

**Managing People at Work****Pp 416 (2013)****Publisher : Routledge****ISBN-13: 978-0415534390**

*(*internationally recognised Leadership guru,
prolific writer and speaker)*

“In a society whose communication component is becoming more prominent day by day, both as a reality and as an issue, it is clear that language assumes a new importance.” –

Jean-Francois Lyotard

What are the Details of the Book?

If you want to acquire knowledge about human resources management, read this book. If you want to share knowledge on HRM to students of MBA and EMBA, read this book. If you want to manage and lead at the workplace to grow as a manager and leader, read this book. Julian Randall and Allan J. Sim's authored book *Managing People at Work* is divided into 12 chapters.

This book arises from the need of students who have little or no threshold knowledge of human resource management but who need to link it to their studies in other subjects. This book encourages readers to examine the underlying concepts that reach out beyond discrete disciplinary boundaries and require connection with theories from different disciplines and their common practice wherever it applies to people within a

company. The book also addresses the need to understand and contribute to the strategic discussions which are expected in senior management forums.

The book describes the links between company strategy, human resource (HR) planning and implementation using cost-benefit analysis to illustrate the hard and soft approaches to HRM. It also looks at evaluating the results of HR in terms of both efficiency and effectiveness in the main management interventions that lie within the human resource development activities. Students are aided with their understanding by activities that lie at the end of each chapter. These exercises can be done individually or in tutor-led groups.

What is Inside?

It contains amazing case studies with diversified examples to ensure the HRM takeaways to the readers. For instance, a senior officer retired from the armed service and took up a position of chief executive of a local authority. His style was command and control and he tended to send memos and post notices that summoned managers to meetings and indicated that decisions had already been made. This approach was extremely uncongenial to senior members of his staff. After three months he lost the cooperation and good will of his colleagues and left the job. He then became managing director of a debt collecting company where his style was a perfect fit and went down well with his staff, many of whom were ex-service personnel themselves.

The book shares Charles Handy's inspiring story of his time as head of a business school. He was approached by a young millionaire who asked to be admitted to a student to one of the university's business degree courses. Handy expostulated with him that he already knew how to be successful as a businessman, so what need had he of studying further. The young millionaire answered, 'I want to discover why I was successful – otherwise I shall not be able to repeat it.' Handy accepted him on the course.

The book unveils that Geert Hofstede is perhaps the most well-known researcher to devise what was to become part of the staple content of most courses on national cultures. His research into subjects in IBM, a company that at the time was spread throughout most countries in the world, enabled him to come

up with his four basic dimensions of cultural difference between nations: power distance; individualism vs. collectivism; masculinity vs. femininity; and uncertainty avoidance. He came up with a fifth dimension that he initially called 'Confucian dynamism' but that he later changed to 'time orientation' (meaning long-term vs. short-term approach to life and work).

The book highlights various new concepts. For instance, it outlines about graduate attributes and explains the definition of Boden et al; 2000 as follows: "Graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. There are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future." It describes the four main areas of graduate attributes as follows: academic excellence; critical thinking and communication; learning and personal development; and active citizenship and engagement in the wider world of work and society.

The book explains about Aristotle who taught about the essentialness of three presentation components as follows:

1. Ethos: The ability of the presenter to establish credibility with the audience.
2. Pathos: The ability of the presenter to display and arouse passion with the audience.
3. Logos: The ability of the presenter to exemplify the stature of an expert with the audience.

Looking at these very brief statements they raise some very interesting issues. Let's look at them one at a time. First is *Ethos* and it is really quite simple: why should I waste my time listening to you if you don't appear to be a credible person? In other words, if you don't seem secure in what you are saying why should I listen? Second, we must look at *Pathos*, why would we want to display and arouse passion? Aren't we meant to be being professional here? Well the answer is really simple, if you don't care about the topics why should the audience? One of the hardest parts of presenting is keeping the audience interested. Third, we have *Logos*, once again it is about why I should spend my precious time listening to you. If you don't appear to be expert in the field that you are presenting on then exactly why should I listen to you? So Aristotle's essentials may be old but they are relevant today.

The elements of presentation are purpose, audience, planning, design and implementation. When you close your presentation, you must consider the following aspects: know when to stop; bring all your points together; repeat them for the audience (repetition brings remembrance); and remind them what they mean.

It has been suggested that roughly 24 hours after hearing a presentation, the listener will forget at least 50 per cent of all the information presented. In 24 more hours, another 50 per cent will be forgotten. So if you want people to remember your key points then emphasize and repeat.

Approximately 80 per cent of what we learn is learned visually and only 20 per cent is learned aurally. That makes visual tools such as PowerPoint very useful in presentations.

However, don't overload your audience's brains. Keep the information on each visual aid to a minimum and remember your time limit. You must give your audience time to look at and absorb the information. If every slide is up for five seconds they aren't going to be able to do that.

In conclusion, tell them what you are going to tell them; tell them it; tell them what you tell them (repetition brings remembrance); answer the questions (it will be easy because you are prepared).

HRM Takeaways

There has been an increasing focus in recent years on the rise in the numbers of knowledge workers. There are those who would say that jobs have always required knowledge to be conducted effectively. But we can probably accept that more jobs require knowledge, skill and experience prior to engaging with the work required and that though there are training paths initially for most occupations, for knowledge workers their expertise has often been developed through experience with clients in their field and continuing professional development in their working lives.

The four key roles of HR are: strategic partner; change agent; administrative expert; and employee champion.

Management is both an art and a science. The science can be learned from books or lectures. But the art can only be acquired by practicing the skills as closely as can be replicated to conditions in the workplace.

The common curriculum for L&D was divided into three core areas: working in the specific department, leadership and management development and core skills.

Being assertive is about expressing yourself. It is about making your personal rights and feelings clear to others. Assertiveness is an attitude and a way of acting in any situation where you are required to express your feelings, ask for what you want or say no to something you do not want. Assertiveness is about self-confidence. It is about having a positive attitude towards yourself and towards others. It is about standing up for your needs and interests in an open and direct way. Remember that being assertive in the workplace, just as elsewhere, doesn't mean trampling on others and it certainly doesn't mean letting others trample on you. You need to make your case without belittling the work of others but also without giving them undue credit for your success.

Humans have a requirement for a certain amount of space around their bodies in order to feel comfortable and not threatened. Distances vary with individuals and the cultures in which they were brought up. Violating this personal space can be seen as an aggressive action so try to avoid it.

Charity may begin at home but your career path is guided in the workplace. Learning to be assertive in the workplace is a vital part of being successful. In the workplace you will need not only to be aware of your achievements but also to have the ability to make others aware of them. If you can't do this you are likely to miss out on opportunities.

Finding the right people for business has always been a challenge and sometimes problem. At present more than 80 per cent of companies in the EU complain that they cannot find the people they need to staff their business effectively. This is in spite of the highest unemployment figures that have been seen in the EU countries since the great depression of the 1930s.

There are many trainers who are good at what they do, but have no sympathy with

those who find they are struggling to understand something or need extra practice before they become familiar with new knowledge and skills development. Training for trainers is an important investment because people learn in different ways, and at different speeds.

Traditionally training can address three of the four headings of the personnel profile: knowledge, skills, experience and attitude. Most training requires both an element of underpinning knowledge and a level of skill to communicate that knowledge.

Theoretical knowledge may require formal, classroom style instructional technique, laid out in a way that interests the trainees and gives examples and exercises of theory in practice. Stories based on experience can be useful to trainees and are enhanced by trainers who are experienced and knowledgeable in the subjects they instruct in.

Skills development is usually hands-on and experiential. Role-play and filming of activities provide a useful opportunity to exercise the skills in the likely scenarios to be faced in business. Video recording can be used to capture and performance of those involved and allow group and tutor comment and feedback on what has been achieved.

The three steps that trainers must learn about imparting their knowledge and skills to others are: I hear-and I forget; I see-and I remember; and I do-and I understand.

Interactive training can achieve all three levels, because while knowledge or principles can be taught deductively, the supporting skills are taught and tested inductively. This gives the added advantage of developing knowledge and skill together in individuals and reinforcing group learning at the same time. Shared group preparation for interactive skill learning should give added confidence and more insightful feedback to the individual from the group and trainer.

It requires coaching skills (developing skills

and knowledge) and sometimes counseling skills (encouraging self reflection and exploring feelings) and these cannot be assumed in many managers, however experienced they may be in their own job.

In the modern working environment it is more important than ever to be able to work as part of a team. The days of the gloriously isolated 'expert' have long gone. Globalization and technological change has made team working essential. Maybe you do hate people but then maybe you had better learn to get along with them. It is important to get along with your team members but you don't have to agree to be their best friend. Sometimes being overly friendly can have a negative impact on the effectiveness of a team. As part of a team you should strive to be professional but not necessarily become friends for life.

It may seem a kindness to let the quiet member contemplate and then come forth with their contribution when they are ready but it can be damaging. It may be that the team member is quiet not because they are considering but simply because they lack confidence or feel they have not had permission to speak. In a team every member's contribution adds a value.

In executive coaching, senior managers work with professional behavioral coaches to assist them to see clearly things they do that are effective as well as those that are ineffective.

Turning work experience into development and learning opportunities will be a lifelong occupation for most people in active work and will last throughout their careers.

Skill without knowledge is vacuous. Knowledge without skill is powerless. A combination of the two may well combine the benefits of both and encourage managers to continue in their search for best practice in managing their people at work more effectively.

What is the Recommendation?

This book is well researched and is written in a conversational tone. The book contains lots of stories and case studies in boxes. It serves as an academic and reference guide for the students of MBA and EMBA. It is useful for students, educators, learners and HR scholars and practitioners. Enjoy reading this book!

“If you want a happy ending that depends, of course, on where you stop your story.” – Orson Wells

References

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415534390/>

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