

Reflections on Management Education

By HENRY H. GOLDMAN, Ph.D
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
THE GOLDMAN-NELSON GROUP:
GLOBAL CONSULTANTS AND TRAINERS
LEE'S SUMMIT, MO, 64082, U.S.A.

Management education vs. management training: A matter of focus.

Management has often been defined and/or described as, “getting work done through others.” Nearly all of the writers and business philosophers from Henri Fayol to Peter Drucker and beyond have focused on that definition, to a greater or lesser degree. Contrary to popular thesis, management educators and scholars do, in fact, consider themselves “worthy of critical scrutiny.” A prime reason for teaching management, particularly on the graduate level and for working adults, who are quite likely to already be experienced managers, is to determine why some things tend to work well in some companies and do poorly in others. “Why does it work here, but not there?” is a necessary and meaningful interpretation of management education, or should be.

We may also wish to clearly separate, for the purpose of this paper, *management education* from *management training*. While related, these two concepts are quite different and are unique unto themselves. Both *education* and *training*, in general, stress Fayol’s “Fourteen Principles of Management,” but the focus can be very different in nature. It has been suggested that *management education* be reserved for the formal offerings in colleges and universities, and that *management training* is that which is done in on-site programs conducted by either in-house personnel, or by outside consultants. If this differentiation holds true, then both aspects of the original thesis are likely to be true.

One colleague has suggested that, “management educators have an easier time when teaching Managers or those who wish to become Managers because the motivation is for their [goals] to be achieved.” He goes on to suggest that management can be taught and that the emerging managers can be molded to take the reins and move forward toward a new vision: a new way of doing things. It thus becomes essential that “managers-in-training” relate that which is offered from the podium to their own developing management styles. *Management*, as a discipline, can be taught, *management* as an art, cannot.

We, as professors, scholars, writers and teachers of management, must continually inquire into the purposes of management education. One such purpose is to create a pool of new management talent, ready to step into place when needed. Another, and closely related

purpose, might be to permit people NOT to become managers. Some people may want to understand management, particularly as it may relate to their own organizations, but have absolutely no interest in becoming managers, themselves. We all know individuals who are quite content with taking orders but may feel very uncomfortable in giving them.

Still another purpose of management education may be to innovate – but little is done about this topic, with the exception of Professor Peter Drucker, who continues to refine and redirect the ideas and the ideals of management theory, both from the podium and through his extensive writing and speaking. He would agree, that there is very little new in management, but many new ways of discharging management responsibilities. I recently responded to a Request for Proposal (RFP) for conducting a series of “hands-on” management courses for a governmental entity. The overall goal of the training was to determine, “if management [was] right for me.”

Malcolm W. Warren, former president of Performance Technologies, Inc., suggests that “we can differentiate between [management] training and management development [or education] in three ways.” Warren lists them as:

- Training deals with current needs; management development with predicated needs.
- Training is job-oriented; management development is person-oriented.
- Training usually deals with specific task requirements; [education] with organizational requirements or “task complexes.”

The effect of both of these ideas is to change human behavior. Both share a common objective: the development of human resources.^[1]

Still another differentiation between *management education (development)* and *management training* is the degree to which the information being proffered from the podium is immediate “take-away” value. Management training tends to be very task oriented. The emphasis might be on “problem-solving” or on “decision-making.” I have had the privilege of facilitating “hands-on” learning for a number of world-wide corporations. Sometimes the purpose of the training is “skill enhancement.” Sometimes the purpose of the training is to allow the “student” to learn how to do his/her job more efficiently. Often, we have led programs that are geared to introduce new and different ways of completing tasks. These training programs may be financially oriented, i.e., “Enhancing Shareholder Value,” or “How to Read and Use Your Company’s Financial Statements.” These programs, generally short and very content specific, are brought about by current company concerns, “Ethics after Enron,” is a good example. Some training coursework covers soft skills. “Writing Better Memos,” “Effective Delegation,” and “Negotiation Skills,” are all examples.

By contrast, management education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels tends to

stress the more classical treatment of management. “Management as an Art,” rather than an attempt at solving current problems at the office. Management 101, “Principle of Management,” may actually become a course in the history of management rather than an applied course. Professors are notorious for teaching what each of them deems to be important, as long as all of the subject matter in the University’s course outline is covered, or at least mentioned. Often, lower division “Principles” courses may actually call for the spending of several lecture hours comparing and contrasting the works of Fayol with those of Frederick Taylor. Such rigid approaches ought not to be permitted when we can agree that there ought to be a separation between management in the abstract and practical or applied management. Even Henri Fayol stressed the point that his “Fourteen Principles” were flexible and that their application would vary based on several criteria, including the type of industry served and the quality of the company’s management cadre. He cautioned that allowances had to be made to their applicability for different and changing circumstances.[2]

Several of Fayol’s “Principles” can be both theoretical and practical. Those are worthy of specific mention and include at least the following:

Division of Work (#1):

Here was the first statement dealing with the conceptual idea of work specialization. This practical principle forms the basis of any superior – subordinate relationship. As such, deserves treatment from both the university podium and the in-house trainer. The concept can be immediately understood in both venues.

Authority (#2):

Fayol describes formal or positional authority as opposed to personal authority. Again, students can easily understand the relationship of authority as it comes from the position held. This also proclaims that there is “hierarchical” authority: the higher one moves within an organization, the greater the amount of real as well as perceived authority. Here again is a “Principle” that is both classic and applied and, as such, easily comprehended by both the university student and the workplace participant.

Subordination (#6):

This topic may be less understood by those receiving their management education at the university level versus those already employed. University students are generally very jealous of their individual interests and tend to be reluctant to subordinate these interests for the “greater good.” Teaching a course on “Team Building” may be more difficult at the university level because of this unwillingness to set personal interests aside. MBA students tend not to want to work in teams in order to promote their own abilities, particularly in the classroom. The workplace is dominated by work teams. The better employees are always “team players.” Those who are not soon realize their inabilities in moving upward through the organization. On the other hand, working adults who are just beginning their management education and

working toward the MBA or similar degree, find that working in teams multiplies their successes because of the increased brain power and skills utilization.

Fayol developed his “Principles” from the practices he had used most often in his own work. He understood them as broad and general guidelines for effective management. They were never intended to be “classic.” Fayol’s true contribution to management thinking was not the “Fourteen Points” themselves but rather his formal recognition and synthesis of the “Principles.” He was probably the first to codify the elements of management. Today, these “management functions” are taught from every university podium and are reiterated in books by university scholars; none have really improved upon Fayol’s groundbreaking work, now nearly eighty-five years old.

Management education or development courses tend to emphasize Fayol’s so-called elements of management, today more likely to be called, “functions of management.” These include the kinds of information normally taught in an on-site program of management training:

- Planning
- Organizing
- Commanding
- Controlling
- Coordinating

He most often emphasized planning and organizing because he viewed these “elements” as primary and essential to all of the other functions of management. Our worldwide program, “Essential Skills for Middle Managers,” an on-site management training course, is based on Fayol’s functions of management. On the other hand, one is unlikely to find a university management course built solely on the functions unless when compared with another’s work, usually Taylor.

To further differentiate “training” from “education,” the following might be the beginnings of a one-day management training course for a major corporation. This one-day overview of the “Management Process” would be conducted in a lecture-discussion mode and would be highly interactive. There would probably be two or three hands-on “applications workshops” spread throughout the day, as the need arises. The course might look like this:

Defining the Role of the Manager

- Understanding the Management Function
- Establishing Yourself

Classic Management Functions

- Planning
- Organizing

- Staffing
- Training
- Communicating

Delegating: the Life Blood of Management

- Barriers to Delegating
- Benefits of Delegating

Employee Discipline

Ethics in Management: A Primer for the 21st Century

Handling Stress, Conflict, Burnout

Management Decision Making and Problem Solving

Negotiating

Strategic Planning

Budgeting and Financial Skills

By contrast with the above, a typical university course, heavy on theory and light on practice, may cover the following topics:

UNDERGRADUATE MODEL

Management Functions

Management Theory

Leadership Theory

Motivation Theory

Strategic Planning

Entrepreneurship

Decision Making

Ethics and Social Responsibility

Organizational Structure and Design

International Environment

Control Methods

GRADUATE MODEL

Five Functions of Management

- Planning
- Organizing
- Staffing
- Directing
- Controlling

Management Styles

- Highly Directive, Autocratic
- Participative

Management Objectives

Managerial Effectiveness

Organizational Structure

International Competition

Corporate and Social Responsibilities

Another, more structured model might look something like this and can be either for undergraduates or for a graduate program, depending on the emphases:

Management and Organization

- Management Theory

Building Basic Management Skills

- Building Decision Skills
- Building Interpersonal Skills
- Leadership
- Goal Setting
- Managing Conflict

Strategic Management

- The Organization and its Outside Environment
- Strategic Planning and Control
- Organizational Design
- Strategic Change

Tactical Management

- Tactical Planning
- Organizing Work
- Managing Groups
- Controlling Behavior
- Controlling Operations
- Staffing
- Organizational Performance

Additionally, in the graduate program, several of the topics ticked off above may be the subject matter for more intensive courses, like, for example, “The External Environment of Business,” or “Introduction to Executive Management,” or “Executive Decision-Making,” where the student will

learn more and more about less and less until he or she becomes an expert on nothing. These largely theoretical courses dwell on *what ought to be* rather than on *what is*. It is axiomatic that much of what is learned in graduate school is quickly forgotten or ignored in the corporate world. The true function and purpose of graduate education is for the student to learn to think in a logical and critical way. Often, these goals are ignored or simply misunderstood by faculty members, worldwide.

There is still another aspect of *management education* versus *management training*. A large percentage of university professors have limited “real world” experience. Many of them have never worked as managers in large, multi-national corporations. Their knowledge, while profound, tends not to include hands-on expertise. The problem-solving component management is often missing or lightly treated by these professors. Their case studies are derived >from textbook examples, rather than from their experience as corporate executives or as management consultants.

We argue that management education, of all kinds, must include front-line experience. The instructor should have been “in front of the cannon.” The instructors’ experiences can be woven into the lectures and into the interactive small group discussions that ought to take place during the learning sessions. These can prove to be invaluable to the participants. The solving of real world problems, by students led by their instructors can go a long way toward the creation of a managerial workforce that is ready and prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

[1] *Training for Results*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979

[2] Henri Fayol. *Administration Industrielle et Generale*. Paris: 1918.