

approaches the subject of this newer and more intelligent kind of handling or rather guiding of human beings will confess himself baffled without both a thorough understanding of home conditions and the coöperation of the home. Finally, in this as well as in all other phases of factory service work, the underlying purpose must be a genuine desire to further the advancement of workers by education and coöperative training and the service worker must ever have vision born of the words of Marcus Aurelius, "Men exist for the sake of one another; teach them, then, or bear with them."

THE THREE POSITION PLAN OF PROMOTION

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An adequate system of promotion is the solution not only of holding employees in an organization, but also of the employment problem.

There is much emphasis today upon the proper *selection* of employees, and many and elaborate systems have been undertaken for a scientific, or near-scientific, *placement*. These are not in any wise to be criticized, for the selection of the individuals comprising any organization is important, and any plan that will cause the employment manager to plan his duties carefully and to give each decision on the fortunes of others careful consideration is to be commended. It must be realized, however, that even more important is holding and helping these employees after they have been selected, and providing an adequate systematized plan of advancement for them. In the Three Position Plan of Promotion we have not only the true and proved answer to the problem of promotion, but also the means by which efficient placement becomes almost automatic, and a supply of desirable applicants for any vacant position is constantly available. No system of placement can hope to succeed unless such a supply of applicants is available.

We wish to emphasize then three points:

1. The necessity of attracting desirable applicants.
2. The necessity of holding, fitting, and promoting those already employed.
3. The interdependence of these two.

We have never known a better friend of the worker than Mr. James Mapes Dodge, and he was wont to emphasize and demonstrate the benefit not only to the employee, but also to the organization of holding the cooperating employee, and the great and needless loss to the organization, to the worker, and to society in a constant change of the personnel of the organization. Now, no organization can hope to hold its members that does not consider not only the welfare of the organization as a whole, but also the welfare of the individuals composing that organization.

The Three Position Plan of Promotion considers each man as occupying three positions in the organization, and considers these three positions as constantly changing in an upward spiral, as the man is promoted from the lowest position that he occupies and into the position next higher than the highest position that he occupies. The three positions are as follows: first, and lowest, the position that the man has last occupied in the organization; second, the position that the man is occupying at present in the organization, third, and highest, the position that the man will next occupy. In the first position the worker occupies the place of the teacher, this position being at the same time occupied by two other men, that is, by the worker doing the work, who receives little or no instruction in the duties of that position except in an emergency, and by the worker below who is learning the work. In the second position the worker is actually in charge of the work, and is constantly also the teacher of the man next below him, who will next occupy the position. He is also, in emergencies, a learner of the duties of his present position from the man above him. In the third position the worker occupies the place of learner, and is being constantly instructed by the man in the duties of the position immediately above.

Naturally a plan like this demands a close coördination of all positions. This is provided for through the master promotion chart. This chart is in the hands of the man in charge of promotion. It is slightly different for each organization. It consists of a

schematic arrangement of all positions in the organization, so arranged as to provide for lines of most rapid advancement, along the various functions and subfunctions, under which the measured functional management by which we operate, works. The great advantage of such a chart is that it makes possible visualizing the complete problem of the organization's needs in teaching and preparing its members. The direct product of this is that the man in charge of promotion sees clearly the needs and the means of filling them, the demand and the supply. The important by-product is the gradual evolution of permanent, rapid, direct paths of promotion. This means the abolishment of the "blind alley" job, that is, a position into which some member of the organization drifts with no chance for advancement. Another by-product of this chart is the fact that the promotion head, the promotion manager, or chief of promotion, as he has been variously called, can arrange for shifting or transferring the worker easily, if he sees that he has been improperly placed, or, if he develops abilities along some unexpected line. This is often the case under this type of management where there is great opportunity for the development of latent, as well as apparent, abilities. This master promotion chart is the great educative force to the management as to the importance of proper promotion.

The interests of the individual worker and his education as to the importance of promotion are carried on through the individual promotion charts. Upon these the records of each and every member of the organization are separately kept. These sheets are often called "fortune sheets," and it is this aspect of them that is of peculiar interest to the psychologist. When a worker becomes a member of the organization he is called into the department in charge of advancement or promotion, and given one of these fortune sheets. Upon it is shown his present position, and he and the man in charge outline together his possible and probable line of advancement. The sheet then becomes his fortune map, or fortune schedule. The projected line of promotion is outlined in green, and upon it are placed the dates at which it is hoped he may reach the various stages of advancement. At set times the worker and the promotion chief, or one of his helpers, meet, and the line of actual progress of advancement of the worker is traced upon the map in red, with the dates of achieving the various

positions. The two then consult as to existing conditions, the special reading and studying necessary for fitting for the new positions, possible changes, or betterments. The direct product of this is that the worker understands what he is doing, gets expert advice for greater progress, and realizes that there is, and must be, coöperation between him and the promotion department for the good of all concerned. The by-products are equally, or more, important. One is that the worker is glad to impart all information that would be of help to the organization as to his history and antecedents, his home and other social conditions outside the plant, that help or hinder his plans of preparing, ambitions, etc. It is common practice in these days to present the applicant with blanks to be filled in with all this information. We have such blanks, and use them in selecting applicants, always with the proviso that, if the applicant shows any disinclination to fill out such parts of the blank as tell of his ambitions or other details, which he may consider confidential, he be not required to do so. This information has been invariably volunteered, when the fortune map, or schedule, is understood. Naturally the applicant must furnish such information as will show his ability and reliability; but, as we will see later, these are so supplemented by data obtained through other sources that it is not necessary to ask for information usually considered confidential before it is volunteered. The second by-product of these fortune sheets is directly connected with the solution of the problem of getting constantly a group of desirable applicants from which to select more wisely. Thus, when the worker looks at his fortune sheet, and understands the three position plan of employment, he recognizes that he must train some one to take his position before he can hope to be most rapidly advanced. Naturally he first looks around in the organization to see who is available, for it is always desired that those within the organization be advanced first. However, if no such person is available, he reviews his entire acquaintance, and all possible sources for new workers, in order that he may obtain the most desirable person easy to train into that position. It is not necessary to dwell long upon the advantages of this system for holding members already in the organization. No worker who is constitutionally able to become a permanent member of an organization will wish to change, if he is receiving adequate pay

and has ample opportunity for advancement, especially if, as here, he is a member of a group where it is to the advantage—more than that—actually to the selfish interest, of every member to push all higher members up, and to teach and fit others to advance from below. Inseparably associated with this is the fact that any worker will be ready and glad to enter an organization where such conditions exist, and a desirable applicant will automatically present himself, when needed, at the direct request of some one who knows his particular fitness for the job, and desires him to have it. This selecting of the worker by the worker is real democracy. An organization built thus has proved to be the most satisfying to both management and workers.

Now there are various questions that may arise concerning this subject, that it is well to answer here.

1. *What becomes of the workers who find exactly the positions that suit them, and have no desire to advance?*

The answer to this is that, if a worker finds such a position, he is retained in it, and that others who go beyond it are trained by him in the work of that position until they know enough about it to advance to the next higher grade. This often happens, especially in the case of the workers who prefer positions entailing comparatively little responsibility, and who, arriving at some work that satisfies them, and that involves but slight responsibility, choose to make that particular work a life vocation. If, as is seldom the case, a second worker is found who desires to remain in the same position, it is sometimes advisable to place such a contented specialist in another organization, as trained and satisfied expert workers and teachers are all too rare.

2. *If promotion is constant, are not men constantly promoted or graduated out of the organization?*

The answer to this is "Yes, and always to waiting and far better positions."

3. *What becomes of such well known "blind alley" jobs as that of elevator or errand boy?*

These positions are transformed into training stations or schools. Through them the young worker is put in touch with various lines

of activity in the organization and his possibilities, capabilities and tastes are noted. Tending jobs under this type of management are also so used as training stations. The new work for crippled soldiers, which is now occupying so much of our attention, is also furnishing a means of filling such "blind alley" jobs. A position that might be deadening for a young, ambitious boy, or for a progressive worker, might prove the salvation of a maimed, or crippled, worker who might otherwise become an idle, unproductive, and worst of all, a discouraged and unhappy member of the community.

4. *How can the close "human touch" that is essential to this system of promotion be maintained in a large organization?*

We maintain this spirit through what we call the "Godfather Movement." This is especially successful where there are many young workers. Some older man in the organization, preferably in the same department, or interested in the same line of work, is made the godfather of several young, or inexperienced, workers, and keeps in touch constantly with their progress. We call this man "the Godfather" in all foreign countries, where the relation between godparent and godchild is an unusually close one, and is very similar to the sort of relation supposed to exist here between members of the same family. It resembles, perhaps, in this country more the "Big Brother" or "Big Sister" Movement now so popular.

5. *What are the actual results of the workers already employed using this system of promotion?*

They are most satisfactory in every case. In organizations where we have installed this system as a part of our plan of management we have seen

- a. Office and messenger boys pass through five positions in one year.
- b. A messenger boy become head storekeeper in three years.
- c. A mechanic become night superintendent in four years.
- d. A foreman become superintendent in two years.
- e. A receiving clerk become head production clerk in three years.
- f. A stenographer pass through five positions to motion study assistant in one year.
- g. A stenographer pass through five positions to assistant chief of the three position plan in one and one half years.
- h. An office boy become assistant purchasing agent in three years.

- i. A half time apprentice become foreman in three and one half years.
- j. A stenographer become head of the department of graphical presentation of statistics.
- k. A laborer become superintendent in nine years.

and other cases too numerous to mention, many advancing in spite of predicted dire failure of the plan of selection, placement and promotion. The greatest good is, perhaps, not the individual advancement, but the increased interest and zeal of all the workers under this plan.

6. *What are the practical results on supply of applicants and on better placement?*

In our experience we have never failed when using this plan of promotion to supply all needs of the organization almost immediately with most desirable and efficient workers. Every member of the organization working under this plan has become an active and successful "employment bureau man."

7. *What are the advantages of this whole plan to the man in charge of the function of employment?*

He benefits by this plan, perhaps, more than any one else. He comes in close touch with every member of the organization. It is to the advantage of every member to tell him exactly which individuals he thinks had better follow him, whether these are inside or outside the organization. Imagine for a moment that you are such a chief. A comes in and says, "Mr. Blank, I should like O to follow me in my position." B comes in and says, "I should like O to follow me in my position." C comes in and says, "Mr. Blank, I should like O to follow me in my position." Naturally you would recognize the wisdom of getting better acquainted with O. Or, perhaps, you suggest to A, "I think that M would be a good man to follow you," and A says, "No, I think I had better have some one else." You suggest M also to B and C, who reply somewhat along similar lines. There may be nothing fundamentally wrong with M, but the line you have planned will probably not receive as much coöperation as it should, and, in any case, there is something there worth investigating. Again, a worker comes to you and says, "Mr. Blank, I know a man who is not in this organization who would be just the person to follow me. You

know there is no one available just now, as the man below me is satisfied with his job." Here follow particulars as to the desired man's education, training, etc., which act as the supplementary data before mentioned. The recommender is given a blank form of "recommendation" to fill out for filing, whether or not the proposed man is hired. This naturally leads to the question

8. *Can any part of this plan of promotion be used without the other parts?*

The answer is "Yes" and "No." "No," if the desired results are to be obtained in full, since the entire system is interrelated and correlated with the complete plan of Measured Functional Management. "Yes," in that the fundamental ideas underlying this plan can undoubtedly be worked out in many ways. The immediate success of this plan is fostered by a carefully devised set of forms and charts and other devices for visualizing the possibilities of individual success that have stood the test of time and use. The ultimate success of this plan depends upon the principles¹ that underly it, giving every man a square deal, a maximum chance for coöperation, advancement and prosperity, in other words, the opportunity for simultaneous individual and social development.

¹ See *The Psychology of Management*, Sturgis and Walton, New York City.