to foreman, his newly acquired authority goes to his head and he strides about drunk with power. I couldn't "case" a boss like that. I couldn't plan ahead confidently in my dealings with him. In short, my "emotional security" would be zero.

My additive list therefore would look like this:

<u>Floor Swabbing</u>	
<u>Factor</u>	<u>Value</u>
Opportunity	0
Recognition	0
Belonging	0
Security (economic)	D
Security (emotional)	0
Total psychic income	<u>F</u>

You will note that my minimum requirement is still F--it doesn't vary from job to job. It is a constant quantity that goes with me wherever I am. The question now is: How big must D be so that, added to the zeros, the sum still equals F, my minimum requirement? For me D would have to be \$75,000 before I would consider taking the job.

I see you are laughing. You wonder why as a floor swabber I have suddenly developed a need for an extra \$65,000. I'll tell you why. My psychic income as a floor swabber is way out of balance from the standpoint of my requirements. To restore the zeros, respectively to their required values of A, B, C, and E, I must purchase, off the job, the opportunity, recognition, belonging, and emotional security I don't get on the job. I will go about it as follows:

First I will take \$25,000 out of the \$75,000 and exploit some interesting real estate speculation opportunities I know about in Montgomery County, Maryland, my home. Less than \$25,000 would not meet my minimum opportunity requirement, but with the \$25,000 I can restore my "opportunity feel factor" from zero back to A, where I must have it to be able to live with myself.

Second, I will take another \$25,000 and use it as a down payment on a beautiful home in socially exclusive Chevy Chase. So when people walk by, one will whisper to another, "Who just moved into that house?" And the other will reply with a knowing expression, "Why, its the Onckens, of course!" That does it. My "feel" factor for recognition is back up from zero to B; it cost me \$25,000, but never mind.

Third, I'll buy my way, if need be, into the exclusive Chevy Chase Country Club, ingratiate myself with its members until I obtain some important post. From there I will become active in civic affairs until I am appointed chairman of the Chevy Chase Community Chest. It won't be long before the newspapers quote the Mayor's frequent references to me as "Bill Oncken, that pillar of the community." That does it. I belong! The feel value is restored from zero to C, my minimum requirement.

Fourth, I will have a cocktail party at my home every Friday evening to which I will invite only Washington's prominent people. Most of these may question why a floor swabber is able to do this; but in Washington you regard such things as none of your business--you just keep coming. To these parties I will invite my foreman. He will recognize the importance of being on my invitation list. So while he may be superior to me on the job, I shall be in a superordinate position to him off the job. This will enable me to "case" him to the extent necessary to bring my emotional security back up from zero to E. I can now plan ahead with confidence in my dealings with him as an individual.

Having spent a lot of money to restore those four elements of my psychic income back to acceptable values, what cash have I left? Exactly \$10,000. What do I do with it? The same thing I do with the \$10,000 per annum I get right now in my Army job. A little on groceries, a little on transportation, a little on clothing, and so on down the line. In fact I wind up with the same amount of cash each year whether I continue in my present job with the Army at a salary of \$10,000 or take a floor swabbing job at Union Station at \$75,000. Either way I collect \$75,000 in psychic income. The Army gives me \$10,000 of this total in actual cash, the rest comes with the job. I prefer it that way.

"Now precisely what has all this to do with communications?" you may ask. In order to answer that, I'm going to have to tell you two stories--both of them out of my own personal experience. (I will make no apology for my frequent references to my own personal experiences because they're the only kinds I've ever had.)

The first of these stories is a synthesis of a number of yarns I picked up during wardroom duty on the AGC 13 while I was attached to her during the last three months of 1945 in Sasebo, Japan.

It is said that the Navy discovered electricity in 1939. One of the things we did with it was to install PA systems on all our larger fighting ships. Most of you are familiar with the "now hear this" routine that precedes every communication over the system.

Well, right after Pearl Harbor, 1941, when we put to sea with what larger ships we had left, we (the Navy) found that under strenuous battle conditions morale was at a low ebb in the engineroom. We weren't too sure what morale is, but whatever it is, they didn't have any of it in the engineroom. Now this wouldn't ordinarily be a matter of life and death except for the fact that there are times when the Old Man wants an extra five knots for tactical reasons--extra over and above the maximum rated speed which is clearly stenciled on the engineroom control panel. Every captain knows that he cannot order any more r. p. m. out of his engines than their rated maximum--if he tries to. But this is our story.

On the particular ship we have in mind, the Old Man decided he wanted an extra five knots. Remembering what he learned in Leadership 201 at the Naval Academy as a youngster, he knew that he would have to lead, rather than to drive, the men toward that extra speed. So he decided to use the personal, face-to-face, "let's do it boys" approach.

He turned to the executive officer and said, "How about an extra five knots?" The "exec" turned to the chief engineering officer and said, "The Old Man wants an extra five knots." This message passed down the echelons of command into the bowels of the ship until it reached the striker who had his hand on the lever that could produce the extra five knots. He pointed to the engine specifications on the control panel and replied, "Can't you read?" This question was passed up the chain of command until the "exec" respectfully asked the Old Man whether he had not read the specifications.

The captain said he had and blurted, "Why can't we get an extra five knots out of the engineroom, when battleship X, cruiser Y, and carrier Z have done it time and again. What's so different about us?"

That question went tersely down the echelons till it hit the bottom. The reply came up from mouth to mouth with equal terseness. "We've got boiler scale."

Down the chain of command went the captain's question "What the devil is boiler scale?"

Up the chain came the reply: "Anybody knows what boiler scale is."

Maybe so, but the Old Man didn't. He'd been a deck officer all his career; he was not familiar with the insurmountable problems you run into below decks. It was too late for him to learn about them now. So he had to settle for the maximum rated speed. He had become the prisoner of the specialists in the engineroom and he knew it.

With all these statements, questions, and answers going up and down the chain of command, he'd been led to believe that there was nothing wrong with the vertical communications between himself and the engine-men. All this word-passing, of which there was plenty, was creating an illusion of communications. Actually there was, as you have seen, no chain of understanding and therefore no communication at all. Just words, words, words; first down, then up, then down, then up again.

He went to the executive officer and said, "Trouble is, we've got bad morale in the engineroom. I want you to build up the morale of the men down there." "Is that an order?" asked the baffled "exec." "It is" replied the captain and he walked away.

Well now, just how do you "build up" morale? Do you issue an order, put a piece in the plan of the day, say something over the PA system, or what? The "exec" decided to go down to the library and look for a book on morale building. He found it.

Chapter one stated that good morale results when you have good working conditions. He scratched his head over this one because he knew that after the first few rounds were fired, working conditions are all shot up topside while they are intact below decks; nevertheless morale was high topside, low below decks. The author obviously didn't know what he was talking about so the "exec" tore out chapter one and threw it to the winds.

Chapter two said that you get good morale when the organization is so laid out that everybody knows exactly his duties and responsibilities and the standards of performance that go with them. The captain leered at this one. He knew that after the first few rounds the deck organization was pretty well shot up and half the men weren't always too sure of

their targets or of their marksmanship. meantime, organization below decks remained intact. Yet morale topside was high; but below decks, low. He tore out chapter two.

Chapter three said that you get good morale when orders are "clear, concise, and to the point." The "exec" scratched his head on this one too, for after the first few rounds, the men topside weren't too sure always what their orders were, let alone clarity and pointedness. The men in the engineroom got their orders via engine telegraph which can be read and acted on by anyone with an I. Q. of 50 and 1-20 eyesight. Nevertheless morale was high topside, low below decks.

We could go on. Suffice it to mention what the "exec" found in chapter eleven. "Rest periods at optimum intervals have a marked effect on morale. These can advantageously be combined with the so-called coffee break." This didn't ring a bell either. In some cases the men would remain at their battle stations topside for hours on end without relief of any kind. The engineroom crew kept a coffee pot on the steam line for constant use. You guessed it--morale high topside, terrible below decks.

In confusion the "exec" threw what was left of the book over the side. In despair he returned to the captain.

The captain had an idea. "Let's get the chaplain to help us on this."

Gentlemen, when the Navy has to call on the Chaplain's Corps to get an extra five knots out of the engineroom, things have come to a pretty pass.

But they went anyway. The chaplain said, "You are using the wrong approach. Go down the ladder and talk to the men, man-to-man. Inspire them. Why, half of them don't even know what you look like," he said, glancing at the Old Man.

"Let's go down" said the skipper and the three descended to the engineroom, picking up the chief engineering officer and a couple of CPO's on the way.

When they arrived, the men were waiting for them. The officers stood in a row on one side of the rail, the men in a row on the other. It looked for all the world like a labor-management bargaining session. The Old Man spoke first: "Men, let's see if we can't plan for a few more

r.p.m. out of these engines. A little careful and systematic planning should do it."

He looked around. No sale. "Let's see if we can't get organized down here for a little more speed."

"Improved supervision and direction could do a lot."

"Maybe what we need is a little better coordination."

"If we could get a little better control of the situation...."

The Old Man was getting nowhere and he knew it. The chaplain stepped into the breach. "You know why we're here, and what we're fighting for," he pleaded. "For home and hearth, for God and country, for womanhood and the flower of american youth, for the four freedoms and...." He saw he was making no headway either.

The officers turned and started back up the ladder. The captian looked down at the chaplain and said, "This just goes to prove my point. People are no d--- good."

"It would be more to the point," replied the chaplain, "to say that people who end up in the engineroom eventually become no d--- good. And I'm going to find out why."

As he thought things over, he began to realize what was happening. Up till now the "management" had been using the language of production and efficiency while the men had been listening in the language of motivation. As he had just seen, this resulted in no chain of understanding being forged in support of the chain of command. Plenty of words, but no communication.

After one particularly strenuous engagement, he happened into the messing compartment. The men from above and below decks piled in for a long overdue meal. He noticed the conversation. The above-deck's crowd was comparing notes on what they had accomplished. Charlie, the gunner's mate, shouted to Pete at the other end of the table, "Did you see that Zero coming in at us on our starboard bow? We got a bead on him and--splash!"

"That ain't nothin!" shot back Pete, "What about the three planes headed right at us, and when they looked down our barrels they did a 180 degree and never came back!"

The din of bragging and counterbragging drowned out all the other noises.

The chaplain noticed the below-decks men. They weren't participating. They were concentrating their attention on their bean soup. They had nothing to talk about. Indeed, had they not shown up for chow they wouldn't even have been missed. Not missed? My friend, when you're not missed you definitely don't belong.

What about opportunity? The above-decks crowd had more than it could handle. Plenty to do of obvious significance and importance. But below decks? My friend, if you think that watching gages, throwing switches, keeping logs, turning valves, and oiling bearings, spells opportunity, you've never had engineroom duty. It just isn't there.

What about recognition? When a gun crew made a killing, the Old Man up there on the bridge would turn around and grin with pride at the gun crew that did the job. That's all those boys needed. The Old Man knew! (And in granting this recognition he followed the line of sight, not the chain of command.)

But below decks? What recognition can you get for doing what you're supposed to do anyway? And if you did get the Old Man the extra five knots he's looking for, what then? Why it would just increase the opportunities of the men topside and they would get the extra recognition for the added targets they hit. And this would only increase the bragging in the messing compartment, which was well-nigh insufferable as it was.

What about economic security? All hands had that, in the form of their regular pay and allowances. But these weren't exactly the things they joined the Navy for in the first place.

Emotional security, however, was not as evenly distributed between topside and below decks. The men with the blue sky above them could see what was coming and could plan ahead with a degree of confidence. If a squadrom of strafers was swooping down, each man might estimate, for example, that he had 30 seconds to go before he got hit; but that 30 seconds was democratically distributed among all hands above decks--there was no discrimination.

But below decks? The men down there didn't know when to expect a torpedo through the side, a bomb down the stack, a shell through the overhead, or a mine up through the bottom. Judging by the St. Vitus

dance of the engine telegraph, the men could conclude that somebody on the bridge had gone berserk--things must really be bad. Indeed, it is more popular in the engineroom to overestimate the danger, because if you're right it won't make any difference anyway and if you're wrong, you don't feel let down when you find out what actually happened. So, in short, you have no emotional security.

The chaplain got the point. The psychic income of the men below decks was far below their minimum requirements. The thing to do was to raise it somehow. He couldn't do anything about their economic security--the "D" value--but he could about the others. And here is where the electronic communications system--the PA system--came in.

He went up to the captain on the double. He suggested that they find an officer who'd had news or sports broadcasting experience in civilian life, that they put him behind a microphone on the bridge, and that he give a running account of the entire strategic and tactical situation as it unfolded and of the immediate part their own ship was playing in it. He was to give a blow-by-blow description of each engagement, the disposition of the enemy, and the ship's battle status at every instant. The captain agreed. They found their man, a lieutenant junior grade, and put him to work.

I can well imagine the question a modern manpower utilization expert might have asked the Old Man about the wisdom of assigning a person to such a task. The conversation might have sounded like this:

Expert: "Will this officer tell the men anything they need to know to do their jobs?"

Captain: "No, but...."

Expert: "Will he tell them anything that will help them improve their qualifications?"

Captain: "Well, no, but you see...."

Expert: "Is knowledge of the strategic and tactical situation an engineering job requirement?"

Captain: "That's not the point."

Expert: "Is knowledge of battle progress a factor in the advancement-in-rate schedule?"

Captain: "What we want to do is to...."

Expert: "Then it is obvious that assigning an individual to this type of microphone duty is a waste of manpower at a time when we are in the most critical need of it. The men should do their engineering tasks as directed and the strategic and tactical information should be limited to the bridge on a strictly need-to-know basis."

Luckily no such expert was carried on the ship's complement.

During the next battle engagement the lieutenant did his job well. After it was over the captain said to him, "Lieutenant, give me that microphone. I want to announce the box score." When he had finished he added, over the PA system "This is peanuts compared to what we could do if we could overtake a squadron of enemy destroyers directly to the west of us. To do it, though, will take an extra five knots."

To his amazement he got the extra five. They overtook the squadron on schedule. They clobbered it. The Old Man grabbed the microphone from the lieutenant. "Men," he shouted, with obvious warmth, "We did it. And it goes without saying that without those additional five knots, there would not be anything to talk about."

The chaplain beat the men to the messing compartment. The usual din of competitive bragging was building up. Presently one of the men from the engineroom stood up and pounded his coffee mug on the table to get attention. When he got things quiet, he said, "Did you hear what the Old Man said? He said that if it hadn't been for the extra five knots you guys wouldn't have anything to talk about!" He sat down.

One of the above-deck's crowd stood up. "What about that boiler scale you fellows have been griping about?"

"What's that?"

"Boiler scale!"

"Can't hear you."

"Boiler scale," the above-deck's crowd shouted in unison.

"Oh, boiler scale?--do you see that rating patch we've got on our sleeves? Well, we licked boiler scale years ago! What the devil are you talking about?"

It is easy to see what happened.

What had been a problem, boiler scale, now became an opportunity to accomplish something of significance and importance.

What had been a problem, boiler scale, now became an avenue toward recognition.

What had been a problem, boiler scale, now became an invitation to belong, through participation.

What had been a problem, boiler scale, now became a source of emotional security. They could now plan ahead with greater confidence.

You see, the officers recognized that to get more out of the engine-room than the maximum rated speed, they could not ask for it in the language of production and efficiency and still expect to get it, simply because the men would be listening in the language of motivation. Instead, they saw clearly that the problem was to translate "top management's" desire for greater production and efficiency into the language of motivation. This they did, in this instance, with real success.

Now, don't get me wrong. I am not saying that you have to switch to the language of motivation for everything you want out of your organization. No indeed. When all you want is the maximum rated speed, you can demand it in the language of production and efficiency and get it. We always can, and always have, been able to get compliance by simply ordering it. Anybody can get compliance. But I am sure that none of you here this morning can afford to be content with mere compliance. To be worth your pay, you have to develop a reputation for getting more--more--than bare compliance out of your organization. To do that you have to talk to people in the language they're listening in.

So much for downward communication, which, as you have seen, supports the directing function.

Let us now examine upward communications which, as we shall see, supports the controlling function. About two years ago when I was an employee of the Navy Department, I was walking down the hallway when I saw my boss at the other end walking toward me. This is known as "two intermediate echelons of command advancing on each other." We eventually drew abreast. He smiled at me and asked, "Bill, how's the work coming?"

You all know from experience that this is not an easy question to answer. It was especially tough in my case because he and I had not talked shop for about three weeks; there were some critical items I was working on that he should know about; and if he didn't find out pretty soon he would lose control. And since control is a basic word in the language of production and efficiency, he was being paid to pay close attention to it. (He had a different gleam in his eye for each of the five basic words. And I could see that the controlling gleam was on.)

Well, how do I answer that question? I debated the matter silently for about five seconds before I replied. But it will take me five minutes to describe that debate to you.

"My answer," I argued, silently to myself, "will depend on what lies behind that question. Maybe it's just early morning smalltalk, but then again maybe not. I wonder what he already knows that prompted that question! What could he know? Let's see-- there's project A and project B. Project A is away ahead of schedule and in fine shape; but project B is six weeks behind and all fouled up. I wonder if he already knows about project B? If he does, who is the rascal that told him? If it's who I think it is, what did he say? And if he said what I think he said, what slant did he put on it? Then in the light of all this, how can I frame my reply in such a way as to give him an unbiased report on the state of project B from my point of view?

"On the other hand," I continued to myself, "suppose he doesn't know about project B. Then I can safely ignore it at this time and concentrate on project A. If I do that, he may smile approvingly and continue on his way. But I will still not know for sure whether he really knows about project B. If he does, and doesn't reveal it, then he'll go back to his desk, shake his head, and say to himself, 'I'm still looking for an honest man. I asked Bill how things were coming but all I got were the good things, the things he thinks I want to hear.'

"As he ponders thus I can see him picking a piece of paper out of his IN basket. It's from the Admiral. It says, 'Choose me out from among your crew an up-and-coming young man with plenty on the ball and detail him to me for the next three weeks. This could be a real opportunity for the right man'.

"I can see the boss now," I say to myself, "shaking his head and saying, 'I would have picked Bill for this, but based on the new impression I just got of him in the hallway, I am convinced that he is not ready for this kind of an opportunity'.

"Then (I continue to myself) when he explains to his captain why he did not pick me, he is obviously not pinning any medals on me. My recognition takes a beating.

"Each time I see him after that I won't feel as much a member of the team as I did before. My belonging--shot.

"Over the subsequent months I won't be able to plan ahead as confidently as in the past in my relationships with him. My emotional security--on the skids.

"The only aspect of my psychic income that won't be affected will be my economic security. But this is small comfort. It's never affected anyway. I'm a civil servant."

So I decide to take the "bull" by the horns. I'll make no dangerous assumptions. I begin my reply by saying that project A is in fine shape and ahead of schedule. I study the expression on his face to get a hint as to what he may already know. But he is an old hand. He gives me the deadpan.

So I proceed cautiously into the hazardous area. I say, "project B, on the other hand, is six weeks behind and not going quite the way we want it to go." Again I pause to get some guidance from his expression. I don't get it. So I take the plunge.

"Project B got fouled up down in the fiscal office. We made out the requisition in plenty of time but when it got to fiscal, one of its new employees gave it the wrong internal office routing and we lost four weeks on that alone."

Now the boss reacts. He's mad. This is the fifth time fiscal has fouled things up for us in as many days. He pushes me out of the way as he heads for the fiscal office. But I can't afford to have him go down there and get an unbiased account of what happened from fiscal's point of view. This would be disastrous. So I get in his way and say, "Now please don't go down there and ruin the fine relationships I've developed with those people. Why, when I called their error on project B to their attention, they went all-out to correct it. Their boss put three girls on overtime to dig us out of it and even came in himself last Saturday morning to get the more important orders out in the morning's mail."

This stops him, all right. But he's still standing there with that controlling gleam in his eye. He expects more. So he gets it.

"What really happened, Al," I resume, "is that we made out the requisition on NavOrd Form 5947 as approved by the Bureau of the Budget in June of 1948, overruled by GAO in December 1950, reinstated in 1951, and revised in the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts Manual, volume II, chapter 3, section 4 in line with the Comptroller General's decision of October 1949 concerning requisitions involving more than \$1,500, pertaining to provisions set forth in Public Law 547 of the 78th Congress in which provision is made that, except as noted otherwise in previous legislation, the former shall take precedence over the latter, whichever shall occur earlier, in which case a more recent executive order shall apply...."

I could lose anybody in five minutes with this kind of talk, but not him. He's sharp. He's still with me. So I go on in the same vein as long as I have to.

After 10 minutes of this, he smiles, yawns, and looks at his wrist-watch and says, "Bill, we certainly have our problems, don't we? I'm sure glad to see you are on top of yours. And if there's anything I can do to help out, don't hesitate to call on me." With that he gives me a pat on the back and goes on his way.

What went on here? His objective was to do what he was paid to do--to manage. Part of this is to control. To do that he had to get upward communication. That he did not begin to achieve his objective is obvious to all of you.

But my objective was different. It was to see to it that I wound up with at least as much psychic income at the end of our encounter in the hallway as I knew I had at the start. Paraphrasing Winston Churchill, "I didn't come to that point with my boss in the hallway just to preside over the liquidation of my psychic income."

How did I fare? Let's see--when he said, "We certainly have our problems," he was really welcoming me into that great company of successful executives who have problems! I was in like the other fellow. I belonged.

When he said he was glad to see that I was on top of the job, he was obviously pinning verbal medals on me. My "recognition" was salvaged. When he invited me to call on him for any help at any time, the door of "opportunity" was thrown wide open. And finally, I didn't have to worry about what he might do with what I just told him, for I didn't tell him anything. My "emotional security" therefore was where I wanted it.

I came out, as you see much better than the "management" did. The tragedy is that the boss was paid to do what he tried unsuccessfully to do, while I was not paid to do the thing I succeeded so well in doing. Worse yet, all this was going on during working hours at at our employer's expense.

You may say, "Bill, this sort of thing is common enough, but I don't see any answer to it."

I would like to suggest an answer for this particular case. If my boss had done in that instance what he usually did in similar cases where my psychic income was at stake, he would have met his objective.

Normally, he would have invited me into his office and put me at ease by asking if I preferred cream or sugar in my coffee, letting me offer to pay for it, then suggesting we flip for it. With this and a little irrelevant smalltalk out of the way, he would just let me talk my own way into the subject and out of it again. He would give me time to "case" the situation, in other words. Properly "cased," the situation helped to forge the chain of understanding necessary to the upward flow of valid and reliable communication.

You will say, "Do you mean to tell me, Bill, that every time I want information from my subordinates in which their psychic income may be at stake, I have to butter them up for 15 minutes? I don't have that kind of time."

I will turn the question back to you: Do you mean to tell me that you have the time to spend a half hour getting little or nothing and that you don't have the time to spend 20 minutes getting what you really want? What you are actually saying to me is that you don't like to spend time "buttering up" (this is your term) people. This is a matter of your personal inclination and not of your time. All I'm suggesting is that you take time to save time.

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But you may say, "I just don't believe in catering to oversensitive people. I want men who can cut the mustard. If any of them can't, I'll get others who will."

Let's get back to fundamentals. Your operation as a boss will be no better than the control you exercise, directly or indirectly, over what is going on. For this you need information. If you're not getting it, you must fill in the void with your own opinion. Your own opinion of what is going on may have little semblance to what is really going on. If this condition persists, your operation is in jeopardy.

Now, if you are willing to live in a dream world just because you don't like to "butter up" sensitive people, go right ahead. The skin is off your nose, not the other fellow's. You have the final responsibility, not he.

Thank you very much.

(1 Dec 1954--750)S/gmh