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Maverick Managers: Individualist Displaces the Organization Man

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honey are creating at Colgate. "Together the two are shaking up this company," comments a Colgate official. "No longer do we get the usual teamwork slogans. We're being told point-blank that the company's success depends on each individual doing his job better than his counterpart at P&G (the company's chief competitor, Procter & Gamble)." In line with this shift in emphasis, more authority is being delegated to middle management people.

Sales Managers' Role Broadened

Until this year, for example, top officials were largely responsible for deciding where advertising and promotion expenditures were to be channeled, what products were to be featured in special promotions and even what type of counter displays were to be used. "Sales managers were brought in once a year, told what was ahead and given the old push to get out and sell," relates a Colgate executive. "Now the sales managers come in and play the major role in all these decisions. It's up to them to help develop promotions, pick out products ripe for special cut-rate sales and to come up with marketing gimmicks."

Dissatisfaction with "soft sell" techniques has been partly responsible for widening opportunities for colorful and imaginative executives. Hard-selling Judson Sayre, head of the Norge division of Borg-Warner Corp., is credited by Borg-Warner management with pulling the appliance-making unit out of the red. Through his "almost fantastic ability to dramatize selling," as one associate puts it, Mr. Sayre has helped push Norge sales from $32 million in 1954 to more than $100 million a year now.

On several occasions, the Norge chieftain has demonstrated to retailers the effectiveness of his vigorous tactics by personally tackling a customer in a dealer's own shop and making a sale. In pushing Norge's new dry-cleaning machines, Mr. Sayre took an impromptu part in a promotional affair by dousing the jacket of his $200 suit with catsup and tossing it into a dry-cleaner.

Stepping on Toes

The hard-driving innovators who rise to the top of corporate management generally step on a few toes along the way, and a growing number of companies are coming around to the view that conflicts are inevitable and not necessarily a bad thing. Of 600 high-level executives interviewed in a survey on the organization man problem carried out two years ago by the Opinion Research Institute of Princeton, N.J., 62% said it was impossible to avoid conflict with other people. Only 27% thought it was "very important to avoid such conflicts."

The realization that overt disagreements and bruised feelings are unavoidable is resulting in less talk about the importance of a mastery of human relations, or getting along with people, in management training programs. At Ling-Temco-Vought, for example, there's no particular emphasis on human relations. A few years ago the Chance Vought unit tried giving a course in the subject to its management but quickly abandoned the effort. "You can't teach people human relations after the age of six," argues one executive.

Management specialists and executives with a historical turn of mind find a basic cause for the decline of the organization man in the sweeping technological changes of recent years. The increasing complexity of the wares with which industry must deal and the flood of new products resulting from scientific and technical advances put a premium on imagination and creativity all along the line—from the men who guide development and manufacturing operations to the people responsible for sales.

New Approach at Twin Coach

The stress on originality and individuality in management is resulting in new approaches to management development programs at some companies. Twin Coach Co., Buffalo, N.Y., a former bus maker which now turns out parts for aircraft and missiles, embarked last year on a program that's a far cry from formal classroom courses. Five junior executives, all under 40, were given the responsibility of finding companies Twin Coach might want to acquire, a duty that's reserved for top executives or directors in most firms. Working without interference from top management, the young executives have investigated 50 potential acquisitions during the past year and a half. Late last year, upon the recommendation of the group, Twin Coach bought the truck body division of York-Hoover Corp.

Remington Rand Corp. also is encouraging more individual initiative. The New York-based company recently decided many executives at its Norwalk, Conn., offices were devoting excessive amounts of time to trivial paperwork or decisions as to whether a secretary should get a raise and on the other hand, too little time to important duties. Instead of reprimanding the executives and spelling out exactly how they should do their jobs, the company asked the men themselves to take a critical look at their duties.

There were a number of surprising results. Most startling of all, four men came up with the original suggestion that their jobs be eliminated. The four managed a department that serviced office machines for the company's customers. But another four men were supervising a separate department that serviced typewriters for the same customers. There was no reason, the executives reasoned, why one group couldn't manage both the office machine repairmen and the typewriter repairmen. The departments were consolidated, and the four displaced executives received new assignments.

One company which has taken extreme steps to promote individual initiative is Texas Instruments, Inc., maker of transistors and other electronic gear in Dallas. Texas Instruments ignores organization charts because "people, not organizations, get things done," says M. Scott Myers, director of personnel relations.

Any employe who wants expert advice on his job is encouraged to go directly to the most knowledgeable man in the company. As a result, lower-level employes often completely bypass their immediate supervisors. Informality reigns in other ways, too. In the company's spartan headquarters, President Pat E. Haggerty, dressed in sport shirt and slacks, works in a tiny linoleum-floored office; in another office, a secretary greets her boss by his first name.

To outsiders, Texas Instruments may seem to run its business in a haphazard way. "How do you keep employes from usurping management prerogatives?" a skeptical banker once asked a company official. But the seeming indifference to normal corporate etiquette and protocol is part of a carefully thought-out plan to stimulate imagination and creativity. And Texas Instruments guards against the dangers inherent in such freedom by a rigorous review of the performance of all employes every six months.

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Maverick Managers

Individualist Displaces The Organization Man In Many Organizations

Texas Firm Hires 'Insecure' But Talented Executive; Less Teamwork at Colgate

Catsup on the Chief's Suit

By DONALD A. MOFFITT
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

DALLAS — A few years ago the personnel director of Chance Vought Aircraft, Inc., suddenly withdrew a lucrative job offer he had made to an experienced 40-year-old executive employed by a competitor. Though the executive appeared highly qualified and was a leader in his field, the results of a personality test supposedly had revealed him to be "emotionally unstable and insecure."

Today there's not a personality test to be found in Chance Vought files; in fact, the results of all such tests given in the past have been deliberately burned. Moreover, the once rejected executive has since been hired and has risen to the ranks of top management at Chance Vought, now a subsidiary of Ling-Temco-Vought, Inc.

The transformation in Chance Vought's thinking about what it takes to make a good executive is being duplicated in many other companies around the nation these days. For years, such tools as the personalty test, the "human relations clinic" and group decision-making sessions have been important parts of corporate life as many firms have sought to develop the type of executive that has come to be known as the "organization man." But now there are signs an increasing number of companies are becoming disenchanted with the conformity-minded organization and they instead are placing new stress on individuality and originality in executives. While such men may on occasion ruffle feathers in management ranks, the companies are concluding their contributions generally more than compensate.

"The Bold, Brash Individual"

"We just decided it was time to stop trying to fit everybody into a mold," explains Gifford K. Johnson, blunt-speaking president of Ling-Temco-Vought. "There's plenty of room in our company for the bold, brash individual who's willing to be set apart from the herd. Besides, you'd be surprised how many different individuals can handle the same job well."

"More than ever before industry is seeking men of originality with the courage to approach problems from an unorthodox standpoint," echoes John L. Handy, an executive recruiter in New York City.

The sort of man some businesses now find inadequate is typically thought of as a middle-level executive whose major aim in life is to do his company's bidding. The term organization man—coined by William H. Whyte, Jr., who described the characteristics of the species in a book—implies a "well-rounded," extroverted kind of fellow, not very intellectual, whose tastes in everything from clothes to politics conform to those of his associates. Whenever possible, he avoids sticking his neck out and making a decision on his own, preferring instead to submerge himself in committees. While rarely an innovator, the organization man can be depended on to follow orders efficiently.

Fewer Committees

Evidence of a trend away from such an executive pattern is widespread, though a sizable number of companies insist their management development programs have been producing a sufficient supply of capable executives all along. The proliferation of executive recruiting firms, which specialize in luring crack executives from clients' competitors, suggests more corporations are growing dissatisfied with the caliber of the candidates trained within their own companies. At the same time, some corporations are trying to breed more free-wheeling, creative individualists in their own ranks so they won't have to turn to outsiders for fresh ideas. Still others are de-emphasizing committees and once again stressing individual responsibility.

Recent and current events at Colgate-Palmolive Co. serve to underscore some of the shortcomings of the organization man and some of the efforts companies are making to remedy the management deficiencies that have cropped up during his ascendancy.

For one thing, Colgate demonstrates anew that the thorough-going organization man seldom proves to have the leadership qualities needed at the pinnacle of corporate management. Far from blending smoothly into the group, executives at the top are usually individualistic, fiercely competitive types who rarely fit the bland ideals common among personnel men.

Selling Soap in Mexico

When Colgate needed a new president and chief executive officer last year, it chose George Lesch, a 52-year-old accountant with a distinct flair for the unorthodox. The energetic Mr. Lesch had made his mark during 16 years as an executive of Colgate's Mexican subsidiary. While there, instead of simply copying marketing methods the company had proved in the U.S., Mr. Lesch struck out in new directions, and sales shot up. To reach isolated communities, for instance, he dispatched sound trucks carrying fetching senoritas such as "Miss Colgata" and "Miss Fabuloso Fab," who demonstrated the virtues of toothpaste and detergents to primitive villagers.

After assuming the presidency, Mr. Lesch went outside Colgate and selected for his executive vice president a man with no experience in the soap and toiletry field. The new man was David J. Mahoney, who 10 years earlier at the age of 28 had chucked a $25,000-a-year job as vice president of a big New York advertising agency and started his own agency. Later hired as president of Good Humor Corp., the ice cream firm, Mr. Mahoney was open to the Colgate offer when Good Humor was sold this year.

An organization man would be ill at ease in the atmosphere Messrs. Lesch and Ma-

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