

JOB ROTATION IN EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT  
AN APPRAISAL OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

by

Rodney Lawrence Booker

B.S., University of North Carolina  
1949

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
1957

Signature of Author . . . . .  
School of Industrial Management

Certified by . . . . .  
Faculty Advisor of the Thesis

46 Kingswood Road  
Auburndale, Massachusetts  
May 8, 1957

Professor L. F. Hamilton  
Secretary of the Faculty  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge 39, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Hamilton:

In accordance with the requirements for graduation, I herewith submit a thesis entitled "Job Rotation in Executive Development: An Appraisal of Theory and Practice."

This study, as such, would not have been possible were it not for the generous assistance of the representative of the organizations visited. I also wish to acknowledge the willing help and assistance of my thesis committee, composed of Professors Howard W. Johnson, Charles A. Myers, and Paul Pigors. I am particularly grateful for the support and patience of the chairman, Professor Pigors.

Sincerely yours,

Rodney L. Booker

RLB/wj

Dewey (Ind. Mgmt.) Sept. 9, 1957

## ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with an appraisal of the theory and practice of job rotation in executive development. The purpose is to determine the value of job rotation as a device for training managers, and in so doing, to determine the types of job rotation used today, and the proper method of employing the job rotation technique. The scope of the study is limited to a review of selected literature with reference to executive development, and interviews with managerial representatives in nine selected companies and one installation of the United States Air Force.

The discussion in the seven chapters is mainly concerned with the characteristics of executive development which relate to job rotation, the types of job rotation, the factors involved in the selection of men, the policies and practices involved in the operation of the job rotation process, the problems peculiar to intercommunity transfers, the advantages and disadvantages of using job rotation, and the prerequisites of an effective job rotation program.

This study has convinced the author that job rotation is an effective on-the-job training method for developing managers. If the program is properly organized and operated, the advantages of its use far outweigh the disadvantages. While job rotation is expensive, so is any other effective method of developing managers. The company must determine whether its need for future executives is sufficient to warrant the costs involved in developing them.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
The Problem . . . . .	1
Purpose of the Study . . . . .	1
Scope of Study . . . . .	2
Major Conclusions . . . . .	4
II. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT . . . . .	6
Need for Executive Development . . . . .	6
Executive Development: A Company Philosophy . . . . .	8
Generalist or Specialist . . . . .	11
Job Rotation Related to Other Methods of Executive Development . . . . .	13
III. TYPES OF ROTATION . . . . .	16
Status in the Organization . . . . .	16
Nonsupervisory or nonexecutive employees . . . . .	16
Cadet training . . . . .	17
Lower, middle or upper management . . . . .	19
Types of Reassignments . . . . .	21
Vertical rotation . . . . .	21
Lateral rotation to similar type work . . . . .	22
Lateral rotation to different type work . . . . .	23
Line to staff and vice-versa . . . . .	24

CHAPTER	PAGE
Assistant-to jobs . . . . .	26
Created jobs . . . . .	27
Temporary substitutions . . . . .	28
Preparation for special job . . . . .	29
Swapping jobs . . . . .	30
Special training courses . . . . .	31
Interdepartmental, Interdivisional and Geographical Rotation . . . . .	31
<b>IV. SELECTION OF THE MAN . . . . .</b>	<b>34</b>
Responsibility for Selection . . . . .	34
<b>Selectivity . . . . .</b>	<b>36</b>
Evaluation . . . . .	38
Is He Informed Regarding the Program . . . . .	40
Age Requirements . . . . .	41
Educational Requirements . . . . .	43
Job Status . . . . .	45
Promotion or Raise . . . . .	46
What If He Refuses . . . . .	47
<b>V. THE ROTATION PROCESS . . . . .</b>	<b>50</b>
Publicize the Program . . . . .	50
Selection of the Jobs . . . . .	50
Following the Progress of the Participant . . . . .	53

CHAPTER	PAGE
Time in Each Job . . . . .	55
Responsibility Assumed . . . . .	58
Productivity . . . . .	60
Cost of Job Rotation . . . . .	61
Number in the Rotation Process Simultaneously . . . . .	64
Co-operation of Others . . . . .	66
If Unsuccessful on New Job or Jobs . . . . .	68
Completion of the Rotation Program . . . . .	70
VI. PROBLEMS OF GEOGRAPHICAL TRANSFERS . . . . .	72
Cost of Geographical Transfers . . . . .	73
Participation in Community Affairs . . . . .	75
Attitude Toward Intercommunity Transfers . . . . .	77
Summary . . . . .	80
VII. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	82
Evaluation of the Job Rotation Method . . . . .	82
Advantages of job rotation . . . . .	82
Disadvantages of job rotation . . . . .	86
Prerequisites of a Job Rotation Program . . . . .	90
Conclusion . . . . .	94
Recommendation for Further Study . . . . .	95
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	96

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most controversial subjects in the field of business management is the problem of developing future managers. Most management representatives have agreed that there is a definite need for developing executives. The present accelerated expansion rate of most companies, the tendency toward decentralization, the growing difficulty of the management task coupled with increased specialization, and the higher cost of acquiring managerial talent is convincing evidence that executive development is necessary. The major unanswered question is how best to develop future managers.

#### THE PROBLEM

Many training methods are used today in executive development, and one of the most common is job rotation. Although job rotation has been practiced for many years, there are questions regarding its use that have not been answered to the satisfaction of all concerned: What types of job rotation are used today, and what are the proper methods of employing the job rotation technique? What is the value of job rotation as a device for training managers? These questions are of sufficient importance to justify an appraisal of the theory and practice of job rotation in executive development.

#### PURPOSE OF STUDY

The objective of this study is to determine the following:

1. What methods of job rotation are being used in current management development, and what are the procedures used in the operation of such job rotation plans?
2. Are the claims now made for the job rotation training method valid?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of job rotation as a method of executive development?
4. What are the prerequisites of an effective job rotation plan?

#### SCOPE OF STUDY

To accomplish this study, the author reviewed selected literature pertaining to executive development, and interviewed management representatives in nine selected companies and one installation of the United States Air Force. For assistance in the discussion of the effects of geographical transfers on employees and their families (Chapter VI), reference is made to questionnaires answered by fifty middle-management employees and their wives who have been transferred frequently between communities. These questionnaires were obtained through the co-operation of a fellow student, John H. Mitchell, who utilized them in a thesis entitled "A Survey of the Transient, Middle Management Family."<sup>1</sup>

The literature reviewed consisted of selected books, periodicals, and publications relating to executive development. Time would not allow

---

<sup>1</sup>John H. Mitchell, "A Survey of the Transient, Middle Management Family" unpublished Master's thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957.



a review of all the voluminous literature concerning executive development. However, sufficient material was covered to satisfy the objectives of this study. The literature, particularly the publications of the American Management Association, facilitated a review of the managerial development policies and practices of many companies, thus, the practical aspects of this study are not limited to the ten establishments personally contacted.

In the author's opinion, the companies selected for the purpose of this study represent a cross section of American industry. Care was taken to include companies which do not have an acknowledged executive development program, and companies which do not have an acknowledged job rotation plan. The interviews at the Air Force installation were made to reflect the job rotation policies and practices of one sector of the Armed Forces.

The companies will be referred to in the following manner:

1. Main office of a large bank which has branches.
2. Main office of electric public utility.
3. Headquarters of light equipment manufacturer which has divisions.
4. Manufacturing division of heavy equipment manufacturer.
5. Laboratory division of chemical manufacturer.
6. Headquarters of a large public utility.
7. Assembly division of heavy equipment manufacturer.
8. Retail store of a large chain store organization.
9. Operating division of a large public utility.
10. Air Force base.

Following is an outline of the scope of the various chapters: In Chapter II, the discussion concerns the need for executive development, the characteristics of executive development which contribute to the success of job rotation, and other methods of development as related to job rotation. Chapter III is devoted to a discussion of the types of job rotation used today, the purposes of their use, and some examples of how they are used. The various factors involved in the selection of the man are discussed in Chapter IV. The discussion relates mainly to steps taken previous to selection, the characteristics of the men selected, and the selection process. The discussion in Chapter V is related to the policies and practices involved in the operation of the job rotation process. Some of the subjects discussed are the jobs for rotation, their selection, their duration, and the responsibility involved. The discussion also relates to the administration of the program in so far as the men rotated are concerned, and their relationship with other employees in the organization. The discussion in Chapter VI is devoted to problems peculiar to geographical rotation, such as the cost of such transfers, disruption of the family's home life, and the family's participation in community affairs. The conclusions in Chapter VII relate to the advantages and disadvantages of job rotation, and the prerequisites of an effective job rotation program.

#### MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

There are many advantages and disadvantages to the job rotation

method of executive development. The major advantage is that men, by performing in a series of carefully selected jobs, can broaden their vision and knowledge of the organization, and can acquire or strengthen their managerial skills. The major disadvantage is that job rotation is an expensive method of developing executives due to the cost of training, the loss of productivity while the men are learning, the cost of possible errors committed by the men on rotation, and the cost involved in lowered performance due to the disruption of the organization.

If all the advantages of job rotation are to be realized, and if the disadvantages are to be minimized, the program must be organized to include certain prerequisites. The most important prerequisites are as follows:

1. The program must be fully supported by top management, by department heads and supervisors, and by the employees who are associated with the men rotated.
2. The men rotated should be carefully selected. They should be outstanding men with ability and promise.
3. The men should be assigned to carefully selected jobs of full and significant responsibility, and of sufficient duration for the man to learn from the responsibility assumed.

In the author's opinion, job rotation is an effective on-the-job training method for developing managers. If the program is properly organized and operated, the advantages of its use far outweigh the disadvantages. While job rotation is expensive, so is any other effective method of developing managers. The company must make the decision whether its need for future executives is sufficient to warrant the costs involved in developing them.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

The subject of job rotation can properly be discussed only if related to (1) the need for executive development, (2) the characteristics of executive development which contribute to the success of job rotation, and (3) other methods of executive development. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss these relationships.

### NEED FOR EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

During the past ten years, the old problem of job succession has been assuming greater and greater proportion in the thinking and planning of business management. At present, the major concern is with executive development. This term means simply the development of managers. What has led the men in management to accept the responsibility of helping to select and to develop their own successors?

First, the management task is becoming increasingly complex. Administrative units are larger, the number of activities have multiplied, and the responsibilities have broadened. Business today is keenly affected by labor union policies, government actions, and world events. Managers must be capable of making decisions in this broadened environment. As Myles L. Mace expresses it, "Technological developments, stimulated and encouraged by the war, have far outstripped our administrative knowledge and capacities to cope with the changes. New skills

are required, new understandings of people in organizations must be established; in short, new types of administrators are needed."<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, companies are expanding at a much faster rate than during the years immediately preceding World War II. The demand for managers, precipitated by expansion, is further accelerated by the tendency toward decentralization.) One light equipment manufacturer, in the process of expanding and decentralizing, has the following forecast for executive personnel during the next five years:

	Executives 1956	Executives Needed by 1961
First three levels of supervision	3,400	6,500
Next three levels, junior executives	700	1,300
Senior executives	100	200
Officers	20	30

( In discussing the expansion of business and industry and management jobs, Lawrence A. Appley says, "Then, too, during World War II and the years following, we have seen the greatest expansion in business and industry in the history of the United States--in the number of enterprises, in facilities, and in the number of management jobs."<sup>2</sup>

As companies have become larger and more complex, jobs have become more specialized. More than ever before, companies are groups of

---

<sup>1</sup>Myles L. Mace, The Growth and Development of Executives, Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, 1950, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>M. Joseph Doohar and Vivienne Marquis (eds.), The Development of Executive Talent: A Handbook of Management Development Techniques and Case Studies, American Management Association, New York, 1952, p. 6.

specialists. This specialization has tended to limit the point of view of potential executives and to confine them to very narrow functions.<sup>3</sup> To prepare these men for management, a broader outlook is necessary, and broadening is one phase of executive development.

Executive talent can be obtained by hiring managers who were developed by other companies. However, the present personal income tax rates constrain men from moving unless the offer is very inviting. Executive development is more desirable, especially considering the advantages of promoting from within. According to John W. Riegel, "Success in turning to other companies for managers and technicians is increasingly costly under the stiff personal income-tax rates imposed today. Years ago a 20 per cent net increase in compensation induced many a man to leave one company for another. Now the bidding company may have to offer a 30 or 40 per cent gross increase to accomplish the same result."<sup>4</sup>

#### EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT: A COMPANY PHILOSOPHY

Executive development should be a company philosophy. It is not a program that can be successfully operated by the personnel department alone. The support of every management representative is desirable; the support of every management representative should be sought. Indeed,

---

<sup>3</sup>Mace, op. cit., p. 9

<sup>4</sup>John W. Riegel, Executive Development: A Survey of Experience in Fifty American Corporations, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952, p. 4.

Lyndall F. Urwick expresses the need for support in this manner: "They [the firm] will have management development only when every individual on the payroll feels that he or she is expected, helped, and encouraged to grow on the present job and into any bigger job for which he or she can qualify."<sup>5</sup> While Mr. Urwick may be somewhat extreme in stressing his prerequisite for managerial development, employee support can contribute to its success. However, the prime support should come from the representative of management.

The spirit, the support, and the example has to come from the top. Top management's role is ably described by Paul Pigors and Charles A.

Myers:

The importance of top-management interest cannot be overemphasized. The responsibility for building a competent managerial organization clearly rests with the chief executive, and he cannot delegate this to a personnel administrator, a controller, or a group of outside consultants. He can get help and advice from these specialists, but unless he shows by his example the importance attached to developing management ability, an organization plan or an executive development program is likely to be on paper and not in men's minds.<sup>6</sup>

Executive development should be both a line and a staff function. The personnel department's job is to advise, counsel, and assist line officials. Every supervisor should have a basic desire and responsibility

---

<sup>5</sup>Lyndall F. Urwick, Management Education in American Business; General Summary, Part I, Management Education for Itself and Its Employees, American Management Association, New York, 1954, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup>Paul Pigors and Charles A. Myers, Personnel Administration: A Point of View and a Method, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956, p. 116.

to assist his subordinates in their development. The official of a large public utility stated that everyone in the company was on the lookout for good men to move up. A representative of the management development department of a light equipment manufacturer said that in his company, all supervisors train and develop their subordinates. This, he said, was the company's philosophy. The personnel director of another company requested that all executives submit charts showing future replacements for all supervisory jobs. This, he stated, had the effect of emphasizing the need for training subordinates.

Executive development is self-development. Although it should be a company philosophy, men must develop themselves. The company should train, counsel, advise, and encourage the man. However, the man must have the desire to better himself. The company can encourage this desire, but the man must be receptive. Peter F. Drucker has the following to say about self-development:

For development is always self-development. Nothing could be more absurd than for the enterprise to assume responsibility for the development of a man. The responsibility rests with the individual, his abilities, his efforts. No business enterprise is competent, let alone obligated, to substitute its efforts for the self-development efforts of the individual. To do this would not only be unwarranted paternalism, it would be foolish pretension. But every manager in a business has the opportunity to encourage individual self-development or to stifle it, to direct it or to misdirect it. He should be specifically assigned the responsibility for helping all men working with him to focus, direct and apply their self-development efforts productively.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>Peter F. Drucker, The Practice of Management, New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1954, p. 187.



## GENERALIST OR SPECIALIST

In the previous discussion of the need for executive development, the trend toward job specialization was cited as one of the reasons why executive development is needed today.<sup>8</sup> Jobs have become more specialized because companies are larger and more complex, and because the state of the technology has become more advanced. Specialization has both advantages and disadvantages, and Riegel summarizes these when he says:

Specialization has important advantages: it increases the individual's skill and expertness, and it offers him opportunities to choose a vocation suited to his aptitudes and interests. But specialization has disadvantages also. It makes people narrow. It gives rise to misunderstandings and friction among them. . . . The specialization of personnel, and particularly of managers, has created a problem of increasing seriousness in firms whose organizations have grown in size and complexity. . . . Because of his [the typical junior executive] narrow outlook and prejudices he is handicapped as a candidate for promotion to a higher position which would require him to co-ordinate the work of his unit with the work of other units.<sup>9</sup>

All of the management representatives consulted during this project expressed the opinion that a manager can do a better job if he has a broad knowledge of his department, his division, or his company. While technical skills are necessary in many jobs, a manager, to operate a complex organization effectively, must also understand the broad objectives, policies, and practices of the organization. The personnel director of a public utility expressed his opinion that, "knowledge of the job alone is less important in upper supervisory and management

---

<sup>8</sup>Cf. ante, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Riegel, op. cit., p. 19.

positions than the knowledge of and ability to carry out company policy." In a large chain store organization, the store manager must have experience in all of the departments of the store before becoming manager. The managers of this organization feel that a man cannot be an effective manager unless he has a working knowledge of every phase of the operation. The personnel director of an assembly division of a heavy equipment manufacturer related how each of the line foremen had previous experience in some other departments of the plant. This previous experience, he felt, enabled the supervisors more effectively to co-ordinate the functions of their department with the functions of other departments.

There are, however, many managers in industry today whose paths of progression were through some narrow function of sales, production, or finance. Five of the six top executives of a large light equipment manufacturer, progressed through the sales organization. These men were advancing in the company when it was much smaller and less complex. They had the opportunity to become familiar with all phases of the organization due to its size and centralization. These same men have instituted an executive development program which strives to train the younger executives in the fundamentals of management, and to give them a knowledge of and appreciation for the broad objectives of the company.

Can a good administrator be a good manager of any function of the company regardless of his speciality? There are many instances where a good administrator has been a good manager of several dissimilar functions which do not require advanced technical knowledge. These men,

however, acquire additional skills as they proceed from one successful job to another, and whereas they were specialists when they began, they become generalists as they proceed to conquer each new job. Men of such qualifications might be even more successful if they are given a broader outlook when they advance through the lower management levels. It is this writer's opinion that they would.

#### JOB ROTATION RELATED TO OTHER METHODS OF EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

There are many training methods used in executive development, and they are usually classified as training off the job or training on the job. Before discussing some of the training methods used in these two types of development, executive inventories, audits, appraisals, and evaluations should be mentioned. To conduct a successful executive development program, the company should determine what executives it now has, and what executives will be needed in the future. Executive inventories and audits are tools used to perform this task. If the individual is to be developed, he should be appraised so that his needs might be known. The man should be observed during the training so that his progress and the progress of the program might be evaluated. Executive appraisals and evaluations serve this purpose.

There are numerous off-the-job training methods. One form of training off the job consists of courses of study given on the company premises, either during or after working hours. Special training aids are used in conjunction with such courses, for example, case studies and role-playing. Training conferences and seminars are another means of

development. The individual can be assigned certain outside reading, or he can participate in field trips to other divisions or organizations. He can be encouraged to take night courses at schools or universities, or he can be enrolled in special managerial development courses at various colleges and universities.

Training on the job can take the form of coaching and counseling by the immediate supervisor. This form of training is basic to the success of any executive development program. As was mentioned above, when discussing executive development as a company philosophy, every supervisor should have a basic desire and responsibility to assist his subordinates in their development.<sup>10</sup>

Development on the job can take other forms, such as special work assignments. The individual is assigned the study of a particular problem, or is made a member of a special committee assigned the study of a particular problem. The committee assignment method can be further enlarged to constitute what is known as multiple management. The committee becomes a junior board of directors. The trainee may also attend management conferences, either to make a special report or to observe.

Job rotation is another form of on-the-job training. It can be defined as the planned movement of men from one job to another for the purpose of developing their skills and increasing their knowledge and understanding of the organization.

---

<sup>10</sup>Cf. ante, p. 9.

Thus, job rotation is one of many methods of development. No one method is the answer to the executive development problem. A successful program may make use of many of the development methods, and the program should be tailored to meet the needs of the individual company. The development methods selected for the individual employee should also be tailored to meet his particular needs.

However, job rotation makes use of the most important medium for the development of men--the experience gained and skills learned from the day-to-day performance of the job. To be sure, the man must be properly supervised, coached, and evaluated if the job experience is to be the most effective teacher. Urwick expresses these thoughts very ably when he says:

By far the most important part of any individual's development is the practical experience he gains by working in suitable positions where he learns directly from the coaching and indirectly from the example of his immediate chief.<sup>11</sup>

.....

Only by the progressive accumulation of a series of working experiences of the right kind in the right order under the right kind of supervision can the individual hope to attain that maturity of mind and personality necessary if he is to sustain major responsibilities.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>Urwick, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

## CHAPTER III

### TYPES OF JOB ROTATION

There are many types of job rotation. It is not always used in the same manner, nor for the same purpose. Also, different types of job rotation are used for different groups of employees. For the purpose of this study, job rotation will be classified in accordance with the status of the employee rotated, in accordance with the types of reassignments, and in accordance with the company departmental or geographical boundaries within which rotation occurs. In this chapter, the various types of rotation are discussed.

#### STATUS IN THE ORGANIZATION

##### Nonsupervisory or nonexecutive employees.

Rotation is occasionally used below the supervisory level and for purposes other than executive development. An Air Force base personnel department rotates clerks among the various jobs in the department such as training, records, interviews, etc. A program of this type is usually permanent in duration as the employees continuously rotate among the various jobs. The purpose of such rotation is to train all office personnel to be capable of handling all jobs, thereby increasing their skills and giving them a better understanding of the objectives, policies, and practices of the department. This type of rotation also makes the personnel more flexible in the event of absences or terminations, and creates a

more co-operative atmosphere. Job rotation plans of a similar nature are used in various companies. A public utility rotates some of its general accounting personnel. A retail store rotates some of its employees among selling and nonselling jobs.

Rotation of nonsupervisory employees is also widely used to train employees for supervisory jobs. For the past ten years, a light equipment manufacturer has been using such a program in its manufacturing departments to train supervisors. Employees who show promise are moved about their department in various jobs for a period of approximately one year as a prelude to a supervisory job. A large chain store organization has store training programs for noncollege employees which involves rotation among all the functions of the store as preparation for supervisory jobs. Such rotation programs are usually given in conjunction with supervisory training courses of study.

#### Cadet training.

One of the most popular forms of job rotation is commonly known as cadet training. Cadet training is the initial training given college graduates, and it entails rotating the trainee through some of the jobs or functions of the organization for a period of from one to three years. The time in each job is usually short, ranging from two or three weeks to two or three months. Training courses of an orientation nature are normally given in conjunction with the rotation program.

The purpose of cadet training is to acquaint the trainee with the functions and departments of the organization, thereby giving him an

understanding of the organization in its entirety and giving the members of the organization an opportunity to know him. Riegel states that cadet training enables the department heads and executives to become acquainted with the trainee, providing them with an evaluation of his interests and aptitudes which facilitates his placement at the conclusion of the program. A program of this nature also enables the individual cadet to discover his vocational aptitudes and preferences. As all cadets undertake similar assignments, they can be compared directly, and outstanding men for each field can be identified.<sup>1</sup> An opportunity is also provided to weed-out misfits.

Five of the companies contacted for this study have cadet training programs. An operating division of a public utility has a one-year program consisting of a two-weeks' induction course followed by a series of working assignments of from two weeks to twenty-two weeks duration. In the middle of the year, a two- to four-weeks' technical course is given after which the trainee is returned to rotation for the remainder of the year. He is then evaluated and assigned a job. The college graduate of a large bank receives about six months of orientation and rotation which is supplemented by instructions in the bank training center. This is followed by a six-months' work assignment in the controller's division and in the credit department. Upon successful completion of the

---

<sup>1</sup>John W. Riegel, Executive Development: A Survey of Experience in Fifty American Corporations, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952, p. 159.



eighteen-months' tour, the man is assigned a job. A light equipment manufacturer is planning a nine-months' program for engineers. Each man is to be given three weeks of orientation followed by three months of rotation. He will then receive a training course in his speciality followed by another five months of rotation. A large chain store organization rotates its college graduates through all the major functions of the store during the first year of employment. The trainees change jobs approximately every two months, and at the conclusion of eight or ten months, they are assigned as departmental assistant sales managers for the balance of the year.

Lower, middle or upper management.

The job rotation process used after the employee completes the cadet program, or after the employee becomes a supervisor, differs between companies. Some companies rotate employees in the lower, middle, and upper levels of management while other companies rotate employees in only one or two levels. The purpose for the rotation of employees in all three management levels is the same--to develop the employees while satisfying a job requirement. By development is meant increasing the employee's skills and knowledge and overall ability to manage.

Rotation in the lower levels of management usually aims toward improving the man's skill and knowledge of the basic managerial functions, such as supervision, human relations, labor relations, administration, and technical proficiency. An official of a large public utility stated that his company uses rotation in the lower levels of management mainly

to increase technical knowledge. Rotation in the middle and upper management levels normally aims at sharpening these managerial skills with more of an emphasis on increasing the man's administrative ability to handle a bigger job.

An example of a lower management rotation plan is one which exists in an operating division of a large public utility. If, after a man has completed his cadet training, he appears to have the qualifications necessary for advancement to middle management, he is assigned to the rotation plan. The requirements of the plan are that he must work in three different jobs in three of the four major departments. The minimum time on each assignment must be eighteen months, and each placement must be a working assignment with full job responsibility. During this period the man must have some line experience. Including the year of cadet training, the total rotation plan requires a minimum of five and one-half years. Upon completion of the program, the man is assigned a job in middle management. This company has no formal rotation plan for middle or upper management personnel. However, employees who have the ability to continue to advance are rotated at greater intervals than the eighteen-months' minimum for lower management personnel.

A large bank rotates men in middle management who possess the qualifications for advancement. There is no formalized plan, however, if a man appears outstanding, he is moved through a series of jobs, some in branch offices and some in the various departments of the main bank. According to a bank official, the jobs are selected to bolster the man's

shortcomings without wasting his strength. Bank executives at the vice-president level are also rotated for development purposes.

A light equipment manufacturer is instituting a lower management rotation plan in its engineering departments for outstanding employees with three to five years experience. The program will consist of four one-year assignments in major functions, such as engineering, manufacturing, and finance. The men will also receive some field experience and a four-months' university course in the humanities.

During the past ten years, an electric public utility has conducted a rotation plan for promising executives in middle and upper management. The men have been moved through the various departments of the company. Approximately 250 executives have participated in the program. The purposes of this company's plan are to build up a reserve of qualified people for key management positions, to give the participants broad experience in different phases of the company's work so that they might be more effective on the job, and to develop generalists with an overall company viewpoint.

#### TYPES OF REASSIGNMENTS

##### Vertical rotation.

Rotation assignments are usually lateral; however, occasionally, it may be desirable to move a man up or down temporarily for purposes of development. An assistant sales manager being groomed for the sales manager's job might be assigned a salesman's territory for several months

to acquaint the man with the salesman's problems. A foreman being trained for a line foreman's job might be assigned as an assistant superintendent for a few months to gain administrative ability and prospective. According to Earl G. Planty and J. Thomas Freeston, "The determining factor here is the experience which a particular man may need at a particular time. If moves upward were permanent, they would constitute promotion, and if permanent and downward, they would be demotions--and neither of these is part of rotation."<sup>2</sup>

Lateral rotation to similar type work.

One of the easiest forms of rotation to administer is lateral rotation to similar type work. Industrial engineers may be rotated among various manufacturing departments. Although the work in each department is somewhat similar, these men are confronted with different problems and personalities in each assignment. They have an opportunity to acquire broader backgrounds, make new contacts, and meet new challenges. These men may also stimulate the improvement of methods in the department to which transferred.<sup>3</sup>

A large chain store organization rotates assistant store managers and store managers between their various stores. Usually the men progress from smaller stores to larger stores. A light equipment manufacturer

---

<sup>2</sup>Earl G. Planty and J. Thomas Freeston, Developing Management Ability: 600 Questions and Answers, New York, The Ronald Press Company, 1954, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>Riegel, op. cit., p. 282.

rotates salesmen between territories. A heavy equipment manufacturer rotates foremen between the various manufacturing departments. Planty and Freeston say, "Rotations like this also provide a variety of departmental, company, or geographic climate, as well as different work standards and philosophies of operation. They keep each man alert and growing while they test his adaptability."<sup>4</sup>

Lateral rotation to different type work.

Rotation becomes more difficult to administer as the job changes are made to jobs that are progressively more dissimilar from the previous job. The rotation of the clerical workers in the personnel department of the Air Force base, from training to records to interviewing, is an example of lateral rotation to different type work that is fairly easy to administer. Rotation in the chain store organization where a man may progress from a receiving clerk to a buyer in a selling department to an interviewer in personnel to a manager of a selling department is more difficult. Another example of lateral rotation to different type work reported by a participant in the rotation program of a large public utility consisted of successive jobs as plant engineer, staff accountant, operating assistant, sales engineer, plant engineering supervisor, and administrative methods engineer.

According to Planty and Freeston, the person responsible for the rotation program will find that some shifts are easier than others.

---

<sup>4</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 79.

Rotation from personnel to public relations, or from engineering to production, may not be so difficult as rotation from research to finance, or advertising to quality control. Also, once a man has made several moves and has progressed into general management where he co-ordinates many different kinds of work, the one or two moves that may be needed to complete his development cause little difficulty. After one has experienced a few rotations, he can shift readily and still benefit from the new problems and responsibilities presented by new work.<sup>5</sup>

Line to staff and vice-versa.

Line and staff jobs differ in responsibilities and duties. In a production department the line man's major responsibility is to produce certain products of an established quality within a certain period of time. He has to rely on the productive employees in his department to accomplish his goal. Thus, his major function is to supervise his employees. Certain skills are required to accomplish his work. The staff man's major responsibility is to assist the line man in accomplishing his goal. Whether the staff man is a personnel man, or an industrial engineer, or a time study man, or a factory accountant, his job is to assist the line man. He performs his service by advising, counseling, and recommending certain courses of action to the line man. He also performs certain tasks that are outside of the line man's sphere of operation, either due to technical ability or to advantages resulting

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

from a division of duties.

It is the writer's opinion that the manager's job requires some of the skills peculiar to the line man's job and some of the skills peculiar to the staff man's job, and most of the persons interviewed during this study concurred with this opinion. Most of the persons interviewed also felt that a manager should have both line and staff experience during his career. Riegel expresses this opinion when he says:

At second and third levels of management an "operating" executive ideally should have both "line" and "staff" experience. If he has staff men reporting to him, he should understand their outlook, their interests, and their work so that he can supervise them, utilize them effectively, and be an acceptable leader to them. On the other hand, staff executives at high levels will know better how to serve the operating executives if they have had operating experience. They then understand how their speciality fits into the broader and more complex responsibilities of the operating executives. These senior staff men will also recognize more clearly the boundaries imposed by limited time or means upon the adoption of their proposals at any given time.<sup>6</sup>

In the Armed Forces, where rotation of certain personnel every three to five years is required, rotation from line to staff is a common practice. Rated officers (those on flying status) in the Air Force are constantly being moved from line to staff and vice-versa. Other branches of the service follow the same practice. As one Air Force officer explained it, "A good officer needs both line and staff experience; such experience is vital to the success of his career."

Industry also rotates men from line to staff and vice-versa. All

---

<sup>6</sup>Riegel, op. cit., p. 288.

companies contacted which use rotation, utilize line to staff transfers for development purposes. In some instances, it is the more difficult type rotation, however, if a man needs such experience for his development, line to staff rotation should be utilized.

Assistant-to jobs.

Some companies use assistant-to jobs for rotational purposes. Mace found that some executives of manufacturing companies felt that rotation at higher levels was expensive due to the possibility of errors in judgment if the man is transferred to a position of great responsibility. To meet this objective, assistant-to positions have been used as rotation jobs. Such jobs can be used for rotation without causing unusual disturbance in the organization as men can be moved in and out of such jobs with relative ease.<sup>7</sup>

Riegel says that assistant-to jobs are advantageous to young men as training jobs. The young man can be of great value to the operating executive, and at the same time, he can get an overview of the work of the entire unit. It also tests his ability to plan his time, to establish satisfactory contacts and relationships with others, and to develop his skill in communications. Such a position is a test of a man's discretion and tact and of his ability to win and hold the confidence of other men.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>Myles L. Mace, The Growth and Development of Executives, Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, 1950, p. 104.

<sup>8</sup>Riegel, op. cit., p. 285.



Assistant-to jobs also have disadvantages as training jobs. If they are used for higher level men, they can be expensive due to the high salaries involved. They may not carry sufficient responsibility to test a man's ability, and to serve as the most potent means for development. If the boss is not a good instructor, or is not the type to exemplify, his assistant might be misguided.<sup>9</sup>

The writer feels that the use of assistant-to jobs for training is dependent upon what is desired in the way of development. If the trainee's development requires rotation to a job of full responsibility, then assistant-to assignments should not be utilized for that man. However, if an appraisal of the trainee's needs indicates that he will benefit from an assistant-to job, then he should be rotated to such an assignment.

A laboratory division of a chemical manufacturer has assistant-to-the-director jobs in each department. Executives are rotated into these jobs for training and development. An assistant factory manager of a manufacturing division of a heavy equipment manufacturer, which is planning an executive development program, expressed an interest in using assistant-to jobs for training. He felt that such jobs are excellent for training purposes.

#### Created jobs.

Some companies create special jobs for rotational purposes. The assistant-to jobs discussed above are often created for training purposes,

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

and some of the advantages and disadvantages of such a practice are the same as those discussed in connection with assistant-to jobs: Men can be moved in and out of such jobs without causing unusual disturbance in the organization. However, such jobs may not entail sufficient responsibility to test a man's ability and to serve as the most potent means of development. Planty and Freeston comment on another possible disadvantage, "Where spots are identified and reserved for rotation, employees in the department are denied the opportunity of promotion to such positions. Unless other and adequate opportunities for promotion are open to them they will resent the idea and the man who is rotated into the position."<sup>10</sup>

A personnel department representative of a large bank stated that occasionally, jobs are created for training purposes. He explained that as the bank was large and growing, the organizational structure was very flexible permitting the creation of special jobs. Training jobs are also occasionally created in a large chain store organization. Such jobs are sometimes created on an "acting" basis for a limited period of time.

#### Temporary substitutions.

A popular training device in job rotation is the use made of temporary substitutions. When executives are on vacation, on leave of absence, or are absent because of an extended illness, a substitute is usually needed to perform their duties until their return. A man can be laterally or vertically rotated into such a vacancy which will serve the

---

<sup>10</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 83.

purpose of getting the job done and giving the substitute some valuable training simultaneously. Riegel states the risks involved due to possible errors can be reduced if the immediate supervisor of the person on leave is available for instruction and consultation. He also says that the substitution tests and trains the substitute, giving him the feel of the job at the higher level, and may emphasize to him the need for further preparation.<sup>11</sup>

The personnel director of an assembly division of a heavy equipment manufacturer told of a temporary substitution scheme of a somewhat different nature. During a certain peak production period, additional supervisors are needed. Employees who have supervisory qualifications are given some classroom instruction and temporarily assigned to supervisory jobs during the period of accelerated production. The substitutes are then moved back to their old jobs, or they may be given jobs superior to their old jobs. This program provides the company with excellent supervisory material when permanent openings occur.

Preparation for special job.

Ideally, rotation is planned for each individual's development. However, it is usually difficult and impractical to determine which ultimate job each executive is being trained for as conditions within a company are constantly changing. Normally, rotation can be planned effectively only two or three jobs in advance. This subject will be

---

<sup>11</sup>Riegel, op. cit., p. 281.

discussed further in Chapter V; the reason for mentioning it here is to point out that rotation is often used to prepare some men for specific jobs. A company may wish to groom a particular man for the president's job, and for training and development, he will be rotated through a series of jobs. The distinction between regular job rotation and rotation as preparation for a specific job is rather narrow, however, it is the writer's opinion that many companies which do not have acknowledged job rotation plans use job rotation to prepare men for specific jobs. They may not call it job rotation, but they are using it.

#### Swapping jobs.

Some companies which have rotation plans arrange to swap jobs between two individuals that are ready for rotation. Swapping can be arranged in rotation to similar type work or to different type work. Supervisors of two production departments can swap jobs, or time study men in two departments can swap jobs. In a similar manner, a product design engineer can swap jobs with a production engineer.

A representative of a large public utility stated that swapping jobs is the most prevalent form of rotation in the company. An official of a large bank advised that they swap jobs occasionally. He cited as an example the swapping of jobs by two branch managers. According to the persons interviewed, the swapping of jobs has the advantage of arranging the rotational jobs for two men simultaneously. However, the timing of the moves simultaneously might prove difficult on geographical transfers.

### Special training courses.

Rotation is used in conjunction with special training courses. This type of rotation can best be explained by illustration. A heavy equipment manufacturer sponsors college courses for employees. The employee alternately attends college for six weeks and works for six weeks. For each six-weeks' work assignment, the employee is rotated to a different job, preferably in a different department. A bureau of the Federal Government is planning a special course to acquaint certain government employees with the various governmental agencies. In addition to courses of study, the participants will be rotated to jobs in the various agencies.

### INTERDEPARTMENTAL, INTERDIVISIONAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL ROTATION

Job rotation can be classified in accordance with the company boundaries within which it occurs. The job rotation of the clerical workers in a personnel department is confined to eight or ten employees in one department. If the purpose of job rotation is executive development, it will usually be on a much broader basis. In a multiplant, or multidivisional company, the tendency is to rotate lower level executives within a division or plant, and higher level executives between divisions or plants. In a large chain store organization, store executives below division manager level (in charge of one line in a store, such as hardware) are usually rotated only within the store; division managers are rotated to other stores in the immediate area, such as the Boston area; store assistant managers and managers are rotated within the district,

such as the New England district; executives above store manager level are rotated all over the country.

A large public utility with operating companies all over the United States rotates lower level and middle level executives within the individual company. Some middle level executives are rotated between the companies and the central office. Upper level executives rotate between operating companies in addition to rotating within their own company and between their own company and headquarters.

Some decentralized companies rotate only upper management executives between divisions. Lower management and middle management executives rotate only within the individual division. A chemical manufacturer follows such a practice except that lower or middle management executives will be transferred to another division if that division has job openings which it can not fill from its employees. This company also tries to transfer lower and middle management executives to other divisions if such employees request a transfer.

The geographical distance between the various plants or divisions of a company can be a deterrent to rotation between such plants and divisions. Riegel found that a number of companies do not rotate junior executives if the rotation requires a change of residence. These companies may rotate members of middle management who are willing to move. Such middle management executives are described as men with special skills, or as reservists for senior jobs. A number of men were reluctant to accept assignments to other areas because they did not wish to give up

satisfactory housing arrangements and face uncertainty and added cost on that score.<sup>12</sup>

However, some companies move all levels of executive employees geographically for rotational purposes. An operating division of a large public utility follows such a practice. In this particular company, however, the employees are located all over the United States, and the number of employees in any one location is small. Even this company makes an effort to limit transfers of individual employees to the area in which located.

As there are many other problems involved in geographical transfers, this subject will be discussed at greater length in Chapter VI.

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. p. 292-293.

## CHAPTER IV

### SELECTION OF THE MAN

The selection of the man to participate is one of the most critical phases of a job rotation program. If the wrong man is selected, the program will not accomplish the desired result of supplying the company with future executives. The care with which candidates should be selected is described in the following manner by Planty and Freeston:

More care should be used in picking a man for rotation than in selecting one to attend an executive development course in the plant or at a university. Both men may fail to learn, and the one in class may be a burden to his teachers and associates. Still, his failures do not slow up or disrupt daily operations, as do those who fail in job rotation.<sup>1</sup>

#### RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

Who should select the man for the rotation program? Selection should be the duty of many people in an organization. However, the prime responsibility should rest with the supervisor or department head to whom the man reports. Every executive in the company should have the responsibility for seeking out promising men. However, each executive's prime responsibility should be the development of his subordinates.

Staff assistance in selection is a function of the personnel department. These departments supply the tools for selection and assist

---

<sup>1</sup>Earl G. Planty and J. Thomas Freeston, Developing Management Ability: 600 Questions and Answers, New York, The Ronald Press Company, 1954, p. 80.



with advice and consultation. They maintain employee records and assist with evaluations. They should also work with top management in co-ordinating the executive development program on a company-wide basis. The personnel administrator's function in executive development is ably expressed by Pigors and Myers:

The personnel administrator's function is to work with the line organization, especially top management, as advisor in planning organizational changes and in helping to devise a program which will provide maximum opportunities for the development and release of executive talents.

.....

Thus, the personnel administrator's role is to help all levels of management with their problems of developing their subordinates as they see them, rather than to impose his preconceptions about the organization and his solutions.<sup>2</sup>

The selection process should be so organized that the department heads of the departments through which the men will be rotated will be consulted. As the trainee is likely to be rotated to any department, and the respective department head will be responsible for supervising him, the department head will be interested in discussing the selection of the candidate. The department heads and representatives of personnel and top management can form a committee to meet at intervals to discuss the qualifications of the candidates nominated. The committee can also discuss the progress of those already in the rotation process. An

---

<sup>2</sup>Paul Pigors and Charles A. Myers, Personnel Administration: A Point of View and a Method, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956, pp. 116-117.

electric public utility has such a committee composed of department heads with a vice-president as chairman. The committee meets three times a year to make new appointments, to arrange new transfers, and to discuss the progress of individuals in the program.

Other companies which operate without such a committee may co-ordinate the selection function in the personnel department of the main office. A chemical manufacturer maintains records of exempt employees in the main office for the purpose of co-ordinating the executive development program, including the transfer of employees between divisions. The personnel administrators in the various divisions assist the division management with the operation of the executive development program within the division. However, the program for the entire company, including rotation between divisions, is co-ordinated by the main office.

The plant managers of many plants are actively interested in the selection process. In accordance with the premise that support for executive development should come from top management, the participation of the plant manager in the selection process is desired. An Air Force representative stated that senior management should be involved in the selection process if the program is to succeed.

#### SELECTIVITY

In the opening paragraph of this chapter, reference is made to the importance of selecting the correct men for job rotation. It is the writer's conviction that job rotation should be operated on a very

selective basis. Some companies are now approaching executive development on a very broad basis, including in the program all employees on a certain level. Job rotation should not be operated in such a fashion.

Job rotation is expensive as are most development methods; therefore, a company should rotate only those employees who need job rotation for their development. Some men may not need rotation, but some other form of development. Other employees may have reached their maximum level in the organization and may not profit from job rotation. It is obviously a poor plan to rotate a man who is to retire in three years.

Job rotation should be selective for other reasons. Only those men should be rotated who appear qualified to move from one job to another without making costly errors. Undoubtedly, there is no method known today which will guarantee in advance that a man can handle a particular job satisfactorily. However, men should not be rotated into jobs for which they appear unqualified just to have job rotation.

Also, there is a limit to the number of employees who can be in the rotation process at any one time without disrupting the organization. This subject will be discussed in Chapter V. It is mentioned here to point out that rotation should be selective because the number of employees who can be rotated is limited.

Finally, if job rotation is used for executive development, an attempt should not be made to develop all employees to be executives. Everyone cannot be president. Only those employees who appear to have the qualifications to advance in the organization should be included in

the executive development program. The program should be geared to supply the correct number of executives at the proper time.

A representative of a public utility stated that job rotation should be on a very selective basis. This same opinion was expressed by a factory manager of a heavy equipment manufacturer, a representative of the Air Force, a superintendent of a manufacturing company, and a personnel officer of a bank.

Riegel, in discussing comments made by companies with respect to job rotation, says they pointed out that only individuals who have shown outstanding ability and promise on their present work should be considered. He also says selection should be carefully made for a man who fails on a new assignment is not likely to be willing to return to his former position. The probability is that he will leave the company.<sup>3</sup>

A representative of a public utility raised the question that if you do not rotate on a broad enough basis, you may overlook an employee who, while only mediocre in his present position, might be exceptional in a different environment. This question will be considered in the following discussion of evaluation.

#### EVALUATION

If job rotation is to be on a very selective basis, what guarantees

---

<sup>3</sup> John W. Riegel, Executive Development: A Survey of Experience in Fifty American Corporations, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952, p. 284.

that the correct man will be selected? How can a company avoid overlooking some good man? At the present time, there are no sure answers to these questions. Selecting good men is not an exact science. However, much can be done to attempt to find the men who need rotation. The most acceptable means of accomplishing this task today is through periodic evaluations. Planty and Freeston, in answering the question, "How do you start job rotation?", list as point number one, "Use periodic evaluations to locate men who need the development or challenge that is best provided by rotation."<sup>4</sup>

Evaluation should begin when the man is first employed. Whether the evaluations are formal or informal, by the immediate supervisor or by a committee, employees must be observed if they are to be discovered as candidates for management and if they are to be developed. A management representative of a large public utility stated that job rotation was dependent on evaluation, first to find the correct man, and then to observe his progress in the program.

Employee interviews in connection with evaluation are also helpful in determining the employee's preference for job assignments. A management representative of a chemical manufacturing company stated that employee interviews in connection with the annual performance appraisal assisted the company in the job rotation process by facilitating consideration of the employee's preference.

---

<sup>4</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 82.

## IS HE INFORMED REGARDING THE PROGRAM

All persons interviewed in this study expressed the opinion that the man should be fully informed in regards to the job rotation program. The companies contacted, which use job rotation, discuss each move with the man prior to the assignment. However, the companies usually do not promise the man that rotation will result in advancement. The representative of a large bank made the comment that the man is told he is moved for development, the program is discussed with him; however, no promises of advancement are made. Other persons interviewed made similar statements.

Mace, in discussing interviews he had with executives regarding this subject, relates that:

Several executives acknowledged that they had erred in telling subordinates what jobs they would be promoted through and to over the years. When, for any one of many possible reasons, assignments to these positions were not possible for subordinates, ill feelings and disappointments followed. One executive stated that the only thing he tells subordinates now is that each new job assignment is a step of progress, and that the individual man must prove himself on that job in order to qualify for positions of higher responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

There is a valid reason why the participant should be fully informed in regards to the program. Job rotation is a development program, and development is basically self-development.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, if

---

<sup>5</sup>Myles L. Mace, The Growth and Development of Executives, Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, 1950, p. 100.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. ante, p. 10.

a man is to receive maximum value, he should enter the program voluntarily and enthusiastically. He should be in the proper frame of mind, feeling that the program is of value to him and to the company. To prepare properly the man for the program, the company should thoroughly indoctrinate him as to the reasons for the program, how it is to operate, the value to be derived, and what is to be expected from him.

#### AGE REQUIREMENTS

To some degree, the age requirement for a participant is dependent upon the purpose of the job rotation program. If the program is related to cadet training, the trainee will probably be between twenty and twenty-five; if the program is designed for lower management, the candidate will most likely be between twenty-five and thirty-five; if the program is designed for middle management, he will most likely be between thirty-five and fifty; and if the program is designed for upper management, he will most likely be over fifty.<sup>7</sup> However, the general opinion among those interviewed was that job rotation should be for younger men. Or, to express this matter differently, most programs are designed for younger men. A representative of a large public utility stated that most men selected were under forty. An operating division of a public utility has a minimum age requirement of twenty-five, plus the years in military service, and a maximum of forty years of age. This company has no

---

<sup>7</sup>Cf. ante, p. 19.

formalized program for middle and upper management personnel. The same company has an administrative training course for men with four- to seven-years' company service. A chemical manufacturer prefers to start rotating employees from the beginning of their employment. A heavy equipment manufacturer, in the process of planning an executive development program, would prefer to start rotation with employees of four- to five-years' company service. An electric public utility places the maximum age at forty-five and a minimum of ten-years' company service. This company's program can be classified as a middle-management program. A representative of a large bank stated that the average age of those in the rotation program was between thirty-five and forty-five. However, the bank rotates some upper-level executives above forty-five. A chain store organization begins rotation when employees are first hired and continues it through all levels of management.

Riegel, in reporting on interviews he made regarding eligibility for job rotation, says:

The companies made a number of comments with respect to eligibility for lateral promotion [job rotation] . . . . They thought that lateral promotion and transfers are particularly appropriate for adaptable men in their late twenties and in their thirties. Generally speaking, these men are not essential in their present assignments, and the jobs to which they are transferred are usually not critical ones. In these jobs they work under fairly close supervision. Because they are young, the benefits of the broader experience can be reaped by them and the company during a long future period. The salaries at these ages are not large, and senior executives are willing to accept men at these rates.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>Riegel, op. cit., p. 284.



Planty and Freeston in answering the question, "Should rotation start with junior or senior men?", say that:

Good programs of rotation start with the easy, simple movements and work toward the more difficult ones needed by mature top executives. It is unwise to begin with extensive rotation of top-level men and go down the scale. Start with juniors and when they grow in experience rotation will be easy for them.<sup>9</sup>

The Armed Forces begin rotation at eighteen years of age and continue it until retirement. Although their circumstances are not similar to those found in industry, they find it feasible to rotate men of all ages.

To summarize, programs are usually designed for men between the ages of twenty and forty-five because this period of a man's working-life is the most suitable for the rotation process. However, there are also advantages to be derived from rotating men above forty-five if there is a need for development which job rotation can satisfy.

#### EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The educational requirements for participants of job rotation programs can be directly related to the opportunity companies offer noncollege employees for advancement into the executive ranks. The present emphasis on college recruitment for the acquisition of managerial talent has lessened the chances of the noncollege man for advancement. College graduates who enter a company via the cadet training route have

---

<sup>9</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 80.

some advantages over noncollege employees. They are singled out somewhat as "crown princes" even though the company may make a special effort not to do so. The very act of participating in a cadet training program brings the trainee to the attention of managerial representatives, and if he has special qualifications, he will have a better opportunity to advance than the noncollege man in the ranks.

However, in a survey of fifty American corporations, Riegel found that practically all the companies are trying to keep open the channels of advancement from rank-and-file positions to first-line supervisory jobs. He found that practically all of the companies warned against utilizing any single source of candidates for preparatory training. The companies indicated that a preference for college graduates as such has a damaging effect on employee morale and tends to set up class barriers between junior executives and their subordinates.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the companies contacted in this study make provisions for noncollege employees to participate in their job rotation programs. A large chain store organization has a program for promising noncollege store employees in addition to their program for college graduates. The noncollege employees participate in weekly courses of study in addition to rotation. Their program is very similar to the program for college graduates. An operating division of a public utility will place promising noncollege employees on its lower management rotation program although

---

<sup>10</sup>Riegel, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

the program was designed for college graduates. An electric public utility, which operated a middle management program for ten years on a college graduate basis only, is now accepting some candidates from the noncollege ranks. A light equipment manufacturer has a supervisory training job rotation program in its manufacturing departments which does not discriminate between college graduates and noncollege graduates. One company contacted, a chemical manufacturer, excludes noncollege employees from its personnel development program.

It is the writer's opinion that noncollege employees should not be excluded from job rotation programs. It should be management's responsibility to encourage the development of all employees, and if the noncollege man has the desire and the ability to advance into management, he should be given the opportunity for development.

#### JOB STATUS

This study has not revealed any correlation between the previous job occupied and candidates selected for job rotation. Candidates are selected from all type functions and all type locations. The correct man for job rotation (or executive development) may be found in any job and in any location.

On some occasions, a capable man is not rotated because he is too important in the position he occupies. This is regrettable; however, the company has to make the decision of either giving the man needed development through rotation, or maintaining him on his present job. If the man

is not given the opportunity for development and advancement, the company might lose him. In the writer's opinion, if the man cannot be spared from his present job, he should be offered development through some other method. The company should immediately begin training a replacement for his position so that he might be released at a later date for rotation and advancement.

#### PROMOTION OR RAISE

Does the man selected receive a promotion and a raise when assigned to the new job? Some companies say yes; some companies say no. Some companies say a raise, but no promotion; some companies say a raise if practical. Some companies say that the man's usual salary increases continue during the rotational period.

Managerial representatives of a large public utility said that job rotation may be a promotion and a raise, and it may not. If the man is being moved to a job on the same level as his present job, the move will not be a promotion, and he will not receive an increase in pay unless one is due, based on merit. If the new job is on a higher level, and the man has the seniority and ability to stay on that level, then the move will be considered a promotion with an increase in pay.

A large chain store organization grants a salary increase with each transfer, plus merit increases while on the job. The transfer may or may not be a promotion. A rotational assignment in a large bank may or may not mean a promotion or raise. A rotational assignment in an electric public utility carries with it no promotion, but a small increase in

salary if practical. Job rotation participants in a chemical manufacturing plant usually receive an increase at the time of each new assignment.

It is appropriate at this point to answer the question "promotion or raise" with some semblance to order. The writer observes that in formal programs where the participants will rotate through a stated number of jobs on somewhat the same level as his initial job, remaining in each job a uniform period of time, the participant will probably receive his usual salary increases. On the other hand, if the program is informal, in that the participant is rotated to jobs of increasing responsibility as he develops and as such openings occur, each new assignment will probably mean a promotion and an increase in pay.

When a man is rotated to a job which is paid on a lower scale, his salary should not be adjusted to the new level. According to Planty and Freeston, reducing his salary might upset his living standard and prejudice him against rotation.<sup>11</sup> To prevent resentment, the men assigned permanently to the department should be informed regarding the nature of the assignment and the job rotation program.

#### WHAT IF HE REFUSES

What happens if the man refuses to participate in the job rotation program? Suppose he will not accept a job assignment? Will he get

---

<sup>11</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., pp. 87, 88.

another chance? These questions were asked the persons interviewed in this study. The consensus of opinion was that what happens depends upon the reasons why the man refuses to participate. If his reasons are valid, such as his health or his family's health, or schooling difficulties of his children on geographical moves, the man will most likely be given another opportunity. If his reasons are questionable, then he is not likely to be given another opportunity in the near future. Some companies try to cater to the preferences of their men as to what jobs they are assigned. This tends to reduce the number of refusals.

Refusals are more prevalent on geographical transfers. This is understandable, considering the difficulty of making such moves. A representative of a heavy equipment manufacturer stated that the refusal of the wife to move was the most frequent reason for men turning down transfers. He stated that the attitude of the wife is most important in geographical transfers. If she is unhappy, the man will probably be unsuccessful on the assignment. This subject will be discussed at greater lengths in Chapter VI.

In the writer's opinion, refusals to rotate should be considered most carefully. Maybe the man turns it down because the rotation plan has a bad reputation due to treatment of previous participants. Even if the man's reasons for refusing are questionable, he should not be forgotten. Management has a duty to encourage development, and this includes convincing men that they should take advantage of development opportunities.

Another opportunity offered at a later time might be accepted, resulting in a more capable and better developed employee.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ROTATION PROCESS

The previous chapter was devoted to a discussion of the prerequisites to be considered in selecting the man for job rotation. The discussion will now be directed to the policies and practices involved in the operation of the job rotation process.

#### PUBLICIZE THE PROGRAM

The rotation process requires the co-operation of the participants, the heads of the departments from which and into which the man will be rotated, and the employees in those departments. To get the desired co-operation, the program should be publicized throughout the company. The employees should be told the purpose of the program, how it is to operate, and what group of employees will participate. Some companies publicize the program in their plant organ, even to the extent of periodically publishing the names of those in the rotation process and the departments to which they will be rotated. Advance publicity of this nature advises those in the departments concerned of the pending arrival and departure of the men on rotation, and helps to insure the desired co-operation.

#### SELECTION OF THE JOBS

The selection of the jobs for the rotation process is usually the responsibility of the department head, if the rotation takes place within



a department, and a plant-wide committee, if the rotation takes place between departments. Assistance is usually rendered by staff personnel connected with the managerial development program.<sup>1</sup> Jobs should be selected which will give the participant experience and responsibility; development requires both. Considerable co-operation is required, especially, if rotation is between departments, for jobs can be created through retirements, transfers, quits, promotions, etc.

Some jobs can be designated as training spots, and men can be rotated into them regularly. The advantages and disadvantages of using jobs of this nature, such as assistant-to jobs, were discussed in Chapter III, and it would be repetitious to repeat them here.<sup>2</sup> If the designated training job is one requiring considerable responsibility and supervision, it should not be used continuously for rotational purposes. Planty and Freeston give some valid reasons for not doing so:

The job and its performance may have suffered by having a learner as an incumbent, and it may be necessary to give a permanent, or at least indefinite, appointment to a very able man who will bring the job and its performance back to normal. Moreover, employees or subordinates do not always like the idea of constant change in their boss. Sometimes they need and deserve the stability of a permanent boss quite as much as a trainee needs and deserves an opportunity to learn.

---

<sup>1</sup>Earl G. Planty and J. Thomas Freeston, Developing Management Ability: 600 Questions and Answers, New York, The Ronald Press Company, 1954, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. ante, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 87.

Selection of the jobs for the program should be directly related to selection of the jobs for the individual. While certain jobs or vacancies can be designated for general rotational use, the needs of the man should be the determining factor in selecting the jobs for his development. The responsibility for selection should be borne by the same individuals who select the jobs for the program, however, the prime responsibility should rest with the immediate supervisor. As has been indicated in previous chapters, the development of the subordinate is mainly the supervisor's responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

The immediate supervisor, with the assistance of staff personnel, should use the periodic evaluations of the man to determine the job or jobs to which he should be rotated. If possible, rotation should be planned in advance. With many people in the rotation process, each needing specific jobs for development, advance planning is necessary.<sup>5</sup> A large chain store organization usually plans an individual's development at least two years in advance. In all instances, the exact jobs through which the individual will rotate cannot be selected that far in advance, however, the general nature of the man's development is planned.

This discussion should not be concluded without pointing out that the selection process and the planning process must be subject to the needs of the business. The rotation process should serve its needs

---

<sup>4</sup>Cf. ante, pp. 9, 14.

<sup>5</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 81.

without unduly interfering with the normal operation of the business. Mace, in discussing this matter, says that, "any plan, no matter how carefully prepared, must be adaptable and subject to change to serve the exigencies of business operating conditions. One of the errors of preparing and administering a method of giving men progressively greater business experience lies in giving the movement of personnel a higher priority than the task of meeting the requirements of profitable management."<sup>6</sup>

#### FOLLOWING THE PROGRESS OF THE PARTICIPANT

The participant of a job rotation program should be paid, supervised, counseled, and evaluated. Who performs these functions? First, the participant is usually on the payroll of the department to which transferred. In most cadet training programs, however, the trainee is on a special payroll charged to training or to the administrative division. In regular rotational programs, designed for the development of lower, middle or upper management, the man is transferred to the payroll of the department to which rotated.

Supervision is the function of the supervisor of the department to which rotated. All companies contacted stressed the importance of the supervisor training the man. The success of the job rotation program

---

<sup>6</sup>Myles L. Mace, The Growth and Development of Executives, Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, 1950, p. 100.

depends on such supervision and training. However, in following a man in a rotation program, more is involved than the training he receives from his immediate supervisor. Someone should keep tabs on him to see that he makes progress, does not get discouraged, and receives his salary increases. Usually, a staff man connected with the management development program works with the immediate supervisor to perform these functions.

The man's performance should be evaluated at regular intervals by his immediate supervisor in conjunction with staff personnel, or a plant committee devoted to managerial development. As mentioned in Chapter IV, frequent evaluation is one of the keys to the success of job rotation.<sup>7</sup> It is somewhat futile to encourage development if the success of the effort expended is not measured.

The salary the man receives was discussed in Chapter IV.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of the pay plan the man is working under, the immediate supervisor's evaluation should be considered in administering the salary plan. However, he should not have to sacrifice financially because of participating in rotation. He should receive as much financial reward as he would have been granted had he stayed on his old job.<sup>9</sup>

In some companies, the man's original supervisor who recommended

---

<sup>7</sup>Cf. ante, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. ante, p. 46.

<sup>9</sup>John W. Riegel, Executive Development: A Survey of Experience in Fifty American Corporations, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952, p. 288.

him for the rotation program will follow his progress and assist him. In an electric utility, the sponsoring supervisor follows carefully the progress of the man, counseling and encouraging him, helping him with any problems, and rendering other assistance, even to the extent of following his pay increase progress.

#### TIME IN EACH JOB

The length of time a man should stay in each position in the rotation process is dependent upon the purpose of the rotation, the nature of the job, and the ability of the man to learn. Rotation, as used in cadet training or in special training programs, may consist of from several days to several months each in a series of jobs. The purpose of such rotation is merely for orientation, or to familiarize the man with the function of the department. In rotation programs designed for managerial personnel, the purpose may be merely to acquaint the man with the problems of the job, and he might spend several months at this task. In another situation, the man might not only be expected to know the problems, but be expected to solve them. Here, the length of time in the job might amount to from one to two years. If the man is to receive his development by assuming full control of a job of considerable responsibility, the length of time might vary from one to several years.<sup>10</sup>

The length of time in each job might vary with the nature of the

---

<sup>10</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 93.

job. Jobs vary in complexity and in responsibility. Some jobs require technical skills which, if not possessed by the participant, have to be learned. Other jobs require the learning of a vast amount of details. In supervisory jobs, considerable learning time is usually required for the man to establish a proper relationship with his subordinates.

The ability of a man to learn is another factor determining the time in each job. Some men naturally learn faster than others. Also, men are more inclined to some jobs than to others. Some men like sales work, and are more qualified for sales work than for purchasing work. These men might require less time in a sales job than in a purchasing job. The ability of the man to learn is also affected by the skill of the teacher. Supervisors vary in the ability to teach, and this is a factor to be considered in determining the time on each job.<sup>11</sup>

Companies differ in their policies regarding length of time in each job. Some companies have a definite time period for all rotational assignments. An electric public utility, which has a middle-management program, specifies one year in each job. A light equipment manufacturer has a program of four one-year assignments in its engineering departments. An operating division of a public utility specifies a minimum of eighteen months in each assignment for a lower-management program. Whereas, these companies have established a fixed period of time for each assignment, other companies vary the time. A chain store organization varies the

---

<sup>11</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 86.

assignments from one to three years. A large bank varies its assignments also. A representative of a heavy equipment manufacturer stated the length of time might vary from two to five years.

In the writer's opinion, except for rotation of an orientation or familiarity with the job nature, it is difficult to specify in advance the time in the job. Unless the man's ability to accomplish the task in time can be determined in advance, the time in the job should not be specified. The man should be reassigned when he has learned what the company assigns him, and when another assignment is available. The man's progress in the development process should be determined by constant observation and frequent evaluation by his immediate supervisor assisted by staff personnel.

A representative of a light equipment manufacturer stated that the man should not be told how long he is to remain in each assignment. If the man knows that his time in the job is of a certain temporary duration, he is apt to take only a superficial interest in his work. He stated that the man should be assigned on an indefinite basis, and even if the company knows the duration of the job, he should not be informed of the length of time. While this conflicts somewhat with the premise that the man should be fully informed regarding the program, it is not completely contradictory. The fact that this information is withheld will not be a disadvantage to him; it might be an advantage in that he is more likely to do a better job.

There is one other factor to be considered before the conclusion

of this discussion. When a company is using an informal method of rotation, it is often desirable to transfer a man to a new job when he gets stale on his present job, or when it is no longer a challenge to him. The time when this occurs varies with the man and with the job. The Air Force rotates certain officers every three years. An Air Force personnel officer said that such an arrangement serves a good purpose because a man gets too familiar with a job in three years; he gets stale; he needs a new challenge. A representative of a public utility stated that men on rotation should not stay in staff jobs longer than three years if they are to go back to line work. He stated that they "lose touch" with the line environment after three years in staff work.

Rotation of men who get stale on the job might serve as a substitute for a promotion. If such men become impatient because the company has no openings for promotion, a rotational assignment might suffice until a job on a higher level is available. Rotation can provide them with opportunities and challenge which may maintain their interest in their jobs and in the organization.<sup>12</sup>

#### RESPONSIBILITY ASSUMED

The responsibility assumed in rotational assignments is directly related to the purpose of the rotation. If the man is assigned only to observe and to become familiar with the function or department, he will

---

<sup>12</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 88.



be given very little responsibility. This can be contrasted with rotational assignments designed for the assumption of full responsibility for jobs of considerable significance in the organization. As the purpose for rotation and time in the job are directly related, responsibility assumed is also dependent upon the time in the job. Even the simplest jobs require a certain learning time, and the man must be assigned for a sufficient period to master the job if he is to assume full responsibility. Here again, the time necessary to master the job is dependent on the nature of the job and the ability of the man.

Rotation in connection with cadet training is an example where little responsibility is usually assumed. The assignments are only from a few weeks to a few months in duration, and the jobs assigned usually require very little responsibility. The rotational assignments of an operating division of a public utility are an example of assignments with more responsibility. Lower-management personnel are assigned for a minimum of eighteen months to such jobs as plant engineer, staff accountant, and sales engineer. The men must assume full responsibility for the jobs. Considerable responsibility is assumed by store managers of a chain store organization when they are rotated between stores; they assume full responsibility for the store on each assignment.

One criticism of job rotation for executive development purposes is that because the assignments are short and temporary in nature, the man will not be assigned full responsibility for a significant job.

Urwick raises this criticism when he says:

Succeeding assignments are usually much too short for any but superficial results to be apparent. Because they are short and everyone knows they will be short, managers hesitate to entrust important matters to such a trainee . . . . Job rotation exposes the individual to a variety of experiences and conditions, but it does so somewhat artificially at the expense of the direct challenge of the job. And it is the direct challenge of the job, coupled with skilled and sympathetic guidance, which constitutes the really "practical" part of the experience to which a developing executive may be submitted within a business organization.<sup>13</sup>

In the writer's opinion, this is a valid criticism. If job rotation is to be an effective tool for developing managers, men should be assigned to jobs of full and significant responsibility, and of sufficient duration for the man to learn from the responsibility assumed.

#### PRODUCTIVITY

How productive is the man in the rotational assignment? Or one might ask, how productive is any man in a new assignment? However, there is some difference between a man in a new assignment, and a man in a rotational assignment. The man for rotation should be selected for his superior qualifications and his ability to advance in the organization; he should be above average.<sup>14</sup> Thus, he might be expected to learn rapidly. However, regardless of the learning speed, time is required to learn any job, and even with experienced men, learning time is partly nonproductive. Therefore, the man on rotation is not fully productive until he has learned the job.

---

<sup>13</sup>Lyndall F. Urwick, Management Education in American Business; General Summary, Part 1, Management Education for Itself and Its Employees, American Management Association, New York, 1954, p. 85.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. ante, p. 36.

Some persons interviewed in this study estimated that the learning time on the average job in lower and middle management is between two and six months; others estimated it to be between six months and a year. If, for the purpose of this discussion, it is assumed to be between two and six months, then the man is only partially productive for his first two to six months on the job. This assumes also that he is properly selected, that he is given responsibility, that he is well supervised, and that he applies himself diligently. If the rotation program is properly operated, these conditions will be present.

However, there are other factors to be considered. One purpose of job rotation is to give the trainee experience in functions or departments with which he is not familiar. Because of this unfamiliarity, he is apt to be less productive at first than an employee promoted into the job from a lower level. This disadvantage might be partially offset by his being superior in general qualifications and ability. Also, once a man has gone through several rotations, he is more adaptable, and has less difficulty in acclimating himself to a new assignment.<sup>15</sup>

#### COST OF JOB ROTATION

The cost of job rotation is difficult to estimate for it is directly related to the loss of productivity during the learning stage. If six months is required to learn the job before the man is fully

---

<sup>15</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 79.

productive, the cost of that particular assignment is the productivity lost during the first six months. However, if someone has to learn the job the man was rotated from, additional costs are incurred during the learning stage on that job. Thus, the cost of making one rotational transfer can be the loss of productivity during the learning stage of two jobs, the job rotated from and the job rotated to. But, if the rotational program is organized properly, the assignment the man is transferred from will be used for the development of his replacement. For the purpose of this discussion, we will assume that the original job is used for development purposes.

The representative of a public utility stated that the cost of a rotational assignment is twenty-five to fifty per cent of the first year's salary. A light equipment manufacturer, that is starting a rotational program for lower-management personnel in its engineering departments, plans to charge the first two months of each rotational assignment to training and the balance to the department to which transferred. This company is assuming that the two-months' charge to training is the cost of rotation due to the loss of productivity of the trainee during the learning stage. As mentioned previously, all rotation in connection with cadet training is usually charged to a training payroll or to an administrative payroll.<sup>16</sup> The representative of an electric public utility with a middle-management rotational program, stated that,

---

<sup>16</sup>Cf. ante, p. 53.

while he could not estimate the cost of job rotation, it is essentially training even though the men are partially productive during the one-year rotational assignments.

Representatives of an operating division of a public utility, stated that rotation is not too costly in their lower-management program. They explained that as the men are young and have only a few years service, their salaries are low, more so than the men who would normally occupy the jobs which the trainees are rotating through. They estimated the cost to be twenty-five to fifty per cent of the first year's salary.

There are other costs to be considered. The mistakes of the learner can be costly to the organization. Also, the cost is high in terms of time and attention required of the supervisor to train and guide the trainee. Considerable guidance is required if the man is to learn. The values of rotation make it a profitable device, but it demands an initial investment by the trainee's supervisor.<sup>17</sup>

Rotational assignments are more costly if men are transferred between communities. The company usually absorbs the costs of transferring the man and his family and their personal property, and lodging and meals during the trip, as well as lodging and meals while the family is waiting to occupy their new house. Some companies reimburse the man for certain extra costs in connection with moving from one community to

---

<sup>17</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 88.

to another. Costs of intercommunity transfers will be discussed at greater lengths in Chapter VI.

#### NUMBER IN THE ROTATION PROCESS SIMULTANEOUSLY

How many men should be on rotation at one time? In the writer's opinion, this depends on the size and type of the organization in which rotation occurs. Rotation, by its very nature, is disrupting to an organization. When a man is rotated into a job, the job and its performance may suffer while the man is in the learning stage.<sup>18</sup> A larger load may have to be carried by the other employees in the department, and in particular by the subordinates and by the supervisor. Even the jobs on the same level with the rotational assignment may have to carry a larger load. If the department has to absorb too many men on rotation at any one time, the performance of the entire department may suffer.

Thus, larger organizations should be able to rotate more men simultaneously than smaller organizations for the disrupting element of more moves can be absorbed. However, the type of organization is another factor to be considered. A production department may consist of one hundred employees, but only eight of the positions in the department might be considered managerial positions to be used for rotation. The men occupying these jobs might be the only managerial employees in the department. This can be contrasted with an engineering department of one hundred employees where twenty of the jobs or employees may be considered

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

to be managerial. Surely, the engineering department can rotate more men in its managerial positions at one time than the production department. If four of the eight positions in the production department were assigned to rotation simultaneously, the department might not operate efficiently. The engineering department might absorb this number with comparative ease. This analogy may be made between other departments and between companies. The more managerial positions there are in a company, the more managerial employees the company should be able to rotate simultaneously.

Of course, the number on rotation simultaneously will also depend on the need for development and the extent to which rotation is the single method relied upon for development. Also, an expanding company should have a greater need for development than a company that is not growing. More future executives will be needed. An expanding company should also be able to rotate more employees simultaneously as more openings are becoming available due to promotions. Men can be rotated into these openings without disrupting the organization. In a company whose growth is comparatively static, it is more difficult to arrange rotation positions. If either an expanding company or a slow growing company relies on job rotation as the only method of executive development, more men will be rotated simultaneously than if other development methods are used concurrently with job rotation.

Companies contacted in this study were not consistent in the number of employees on rotation in comparison with the number employed. One company has 27,000 employees, including 3,400 in managerial positions.

This company has approximately 400 managerial employees on rotation simultaneously. Another company with 25,000 employees, including 2,700 in managerial positions, has rotated only 250 managerial employees during the past ten years. A retail store of a large chain store organization has 500 employees, including 70 managerial employees. At least 50 of the managerial employees are in some phase of rotation at any one time.

#### CO-OPERATION OF OTHERS

As was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the rotation process requires co-operation, the co-operation of the participant, the supervisor, and the employees. Publicizing the program helps to insure its success. However, the supervisor has to be sold on job rotation if it is to succeed. A representative of a public utility stated that the supervisor has to believe in rotation if it is to be effective. He said that you have to be sure the supervisor will train the man.

If the supervisor shares the responsibility for selecting the man and the jobs for rotation, he will be more encouraged to support it.<sup>19</sup> Planty and Freeston state that "unless he believes in rotation, has been a part of the group that planned and established it, and sees merit in it for himself and his subordinates, he may be resistant or uncooperative."<sup>20</sup> According to Riegel, supervisors are more willing to train

---

<sup>19</sup>Cf. ante, pp. 34, 50.

<sup>20</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 89.



subordinates when they know that higher positions are often filled by rotation. Ordinarily, when they train subordinates, they may feel that they are training competitors for their jobs.<sup>21</sup>

Most companies contacted indicated that they incur no difficulty in getting the support of the supervisors. One company representative stated that they incur difficulty in getting supervisors to release men for rotation before replacements are available. This problem arises on geographical transfers due to the difficulty of filling two widely separated rotational jobs simultaneously.

Co-operation of employees refers mainly to the co-operation of subordinates in the departments in which rotation occurs. Subordinates are confronted with the loss of a boss and the acceptance of a new one. The subordinates have to carry a larger share of the work. They also have to accept gracefully the fact that they did not get the job. They may feel that the boss's job is being permanently reserved for rotation, thus denying them promotion. They are even called on to help train the new boss. Thus, the employees have to be prepared for the rotation of their superiors. They should understand the program and its purpose, and be informed in advance of the rotation of their superiors.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned above, maintaining employee support is related to the number of men rotated simultaneously. A representative of one company

---

<sup>21</sup>Riegel, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>22</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 83.

stated that too many on rotation simultaneously can demoralize the employees. They complain that they have to carry all the load. The level of supervision decreases, and subordinates, at times, have to by-pass the supervisor to get accurate information. Another company representative stated that well qualified subordinates are needed in rotation; they are necessary to support the man on rotation. Representatives of three companies indicated that the most difficulty is incurred with subordinates who feel they should have gotten the job. They stated, however, that this is not a big problem as such resentment is found in any system of filling openings. One company representative said that such opposition is a challenge to the man being rotated; it is part of his development.

#### IF UNSUCCESSFUL ON NEW JOB OR JOBS

Even though great care is taken in the selection of the man and the jobs for the rotation program, there are occasions when a man is unsuccessful on a new assignment or assignments. What is done with such a man? Companies contacted in this study do not all follow the same course of action. All companies were similar in one respect, the man is not fired. He is given another assignment, either his old job back, or another new assignment for which he is suitable. A large public utility sometimes assigns the man to the job held prior to rotation, and sometimes assigns him to a new job, depending on the circumstances. A large chain store organization makes an evaluation and assigns the man to a new position for which he is better qualified. A chemical company does not

assign the man to the job held prior to rotation, but tries to find a new assignment for which the man can qualify. A representative of this company stated that the unsuccessful candidate might feel frustrated, and that he can be better rehabilitated if he is placed in a new environment. If he has to face his old associates with a feeling of failure, he might choose to leave the company instead. However, a representative of a heavy equipment manufacturer stated that the man should be transferred to his old job.

Several of the persons interviewed stressed the importance of using extreme care in dealing with unsuccessful candidates. If the man is not properly counseled and carefully reassigned, he might leave the company. If possible, the man's preference should be considered in the reassignment. A chain store representative stated that if extreme care is exercised, the man will not be lost to the organization. This company feels that much can be learned from unsuccessful assignments. First, the man learns from such assignments; men receive training even from unsuccessful assignments. Secondly, the company learns about the man. The company can better determine the job for which the man is qualified, and this is one of the purposes of job rotation. A representative of a heavy equipment manufacturer expressed the same opinion.

It is the author's opinion that an unsuccessful candidate should be carefully counseled and reassigned to a new assignment for which he is qualified. Unless the man's failure indicates that he does not have managerial ability, he should be continued in the rotation program. A

man's failure in one job does not necessarily indicate that he will not be a successful manager. The man's failure should be used to find the job where he can contribute the most to the organization.

#### COMPLETION OF THE ROTATION PROGRAM

When the man has completed the rotation program, he might return to his original position, or he might be assigned to a different position. His destination depends on the purpose of the program. If the purpose of the program is to improve his performance on his present job, then he will probably return to it upon completion of the program. If, on the other hand, the man is rotated so that he might be prepared for a more responsible position, then he will probably not return to his original position.<sup>23</sup>

Most of the programs examined during this study were designed to prepare the men for more responsible positions, and upon completion of the program, the men are usually assigned to new positions, usually more responsible positions. In some instances, the men might remain permanently in one of the jobs to which rotated. In some informal programs, where men are rotated throughout their career, there is no definite duration to the program. Men continue to be rotated as long as they indicate they have the ability to advance, and as long as rotation will assist in their development. When a man reaches a position for which he

---

<sup>23</sup>Planty and Freeston, op. cit., p. 84.

is well fitted, and in which his services are needed, he may remain there for some time, maturing and getting ready for another horizontal rotation, or a step upward.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER VI

### PROBLEMS OF GEOGRAPHICAL TRANSFERS

There are certain problems peculiar to job rotation between plants located in different communities. On rotational assignments of this nature, the participants are faced with the problem of establishing a home for themselves and their families in the new location. There are costs involved in such transfers, both for the company and for the man. The participants are also faced with the problem of acclimating themselves and their families socially and culturally in a new community. The discussion in this chapter will be confined to some of these problems of geographical transfers.

For assistance in the discussion of these problems, reference is made to questionnaires answered by fifty middle-management employees and their wives who have been transferred frequently between communities. These questionnaires were obtained through the co-operation of a fellow student, John H. Mitchell, who utilized them in a thesis entitled "A Survey of the Transient, Middle Management Family."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mitchell received the names of the families to whom he sent questionnaires from eight selected companies who make frequent geographical transfers. Questionnaires were answered separately by the husbands and the wives.

---

<sup>1</sup>John H. Mitchell, "A Survey of the Transient, Middle Management Family" unpublished Master's thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957.

Some general characteristics of the families from whom questionnaires were received are as follows: The average age of the men is thirty-five. The jobs held may be classified as middle-management jobs, such as sales branch managers, or sales district managers, managers of small plants or assistant managers of large plants, etc. The families average 2.6 children, equally distributed between girls and boys. The families have averaged five intercommunity transfers in the past ten years. The men have an average of eleven years of service with their companies. The families have been in their present homes for an average of 9.4 months. The last intercommunity transfer for twenty-eight of the men was in connection with job rotation programs, while eighteen were transferred to get the right man in the right job. Further reference will be made to the questionnaires where appropriate to the discussion throughout this chapter.

#### COST OF GEOGRAPHICAL TRANSFERS

The major costs of transferring a man from one community to another are usually borne by the company. Such costs include expenses in connection with transporting the man and his family and their personal property, and lodging and meals while the family is waiting to occupy their new house. Some companies reimburse the man for certain extra costs in connection with moving, such as installation fees for telephone service, electric service, etc. Even though a company may have what appears to be a very liberal policy regarding financial reimbursement, the man usually

has to bear some of the expense himself. There are so many expenses incidental to moving from one community to another that it would be difficult to establish a policy to cover them all. For example, should the company cover the costs of drapes for the new home? To offset some of these incidental expenses, a chain store organization pays one-month's extra pay each time a man is transferred between communities. All companies do not have such liberal policies.

Another expense that the man usually has to bear is any loss incurred on the sale of his house in the community from which transferred. None of the companies contacted in this study reimburse the man for such a loss. An operating company of a large public utility does assist the man by arranging for bank credit while the man is in the process of disposing of one house and buying another. Some companies also assist the man in locating a house in the new community.

Responses to the questionnaires indicate some dissatisfaction with financial arrangements. In answer to a question asking what they disliked about intercommunity moves, nineteen of the fifty families listed as a disadvantage, the financial expense which they have to bear. In response to a question asking, "How fully do you feel the company has reimbursed you for all the costs involved in moving?", fifteen families indicated, "all out-of-pocket costs, plus something for many of the little things tough to keep track of but which add up"; twenty families indicated, "all out-of-pocket costs"; twelve families indicated, "only major out-of-pocket



costs"; and three families indicated that the company "did not meet major out-of-pocket costs." In response to a question asking what changes they would like to make in their employer's transfer and moving policies, twenty families stated that they would offer assistance in financing the new house, and six stated that some type review of the economic situation was needed. Mitchell concludes that "many parents, particularly the husbands, felt that the costs of moving imposed a burden on the family's finances even though the employers do foot most of the bill."<sup>2</sup>

The financial costs to the company of transferring men between communities appear to be considerable. The cost to move a family across the country can amount to as much as \$1,500, without the reimbursement of some of the extra costs mentioned above. As was noted in the discussion of geographical rotation in Chapter III, some companies are so concerned with the costs of intercommunity transfers that they do not make geographical rotations of executives at junior levels, but rotate only members of middle management who are willing to move. However, it is also noted that some companies transfer all levels of executives between communities.<sup>3</sup>

#### PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

One major criticism of rotation involving intercommunity moves is that the participants and their families do not take an active part in

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Chapter VI, (page number not available)

<sup>3</sup>Cf. ante, p. 32.

community affairs. It is said, that as they know the duration of their stay in a community is of a temporary nature, they have a tendency to refrain from active community participation. An Air Force personnel officer said that this lack of participation is a disadvantage to geographical rotation. He also said that the families who do take an active part in community affairs probably would even if not rotated. However, most families would be more interested in community affairs if they were permanent residents. A representative of a chain store organization indicated that nonparticipation in community affairs is a disadvantage to geographical rotation. He said that his company tries to combat indifference to community participation by displaying approval of employees who do participate.

Several questions on the questionnaires were designed to measure community activity participation. It should be noted, however, that a norm is not available with which to compare the degree of participation as recorded from the questionnaires. In the author's opinion, the level of activity of the families questioned appears to be below normal for families of their states. In this instance, however, the author would prefer that the reader draw his own conclusions:

**Religious activities.**

Twenty-eight of the husbands and thirty-one of the wives indicated that they attend church "quite regularly." However, participation reported in any other church activities is negligible.

**Activity in civic or political organizations.**

Forty-five husbands and forty-four wives did not report any activity.

Voting in general election of November, 1956 (if eligible).

Twenty-six of forty-nine husbands eligible and twenty-six of the forty-seven wives eligible voted.

Activity in professional and fraternal organizations (including business men's clubs).

Twenty-three husbands and forty-one wives did not report any activity.

Activity in miscellaneous organizations, such as country clubs, athletic clubs, women's clubs.

Thirty-five husbands and thirty-one wives did not report any activity.

Participation in youth's educational organizations.

One husband and twelve wives reported participation in P. T. A. Five husbands and six wives reported participation in scout organizations.

Mitchell has the following to say regarding the families' participation in community affairs:

Participation in community affairs by this group was low. Although church attendance was rather high, activities in other church functions was minor. The same was true for civic participation; activity was very meagre, especially on the husbands' part. Slightly more than one-half voted, the most perfunctory participation, in the 1956 general election. Attention to church and civic affairs is not very diligent throughout the population generally, especially among parents with young children. Nevertheless, this group, which has above average ability and sense of responsibility, would undoubtedly be more active if free from the discouraging effects of frequent moving.<sup>4</sup>

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD INTERCOMMUNITY TRANSFERS

What is the attitude of families who are required to make frequent intercommunity moves? In addition to the financial sacrifice discussed above, families who move between communities are confronted with the

---

<sup>4</sup>Mitchell, op. cit., Chapter VI, (page number not available).

problem of acclimating themselves to a new community. This can include establishing a new home, making new friends, enrolling their children in new schools, becoming affiliated with new organizations, as well as many other problems. Several questions of the questionnaire were designed to measure the attitude of the families to intercommunity transfers. In the writer's opinion, the response to the questions indicates a fair attitude; however, the reader should draw his own conclusions:

Thirty-six husbands and thirty-one wives indicated that moving from one community to another as they had done has "been good in many ways, and bad in a few."

The husbands and wives feel that their children are progressing satisfactorily in their educational, cultural, and social development.

Most of the families are pleased with their present house.

Forty-nine of the men feel that they have a good opportunity for advancement within their company.

In response to the question, "How free did you feel to accept or turn down your last intercommunity transfer?", eleven husbands indicated that they were "entirely free"; twenty-six husbands indicated that they were "free to turn it down, but felt turning it down might jeopardize future advancement"; and thirteen indicated that they were "obliged to accept to protect future advancement."

Twenty-four husbands and twenty-seven wives indicated that if career were no longer a factor, they would move "just once more"; twenty-four husbands and nineteen wives indicated that they would "not move at all." However, when the question was changed to "Knowing that your career has required you to move your family in the past, what do you hope will be your future rate of moving?", eighteen husbands and sixteen wives indicated, "every five years"; fifteen husbands and eighteen wives indicated, "just once more"; and eight husbands and wives indicated, "no more moves at all."

When asked, "Do you feel that it has been necessary for your employer to transfer you between communities as much as he has?", twenty-six husbands and seventeen wives indicated, "definitely yes"; nineteen husbands and twenty-three wives indicated, "probably yes."

When asked, "How much concern for your family's welfare do you feel the company shows when it transfers you between communities?", fifteen husbands and wives indicated, "quite a bit of concern"; twenty-two husbands and eighteen wives indicated, "some concern"; and thirteen husbands and seventeen wives indicated, "little or no concern."

In response to the question, "Taking everything into consideration, what would you say your attitude is towards the moving you and your family have done?", sixteen husbands and nineteen wives indicated, "very favorable"; twenty husbands and nineteen wives indicated, "somewhat favorable"; three husbands and six wives indicated, "completely neutral"; nine husbands and five wives indicated, "somewhat unfavorable"; and two husbands and one wife indicated, "very unfavorable."

Mitchell draws the following conclusion regarding the general attitude of the families toward the moving they had done:

The group's overall attitude towards the moving it has done was unmistakably on the favorable side. The parents, as a group, expressed this view initially; they maintained it, in balance, throughout the nine possible problem areas as well as in their final considered opinion. They stated a number of advantages to moving about the country. But, above all, they revealed both directly and indirectly that their instinct for social and economic progress outweighed the many disadvantages they readily ascribed to moving. The great American tradition of placing opportunity ahead of geographical or social stability endures in this group of families. Its record of mobility itself serves as proof.<sup>5</sup>

Riegel says that a number of men have been reluctant to accept intercommunity transfers because of the tight real estate market of recent years. Men do not like to give up satisfactory housing and face uncertainty and added costs in the new community. He also says that in some lines of business, executives who build good customer relationships dislike transfers to other communities where they will have to start anew.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>John W. Riegel, Executive Development, A Survey of Experience in Fifty American Corporations, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952, p. 293.

## SUMMARY

Intercommunity transfers are costly for the company, and can be costly for the man. Also, families who are frequently transferred between communities may not take as active a part in community affairs as permanent families. Intercommunity transfers can be difficult for families due to the adjustments which have to be made in each new community. However, in the writer's opinion, job rotation between plants in different communities is advantageous if organized properly. It is advantageous for a company to transfer employees between plants. The various plants can take advantage of the talents of each other. Also, interplant transfers tend to mold the organization into a more co-operative and unified venture. The personnel of each plant becomes more aware of the problems and purposes of the other plants, and thus, they become more aware of the problems and purposes of the entire organization. Intercommunity rotations help to develop the executive. Just as the adjustments, problems and challenges of a new job broaden and develop the man; the adjustments, problems and challenges of a new community also broaden and develop. The man and his family must learn to adjust their daily lives to a new environment.

To profit from the advantages offered by intercommunity transfers, the company should organize its program properly. The candidate should be carefully selected, for not only does the man need to have the ability to handle the proposed job; he and his family must be capable of adjusting

to a new community. Both the husband's and wife's preferences should be considered in making the assignment. The company should design its program to assist the man and his family in making the move. The company should meet all the expense, both major and minor, involved in moving. If practical, some method should be developed for reimbursing the man for any losses incurred on the sale of real estate. The company should assist the man in disposing of one house and locating another, and should also assist in other matters related to locating in a new community.

Intercommunity transfers should not be too frequent. In the writer's opinion, the family should be allowed to remain in each community for at least four or five years. If the company desires to rotate the man more frequently, he should be rotated to more than one job while in a particular location, if practical.

The company should encourage its employees to take an active part in community affairs. Such encouragement can be manifested in many ways: by sponsoring memberships in certain organizations, by allowing time off from work for civic activities, by publicizing employee achievements in community affairs through the plant organ, etc.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the advantages of job rotation, the disadvantages of job rotation, and the prerequisites of an effective job rotation program. Although some of the matters have been covered in preceding chapters, they will be repeated for the purpose of summarization. All of the conclusions expressed in this chapter represent the opinion of the author. Credit may have been given to another source when some of the subjects were covered in previous chapters, however, the conclusions reached by the author are the result of carefully considering all the opinions expressed by the writers previously referred to and the persons interviewed in this study.

#### EVALUATION OF THE JOB ROTATION METHOD

The evaluation of the job rotation method will consist of a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using job rotation as a method for developing managers. The discussion will refer mainly to job rotation as used for developing lower, middle or upper level management personnel, rather than to rotation used for orientation, such as in cadet training or in special training courses, or for purposes other than executive development.

##### Advantages of job rotation.

Job rotation makes use of the most important medium for the



development of men, the experience gained and skills learned from the day-to-day performance of the job. Men learn best from the experience gained by being responsible for a series of carefully chosen jobs.

Rotation makes use of another prerequisite of executive development; it allows men to develop themselves. Executive development must be self-development, and by applying himself diligently in a series of jobs, the man can develop himself.

Rotation can broaden the individual. It can make generalists out of specialists. A manager can do a better job if he has a broad knowledge of his department, his division, or his company. While technical skills are necessary in many jobs, a manager, to operate a complex organization effectively, must also understand the broad objectives, policies, and practices of the organization. Rotation can acquaint the man with the functions and departments of the organization, thereby giving him an understanding of the organization in its entirety. The man so trained considers his problems and makes his decisions more intelligently in the light of their effect on the operations of the organization as a whole.

Rotation can be an effective teacher of human relations. The man is confronted with different personalities in each assignment. He must learn to work with a different supervisor, different co-workers, and different subordinates on each job.

Rotation gives the members of the organization an opportunity to know the man. Department heads and other executives can become acquainted

with the man's interests and abilities, facilitating his proper placement in the organization. This same knowledge of the man by many persons in the organization can hasten the weeding-out of misfits for rotation tests the man's ability to perform on many jobs and to get along with many people.

Rotation affords several supervisors the opportunity of evaluating the man. One supervisor might incorrectly judge a man while the judgment of several supervisors might rectify such an error of judgment. Endorsement of a man by more than one member of management is always reassuring. Rotation can help solve "personality conflicts" between the supervisor and the man. It can provide the means of a transfer which might be more difficult if rotation is not used.

Rotation can assist the man in finding the job in which he can do best. It can provide the man with the opportunity of working in different jobs and different departments. It can reveal latent talents in an individual. The man who does poorly in one position might do well elsewhere. Also, a man might work better under one executive than under another.

Rotation can help create a more co-operative atmosphere in an organization. The movement of men between departments can help to overcome departmental rivalry and jealousy. It can help to give the employees an understanding of the problems and objectives of all departments. It can improve situations where the efficiency of the organization is being

impaired by the lack of co-operation.

Through rotation, the various departments or plants can take advantage of the talents possessed by individuals in other departments or plants. It can modernize the organization by periodically introducing new managerial viewpoints, eliminating any obsolete methods and practices, or stimulating the improvement of methods and practice. Job rotation can break up cliques that form in various parts of the organization by the movement of men in and out of such groups.

Rotation can meet the needs of a man who is ready for a change; who is stale on the job. A man probably gives a job his best within a period of from three to five years, then he needs a change, new challenges. If such a man becomes impatient because the company has no openings for promotion, a rotational assignment might suffice until a job on a higher level is available. It can keep the man alert and growing. Thus, job rotation can substitute for a promotion.

Rotation can help men to build new or additional managerial skills. It can provide the type of working experience men need to round out their development. For example, it can facilitate line to staff transfers. It can increase men's adaptability. Simultaneously, rotation tests the men and provides an indication of which men are most suitable for senior executive positions. Job rotation can establish a number of channels of advancement to the higher positions in an organization. The company can build up a reserve of qualified people for senior management jobs.

Job rotation permits the man to work under several bosses. He has

the opportunity to learn something from each boss for each may have different attributes and abilities.

Rotation can be an incentive to the employee selected for the program. It is a form of recognition of his abilities and his performance on previous jobs. It can keep his morale high, and can encourage him to continue to perform.

Intercommunity rotations also help to develop the executive. Just as the adjustments, problems, and challenges faced in a new job can broaden and develop the man, the adjustments, problems, and challenges faced in a new community can broaden and develop.

#### Disadvantages of job rotation.

If job rotation has so many advantages, why is it not used by every company to train managers? First, job rotation is an expensive method of executive development. Men on rotation can make costly errors. Men on rotation are not fully productive while they are learning the job. Some companies find it difficult to locate one good man for every job. To deliberately transfer a man who is doing an efficient job and bring in a green replacement is foreign to the nature of a cost-conscious operation. The company has to train the replacement; it has to train the man rotated. This expensive training can be avoided by not moving anyone. For some companies, it is the line of least resistance. Some companies would rather try some other method of development which will keep the man in the job. Individuals have basic talents which qualify them for certain jobs, rather than for others. Some companies would rather keep

men in jobs for which they appear best qualified than to rotate them for development.

Geographical rotations are particularly expensive. In addition to the costs connected with job changes, the company has to absorb the cost of moving the man and his family from one community to another. Such costs can discourage companies from using intercommunity transfers even though there may be advantages to doing so.

Effective job rotation is dependent on good supervisors to train the men rotated. If supervisors are not qualified supervisors or teachers, the men may not learn, or they may be taught incorrectly. Rotation also depends on a strong organization. Subordinates have to be well qualified if the man is to be supported while he is learning. Supervisors and associates have to be well qualified if they are to help carry the load while the man is learning. Rotation is difficult if the company does not have a strong organization to support it.

If supervisors are not completely sold on rotation, the company can incur difficulty in rotating men. The boss dislikes seeing a good man transferred out of his department. He most likely has trained the man. He would rather promote the man vertically in his own department than to lose him to another department. He also dislikes seeing another man rotated into his department to fill a position. He would rather promote one of his own men to the position. He would rather work with his own men.

Rotation might be superficial training. If the man is not given

responsibility for jobs of some importance, he might get only a smattering of many fields or functions, and not develop any particular managerial skills. If he does not remain in the jobs a sufficient length of time to assume responsibility, he might only acquire knowledge as an observer, and not skills as a performer. He might develop into a "jack of all trades and a master of none." If the program is not properly organized to give the man responsibility and sufficient time to use it, the supervisor might be reluctant to entrust important matters to the man. Also, the man might feel that he is on somewhat of a vacation, and not apply himself diligently.

If men for rotation are not chosen on a very selective basis, disadvantages can develop. Some companies may not rotate their best qualified men because they are too important in their jobs. The rotation of the second-best men can be demoralizing to the better qualified men who are left in their jobs. Also, the organization will lose faith in the program if it feels the men on rotation are not well qualified. The employees will not give the program proper support. If the men for rotation are not carefully selected, or are chosen on a very wide basis, supervisors might get the idea the program can serve the purpose of transferring undesirable employees. Department heads will try to unload their "headaches" on another department.

By being selective in choosing men for rotation, or any other method of executive development, "stars" are created. The men chosen for job rotation are "marked men." They are chosen because they show promise,

however, their selection will most likely create jealousy and resentment. The morale of the men not chosen will most likely be damaged. Older men might be demoralized and resentful. Subordinates might feel that they should get the jobs the men are rotated through. The men chosen might not get the desired co-operation; they might even be sabotaged. The company can make the mistake of choosing the wrong men. The company can miss choosing some good men. The men chosen might be disappointed if they are not given the opportunity to advance. They may feel that they are guaranteed a senior manager's job. However, all of these disadvantages are inherent to any system of choosing current management's successors.

Job rotation can disrupt an organization. If too many men are rotated simultaneously, or if rotation assignments are handled in a haphazard fashion, the performance of the job and the department can suffer. Subordinates can become demoralized because they have to carry all the load. They can lose confidence in the job rotation program and in the man rotated. They may feel that they have to go around the man to get accurate information. Also, they may feel that they are being denied promotion into the jobs used for rotation. A constant influx of men with different ideas into a department can lead to a constant changing of methods and policies which in itself can be demoralizing.

If the man in the rotation process is not properly guided and counseled, he may develop a sense of not belonging. He may feel that his rotation was the result of his not doing well on his previous assignment.

He can even be lost to the organization.

Men who are rotated may not be interested in training their subordinates. If the time in each job is short, they may be so involved in learning that they do not have the time, nor the knowledge, nor the inclination to train others.

Intercommunity rotations have disadvantages. The families so rotated may have to bear a part of the expense of moving from one community to another. Such moves tend to disrupt their daily lives. They may not be given an opportunity to establish their "roots" in a community. As they know their stay in the community is of a temporary duration, they may not be interested in actively participating in community affairs.

#### PREREQUISITES OF A JOB ROTATION PROGRAM

The following discussion relates to what the writer feels are the prerequisites of an effective job rotation program. As in the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of job rotation, the prerequisites to be discussed relate to job rotation as used for developing lower, middle, and upper management personnel, rather than to rotation used for orientation, such as in cadet training, or in special training courses, or for purposes other than executive development.

A job rotation program should not be contemplated unless it has the approval and support of top management. A rotation program should be a program of prominence in the organization. It is costly to operate. It requires the support of the supervisors and many of the employees. If



top management does not actively support the program, it is doomed.

Some staff person or persons in the organization should be designated to co-ordinate the program and keep it active, alive, and operating properly. Even though the program is supervised by a committee of department heads, a co-ordinator is needed to help resolve the many problems involved in selecting the men and the jobs for rotation, and in following the progress of the men on rotation. He is also needed to keep the program from "bogging down." The co-ordinator will normally be a representative of the personnel or managerial development department. He should have the unqualified support of top management.

As mentioned above, the program requires the support of the supervisors. They have to be sold on it. They have to assist in selecting, training, and evaluating the men. The program also requires the support of the employees who will work for or with the men being rotated. The program should be fully publicized. It should be given a measure of prominence or distinction in the eyes of the employees. This may encourage their support.

Men should be chosen for rotation on a very selective basis. Only men who display ability and promise should be chosen. The prime responsibility for selection should rest with the supervisor or department head to whom the man reports. If rotation is plant-wide, the department heads or supervisors should form a committee to discuss the proposed candidates. Assistance should be rendered by the co-ordinator from the personnel or managerial development department mentioned above and representatives of

top management.

The man should be fully informed regarding the program. He should not be promised a promotion, but he should know the purpose of the program, and what is expected of him.

Men of all ages can be rotated for development. However, the most suitable period of rotation appears to be between the ages of twenty and forty-five. A formalized program can best be organized for men between those ages. Rotation on an informal basis can be effectively used for men of all ages.

The program should be organized to include noncollege as well as college men. It should be management's responsibility to encourage the development of all employees.

The man selected for rotation should not suffer any financial loss or other benefits. He should receive as much financial reward as he would have been granted had he stayed on his old job.

The man should accept rotation voluntarily. Refusals to participate in the rotation program should be considered most carefully. The man should be given another chance at a later date, if practical.

The selection of the jobs for the program and for the man should be the prime responsibility of the department heads in which rotation occurs. A committee of department heads should be used if rotation is plant-wide. The co-ordinator from personnel or managerial development and representatives of top management should participate. The needs of the man must be the determining factor in selecting the jobs for his

development. His preference should be considered in making job assignments. If practical, his development should be planned a couple of years in advance. His progress should be followed very closely. This should be the prime responsibility of the supervisor with the assistance of the co-ordinator and the plant committee mentioned above. The man should be evaluated frequently to determine his progress, the progress of the program, and the next phase of his development. He should be counseled frequently. The supervisor should be responsible for his training.

The man should be assigned to jobs of full and significant responsibility, and of sufficient duration for the man to learn from the responsibility assumed. Rotation of an orientation nature can be used if it is required for a particular phase of the man's development. However, to build management skills, the man needs the experience of full performance in a responsible job. The time in the job depends on many factors; one year should probably be the minimum and five years the maximum. Job rotation can be more effective if a definite length of time in the job is not specified. The man should not be reassigned until the purpose for rotation has been accomplished.

If the man is unsuccessful on an assignment or assignments, he should be carefully counseled and reassigned to a new assignment for which he is qualified. Unless the man's failure indicates that he does not have managerial ability, he should be continued in the rotation program. He should not be returned to his old job, but should receive a

new assignment, if practical.

The number in the rotation process simultaneously should be limited to the ability of the organization to absorb them without unduly affecting the morale of the employees or performance of the departments. A particular job should not be used continuously for rotation if supervision is involved, or if the job entails considerable responsibility.

Intercommunity rotations should be carefully planned. The candidate should be carefully selected for he and his family must be capable of adjusting to a new community. Both the husband's and wife's preferences should be considered in making the assignment. The company should assist the man by meeting all expenses involved in moving from one community to another. The company should also assist in other matters related to locating in a new community. Intercommunity transfers should not be too frequent. If practical, the man should be allowed to remain in each community for at least four to five years. The company should encourage the man to participate actively in community affairs.

#### CONCLUSION

In the author's opinion, job rotation is an effective on-the-job training method for developing executives. If the program is properly organized and operated, the advantages of its use far outweigh the disadvantages. Job rotation is expensive. However, so is any effective method of developing managers. The company must make the decision whether its need for future executives is sufficient to warrant the cost involved in developing them.

#### RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

During this study, the author has observed that various companies and governmental agencies are currently using job rotation. This has been determined both from the interviews and from the literature. While many types of organizations use job rotation, the formalized programs appear to be more predominately used in such organizations as public utilities, banks, chain stores and governmental agencies rather than in manufacturing companies. This assumption may not be correct; this study was not designed to survey all companies using job rotation. However, it may be that various factors such as the expense of job rotation, the organizational support required, the degree of specialization in the organization, and management's awareness of the importance of executive development, have caused nonmanufacturing organizations to use formalized job rotation programs to a greater degree than manufacturing companies. Further study should consider this question.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. BOOKS

- Doohar, M. Joseph, and Vivienne Marquis (eds.), The Development of Executive Talent: A Handbook of Management Development Techniques and Case Studies. New York: American Management Association, 1952.
- Drucker, Peter F. The Practice of Management. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1954.
- Mace, Myles L. The Growth and Development of Executives. Boston: Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration, 1950.
- Pigors, Paul, and Charles A. Myers. Personnel Administration: A Point of View and a Method. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956.
- Planty, Earl G., and J. Thomas Freeston. Developing Management Ability: 600 Questions and Answers. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1954.
- Riegel, John W. Executive Development: A Survey of Experience in Fifty American Corporations. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1952.
- Stryker, Perrin, and The Editors of Fortune. A Guide to Modern Management Methods. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1954.
- Whyte, William H., Jr. The Organization Man. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956.

### B. PERIODICALS

- Anshen, Melvin. "Better Use of Executive Development Programs," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 33, No. 6, (November - December, 1955), pp. 67-74.
- Argyris, Chris. "Executive Development Programs: Some Unresolved Problems," Personnel, Vol. 33, No. 1, (July, 1956), pp. 33-41.
- Bennett, William E. "Master Plan for Management Development," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 34, No. 3, (May - June, 1956), pp. 71-84.

- Blansfield, Michael S. "Executive Development: A Group Training Approach," Personnel, Vol. 32, No. 5, (March, 1956), pp. 441-448.
- Faught, Millard C. "The Need for Executive Versatility," Dun's Review and Modern Industry, Vol. 64, No. 2318, (October, 1954), pp. 31, 66-76.
- "Plenty of Men for Any Spot," Business Week, No. 1428, (January 12, 1957), pp. 164-168.
- Randle, C. Wilson. "Building Tomorrow's Management Today," The Management Review, Vol. 46, No. 1, (January, 1957), pp. 84-90.
- Sargent, Dwight S. "Executive Development Programs Using Job Rotation," Personnel Journal, Vol. 31, No. 11, (April, 1953), pp. 405-409.
- Spates, Thomas G. "What's Wrong With 'Executive Development'?", The Management Review, Vol. 45, No. 12, (December, 1956), pp. 1073-1080.
- Stolz, Robert K. "Getting Back to Fundamentals in Executive Development," Personnel, Vol. 30, No. 6, (May, 1954), pp. 434-444.
- "Three-Year Study Shows How Managers Are Made," Nations Business, Vol. 44, No. 3, (March, 1956), pp. 90-94.
- Van Delden, E. H. "Personnel Activities in 1960: A Forecast," Personnel, Vol. 32, No. 4, (January, 1956), pp. 294-300.

### C. PUBLICATIONS OF MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

- American Management Association. Management Education for Itself and Its Employees, Parts I, II and III, New York, 1954.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Strengthening Management for the New Technology. General Management Series, No. 178, New York, 1955.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Management Development: Key to Company Progress. General Management Series, No. 162, New York, 1953.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Fitting Management Development to Company Needs. General Management Series, No. 174, New York, 1955.
- National Industrial Conference Board, Inc. Company Programs of Executive Development. Studies in Personnel Policy, No. 107, New York, 1950.

Rowland, Virgil K. "Evaluating an Executive Development Method," Organization Planning and Management Development. Personnel Series No. 141. New York: American Management Association, 1951, pp. 23-34.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Progress to Date in Executive Development," Practical Approaches to Supervisory and Executive Development, Personnel Series No. 145, New York: American Management Association, 1952, pp. 3-19.

Worthy, James C. "Planned Executive Development: The Experience of Sears, Roebuck and Company," Practical Methods of Management Development, Personnel Series No. 137, New York: American Management Association, 1951, pp. 3-27.