

"Coaching" as a Mentoring Tool

Bruce Hodes

Small businesses, large businesses and corporations are in the middle of dramatic changes. In the face of these changes, business executives are rethinking their managerial practices and redesigning themselves. For example, traditional management structures are being replaced with something new that is just now emerging. At the heart of all these changes, our companies are being driven to go from being *task*-driven to *learning*-driven.

Clearly, OD practitioners are in the middle of all this; we need to help our clients deal with these transitions. One way we are helping is by showing them that management style is one of the emerging technologies that will help them work successfully in the new era. The intention of this articles is to educate OD practitioners on coaching as an aspect of management style so that you, in turn, can do the same for your clients.

Our Shifting Mindset

The definition of **coach**, according to the *Random House College Dictionary*, is: (1) a person who trains an athlete or a team of athletes; (2) a private tutor who prepares a student for an examination; (3) a person who instructs an actor or singer; (4) to give instruction or advice to in the capacity of a coach; (5) from the Hungarian word referring to tutoring or instruction. Likewise, **managing** is defined as: (1) to bring about; succeed in accomplishing; (2) to have charge of or responsibility for; (3) to dominate or influence (a person) by tact or artifice; (4) to handle, direct, govern, or control in action or use. A **manager** is: (1) a person who manages; (2) a person charged with the control or direction of an institution, business or the like.

As these definitions suggest, managing is about getting things done. It is our traditional mode of directing things in a traditional hierarchy (see Diagram 1). In it, the manager is the focal point. Everyone else is

basically around to do the manager's work. The name of the game is to do what the manager tells you to do the way he/she tells you to do it. This relationship is modeled as a triangle, with managers towards the top and everyone else below.

Some of the beliefs which justify the rationality of this design are the following:

- knowledge flows up; the higher up you are in the organization, the more you know,
- compensation flows up;
- power flows up.

The goal in our work culture is to become a manager. Generally, remaining at a lower level is demeaning and has negative connotations. The higher up

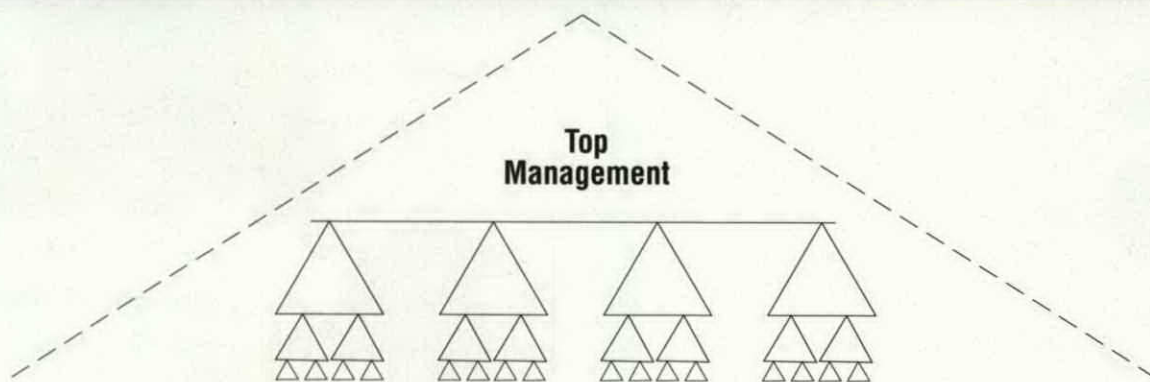
you are, the better you are. Better is meant here in a superior sense so that in this model managers are literally superior people. Problems flow down. Whatever problems are at the top are passed down to those below for solution, fault and/or blame. Many of these beliefs have become unconscious and unexamined. They automatically come with the territory of our work lives and culture.

It is clear that many of these principles ought to be, and are being, seriously questioned.

The "Coaching" Model vs. The "Management" Model

Metaphorically, coaching revolves around the con-

Diagram 1



Corporate Ladder

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhibits Potential • Inaccurate Communication • Information/Results are Pushed Up • Victimizes (<i>to win — someone must lose</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slows Corporate Responses • Instruction Flows Down • Management Driven • Promotes Mediocrity |
|---|---|

- **Most companies want to promote interaction and exchange but are unwilling to give up control.** —
- **As a company succeeds, it often invests profits into another layer of management. —**
While this elevates some, it places greater stress on the lower layers.
- **Upper layers dangle carrots to those below to perform in hopes of climbing the ladder.** —
— Creates a self-serving environment. —
- **Stepping out of assigned roles to problem-solve is discouraged.** —
- **Cautious organizational movement is favored over risk-taking.** —

Adapted from material developed by Mike Murphy, CEO, Comfortex, Winona, MN

cept of a game. Games tend to be seen as fun, and in their best light, not tied to survival. One can be passionate about playing as it relates to survival. In the traditional way of managing, we work because we must. In sports, one plays because he/she wants to. Both players and coaches are vital to the outcome of the game; coaches are a resource to the players. Serious teams, of course, need a coach, even serious athletes at the top of their game will employ a coach. Why? Because, to excel, the perspective, knowledge, and skill of the coach is not only appreciated but required.

In sports, there is always a notion that you have to develop yourself in order to be competitive. The coach is instrumental and vital to that development. This is in strong contrast to business, where managers are seldom seen as resources. In fact, many employees see their bosses as impediments to maximizing individual potential.

In sports, the coach never goes on the actual playing field. The purpose of the coach is to continually enhance the effectiveness of the players who are on the field. Coaches stand on the sidelines. When applied to business, some of the notions that will come with this model are the following: ultimately the front line employee has the most power (because he/she is closest to the customer — either external or internal); problems are shared; knowledge and authority are also shared. At present, you can see these trends emerging where front line employees, at least in the better organizations, are

getting unprecedented amounts of training and education.

One of the reasons a coach is useful during a game is that he/she is not actually embroiled in the action. The coach has a perspective which is different from those on the field or those spectators in the viewing stands. He/she is not there to play, like the athlete, or be entertained, like the spectators. The coach is there to influence the players so that the ball gets moved

most effectively in the right direction. This sideline perspective often proves to be the winning edge. In business, managers could be used for their perspective and experience.

In order for a manager to become a coach, he/she has to give the employee the responsibility and accountability for the outcome of the game. In order for the employees to become players, they need to see themselves as the determinants in the outcome and see their managers as resources. The players must own the outcome.

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Rethinking Managerial Practices

Who determines the fate of our organizations? If one believes in the notion of rugged individualism and a "can do" spirit, one would say that CEO's, president's and managers are responsible for whatever happens. However, as the world in which we live becomes more complex, a new perspective is needed. The buy-in of groups of people, not individuals, will be essential in moving ahead in business. From this vantage point, one can see that the follow-

ers determine the fate of leaders. The Eastern Airlines employees did not buy in and support their CEO, Frank Lorenzo. However, with Ford Motor's President Donald Peterson, they did. Clearly the Iraqis army did not buy into Sadaam Hussein's plans when the going got tough. The Russians did not support the coup in the fall of 1991. There is example after example in which the fate and/or success of the enterprise is related to what the people who are on the field decide to do.

The rethinking which we are suggesting is that top managers shift attention off themselves, seeing their jobs as one of the developing players. Employees also have to rethink their roles. It is very easy to see oneself as just a cog in the wheel. It's more difficult to consider yourself as a major determinant of where the business is going. When one sees oneself as a critical element, a partnership with management can be established where each view the other as a resource, playing a common game with a common goal. Within this partnership, innovation and speed can occur on the field.

Looking at the sports model, a good coach is one whose players (employees) are clearly more skilled at playing their positions than the coach (manager) is. The coach is hired by the players and used by them to enhance their ability to do a good job, because they have invested themselves in the game and in doing well. A useful coach stands for excellence and attracts people who want to be excellent.

Translate this to business life and the focus shifts to the employees and on having these employees be effective in jobs throughout the company. The man-

agers are there to enroll and empower employees. This is radically different from telling people what to do.

In the coach-player model, there is an element of game. People participate because they want to, because they enjoy it. When people are at work because they want to be, and are doing what they want to be doing, coaching becomes useful.

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Coaching Is an Art, Not a Science

While the structure of the coaching relationship has been discussed, little has been said about the actual process of effective coaching. How does one function as an effective coach? What skills and abilities does

one need to have? Can coaching be taught in the same way we teach a science or technology? Or, is coaching more like an art, which can be expressed, but never formalized into a general set of rules or procedures?

We take the position that coaching is more a performing art than a structured technology. We have already acknowledged that coaches often make use of rules, techniques, and other methodologies when they are needed. At the heart of the process of coaching lies a more fundamental, non-structured responsiveness which results in uniquely human expressions such as: compassion, leadership, creativity, wisdom, vision, and commitment. These qualities cannot be pretended; they must come from the soul.

In a similar illustration, professional dancers, athletes and other artistic performers need certain basic skills and abilities to reach a high level of professional performance. However, the source of their actions and behaviors is not merely those skills themselves, but skills embodied in a deeper and richer expression

of human capability. So, too, a human being does not perform coaching as a simple product of learned skills and behaviors. Much more is required for successful coaching.

Extraordinary Coaching

Extraordinary coaching is brought about by fusing the uniquely human characteristics mentioned above with the experience and perspective useful to the overall game plan already residing within the coach. An extraordinary coach will be one who truly measures his or her accomplishment by the performance of their employees (the players). This approach not only yields superior results, it establishes a foundation for an ongoing flow of future coaches who understand the power of coordinating and propelling players' potential.

Certain observations can be made about the ingredients which set the stage for extraordinary coaching:

1. The player needs to volunteer for and be eager for the relationship with the coach.
2. The coach always leaves the exit door open; players can terminate the coaching relationship. This is different from leaving a managerial relationship and does not necessarily mean leaving the company.
3. Coached organizations must be made of volunteers and people who love to play.
4. The coach never has permission to develop people into anything they have not asked he/she to develop.

Extraordinary coaching is brought about by fusing the uniquely human characteristics with the experience and perspective useful to the overall game plan already residing within the coach.

5. Coaches develop capabilities; they do not get tasks accomplished. Managers focus on the task, but coaches use the task as a metaphor for development. They get the task accomplished, but use it to develop people.
6. Coaches manage both the context and the resource constraints. Coaches manipulate the time and resources available to make the task at hand an all-consuming challenge.
7. The game the coach sets up pulls players far beyond their belief of what they can do — and far beyond any realistic assessment of what they do. Goals are plucked from the domain of possibility and are not kept realistic.
8. The magic of coaching is in the coach's belief in and commitment to achieving the impossible and having players step up to bat and accomplish this.

Are You Coaching?

The following are questions either a manager or a consultant could ask to see whether or not extraordinary coaching was taking place.

1. Would people around you say that your team gets extraordinary results (enables the production of results beyond business as usual)?
 2. Is there evidence that you are someone who develops great players? By a great player, we mean people who are able to make things happen far beyond what one might expect given history and past predictions of your organization?
 3. Do you consistently demonstrate the ability to bring the capabilities or possibilities of co-workers to a more advanced or effective state? The coach does this with whomever he or she directly or indirectly interfaces in the organization. The

coach develops people in a 360° circle... above, below and laterally within the organization.

4. Do your commitments and sphere of influence go beyond traditional business channels and relationships? The coach does not get entrapped by his or her position in the organization. This person uses influence and coaching to move the ball wherever he/she moves within the organization.
5. Are you a person who presents himself/herself for coaching? Are you coachable?
6. Do you take on projects which require self development?

Answers to these questions should provide a sense of whether or not extraordinary coaching is taking place. Be tough, however, and differentiate between coaching activities and management activities. All too often, you find executives claiming to coach, but really managing.

Conclusion

Managing and coaching are different systems of human interaction. Both are necessary for successful organizational life. In managing, one tends to make decisions based on established directions, emphasizing reason supported by intuition, acting in the present based on the past, and emphasizing knowledge. In coaching, one needs to make decisions based on an envisioned future. A coach emphasizes intuition supported by reason, belief and commitment in others, and acting toward the future based on the present.

As a style, coaching is a new development. Because of the changes and pressures which are overwhelming business, it will be a predominant management style in the future. Managers and team leaders who are going to be successful need to invest themselves in this system and become extraordinarily proficient at it.

All employees in business need to shift from being victims to being players. The view that work is a "have to" needs to be redirected to work as a "privilege" and a growth path. Once people come to work in order to grow, develop and learn, as well as to make a living, then the transition from managing to coaching will be a relatively simple and profoundly beneficial thing to do.

Bruce Hodes is President of Contextual Management Institute (CMI), working with business executives and teams in the area of team building, strategic business planning, and team implementation and cultural shifts. He coaches growth-oriented companies that are creating profitable, potent, nurturing and quality-oriented cultures in the 90's.



BETWEEN A
ROCK
AND A
HARD
PLACE

Where Good
Managers
Grow

By Alan L. Wilkins
and Scott Hammond

wish I could have that kind of organization, but without some movement from the management committee, it's never going to happen here," complained the manager of a research group at one of America's largest chemical companies. Like

Alan L. Wilkins is professor of organizational behavior at BYU and the author of *Developing Corporate Character: How to Successfully Change an Organization Without Destroying It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989), from which this article is adapted. Scott Hammond is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Utah and a regular contributor to *BYU Today*.

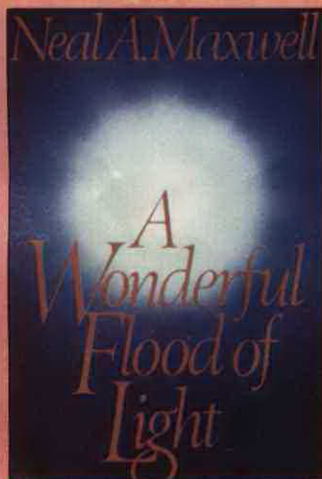
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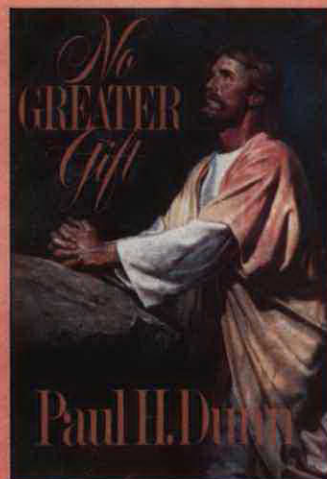
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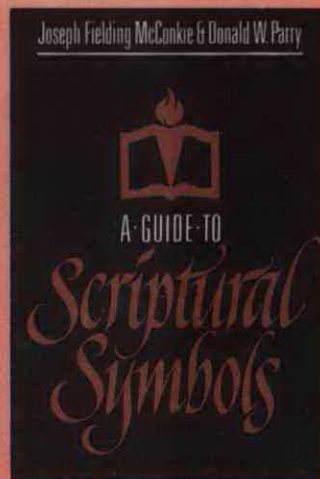
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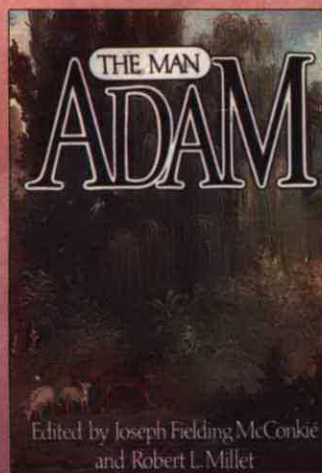
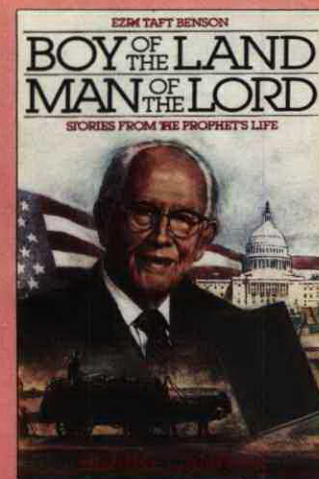
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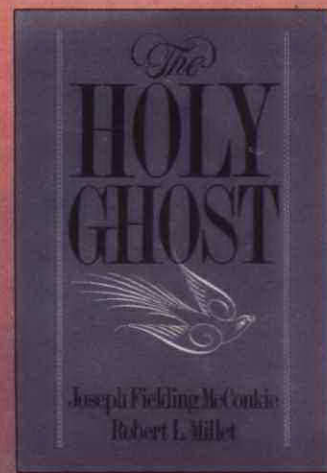
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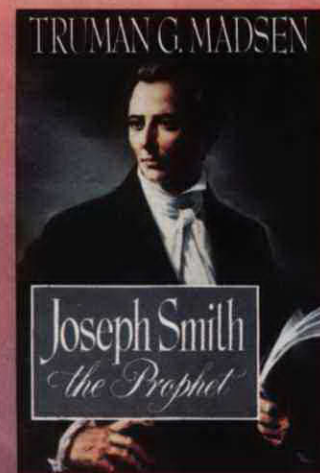
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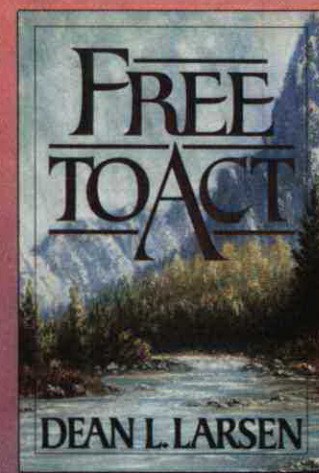
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er Design Hall of Fame. House was honored for "distinguished international contribution to the engineering and scientific community" in 1986 by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. Recently he completed a five-year assignment as director of corporate engineering for Hewlett-Packard.

THE BORDER GUARD

House is an excellent example of what can be called a border guard—a manager willing to take some risk while creating a character for his or



While it is tempting to think that one must be a CEO to have a significant impact on corporate character, middle managers can find significant growth, both personally and in their contributions to the organization, by carefully managing the interchange between the people they manage and the larger corporate culture.

her part of the organization. In this case, House was able to take a group of people and give them a chance to grow, which resulted in greater self-confidence and therefore in significant technical contributions. He was able to protect his group from incursions of the larger organization while these engineers were building confidence and a new vision. He also helped build ties with the larger organization by requiring engineers to spend time with other groups within the company, and by directing his group of engineers toward making a significant contribution to the overall organization with their technical breakthrough.

House's example should give hope to the middle managers who feel they are at the mercy of their superiors. While it is tempting to think that one must be a CEO to have a significant impact on corporate character, middle managers can find significant growth, both personally and in their contributions to the organization, by carefully managing the interchange between the people they manage and the larger corporate culture. This critical function, which benefits both the larger organization and the smaller group, is difficult but rewarding. It requires sticking one's neck out and facilitating some compromise. Would-be border guards risk retaliation from both sides, but may also be rewarded with influence beyond their current borders. The story of Charlie Feld illustrates this point.

Feld was the vice-president of management services (responsible for computer systems and systems development) at Frito-Lay. When he first accepted the assignment he was struggling to create a sense of the special contribution his group could make; in fact, he wanted to create a different subculture from the larger organization.

At the time Frito-Lay was plagued by high turnover, which resulted from a very competitive promotion and reward system. A person either succeeded or was asked to find work elsewhere. When Feld was hired from IBM to become vice-president, his division was experiencing a 38-percent turnover rate each year. The result was that the division

was unable to deliver high-quality new systems to accounting, plant management, and sales because it could not keep intact a team long enough to develop a new and complex system.

Feld began looking to replace those who were leaving with those who were interested in staying with the company. These people did not always have the technical experience of the former employees, and in many cases they were hired right out of school. He was taking a risk by hiring people who would have to stretch and who were inexperienced compared to those hired previously. But he hoped that by challenging these young people and supporting their development he could obtain a sense of commitment that would lead to growth and careers within the organization.

Feld's strategy worked. Within four years his division had the lowest turnover in the entire company: 10 percent per year. But now he was faced with a new problem. Employees were asking about career paths and long-term opportunities. He saw the new problem as the result of the success of his strategy and willingly worked to address these concerns.

Seeing that Feld was indeed creating a different culture within the larger organization, one of us shared with him a "Doonesbury" cartoon about a translator for the U.S. ambassador to China. In a speech the ambassador severely criticized the Chinese for human rights violations. After the speech the ambassador asked the translator why the Chinese audience was applauding him, and the translator admitted to taking a few liberties with the text. "A few liberties?" he responded. "What did my speech end up being about?"

"Ballbearings, sir."

"I spoke for 45 minutes on ballbearings?"

"Yes sir, and you were spellbinding."

The clear implication was that Feld was the counterpart of the translator in this cartoon, a "border guard" who had to work hard to screen the messages from the larger culture. But Feld did not agree. "I'm a good border guard because I believe in what the top man-

many middle managers who feel they are caught between the needs of their people and the direction set by senior managers, this manager was waiting for his superior to change his organization's character, culture, and bottom line.

For years "corporate culture" has been viewed as a cure-all for companies' woes. Businesses want a set of values, beliefs, and behaviors that will set them apart from their competitors. To meet that need, many best-selling business books have advocated a "generic," one-size-fits-all culture for American business. They suggest a need to be more like Japanese companies, or more "excellent" in service, quality, production, or marketing. But it hasn't taken long for many of the organizations and managers that were attracted to that doctrine to realize that while corporate culture is important, the right culture is critical for strategic success.

Just like individuals, each organization has a different set of characteristics that makes it unique in the marketplace. These points of corporate character are what differentiate companies and their components. Senior managers are rightfully concerned with what the right character of their companies should be. But to a large extent, middle managers are caught between a rock and a hard place. While the larger corporate character helps to set general guidelines and maintain the overall organizational strategy, middle managers may find it to their advantage to create a subgroup with its own character: one that incorporates the best of the larger organizational values with the unique capabilities and market opportunities of the sub-unit. This approach to middle management can be very rewarding, but it also contains some risk.

Consider the example of Charles House. Some 15 years ago, House was assigned as research manager for a

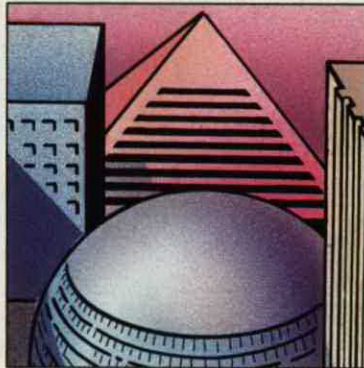
new ventures group in a division of Hewlett-Packard. The problem with this new ventures group was that no one was creating new ventures. The group had not produced a significant innovation in years, and gradually many of the better engineers had left.

House began by taking an inventory of the organization. He interviewed the members of the organization and concluded that there was significant potential for real innovation. But there were also some major road blocks. The research and development professionals were not reading the current leading journals in their fields. They were even unaware of what people in other divisions of HP were doing related to their field. They were not following the competitors. In fact, they were not even

be demonstrating their products. In order to take full advantage of these activities, House held regular meetings where people reported on what they had seen, read, and learned.

Excitement began to grow. Engineers started to have a feel for what was needed, what was possible, and what no one else had done. They began to feel like a team that had something important to do and could only do it right by working together. As their ideas blossomed and took form, they had the feeling that they were united in a cause, that they held within their group great secrets, and that those secrets, when acted upon, would make a real difference in the world.

During this time, House had to explain some unusual time and budget al-



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keeping track of what others within the division were working on.

Instead of waiting for direction from superiors, House adopted a long-term strategy for change. Since few of the current projects were promising, and because the engineers had little awareness of their surroundings, he decided to use a significant amount of the first year's budget to pay for travel, journals, and attendance at conferences. He required every engineer to spend at least one week during the year at other locations within the company and one week on site with potential customers learning about their needs. He required the engineers to keep current on the journals and assigned them to attend conferences where competitors would

locations to his superiors at corporate headquarters. He was also asked to explain why some projects had been dropped and others had not progressed. He countered with glowing, and sometimes exaggerated, reports about the progress of his group. Much of his time was spent taking incipient ideas to people within HP whom he trusted for their evaluation and help in linking up with others who were doing similar work.

Within a year his group had several projects going. Two-and-one-half years after his arrival, the division produced an innovation significant enough that it was awarded the "Achievement of the Year" by *Electronics Magazine* and was subsequently included in the Comput-

3. Practical Function

The border guard also communicates to people within the group the constraints and practical aspects of dealing with the outside world. The border guard helps the group understand the acceptable limits of deviance from the norms established by the overall culture. Often this involves communicating tough realities in non-threatening ways.

One border guard was asked to head the news department of a large television station. He began a team building and training program, followed by a change in the way the news was presented. This resulted in a larger audience, as well as a boost in morale and revenue. With these results, he gathered key ambitious people together and planned further incremental growth.

The plan involved a modest increase in budget and some shifting of existing program times. The station management denied the request, and the news director was faced with the difficult task of telling the people in his department the news. In the next few months many of those involved in the early success left the station, and the young manager was left to begin training new people over again. The news director said his mistake came not in being turned down on his proposal, but in "how I told the

Instead of moving more toward micro management, middle managers who move back and look at the unique abilities of their group, and then use these characteristics to create a competitive advantage, are more likely to succeed in the times of change ahead.

troops. If I had framed the rejection as an opportunity to submit another proposal at a later date, rather than as a dead end, we wouldn't now be trying to get where we were six months ago."

SOME ADVICE TO BORDER GUARDS

The secret to being a successful border guard appears to be in balancing the internal and the external focus. It is clear that each situation requires a different balance. The following suggestions may help managers reduce some of the risks they will face. This advice assumes that it is usually better to start by setting up an exchange relationship rather than an adversarial relationship with the larger organization.

1. Solve your own problems first

Don't get involved early on in a border war. Find your own territory and begin there. A critical reason for Feld's success is that he began by solving the problems within his area first. His group was not providing service or meeting deadlines. It could not do so unless changes were made. Feld used his early success in solving production problems as a lever to create an exchange in the organization. Individuals and groups that are seen as being out of control of their own situation are rarely allowed to create their own subgroup character, let alone influence the rest of the company.

2. Find your own space

After some early successes at meeting output deadlines, Feld was able to obtain some concessions from the larger organization. For example, he brought top executives into his area to show them how spread out his group was and the dilapidated nature of the work environment. He was able to obtain space in a newly remodeled building and pull his group together in one place. The striking green carpets in the new building led people to call the area the "Emerald City" and Feld "the Wizard of Oz." Feld thus provided his group with a better place to work and a powerful symbol of their uniqueness. Unity grew as the group shared a common

place to interact as well as a unique language and views.

House, on the other hand, had separate facilities for engineers, but they did not use them. So he created meetings and joint learning opportunities that helped group members to interact and think of themselves as a group.

3. Nest your vision

Every border guard will have a different way to position his or her group. In each case, managers must find a way to identify commonalities between the needs of the larger organization and the capabilities of the smaller group. Initially, the manager must focus on the short term, asking, "What can my group do now to meet current organizational needs?"

4. Be clear about the trade-offs and constraints

Group members should know the potential risks and rewards. In one project oriented work environment, a manager provides an informal six-month "bail out period" where research scientists can have his support in moving to other areas if they want. But if they stay for the long haul, the manager insists on their complete commitment.

5. Take time to teach the group, as well as outsiders

Feld is perhaps the best example of this idea. He spent most of his time as a manager talking with individuals or small groups about how particular projects and the performance of the projects related to the group's position in the organization. He also spent time discussing with them the firm's strategic problems and encouraged them to develop solutions.

William and Robert Dyer have developed an excellent model for managers trying to build a work team. The model suggests that the initial focus of the manager should be educational. The manager should teach team members about the political environment and inter-group norms. This should evolve toward a more facilitative role for the managers, and finally the manager may reduce direct management

agement is doing. I may not agree with the way some programs get implemented, but I believe that we are doing exactly what is best for the company. My problem is how to help those in my group understand and support what we are trying to do."

Feld illustrates two critical but not contradictory abilities of border guards: 1) to buffer and seal off a group of people and 2) to connect them with the rest of the company. However, he went beyond merely connecting people with organizational needs. During his first four years as a vice-president, Feld was able to convince top management that his group's contribution to the development of new systems could be a key competitive advantage for the firm. He suggested that they develop handheld computers and support pricing and accounting systems that would help sales people adjust prices on the spot in a given regional area of competition. Because he had delivered in the past and because he understood the capabilities of his own group and had their support, he was able to present a vision of what the company could do and how his group could contribute significantly. He was able to position his group where they not only aligned with but helped direct the overall strategy of the organization.

Feld's group had other influences on Frito-Lay. Whereas Feld's group had imported managers from other parts of the organization before he began in 1982, the systems division began exporting managers. In 1986 11 managers from Feld's group were moved into other areas. These managers began to influence other parts of the company with a focus on understanding the overall strategy, linking what the smaller groups were doing to that strategy and encouraging what Feld called a career system.

THE FUNCTIONS OF BORDER GUARDS

Recently one of us attended a dinner at an annual development conference of a high tech company and sat at the table with the CEO and several vice-presidents. But it was clear that the

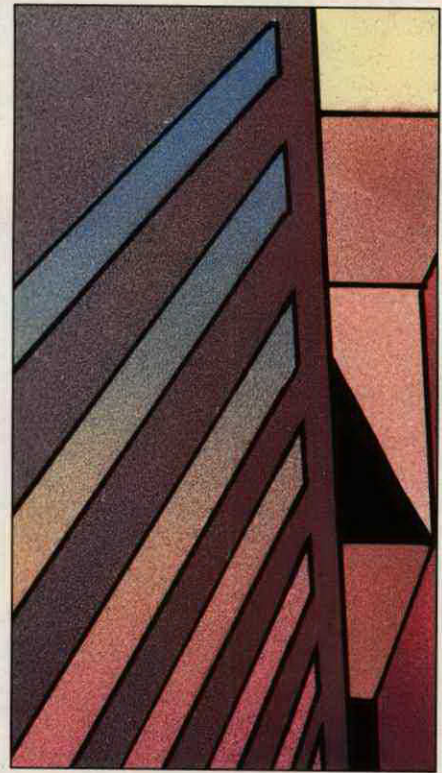
head table was reserved for "Dr. Smith (pseudonym) and his crew." The CEO explained that the management's attendance at this conference was largely symbolic. The real value came in the presentations of Dr. Smith and his people. It was apparent that he held no formal position within the organization, he had simply identified several people with technical talent and started up projects for the company. He and his informal group were responsible for several key patents that were changing the direction of the organization, yet he held no formal management position. He was a border guard who had been able to import talent and resources but who had not been "rewarded a kingdom." When asked why Smith was not a formal supervisor, the CEO replied, "He doesn't want to be one."

The example of Dr. Smith illustrates two issues. Border guards need not have formal position or authority, and they also need not be a part of large groups. Feld worked at a vice-president level over several hundred individuals, whereas Smith typically included four to six people in his informal group, depending on the kind of project he was working on.

What is consistent in the nature of border guards are the particular functions that they perform. Consider three key functions involving perception, politics, and practicality:

1. Perceptual Function

Border guards help others understand their place in the organization and find meaning in what they do. A border guard shares, and in many cases creates, the language that people use to talk about and interpret what is happening within their group, and within the larger organization. As described in the "Doonesbury" cartoon, a border guard translates messages that come from the rest of the organization and helps the subgroup understand what is useful and relevant. The border guard also helps key people in the larger organization understand the subgroup's contribution and the value of that contribution to the overall organization.



What is consistent in the nature of border guards are the particular functions that they perform. Consider three key functions involving perception, politics, and practicality.

2. Political Function

The border guard must also function as a buffer for the group. She or he protects the group and negotiates trades and deals, enabling the group to maintain its focus and its ability to develop a competence. This role suggests that as the group comes to have a competence, and as the rest of the organization comes to see what the group can offer, the border guard uses these perceptions to increase the power or the influence of the group.

of the group with no serious detriment to performance.

6. Cultivate allies

There is an old saying, "Friends come and go, but enemies accumulate." Often it is not so much support that matters when one wants to be different, but lack of opposition. For border guards, having allies, particularly allies close to the border, is of paramount political importance.

7. Create credible next steps

This step has been called logical incrementalism, or how to eat an elephant. One must know which step to take next, and which steps the organization and the manager can handle. Change in one big bite can not only be messy, it can also be fatal.

After some short term successes, a group may begin to work on more long-term strategic problems. Feld's development of a hand-held computer for field representatives would not have been an appropriate first step. The group did not have the clout or the capability to install that system initially. But it was a good second step, and it led to further successes, both organizationally and technically.

8. Be consistent and dramatic, or "practice and pounce"

Managers need a clear vision of the borders they are guarding. Within the borders, the law of the land must be upheld. The manager/leader is the personification of the character he or she wants to establish. Sometimes this character must be illustrated in dramatic ways. In recent interviews one middle manager described her role as largely symbolic. "If all works well, I don't have much to do around here except show 12 department heads how to manage. That means teaching them everything from how to dress to how to treat the customers. Sometimes I feel like I am under a microscope."

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Middle management is perhaps the greatest challenge of the organization

of the 90s. The last decade has found flatter organizations with fewer levels. Where middle managers once supervised four or five subordinates, in some cases they are now managing 20 or 30. More and more workers, particularly knowledge workers, are being asked to manage themselves and to have less contact with their superiors. The increasingly competitive environment

means middle managers are feeling the pressure to get more performance with less contact. Instead of moving more toward micro management, middle managers who move back and look at the unique abilities of their group, and then use these characteristics to create a competitive advantage, are more likely to succeed in the times of change ahead. □



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The Changing

FAMILY

By Carri P. Jenkins, Associate Editor

Vickie Phippen can remember when making Mother's Day cards with her fourth graders was a simple matter. Today, it has become too complicated. Amy needs two cards—one for her real mom and one for her stepmom; Michael wants to make a card for his dad's girlfriend; and Jennifer wants a card for her grandmother, who, since her parents' divorce, has raised her.

"Anyone who doesn't believe divorce is changing family dynamics needs to step in my classroom," says Phippen. No longer does she send notes home with the familiar salutation, "Dear Parents." Instead, she lets the child fill in the appropriate name, which is sometimes different from week to week. "In whatever I'm doing, I try to make it so a child doesn't have to justify his or her situation at home," she explains. "No child should be made to feel embarrassed. But it does get tricky for a teacher."

The Changing **FAMILY**

Preventive
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While few family demographers, sociologists, therapists, and historians are ready to label divorce as the downfall of the American family, they do agree that it has made life for all people—especially children—much more complex. In a society that grew up with Ozzie and Harriet, new family structures are hard to understand.

And yet some experts claim that we are trying too hard to understand these new structures and should put more effort into preventing divorce in the first place. Others say divorce has become such a part of our culture that society should focus on dealing with the problem instead of hoping it will go away. At BYU numerous researchers and therapists are studying the issue. On the whole, most claim they are walking the middle line: Preventive measures must be taken, but time and resources must also be spent on helping families deal with divorce.

Dr. Tim B. Heaton, an associate professor of sociology at BYU who has spent years gathering and verifying statistics on divorce, explains, "The divorce rate has been rising since the early 1960s. What we are hearing touted in the media as a decline in recent years is actually a leveling off. Divorce is not something that's just going to disappear—or sharply decline—in a few years. For one thing, there is no one cause for divorce; hence, no magic cure."

What the latest statistics do show is that two-thirds of all couples who married for the first time in the 1980s can expect to divorce. For many, this seems almost unbelievably high. "What this figure takes into account," says Heaton, "is the divorce statistics for the 1980s. The figure currently being tossed around is a 50-percent chance of divorce—much lower than the two-thirds rate. But what people don't know is that that statistic is based on data compiled up to 1979. It does not take the 80s into account."

For LDS couples the total rate of divorce is ap-

proximately 20 percent below the national average, explains Heaton. In the mid-1980s, when the last survey was taken, it was estimated that 35 percent of all LDS marriages would end in divorce. Heaton suspects this has risen and probably lies somewhere between 40 to 50 percent.

LDS temple marriages are one-fifth as likely to end in divorce as non-temple marriages, although Heaton says this too has probably risen since the last survey was completed in 1981.

Of those who divorce, LDS and non-LDS alike, about three-fourths of the men and two-thirds of the women will remarry. The Step Family Foundation of New York estimates that one of three children now live in some sort of step environment. Statistics also show that the majority of America's children will spend some time in a single-parent family.

Naturally, anyone hearing these statistics is sure to wonder, "Why" and "How come?" Yet these are questions that charts and tables can't easily explain. In reality, divorce is a relatively recent social phenomenon. Only in the last few years have researchers had any long-term results that might indicate why the number of divorces continues to rise and how divorce affects families.

From this research, we are learning that divorce is a far more traumatic event for children than once believed. However, we are also learning that when properly dealt with, the devastating effects of divorce can be significantly reduced. We also know more about what puts a marriage at risk and how therapists can best help couples in conflict.

"But statistics only provide us with clues," adds Heaton. "There are no guarantees from statistical tendencies. You can't wait to get married until you are 29—because statistically that is a safe age—and then expect not to get a divorce."

Research can, however, help point the way. It

The Changing **FAMILY**

can also dispel some of the myths surrounding divorce and shed new light on the subject.

A popular philosophy held by the public is that divorce has just become too easy and too common. Reflecting this belief is the joke about the woman who, in contemplating her upcoming marriage, asks, "Is this really the man I want my children to spend their weekends with?"

"People ask me all the time if the pendulum hasn't swung just too far the other way," says Dr. D. Russell Crane, director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Programs in the Department of Family Sciences at BYU. "In other words, they are asking, 'Has divorce just become an easy way out?'"

Crane's reply agrees with the majority of researchers interviewed for this article. "First," he says, "I have never seen anyone go through a divorce who hasn't tried very hard to make his or her marriage work. Nobody wants to go through this. It's just too hard. But divorce is an option. And because it is an option, people are no longer willing to stay in miserable situations. And I guess each one of us has to make his or her own decision as to whether that's good or bad."

After conducting a decade of research on identifying and treating high-risk couples, Crane found that it is the wife's distress level in a marriage that is the major predicting factor in a divorce. He also discovered that women—who in his study filed for divorce 90 percent of the time—do not haphazardly seek divorce.

Instead, he found that the women usually approach their husbands about resolving their differences. When this doesn't work, they begin to talk to family and friends about divorce. "Most women have a good idea of the hardships they are up against when they get a divorce," says Crane. Although no one can be fully prepared for the pain and stress that accompanies divorce, he em-

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phasizes that the women he interviewed had weighed the situation carefully.

"When a woman gets a divorce, her standard of living drops 40 percent. And statistics tell us that it stays there. Women really are the big losers when it comes to divorce. So why would they want it? It's because most don't get out of a marriage until they absolutely can't stand it any longer."

The fact that women and men do not view conflict in a marriage the same way indicates one reason why divorce is rising, adds Crane. He believes that if we are ever going to reduce the rate of divorce, we must change our expectations of marriage.

"Today we go into marriage expecting our spouse to fulfill all of our needs—emotional, spiritual and physical. We are such a mobile society that many couples live far away from their family and friends. Our institutions—such as religious institutions—are somewhat fragmented, so couples don't even have the companionship of fellow church members. Hence, we have to turn inward to our own family. The need for friendship and companionship from the family is much higher today than it was 30 years ago."

The problem, he goes on to explain, is that both men and women are often not socialized to relate to each other well. What makes a man successful in his career or in the world of men—being aggressive and non-expressive—does not make him a good father or husband.

Women, at the same time, are taught to be kind, loving, and expressive. "Yet a husband expects his wife to run the house, discipline the kids, and solve her own problems—characteristics she has not been trained to have."

After the honeymoon is over, it doesn't take long for a man and woman to notice these differences. Perhaps this is why divorce occurs more often in the first seven years of marriage. The cru-

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cial period in a marriage is when a couple begins to notice their differences, says Crane.

"So much depends on how a couple accepts these differences. If a man says, this isn't the woman I married and in order for me to live with her she has got to change, the marriage is jeopardized. If a woman starts punishing a man for not being what she wants, the relationship is also hurt. But if both spouses can recognize their differences and accept them, the marriage has a good chance of surviving."

This is one reason why marital therapy, which has a 70-percent success rate, works for many people. A therapist can help a couple understand these differences and help each spouse turn these differences into strengths.

Dr. Mary E. Stovall, an assistant professor of history at BYU, has examined society's tendency to compare the present situation with some mythical "traditional" family. Her findings agree with Crane's in that couples who marry today expect too much from a relationship. "We are asking of marriage things that have never been asked," she explains. "I watch our young BYU students get married to someone they think is the perfect male or female. When they find out they aren't, they are disappointed. And sometimes they do look for a way out.

"We are asking one person to fulfill a tremendous number of needs," she explains. "Yet before the 19th century, the purpose of marriage was to produce children and add to the stability of society. Love was supposed to grow within the marriage. And the marriage was not there to fulfill all of your desires. God was to do that."

While not advocating a return to 17th-century Puritan relationships, Stovall encourages her students to look beyond the media's portrayal of love. While some marriages—despite all the odds—are successful, she asks her students to be realistic

and to carefully examine the obstacles they face.

But what is reality? And are there any secret formulas for predicting which couples will never visit an attorney?

As for magical formulas, the answer is, there are none. But as scholars spend more time studying the roots of divorce, a few predictors are appearing. The most predicting factor of divorce is the age of a couple when they marry. For women, the risk is much higher if they marry before age 20 and especially before age 18. For men, the risk is also higher if they are younger than 20.

The second critical factor, says Heaton, is the length of the marriage. "Simply, the longer you have been married, the less likely you are to get a divorce. However, divorce rates have increased in all age groups. It is a ubiquitous trend and not just rising in the newlywed category."

Other predicting factors have to do with heterogeneity. Even though society has become far more tolerant in the past years of interfaith marriages and of wide disparities in the ages of spouses, these differences can still create serious problems.

In research conducted by Heaton and Dr. Stan L. Albrecht, academic vice-president and associate provost at BYU, it was found that a marriage was at a high risk for divorce if there were more than five years difference in age between the spouses; if the wife were 17 or younger when the marriage took place; or if the couple had no religious affiliation or practiced different religions. The researchers also found that if the bride had conceived prior to the wedding, the marriage was more likely to end in divorce, even if it had lasted 15 years or longer. Additionally, the risk was higher if either partner had grown up in a home where there had been a divorce.

Heaton's most recent study, which was reported in the February 1990 issue of the journal

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Demography, also indicates that couples with more than four children may increase their risk of divorce.

In addition, national research has shown that couples who live together prior to marriage also increase their chances of divorce.

What then, if anything, can we learn from this data? Heaton believes it can help us see marriage in a more realistic light. While the 50-year-old man and the 19-year-old coed may live happily ever after in the movies, partners should know that they are facing some rough odds when their backgrounds and beliefs are quite different.

No one is saying that these marriages are doomed, but they do face a higher risk of divorce. Stovall believes this is where we can take a lesson from historical families, who didn't expect marriage to be without its ups and downs. "Somehow we have in our minds that pain doesn't exist in good marriages, that if a marriage is painful, the best solution is to break it up. Today, even boredom is a reason for divorce. The truth is most marriages are sometimes filled with pain, and it's something we should not be so afraid of. However, it is important to distinguish between the normal pain that results from the interaction of different personalities and the severe pain that signals deep problems in the relationship."

As Heaton pointed out earlier, however, even in the best situations, marriages can fall apart. While preventing this dissolution is of utmost importance and a critical aspect of the research being done at BYU, there is another side to the issue: How to best deal with divorce once it is inevitable.

Unfortunately, researchers say, society has had its head in the sand too long when it comes to dealing with divorce. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the courtroom, where

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spouses are pitted against one another, often bitterly fighting over a child—who cannot be split in half.

"For most other types of conflicts," says Dr. Stephen J. Bahr, a professor in the Department of Sociology at BYU, "the legal system works quite well.

"But for divorce, it doesn't work so well. This is primarily because the relationship is ongoing and will remain that way. Even if two partners hate each other, they still—in most cases—must retain some kind of relationship. So it is never a matter of just going to court and being done with it."

What most people don't realize is that they don't have to go through all of this to get a divorce, says Bahr. A number of years ago, O. J. Coogler, who was a lawyer himself, went through a horrible divorce. He realized there had to be a better way and led the movement for a mediation program.

Here, the two partners are brought together with a neutral third party who can either be an attorney or a counselor of some kind. The purpose is not to get the couple back together but to negotiate an agreement both parties can live with and without unnecessary acrimony.

"The problem with our current legal system," says Bahr, "is that it is based on adversity, where one

party is wrong. Your lawyer is an advocate for you. Hence, it is his or her job to make sure you are represented well. So even in no-fault divorce cases, the legal system builds upon problems. Usually the system just furthers the conflict and opens new wounds. The problem is—unlike in a business setting—these people have to live with the decisions of the court day in and day out."

Mediation was designed to help couples separate without destroying each other. After examining three months of contested custody cases in Utah County that involved a mediator, Bahr found that only 50 percent went on to a court trial, compared to the normal 80 percent.

The Changing FAMILY

He also found that most of the partners involved in mediation reported less strain than those who used other methods. "We attribute this to the fact that mediation acknowledges that the family continues after the divorce," says Bahr. "It is also less expensive and cuts down on the arguing."

Initially, he had also hoped mediation would make the divorce easier for the children involved. Yet the results showed that children whose parents used mediation were only a little more likely to say their home life was happy during the divorce period.

The effects of divorce on children are something we are only beginning to comprehend, says Dr. Barbara R. Wheeler, director of BYU's School of Social Work, who has conducted numerous divorce adjustment groups for children at BYU.

"I will never forget the reaction of one little three year old to his parent's divorce," recalls Wheeler. "When the counselor—who was a second-year graduate student in social work—asked the children how they felt when they first heard their parents were getting a divorce, this one little kid stood up and fell backwards on the floor with his legs and arms outstretched. He didn't say a word, but he communicated quite clearly his feelings."

For so long, the psychotherapy community was ill-prepared to deal with these kids' needs, she adds. Although there were divorce adjustment groups for adults, few were paying attention to what was happening to the children.

"And yet children were suffering, too. We were seeing symptoms in them that were very clearly linked to the rupture of the family. For example, we could pinpoint when the bed wetting started or when the grades dropped to the time of the divorce."

From watching these children—who ranged in age from 3 to 18—in the divorce adjustment groups, Wheeler learned something about how kids

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handle divorce. Her findings are compatible with those gleaned by other researchers. "The younger kids do seem to feel more pain at the time of the divorce," she says, "while for teenagers this pain is often manifest later. Sometimes, this comes out when adolescents are faced with male or female relationships. They often experience fatalistic feelings, such as, 'What if this turns out just like Mom and Dad's marriage?' Whereas we don't see these feelings occurring in younger children when they face relationships."

When asked what were the major problems Wheeler encountered with the children, she is quick to reply, "Self blame." In almost every case, she says, children could come up with a precipitating event as to why they caused their parents' divorce. "The counselors were always amazed at what these children believed they had done to cause their parents' separation. One little boy was sure it was because he didn't clean his room because that was the night his parents said they were getting a divorce."

Another problem is that many of the children simply had no one to talk to about the divorce. "It was incredible how many children didn't

even know why they were attending our sessions. When we asked how many knew why they were here, only about half would raise their hands.

"In saying that," says Wheeler, "I also have a lot of empathy for parents. I know they are in pain, and it's a hard and a terrible thing to sit down and face your kids and tell them about divorce. But parents need to realize that kids have to be given the opportunity to say, 'I think this is crummy. I hate it. I don't want this to happen.'"

If these feelings can come out, instead of being buried, the adjustment is much quicker and easier for a child. Wheeler adds that in a somewhat

(continued on page 42)



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