

ManagementMatters™

SOLUTIONS THAT WORK • SUCCESS THAT IS REALIZED • RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST



THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

Filling a Gap

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Management Matters*, a quarterly newsletter devoted to providing you with the management and leadership tools, approaches, strategies, and perspectives you can use to help you be the best manager and strongest leader you can be. As a management consultant for more than 30 years who has worked with many, many managers at companies such as Merck & Co., Inc., Pfizer, Wyeth, and Johnson & Johnson, and at government agencies and health care providers, I welcome the opportunity to offer a publication that is easy to read and, of greatest importance, provides tangible, realistic, common sense ways to manage and lead more effectively. It will fill an important gap in the management literature that currently exists.

We have named this publication *Management Matters* because, very simply, *it really does*. Management matters in the private, public and non-profit sectors, in small businesses and large corporations. Management matters for chief executive officers, middle managers, and line staff. Most people spend more time in the workplace than they do at home and their lives are greatly affected by the way their workplace is managed. People who are very strong technically are often promoted to management positions with

little training or preparation and even less understanding of what it will really take to succeed in their new role. This publication will offer bridges to management and leadership success. Each issue will contain success stories, useful interviews, book reviews, thought provoking quotes, and other features that will help you think and plan, plan and think. As a manager and leader, it is critically important to know that there is a way to say everything, and that, in the workplace and in life, it's all about relationships. This publication will help you put those basic principles to work for you and for those around you. It will help you meet the management and leadership challenges you face every day with confidence and insight.

Management Matters is the culmination of many years of effort and experience. Also, it is something I have always wanted to do. I hope you enjoy it, find it useful, and look forward to reading future issues as much as I'm looking forward to sending them to you! **MM**

We welcome your feedback, comments, and suggestions.

Please contact us at:

mdsinc@aol.com

Please visit our website:

www.mdsinonline.com



THE BOOKSHELF

Now, Discover Your Strengths – Strengths Finder 2.0

Author: Tom Rath

Reviewer: Patricia Olea

This book is an excellent resource and I recommend it. It is based on the premise that focusing on your talents and leveraging your strengths can make a dramatic difference in both performance and interpersonal engagement. More than just interesting reading, the book provides you with access to an online assessment (Gallup's) that helps you to discover your top five talents out of 34 themes (an improved version of the original assessment launched in 2001). Once you have completed and scored the assessment, it is really refreshing to find out "what's right with you."

You will complete the assessment in about 30 minutes (you have 20 seconds to answer very easy questions about yourself) and you immediately get a "Strengths Discovery and Action Planning Guide" for your top five talents (basically what you will find in the book). On the website provided in the book, you have access to additional resources to help you create your individualized action

(Continued on page 8)

HERE'S THE SITUATION:

You're a manager with a direct report who has good skills, a critical role, and a really bad attitude. And you have to do something about it.

Real managers have *their* say but what would *you* do? See page 4!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2** INTERVIEW WITH DR. STUART LELAND
- 4** WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
- 5** RECOMMENDED READING
- 5** TAKING THE PULSE

- 6** COMMUNICATIONS CORNER
- 7** THE LIGHTER SIDE OF MANAGEMENT
- 8** THE *MM* METHOD: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION



VIEWPOINT

An Interview with... Dr. Stuart Leland, Wyeth Research

1 WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A TRULY EFFECTIVE MANAGER?

As a young research veterinarian, I was taught that you either “have it or you don’t” when it comes to managing people. At the time, I felt constrained in my options – if I didn’t “have it,” was I relegated to being a scientist forever, even though I had an interest in management? I was fortunate in that my first job in academia offered a two-year certificate program stressing management as a secondary skill for medical professionals. This opened my eyes to the fact that management, like other skills, can be developed and improved with training. Ideas and concepts that were closed to me at an earlier career stage now took on new meaning and importance. Those ideas and concepts were reinforced and expanded on later in my career when I worked with a personal coach.

As a result of that training and coaching, I came to realize that to be a truly effective manager, you need a broad range of tools and skills you can use as different situations present themselves. These include communication skills, motivation skills, delegation skills, conflict management skills, and leadership skills. Managers deal with anything from absenteeism to over-zealousness. They must be able to identify problems and develop a realistic plan to address them. To be truly effective, good managers must also know how to implement those plans.

2 IN TIMES OF CHANGE AND TURMOIL, WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES THAT A MANAGER FACES?

During those trying times, I think the hardest thing to manage is people’s expectations. Different people have different tolerances for change. As much as we preach that change is inevitable and as much as I provide reassurance, change can be difficult for some. People are wired differently. I try to be sensitive to this. I spend more time on the floor interacting directly with people, letting them know that I’m doing everything in my power to support them and that

I’m there if they want to speak to me. I also try to accurately assess the emotional state of my staff to determine how I will manage the requested changes, whether to push, support, inspire or cajole my people to meet the specific organizational need or directional change.

3 WHAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT THING ABOUT BEING A MANAGER?

For me, the most difficult thing has been to grasp the political environment within which my decisions may influence peers and others above me in the organization. Having an awareness of peer and senior manager agendas and perceptions is helpful. I’ve occasionally altered a decision or approach based on that awareness. Anticipating push-back and getting buy-in before a difficult decision is rolled out, even if the decision appears to be obvious, has occasionally made the difference between the ultimate success or failure of the decision.

4 WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART ABOUT BEING A MANAGER?

I like developing people, especially those with great potential. I feel their energy and excitement and it motivates me. I maintain an open door policy and encourage young managers to discuss their approaches, conflicts, perceptions and agendas with me.

5 WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON SOME KEY MANAGEMENT SKILLS LIKE COMMUNICATION SKILLS, DELEGATION SKILLS, AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS?

Communication is the foundation for all other management skills. So, if you had to focus on mastering one skill, that’s where I would begin. You can’t delegate or manage conflict without communicating effectively. I’m much more cognizant of the important role that communication plays today. Communications should be calm, cool, collected, and professional at all times. There are times, however,

when letting people see the raw side of your emotion can be very powerful. It can put a very human side to you as a manager and demonstrate your intensity and passion. I don't recommend this often; the last thing you want is a reputation for being too emotionally involved.

Also, in this time of e-communication, I like to stress the importance of choosing your mode of communication carefully. In a global environment, e-mail and text messaging may be your only options. Those communications need to remain professional at all times. Poorly constructed or emotional e-mails reflect poorly on the individual, their manager, and the department.

6 WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP MEAN TO YOU? WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?

Leadership is visionary and forward thinking. It's about inspiring and motivating people to help make the vision a reality. I try to review our vision with my staff at least annually. I also try to incorporate our vision whenever possible when discussing difficult decisions with clients. Management embodies all the skill sets (communication, conflict management, negotiation, performance evaluation, etc.) necessary to run an organization day to day. Both are important for success; they really go hand in hand.

7 WHAT ROLE DO PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS PLAY IN A MANAGER'S SUCCESS?

As my coach always says, "It's all about relationships." I believe this extends through all levels of an organization. "Schmoozing" with the higher ups is good but it's the relationships with others that help you get the job done quicker or more efficiently. As you move up the organizational ladder, cultivating relationships, at all levels, is the single biggest factor that can help propel you to the next level.

8 HOW DO YOU BUILD AND MAINTAIN PRODUCTIVE, EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS?

One-on-one meetings are a great tool to build relationships. Putting a name to a face to a mannerism to a few personal anecdotes can add up to a successful relationship. Subtle emotions including urgency, priority, intensity, and sincerity are all revealed through facial expressions, tone, mannerisms and body language. Knowing

this information can guide you in your own decision making. Face-to-face communication involving some "small talk" gives you an opportunity to personalize the relationship. It helps humanize what was previously a power relationship and often leads to continued discussions in future meetings.

9 IF YOU HAD A SIGN ON YOUR DESK TO REMIND YOU ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER, WHAT WOULD THAT SIGN SAY?

I'm a sucker for those positive reinforcement messages. I've always liked the simple word, "SOAR." I like this word because it embodies the potential that exists within each of us. If you can pull together all the skill sets of managing and have the confidence to lead, letting others reach their potential, who knows what heights you may achieve. *MM*

"I like developing people, especially those with great potential. I feel their energy and excitement and it motivates me. I maintain an open door policy and encourage young managers to discuss their approaches, conflicts, perceptions and agendas with me."

Dr. Stuart Leland has been the Director, BioResources, Wyeth Research, in Princeton, New Jersey, for the past five years. He manages 30 professional and technical staff members. He previously served as Head, Research Support and Veterinary Services at Aventis in Bridgewater, New Jersey. Dr. Leland has a BS in Animal Science from Cornell (1983) and a DVM from UC Davis (1988).





REAL MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS WITH REAL SOLUTIONS FROM REAL MANAGERS

What Would You Do?

One of your direct reports, Ed, has excellent technical skills but a poor attitude. He is an integral part of a very important project that your department is working on but he has already had several disagreements with team members. He has been late to three team meetings and, on two occasions, when you've asked him to stay later than 5:00 for a meeting, he has refused without even offering a reason. His technical expertise is both unique and critical but, in your opinion, he has not been a "team player."

Ed has been with the company for eight years and has a good personnel record. But, in the six months he has been working for you, he has become increasingly problematic to manage. Your one and only discussion with him about his attitude resulted in a begrudging promise to "be better." Unfortunately, this hasn't happened. The other complicating factor is that your boss has known Ed for several years, likes him, and values his technical skills.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO AND HOW WOULD YOU DO IT?

Solution #1:

Since Ed's problems seem to have started six months ago, there may be an issue that has flared up in Ed's life, be it personal or professional. This situation warrants discussion between the manager and the employee. In this meeting, it is important to gain knowledge and insight into the cause of the difficulty without reaching to solve someone's personal problems. If it is a personal problem, there may be a way for the manager to support the employee without crossing over the line of employee/employer relations. My goal would be to reach a compromise while collaborating with Ed in hopes of finding some common ground to solve the current problem. This method will allow the employee to actively contribute to the solution and have a chance to turn around the previous poor performance.

Even though my boss feels Ed has strong technical skills, his performance problem still needs to be dealt with quickly or it could become systemic, affecting the productivity of the team and possibly disrupting my entire department.

*Marc Stephanick, Department Head, Power Plant Operations
Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, New Jersey*

Solution #2:

The key to dealing with Ed's poor attitude is communication and candor. I would ask to speak to Ed and discuss the issues involved with the group project, specifically the lateness and refusal to stay for the meeting.

There is often a reason and subsequently a behavioral component behind an employee's action. Ed's behavioral issues are giving me

"cues" reflecting his obvious discontent with how the group project is progressing. The reasons behind his behavior need to be identified and discussed. Someone like Ed, who is technically skilled at his job, often needs to feel he is recognized for his talents and contributions. He needs to be told he is an integral part of the team and feel empowered to make changes and offer ideas in order for the project to be a success. To continue to draw out the unique technical skills Ed possesses, frequent communication, coaching and relationship building techniques need to be cultivated and maintained for the good of this and future projects and for the teamwork environment as a whole.

*Jacqueline S. Howenstein RN, BSN, CEN, Emergency Department Manager,
Grand View Hospital, Sellersville, Pennsylvania*

Solution #3:

I would spend some time with Ed to try to understand what is going on. It sounds like something has changed within the last six months that is causing his change in attitude. Is it the relationship with me? Is it something at home? Does he want my job and is he acting out to punish me? Maybe by talking, listening, and understanding his issues, it will bridge a gap and help him see his power in the company. Maybe he thinks he is not valued because he did not get a promotion. Maybe he feels he is not capable, and needs reassurance. Maybe something is going on at home, and he feels he cannot contribute in the same way. In any case, I need to be flexible. If nothing comes of this approach, and Ed is not willing to open up, a more direct, more forceful approach might be needed.

*Kimberlin Keller, Manager, Regional Site Services, Johnson & Johnson
Spring House, Pennsylvania*



RECOMMENDED READING FROM THE EDITOR

Common Sense Leadership

by Roger Fulton

You can probably read this book in one hour but you'll be thinking about what you've read for a long time. It is short and easy to read but also one of the most substantive books on leadership that you can find. It offers useful insights and practical approaches to leadership and there is a thoughtful quote on each page. The author focuses on what a leader is and does, and on what a leader understands and avoids. Common Sense Leadership is aptly titled. It demonstrates that large, tedious tomes on leadership are not necessary and that you can learn a lot from a little book. **MM**

Smart Moves For People In Charge


by Sam Deep & Lyle Sussman

This is a book that should be kept within easy reach because it is an excellent, timeless resource. It consists of 130 checklists that contain practical tips and strategies to help you become a better manager and stronger leader. If you're stumped by a problem or trying to clarify your thoughts on an issue, just look through the book and one of the checklists is sure to help. With chapter titles such as "Get the Word," "Spread the Word," and "Lead Your Team," the book provides useful tips and realistic advice to help you resolve problems and plan strategy. The book is neither theoretical nor wordy and the format makes it easy to find the checklist you need. Get the book and keep it handy; you'll use it often. **MM**

TAKING THE PULSE

Conflict Management

Each issue of *Management Matters* will present the results of a brief survey of managers on an important management topic. This feature will enable you to learn more about what other managers are thinking and doing on a daily basis. The current survey focuses on conflict management. It consists of six statements with a "Strongly Agree" – "Strongly Disagree" response continuum with a "No Opinion" option. There is also one open-ended item. The survey items are as follows:

- 1 I have to manage or mediate conflict at least twice a month.
 - 2 I have difficulty dealing with conflict.
 - 3 I leave conflict alone, hoping it will take care of itself.
 - 4 I try to anticipate potential conflict as often as possible.
 - 5 In dealing with conflict, I focus on defining and resolving issues, rather than placing blame.
 - 6 In resolving conflict, showing emotion is counter-productive.
-  I have been successful in resolving conflict by:

MM

If you would like to participate in the survey, please visit our website at www.mdsinonline.com and click on the **Survey link**.

CHECK THE STATS!

30%

of white-collar workers think incompetence is what makes for a bad boss

42%

of white-collar workers have considered quitting over bureaucratic hassles

45%

of those with Blackberries or similar devices check their e-mail before they get dressed.

53%

of white-collar workers complain about a sense of entitlement among colleagues under 30.

55%

of white-collar workers take calls or e-mails after office hours all or some of the time.

Source: YouGov/BusinessWeek poll of 721 office workers on August 4-6 (reprinted in the August 25/September 1, 2008 issue of "Business Week")



THE COMMUNICATIONS CORNER

By Ilana Eden Esposito

Effective E-mail

Even though the days of typewriters are not too far behind us, it has become hard to remember a time when our lives didn't seem dependent on computers. The technology boom of the last few decades has certainly brought amazing benefits, including new ways of communicating. In particular, email has revolutionized the workplace. It enables us to easily deliver information to multiple parties at once, to document exchanges, and to simply send a quick note.

However, communicating via e-mail also poses new challenges. Few of us put the amount of energy into an e-mail that we would into an old-fashioned letter; e-mail is supposed to be an easy alternative – a communication shortcut. This view can cause us to overlook the perils of electronic exchanges. Most significantly, it can lead us to fail to consider how our messages may be perceived by others and adjust them accordingly.

Many of us write e-mails in the same way that we speak: informally and conversationally. What we often fail to consider are vocal cues, including pace, tone, and volume, which play such an important part in spoken interactions. These signals immediately convey the speaker's intent and point of view, and may do so even more powerfully than the words that he or she uses. Their absence leaves only words without a guiding subtext, yet we frequently choose those words casually and without a great deal of forethought.

As a result, e-mail messages can more easily produce misunderstandings than other forms of communication. A statement meant to be sarcastic is interpreted literally; a disagreement with a colleague is interpreted as an attack; a request to an employee is interpreted as an order. Such breakdowns can negatively impact productivity, lead to unmet expectations, and, perhaps more importantly, undermine relationships.

To avoid these unfortunate consequences, it is critical to pay greater attention to the language that we use when e-mailing. Approach the drafting process thoughtfully. Decide what information you want to share and how much (if any) detail is appropriate for your immediate purpose. Finally, before hitting "Send," re-read the entire message from beginning to end from the perspective of the recipient. Be sensitive to any political implications that could influence his or her perception. Consider whether there is anything that could be misinterpreted and, if so, attempt to clarify. These steps do not have to make crafting an e-mail cumbersome or unwieldy – they take only a little extra time but are indispensable to communicating effectively.

Becoming more cognizant of how e-mail differs from other forms of communication can help us to make the most of this medium. Taking a few moments to address the potential obstacles posed by its solely literal nature will pay surprisingly sizable dividends. *MM*

Ilana Eden Esposito is an experienced communications professional for a major financial institution.

"...it is critical to pay greater attention to the language that we use when e-mailing. Approach the drafting process thoughtfully. Decide what information you want to share and how much (if any) detail is appropriate for your immediate purpose. Finally, before hitting 'Send', re-read the entire message from beginning to end from the perspective of the recipient."

The Lighter Side of Management

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied, "You're in a hot air balloon hovering about 30 feet above the ground. You're between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

"You must be an engineer," said the balloonist. "I am," replied the woman, "How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct but I've no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help at all. If anything, you've delayed my trip."

The woman below responded, "You must be in Management." "I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well," said the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you're going.

You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you've no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems.

The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault." **MM**



A sales rep, an administrative assistant and the manager are walking to lunch when they find an antique oil lamp. They rub it and a Genie comes out in a puff of smoke. The Genie says, "I usually only grant three wishes, so I'll give each of you one wish."

"Me first! Me first!" says the admin. "I want to be in the Bahamas, driving a speedboat, without a care in the world." Poof! She's gone.

In astonishment, "Me next! Me next!" says the sales rep. "I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with my personal masseuse, an endless supply of pina coladas and the love of my life." Poof! He's gone. "OK, you're up," the Genie says to the manager.

The manager says, "I want those two back in the office after lunch."

Moral of the story: Always let the boss have the first say. MM



"A manager sets objectives... organizes...motivates and communicates...measures...and develops people. Every manager does these things knowingly or not. A manager may do them well, or may do them wretchedly, but always does them."

– Peter Drucker

"...a manager's job is to get things done through other people."

– John Schermerhorn
Managing for Productivity

"The reason you don't understand me, Edith, is because I'm talkin' in English and you're listenin' in dingbat."

– Archie Bunker

"Leadership is a performance. You have to be conscious about your behavior, because everyone else is."

– Carly Fiorina
former CEO of Hewlett-Packard

"It's all about relationships."

– an old stickball player from Brooklyn

Discover Your Strengths

(Continued from page 1)

plan, a strengths grid for mapping the talents of your team, an online discussion forum, and examples of strengths discussion guides.

Besides a short introduction, the content of the book is a description of the aforementioned 34 themes, some brief real life examples, “10 Ideas for Action” about how to capitalize on your strengths, and three recommendations under a “Working with Others” section that will help you to understand how to get along better with people using these strengths.

This resource can really help you to engage more effectively with people and have valuable discussions regarding current job concerns or your career path. Also, the assessment is an excellent tool to use if you want to start working on team building and enhancing team dynamics. The positive approach of the book establishes a good foundation to know others better and to build relationships.

Read the book and complete the assessment. Do it just for fun! You will feel great about yourself once you have the results that tell you how fantastic you are and how to leverage your talents to make you stand out. **MM**

Patricia Olea, Expert Coach for Latin America and Puerto Rico, Merck & Co., Inc., Mexico City, Mexico

ManagementMatters™

Management Matters is published quarterly by Management Development Systems, Inc., a management consulting firm in Hillsborough, New Jersey, that specializes in coaching and developing managers and leaders. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of MDS, Inc. and its contributing writers.

Copyright © 2008 by Management Development Systems, Inc.

To subscribe or provide feedback, please contact MDS, Inc. at mdsinc@aol.com. Please visit our website: www.mdsinonline.com

Editor-In-Chief: Joel A. Goldberg
Managing Editor: Joanne Farber
Contributing Editor: Ilana Eden Esposito



THE MANAGEMENT MATTERS METHOD

A practical, common sense approach to achieving success in:

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

THE “TO DO” LIST

- Remember that people’s perceptions are the basis for their communication.
- Think about who you’re talking to and what their concerns and issues might be.
- Plan your communication whenever you can.
- Don’t “jump” or “blurt;” take a few seconds to think before you speak.
- State your ideas simply and clearly.
- Encourage an open expression of feelings; be sincere and honest.
- Ask, don’t tell; use open-ended questions (what, how, why) that invite the other person to talk, e.g., “What do you think?”
- Emphasize those words or thoughts that are most important.
- Use appropriate repetition.
- Use your voice effectively (proper pitch, volume, speed, and tone).
- Be an assertive communicator – use “I” statements (“I think,” “I feel,” “I want”) rather than “You” statements that put people on the defensive.
- Be aware of non-verbal communication cues, e.g., eye contact, body language.
- Be an attentive, active listener (ask questions, paraphrase, summarize, etc.).
- Don’t be overbearing, condescending, or self-aggrandizing.
- Do not violate confidences.

KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:

- Communication is a key to the success of every individual and every group in every organization.
- Communication skills can be learned and/or improved.
- We communicate who we are.
- Every part of us sends a message.
- It’s not just what you say but how you say it.
- You’re always communicating.
- Listening is the most difficult part of communicating; you have to make a conscious decision to listen.
- **There is a way to say everything.**

A FINAL THOUGHT

Work at it; communicating effectively is not easy; it takes thought, planning, and practice.
...And don’t forget the P.S.: Productive Schmoozing