

# sección especial en idioma inglés

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developing your management philosophy

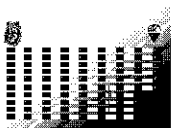
## workers want to know the goals

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ONE OF the more important aspects of management, and one which has received much attention during the past few decades, has to do with morale and attitude of employees. The significance lies in the fact that an employee may have considerable ability, but he may possess an attitude that is highly unfavorable toward his work situation and thus be an undesirable employee. The timely topic of worker motivation is also involved and is difficult to

completely separate from that of attitude. Even so, a man may have a very poor attitude toward his organization and still be highly motivated to render an excellent performance. The manager's problem of trying to secure employee cooperation in attaining organizational objectives is greatly enhanced by the complexity of the relationships among morale, motivation, and work achievement.



## Concept of Morale & Attitude

No small part of the problem lies in the difficulty of clearly distinguishing the involved terms. Most writers in the field of management use the terms morale and attitude in precisely the same manner, switching from one to the other as suits their fancy. (The same pattern will be followed here.) Nevertheless, there is a distinction to be made. Morale should be looked on as a state of mind at any moment of time. It is a mental condition and is closely akin to *esprit de corps*. It may be reflected in the person's actions at any instance of time, and his actions may change greatly and quickly as his morale or state of mind changes. There may, for example, be a marked change in his enthusiasm or self-confidence. Chances are that favorable morale will exist if the individual realizes that his needs are fulfilled through his efforts in his work situation.

Attitude, on the other hand, normally does not change as quiky as does morale. A worker may arrive at his job some morning and have a very low or unfavorable morale—his state of mind. But his general attitude toward his work situation has not changed. Attitude is the *readiness to act in a certain manner, and it has been acquired through the influence of many factors and experiences of the individual's past*. Certain experiences will cause one to respond to a situation in a particular way. Surely attitude is not the action itself nor is it the motive behind the action; it is the way in which a person is *predisposed to behave*. Of course, it does not necessarily follow that any overt action will be taken.

Another portion of the probelm arises because of the failure of many of the theoreticians to distinguish between individual morale and attitude and that of the group. After all, individuals make up the group. It is often incorrect and misleading to speak of group morale as being high or low, when in fact the employees' states of mind may be pretty evenly divided between favorable and unfavorable. It is specially important for the manager to consider the

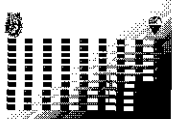
morale and attitude of the individuals when such employees are informal group leaders, strongly union-oriented, or chronic faultfinders. Of course, the same would be true were the specific employees those with extremely favorable attitudes toward the organization.

## The Attitudes of Managers

Undoubtedly one of the most important factors affecting the readiness of the operative employees to respond in a certain manner (attitude) and their state of mind at one time (morale) is the behavior of their superiors. All too often the attitude and morale of the workers simply reflect that of the various levels of management. Even though managers' attitude is of the utmost importance, it has been stressed all too lightly by top executives. The diverse attitudes resulting in behavior patterns of managers have brought about attempts to classify them into neat little categories. Thus one reads and hears about the positive leader versus the negative leader. The positive manager is one who stresses the positive motives; he attempts to draw out the best in his subordinates; he consults with them and seeks their opinions; he has the "we" attitude and thies to give all credit to his subordinates if things to well. The negative leader, on the other hand, rules by threat and coercion: he instills fear and distrust in the group; he may tend to take personal credit for the good work done by others and "pass the buck" for his unit's poor performance. Of course, no manager would likely be classified as entirely positive or negative. However, managers do lean to one side or the other.

The negative attitude of a manager may result in his being classified as belonging to the autocratic or dictatorial type. Such a manger wishes to rule absolutely and in a despotic manner. He does not tolerate disagreement with his ideas and methods, and he is prone to giving definite orders and engaging in close follow-up practices. Usually he does not like to delegate much authority to his subordinates.

The paternalistic leader is another type of



leader who does not do a very good job of delegating authority. This type views his employee in a fatherly manner, sometimes even off the job, and he either actually has, or pretends to have, an almost undue concern for the employee's general welfare. His failure to delegate sufficient authority and responsibility to subordinates many result from his lack of confidence in the workers or because he simply does not really trust them.

Leaders have been grouped in many personality and attitude categories, but perhaps the other really distinct classification is that of the creative or developmental manager. This type of manager is truly positive in his approach. He tries to draw out the creative instincts in his subordinates; he encourages them to develop their potential; he realizes that as a manager his destiny may well lie among others—in this case his subordinates—because the manager's own superiors will be inclined to judge him by the performance of his subordinates.

#### Measuring Morale & Attitude

Morale and attitude tend to vary so greatly with time, work situations, and individuals that methods of measurement remain most inexact. Satisfactory results are elusive, and many authorities in the field are still quite skeptical. Partial blame for this skepticism may result from the use of some very subjective methods of morale and attitude determination. For example, one such method is called the "listenig-in" procedure. Following this method, the supervisor associates with his subordinates at work and sometimes at play; he may take his coffee breaks with them and eat lunch in the same area. Such investigation, like the closely related "supervisor's impressions" method, is likely to be very subjective and undesirable.

Perhaps the most popular way to try to evaluate morale and attitude is by use of employee surveys. These may take the form of a guided interview, in which the interviewer has certain specific questions to which he seeks answers,

or the unguided interview, during which the employee is simply encouraged to talk freely. The third type of survey is the noted written-questionnaire method. As is true with most management tools, the survey method of evaluation of employee attitude can be helpful properly used. Questions should be very carefully selected, complete anonymity must be maintained, and thorough analyses must be made of the results. At any rate, one of the values is that the employees are made to realize that the managers have some interest in them.

Another very popular method of attempting to determine how the employees "feel" about their organization is by the analyses of various records. Labor turnover may be indicative of attitudes, but this depends greatly on the condition of the labor market. Grievances and disciplinary actions may also give an impression, at least in a general manner, of the workers' feelings about their job situations. Another type of index often considered is the rate of tardiness and absenteeism; objective data may also be obtained concerning waste of time and materials and even accident rate.

However, the results of the examinations of such records cannot be taken as accurate indications of the state of morale and attitude without the consideration of many other things. In a "tight" labor market, all such records may be very favorable, but the reverse may be true of the workers' attitude and morale. The situation to be found in the soft coal industry in southern West Virginia is an outstanding example of this state of affairs. In times of wars and national conflicts, it would hardly be safe to rely on such records to evaluate employee morale. And, incidentally, a poor accident record probably indicates a poor safety program.

But what about the most important key to the entire problem—the worker's performance or production record? Again, result of studies are too inconclusive for any generalizations. A moment's reflection will call to mind many workers whose attitude is very negative toward their work situations and whose production record is superior. We also can think of many



employees who are extremely fond of their organization and whose performance is barely high enough to prevent their dismissal. Research studies having to do with this problem vary greatly; there is little reliable empirical evidence that indicates a definite correlation between attitude and productivity.

#### Attitude & Morale Factors

Regardless of how accurately the state of morale and attitude may be measured, it may be well for managers to consider some of the more important factors which influence it. Such factors of concern are those which pertain to the work situation and over which managers have some control. These elements are numerous. But perhaps the most important one has to do with the attitude of all levels of management, discussed previously. The type of attitude shown by the superiors is bound to influence the effectiveness of their direction of subordinates.

Economic factors such as hours, pay, working conditions, and performance standards should come in for continual scrutiny. Attention should also be given to some type of employee representation, especially if the employees are not unionized. Another major factor affecting attitude and morale is the entire area of communications. Workers want to know. They want to know something about the goals and objectives of the organization for which they work, about the policies and plans, about the organization's status in the community, and about their future security in their jobs. Even the size of organization may be important, since it is often maintained that morale is better in the small firm than in a large one. However, this is somewhat debatable.

#### A Brief Note

The entire subject of employee morale and attitudes is still a bit obscure and hazy. Definite correlation between attitudes and factors such as production, quit rate, grievances, and so on, is difficult to establish with any degree of certainty. The worker is too complex and his job satisfaction is too intricate for simple and dogmatic conclusions. Nonetheless, favorable morale and attitude toward the entire work situation is not to be minimized. Individual and collective attitudes of the group toward the organization and its managers which indicate a state of faith can be highly beneficial. Even though there are exceptions, low turnover rates and low rates of absenteeism and tardiness are associated with favorable morale; and certainly recruitment of new employees is an expensive undertaking. Nor is the public relations aspect to be overlooked. Undoubtedly the most important public relations medium is that of the employees, and their "feelings" about the organization will be expressed in many ways. Behavior of the workers concerning unions, work slowdowns, grievances, and so forth, is also influenced by attitudes and morale.

The stress, then, that is being placed on the component of employee attitude is well merited. Sooner or later all management work must come to focus on the workers, and there is little doubt that such work is made more satisfactory when attitudes are favorable. The final chapter on the subject is probably some distance into the future, but researchers are still busy with bits and pieces which eventually will be fitted together to present a reliable aggregation.

