



Building Team Spirit in Organization Management Through a System Approach

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ABSTRACT

Organizations may have enormous resources to optimize production yet lack the strategy for creating the orientation in their employees and the environment to achieve their set goals. This remains the situation and a major management problem where specialization has been over emphasized with inequitable value placed on contributions of the various sections of the organization and individual employees. The contribution of the system view of organization to solving this problem is its explicit and empirical proof of the importance of each of the various components of the system for it to be able to function and attain a dynamic equilibrium for desired level of maximum productivity. It thus helps the manager to pull the various components of the organization together with the awareness, desire and commitment for a common goal.

INTRODUCTION

Achieving organizational goals the primary concern of all organizations, preoccupies managers with the search for the most appropriate managerial principles and strategies for effective utilization of available human and material resources. Among the several functions besetting the managers daily in this regard, is how best to co-ordinate the efforts of employees by building around them team spirit with good interpersonal relationship. This function poses a serious problem in complex organizations departmentalized on productive or service basis requiring specialized knowledge, expertise and technical know-how. Harnessing the diverse human resources in such

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organizations for common goal(s) in an atmosphere of cordial relationship with willingness of efforts is often times herculean. The system view approach to managing organizations provides a panacea to this problem. The approach as offered by modern management theorists sees the organization as a system having interdependent sub-systems or components integrated in a functional relationship for achieving organizational objective.

This article treats this subject in-depth, in five sections. The first section introduces the paper. The second section is on the conceptual discussion on organization. The third section examines literature on various organization management theories, while the fourth presents a discussion of the system views of organization and its application for building a formidable work force. Section five concludes the paper.

Organization: Conceptual Discussion

The concept, organization, is best examined by first providing an understanding of its structure, purpose and operation. The structure spells out the hierarchy, positions, duties and responsibilities while the purpose as it suggests, determines the nature of service, the set target and goal of the organization. Generally, organization's operations are human based, as they comprise persons whose activities they depend on for operations, and by implication of survival and goal attainment. This suggests that organizations have the common features of well spelt out positions for persons or officials with assigned functions, specialized operations and set objectives.

Different authors have variously defined organization, the common features notwithstanding. According to Etzioni (1964) "organizations are social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed or reconstructed to seek specific goals". To Davis (1957), it is "a group of people working together under a leader to accomplish an objective". Barnard (1938) defined it as a system of consciously co-ordinated activities". A more elaborate definition was given by Schein (1992) "as the planned co-ordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common, explicit purpose or goal through division of labour and function, and through hierarchy of authority and responsibility. Deriving from these definitions is the idea of organization as a body of persons or groups who are jointly involved in the pursuit of a common goal or interest. The purpose for their coming together may be political, social, cultural or economic and the organization may be private or public. Some organizations are profit oriented established primarily to make profits. Other forms of organizations are established essentially to render social services to the public in which position they are non-profit oriented. Such organizations include public schools, museum, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Red Cross Society, Amnesty International amongst others rendering humanitarian or philanthropic services.

Organization theorists have thus categorized organizations using various criteria. Principal among the theorists are Parsons (1960), Blau and Scott

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(1962), Etzioni (1964).

Parsons (1960) in his categorization put organizations under four headings;

- i. Economic organizations referring to commercial and industrial firms. These are profits oriented organizations.
- ii. Political organizations: these are governmental institutions, agencies and political parties geared towards goal attainment. They are adaptive financially.
- iii. Stability and deviance reducing organizations: such include judiciaries, courts, police, and hospitals. They help to avoid chaos in the society and are therefore integrative functionally.
- iv. Socializing organizations: included in this category are churches, mosques and many non-governmental organizations. They are culture/pattern maintenance organizations.

Blau and Scott (1962) based their categorization on 'Cuo-Bono' i.e. who benefits. They identified four types of organizations in this category;

- i. Members or rank and file or mutual benefit, into which fall political parties, professional associations.
- ii. Managers or owners organizations. These are business organizations that include industrial firms, whole-sale firms/stores.
- iii. People oriented organizations, which are service delivery in nature. This group refers to organizations such as the hospitals, schools and welfare social agencies.
- iv. The commonweal organizations, which are institutions, oriented towards the general public good such as the brigade, the police, and armed forces.

Etzioni's (1964) categorization is based on people's response or compliance of employees to the power employed by superiors to control them, in the organization. He identified people's compliance to be three functions of organizations, be it prestige, symbol or economic organizations. The three functions in his view correspond to the three methods of controlling members of an organization:

- i. Coercive control: This is use of force that infuses pain or torture. In this category are prisons, psychiatric or hospitals and forced labour camps. The coercive control produces alternative response as it attaches members' hostility to the organizations rules and regulations or goals.
- ii. The remunerative control based on the manipulation of economic benefits such as salaries, wages, fringe benefits. This elicits calculative response from members of the organization.
- iii. Normative control which involves the manipulation of prestige symbols. This attracts moral response expressed in positive attachment to the organizational goals with participation in achieving desired goals.

In our view, organization could be termed an association of persons in a formal or informal relationship for the pursuit of a common goal or interest.

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Theories of Organization: A Review

Organization theorists have been concerned with the most efficient management method for achieving maximum productivity in organizations. The earliest among them are commonly referred to as the Classical or Traditional theorists who comprised of Bureaucratic, Administrative Management and Scientific theorists. The fundamental tenets of Classical theorists are that:

- i. Organizations exist to accomplish production-related and economic goals.
- ii. There is one best way to organize for production, and that way can be found through systematic, scientific inquiry.
- iii. Production is maximized through specialization and division of labour.
- iv. People and organizations act in accordance with rational economic principles (Shafritz and Ott, 1992).

Scientific Management Groups

The Scientific groups were concerned with the application of scientific method to management for enhanced performances. They looked at the specific aspects of the organization and the individual and his foreman. The father of this group Fredrick Taylor and his followers were actually not organization theorists but practitioners whose observations and ideas were later adopted by administrative management theorists. The ideas put forward by the group included clear delineation of authority, and responsibility, separation of planning from operations, the functional organization, the use of standards in control, the development of incentive systems for workers, the principle of management by exception and task specialization (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1974).

Taylor was heavily criticized as scientific management system was seen as having treated workers like cogs in a well oiled machine and for the perception as having the system destroyed humanistic practices in industry.

Administrative Management Theory

Whereas Scientific Management was concerned with optimizing effort at shop or operative level, thus adopting a micro approach, the Administrative Management theory emphasized establishing broad administrative principles applicable to higher organizational levels. The emphasis of this group was on the development of macro concepts focusing on formal organization structure and the delineation of the basic processes of general management March and Simon (1958) refer to this body of knowledge as "Administrative Management Theory". Henri Fayol (1916), a French Industrialist has been identified as the father of the Administrative Management theory. He defined administration in terms of five primary elements: planning, organizing,

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command, co-ordination, and control which have become the foundation for considering the basic processes or functions of management. Fayol and his followers advocated the idea that management was a universal function, which could be defined in terms of the various processes, which the manager performed. They emphasized that the managerial processes and the principles, which they developed, were applicable not only to business but to governmental, military, religious and other organizations. Fayol (1916) opined that administration was not rigid and adopted the term principle whose application varies with situation and circumstances. He enunciated fourteen administrative principles: division of work, authority and responsibility, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subordination, remuneration, centralization and decentralization, scalar chain, order, equity, stability of tenure of personnel, initiative and esprit de corps.

Later Gulick and Urwick (1937) and Parker Follett (1926) advanced the course of Administrative Management Theory. Gulick and Urwick in their several papers on Science of Administration, popularized management principles in areas of organization structure, line authority and responsibility, departmentalization, unity of command, delegation, and span of control. Parker Follett (1926) on her part emphasized the psychological and sociological aspects of management. She viewed management as a social process and the organization as a social system.

Bureaucratic Model

Max Weber (1946), a German sociologist, developed the bureaucratic model. The model was concerned primarily with the structure and design of the organization. It does not connote what is generally held today as red tapism. Weber (1946) viewed bureaucracy as the most efficient form, that which could be used most effectively for complex organization- business, government, and military- arising out of the needs of modern society.

Weber formulated bureaucracy on the view of rational-legal authority. This view is the right of exercise of authority based on position. "In the case of legal authority, obedience is owed to the legally established impersonal order; it extends to the person exercising the authority of office under it only by virtue of the formal legality of their commands and only within the scope of the authority of the office". Henderson and Parsons (1964) Rational legal authority is based upon position within the organization, and when it evolves into an organized administrative staff, it takes the form of a 'bureaucratic structure'. Within the structure each member of the Administrative staff occupies a position with a specific delineation of power. Compensation is in the form of a fixed salary, the various positions are organized in a hierarchy of authority, fitness for office is determined by technical competence, and the organization is governed by rules and regulations. In summation, the traditional theory states:

i. The operation of organization is built around economic man equipped with complete knowledge and optimal behaviour

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ii. Specialized labour force in a well -defined hierarchical conformation put in place to achieve organizational goals .

Controlled human participants fitted into structured positions with defined authority and responsibility. The duties attached are specified with necessary instructions, rules and regulations. In order to ensure cooperation in meeting organizational goals, the participants had to be closely supervised. Management was the primary integrative force and the formal hierarchy was the mechanism for achieving co-ordination (Massie 1963). The main assumption of traditional management theory is that of the rational economic man. Management should plan, direct, and control the activities of the work group. Authority had its source at the top of a hierarchy and was delegated downward. Principles were established to guide management practice. The main thrust of scientific management was on planning, standardizing and improving the efficiency of human work. It viewed management as a science rather than an individualistic approach based upon rule of thumb.

On the whole, management theory has made significant contributions to management as a field of practice as many of the concepts from the school are currently applied in organizations. The pyramidal form, the scalar principle, the concept of unity of command, the exception principle, the delegation of authority, limited span of control and Departmentalization principles are currently being applied in the design of many organizations.

Notwithstanding the immense contributions of traditional management theory, it has obvious limitations in terms of its perception of management as a practice and the human participant. Its concept of the participant as a more or less controlled tool in a mechanistic system leaves no room for initiative. And where it seeks to replace the rule of thumb with scientific methodology, it over rated science. Also, its view of man as an economic being, motivated with high pay for maximum performance fails to accord necessary consideration to other factors such as the socio-cultural environment and the influence of work group.

The Behavioural Scientists

The industrial revolution, which occurred at the wake of the 20th century, had set the tune for the emergence of the traditional management theory. By the middle of that century many forces reshaped the environment of the organization and consequently altered the structure as well as the management of the organizations. Many large firms during the period had diversified their operations arising from increase in size, ventures into new fields, fusion of firms into conglomerates and multinational corporations. These trends fostered increased complexity in the business organizations. Other types of organizations had undergone similar growth in size and complexity e.g hospitals, schools and government agencies. Growth in size and diversification of the firms witnessed specialization of the work force. With increased specialization, the problems of integrating people into

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organizational effort multiplied and required new management concepts, goals or objectives of participants and sub-groups of enterprises diversified that it was not common if possible at all to talk of an enterprise with single objective.

Technological changes also created new adaptations, the changes occurred in mechanization and assembly line production and more recent trends in automation, computers and information technology, which have all altered traditional relationships between man and machine. Modern organizations required new skills, talent and expertise in technical knowhow as well in their co-ordination. According to Galbraith (1973) the requirements of technology and planning have greatly increased the need of the individual enterprise for specialized talent and for its organization.

Other factors that forced managerial modifications were increased education acquisition and the need for collective actions leading to formation of unions to protect the interests of their member workers in organizations. Increased education provided people with more intellectual skills requiring new inducements to secure effective participation. The new environment was that which was dominated by the new intellectual inputs that reformed the milieu created by the industrial revolution

The various changes which affected the composition, structure, sizes diversification, and objectives and the environment resulting in modification of managerial efforts and practice from mid 20th century, brought about the emergence of behavioral and management sciences. These were new ideas separately put forward for studying and managing organizations. Management science can be considered as a basic extension of scientific management but with modification. It is concerned with the organization primarily as an economic-technical system. This view focuses on the manager as a decision-maker and uses systematic analysis and quantitative techniques to optimize performance toward certain objective (Rosenzweig, 1974). Behavioral scientists on the other hand emphasize the psychosocial system with primary consideration of the human components. The behavioral school is interested in empirical research to verify theories of organizational behaviour. Typically, they have a "humanistic" view which differs substantially from the mechanistic orientation of the traditionalists and management scientists. In contrast to other approaches, the behavioral view centers more on the people, their interactions and co-operation. It emphasizes, more than the traditional approach, the development of insights and understanding based on empirical investigation. In summary, behavioral science is concerned with "the scientific research that deals with human behavior (Gordon,1963).

The early behaviorists Mayo, Roethlisberger and Whitehead carried out series of studies or experiments on fatigue, periods and physical surroundings of employees. The outcome of the three phased studies was that social and psychological factors were now seen as being of major importance in determining worker satisfaction and productivity.

The early human creationists thus brought to the forefront the concept of

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the organization as a social system encompassing individuals, informal groups, and inter-group relationships as well as formal structure. They had two orientations (1) A basic concern for man in the organization. Scott (1967) calls this ideological approach industrial humanism. Basic to the philosophy of industrial humanism is the design of the work environment to provide for the restoration of man's dignity. (2) Utilization of the research methods of the behavioral sciences in studying organizational behaviors.

The contrasting views held by the traditionalists or the classicists and the behaviorists are that the former emphasized structure, the organization chart, while the latter argued that it is people and not the black boxes in the organizational chart that determine the effectiveness of the organization. Thus, they emphasize the psychological state of the workers as it affects productivity. To them, effective control emanates from the individual rather than through the administration of positive and negative monetary and career relevant inducements. From the human relations point of view, the desire to produce at an optimal level rests on the employee himself, rather than the "economic man" of the classicists who depends on financial inducement".

The Modern Theory of Organization

The modern theory of organization sees the organization as a system with interdependent sub-systems or components. The sub-system works together, each in a good functional state for the system to attain equilibrium for optimal performance or productivity. The system may be closed or open system. Open system is the one in which organization interacts with its environment from which it accepts or takes inputs for continual works while in turn it gives out outputs to the environment.

The open system has dynamic relationships with the environment from which it receives various inputs, transforms these inputs in some ways and exports out-puts. This situation enables the system to off-set the processes of disorganization (entropy). The system is not only open to its environment but also to itself internally in which condition interactions between the components or sub-systems affect the system as a whole. The open system therefore, adapts to its environment by changing the component parts. The proponents of this theory state that organization must adapt to changes within its sub-systems and its environment if it is to survive.

In a closed system, the organization is not open to its environment and itself. It does not allow inputs from the environment. Such a system has the tendency to move toward a static equilibrium or entropy. Most physical or mechanical systems are closed systems.

Building a Formidable Work Force: The Systemic Approach

Many theorists see organization as a system. Among the early proponents of this school of thought is Chester Barnard (1938) who sees organization as a system of consciously coordinated personal activities of two or more persons.

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Other early modern system theorists are Simon(1964), Katz and Kahn (1966).They viewed organization as a complex system of decision-making processes. In their view, "the term system" is being used more and more to refer to methods of scientific analysis that are particularly adopted to the unraveling of complexity"

Many writers likeTrist (1977),Hannan and Freeman (1977) havecontributed to the theory. According to them, system implies an interconnected complex of functionally related components.

Kast andRosenzweigstudy further enhances the suitability of the system approach to the study of the organization and his discourse. In their integrated system view, the organization is made up of sub-systems or components:

First, is the goals or values subsystem - this consists of the goals which the organization has set out to achieve. The goals are clearly spelt out in the document establishing the organization and the organization expectedly periodically evaluates its performance against the goals. If the organization must be able to draw its inputs from the society and survive, its goals must conform to the broader values of that society.

Second is the managerial sub-system - it spans the entire organization and relates the origination to its environment, setting the goals, developing comprehensive strategic and operational plans, designing the structure, establishing control processes etc.

Third is thestructural sub-system -this involves the ways in which the tasks of the organization are directed (differentiated) and coordinated (integrated). The structure is indicated or shown by the organization chart, by rules and procedures. It is also determined with the pattern of authority, communication and work flow.

Fourth is the technical sub-system - this refers to the knowledge required for the performance of tasks including the techniques used in the transformation of inputs into outputs. It is determined by the task requirements of the organization and varies depending upon the particular activities. The specialization of knowledge and skills requiredthe type of machinery and equipment involved and the layout of facilities shape the technical sub-system.

Fifth, the psycho-social subsystem - it comprises the individual and group interaction within the organization. It consists of individual behaviour and motivation status and role relationships, group dynamics in the system. It is affected by sentiments, values, attitudes, expectations and aspirations of the people in the organization. The subsystem is also affected by external environmental forces as well as the tasks, technology, and structure of the internal organization. Both the external and the internal forces help to build up the organizational climate within which human participants perform their roles and activities. The organizational climate in turn determines the impression the society holds for the organization.

The case of Ceven industries illustrates the point we are making better. Ceven Industry Ltd, (a table water and fruit processing factory located at

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Aviele in Edo State, Nigeria) was established in 1989. In the first few years of operation, the industry was plagued with serious challenges which included non-availability of raw materials, staff incompetence and the hostility of the host communities. Both internal and external dynamics worked against the industry.

In the case of Ceven Industry the factors in the external environment include the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), the Water Board, the Police for security of the employees and the property in the factory, the National Administration for Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) being the regulatory body of the government for its policy on the protection of local manufacturing industries; and the local community. The Industry could not survive the challenges and was shut down between the years 2000 and 2005.

Ceven Industry returned in 2006 and came up with strategies for survival. One of its strategies was to organize a seminar in April 2006 to sensitize the staff of the organization on the new strategies of operations. The Industry reviewed its relationship with the host community, the private and government agencies with which they had to do business. The company's interdepartmental and inter-personal relationships, the value of contributions of departments, divisions, units and individual employees were also reappraised.

In the situation highlighted above, every employee of an organization and by implication has the responsibility of ensuring the proper functioning of his/her subsystem and relate well with the employees of other subsystems if the goals of the company must be achieved. These include:

i. The goals of the organization should have been spelt out. As earlier stated somewhere in this paper, they are expectedly contained in the relevant document incorporating or establishing the organization. The employees are to vigorously pursue and achieve these goals as a mark of success for the organization. Of common concern are issues relating to planning and setting of targets for production, sales, expansion, drive for improved quality and position in the competitive market and service delivery. Growth may necessitate diversification of products, increase in sales outlets, review of production and marketing strategies, acquisition and installation of new equipment to march new technologies, training and retraining of personnel for new skills, techniques knowledge, managerial skills and orientation of attitudes as well as elimination of wastes. Also important are effective communication and fairness in distribution of reward for achievement to create and retain awareness and commitment for organizational goal.

iii. As in the case of the goals subsystem, the structure of the organization should have been put in place. This is contained in the organization chart indicating positions, flow of authority and the communication channel. Officers in the various positions must be mindful of their tasks and responsibilities and the flow of authority. Authority is real and in place, but expressed in motivational leadership which produces committed

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subordinates. Extraction of compliance and obedience through coercion is rare, if not totally absent. The individual employee sees the organizational goal as representing his target, aspiration and fulfillment to which he subordinates his objective. This does not obviate the employees' right to self-development and self-actualization. Similarly recognition for specialization does not obstruct management integrative effect and co-ordination of the expertise, skills, knowledge and techniques of the entire labourforce for a common objective. Commitment to a common goal elicits respect for positions whose occupiers are treated as impersonal.

iv. The managerial subsystem is also in place. It is the duty of this subsystem to ensure policy guidelines and formulation, review of policies, actions and strategies as dictated by the prevailing economic and socio-political situations of the environment and pressure from groups dynamic within the system. It then relates the organization to the environment.

Ceven Industries Ltd. has rather unfriendly environment. The power supply is epileptic, the host community is non-cooperative, fuel and diesel are hardly available for their vehicles and machines, cases of breach of contract reported to the police are poorly handled. The management had adopted a passive relationship with these bodies. But that idea changed for a renewed hope for achieving better relationships for better results when the organization staged a come-back. The management decided to involve other departments and individual employees for bridge building and smoothing of edges. Efforts were made to find out employees sharing neighborhoods with the hostile youths in the community and those with informal relationship with the officials of the service agencies.

a. The technical subsystem in this case, does not only refer to the engineers but to virtually all the staff involved in the transformation of the inputs received by the organization to its outputs i.e. its products. The staff includes those involved in planning based on information and ideas on new knowledge and skills required by the organization to perform its task, those for procurement and receipt of raw materials, and those in production, packaging, and delivery. They also include the maintenance group including the lowest employee in the unit who ensures the protection of the equipment against the harsh weather condition and the tidiness of the place, the security personnel who ensure that the equipment and other facilities are not stolen.

b. Under the psycho-social sub-system, the staff are expected to demonstrate commitment to the success of the organization through their sentiments for the organization, behaviour; values placed on work and remuneration. There is the climate of love, friendliness, and regard for constituted authority, respect for and adherence to laid down communication channel, good interpersonal and inter-group relationships. There is the demonstration of willingness to work together.

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According to Chester Bernard (1938), an organization only emerges when the following are available: (a) Common purpose (b) Willingness of members to contribute efforts (c) Ability to communicate.

These, no doubt, are only found among a group of persons who have agreed to work together as a team and achieve the set goals.

c. The managerial subsystem continually reviews the organization's relationship with the environment and ensures its friendliness to have a friendly supra-system. The management may employ the services of individuals and groups outside the managerial sub-system to achieve this.

Whereas the traditional organization theory used a highly structured, closed system approach, modern theory has moved toward the open system approach. "The distinctive qualities of modern organization theory are its conceptual analytical base, its reliance on empirical research data and above all, its synthesizing, integrating nature. These qualities are framed in a philosophy which accepts the premise that the only meaningful way to study organization is as a system (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1974).

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the strategy that organization can adopt for achieving their goals in an atmosphere of good inter-personal and intergroup relationships. The importance of team spirit for achieving corporate goals can hardly be overstressed and it is underscored by the emphasis placed on it today by key players in industries and human resources departments of organizations in both the developed and developing world today..

The paper adopted the system view of organization as its tool of analysis which has enabled us to have a clear understanding of the functional components of the organization. The detailed analysis of the various components based on the application of the theory has revealed that organization can only attain its dynamic equilibrium at which it functions optimally when all the components or the sub-systems function properly and are in perfect relationship. Since the sub-systems are human driven, all employees must put in their best with due sense of commitment as active players in a team for the overall success of the organization. The paper has opined that every employee and for that matter every sub-system in the organization is of utmost importance for the realization of the goals of the organization.

The paper however recommends that, to achieve a well-knitted committed work group, the following are essential:
Specialization and division of labour are necessary for the good functioning

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of the organization but only to the extent of not being factors of permanent decentralization. As much as possible, centralization should be the primary motive for a true synergy for corporate existence and goal attainment. True commitment to corporate success calls for subordination of personal and sectional interests to the organizational goal. Therefore, efforts pulled at individual, sectional and departmental levels should serve as desirable linkages for a common purpose.

Effective communication system: To achieve a true synergy or proper integration, effective communication system is an imperative. It helps to keep employees informed of the organizations goals, philosophy and mission, and the strategies for achieving those. It further helps to constantly remind the staff of their role through their individual contributions towards the overall success of the organization. Personal goals are thus aligned with the general goal by highlighting the benefits of integrative efforts of management.

Regular orientation training and development programs: Employees can be greatly aided by training and development to acquire the necessary attitudinal change and orientation to perceive the organizational goals as a priority and the content within which they advance their personal objectives. Individual objective are at best seen as only catalyzing the process of actualizing organizational objectives. Employees in that situation overtly cultivate sentiment for the organization and its success. Development produces considerable effect through the supervisors and managers in creating changes in attitude and orientation in employees for corporate success.

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