

SPOTLIGHT

on management techniques

by B.C. ALBERTS*

The South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy arranged a well-attended Colloquium on Management Techniques in the Mining and Metallurgical Industries at the CSIR Conference Centre from 13th to 15th June, 1988.

Opening

The President of the Institute, Mr B.C. Alberts, welcomed the 322 delegates.

The Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology, Mr G.S. Bartlett, officially opened the Colloquium. In his speech, he referred to the necessity of good management in developing South Africa's raw materials and creating prosperity.

Mr Alberts, in his welcoming speech, referred to the rapidly changing environment, the striving for excellence, and the changing role of management as basic trends that make the re-evaluation of current management practices imperative. Leadership, vision, and the management of an organization's culture were emphasized as essential aspects of excellence.

Professional Management Approach

Professional Management was discussed in session one. Messrs C.E. Fivaz, Metallurgical Consultant, Chamber of Mines, and F.P. Kotzee, Chairman, Dorbyl, Ltd, chaired this session, and five speakers took part.

Mr B.R. van Rooyen, Executive Director, Gold Fields, discussed the role of top management in the 1990s. He emphasized the role of leadership, and stressed the fact that leaders should innovate and should not merely spend their time on administrative work.

Dr J.B. Maree, Chairman, Eskom, pursued this line further in his speech regarding the change in the management climate of an enterprise, stressing the necessity of strong leadership and clear directives as key factors in changing a management climate.

Both speeches elicited a lively response regarding communication, vision, participative management, and acknowledgement of good performance. It became clear from the speeches that a process of democratizing management techniques and an awareness of the importance of values and organizational culture are high on the agenda of top management in the RSA.

Management for Excellence

Eleven speeches covered this theme. Dr H. Wagner, Director General, Research Organization, Chamber of Mines, Dr O.K.H. Steffen, Managing Director (Mining), Steffen, Robertson & Kirsten, Mr H.G. Mosenthal, Rand Mines Ltd, Mr D. Rankin, Managing Director, Amcoal, and Mr W. van Wyk, Managing Director, Iscor Ltd, acted as session chairmen.

Productivity, entrepreneurship, organizational climate, technological breakthroughs, utilization of human re-

sources, and aspects of management and labour relations were dealt with.

The role of management and the employees was discussed in an interesting manner by the speakers, and the speeches by Professor J.J.H. Coetzee, Manpower Consultant and Mr R.M. Godsell, Group Consultant, Industrial Relations and Public Affairs, Anglo American Corporation, in particular gave rise to lively discussions. It was stressed that man's attitude and reaction to change, as well as management approaches, were primary elements of success that should be managed properly if excellence was to be achieved.

Management Support Systems

Communication and control systems, consultant groups, research, management information systems, and technical audits were among the subjects that were discussed. It was stressed that proper communication was absolutely necessary in all the above systems, which are indispensable owing to the complexity of management work in a rapidly changing environment in which there is a scarcity of high-level manpower.

Under the chairmanship of Mr W. van Wyk, Managing Director, Iscor Ltd, Mr T.I. Steenkamp, Executive Director, Gencor, and Mr J.F. Clark, Managing Director, IBM, Johannesburg, the advantages, disadvantages, and practical problems encountered were keenly debated.

Mr W. Grulke, Manager, IBM, Durban, gave an interesting speech on technological change in the field of information and information management, and the impact of these on job content and organization.

Profile of an Effective Manager

Although this was the last theme and also the third day of the Colloquium, the subjects elicited great interest. Dr D.J. Gouws, Managing Director, Dawie Gouws Associates, pointed out the difference between management and leadership, and drew great response. He pointed out the variety of separate team roles and 'circulating leadership' in a smoothly functioning team as revealed by recent research. Professor F. van Graan, PU for CHE, Vaal Triangle Campus, dealt with psychic energy as an important quality of the effective manager. Creative thinking, a positive achievement drive, self-respect, and a positive self-concept were highlighted as characteristics required of an effective manager. Managers should pay more attention to self-development and self-maintenance in order to be effective.

Conclusion

The speeches were of a very high standard. The speakers proved that they are specialists in their respective fields, and made positive contributions towards an interesting and thorough analysis of the vast subject of management work.

Amcoal and Iscor sponsored meals and cocktails respectively for the delegates.

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