

Administration Skills

Manmohan Joshi



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ADMINISTRATION SKILLS

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1 ADMINISTRATION SKILLS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many of us think of an administrator as paper-pushing and issuing instructions, requiring little initiative and few skills. Yet the dictionary defines an administrator as someone who manages, for example, business or public affairs, or someone capable of organising activities and resources.

As a result of stereotypical views of administrative tasks, administrators are widely undervalued and receive little recognition for their contribution to business or activity. Even though the art of administration is as old as the human race, many administrators are rarely offered training and development opportunities and receive little or no career guidance. However, they have direct influence on their organisations. They need and use a wide variety of essential skills in these areas.

In different organisations these administrators may be known by various nomenclatures viz. Manager, Supervisor, Executive, Principal, Dean etc. but for the sake of convenience I'll use the term "administrator".

1.2 THE ADMINISTRATOR'S JOB

A management consultant asked the President of a large insurance company, "How does your business keep running so smoothly? Each time I visit here I learn of another shake-up in top management. Vice-Presidents come and go as if they were big league basketball managers. Yet I hear your policy-holders don't complain too much about service".

"I think I can answer your question", replied the President, "Our day-to-day work gets done by office administrators and their workers. It doesn't matter who the players are at the top of the company. The game is the same down below. Most of our administrators have been with us a long time. They make sure that the work gets done without worrying about the politics in the top executive suite".

Although comments made by this President may be over-dramatic, they do illustrate an important part of work life.

Organisations cannot be run properly without competent first-level managers. These administrators are the key to success in any organisation. Because of the widespread recognition of this fact, they are usually held accountable for whatever goes wrong in an organisation.

1.3 WHO IS AN ADMINISTRATOR?

An administrator is a manager who:

- Accomplishes work with and through subordinates;
- Directs the work activities of people who themselves are individual performers.

1.4 DIFFERENT ADMINISTRATIVE JOBS

The basic job performed by an administrator varies in complexity. Some administrators are expected to prepare a budget, contribute to long-range planning and solve technical problems. Another person may be called an administrator, yet may spend almost all of the working day checking to see that others are working properly. Such administrative positions are becoming increasingly rare.

1.5 MANAGING RESOURCES

An administrator has to manage various resources. He/she cannot accomplish this task without the full cooperation of his/her team. The following resources are generally at the disposal of the administrator:

- **People:** This is the most difficult resource to manage. People have different needs, attitudes, abilities and personalities. These are not constant and can change from day to day, hour to hour. A good administrator will maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses.
- **Time:** This is the most democratic of resources. Everyone has 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour etc. It is how this time is used that determines administrative effectiveness.
- **Space:** This is expensive and many workplaces suffer from lack of it. However, much can be made of the space available to improve the working environment and people's behaviour.
- **Finance:** All administrators will be involved with budgets and expenditure to some degree.
- **Equipment:** It includes desks, telephones, photocopiers, computers etc. An administrator must ensure that his/her team has sufficient equipment for their needs, while bearing in mind that idle equipment is a non-productive asset.
- **Information:** It is to be ensured that all information received is given the right priority and used as appropriate to help the team. Their utilisation will help the team and the individuals within the team, so managing these resources effectively is vital.

1.6 ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

It is helpful to understand why some administrators are more effective and others are not, and how their sincerity in the welfare of the team members can affect the success of the organisation.

1.6.1 LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS

- What the administrators expect of their subordinates and the way they treat them largely determines the subordinates' performance and career process.
- A unique characteristic of superior administrators is their ability to create high performance expectations that subordinates fulfil.
- Less effective administrators fail to develop similar expectations, and as a result, the performance of their subordinates suffers. Subordinates, more often than not, appear to do what they believe they are expected to do.

1.7 DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

- The role that the administrators play in developing the readiness of their people is very important. Too often, administrators do not take responsibility for the performance of their people, especially if they are not doing well.
- However, when administrators develop their people and have subordinates at high levels of readiness, the subordinates can take over much of the responsibility for day-to-day administrative functions also.
- Initially, close supervision and direction are helpful when working with individuals who have little experience in directing their own behaviour. In order to maximize their performance, administrators must change their style and play an active role in helping others grow.

1.8 THE UPGRADED ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

The administrative role has been upgraded in recent years. Administrative positions today require technical skills, human relations skills, and direct responsibility for improving productivity and performance.

The current emphasis on improving productivity and performance, while at the same time maintaining morale, has also helped upgrade the administrators.

1.9 BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Business environment refers to various forces that influence the functioning of business. It plays a significant role in shaping the business decisions and strategies of a company.

Changes in all these spheres are constant, and they pose a serious challenge for today's administrators to be aware of the specific changes so as to keep themselves abreast with the latest happenings in their fields to maintain their survival and sustainability.

Since business environment is complex and vibrant, it has great impact on the development of business. There is a close relationship between business and its environment. Hence an administrator has to have a proper understanding of the various forces running the environment, and this understanding helps the business in several ways.

This involves the following:

- **Determining opportunities and threats:** An administrator needs to identify opportunities and threats in order to face various challenges and come out successful.
- **Learning potential:** Environmental analysis helps administrators to enhance their learning and empowers them with the knowledge and skills to deal with challenges continually.
- **Image building:** Study of the environment provides an opportunity to the administrators to create and sustain their image vis-à-vis their competitors.
- **Identifying strengths and weaknesses:** An analysis of business environment helps the administrators to assess their organisations' relative strengths and weaknesses in the light of technological and international developments.

In addition to the above, administrators need to understand the following in order to analyse environmental influences:

- They need to know the uncertainty regarding the structure and nature of the organisation.
- They need to be fully aware of the decision making process.
- They need to clearly identify the various environmental influences which are likely to affect the organisation's performance. For this, they need to understand and analyse the political, economic, social and technological influences.
- They need to understand the competitive environment and assess its effects on the organisation.

1.9.1 ORGANISATION – VISION AND VALUES

Organisations are not ‘self-contained’; they depend on other organisations for many of their requirements. They have to respond and adapt to the pressures of their particular external environments – social, political and economic – which are constantly changing. However, every organisation has its own vision and values.

It:

- Maintains key relationships:
 - Internal relationship,
 - Relationship with community,
 - Relationship with individuals and groups;
- Clearly defines its vision and mission;
- Follows the principle of business ethics;
- Understands its social responsibility;
- Develops the necessary infrastructure (systems, policies, marketing etc.);
- Improves competence through training and development programmes;
- Analyses its internal as well as external environment, and modifies accordingly;
- Encourages creativity and innovation; and
- Has effective staff welfare programmes.

An administrator needs to ensure that he/she is actively involved in all the above-mentioned activities. Only then will they be able to undertake their responsibilities effectively.

1.9.2 ADMINISTRATOR’S ROLE IN THE ORGANISATION

According to Henry Mintzberg (1973), an administrator’s role falls into the following categories:

- **Informational:** Monitor, Disseminator, and Spokesperson.
- **Interpersonal:** Figurehead, Leader, and Liaison.
- **Decisional:** Entrepreneur, Disturbance Handler, Resource Allocator, and Negotiator.

Mintzberg argues that management is a blend of these often conflicting roles, where art, science, and craft meet.

1.9.3 PERSONAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK

An employee's attitude often reflects the attitude of his/her superiors. Administrators who have a negative outlook on everything usually cause employees to do the same. Hence administrators have to be very careful about their own attitude. They should monitor their personal communications with employees, even emails and phone calls, and seek feedback from employees on how they are perceived as administrators.

As an administrator, one's influence is crucial for the healthy functioning of their team. Therefore, it is essential that they need to inculcate the right attitude lest it stifles team effectiveness.

An administrator's attitude affects team morale and productivity. Therefore, it is important that the administrator has positive leadership qualities that promote a productive work environment.

1.9.4 PERSONAL LEARNING STYLES

Different people have different ways to learn things. There is no right or wrong way in learning styles. Some people see things and understand. Some people do experiments to learn. Some people may just think and correlate. Leaders in their role as administrators spend most of the time in understanding followers' development levels, and change their teaching methods to educate them based on that.

Learning improves the working ability which in turn gives out the expected outcome, which is otherwise called as improved performance. Even those who fail to understand by one approach of learning, can understand things well if we change the learning style.

Several theories have evolved about learning styles. Among these, the most popular has been David Kolb's (1984) experiential learning. Kolb produced the first systematic and comprehensive exposition of the theory of experiential learning.

He said that:

"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it."

So, Experience + Understanding = Knowledge

Learning styles play a significant role in different fields – mainly in educational, professional career and adaptive competencies.

Kolb goes on to say:

"A learning style is a differential preference for learning, which changes slightly from situation to situation. At the same time, there is some long-term stability in learning style."

To summarize the benefit, successful projects need to employ a range of learning styles to capitalize on the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of each style, and it helps leaders to set up good coaching relationship.

1.9.5 ASSESSING CURRENT SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

It is important for an administrator to identify and assess what they consider to be their skills, knowledge and the experience gained. An added advantage of assessing oneself is that they will be able to identify their weaknesses, and thereby plan to improve and upgrade them.

Some of the skills that need to be continuously assessed in order to remain an effective administrator could be the following:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to promote change
- Organisational skills
- Ability to develop ideas

1.9.6 THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability is the nature of changing or creating modifications in oneself to suit the new environment. It means that an administrator must be open to new ideas or changes, and must be able to work independently as well as in teams.

Adaptability is a core emotional intelligence quality. It is ranked the top among other important skills like communication, interpersonal skills, work ethics and principles.

An administrator who is adaptable is able to carry out multiple tasks, manage multiple assignments by setting priorities and making changes to attitude to merge with the new culture. To function or perform in the world in any situation or circumstances requires an administrator to possess the basic skill of adaptability. Hence, the importance of adaptability gets stronger when there are more given opportunities.

1.10 ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

In order to handle their jobs effectively administrators need the right mix of five key managerial skills. These are classified as technical, human, conceptual, diagnostic, and political. The first three have been recognized for many years. Diagnostic and political skills have also now received attention as organisations have become more complex.

1.10.1 TECHNICAL SKILL

Technical skill is proficiency in a specific activity that involves methods, processes, procedures, or techniques. Individual performers expect their supervisor/administrator to be able to help them with technical problems.

1.10.2 HUMAN SKILL

Human skill is the ability to work with, understand, motivate, and communicate with individuals and the group. Human skill also includes the ability to communicate with people, to resolve conflict, and to discipline. Since the administrator's job involves constant interaction with people, human skills are also essential.



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1.10.3 CONCEPTUAL SKILL

- Conceptual skill is the ability to understand abstract or general ideas and apply them to specific situations.
- Conceptual skill usually means understanding how the total organisation can be affected by a specific activity.
- Although it may not always be apparent, every action taken in an organisation has ramifications elsewhere.

1.10.4 DIAGNOSTIC SKILL

- Diagnostic skill is the ability to analyse the nature of a problem with people, ideas, things or events. A good diagnosis precedes a recommended solution to a problem (like in medicine or automotive repair or management). Administrators are frequently called on to size up a problem in order to take appropriate corrective action.
- Diagnostic skill overlaps with four managerial skills. This occurs because administrators usually need to use technical, human, conceptual or political skills to make their diagnosis.
- Many administrators regard diagnostic skill as the most exciting part of their jobs. An experienced manager expressed it this way: “Figuring out what’s wrong is why I am here. If all problems had a ready solution, you wouldn’t need a manager.”

1.10.5 POLITICAL SKILL

Political skill is the ability to acquire the power needed to achieve one’s objective. Specific political skills include being able to win others over to one’s cause.

1.11 PRACTICAL SKILLS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

There are certain skills which are absolutely necessary for modern-day administrators irrespective of whatever type of organisation they work for.

1.11.1 TECHNICAL OVERSIGHT

An administrator needs to have a basic knowledge of technical aspects being pursued in his/her organisation. This will ensure that they are able to understand the problems and difficulties faced by the subordinates, and are in a position to offer acceptable solutions.

1.11.2 SOFTWARE SKILLS

The ability to use standard business software is very important for an administrator. He/she should have a good knowledge of standard office productivity programs like Microsoft Office, including Microsoft Word and Excel, PowerPoint, and perhaps Access as well. They often need a good working knowledge of Microsoft Project, SharePoint and Project Management tools. Strong computer skills are important as well since those skills make learning new software packages easier.

1.11.3 ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Attention to detail can be a critical skill in many administrative positions. For instance, a missing signature or misspelled word on a legal document can render the document moot, so an administrator needs to have strong proofreading skills and the ability to focus on the smallest details. A project manager serving in an administrative role needs to be able to juggle several different tasks at the same time without losing sight of any of them. Understanding how those small details fit into the larger picture is a big part of any administrative position, and being detail-oriented can be a big plus for the people filling those roles.

1.11.4 ETHICAL ATTITUDE

This is one of the skills that everyone must develop in the business world but an administrator who has a strong work ethic will go far. They will stand out among the general crowd of other administrators.

1.11.5 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Problem solving is one of the most widely sought after skills. An administrator may have to face an immediate challenge to make reasoned judgments and find solutions independently on a daily basis.

An administrator needs to demonstrate that he/she has the right skills to resolve a number of different problems, and the capability to handle the challenges and pressures they may bring.

An administrator needs to be able to:

- Evaluate information or situations;
- Break them down into their key components;
- Consider various ways of approaching and resolving them;
- Decide on the most appropriate of these ways.

In order to develop problem solving skills an administrator needs to acquire/refresh the following key skills:

- Analytical ability
- Creative thinking
- Initiative
- Logical reasoning
- Persistence
- Team work
- Communication
- Persuasion and negotiation

1.12 TEN KEY QUALITIES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

In order to fully understand the nature of an administrator's work it is essential to know what qualities he/she is expected to possess. John Humphries (2000) specifies ten key qualities:

- Providing clear directions by:
 - Establishing clear goals and standards;
 - Communicating group goals;
 - Involving people in setting targets;
 - Being clear and thorough when delegating tasks.
- Encouraging open, two-way communication by:
 - Being open when dealing with people;
 - Being honest, direct and to the point;
 - Establishing a climate of trust.
- Willing to coach and support people by:
 - Being supportive and helpful;
 - Being constructive when correcting poor performance;
 - Supporting their staff upwards.
- Providing objective recognition by:
 - Recognizing good performance more often than criticizing;
 - Relating rewards to the excellence of performance.

- Establishing on-going controls to:
 - Follow up on important issues and actions;
 - Give staff feedback on their performance.
- Selecting the right people to staff the organisation;
- Understanding the financial implications of decision;
- Encouraging new ideas;
- Giving out clear cut decisions when necessary;
- Constantly demonstrating high levels of integrity.

John Humphries (2000) has advocated that administrators should possess the following attributes, skills and knowledge:

Attributes (In-born qualities)	Skills (qualities learned and developed)	Knowledge (information learned and acquired)
Integrity	Communication	Staff needs
Flexibility	Listening	Organisation policy
Open-mindedness	Motivation	Organisation procedures
Decisiveness	Delegation	Organisation objectives
Trustworthy	Innovation	Services
Unbiased	Training	Competition
Enthusiastic	Planning	Financial
Imaginative	Controlling	
Humorous	Influencing	

2 ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every administrator has responsibilities towards themselves, their team, and the individuals within the team, the organisation and the tasks in hand. Most administrators find themselves under constant pressure to achieve targets as effectively as possible.

An essential way of understanding the administrative role is to examine the functions performed by administrators. This is the traditional or typical way of understanding administrative jobs.

2.1 PLANNING

Planning is the basic managerial function of an administrator. Planning helps in determining the course of action to be followed for achieving various organisational objectives. It is a decision in advance, what to do, and who will do a particular task. Planning is a process which involves 'thinking before doing'. It is a process of looking ahead. The primary objective of planning is to achieve better results. It involves the selection of organisational objectives and developing policies, procedures, budgets and strategies. Planning is a continuous process that takes place at all levels of management. When an administrator helps determine which work activities the department will undertake during the next week, he/she is planning. A detailed planning is done in the beginning but the actual performance is reviewed and appropriate changes are made in plans when actual execution is done. Plans may be of many types, such as short-range plans, medium-range plans, long-range plans, standing plans, single use plans, strategic plans, administrative plans, and operational plans.

2.1.1 ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

An administrator and his/her team need to prioritize the actions that are to be taken and put into a sensible order rather than to try out every action at the same time. While establishing priorities, the intention is to decide what to do first in the order of importance, to not pick out the easy tasks and forget the more difficult ones or concentrate only on things we like to do.

Asking these questions will help:

- Is the action short or long term?
- Is the action realistic or feasible?
- What kind of resources will be needed in terms of:
 - People
 - Money
 - Equipment and tools
 - Materials
 - Time

- What are the constraints in terms of:
 - Time
 - Money
 - Resources
 - Equipment and tools
 - Skills
 - Availability
 - Level of support

- Who needs to know or be involved?

- What is a suitable order of events?

- What are the expected improvements or benefits in terms of:
 - Output
 - Quality
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Safety
 - Welfare
 - Systems
 - Procedures
 - Behaviour
 - Communication
 - Organisation

- Having asked these questions, is the action justified?

2.1.2 MAKING THE PLAN

A systematic step-by-step approach reduces the likelihood of the plan being unrealistic or unachievable.

To achieve success:

- Prepare Micro plan: break down each action into various steps.
- Examine each step and decide the following:
 - What is the objective of this step and how does it fit into the overall action?
 - Who is the person or persons who will be responsible for carrying out this step?
 - What is the time frame (start and finish)? Is it movable?
 - What resources are needed?
 - ✓ Money – how much, where from?
 - ✓ People – how many, what skills, directly or indirectly controlled?
 - ✓ Equipment – what type, where from?
 - ✓ Tools – what type, where from? Who needs?
 - ✓ Permits – are they needed? Who issues?
 - Reporting progress – frequency, method, who to?
 - What difficulties can be anticipated? How can they be overcome?
 - Who will be affected? How do we communicate?
 - How do we monitor and control progress?
- Using information gathered above, formulate the overall plan.
- Having formulated the plan, check the plan's validity. If it is properly prepared, it should answer the following:
 - Why are we doing this?
 - When will we do it?
 - Where will it be done?
 - Who will do it?
 - What are we going to do?
 - How will it be done (methodology)?
- Reviewing progress: A review of progress can and should take place at pre-specified intervals both during execution and on final completion of the plan. The following questions should be posed at each review:
 - Did the plan start on time? If not, why not? Was the original timing correct? Are there any learning points?
 - Is progress as per schedule? If not, why not? Are there any learning points?

- Are the objectives of the plan correct? If not, why not? Were they too ambitious or unrealistic? Did the personnel involved really understand what was needed? Are there any learning points?
 - Is a re-plan necessary?
 - How do we consolidate the learning points? Are we sure of the reasons why things went wrong? Can we ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated?
- After reviewing the plan, modify and extend it, if necessary.

2.2 ORGANISING

Every organisation needs the services of a number of people to look after its different aspects. The management sets up the objectives or goals to be achieved by its personnel. The energy of each individual – guided by the administrators – is channelized to achieve the organisation's objectives. The function of organising is to arrange, guide, coordinate, direct and control the activities of the organisation. It provides the necessary framework within which people associate for the attainment of objectives. It also includes designing jobs, structuring organisation, and training employees to do so.

2.2.1 DEFINITION OF ORGANISATION

Organisation may be defined in various ways:

- An organisation is the structure and process by which a cooperative group of human beings allocates its tasks among its members, identifies relationships and integrates its activities towards common objectives.
- Organisation structure is designed to clarify who is to do what tasks and who is responsible for what results. Organisation means a formalized intentional structure of roles and positions.
- An organisation structure is the way the organisation allocates its resources towards meeting its strategic aims. It is commonly defined by organisation charts. There are many structures that are in use, but no single structure is best for every company and for every period in its operation. Structures change and develop so as to meet the aims of organisation at any given time.

2.2.2 ORGANISING

Organising is to provide the organisation everything it needs to operate efficiently. It is to do with relationships.

It:

- Promotes collaboration and negotiation among individuals and groups;
- Improves effectiveness and efficiency of communication;
- Creates clear-cut lines of authority and responsibility;
- Improves activating and controlling functions of administrator/manager.

2.2.3 PROCESS OF ORGANISING

The process of organising involves the following steps:

- To identify the work to be performed;
- To classify or group the task;
- To assign these groups of activities or work to individuals;
- To organise training;
- To delegate authority and fix responsibility;
- To coordinate these authority-responsibility relationships of various activities.

2.3 COORDINATING

Organising and coordinating are very closely linked, and very frequently coordinating is an essential continuation of organising. Coordinating involves ensuring that all efforts move smoothly together in the same direction, that is, towards the common objectives.

Coordinating is as essential to top management level as it is at junior management and supervisory levels. Good relations and communications between departmental managers must be developed and fostered so that they all work together in harmony. At the other end of the scale, a junior manager, supervisor or foreman must coordinate the work of his/her subordinates in their workgroup so that although different people might be performing different tasks, work will, when necessary, flow smoothly and continuously from one person to the next.

2.4 MOTIVATING

Motivating is the will to act. What we call 'motives' are the reasons why people act in certain ways. Today's increasingly competitive business world needs a highly motivated workforce for any organisation seeking to achieve good results. It is only through the efforts of the workforce that the objectives of the organisation can be achieved. Hence a manager/administrator should be aware of what these motivational forces are. Therefore, the managerial function of motivation is concerned with the human resource of an enterprise.


However, research in human behaviour has suggested that people are motivated by a number of different needs, at work and in their personal life. Recognizing and satisfying those needs will help an administrator to get the best from people. Hence a manager/administrator must make an attempt to know something about each of his/her subordinates. For example:

- Financial reason is the main motivating force for many people. However, this may ultimately result in better performance.
- Job satisfaction is the motivating factor for many people. These people get motivated when they feel that their skills and efforts are being recognized and appreciated by the management.
- Some people may do their best when they are given field jobs. On the other hand, there are others who would prefer desk jobs. Both categories of employees work best in their preferred work environment.


An administrator must ensure that his/her team must work willingly. For this, it is necessary for them to recognize what the correct motivation for each member is.

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There are a lot of ‘motivators’ that actually drive people to achieve. These are what an administrator should aim to provide in order to maintain a satisfied workforce. How much a person enjoys achievement depends on its recognition. The ability to achieve, in turn, depends on having an enjoyable job and responsibility. The greater that responsibility the more that individual can feel the satisfaction of advancement. Motivators are built around obtaining growth and self-actualization from tasks. An administrator can raise motivation in his/her staff by increasing their responsibility, thereby enriching their jobs.

An essential foundation for motivation is a positive environment created by an administrator. Employees have the right to expect fair treatment and understanding. They also expect professional competence, part of which includes delegating tasks in order to increase staff members’ self-management and participation.

An administrator should establish a system that is constructive – not obstructive – in which people can hope to perform at their best. He/she should find out where subordinates’ strengths and interests lie, then delegate responsibilities.

An administrator must ensure that subordinates have a sense of job security. Threats of dismissal or any other punitive action may induce better benefits in the short term, but they are not recommended in modern management/administration as they are likely to result in a disgruntled workforce. Subordinates want to be looked upon as human beings and not as mere tools of performance. They expect a fair and unbiased approach from their manager/administrator who must, therefore, demonstrate the right leadership qualities. A manager/administrator must understand that free or easy-to-supply incentives are a simple way to motivate subordinates and get their cooperation. For example, he/she may start by thanking people for a job well done, and follow this up with a written acknowledgement. He/she must be friendly and polite at all times – bad manners de-motivate – and deal sympathetically with personal requests, such as time off for a special purpose. Such actions on the part of an administrator will ensure that the subordinates will have loyalty to their manager/administrator and be ready to work well and willingly.

2.5 CONTROLLING

Controlling is the management function of ensuring that performance conforms to plans. Control is essential for achieving the objectives of an organisation. The planning of various activities does not ensure automatic implementation of policies. Control is the process which enables management to get its policies implemented and take corrective action if performance is not according to pre-determined standards. If planning is the beginning of the management process, controlling may be said to be the final stage.

The process of controlling involves the following steps:

- Establishing standards of performance;
- Measuring actual performance;
- Comparing the actual performance with the standard;
- Finding variations or deviations, if any;
- Taking corrective action or measures.

There are three types of control:

- **Preliminary control:** It is achieved through policies and procedures. Implementation of Quality Assurance System is an effective step in this direction.
- **Concurrent control:** It means that operational managers are responsible for ensuring that the products and/or services being offered by the company are available for sale at the right time, in the right quality and quantity at an appropriate price.
- **Feedback control:** It is carried out after gathering some data, analysing and returning for corrective action.

2.5.1 SUPERVISING SUBORDINATES

The managerial function of controlling is the supervision of employees and subordinates. It is to ensure that the employees perform their allotted work as per procedures, and that they avoid wastage of effort or materials. Only giving instructions is not sufficient. It is necessary that the subordinates are supervised, and for this purpose they have also to be given motivation, guidance and training.

2.5.2 MAINTAINING RECORDS OF PERFORMANCE

Another important aspect of controlling is maintaining records of performance. These records related to various aspects, such as production, sales etc. provide guidance for future planning. Periodical reports – daily, weekly, monthly etc. – ensure that the management is able to exercise control over the various activities of the organisation.

2.6 ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

2.6.1 TO HIGHER MANAGEMENT

The expectations management has of the administrator in turn become the functions to be performed by the administrator. In order to meet the expectations of higher management, the administrator must interact with other groups. Each role demand is usually met by coordination with somebody else.

2.6.2 TO EMPLOYEES

Much of administrator's job involves the carrying out of responsibilities to employees. Proper discharge of these responsibilities is the primary way in which administrators meet the demands placed on them by the management. Employees have expectations on administrators. We may summarize the situation like this:

"They expect the administrator to provide them with direction and support, be their representative to the higher management. They expect him/ her to look after their needs – social needs and personal needs. Perhaps employees should not expect all of this from their leaders – but nevertheless many of them do – and the administrator must deal with their expectations".

Administrators have so many different expectations from their subordinates and so many different obligations towards them that it would be difficult to cover all of them. Differences in subordinates, jobs, work organisations and cultures are among the many different factors that influence which responsibilities administrators have towards their subordinates. A boss in charge of freshly recruited subordinates would have to provide more emotional support than would a boss in charge of a group of existing subordinates.

A representative example of administrative responsibility toward subordinates as follows:

- Establish a warm and trusting work climate within the department/organisation. Be considerate and open with employees.
- When employee problems occur, handle them promptly. A staff member might need a personal day off in order to attend a friend's wedding. The administrator should take care of this problem before it causes the employee to be distracted from the job.
- Be fair in relationships with employees. Although one worker in the department may be more likeable than some others, it is important to make work assignments strictly on the basis of job competence or other organisational requirements.
- Provide all employees with a clear explanation of all matters related with their jobs – sometimes employees need an explanation for seemingly self-apparent work rules. One receptionist went to the rest room while she held a customer on 'hold'. When reprimanded she said she thought a person had the freedom to go to the rest room 'whenever nature called'!
- Train staff in job-related skills. Most need on-the-job training.

- Counsel with employees when legitimate needs for counseling exist. Although administrators are not expected to function as personal counselors, it is often important to listen to their problems and then recommend that they seek outside help, if necessary.
- Discuss contemplated changes before they take place. By doing so, an administrator is often able to overcome subordinates' resistance to change.
- Help in the orientation of new employees. Although most of them receive some kind of orientation programme from the organisation, it is important that the administrator familiarize the new employee with major personnel policies, work regulations, organisational structure, management structure etc.
- Coordinate and schedule work in ways that minimize peaks and valleys in the work load. Such action helps avert troublesome problem of employees being overworked or underworked.
- Develop a satisfactory level of morale within the group. The term 'morale' refers to a positive attitude and feeling about a number of things such as quality of supervision and attitudes towards colleagues and supervisors.
- Support employees when they are being treated arbitrarily from above. Administrators gain respect to the extent that they can perform this delicate act.
- Pass on orders from above, but they can see to it that upper management take another look at a situation in which it appears an employee has been treated unfairly.

2.6.3 TO CO-WORKERS

If administrators act too independently, team work is not possible. Perhaps the administrator's responsibilities towards co-workers are not as extensive or as important as those responsibilities towards higher management and subordinates. Yet coordination with other departments is essential, as given below:

- Coordinate whatever work flow or paperwork that needs to be exchanged among administrators.
- Communicate with other departments about mutual needs and problems. If you as an administrator notice a morale problem in your department, it could be worth checking to see if other departments are experiencing a similar problem. It could be an organisation wide concern.
- Coordinate policy interpretations with other departments to ensure consistency and uniformity.

3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication is very important in establishing a good working relationship between administrators and other employees. If the communication between both the parties is clear, it becomes easy to deal with people.

3.1 TRANSMITTING YOUR MESSAGE

According to John Humphries (2000), “Good verbal communication is a two-way process. The speaker gives the listeners an opportunity to ask questions and make comments about what has been said in order to clarify or query the statement. Failure to do so means that the communication becomes merely information giving”.

If the listener makes no comments, when appropriate the speaker should invite the person to do so. Never say ‘Do you understand?’ as this puts the onus on the listener and, rather than feeling foolish, they will say ‘Yes!’ If you say ‘Have I made myself clear?’ then the responsibility rests with you and the listener is more likely to ask for further clarification. It is only a matter of words!

3.2 WHAT IS MEANT BY COMMUNICATION?

Communication means interacting with others:

- To promote understanding;
- Achieve a result of some kind;
- Passing information to another person so that he/she can take action.

The information does not necessarily need to be hard facts. Sometimes just a gesture, a show of emotion or even a shrug of the shoulder can act as our means of communication.

3.3 WHY DO WE NEED TO COMMUNICATE?

You might think we could all live quite happily without communicating at all. But no – we all need to communicate throughout our life. Communication is a fundamental part of human life. Even a new born baby crying to attract its mother’s attention to the fact that it is hungry is communicating, usually very effectively! Since we spend so much of our daily life communicating in one way or another, we should be very good at it, but unfortunately, this is not the case. Life could be a lot easier if we always knew exactly what others were trying to say. Quite often people fail to communicate in a way that you could understand.

According to Ann Dobson (2000),

“Nowhere is effective communication more important than at work. Vital information needs to be given, received, exchanged and understood hundreds of times in every working day. Many business transactions go wrong simply because of poor communication between the people concerned”.

3.4 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

In order to communicate we interact with others through the following.

3.4.1 FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION

It is the easiest. You can explain what you mean. If the person does not understand, ask yourself:

- Are you using the language they understand – not difficult but simple words?
- Are your ideas going over their heads?

Three areas that matter in communication:

- **Words:** What we say.
- **Tone:** How we say it.
- **Body language:** How we look when we are saying it.

Face-to-face communication has the following advantages:

- People can see what you mean.
- Eye contact helps you establish if the other person is listening and understanding.
- Your body language can help them believe what you are saying.

However, it has some disadvantages too:

- You can give away your true feelings.
- The other person may not understand the words that you say.
- They may not like the way you are saying the words.

3.4.2 LISTENING SKILLS

The art of effective listening is essential to clear communication, and clear communication is necessary to management success. Hearing is not listening. We hear all sorts of noises during every waking moment but we don't listen to them.

Listening is more important than hearing:

- You often 'hear' what you want to hear.
- Listening is the other half of communication.

When listening:

- Give your full attention.
- Do not assume what the other person is going to say.
- Do not waste listening time formulating what your reply will be.
- Show by eye contact and an interested expression that you are paying attention.
- Make notes if necessary.

3.4.3 THE TELEPHONE

Communicating by telephone is yet another way the profile of your organisation is perceived. For the person on the other end of the phone you are that organisation.

While on the telephone:

- Listen carefully and concentrate on what is being said.
- Do not allow disturbances in the room to interfere with your listening abilities.
- Use words and your tone of voice to communicate your understanding of what is being said. Let your caller know you are listening by making verbal indications such as 'Mm', 'Yes', 'OK'.

3.4.4 QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

To clarify a point questions are asked. There are several categories of questions which can be used depending upon the type of information you want in return.

Questions can be classified into the following:

- **Elaboration questions:** for information of a general nature, for example:
 - *"Tell me about..."*
 - *"Is there anything more?"*
 - *"Would you elaborate on that, please?"*

- **Specification questions:** asking for more detailed information, for example:
 - *“What precisely did she say?”*
 - *“When was the last time this happened?”*
- **Feelings questions:** asked when you want to know the emotional effect of something, for example:
 - *“What did you feel when it happened?”*
 - *“How do you feel when people are aggressive towards you?”*
- **Behavioural questions:** past behaviour is a good indicator of future behaviour, for example:
 - *“How would you usually deal with a situation like this?”*
 - *“What did you do the last time this happened?”*
 - *“How did you react when...?”*

However, bear the following points in mind when asking questions of members of your staff:

- Too many questions from you will appear to be an interrogation of the other person.
- When you ask a question, keep quiet and wait for the answer. Don't be tempted to re-phrase your question unless asked to.
- Ask one question at a time. If you ask multiple questions you will only get one or two answers.
- If you don't get a full answer to a question, ask it again.
- Listen carefully to the answers.
- Refrain from asking leading questions: *“You would agree. Wouldn't you that...?”* except when seeking agreement.

3.4.5 LETTER WRITING

In order to communicate effectively you must produce quality letters for your reader.

- **Planning your letter:** Is your objective:
 - To give information?
 - To sell an idea?
 - To promote an action?
 - To clarify something?
 - To rectify a situation?
 - To promote yourself?

- **Structuring your letter:**
 - Greeting
 - Heading
 - Introduction
 - Information
 - Action
 - Conclusion

- **Writing your letter:** Information and language should be:
 - Accurate
 - Brief
 - Clear

Examples:

Phrase	Short version
At this moment in time	Now
In the event of	If
I have pleasure in enclosing	I enclose

3.4.6 WRITING MEMOS

Writing memos for internal communication in an organisation is an integral part of modern business. These memos are meant for communication between:

- One person in the department and another in the same department;
- One department and another department;
- Manager and subordinates.

Memos are written for:

- Giving instructions;
- Giving reminders;
- Asking for information;
- Providing information;
- Clarifying a point.


An administrator needs to be efficient in writing concise, accurate and effective memos to deal with various situations.

3.4.7 WRITING EMAILS

Email has become an important part of our life – both personal and professional. It has almost become the lifeline of business on account of its versatility and ease of use.

An administrator may make use of email when:


- Sending a follow-up reminder about a staff meeting to be held the next day;
- Wishing to praise an employee for a job well done. (Sending the message to the group and anyone else that needs to know.);
- Sending a press release about the company;
- Sending weekly or monthly status report to their superior;
- Sending an attachment;
- Forwarding a document to someone else;
- Wanting to create a paper trail.



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An administrator should be able to write effective emails. He/she should ensure to:

- Use a descriptive subject line as it helps the receiver to get an idea of the subject being written about;
- Use simple formatting and keep everything flush with the left margin;
- Address the recipient by name to add a personal touch;
- Not use all caps;
- Avoid using abbreviations unless the receiver is known to be aware of them;
- Skip a line when starting a new paragraph;
- Avoid using HTML as not everyone can view it.

3.4.8 TEXTING

Text messaging, or texting, is a quick, quiet, and easy way to send a person-to-person message from a cell phone to someone else's cell phone, or handheld computer. When an administrator is stuck in a meeting or other place where they don't want to interrupt, they can stay in touch silently. Texting is appropriate when:

- Sending information such as offers and product updates to their customers' phones (with prior permission, of course).
- Needing to keep in contact with employees who are travelling and have heavy meeting schedules;
- Responding to quick questions;
- Needing to send an address or phone number.

3.4.9 REPORT WRITING

Quite often you may have to prepare a report on the progress of work, an on-going project, or a planned activity of your department/organisation. It is necessary to understand that people want a report that is well thought of, well prepared, and is effective.

- **The first thing you need to think of:**
 - Who is my reader?
 - What does he/she already know of this subject?
 - What are the objectives of this report?
- **Consider why you have to write:**
 - Are you an expert in this subject?
 - Are you the best report writer in the department/organisation?
 - Have you been asked because you were there?
 - Is it a part of your job profile? (Mostly it is!)

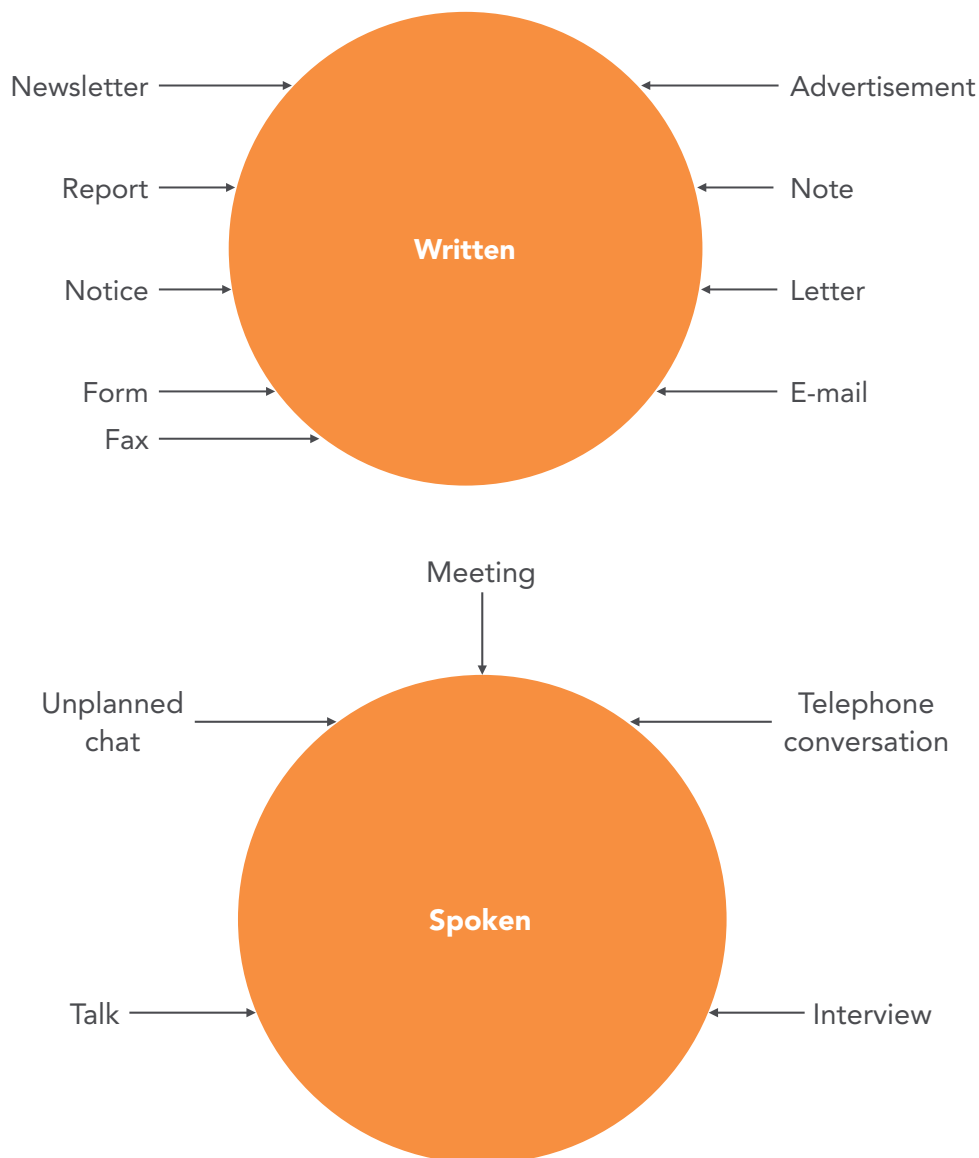
- **Planning the report:**
 - Consider how long it is until the report is required.
 - How long do you have to work on gathering the information?
 - How long on structuring and writing the report?
 - How long on checking, revising, and perhaps even typing the report?

- **Structure of the report (suggested):**
 - Title page
 - Contents
 - Summary/Abstract
 - Introduction
 - Findings
 - Conclusion
 - Recommendations
 - Appendices, acknowledgements, references, bibliography etc. (whatever is required)
 - Index

- **Presentation/Typing:**
 - Wide margins
 - Double spacing
 - Paragraphs and headings
 - Headings in different type face
 - Consistency in numbering system

3.5 CHOOSING PAPER OVER SPOKEN WORD

Should we communicate on paper or by the spoken word? Different occasions call for different action. If you need to contact someone urgently and for a brief communication, a telephone call would probably be your best choice. You could even go to the person or call him/her and clarify the matter. On the other hand, if you have a very complicated message to explain, then sending a letter/note would be better. The receiver will have time to digest the information properly.



3.6 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

There are many barriers to communication. In order to overcome these barriers and understand the true meaning of the message that comes through a particular communication, we need to filter the messages.

3.6.1 IDENTIFYING COMMUNICATION FILTERS

When we filter coffee the grounds are left on the filter paper and only the liquid goes into the jug. A similar thing happens with communication. There are three types of filters which only allow a portion of the message to get through. As a result, we only receive part of the message and often, only the part that we want to hear.

- **Attention filters:** Physical distractions such as:
 - **Noise:** other people talking, telephones ringing, traffic, music.
 - **Environment:** too hot/cold, poor lighting.
 - **Interruptions:** people, telephones.
 - **Timing:** trying to talk to someone when they are about to go somewhere or are in the middle of a job.

- **Emotional filters:** These are inherent in the speaker and probably unknown to the other person:
 - **Prejudice:** dislike of the other person, the way they are dressed, the message itself.
 - **Status:** the other person is higher or lower in the organisation hierarchy, which can affect the way in which you speak and listen to them.
 - **Experience:** If previous communication with a person has resulted in an unpleasant experience, you will be wary when approaching the next time, not wishing to repeat the experience.
 - **Assumptions:** assuming what the message will be and thus not listening properly.
 - **Values and beliefs:** We all have our own codes regarding morals, religion, and politics, and so on. If the message transgresses these standards, we are likely to switch off.

- **Word filters:** Certain words and phrases can cause us to stop listening to the person who utters them:
 - **Criticism:** Few of us like to be criticised. *“That was the wrong way to tackle the problem!”*
 - **Moralizing:** *“You shouldn’t have done that!”*
 - **Ordering:** *“I want the report on my desk by Thursday afternoon without fail”.*
 - **Threatening:** *“If you don’t do what I say, you will be in serious trouble”.*
 - **Advising:** *“I suggest that you...”* (People will only accept the advice that agrees with their solution. They will respond to advice with the phrase *“Yes, but...”*)
 - **Logical argument:** It is too difficult to argue with logic.
 - **Reassuring:** *“Never mind, everything will turn out all right in the end”.*
 - **Diverting:** *“Yes all right, but as I was saying...”*
 - **Jargon:** Unless the listener understands the jargon (unfamiliar words and phrases), they will wonder what it means and will not be listening to the rest of the message.

3.6.2 REDUCING THE FILTERS

Even one filter can reduce the effect of or distort communication but in most instances, two or more are operating at the same time. Being aware that they exist is half the battle won in reducing the effect of others.

It is not always possible or practical to eliminate attention filters, but they can be reduced. If the proposed conversation will take more than a few minutes, find somewhere quiet to hold it and let it be known that you want no interruptions. It is simple enough to get your timing right. If someone approaches you at an inconvenient time, politely tell them so and arrange to meet later.

You can do little about other people's emotions, but try to put your own on hold when talking and listening to others. If you sense emotional filters becoming barriers, keep your conversation brief and to the point.

Take care over the words and phrases that you use. How would you respond as the listener? If you are on the receiving end, question the speaker, and ask him/her to justify the comments.

4 UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Administrators need to understand why people behave as they do. To get things done through other people, you have to know why they engage in certain characteristic behaviours.

Paul Hersey, Kenneth H. Blanchard and Dewey E. Johnson (2000) have emphasized that:

“Understanding past behaviour is important in itself for developing human skills, and it also provides a framework for the next level of expertise – predicting behaviour. Understanding why people did what they did yesterday enables an administrator to predict how they are likely to behave tomorrow, next week, and next month under similar as well as changing environmental conditions”.

The next level of expertise that an effective administrator or leader needs is the ability to direct, change, and control behaviour. People have many needs, all of which are continually competing. No one person has exactly the same mixture of these needs as another. We must know what our employees really want from their jobs. Administrators have to know their people to understand what motivates them.

If an administrator asks a staff member to do something the member has never been taught to do and expects good performance the first time, and doesn't offer any help to the staff member, the administrator has set the person up for failure. Administrators should remember that no one (including themselves) learns to do anything all at once. We learn a little bit at a time. As a result, if an administrator wants someone to do something completely new, they should reward the smallest progress the person makes in the desired direction.

The outcome of any situation is dependent on the way you choose to behave. Whether you are initiating some action or responding to someone else's behaviour, you will have three options to choose from:

- Passive – non-assertive, submissive
- Aggressive – direct, indirect
- Assertive

4.2 PASSIVE BEHAVIOUR

- **You are passive when you:**
 - Want to maintain status quo;
 - Allow others to make decisions for you;
 - Verbally agree with others despite your real feelings.

- **What would you look like?**
 - Standing back (sit at back of groups);
 - Little or no eye contact;
 - Smiling even when upset;
 - Fidgeting.

- **What would you sound like?**
 - Apologetic;
 - Vague;
 - Self-hating;
 - Hesitant;
 - Moaning.

- **How would you feel?**
 - Taken advantage of;
 - Hurt;
 - Anxious;
 - Frustrated;
 - Powerless.

- **How would the others feel?**
 - Frustrated;
 - Resentful;
 - Exasperated;
 - Guilty.

- **Passive behaviour doesn't help your goals, therefore you:**
 - Feel a victim;
 - Blame others for what happens to you;
 - Allow others to choose for you;
 - Choose passive behaviour because it is low risk.

4.3 AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

- **You are aggressive when you try to:**
 - Impose your position on others;
 - Accuse, blame others and find fault with others despite their feelings;
 - Act with belligerence and humiliate others;
 - Behave in an unpredictable manner.

- **What would you look like?**
 - Leaning forward;
 - Pointing fingers;
 - Piercing or glaring eye contact;
 - Jabbing.

- **What would you sound like?**
 - Loud;
 - Sarcastic;
 - Emphatic;
 - Defensive;
 - Arrogant.

- **How would you feel?**
 - In control of others;
 - Guilty;
 - Isolated;
 - Power over them.

- **How would others feel?**
 - Defensive;
 - Humiliated;
 - Afraid;
 - Resentful.

- **Aggressive behaviour:**
 - Helps you achieve your goals only to a limited extent;
 - Gained at the expense of others;
 - Is 'high risk' as it sets you up in a very visible way.

4.4 ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Assertiveness is about self-esteem and respect of others, not about winning. It is about modifying behaviour, not changing personalities. It is also the key to good, clear, honest and professional communication. Assertive behaviour provides people with the skills that enable them to communicate successfully at work. As administrators you provide the first line of communication for your organisation – both internally as well as externally – and you should be able to deal with various situations effectively.

What do you say and feel if:

- Your superior makes an unreasonable request of you?
- You want to disagree with the point of view of a senior member of staff?
- You get an angry customer/client on the telephone (or in person) who is shouting abuse?

Develop an assertive approach, and you will be able to:

- Avoid conflict situations;
- Save time;
- Get more of what you want;
- Handle your appraisal;
- Work more effectively with your superiors and colleagues;
- Put forward your ideas and your behaviour;
- Feel good about yourself and your behaviour.

You can recognize the signs of assertive behaviour by analysing the following situations:

- **You are assertive when you:**
 - Are honest with yourself and others;
 - Protect your rights;
 - Respect the rights of others;
 - Are able to express yourself socially and emotionally;
 - Have confidence in yourself;
 - Are able to behave in an adult and rational way.
- **What would you look like?**
 - Eye contact direct but not staring;
 - Relaxed, moving easily;
 - Open hand movements;
 - Head held up.

- **How would you sound?**
 - Steady and firm;
 - Spontaneous;
 - Sincere;
 - Clear.

- **How would you feel?**
 - Good about self;
 - Confident;
 - Responsible for your actions;
 - Power within.

- **Assertive behaviour:**
 - Helps to achieve goals without hurting others;
 - Is about choosing for ourselves;
 - Is about responsibility for our own actions;
 - Can provide us with a gentle forward strength and inner confidence.

In order to practise assertive behaviour you must ensure that you have positive and assertive beliefs, feelings and attitudes.



The advertisement features a central image of a smiling teacher leaning over a laptop to assist two young students, a boy and a girl. To the right, there are two smaller circular images: one showing three children looking at a book together, and another showing children working at computers in a classroom. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'e-learning for kids' consisting of a grid of colored squares. In the bottom right corner, a green oval contains a list of achievements. At the bottom of the advertisement, there is a paragraph of text about the organization and its mission.

e-learning for kids

- The number 1 MOOC for Primary Education
- Free Digital Learning for Children 5-12
- 15 Million Children Reached

About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFK! An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.

4.5 COMFORT ZONES

In general, people have their own comfort zones within the limits of which they prefer to work. This happens because they are wary of the risks involved if they step out of their comfort zones. However, in order to achieve goals and objectives and move ahead in life, it is necessary to come out of the comfort zone, initially take small risks, and thus move towards their planned goal.

Fig. 4/1 below demonstrates the concept of comfort zone.

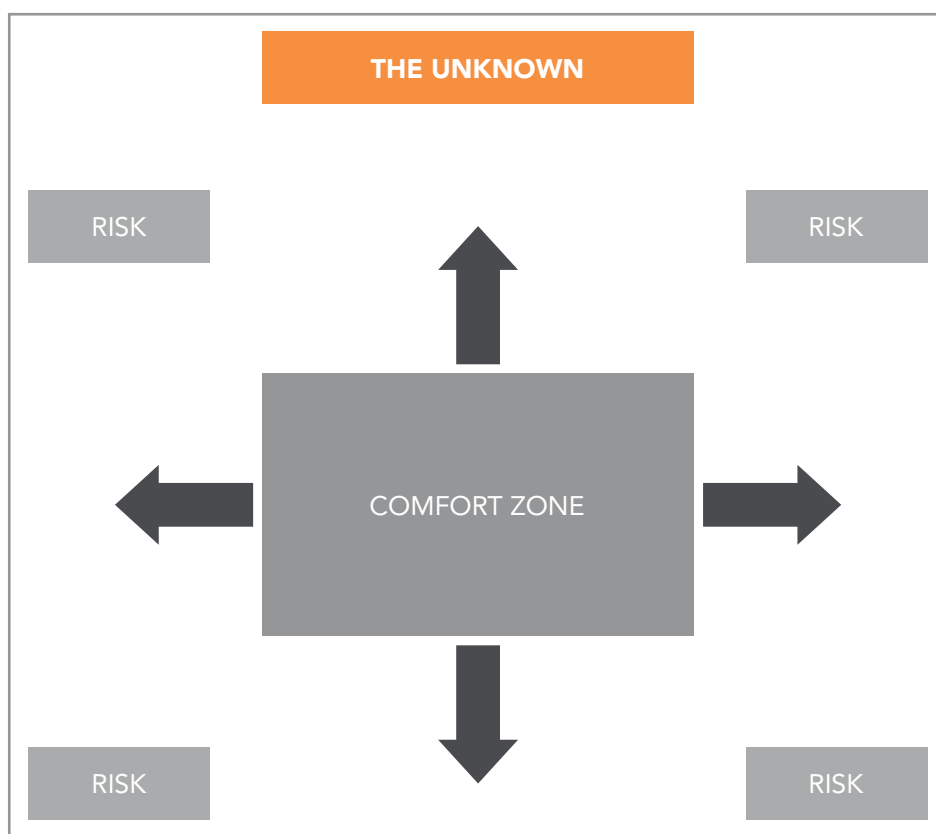


Fig. 4/1 Comfort Zone

- Comfort Zone = Situations you enjoy, things you feel comfortable doing.
- Unknown = Situations you find unpleasant and difficult – you avoid them and remain static.
- Inside Box = Your potential
- Come outside Comfort Zone + Take small risk = Increase the size of your Comfort Zone. (By regularly taking risks you will always grow.)
- Areas outside Comfort Zone = Threat
- Look for middle ground of reasoned control (as in Fig. 4/2 below).

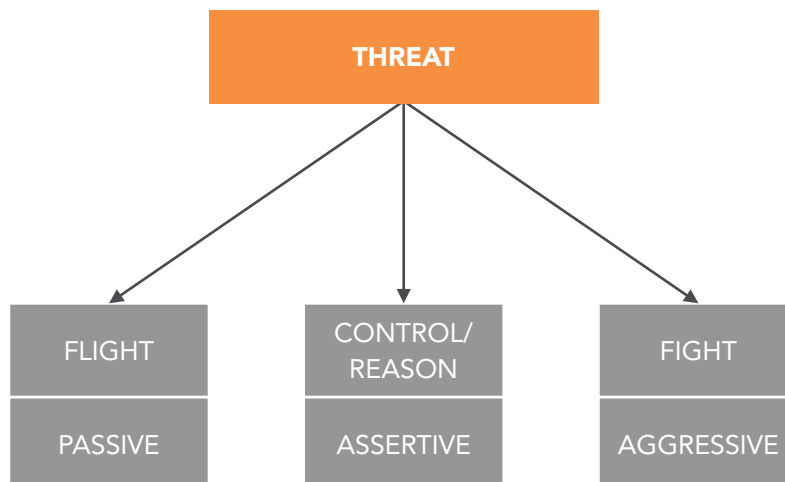


Fig. 4/2 Reasoned control

- **Stepping stones to assertiveness:**

- **Step-1:** Listen to the other person, show you understand.
- **Step-2:** Say what you think or what you feel.
- **Step-3:** Say what you want to happen.

(Often you will carry out Steps 1 and 2 and then fail to say what it is you want. It is only by following through with Step 3 that you are giving yourself the chance of getting what you want.)

4.6 GETTING TO WIN/WIN

You must ensure that both parties come away from the situation in a positive position. So:

- Look for a Win/Win solution;
- Negotiate a joint solution – a workable compromise;
- YOUR solution + MY solution = OUR solution (as shown in Fig. 4/3 below).

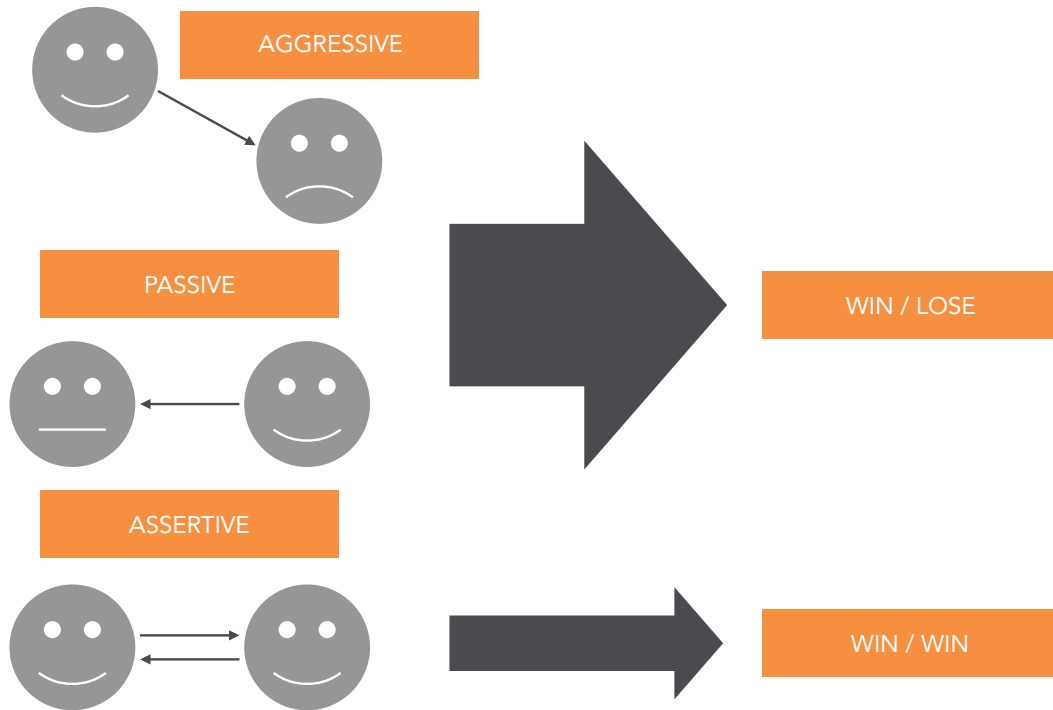


Fig. 4/3 Win/Win solution

4.7 ASSERTIVENESS BUILDING BLOCKS



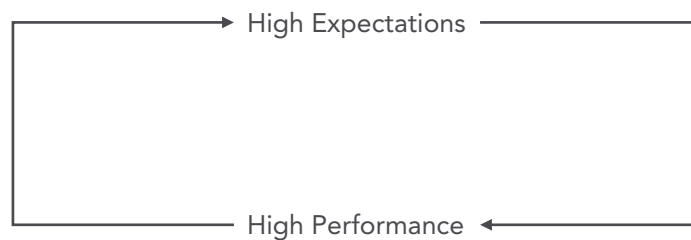
4.8 HUMAN HYPOTHESIS

Paul Hersey, Kenneth H. Blanchard and Dewey E. Johnson (2002) have stated:

“Human beings are basically motivated by social needs; they seek meaning in the social relationships on the job and are more responsive to these than to the incentives and the controls of the organisation.”

It implies that administrators should not limit their attention to the task to be performed but should also give attention to the needs of the people. Administrators should be concerned with the feelings of their people, and in doing so, must often act as the communication link between the employees and higher management.

With this type of relationship people respond to higher expectations of their administrators with high performance. This is called the effective cycle.



5 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal relationship skills are the soft skills or life skills we use every day to interact with other people, both individually and in groups. Interpersonal communication is the process by which people exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages. It is face-to-face communication, and is not just what is actually said but how it is said and the non-verbal messages sent through tone or voice, facial expressions, gestures and other body language.

5.2 IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

These skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This may mean being able to make and sustain friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental, social and professional well-being.

5.3 USES OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

We engage in some form of interpersonal communication on a regular basis. How well we communicate with others is a measure of our interpersonal skills.

We use these skills to:

- Exchange information;
- Establish contacts and maintain relationships;
- Express personal needs and understand the needs of others;
- Give and receive emotional support;
- Make decisions and solve problems;
- Anticipate and predict behaviour; and
- Influence the attitudes and behaviour of others.

5.4 FACTORS AFFECTING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Mainly there are three factors that affect interpersonal relationships:

- Attitude
- Prejudice
- Stereotype

5.4.1 ATTITUDE

The following elements of attitude play a vital role in interpersonal relationships:

- **Object-based:** We form our attitudes directed towards a person, a group, an event, religion etc. We form specific opinions and behave accordingly.
- **Direction:** We could have a positive or a negative approach.
- **Stability:** We could be highly stable in our perception or be flexible as per the demands of a particular situation.
- **Motivational properties:** In certain circumstances we could be ready to act in a particular way, and act differently in another situation. What motivates us to act in a certain way differs from person to person, and from situation to situation.
- **Learnt behaviour:** We are not born with specific attitudes. We learn to have a certain attitude through our experiences with people and environment.
- **Manifestation as behaviour:** Our attitudes are manifested in our behaviour. They lead us to behave in a particular fashion as attitude and behaviour are closely linked with each other.
- **Components of attitude:** Attitude has three important components:
 - **Cognitive:** beliefs, value systems.
 - **Affective:** pleasant or unpleasant feelings, attraction or aversion.
 - **Behavioural:** actual behaviour in relation to a person or an object – positive or negative.

These three components have to be in harmony with each other. Any inconsistency causes tension and anxiety in all concerned.

5.4.2 PREJUDICE

Our prejudices (unfair or unreasonable opinions) are crucial in the formation of attitudes:

- **Biased attitude:** We prejudge people based on unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling with respect to religion, race, colour, nationality etc. We do so without having sufficient knowledge and it is based on limited experience.
- **Sources of prejudice:**
 - **Socialization practices:** based on imitation of elders.
 - **Personality characteristics:** categorizing people as black and white, or being for/against people.
 - **Inter-group conflicts:** majority vs minority in terms of numbers, hostility or friendliness.

5.4.3 STEREOTYPE

We stereotype people, and are unwilling to change our opinion. We do so as follows:

- **Over-generalized beliefs:** categorizing individuals and groups on account of pre-conceived notions, e.g. Asians, Jews, politicians.
- **Resistance to change:** being adamant and refusing to change.

5.5 HOW TO ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENT STYLES

We deal with different types of people and different styles they adopt in their relationships. In order to accommodate these differing styles we generally need to do the following:

- Arrive promptly for any meeting or programme;
- Pay very close attention to deadlines;
- Do not procrastinate or make excuses;
- Be organised;
- Be open-minded to others' ideas;
- Be attentive;
- Show interest;
- Smile and be friendly; and
- Share personal experiences.

Given below are the methods we can use to deal with different styles:

5.5.1 "HANDS-ON" STYLE

- Accept structure;
- Try to do things in an exact and precise way;
- Minimize discussion – get to the task;
- Do things in sequential and orderly steps;
- Discuss and show practical applications;
- Demonstrate to illustrate an idea or point; and
- Allow for "hands-on" project-type tasks.

5.5.2 “THINKER” STYLE

- Use outlines, charts, graphs, and spatial mapping to show information and the relationship of ideas;
- Provide idea;
- Provide documentation;
- Be open to the use of abstract explanations and terms;
- Support information with facts;
- Support views and opinions with logic and evidence;
- Focus on main ideas, related details, and logical conclusions;
- Be open to topics that allow for debate;
- Be patient with quick and sudden moves from idea to idea; and
- Allow for research-type ideas.

5.5.3 “EXPLORER” STYLE

- Allow room for creativity and innovation;
- Relate ideas to the real world;
- Focus on processes and applications rather than facts;
- Be willing to take a risk or to investigate;
- Be patient when they jump from one idea to another; and
- Be willing to discuss ideas.

5.5.4 “FREE THINKER” STYLE

- Use gestures and positive body language;
- Use humour;
- Be sincere;
- Use images, pictures, and colour;
- Apply personal meaning to ideas;
- Show how ideas and details apply to life;
- Show interest and concern for people;
- Avoid questioning or challenging the person’s insight or logic;
- Be patient with interruptions;
- Be open to metaphoric language and expression;
- Don’t force structure – allow room for flexibility; and
- Allow for interactive-type tasks.

5.6 CONSEQUENCES OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The way we develop our interpersonal relationship skills affects our attitude and behaviour. If we are able to enhance these skills we become aware of the following:

- **Liking:** We make an effort to like people, things and ideas even though we were initially reluctant to do so.
- **Understanding:** We start understanding that all the people are not the same. They have widely differing ideas, attitudes and patterns of behaviour, and we learn to deal with them in a positive frame of mind.
- **Trust:** Understanding takes us closer to building trust – in people, in ideas, in approaches. Trust is the backbone of any relationship – personal, social, professional.
- **Direct and indirect contact:** Sometimes we have direct contact with people and at other times we have indirect contact. It means we hear about people and their attitudes through others, and form opinions based on hearsay. What we need to do is verify ourselves before taking up a position either way.
- **Awareness of our biases:** We introspect and think logically – not emotionally. This makes it possible for us to be aware of our own biases, and we need to take steps in order to overcome them.

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6 LEADERSHIP AND TEAM BUILDING

An organisation is made up of groups of people. An essential part of administration is coordinating the activities of groups and directing the efforts of their members towards the goals and objectives of the organisation. This involves the process of leadership and the choice of an appropriate form of behaviour.

6.1 MEANING OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership might be interpreted in simple terms, such as ‘getting others to follow’ or ‘getting people to do things willingly’, or interpreted more specifically as ‘the use of authority in decision making’. It is interpersonal influence which is exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process towards the attainment of a specified goal. It is often associated with the willing and enthusiastic behaviour of followers. Since leadership is an inspirational process, a leader influences long-term changes in attitude. It doesn’t necessarily take place within the hierarchical structure, and many people operate as leaders without role definition.

We can say that:

“Leadership is related to motivation and the process of communication through which one person influences the behaviour of the other people. The process of leadership is not separable from the activities of groups. Effective leadership is a two-way process”.

6.1.1 LEADERSHIP RELATIONSHIP

- **A leader may be:**
 - Imposed;
 - Formally appointed;
 - Chosen informally; or
 - Emerge naturally.

- **Leadership may be:**
 - **Attempted leadership:** When any individual in the group attempts to exert influence over other members of the group;
 - **Successful leadership:** When the influence brings about the behaviour and results that were intended by the leader;
 - **Effective leadership:** When successful leadership results in functional behaviour and the achievement of group goals.

- **Leadership may also involve:**
 - Exercise through greater knowledge, expertise or reputation;
 - Personal qualities or charisma;
 - Manner of exercising authority;
 - Adoption of a particular style of leadership.

Leadership is a dynamic form of behaviour and there are number of variables which affect the leadership. According to McGregor (1987):

“Leadership is not a property of individual, but a complex relationship among these variables”.

He has specified the following variables:

- The characteristics of the leader;
- The attitude, needs and other personal characteristics of the group members;
- The nature of the organisation, such as its purpose, its structure, the tasks to be performed;
- The social, economic and political environment.

6.2 APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

There may be ways of analysing leadership. It is helpful, therefore, to have some framework in which to consider different approaches to study of the subject.

One way is to examine leadership in terms of:

- **The qualities or traits approach:**
 - Focuses attention on person in the job and not on job itself.
 - Subjective judgment in determining ‘good’ or ‘successful’ leader.

The list of possible traits is too long and there is not always agreement on the most important.

- **The situational approach:**

- Emphasis on the importance of professional knowledge or technical expertise.
- Focus on what the leader actually does rather than on his/her personality characteristics.

This approach has its limitations. Quite often a person with knowledge doesn't emerge a leader. At the same time there is no focus on interpersonal behaviour. In such a situation the organisation can't wait for a leader to emerge.

- **The functional (or group) approach:**

- Focus on functions of leadership;
- Focus on content of leadership.

A general theory on the functional approach is associated with the work of John Adair (1979) and his ideas on 'action-centred leadership'. The effectiveness of the leader is dependent upon three areas of need within the group:

- Need to achieve common task;
- Need for team maintenance;
- Individual needs of group members

6.3 TASK, TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL FUNCTIONS

Administrators should have a clear concept of various task functions, team functions and functions of individuals within the group.

6.3.1 TASK FUNCTIONS INVOLVE

- Achieving the objectives of the work group;
- Defining group tasks;
- Planning the work;
- Allocation of resources;
- Organisation of duties and responsibilities;
- Controlling quality and checking performance;
- Reviewing progress.

6.3.2 TEAM FUNCTIONS INVOLVE

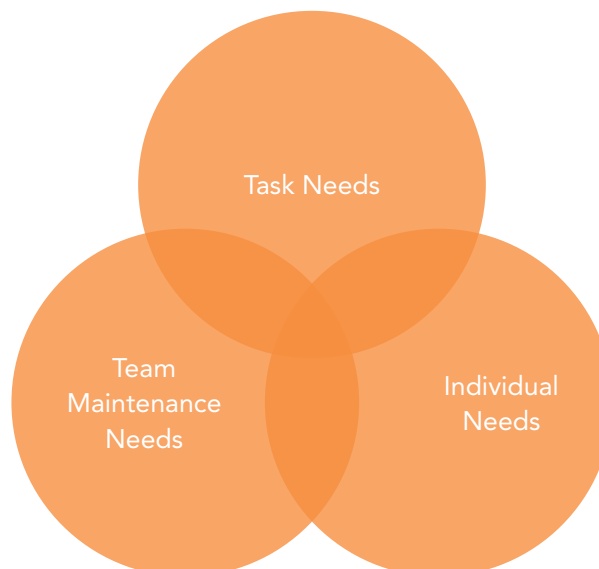
- Maintaining morale and building team spirit;
- The cohesiveness of the group as a working group;
- Setting standards and maintaining discipline;
- Systems of communication within the group;
- Training the group;
- Appointment of sub-leaders.

6.3.3 INDIVIDUAL FUNCTIONS INVOLVE

- Meeting the needs of the individual members of the group;
- Attending to personal problems;
- Giving praise and status;
- Reconciling conflicts between group needs and needs of the individual;
- Training the individual.

The action by the leader in any one area of need will affect one or both of the other areas of need. The ideal position is where complete integration of the three areas of need is achieved. In any work group the most effective leader is the person who sees that the task needs, the needs of the group and those of the individual are all met. The effective leader elicits the contribution of members of the group and draws out other leadership from the group to satisfy the three interrelated areas of need.

6.4 INTERACTION NEEDS WITHIN THE GROUP



Source: Adair, J., 'Action-centred Leadership,' as cited in Sue Harding & Trevor Long, Gower, 2008.

6.5 FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERSHIP

In order to meet the three areas of needs – task, group and individual – certain leadership functions have to be performed. Not all of these functions are required all the time.

- **The leader needs:**

- Awareness of what is going on in groups, the group process or underlying behaviour, and the actual content of discussion;
- Understanding, that is knowing that a particular function is required;
- Skill to do it effectively, which can be usually judged by whether the group responds or changes course.

6.5.1 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Every human being experiences conflict. It is a factor of human interaction. Whenever two or more people are involved in communication, there is potential for misunderstanding, and hence, conflict. How an administrator handles conflict is the key to their own well-being and to developing and maintaining good relationships.

There are three basic ways to deal effectively with conflict situations:

- Listen carefully to determine the nature of the conflict;
- Identify areas of agreement; and
- Allow the other person a way out.

In order to resolve conflict, an administrator may:

- Seek agreement on common ground;
- Refuse to argue;
- Seek commitment and action to change;
- Plot the follow-up; and
- Deliver on promise.

6.5.2 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Daniel Goleman (1995) remarked:

"The most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence."

An effective administrator needs to be in possession of sound emotional intelligence. In order to ensure this, an administrator should develop the following five components of emotional intelligence:

- **Self-awareness:** the ability to recognize and understand emotions;
- **Self-regulation:** the ability to control impulses and emotions;
- **Motivation:** a desire to pursue goals with energy;
- **Empathy:** the ability to understand other people's emotions;
- **Social skills:** the ability to find common ground and build rapport.

6.5.3 FUNCTIONS OF A LEADER

- **As executive:** top coordinator of the group activities and overseer of the execution of policies.
- **As planner:** deciding the ways and means by which the group achieves its ends. This may involve both short-term and long-term planning.
- **As policy maker:** the establishment of group goals and policies.
- **As expert:** a source of readily available information and skills, although there will be some reliance on technical expertise and advice from other members of the group.
- **As external group representative:** the official spokesperson for the group, the representative of the group and the channel for both outgoing and incoming communications.
- **As controller of internal relations:** determines specific aspects of the group structure.
- **As purveyor of rewards and punishments:** control over group members by the power to provide rewards and punishments.
- **As arbitrator and mediator:** controls interpersonal conflicts within the group.
- **As exemplar:** a model of behaviour for members of the group, setting an example of what is expected.
- **As symbol of the group:** enhancing group unity by providing some kind of cognitive focus and establishing the group as a distinct entity.
- **As substitute for individual responsibility:** relieves the individual member of the group from the necessity of, and responsibility for, personal decision.
- **As ideologist:** serving as the source of beliefs, values and standards of behaviour for individual members of the group.
- **As father figure:** serving as focus for the positive emotional feelings of individual members and the object for identification and transference.
- **As scapegoat:** serving as a target for aggression and hostility of the group, accepting blame in case of failure.

It is important to understand that leadership resides in the functions and not a particular person. The various functions of leadership can be shared among members of the group. If a member provides a particular function which is relevant to the activities of the group, and accepted by group members, then in those circumstances this could become a leadership function.

6.6 STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

In the work situation it has become increasingly clear that administration can no longer rely solely on the use of their position in the hierarchical structure as a means of exercising the functions of leadership. In order to get the best results from subordinates, the administrators must also have regard for the need to encourage high morale, a spirit of involvement and cooperation, and willingness to work.

Leadership style is the way in which the functions of leadership are carried out, the way in which the administrator typically behaves towards members of the group.

6.6.1 THE DICTATORSHIP LEADERSHIP STYLE

This leadership style can be defined as coercive style forcing people to act as they are told. According to Allais (1995), dictatorship is seen on a style in which a leader retains as much power and decision making authority as possible. It is leader-centred and cares less about the followers. Where dictatorship reigns, if the staff reacts, these reactions are taken personally and emotionally. The dictatorship leadership style, therefore, can be equated to authoritarian leadership style. This leader uses punishment rather than reward to discipline the staff and he/she calls for more things done their own way. They do not care about other people's feelings.

To summarize, the dictatorship leadership style generally does not allow workers to think for themselves. This style is also an easy alternative for those leaders who do not want to spend time working through people. If a dictator decides to work through people, he/she directs, coerces and controls closely.

6.6.2 THE LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP STYLE

The laissez-faire leadership style is sometimes called the free reign or individual-centred leadership style. This style makes the presence of the leader felt but gives workers freedom to make individual or group decisions. It looks like it is democratic but most of the time the leader appeals to personal integrity, which results in some individuals being totally trusted. This is because they are given little or no direction. Robbins and DeCenzo (2001) concur that the laissez-faire leader generally allows employees complete freedom to decide and complete work in whatever way they see fit, while the leader provides material for use and answer questions. Laissez-faire leader has no authority. He/she just watches what is going on in the organisation. In such an organisation there may be chaos if the leader stays apart from the rest of the workers. However, if the workforce is responsible and conscientious about their duties, they are motivated to work freely and they determine their own goals.

Some employees cannot work under this style of leadership as they need more direction. They may even feel that the leader does not care for them and what they do, as there is no control. On the other hand, some workers cannot work under this style of leadership because they conclude that nobody cares.

To sum up, laissez-faire leadership style connotes leading by abdicating the leadership role. The leader has trust in the workers to the extent that if they are not conscientious about their work, the organisation will suffer.

6.6.3 THE DEMOCRATIC OR PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE

The democratic leadership style, which is also participative by nature, is popular among the leaders because it is people-oriented. If there is a decision to make, all matters are discussed by the entire group. The leader only facilitates input. He/she uses the decisions of the members to enrich his/her own. The style is involved in most, if not all, activities. However, the leader makes it clear that if staff cannot come to a decision, he/she retains the right to do so.

Under this style of leadership, the staff is always well-informed about what is taking place at the workplace. Both delegation and genuine teamwork are practised in order to achieve results together. Mullins (2004) explains a democratic leadership style as implying that the job will be done automatically if interpersonal relationships are on a sound footing.

This is a team leadership style in which a leader integrates concern for production with concern for people at a high level. Team work is emphasised and it is goal-oriented.

To sum up, the democratic leadership style emphasises the group and leader participation in the achievement of goals and objectives of the organisation. The democratic leader derives power and authority from his/her followers. He/she, on the other hand, operates by tapping skills and ideas from the organisation members, remembering to delegate responsibility to them. But this leader has the authority to make decision even if all members do the ground work leading to that decision.

6.6.4 THE SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

The situational approach to leadership depends on various factors that have impact on leadership effectiveness. These factors include the history of the organisation, the community surrounding the organisation, the physical circumstances within which the organisation exists, the communication pattern in the organisation, the structure of interpersonal relationships, the expectations of staff, the personalities of group members etc. The behaviour of the leader and the staff may be affected by the situation, the type of the organisation, group effectiveness, the problem and its complexity, the time pressure which may result in staff not being involved in decision making.

Hersey and Blanchard (1976) defined leadership style as:

"a constant pattern of behaviour which the leader exhibits, as perceived by others, when he/she is attempting to influence the activities of the group."

They believed that there is not a particular leadership style that is more effective than the other. Rather the effective style of leadership is contingent upon the situation.

In using the situational style of leadership, it is indicated that often one leadership style will not work in another situation. Different situations call for leaders to identify styles that can best help to achieve goals and objectives in particular circumstances, situations and times. This means that the situational leader needs to use an appropriate style in any required situation.

Leadership behaviour is based, therefore, on both the willingness of the leader to help subordinates and the needs of subordinates for help. Leadership behaviour will be motivational to the extent that it provides necessary direction, guidance and support, helps clarify path-goal relationships and removes any obstacles which hinder attainment of goals. By using one of the four styles of leadership behaviour the leader attempts to influence subordinates' perceptions and motivation, and smooth the path to their goals.

6.7 PATH-GOAL THEORY

The path-goal theory of leadership suggests that the performance of subordinates is affected by the extent to which the leader satisfies their expectations.

- **Dynamic leadership:**
 - Giving specific directions
 - Expecting subordinates to follow
- **Supportive leadership:**
 - Friendly and approachable
 - Concern for subordinates' needs
- **Participative leadership:**
 - Consulting subordinates
 - Evaluating their suggestions before deciding
- **Achievement-oriented leadership:**
 - Setting challenging goals
 - Seeking improvement in performance
 - Confidence in their ability

6.8 SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

It is a combination of:

- **Task behaviour:** provides direction, sets goals, defines their roles, and directs how to undertake roles.
- **Rational behaviour:** two-way communication, listens to the group, provides support and encouragement.



6.9 TEAM BUILDING

For the successful functioning of an organisation it is essential that the administrators devote sufficient time and effort to promote the spirit of team work. No individual can do the work all alone and effectively too. Building a strong team of employees for performing various responsibilities ought to be the prime objective of administrators. The task is not as easy as it seems.

We can say that:

“It is easy to get the players, but getting them to play together is the hardest part, but with a clear vision and sustained efforts it can be done. Moreover, team work is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results”.



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6.9.1 TEAMS AND SYNERGY

Effective teams provide synergy as they:

- Provide an environment to manage talent;
- Provide security so members feel free to take risks;
- Establish positive group norms that encourage openness and flexibility;
- Produce more creative solutions to problems;
- Help in balancing out individual shortcomings;
- Provide mutual support that encourages team members to reach their potential.

6.9.2 TEAM RECOGNITION

When employees are asked what type of recognition they want most, it is not always money. More often, it is knowing they are valued and appreciated. When people feel valued, they are more positive, productive, innovative, and upbeat. In order to ensure this, an administrator could choose from among the following ways to reward excellence:

- **Company-wide recognition:** Post a note on the bulletin board, send a company-wide email, recognize someone in the company newsletter, organise a luncheon or dinner. Recognition in front of peers encourages other teams to perform at peak efficiency.
- **Handwritten note:** Send a handwritten note to each team member expressing appreciation. Include a copy of the note in the employee's performance file.
- **Time off:** If a team finishes a project ahead of time and on budget, give each member time off. It can be a discretionary day or even a few hours. In this way people can go to the beach on a sultry or summer day, or watch a cricket/football match instead of calling in sick.
- **Draw from a gift bag:** Have each team member draw from a gift bag that can include dinner for two at a restaurant, a gift card, or even cash. When you put chain restaurants and chain stores in the hopper, virtual workers can participate as well.
- **Applaud their efforts:** At a staff meeting, recognize accomplishment by giving the team a round of applause – even a standing ovation.
- **Elect the team to a “Wall of Fame”:** Post the team photo on a wall designated for high achievers.

6.9.3 FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

There are a series of factors that seem to be essential for effective team work:

- Team members must be chosen for their skills, not their personality;
- The team then needs to get off to a good start – setting the right tone is essential;
- The tone should not be too casual – teams perform better when challenged, so a sense of urgency needs to be imparted;
- The team should agree on clear rules for group behaviour and norms, and meet often, both formally and informally.

6.10 CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

The teams that are able to demonstrate high levels of performance are the ones that have been carefully nurtured.

They:

- Set high output, high quality targets and achieve them;
- Gain a high degree of job satisfaction;
- Cooperate well with one another;
- Have leaders who are well-respected for the example they set;
- Are well-balanced with respect to the roles people play in relation to their skills;
- Have a high degree of autonomy;
- Learn quickly from their mistakes;
- Are client/customer oriented;
- Have high problem solving skills;
- Regularly review performance; and
- Are motivated.

6.11 ATTRIBUTES OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

High performance teams are easily recognizable by the following attributes they have:

- Participative leadership
- Shared responsibility
- Aligned on purpose
- High communication
- Future focused
- Focused on task
- Creative talents
- Rapid response

7 EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

An administrator is required to take decisions in various situations. Decision making is the foremost aspect of administration. The method of decision making is quite often responsible for far-reaching consequences. “Decisions are basic to management in action”, says George R. Terry (1993). He further emphasises that:

“to make management more meaningful decisions must be made. They are mandatory for planning, actuating and controlling to have significance”.

Decision making may be defined as the solution from among alternatives of a course of action. According to Koontz and Weihrich (1988), a plan cannot be said to exist unless a decision – a commitment of resources, direction, or reputation – has been made. A decision is the outcome of hunch, intuition, reasoning and planning. It is made to achieve goals. Though decision making has its own limitations – as no administrator can simultaneously plan the future, invent the video monitor, and prepare the budget – he/she can definitely make a significant contribution to the way in which activities of the organisation are to proceed further. It is the administrator who has to take key decisions, which take development from the mere oratorical to the real.

7.1 FEATURES

Decision making has several important features:

- Decisions are made to achieve identifiable goals.
- They imply the existence of a set of alternatives to choose from.
- The process of decision making is extremely dynamic.
- Decisions are made in relation to the environment.
- It is implied that a decision maker has the freedom to do so.
- When a decision has been made, the matter does not end there. Decision making is an ongoing process.
- Decisions are not made in haste. The process is intellectual or rational.

7.2 SCOPE

The role of the administrator can be seen as a role concerned with three main classes of decision:

- Decisions regarding the allocation of resources within the system – the organisation function of administration;
- Decisions regarding the organisation in a well-defined specific direction – the directive function of administration;
- Decisions relating to monitoring or checking – the control function of administration.

7.3 PURPOSE

An organisation makes an effort to respond to challenges and pressures of the environment and decides to cope with it. This ensures that there is some sort of equilibrium. Management as such is concerned with making decisions and implementing them. The function of a decision is to ensure that the organisation determines the right course at the right time in response to the circumstances. Tannenbaum (1949) suggests that administrators are really concerned with decision making for three main purposes – organisation, direction and control. In the ‘organisation’ aspect it is determined what ‘parts’ there shall be in the system and what relationships shall exist between them. ‘Direction’ provides for the purpose of action and the methods and procedures to be followed in achieving them. ‘Control’ ensures that the purposes of action are attained.

In the past, the administrator alone was responsible for taking all the decisions. But now the size and complexity of the organisation has changed the whole concept. The administration functions of the administrator – forecasting, planning, commanding, and coordinating – have become specialised and fall within the compass of the professional. As the size of his/her staff increases, the administrator has to concern himself/herself more with setting up standards of performance for the members of their staff.

7.4 TYPES

The decision making task of an administrator involves making various types of decisions:

- **Institutional decisions:** They relate to scheduling or policy-making covering various programmes and activities.
- **Strategy decisions:** They involve the implementation of institutional decisions. An administrator has to decide who should be involved in what, when and how.
- **Programmed decisions:** These decisions are structured and are applied to routine problems and repetitive work.

- **Non-programmed decisions:** They deal with problems that result from unusual and unstructured situations. They are aimed at the problems that are not well defined.
- **Initiative or forced decisions:** They involve situations when either a person has to be proactive and initiate a decision or he/she does not have a choice but has to make a decision as per the situation.
- **Decision making under certainty, uncertainty and risk conditions:** Either there may be certainty of achieving results, or there may be uncertainty involving an element of risk.
- **Personal decisions:** They have to be made as per the personal goals of a person.
- **Individual or group decisions:** When working with a group, the group loyalties need to precede individual interests.

7.5 PROCESS

Decisions do not occur in a vacuum. There is an orderly process to decision making. Griffiths (1959) states, “Decision making is the process which one goes through in order to be able to pass judgment and terminate a controversy”.

This process passes through a series of steps:

- Recognizing, defining and limiting the problem;
- Analysing, diagnosing and evaluating the problem;
- Establishing criteria or standards by which a solution will be judged as acceptable;
- Discovering alternative solutions;
- Collecting data;
- Selecting the best solution;
- Converting the decision into effective action.

7.5.1 RECOGNIZING, DEFINING AND LIMITING THE PROBLEM

The first step in decision making is to find the real problem and to define it. One’s knowledge about the areas of the problem has a direct bearing on their perception of the problem. One has also to determine the conditions for its solutions, and go through the objectives for the solution. The objectives should be focused on performance and results. They should have a balance between the immediate future and long-range goals. It is also necessary to spell out the rules that limit the solution because in many cases the right decision will require a change in accepted policies or practices.

7.5.2 ANALYSING, DIAGNOSING AND EVALUATING THE PROBLEM

The next step is to analyse the problem by classifying it and finding the facts. A decision maker must ask himself/herself: What does the problem mean to me? What does it mean to my organisation? What do I want to do about it? Is this a problem on which a decision needs to be made? Classification of the problem helps in determining who must make the decision, who must be consulted in making it, and who must be informed. This will ensure that decision is not endangered and that it is clear who has to do what in order to convert the decision into effective action.

7.5.3 ESTABLISHING CRITERIA

A decision maker functions in a framework of values – personal values, cultural values and the values of the organisation itself. One must consider legal and social values before coming to the final decision with regard to important problems. Hence an administrator has to look for solutions the standards of which will be acceptable as per social norms. Griffiths (1959) rightly states, “In a sense, a decision on criteria and standards must be made prior to the major decision.”

7.5.4 DISCOVERING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

The process of decision making involves considering several alternative solutions. They are the means of compelling us to look at our basic assumptions, examine them and test their validity. A central problem for organisational decision makers is to choose between maintaining the system of action ‘as is,’ or changing them in desirable and feasible directions by desirable and feasible amounts. In fact, the phase of search for solutions places emphasis upon how creative the individual has to be in looking for solutions. Though alternative solutions may not ensure making the right decision, they prevent us from making the decision what we would have known to be the wrong one if we had given a serious thought to the problem.

7.5.5 COLLECTING DATA

In getting the facts, one has to ask: What information do I need for this particular decision? He/she has to decide about the relevance and validity of data available. They may not be able to get all the facts they should have. A large number of decisions are based on insufficient knowledge. This happens because either the information is not available or to get it one may have to spend a lot of time or money. However, decision making is not hindered by incomplete information if the decision maker knows what information is lacking. This will help in judging how much of a risk the decision involves. Moreover, sometimes there is no time for collecting data. For example, if there is a total breakdown of the electrical supply system of the organisation, the administrator cannot wait for the procedural delays of calling for tenders etc. He/she has to make an immediate decision to get the electricity supply restored whatever it may cost.

7.5.6 SELECTING THE BEST SOLUTION

Before deciding upon the best solution from among the alternatives available one must consider the following criteria:

- **Risk:** An administrator has to examine the risk involved in making a particular decision. In order to minimize the risk factor, they must consider the possible consequences of a decision.
- **Economy of effort:** Sustained effort and avoidance of frequent changes in plans and delegation of responsibilities (coupled with authority) as per the aptitude and capability of staff go a long way in making a suitable decision.
- **Timing:** Too long procrastination or haste does not contribute to effective decision making. While a delayed action does not bear fruit, a decision made in haste may prove to be damaging. Any decision has to be timed well.
- **Limitations of resources:** One must consider the limitations of human beings who will carry out the decision. What they can and cannot do depends upon their vision, competence, skill and understanding. An administrator must provide for raising the ability and standard of people or new people may have to be found. They must ask themselves: Do I have the means of carrying out my decisions? Do I have the people who will do so? In addition to the above, an administrator can use the following three basic approaches while selecting from among various alternatives:
 - **Experience:** Experience plays a large part in decision making. However, reliance on past experience as a guide for future action can sometimes be dangerous. Lessons of experience may not be applicable to new problems. As a matter of fact, good decisions must be evaluated against future events, while experience belongs to the past. On the contrary, if we analyse experience carefully and understand the basic reasons for success or failure, then experience can be a powerful tool for decision analysis.
 - **Experimentation:** An easy way is to try one of the alternatives but it is likely to be expensive in terms of expenditure on capital and personnel. At the same time, there are many decisions that cannot be made unless the best course of action is ascertained by experiment.
 - **Research and analysis:** In this approach, one must first comprehend the problem, and search for relationships among the variables and premises. However, this type of analysis and study are likely to be cheaper than experimentation.

7.5.7 CONVERTING THE DECISION INTO EFFECTIVE ACTION

Any decision has to be made effective in action. An administrator's decision is always a decision what other people should do. For this, it is not enough that they buy it. They must make it their own. Since the subordinates are affected by their superiors' decisions, they try to influence them. They can easily sabotage any programme they are not convinced about. Hence it is essential that the perceptions of the personnel be taken into account. In some respects, they behave like competitors who seek recognition for their ideas and skills. In practical matters, the question almost gets settled, but it is a person and not an opinion that wins. The administrator is not only choosing among alternatives but they are also inescapably choosing among advocates. However, an administrator can carry the people along with them if they are able to communicate effectively and in clear terms with those who are to implement a decision.

According to Peter Drucker (1993):

"To convert a solution into action requires that people understand what change in behaviour is expected of them, and what change to expect in the behaviour of others with whom they work".

There is no use if a decision is made but there is no action on it. Moreover, there ought not to be haphazard implementation of a decision. It needs to be done in a well-planned and structured manner.

Fig. 7/1 below represents the process of decision making.



Fig. 7/1 Process of decision making

7.6 EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

Various other factors influence decision making:

7.6.1 PERSONAL VALUES AND ORGANISATION CULTURE

The intellectual make-up, education, experience and personal values of an administrator influence the direction of the organisation. An administrator with healthy attitude of mind will naturally be more successful than the one with negative disposition. Emotional and motivational factors coupled with courage on the part of the administrator to make and implement the decision are also important. Similarly, the pattern of behaviour, shared beliefs, and values of members of an organisation do influence decision making.

7.6.2 INVOLVING THE STAFF

Decisions cannot usually be made in a closed-system environment. One of the myths about decision making is that the top administrator makes decisions. On the contrary, all levels of personnel participate in the process to some degree. People within the organisation are a part of the social system, and their thinking and attitudes must be taken into account whenever an administrator makes a decision. During discussions with the staff, it is essential to understand that there has to be dissent and disagreement. Dissent is needed, but an administrator must make it productive.

Peter Drucker (1993) advises:

“If you can bring dissent and disagreement to a common understanding of what the discussion is all about, you can create unity and commitment”.

However, it is often neither advisable nor feasible to democratize the decision making process to the extent that for all decisions a vote is taken. At some point, a decision has to be made.

7.6.3 GROUP DECISION MAKING

In modern organisations decisions are often made by groups of individuals, such as by committees or teams. The committee system is the best means of making decisions collectively and for ensuring accountability. It:

- Provides a stable structure for introducing problems;
- Is a testing ground on which proposals can be assessed in terms of feasibility;
- Provides a forum where justifications of action can be tested.

7.6.4 DECENTRALIZED AUTHORITY

An effective administrator should have the ability to see the value and consequences of ideas suggested by subordinates. For this, it is necessary to have some sort of decentralization:

- Decentralization must occur whenever an administrator supervises personnel who are highly specialised, as he/she may not have the competence to make their decisions – for example, supervision of the work of technicians if the administrator is not a competent person to do so.
- Most administrators may not be able to handle all the problems – for example, maintenance of plant and machinery.
- The subordinates must primarily make decisions about problems arising out of local circumstances – for example, sensitivity to certain products.
- Sometimes decentralization becomes necessary because of internal power arrangements. For example, if a subordinate receives contradictory instructions from two or more bosses, they find themselves in an unenviable position of making or not making a decision.

Decision making in administration is a difficult process. But if an administrator has a good understanding of the whole process and concepts, it will help them in seeing the job through in most situations.



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Jane, Chinese architect

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8 PRESENTATION SKILLS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Presentation is a method of communicating your ideas and thoughts on a given topic. Doing a business presentation can be a difficult task – particularly when you are doing it for the first time – but once you practise, it will come easily to you. Presentations can be very effective in making your point clear. It may be just an internal presentation – perhaps to your colleagues, or to your boss or it may be a marketing or technical presentation. Perhaps it may be to a large group.

8.2 PROCESS

You must organise yourself well before you can even think of making a presentation.

8.2.1 STEP-1: PLAN YOUR PRESENTATION

When you decide to make a presentation, take care of the following:

- **Subject:** You must be thoroughly conversant with the subject of your presentation.
- **Collect information:** Collect all the information required – from your knowledge and experience, colleagues, books and journals, Internet etc.
- **Size and type of audience:** You must know in advance who your audience is going to be. You should analyse audience needs beforehand. Answers to these questions will enable you to plan accordingly:
 - Are they your co-workers?
 - Or people you don't know?
 - What is their level of knowledge of the subject?
 - How many people will be present?
- **Aids to be used:** Decide what aids you will use:
 - PowerPoint?
 - White board and marker?
 - Flipchart?
 - Just speak?

However, these days almost all presentations are made with the aid of PowerPoint.

8.2.2 STEP-2: PREPARE YOUR PRESENTATION

- Write the script in points:
 - Introduction
 - Main body – points you want to discuss
- Prepare notes on small index card for you to use when making a presentation (if you are not using PowerPoint).
- Prepare PowerPoint presentation. Do not write paragraphs. Write points only, and click point by point instead of the whole slide. This will help the audience to concentrate on the point you are talking about.

8.2.3 STEP-3: PRACTISE YOUR PRESENTATION

- Practise either by yourself or in front of a small audience. You can do so in front of a mirror also if nobody is available.
- Check your timing. Quite often you may have to keep to time limit. Hence it is better to check whether you conform to it – neither less nor more.

8.2.4 STEP-4: MAKE YOUR PRESENTATION

- Get rid of stage fear.
- Be confident.
- Talk normally.
- Preferably start with a simple and appropriate ice-breaker. Maintain proper and regular eye contact with the audience.
- Look at the points only. Then speak from memory.
- Always stand while making a presentation. Sitting presentations lose their effectiveness as the invisible thread of eye contact with the audience is lost.
- Correct body language is important. Use hand movements and gestures to emphasise your points.
- Make your presentation interactive. You may elicit information from the participants instead of giving out all of it yourself.
- You may break the monotony with a small game relevant to the subject of your presentation (depending on the length and purpose of your presentation).
- At the end, ask if there are any questions. Answer them with confidence.
- Provide your contact details (someone may want to contact you for clarifications, if presentation is to the external participants).
- Thank the audience for their patience and participation.

8.3 EXAMPLES OF PRESENTATION LANGUAGE

Function	Language
Greeting the audience	Good morning (afternoon / evening), Ladies and Gentlemen / Friends / Girls and Boys
Introducing the topic	I would like to begin with...
Sequencing	First, Second...
Moving on to the next point	Next
Checking understanding	Am I clear?
Summarizing	In summary / Finally / To conclude / To sum up
Finishing	Thank you very much

9 TIME MANAGEMENT

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Effective time management is simply about self-discipline. There is no magic formula, no piece of paper to fill in which will suddenly make you good at managing your time.

Everyone has a lot of work to do and not enough time to do it. However, we can all think of people who seem very organised and others who have the same amount of work to do, but the first kind manage to do it in time, and better too.

The first lesson to learn about time management is that in the real world of work, things go wrong. Computers break down, files go missing, and problems crop up and so on. These things will always happen and there is really no way of avoiding them. This means developing and using a simple set of time management systems that work for you.

Before you start to plan on what and when you spend your time you need to know how much time you have available to you. The way you manage and budget your time is very similar to the way you manage and budget your money. Imagine your salary. At the end of each month you are paid a sum which you know about in advance. You therefore know how much you can afford to spend on things like mortgages, bills, food, clothes etc. If in any given month you receive a particularly large bill you adjust your expenditure accordingly. You may choose not to go for dinner for instance, or not to put money away to save. You can do this because you know exactly what your income and expenditure is.

You also know how much time you have available to you, which is, 60 minutes in an hour, and 24 hours in a day and so on. The amount of time available is static. You also usually know how long you have to take to complete any particular task because most tasks have deadlines.

So once you know this you can start budgeting your time, just as you would budget your money.

9.2 HOW DO YOU MANAGE TIME?

You can manage your time by adhering to the following:

9.2.1 IDENTIFY YOUR PRIORITIES

Ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of your job?
- What are you expected to do?
- What is the time scale for doing it?
- What do you need to do (which tasks do you need to carry out) in order to achieve that purpose?

9.2.2 MANAGE YOUR PRIORITIES

Work falls in two categories:

- **Reactive tasks:** There are certain tasks for which you have to provide immediate response. There is no time to plan for them.
- **Proactive tasks:** These are the tasks about which you know in advance, and so can plan accordingly.

In order to manage your time as per the situation created by reactive or proactive tasks you need to follow the following course of action:

- You need to know (approximately) what percentage of your working day and week you spend on either proactive or reactive tasks.
- Plan for the proactive tasks.
- Leave time for reactive tasks.
- Never leave things until the last minute. Plan in the time that you intend to spend on a certain job and stick to it.

One of the most common mistakes people make in managing their priorities is that they leave the 'big' and important tasks until last while they clear up the 'little' jobs. Of course, what normally happens is that they get to the end of the day and realize they have spent the whole day in doing relatively unimportant tasks and facing interruptions, and then feel stressed because they still have to attend to the important job.

10 MANAGING STRESS

Increasingly you are called on to deal with stressful situations at work. You are often judged on how you perform on these occasions. But how often do you discuss administrative stress? If you are in a demanding job, this could probably be at least once a week.

10.1 WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is derived from the Latin word ‘stringere’ meaning ‘to tighten.’ Through centuries it has meant many different things to different people. In 17th century it was associated with hardship and distress. In 18th and 19th centuries it was associated with Physics and Engineering when people were concerned with metal withstanding stress. Now people talk of stress with reference to mental pressure in performing a certain task or having some kind of situation which is worrying them. However, it has become an inescapable part of modern life, and we can say that:

- Everyone seems to rush and hurry, with deadlines to meet and targets to achieve ‘yesterday’;
- It is about pressure and the reaction it produces within you;
- It can be brought about by external or internal factors – internal factors are harder to deal with;
- It creates an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon you and your capability of meeting that demand.

10.2 RECOGNIZING STRESS

You need to recognize what stress is and what causes it. Only then you can learn how to deal with it. You must understand that:

- Stress is normal, and indeed with no stress we would be dead;
- Stress is a very individual thing and everyone has very different stress levels;
- Successful stress management requires you to recognize when you are experiencing stress;
- We are a like a set of scales with scissors being various weights, and we need to recognize optimum levels in order to maintain a balance.

Fig. 10/1 below depicts the levels of stress.

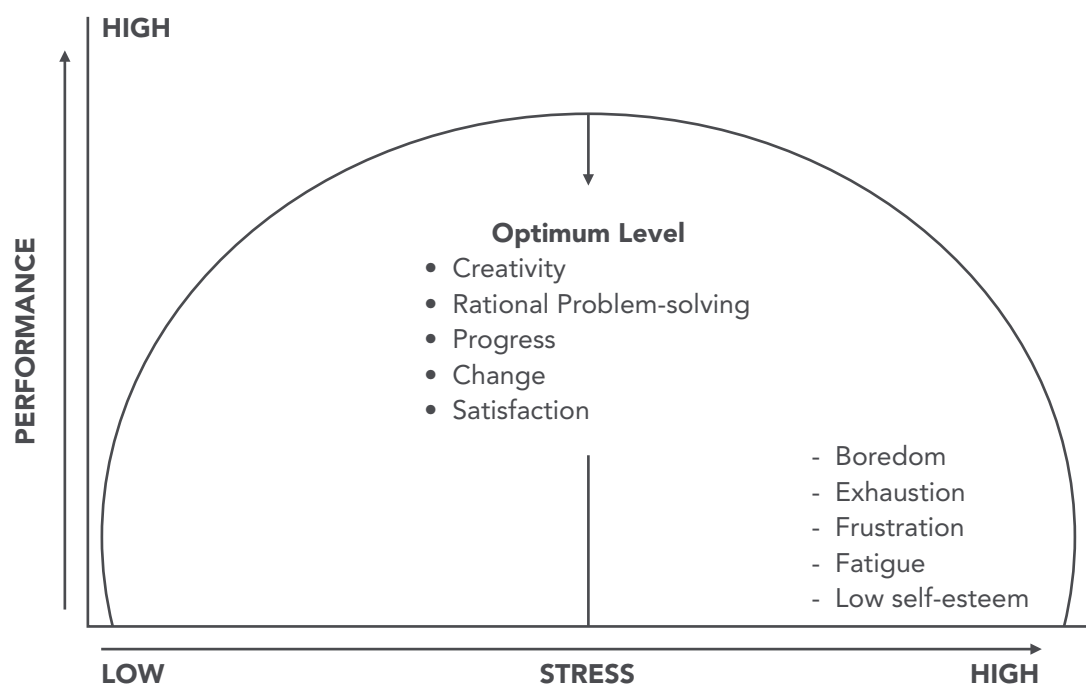


Fig. 10/1 Levels of stress

10.3 ACKNOWLEDGING STRESS

You quite often express your feelings of stress in front of others. However, by articulating that you feel stressed you might be making things worse for yourself. Seth Swirsky (2017), a clinical psychotherapist, says that the word itself can become self-fulfilling. According to him:

“Just saying that you are stressed can set off a cascade of chemicals in the body – epinephrine and cortisol – and neurotransmitters in the brain that make us feel, well, completely stressed out. Our hearts beat faster, our breathing becomes more rapid, our blood pressure goes up, we can’t think straight and we are filled with fear and anxiety”.

So in order to reduce the feelings and effects of stress we might just need to amend our language and thinking.

10.4 COMMON SIGNS OF STRESS

The following are the common signs of stress.

10.4.1 PHYSICAL

- Appetite – increase or decrease
- Sleep – increase or decrease
- Breathlessness
- Hot/cold
- Nervous twitches
- Nausea
- Muscular tension
- Headaches
- Trembling
- Dry mouth

10.4.2 EMOTIONAL

- Sense of failure
- Tearful
- Loss of confidence
- Isolated
- Withdrawn
- Low self-esteem
- Clumsy
- Irrational
- Inability to concentrate
- Loss of interest

10.4.3 FEELINGS WHEN UNDER STRESS

When you are under stress, you can often recognize the following feelings:

- Your self-esteem is low;
- You act in a clumsy manner;
- You feel overwhelmed;
- You feel guilty;
- You are always angry; and
- You feel less competent.

10.5 COPING WITH STRESS

In order to cope with stress you must go through the following steps:

10.5.1 UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF SELF

- Understand your needs and motives.
- Know your own values and limitations.
- Accept yourself and your limitations.
- Recognize your stressors: be honest with yourself and look at where your demands come from. You will place much higher demands on yourself than others do, but you may still blame everyone else for your stress.
- Trying to be perfect leads to burn out: often the standards you set yourself are irrational and unrealistic: *“Everyone must be like me”. “I should be a perfect wife/ husband, mother/father, housekeeper AND employee”!*

10.5.2 TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Often you may spend time worrying about a situation but not actually doing anything to address the problem. 90 per cent of that time is wasted in worrying about things that may never happen, and as Winston Churchill said: *“There is a lot of trouble in life, most of which has not happened.”*

10.5.3 TACKLING PROCESS

- Identify the stressor;
- Attempt to change it;
- If unable to change, accept it;
- If unable to accept, move away.
- Understand this prayer:
*“God please grant me the serenity
To accept things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference”!*
- Make a list of your stressors and identify those which you can take action on and give yourself realistic deadlines.

Problem	Proposed Action	When

10.5.4 SELF-NURTURING

When under stress you need to pay extra attention to yourself and look after your body and mind. Boost your self-image:

- Accept compliments (don't deny them).
- Acknowledge your value (write a short list of things you are good at).
- Praise yourself when you do well.
- Work at having pleasure without guilt – feel great.
- Treat yourself as you would like others to treat you.
- Treat your body well – it is the only one you have got – take a break.
- Learn to like yourself (after all you want others to like you).
- Write a list of things you like about you (if you find this hard, ask a friend).

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10.5.5 EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

To be healthy and energetic you need to maintain positive emotions and not let the negative ones take over. Express your feelings.

Take action by:

- Developing a supportive network;
- Having regular two-way communication (particularly with your boss);
- Accepting that emotions are OK;
- Accepting your own feelings – let them out (don't deny them);
- Sharing your feelings with someone you trust;
- Using the powerful natural tool of laughter;
- To help you smile (and I don't mean a fixed grin!) which will make you relax, you can:
 - Keep a funny picture in your desk that you can take out and look at;
 - Remember an embarrassing moment;
 - Think of a funny story or joke (or person);
 - Take a mini-vacation (shut your eyes for a few moments and take yourself to a place where you would feel peaceful);
 - Remember that you are not the centre of the universe and it really is not the end of the world.

10.5.6 ACTIVE DISTRACTION

You should:

- Be able to switch off and recharge your stressed batteries so that your body is not under constant pressure;
- Take a min-vacation;
- Take tea/coffee break;
- Play with a stress toy;
- Relax your body by tensing and relaxing;
- Scrunch your toes and then relax while imagining all that stress flowing from each toe as you release and relax;
- Relax your mind by thinking of something funny or different;
- Keep a perspective of your problems;
- Be able to:
 - Draw the line;
 - Mark the end of the day by leaving work behind;
 - Take time out: 'ME' time which is for you;
 - Exercise;
 - Relax.

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