

Productivity—Role Of Supervisor

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The prosperity of employees and the employer of any organization hinges on profitability of the same. The present high prices of raw materials, equipment and high cost of modernisation has made the situation more critical. The result is increased cost of the finished product and low profits. In the process small and medium scale paper units are sinking and big units are facing the challenge to fight it, to survive. In reality it is here the Managers, at various levels, in the organization are straining to pull up the productivity. That is to increase the output values in some way per input of resources.

The importance of methods of increasing productivity without adding investment becomes all the more greater when one thinks in terms not of labour productivity only, but of making the most efficient use of all resources taken together. Thus when we speak of productivity techniques they generally relate to those techniques which require little or no capital, but contribute to increase in productivity.

The Japanese are said to have 'almost perfected' this art of producing more things with the available resources. In every industry, however best it is managed, there will be several avenues either to improve the quality of the product or the quantity or both to increase the total output value by applying improved methods for the same inputs. In productivity, they say—"there is always a better way of doing a thing."

Several techniques are available to improve the productivity in industry.

- i. Work Study (method study and work measurement).
- ii. Organization and Methods (O & M)

- iii. Operational Research (OR)
- iv. Ergonomics.
- v. Systems Analysis.
- vi. Value engineering.

Lately a couple of new management techniques called :

- Objective setting for the unit (OSU)
- Return on Time Investment (RTI).

are gaining paramount importance in real time and cost savings methods.

An instant means of increasing the production and profits is by working towards minimising wastes. Generally waste in industry occurs due to ineffective use of skills, materials, time, money and other resources everywhere in the organization. Through optimum utilization of materials machines and man power one can work towards Zero-Waste.

In an integrated pulp and paper mill it is needless to over emphasize the need to maintain uniform quality at every stage of operation for better runnability of Machines and good quality finished product.

Variations do occur however best one works. By making adjustments in the routine process it is possible to offset such variations, to achieve fairly uniform quality. For instance, studies on impregnation of chips (or two stage cooking) showed higher screened yield (3-4%) and lower knotted rejects, over conventional cooking. Such methods best suited, when there is variation in chip size, and in the manufacture of unbleached kraft papers.

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Likewise in the absence of cellulose preservative bleaching like dioxide, peroxide etc., use of inhibitors has great value in the Conventional C.E.H.H. bleaching. Fibre is protected from degradation and the bleaching losses are minimised. In the absence of such chemicals, the losses in bleaching can be anywhere between 10 and 18% depending on the degree of cooking and bleaching conditions.

Careful selection of refining equipment and optimum use of sizing chemicals, in stock preparation, adds to quality, quantity and economy.

Loading the papers to critical level, cutting down the converting and finishing losses to minimum, and periodic audit/analysis of down time, particularly in machine section are three principal areas to get the most, out of the least inputs.

Any amount of writing about the importance of conserving the utilities, fibre and chemical losses sounds superfluous.

It is said 'Economy is the art of making most out of life and things. The love of economy is the root of all virtues'.

It is here, the front line supervisor, who is a shop floor leader of a group of people, plays a key role to energize his team to achieve the said goals set before him. Understanding the human behaviour, putting it to practice is most important thing. Good human relations only can help implement any techniques aimed at higher productivity.

"On earth there is nothing great but Man :
in Man there is nothing great but Mind."

—William Hamilton.

Think of that—we must make men mindful of the importance of productivity because men matter most to get things work in Industry.

Three fourth of the supervisors' job lies in the field of maintaining good human relations. Every one must be a leader to be a manager of men. He should be able to win and retain the affection of his men. The personality of the Supervisor counts a great deal. This is the secret of success of the Japanese.

The surest way to succeed in the words of Swamy Ramathirtha : First win the heart, then appeal to

reason. Love might hope where reason would despair. The wind could not take the coat from the traveller in the fable, but the heat did."

To be a leader of men is not so mysterious a gift. It is direct result of knowledge and training. One who is sincere about this should not overlook the values of what he can learn by studying men including himself. The ability to handle people can be acquired. Leadership is the knack and tact of getting other people to follow and to do willingly the things wanted of them to do.

Men are successful by 'reason of humility' It is the weapon which enables a man of character to win over people. One must realise that every human being is actuated by certain motives (not necessarily monetary always). The supervisor has to know these motives, impulses or instincts and recognise the importance of understanding each employee as a separate individual. Equally important is, he must possess the greatest patience and self confidence so that people working under him have confidence in him.

Understanding human nature is an art. Treat every employee as intelligent human being rather than a work-hand without a mind or intelligence. That develops a feeling of respect and sense of belonging. An atmosphere of approval and encouragement leads to continued good performance. After All, everybody likes a compliment, a little praise for thing well done. The deepest principle in human nature is the carving to be appreciated-by appreciation we make excellence in others our own property-However that does not mean flattery.

A good supervisor is a good listener. Unheard feelings unresolved problems, low self esteem and sometimes a sense of insecurity are factors that affect the health of an organization. Putting down a person or a group lowers his or its self esteem. Any thing heard and done to boost self confidence helps people bring out the best out of their lives. This improves the problem solving process in an organization and at the same time helps the employee and the group to take care of the emotional needs.

Getting down to people and listening to them is one of the most important principles that one should

follow-Says Prof. Hayes of the American Management Association.

In fact, listening is more important than talking. Sharu S. Rangenekar (noted management consultant) says—"This is probably why the good Lord gave us two ears and only one tongue that we should listen more than we should talk. He also made hearing automatic while we have to make an extra effort to talk." The fact is, there is nothing like an uninteresting subject. There are only uninterested persons. Effective listening can improve a supervisor's effectiveness amongst his superordinates, colleagues and subordinates-and the pay off is considerable. A great deal of learning and understanding can come through effective listening.

A group of behavioural scientists and psychologists from the USA found that the feeling that attention was paid to the employees has been seen to have a significant impact on their morale, motivation and performance.

Thus, such principles are practiced, if not mastered by the supervisors at various levels at all times they

can make the men working under them mindful of the objectives to achieve the productivity.

Once the supervisor becomes the true leader of men, he can create awareness, consciousness, sense of belonging and to do things willingly for the organization in which they are working.

Pareto's Law is—"20% of effort by men, gets 80% of results". Pareto was a famous Italian Economist (1848-1923). With that in mind, one might determine how to use unproductive, men, materials, machinery and time more effectively and beat Pareto's law.

Think of those innumerable tonnes of extra paper these people can bring out for the same inputs. The prosperity to the organisation and its employees, while contributing to the National Gross Product.

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