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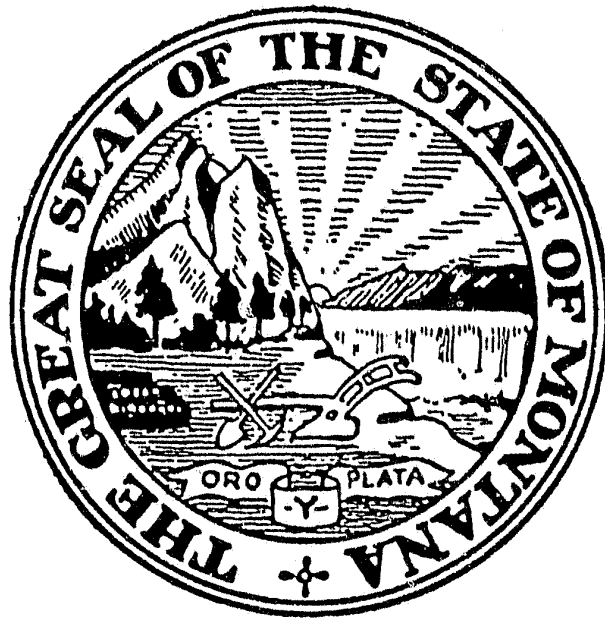
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STAFFING AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
A HUMANISTIC LOOK
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The phrase "people make the program" isn't all that new to us and yet
in these days of cost effectiveness and accountability we often fail to take a
hard look at those people who make up the program. Our emphasis still seems
to fall on organizational systems and structure and irregardless of the excel-
lence of structured programs, some of them still fail.

Community residential treatment centers, especially in the area of correc-
tions, are a relatively new concept and are thus under constant scrutiny.
Thus developing credibility through stability and success is a priority at this
point in time. That credibility can be obtained by utilizing a personnel
management philosophy which will optimize individual staff potential. An
emphasis is being placed in community corrections at looking at offenders as
human beings rather than as social liabilities. In the same light we can look
at staff as human beings rather than employees needed to carry out specific
goals and objectives of the program. We often look at programs externally or
objectively in terms of its outcomes or impacts, etc. The individual, however,
working in that program looks at himself in relation to the process involved
and his place in that process. This is the perspective from which we will be
looking.

The intent here is not to de-emphasis the importance of organizational
structure and program development as they are integrally involved in the success
of a program. The point is in stressing the development of personnel management
to a higher level of successful functioning. A marriage, then, of organizational
management and personnel management can lead only to an optimally functioning
program.

Basic Personnel Theory

A logical staring point for us would be to look at some general theories
of man in relation to work. Through his research, the late Douglas McGregor
developed or identified two basic theories which he called Theory X and Theory
Y.

Theory X is looked upon as the conventional personnel management theory
which assumes the following.

1) That man has an inherent dislike for work and will avoid it whenever possible.

2) Due to man's dislike for work he must be coerced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment to get him to perform adequately for an organization.

3) Man prefers to be directed, avoids responsibility when possible, has relatively little ambition, and above all, seeks security.

These assumptions coincide with an analogy made of Adam. According to that analogy, God created Adam with somewhat of a feeble mind and at the same time created the tree of knowledge. When Adam ate from that tree and was able to see and understand what was going on around him, God banished him from his care-free existence and made him work to stay alive. Thus work became a form of punishment and has remained so. We'll discuss a biblical counter so that analogy in a later discussion.

Following Theory X has led to two basic types of management- hard and soft. Where hard forms of management are put into effect through the use of tight controls, threat of punishment for lack of activity and other coercive methods, negative results occur. The physical laws tell us that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Thus, when a great deal of force is used an equal amount in the form of resistance can be expected. Though that resistance may not appear overtly it will most likely occur in the form of undermining, lack of incentive and the ever known method of "working to rule." In the same light soft management offers little more in terms of organizational output. A staff under very loose management with little direction or control may be working happily and harmoniously while accomplishing little. In both cases the problem lies in disregarding the presence of positive motivational characteristics in individuals in establishing a management plan.

This leads us to McGregor's second theory which is Theory Y. Theory Y is based on beahvioral research and motivational theory. The following are assumed under Theory Y:

1) The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as doing so in play or rest.

2) Men will exercise self-direction and self-control toward achieving objectives to which they are committed.

3) Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement.

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4) The average human being seeks out responsibility under the proper conditions.

5) Most people are capable of a relatively high degree of imagination, inginuity and creativity in solving organizational problems.

Should the above assumptions be true they do not imply that they will be displayed under any given set of circumstances. One must, as a manager, be able to supply the type of system which will allow and nurture their development. To do so, an additional understanding of motivation and how to tap its use is needed.

Using another biblical analogy mentioned earlier, let's take a look at the character Abraham. Abraham was looked upon as a successful person who utilized inginuity and responsibility in a productive manner. Work was not looked upon as a punishment but as a means of gaining rewards which led to a more harmonious existance for him and members of his family.

Motivational Theory

In recent years management has begun to look at the work of Dr. Abraham H. Maslow, one of the leading behavioral theorists of our day. Through his research, Maslow has determined that man's behavior is determined through need gratification. Man continuously works toward basic goals and these goals take the form of basic needs we all have a desire to fulfill. His work is best illustrated in what is known as the "Hierarchy of Human Needs". The Hierarchy is divided into five categories: Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Belongingness and Love Needs, Esteem Needs and Self-Actualization. The higher the level of the need, the more intrinsidy gratifying is the fulfilling of that need. In addition, as Maslow sees it, we as human beings aren't concerned about meeting any given level of need until lower level needs are satisfied.

Application of Theory

Now, how do we get around to applying all of this to personnel management - well, no one said it was going to be easy.

First a basic understanding of how to use motivation. Motivation is internal. A common mistake is our trying to motivate people externally. Example: " What can I do to make you excited about your work?" A better question might be: "What types of rewards can I build into my program that will help in your becoming more excited or motivated to actively take your part?"

Another step to take is to look at Maslow's Hierarchy and determining what it actually means in terms of gaining output from an individual toward achievement of goals. The first four levels relate to things that the program can do for

the individual. The top level, self-actualization, relates to what the individual can do for the program. This level is where the best of the individual comes through in the form of creativity, accomplishment for the sake of personal accomplishment, what I am saying here is that if we set up our organization in such a manner as to meet the first four levels of need we allow a staff member to reach for the next level bringing out the best in that individual.

In looking at how we can meet those lower level needs in our programming it might help to look at the work of Dr. Frederick Herzberg. Basically he has divided job satisfaction into two areas: job context and job content. Job context factors might consist of the following:

1) company policy and administration
2) supervision
3) working conditions
4) interpersonal relations (with fellow workers)
5) salary
6) status
7) job security
8) personal life

Job content factors would be:

1) achievement
2) recognition
3) work itself
4) responsibility
5) advancement
6) growth

Herzberg named the two groups of factors dissatisfiers and satisfiers respectively. The reason for doing so was that in his research the context factors were mentioned by research groups only in relation to dissatisfaction while the second group of items were mentioned only in realtion to job satisfaction. This relates to Maslow's belief that lower level needs are only motivators when they are lacking. Whereas higher level needs may continue to be sought even after they are met. Looking at the above two groups of factors one might easily place context factors into lower level needs and content factors into higher level needs. What often happens , especially in larger organizations, is that a great deal of emphasis is placed on "personnel policy" i.e. benefits, retirement, vacation, etc. without looking at higher level needs. Managers are thus dumbfounded when, despite their excellent personnel policies, their staff remains relatively unmotivated. Again, the intent is not to de-emphasize good personnel policy but to add a "don't stop

there". The reason for the last point is that people will move to a higher level on the hierarchy until lower level needs are met.

The primary point to be made of the above discussion is the motivation, satisfaction and achievement of organizational goals are heavily dependent on the proper consideration of higher level needs.

Motivation Exemplified

To more clearly demonstrate my point on motivation, I would like to share with you the background for my intensity on motivation. To obtain some informal staffing pattern information on residential programs I had decided to contact two model agencies - Boys Town based in Omaha, Nebraska and Lighthouse, a therapeutic community for drug treatment, in Montana.

Don Weber, the personnel director for Boy's Town residential centers, described the highly successful use of the Teaching Family concept in their centers which number close to one hundred. As to why they deleted the use of shift patterns for staffing in their centers he cited the following:

1) Lack or diffusion of accountability for staff responsibilities.
2) High staff turnover and thus poor cost effectiveness in training.
3) Shift staff were not integrally involved in treatment and thus had little investment in client success.
4) One or more professional persons received credit for client success.

The Teaching Family concept has been working well for them and when questioned about burnout it appeared to be less than a problem if any at all. This seemed surprising as Teaching Families are on the job twenty four hours a day, seven days a week with very little vacation. Yet their average turnover rate per center was between eighteen to twenty four months and then it was usually a transfer to another Teaching Family position. Weber attributed the success to the following points:

1) Teaching Families are highly trained prior to their first position.
2) The Family is accountable for the total program and maintains responsibility for control.
3) Families have a great deal of personal investment in the pgoram.
4) Attitudes are clarified prior to entering training.
5) A career ladder exists.
6) Can raise their own families in the work setting - work is home.
7) Enough space in the physical setting.
8) Salary- good and getting better.

Two things came to mind from the discussion:

1) Apparently the intrinsic rewards outweighed the physical demands as salary and time at work seemed less than desireable at first glance.
2) How did Lighthouse, operating with a shift staffing pattern, also have such a high degree of overall program success and low staff turnover.

I then visited Lighthouse and spoke with the director, John Weida, to find out some answers there. He also informed me that burnout didn't seem to be an issue and that this point in their three years of existance they had only one full time staff member leave, after over two years of serving the program. These are some of the points he gave for their success as a staff:

1) Each staff member is involved in the decision making process for the program.
2) Administrative considerations are shared by and with all staff.
3) The staff and clients function as a Family with group and individual responsibility for its proper functioning.
4) Recognition is given by and to staff on a spontaneous basis as positive things happen.
5) Shift communication is structured and done in writing to assure flow.
6) Initial screening for staff received a great deal of attention.
7) Individual flexibility and creativity toward positive growth of the program is encouraged.

By reviewing the information from both programs it became clear that program success and staff satisfaction were related to the meeting or allowance for meeting of higher level needs. As one example, in both modalities the number of staff is relatively low and individual involvement and responsibility is high.

Motivation: A Step Further

In both of the above examples, staff selection was perceived as highly important. This leads to one more direct application of motivational theory to personnel management which is probably the most innovative and advanced process available at this time. The system I am speaking of has been developed by Kenneth G. Neils, APD., and David E. Barbee, PH.D. of Human Potentials, Inc., Big Fork, Montana.

They have taken motivational theory a step further than we have talked about thus far. Basically, what they are saying is that all persons have motivational potential and furthermore, individuals have specific areas in which they are primarily motivated in their efforts to meet need levels.

Responsibility then for personnel management lies in identifying those "motivational traits" in individuals and utilizing that information in staff selection for positions. By matching motivational traits to job descriptions we can obtain optimal performance from individuals. Staff selection is only one function of this system as it has implications for many other facets of personnel management. Human Potentials, Inc. has at this time the technology and developmental experience to assess motivational potential and has experienced a high degree of success and support for their ideas and concepts.

Another Screening Device

Another technique which assesses both motivation for a given position and also current applicant competency is the "in basket" technique. The "in basket" technique was developed primarily for selection of applicants for administrative positions. The technique consist of analyzing the position in question and determining several situations which are likely to arise in relation to it. Those situations are then put in written form by way of hypothetical letters, memos, documents, etc., which must be answered in the manner actually required by the position. The applicant is given a description of the applied for position and asked to respond in the appropriate manner to each of the positions. The applicants responses are then evaluated in terms of interest, competency and appropriateness for the position applied for.

Variations of this exercise can be generated to apply to specific positions even on a non-administrative level.

In summary the staffing pattern is dependent upon the type of program with any number of variables given the wide use of residential facilities. Therefore, the patternitself will often be based on organizational need or the system to which the organization belongs. What is key then, is determining how to best utilize the motivation of individuals and thus optimize functioning of the programs.
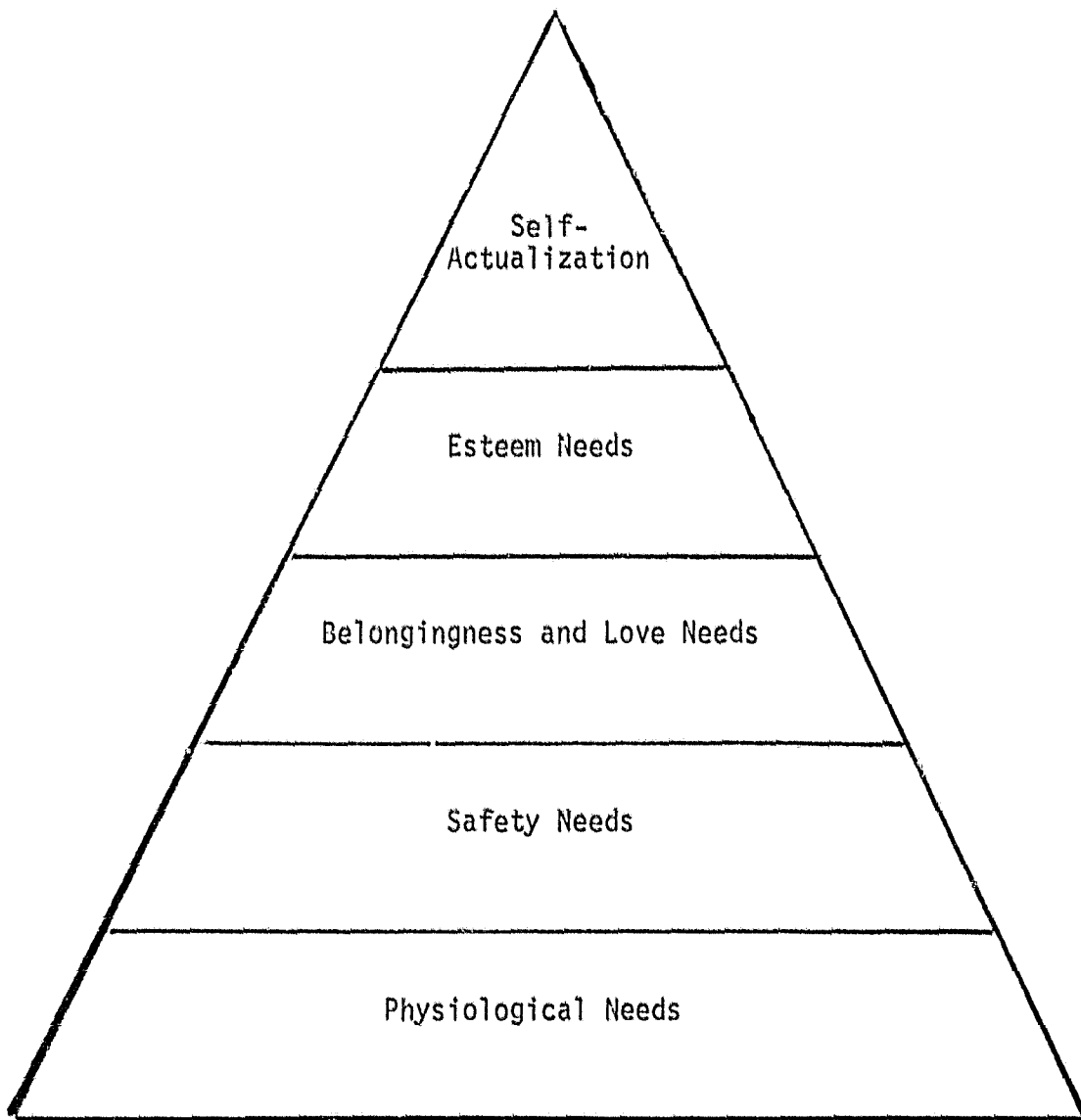
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