

.. or simply how (not) to manage your employees . . .

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Motivation

The book chosen is a French translation of the US author Scott Adams. The title “*Méthode ultra secrètes pour diriger une entreprise*” appealed to me because it seemed not only cynical than also very provocative.

Most of today’s literature in this field propose “new and disruptive” methods how to manage people. Some of this books work with a simple story in order to illustrate the subject as e.g. the Bestseller “*Who moved my cheese*”<sup>1</sup>, meanwhile others present old methods simply repackaged, adding new soundly management slang, and promote it as the ultimate and new state of the art about how to manage people.

Therefore the question arising is whether there is a unique theory or book explaining best what is going on in our companies and what might be the best approach ? The answer might be, that there is no general rule about people management for different reasons:

- national and cultural differences
- different generations and values
- different environments and dynamics
- different opinions
- different objectives
- different manner to communicate
- and many more ...

So what to do if you have to manage people ? Using related literature can be an excellent tool to give you an overview and the use of basic principles. Any knowledge acquired this way is useful but needs to be backed by own learning and your growing experience.

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<sup>1</sup> A simple story about 4 personalities reacting differently on a changing environment. Unfortunately most of the readers identify themselves with a completely different personality described then they are perceived by their colleagues having read the same book ...

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Considering that writing a book about how to do it is not easy (more precisely: impossible) sometimes reversing<sup>2</sup> the problem can be useful. The book presented here uses such an approach by not giving you any solutions than rather telling you what you should (not) do in order to be successful.

As it might be typical for human beings, comparing ourselves with the superiors described in the book, it is really easy to judge things having occurred to others. The same criticism is valid for many case studies used for learning purposes: not “walking in one others shoes” makes it really easy to analyze and extract something happened in the past. For this reasons taking a reversed approach by asking what went wrong and what should not be done, is a less sophisticated manner to see things. Even though what was bad for one problem must not be simply bad in an other case.

In order to take maximal gains out of others experiences, a main problem remains by having an outcome and by finding the “key drivers” which led to the outcome. The fact that none two situations in life are the same, is often perceived as to be a threat rather than an opportunity.

If theoretical principles and experiences of others are required, what more can be useful to manage people ? A further important key in my opinion is intuition. Intuition can be described as associations and learning’s you might not be able to describe, but they are there somewhere in the darkest corner of your brain. Often intuition is expressed by people as having certain feelings about a specific situation. For many people intuition is not a skill nor a positive attribute of managerial skills<sup>3</sup>, meanwhile for others<sup>4</sup> intuition seems to be the only way of decision making. As for many other aspects in life, the questions might not be if intuition is good or bad, than rather how to use it and how to balance it with your other skills. Anyway intuition can be very useful to get the feeling for situations requiring a special treatment and being more sensitive than usual. Individuals going new ways often are driven by an intuition to question the existing and dare to do simple but efficient things which can not be found yet in any of the “Bestsellers” on the market.

One further important aspect, often neglected, can be identified reading the authors book: common sense. As intuition, common sense is either proclaimed as to be the real managerial skill or simply defeated by others as an excuse of not having the required managerial education. Without going to far, let us assume that this skill is one of many others and the real skill is to balance between this skills.

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<sup>2</sup> In Management terms use the expression: “re-engineering a problem” (sounds better, even if the problem might be still unsolved ...)

<sup>3</sup> often for strongly rational people

<sup>4</sup> often people not having any management science education or knowledge

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A further important point about managing people might be your own ethical values<sup>5</sup> and our own persistence by living them. To bring it up to the point: never force somebody to do something you would never do on yourself. Under this perspective ethics is highly linked to respect and is not a matter of your status or position rather accepting that everybody has its own personality and specific skills which are unique. As we will see later, the book described in the following has two main links to an ethical perspective about managing people. First of all employees are not just part of the income statement as wages & salary expenses and second employees can have very high skills<sup>6</sup> which should be used for the wealth of an enterprise instead as being perceived as a threat of your own position.

Finally there is an answers describing best the opposite perspective than described in the book:

There are no bad employees, only bad superiors and (un)fortunately you always get the people you deserve ...

## 1.2 Author

Adam Scott is a US author well known as the creator of Dilbert. His comics about the daily business and fights in companies are sold worldwide with over 140 millions of readers. The ideas for Dilbert's "adventures in the jungle of the employment" and this book came out of Adam Scott's own experiences in many different companies over the past years.

Even if Adam Scott's experiences are related mainly to the United States they have a lot in common with the problems faced anywhere else. The reason for this is simple: all of the companies worldwide have something in common, namely that they are managed and run by human beings ...

Even though many of his episodes might be typical for enterprises in the US, there are many episodes which have been lived in Swiss companies too. As a part of his great success, Adam Scott receives a daily flood of about 350 e-mails. Let us hope that this experiences will allow him to write a "global version" of Dilbert and to learn about more pitfalls, we all know about but we continue "performing" them – either by purpose<sup>7</sup> or simply because of ignorance ...

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<sup>5</sup> business ethics are often described in the corporate policy of companies simple due to the fact because everybody is doing it

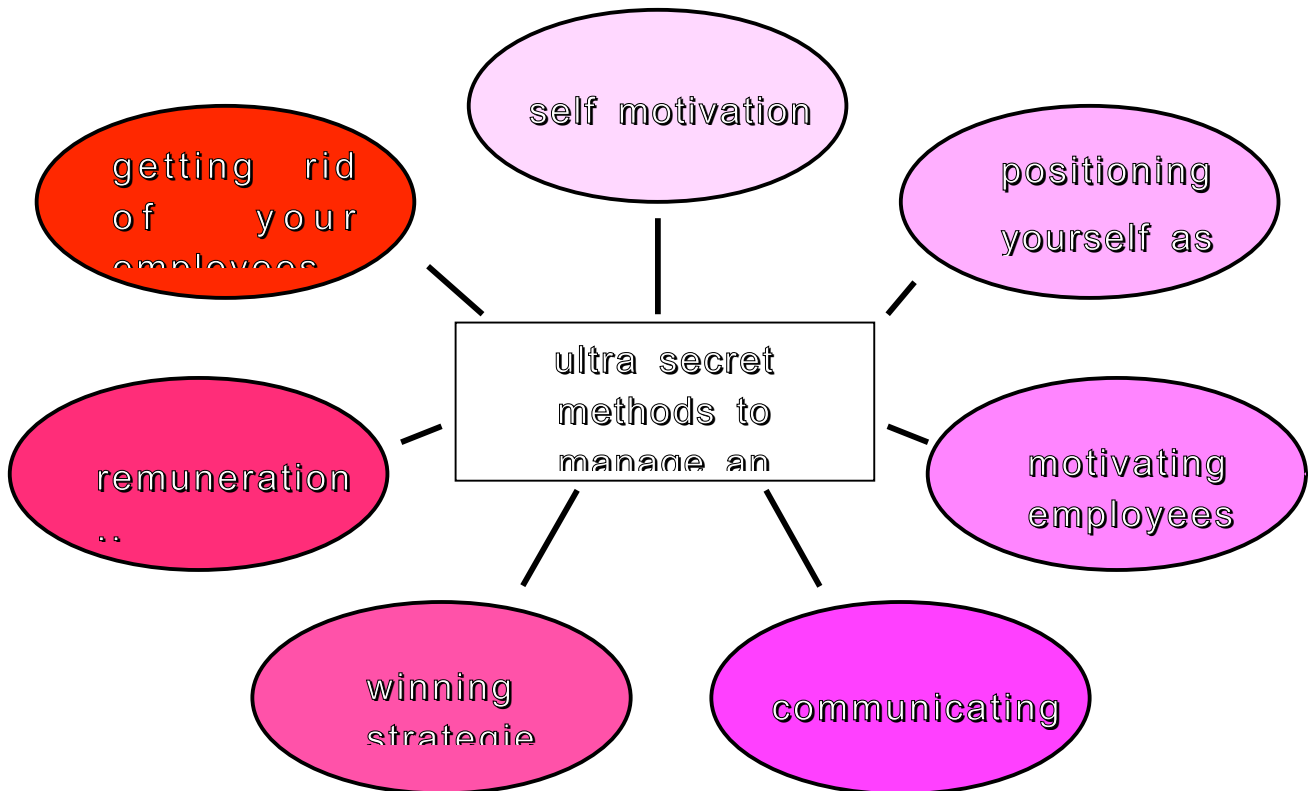
<sup>6</sup> that may be you might not have in an area

<sup>7</sup> not all of the proceedings are wrong. Only because the outcome is bad does not mean that the approach or intention was bad than rather the way to achieve did not work (implementation problem)

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1.3 book content

The book content is based on 7 main pillars as illustrated below.



The first pillar of your success is to get yourself motivated because only a motivated superior will be able to motivate employees. The main source for managerial self motivation following the author is to find your own freedom. We will only follow this path shortly at the end of this critical note, because following the authors tips & tricks “will automatically lead you to a high self-motivation”.

The second pillar relates to the positioning<sup>8</sup> of yourself, or more precisely how to sell yourself in a successful manner. In order to be respected as a manager a few simple rules as your outlook, physical appearance and behaviour have to be followed. Furthermore as a manager you will have to know about “the managers dilemma” :either you are active and take decision which can be dangerous or you just decide to do nothing. Doing nothing has to be excluded because you will be fired. Therefore the golden rule proposed is to do a mix of both paths by doing nothing that matters but making it look like as if you are a “real manager”.

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<sup>8</sup> in the following we will start using the principles proposed in the book as e.g. using managerial or marketing expressions because they are soundly and give the opportunity to show our own knowledge of the issue and that we understood the book content ...

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The third pillar addresses the questions about how (not) to motivate your employees. Different tools are proposed by the author, as evaluation of job satisfaction and employee performance measure, rewarding and promotion. A very important point developed is the appliance of the “micro management” which is a “very powerful tool” with an infinite numbers of victims witnessing the efficiency of this practice.

The fourth pillar is about what a manager should know about communication and how to use it. Considering communication can be dangerous, basic and simple principles have to be followed in order to be successful. Meetings are part of communication and therefore the reader has to understand its purpose, application and (miss)-use.

“Winning programs” have been initiated in many companies and therefore can not be neglected anymore. The author presents his ideas as the fifth pillar of his “ultra secret methods about how to run a company” being the first author really breaking this approach down to the bottom line of a company. Under the aspect of micro management the winning strategies presented relate mainly to your own success as a manager, which, as we will learn from the 1<sup>st</sup> pillar, is essential for the managers self motivation and finally the driver for the 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar (employee motivation).

The sixth pillar is dedicated to the remuneration and the (miss)-use of shifting employee objectives in order to reduce wages & salaries expenses<sup>9</sup>. Promotion promises are important for the employees motivation (3<sup>rd</sup> pillar) e.g. to work overtime without any compensation. Furthermore the question of the sense and use of employee training needs to be addressed. Looking one level higher, manager have to adapt their business in order to keep pace with the fast environmental changes – reorganizations have to be prepared carefully to overcome employees reluctance and resistance against any changes. In a complex environment a manager needs help from outside as typically provided by consultants. To get the maximal return of a consultant you need to have a basic knowledge how to evaluate this proposals for your own objectives and targets.

The seventh and last pillar is essential, because nobody of us likes to fire employees. In order to avoid a bad reputation there are different ways about how to proceed. To (miss)-use the HR department for this purpose needs a few basic understanding about their function, objectives and the people working at HR. Finally to hold the moral of the employees (after downsizing) the author proposes different approaches.

In the following chapters the main pillars described above will be described more detailed and own experiences as well as knowledge be used to draw a conclusion.

Finally the book relates mainly to a superior-employee relationship. Considering that companies are more complex than described by two levels, shows the need of an adjustment (to make it much more complex than it already is). The authors approach transformed<sup>10</sup> us into a “reversed world” which will require at the end a backwards transformation into the “real life”. We will address this issue by our comments to each section of the 7 main pillars and at the end by disclosure of the “missing link”

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<sup>9</sup> sometimes cost center reductions achieved will be crowded out by the cost center manager’s bonus increase ...

<sup>10</sup> Do not panic, there will be no formulas ...

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providing you the source of a useful tool how to react verbally to the “management methods” presented by the book.

## **2. Position yourself as a manager**

### **2.1 The 2 ways of management**

In a perfect world managers mission would be to fix objectives and to allocate resources required for their realization. Unfortunately we are not living in a perfect world and many superiors managing people are facing a striking problem. What should they do related to their skills and capabilities ? The author states that most of the superiors having to manage people are not capable to cover the job requirements. Therefore the only alternatives for managers are either to do nothing or just to do nothing but to make it look like if they would do an important job for the prosperity of the company. Doing nothing can be excluded because even if the superior’s superior might be incapable, he will fire you.

So the only way out of this “managerial dilemma” is the 2<sup>nd</sup> alternative proposed. The author develops different points to be proactive and make things happen in order to be recognized at the top management level. The book delivers different possibilities to be proactive, such as renaming your department, multiplying your monthly reporting, making organizational changes, office dislocations, creating missions statements, work distribution reorganizations (by hazard), creating pie-charts and last but not least practicing the micro management. The micro management is an important technique applicable on most of the main pillars of the book.

As per Adam Scott, it is essential to keep the distance to your employees. You can achieve this by being diplomatic and by using a management slang to impress the employees. If people think you are smart nobody will ever dare to question your point, even if you might be completely wrong. Following this points the underlying message is that employees are stupid and any familiarity would be immediately miss-used to get a salary increase.

Underlying motto is, that you should anyway not be irreplaceable, because if you can not be replaced in your job you will never be promoted. This conclusion might drive you to the dilemma of not knowing what performance as a manager is appropriate. Performing well and shopping outside of the company might work but what if you want to be recognized in order of being promoted in your actual company? A possible solution for a career in your company, considering you performed well<sup>11</sup>, can be networking by selling your ideas at the right places and at the right time. The authors reply on this proposal would be simply that your superiors (remember they use all the same tricks) would miss-use your ideas (as being part of the 5<sup>th</sup> pillar: winning strategies) for themselves. In such a case you might really shop for a new job if you still want to make career.

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<sup>11</sup> which is a completely reversed approach then the one chosen by the author

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As the author indirectly states, most of the employees are not stupid. In their free time they build houses, tune cars, manage small sport clubs or just are the treasurer of the local motorcycle club. Keeping the distance will not allow you to know about their additional skills, their interests and talents. Unrecognized employees skills at work do not only lead to a low employee motivation than can have a severe impact if people might leave a company. Take the example experienced in the mechanical manufacturing industries, where the quit of a “simple” employee welding brackets on a hopper caused severe damage to a whole production unit. We will not speculate about this costs, because doing so would be simply confirming managers theory that everything can be valued in money.

## **2.2 The look and personality of a decision maker**

The author states that the outlook of someone managing people is essential and be a good actor very useful. The tips given are about how to put empathy in your look in order to give the message that if all logic would be vanity – do not forget, if your employees would be smart, they wouldn't work for you anyway.

Dress yourself in compliance with your status and position. The author states that the status of manager is due to his position and his outlook. As Kings, Caesars or Pharaohs in the past its more than that: true, your status puts you in a position of status, but be aware to give your subordinates an insight of your life because else the would find out that you are common human been as anybody else. Fortunately we had the French revolution in the past and enlightenment.

Modern manager need more than just a high IQ. Instead empathy (part of EQ) is a crucial skill. Any empathy will let you recognize about the reasons of your employees to follow you, and as awareness is always the first step for improvement. A person with high ethical values and always demanding more from himself than from others, will never be satisfied by the fact that others just follow because of his status and position.

Therefore, different than the author states, respect has to be gained and is not an initial gift. In order to gain recognition the only path goes through the heart and the ratio of an individual. This is enabled being consistent as a person: “Say what you do and do what you say”. This is completely different then the authors statement claiming that you can do whatever you want as long as you are active and in case of troubles just declare it was a misunderstanding.

Different experiences made in the past showed that sometimes people coming from the bottom (being promoted) have a higher need for status than people with a higher degree of education. Often this is caused by the fact that such managers former colleagues know them and to overcome “this deficiency” the newcomers start to behave different. This can be explained partially by the same effect as for people in the past with high status holding people on distance. In this cases distance is perceived as being the only possibility to keep the position. Additionally to the cynics in the book we would even add a further malice: “being promoted and climbing up the ladder you should be nice with everybody – latest on your way back down you will need to pass this people again . . . “

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One of Scott Adams main points of the book are meetings. Due to his recommendations meetings are not a forum to communicate, discuss problems and make decisions, rather than a modern alternative for work. Following the author, meetings have been invented for incapable managers to hear themselves speak and sell themselves. Unfortunately where somebody holds a speech somebody else needs to listen – a fact that can lead to many “unproductive” hours. Any questions from people not having fallen asleep should be avoided or replied in a managerial manner using non-understandable management slang. As observed under different circumstances, people can invent even new words. Nobody will never ask you about something he did not understand, because this “lack of knowledge” would show your incompetence by doing so. It needs a high self confidence and self awareness simply to admit not having understood something or simply admitting that a specialist knows more about an issue than a generalist. Latest studies for Managers in different countries showed this interesting trend: more and more people do not believe that a good manager has to know about everything. An interesting proposal made about avoiding decision makings in meetings by disappearing before the decision has been observed several time in the industries. As described already, decision making can be dangerous for your career because you can shoot yourself easily in your own foot. So what to do to bring people to like making decisions ? As a possible answer we suggest different drivers as an open company environment supporting people who want to make decisions, skilled managers with the required education and intuition not having any fear about failing – because finally “only a person who risks is free”. For all not being interesting in decision making, even if paid for decision making, the author delivers solutions as not being precise and determined, defining the groups such as the are kept to busy to hold even meetings, by systematically asking for more informations, by loosing documents waiting on your approval or as always the best excuse, just declare that your decision depends on a preceding<sup>12</sup> other decision to be made.

Beside technical skills the author suggests that a manager needs to have minimal technical office skills as using the current IT tools etc. Applying our rules and experiences, we have to admit that this should not be considered a useless proposals. Often top managers in the industries do not use communication tools such as e-mail etc. on a regular basis which simply cuts their communication from the company. Often this people are the same praying that employees have to keep pace with the technology or even that older and experienced people’s salaries should be cut after the edge of 50 years (because of “fall in productivity as a matter of not keeping pace”). On the other side nobody expects the CEO of Daimler Chrysler repairing his own car only because he manages a car manufacturing company. Everybody would understand this by just assuming opportunity costs being to high – even not knowing at all what this is. As we see again, many things in life must not be studied to understand them as well: simple common sense works as well.

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<sup>12</sup> even for that we can find a managerial expression: call it “postponement” (out of managerial planning or operations management)

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Essential for a manager is the fact, that a secretary will manage your schedule. And as the recommendation from the author you should always do what she tells you to do. Ironically he states too, that you do not have to mind because a managerial task can not be measured because it is intangible. As the outcome, it is recommended not to work more because the salary will not be affected. Use your secretary as well to keep your employees on distance. In the case you can not avoid a confrontation use your managerial power which allows you to apply management physics: redefine time, space and any rule if required to speed up the productivity of your employees and to reach your targets.

Your employees are your only “real assets” and from this perspective giving is better than only receiving. Vice versa from an employees perspective the companies would all be the same paying almost the same for the same tasks performed: so where lies the difference ? Employees are judging companies not only for the salaries they receive then rather balance other returns such as working environment and climate. The main motivation has to come from superiors behaving as examples and finding always time for the needs and problems of their employees. The same as we spoke in this sense about “human assets” this approach can be seen as a “human investment” in your employees. But differently then in the book, listening is most of the time not enough. To lead people means to like people and its related interaction: different then ironically stated in the book, your employees are not the means to achieve their superior’s goals rather than to contribute to the companies prosperity. Proceeding this way and subordinating superiors own targets to the companies targets can bring different levels in alignment and employees being successful for the company indirectly strength your position finally too as being their superior. This proposal is as well in alignment with not stealing employees ideas to sell them as yours, because finally it must be the company to profit from the creativity of its members. If the company does well, their superiors will do well too as the labor force will. A successful change management<sup>13</sup> practice needs to address the problems related to the above approach. Should your company, differently then you might, not reward this vision, you are free to leave the company at any time you want.

### **2.3 establishing an environment of trust and confidence**

The key success driver for a leader is to gain his employees confidence. The author suggests different proceedings and strategies to be applied. He suggests that lying is not an obstacle for an environment of trust, because your employees will anyway never find out (“smart lying”). For the worst case that the “environment of confidence & trust” method does not work you can, at any time, change to terror and intimidation. The author states, that applying this method is almost risk free: considering employees are anyway only interested in their salaries and not in the achievement of personal goals and satisfaction, a good working climate and fun would not be required. This thinking might be applied at many average or bad doing companies and especially in periods of downturns might be effective in intimidating employees about their jobs. The only problem is that to achieve you need people who feel free because only a person who risks is really free ...

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<sup>13</sup> unfortunately often confused with brain washing and other programs which might be an opportunity for company outsiders to make some money ...

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## **2.4 The leadership**

Meanwhile “to manage” means in the authors opinion to use the human resources to serve the company, leadership means to use the human resources to achieve your own goals. To inverse the proposals made, lead by being an example. To demonstrate your positive thinking use slogans such as “there are no problems – only solutions”. The problem will be simply that you will shoot yourself in the foot. If your employees are able to solve problems etc. on their own, why should your company need to pay you for further services ?

Further more the book states managers misuse of the definition about a leaders motivation role: Leadership as the art of bringing people to make things they do not want to do and to persuade them that their well-being depends on it and is good for their intellect and spirit ? As already mentioned earlier, the “golden rule” must be not to force anybody to do what you would never do yourself.

## **2.5 How to identify a potential leader**

This subject is very delicate because nobody is interested in forming and supporting potential replacements for yourself. The authors point of view starts with the fundamental question of how to find or identify a potential leader. Once more the book proposes to proceed ironically 180 degrees opposite of what can be called “best practice”. First of all you need to look for somebody you can relay on and use for your purposes. Often this kind of “high potentials” can be identified very easily because this kind of employees might imitate you because they might believe in your charisma or even think that you are an idol.

To bring the books content up to the point, we can say simply that first class people will always hire first class people meanwhile second class people will always hire third class people. Employees threatening (not even on purpose) their superiors are often mobbed, dislocated or even classified as overqualified. As usual in life, most things are relative and therefore statements as “over-qualification” are a shifted perception and might mean that the superior is not enough qualified. This becomes ridiculous especially if the superior hired the “overqualified” employee himself: either the superior hired the “overqualified” person himself<sup>14</sup> or the company is not capable at all levels to interact with people and find potential “nuggets” useful for the company.

Leadership means too to accept your employees higher skills (e.g. technical skills) and even though, instead of being afraid, to make them even better. Having complementary skills allows leaders to be involved and finally to learn from their own employees. An other problem are people becoming leader blocked on their former function level and now responsible for employees doing what they did before. This often leads to the “micro management”. This notation is used many times by the author and is simply the fact that superiors mix themselves up in all of their employees details in order to control the things they think to understand. Micro management applied by “leaders” has a bad impact in two senses.

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<sup>14</sup> do second class people hire first class people as well or is it simply the statistical fact that even a blind chicken finds a corn from time to time ?

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First, employees are disturbed and demotivated by their superiors high involvement and second, and maybe even worse, the superior does not the job on his level as he is supposed to do. As the punishment of the “innocent” is an important task in every company, the question arises who is responsible for that mess ? To continue in the provocative manner of the book we suggest a simple, but effective explanation. As we already stated, there are no bad employees: on all levels this would mean that theoretically on all levels the next direct superior has to be made responsible. Therefore is a bad superior responsible for what he does, or even what he does not ? Or is it even the one that promoted this employee ? Even if our hypotheses might work in some cases, there is more. Promoting people is often based on the peoples past performances on their preceding job but leadership might require other skills ...

### **3. Motivating employees**

#### **3.1 Evaluation of the job satisfaction**

In order to increase employees satisfaction, the author suggests to run an employee satisfaction inquiry but to neglect the outcome. Considering this can be very painful, you should chose carefully your questions to prevent your employees from being “negative”. Asking the “right” questions you can even lead them to the answers you want to hear! Although an employee satisfaction inquiry is an important tool, the author agrees about its limitations for example never doing it after a downsizing or declaration of a zero adjustment of the wages about inflation because employees would not be objectively in such a case. Even though the intention of running such an inquiry could be a useful thing and being part of serious managerial approaches as for a Balanced Score Card<sup>15</sup> it is always difficult to measure intangible aspects.

We suggest here a time shifted approach as trying to create a good working climate and the companies prosperity first and then start to measure on a regular base the employees satisfaction. In the same category we often see new managers “introducing” the employees proposals routine but not taking the time at the different levels to evaluate the proposals made and giving a feedback. As a conclusion, this proceeding with measures or with the opportunity to influence the companies future are nice but if not applied seriously an obstacle for every further approach of any kind targeting into the same direction of continuous improvement and learning. Therefore you should not shoot all your bullets without targeting or in different words it is not only important “to do the right things” you also need to “do the things right and at the right time”.

The author also proposes to join training courses made for the “motivation of decision makers” – this courses are normally hold outside and cover the topics such as how to make your employees work harder by even paying them less or why is the moral of your employees that low ? The real value of such courses is identified to be somewhere else: especially employees are very motivated because during the absence of their “decision makers” they have the opportunity to be productive and their motivation finally is going up ! Unfortunately this is only for a short period of time.

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<sup>15</sup> “The balanced score card”, Kaplan/ Norton: compare the “learning and growth perspective”

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Often the simplest things are the most efficient by starting with small changes for your employees but unfortunately this message seems to be too simple as to be transmitted during this course.

We agree with the author that employees can be motivated partially by giving them long term objectives, the only problem is what are these objectives and how to link them finally to your own goals. Our opinion about the alignment of company wide goals were already given earlier so that we do not need to restate. Interesting about the book's content is that it includes many points and aspects of Maslow's pyramid of human needs. At the top of the pyramid are wages & salaries and other promises like promotions, which means that employees would be only interested only in material assets. Scott Adams suggests that this is not a problem as long as the employees do not reach the pyramid's top. Employees complaining about their salaries need a higher workload. As per our experiences, there are more efficient possibilities to avoid any salary increases (even if only inflation adjustments) as for example the statement that cash flow of the company has decreased, only low inflation forecasts, restructuring costs and many more. Many employees might not be disappointed only because of salary but often about the manner the message is given. Especially to underline are in such situations the manager's compensations which increase, following the motto that part of what you economize at the employees level is due to the great job managers did and therefore managers need to be compensated for that.

### **3.2 Rewarding people**

The author suggests to use your talent to make compliments because this will make your employees happy and more productive even if their work performed is waste! For the employees doing well and in order to motivate them and to recognize their corporate value you should make them gifts (mainly with the company's logo on it). Scott Adams has a special name for these activities: "operation medal of chocolate". As per his "opinion" managers should think the ways "one stone, two birds" and follow this rule: the reason behind these activities must be that employees which are rewarded are motivated to work even harder and on the other hand his jealous colleagues will be motivated to work even harder too. Practicing this method you should avoid other incentive systems, e.g. such as stock option plans, and take care not "to inflate" the value of your reward system.

A further important issue are promotions of employees, which should never be fixed. The writer's idea behind is very simple. Promotions will be used this way to keep your employees running in order to get the promotion: do not mind, as a superior you will always find an excuse to postpone the promotion and even maximize the company's profits by having people working harder for the same amount. Sometimes you need to promote somebody just to keep this system functioning. In such cases (mainly after employee's complaints) promote an employee, but give him a new worthless function as e.g. team leader and assure him that in his new team he has already the highest salary. As already mentioned "laying smart" is very useful and in this case you should know that the promoted employee will anyway not have access to the salaries of his team because of his low function. The second advantage of such a promotion (team leader) is that you can increase the team leader's workload even more by delegating part of your own work.

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Following the authors cynical approach that employees are mainly to be viewed as cost, he recognizes that a “few” employees are motivated by monetary incentives. Even though he suggests on one side to give small premiums only and on the other side corrects that this premiums should be at least as high as to avoid any “annoyances”. As for the rewarding system by small gifts the number of employees that will receive a premium must be limited: else the value of a premium might be “inflationary” and might loose attractiveness to bring people to work even harder. The real problem with premiums is that every employee believes to deserve a premium. To solve this problem, management needs to steadily redefine the objectives of its staff and doing so, can save billion of dollars every years world wide.

Considering you should not trust your employees, premiums are an appropriate mean to reduce the misuse of illness or even death in order not having to show off at work. To bring it to the top you should even prefer ill people coming to work because the risk of catching a cold is everywhere and therefore there is no secure place on earth not to get sick. If labor union power is weak you can even try to introduce a new policy that discounts day’s of absence from the person’s holiday account.

### **3.5 The skills of empathy and motivation**

Use your ability to do as if you would listen to your employees in order to gain their confidence. The author states that confidence and trust is essential. To achieve this goal you need to be able not only to speak than rather to learn how to listen. As typical for the US, the book recommends to make small talk: the best issue is always to speak about family – almost everybody has one. As often observed mainly in the US, for Europeans the American way of small talk is perceived as being very superficially held and anyway nobody will remember you the next day or even your name. The problem about speaking with employees relates mostly to disengage when you do not want to continue the discussions either because you have to hurry up to your next very important meeting or simply because you like your office. For this purpose the author recommends to make conversation at a certain distance in order to escape at any time you need.

As per our own experiences normally top executives enjoy speaking with employees once a year when the board members meet and managers and board members hurry through the company to admire the materials and work in progress laying around – even if none of them has a clue how the company is making money. As a manager, this is the right occasion to make a “calculated” stop at any work place an employee was to stupid to hide himself. Small talks and shaking hands has 2 main advantages<sup>16</sup>: first of all you show the board your social skills even after the 3<sup>rd</sup> downsizing and second the employees “feel” that you are a “one of them”. Do not bother about your past education teaching you that in order to be a real leader first of all you must like people and working with them.

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<sup>16</sup> remember: what ever a manager does it should follow the rule “one stone, two birds”

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Considering empathy and knowledge about people is important, you should force your employees even during their time off to spend their time together – if it works in Japan, why should this not do well for other cultures too? To motivate employees meeting during their time off even more, their boss should join as well. This way you will kill the only opportunity of a common ground between your employees – the one off making fun of their superior and to complain about.

Your soft skills allowing to understand and evaluate should also be used to allocate the right job to the right people. If not, never mind, tell your subordinates how important the job is: this will make them feel important and you will have a problem less. Applying this approach can be rather dangerous if you start delegating more and more task you are paid for. One day employees and superiors might find out that you are just “overhead” and living at their expense. In our opinion this can lead to a dilemma, because if you can not be replaced you can not be promoted in the future and everybody wants senior management positions without the stress of being responsible for subordinates. The dream jobs are CSO<sup>17</sup>, CTO and many other well paid jobs. Nobody, at least being as bad as yourself, will anyway dare to ask what your tasks are in the company. If you reach the level of CEO you will create your own positions for other people you like and do not mind during recessions to clay off people at the bottom line first.

### **3.6 Introduce the “challenge”**

Implement as much challenges as possible to keep your staff busy until nothing can be finished anymore or sell work load you want to get rid off as “a challenge” to be accomplished and delegate to one of your employees. Unfortunately this “recommendations” are followed by many companies. Most activities in companies meeting the challenge have different things in common: they are normally done at the wrong moment, at the wrong place and by the wrong people. People being skeptical are either eliminated or not part of the team because their important questions lead to confusion and destroy the dreams of management. To be even more cynical than the author we want to underline one of the most important issues that was not underlined enough in the book: funny programs “meeting the challenge” need funny names. Best practice per the book would even be to print the name of the program on T-shirts and distribute to the challenge team. That might be the reason why a smart guy invented an important position in any of such teams: the project sponsor. Normally the project sponsor is somebody from the management team: do not panic, you will not be made responsible in case of any failure – the one being punished is always the project leader. The project sponsor simply has to show off and demonstrate the importance of the project due to his presence. Sponsor means also controller for the costs: but again do not mind, because most of the companies have a budget for “challenge programs”. It is assumed by very bad individuals, that consultants spread the need for most of this programs. We do not support this theory, because everybody knows, that consultants do not play golf ...

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<sup>17</sup> joint staff position at the level of CEO as e.g. Chief Strategy Officer or Chief Technical Officer at Corporate R&D level.

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From our past experience we know different programs for a challenge, such as e.g. “Winner 94” made by a “winner team” or e.g. a project “gallo” by sending exclusive employees to a nice place to give them a special treatment first. Nothing in the company is save anymore if such programs are started: following and understanding the pareto-principle, the costs of the coffee machines becomes an important cost driver of your business neglecting that you should always outsource the cleaning women first ...

Very important for such modern management approaches are to break down barriers between top management and the employees. Doing so, you need to organize the staff to meet top level managers: employees will feel themselves important for the company and work twice as hard afterwards. As already mentioned, we “disagree” with the author in this point, because loosing the barriers bears the risk of employees getting behind your “success”. The author states, that if the executives are “real manager” they should not care because they should have learned how to treat employees (compare our statements about “listening to employees”).

### **3.6 Management by objectives**

From increasing importance is to fix the employees objectives. If you did not have already a program in the past to introduce what managers call “MbO” you simply have to wait until a new general manager is hired. If he does a good job, he will address this need first, even before having an overall new strategy for the company and breaking it down to the different levels. Having objectives, employees become tangible and you can blame them for not having achieved the objectives. Unfortunately the bug lays in the detail: people confuse vision and strategy. This might be the reason why many managers like sentences as “there are no problems – only solutions”, because indirectly they are stating that employees have not being capable of doing the managers job. This sentence is very useful at any management level, because it is fully in alignment with the hype of “think positive” and similar expressions.

The author goes even further than our approach. Scott Adams suggests even to ask your employees to come up with their own objectives. This sounds reasonable, considering that most of this objectives can not be evaluated even if they might be nice: using a mutual process of negotiating their objectives finally you will end up fixing their objectives. He states that objectives must be ambitious but “realistic” in your eyes. This can still work, considering that you will later on find many good reasons to change their objectives. Some managers might even hope to be promoted before the next performance meeting is due. Inversely, if you take over a new responsibility, you can excuse yourself not knowing about your new people and your precedent not leaving you any documents. Scott Adams proposal of asking your employees to fill out their own performance review can be found in many companies. Sometimes this is half of the employees evaluation, the other half being done by their superior: we strongly support this procedure. On the other hand we agree, that superiors only relying on the employees own judgement do not do their job well either because not finding the time to do some (time management?) or even worse, simply because not knowing about the tasks their people perform.

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Considering the self “assessment” of your employees, they might hope to get easily an increase in their salaries: to avoid such purposes, the author suggest to take the following corrections: explain them that their objectives achieved contribute only low the companies overall strategy, even if most companies have neither vision nor strategy. Sometimes explaining that the company faced a difficult year will do its job too. The hardest thing of any evaluation of employees is that managers have to speak with their employees. The reluctance of holding evaluation meetings is hard to understand somehow, because a fair and appropriate evaluation of the employees might also lead to a better feedback about your own work: this is only important if you really care about what you are doing ...

### **3.7 Rise profitability**

The book follows a simple approach about how to increase employees profitability. The main strategies to be applied are the slogan, the threat and working overtime without being compensated. As often seen in companies, you must put your slogan in large letters on the wall that everybody can see it and to motivate people to work more ( .. w/o paying them more ..). Differently the strategy of threat “motivates” people because workers might fear about their premiums, or in the “best case” even to loose their jobs. For the final one it is strongly recommended to choose the appropriate expression, because everybody is averse to the notation of working overtime: make excessive use of your workers overtime but simply be aware not to call it overtime.

Ignoring the different cultures, team work has become an excellent tool to improve efficiency. The author states that you can never excess the appliances of team work and if you hate your employees, or even want to get rid off them, announce a course “extraordinary team work”. Your employees will learn to know each other better, such as the colleagues weaknesses etc. and any solidarity will be lost resulting finally in a high productivity of your employees. Profitability is correlated to motivation, so in order to become more profitable you should motivate your employees by breaking down all barriers: but take care because normally one of their biggest barrier is nobody else then you.

One of the evergreens also used in management to motivate people and finally for improvement are employees proposals systems. Your employees are an infinite source of ideas, ideas that should come from you. Unfortunately employees want to share their ideas with you. This trade-off can only be solved by implementing a “program for ideas created by employees” but watch out and hide your real intentions. You can react on any ideas in many ways like explaining that just yesterday you had the same idea, or that it can not work for any simple reason, or even better declaring that if this idea would work others would have developed it already for a while.

In order for yourself to be efficient (and therefore “profitable”), you should rank your priorities. Scott Adams perspective has identified the reason for this need given by employees to be simply related to the fact that they want to work less. To prevent for this you can just simply declare all workload to have the same and naturally highest priority. This way whatever has not been done, you are able to find a responsible person having neglected his work.

### **3.8 Micro management**

The micro management is an art, practiced world wide with only small nuances but having always the same payback<sup>18</sup>. The book delivers two important aspects of the micro management, if your employees might think of you to be inefficient:

One off is called the “attitude”. The underlying thinking here is simply that your employees depend on you and else they would be lost. The second important point of micro management is called “application” and suggests you to control the details, because they are essential. Stating that anyway your employees might have higher skills than you in almost all fields, you should correct them for the work they performed. We see the micro management most of the times as the outcome of promotion policy in our society: who does well in his job is automatically expected to perform on the next higher echelon as well. It seems that even after years knowing that there are other skills than just IQ, our society still denies everything that can not be measured or even worse, a few individuals misusing the system because of knowing that their “real performance” can never be measured.

Micro management applied “professionally” is expected to be a main portion of high employee turn over rates. Especially for younger employees the generation gap can be multiplied many times and therefore can be very useful as an excuse to fire “bad” people without asking why they are bad<sup>19</sup>. The fundamentals laying behind the micro management is simply the fact that employees are not proud and want to perform well – they all need to be controlled. Control is very effective and necessary, especially if the cost of monitoring exceeds the cost you would lose otherwise. Somehow control can here be compared with quality management. Many people think of quality control just as controlling everything as people, machines etc. A new approach for quality management can be transformed to weaken the micro management. Quality control was defined by an excellent author only half off as to be monitoring what you are doing, the other half simply relates to the fact how you achieve the first part itself. Nobody with the aim to perform likes to be corrected: to correct people the way they accept a constructive feedback is one of the highest skills a superior can have ...

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<sup>18</sup> Neglect demotivation and lets be positive ...

<sup>19</sup> cause and effect are a hard thing to be distinguished in a more and more complex world

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## **4. Communication**

### **4.1 Verbal instructions**

In order to be able to deny later on your decisions or what you said, you must communicate verbally and avoid the written form. Unfortunately this has been experienced many times in companies. A similar way of not having to make any decisions is not to react on e-mails or phone calls – you are busy with something more important. To rehabilitate some managers we have to add, that the more IT is developing the less people really know how to communicate. This way e-mail distribution lists become very long and “everybody” is informed. Bad individuals might say, that in good times everybody wants to participate on decision making – in bad times nobody really does. Communicating means fix yourself and make mistakes visible. Often necessary changes are blocked by the fact that years ago a decision was made, which does not allow to change – as you might assume right, nothing written exists<sup>20</sup>. Managers are very busy and this way sometimes e-mails are answered up to a few months later. This leads some employees to suggest to sell the managers PC's<sup>21</sup> and instead installing a few bricks on their tables. A further advantage of modern communication technology is that you do not need to see somebody and the whole thing becomes less personal. Modern e-mail systems even provide you the opportunity to distribute blind carbon copies, means that your victim does not even know, that the battle started right now.

A further communication channel, mainly for larger companies, are the editing of newsletters: internal corporate journals allow the top management to address their message of the companies vision and strategy even if having none. To promote a newsletter choose a disposable employee but be aware then nothing is more demotivating then the truth. Referring backwards, newsletters are an excellent mean to announce and promote challenges and other programs important for the survival of the company. Avoid any words describing the real state of the company, except you need excuses as e.g. the bad economical environment<sup>22</sup> or exchange rates turned against you.

Give new employees the chance to present themselves and ask new managers after their first 100 days in the company about their vision – guess, everything is great, else they would have quit anyway when it was still easy to do so.

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<sup>20</sup> Not to hurt the quality management procedures requiring meeting protocols, you will be insured that somebody took notes, but we can not remember who it was ... may be he even left the company meanwhile ...

<sup>21</sup> in IAS-accounting terms this leads to a “gain on Sales of executive's PC's” (part of Income Statement, but describe it only in small letters in the foot notes)

<sup>22</sup> especially when all of your main competitors are investing in a boom phase ...

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## **4.2 Schedule meetings**

If your company has already a newsletter, do not mind, you can introduce something new as e.g. meetings. The reasons given by Scott Adams to do so are to inform people about things they already know, to give people a chance to speak about their own problems or simply to show their analytical skills. Always keep in mind, the main goal is to communicate and not to share information. The dangerous part is that your employees will misuse the situation by asking you about lay-off and re-organizations etc. In such cases you should deny systematically and tell them that you have no information so far.

Presentations given during meetings can give you the opportunity to hide your lack of knowledge and incompetence. The golden rule if you do not know what you are speaking about to let always some exit door open. As subjects to speak about you should choose areas with a “soft background” as Marketing. Every company has Marketing and choosing this subject you can show easily your orientation towards the customer. Mainly speak about segments and competitors, objectives for product improvement and many other points you like. An other excellent approach in our opinion is to use as much as possible management slang: but be aware, that is the reason why bad employees in Europe invented the “Bullshit Bingo”<sup>23</sup>. Again, the target is not to understand what people are saying, than to look smart. Any inappropriate questions of employees are replied by using “black rhetoric’s”, a very powerful tool in both senses.

## **5. Winning strategies**

### **5.1 How to make others ideas become yours ?**

As per the author it might not be usual for the employees, but sometimes they have good ideas. As already stated, the trick is to reject their ideas and later on present them as your own ideas. Different methods are provided about how to reject ideas. Tell your employees that if their idea was OK, somebody else must have had it already for a while or that it is to late and everybody else had this idea already. Use the physics of time and after a certain time present the idea as being yours: do not mind employees will not notice it because they are still under a shock.

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<sup>23</sup> The rules of the game are very easy: take a sheet of paper and draw a square divided into 5x5 cells. Write in each cell a managerial expression such as “benchmark” or “synergy effect” etc. Any time somebody uses one of the expressions written in one of the cells during a meeting you make a cross in this cell. The winner is the one first having 4 consecutive cells with crosses on his paper: if so, stand up during the meet and shout “bullshit” – you won ...

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Sometimes employees might by-pass you with their ideas: never mind you will have later on occasions to put your label on the idea. Anyway it will be you to present the new product or idea to the management and often without the presence of the “inventor”. Following the “learning’s” from the book, we would suggest to built in some security: again, you should let open an exit because sometimes proposals looking good can fail and in this case you need someone being responsible for.

How to identify people riding one other’s horse ? There are different methods as e.g. the more detailed the discussions become, the less answers you got. Often in the R&D field, people invent things and at the end you will find on a patent one author but many co-authors. It is in the nature of human been that to copy or to take over is much easier than to do something on your own. The best solutions is always to have it done in a “team” because this notation has really a trend<sup>24</sup>: the only problem in this case is the one of communication, which we already described earlier.

## **5.2 The killer method**

Sometimes you are not promoted for making things happen then simply to kill them. You will be noticed at the top of the company and your enemies will be de-motivated. You have either the chance to become the leader of a big project yourself, but do not be afraid, it is very likely that somebody practicing the same professional management style will kill your project too ...

By killing projects and ideas you show capable to make decisions, to carefully balance the companies requirements, the burden of cost and employee’s motivation. The most efficient practice experienced on our own is even more effective: you do not kill project, you simply delay them for any reason even having no clue and for many times. If the project takes long you can blame your employees to be slow, if the project finishes after a long time and it is a success you can say that it was due to your vigilant management style of monitoring projects for the prospect of the company. This stop-and-go strategy is in alignment with the micro management method and has a maximal outcome for every incapable using it. The only “small” problem with it is the “high” motivation of your labor force.

A main problem today is that most of the people are not able to say “no”. Killing projects and ideas can be an easy substitute for doing so and show that you have a keen understanding of the business and its needs. On the other side the question arises about how to say “no”. Imagine you to introduce a system for continuous improvement proposals and ideas. Many times the ideas might be good, but on the other side they do not address more than a narrow section of your problem. Offering people to participate and having to reject the main part of ideas simply kills every initiative at the employees levels for the future.

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<sup>24</sup> compare books published as “Die Team Lüge” or in. English: “The lay or hype about teams”

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### **5.3 Training and formation**

People might put pressure on you to participate at training's offered. The author suggests not to react as long as possible because training has two negative impacts: in short term the problem is that employees neglect their workload meanwhile and in long term they might even leave the company for someone paying them for their knowledge they gathered. You can defend any rejection of offered training courses by declaring them to be useless: people can take yourself as an example because you did not need training to get the position you are covering right now.

If the company has a training budget you need a better excuse. Scott Adams proposes to make as many trips on your own as possible to consume the available budget and absorbing all of the budget. There will be nothing left anymore for your employees ! Employees might be angry about that, but considering they find no other job, their productivity might even raise ! Reporting and communicating to the top instead, you should state as many times as possible, that the formation of employees has the highest priority !

Training can be (mis)-used together with others as a tool for steering your profits: in good times let people visit as much training as possible e.g. secretaries learning how to bend creative figures out of napkins. This way you will reduce your profit in boom years to an expectable level, minimizing the taxes you pay. For bad years the procedure is even much simpler: just reduce training to a minimum which means to the executives levels. Some companies are even more "advanced": department managers responsible for cost centers are measured by their final annual budget versus the forecast. This managers own bonuses will depend on the expense that occurred during the year, and therefore employee's motivation might stop where managers own interest starts.

### **5.4 Raising employees responsibility**

Scott Adams defines empowerment as the art of giving employees the responsibility for the mistakes made by yourself. His proposal is simple and effective: organize for meetings and punish all having taken any decisions and even by motivating people to be initiative. A well known Swiss entrepreneur said once, that "in good times everybody wants to participate in decision making – in bad times you are on your own ...". In our opinion raising the employees responsibility can only work if a few factors are given: responsibility has to balance with competencies given to people but we all know that herein lays one of the biggest pitfalls because managers having power normally will not shoot themselves in their own feet. Furthermore to take over more responsibility employees should be allowed to make mistakes – meanwhile the do not do the same mistake twice, the mistake was not made because of reluctant behaviour nor your company has to file for bankruptcy.

There are bad individualists suspecting that empowerment is saying to give the employee something they are already doing since the past: many company run and survive because of the knowledge and performance of their employees and not the performance shown by their management.

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Applying the same idea, therefore companies running bankrupt are doing so because of wrong decisions of the management and not the labor force underperforming for any reason given: responsibility for a manager means to be responsible within your area, whether it was your own fault or one off your employees committed it.

### **5.5 Use of external consultants**

The author provides how to take maximal gain out of hiring a management consultant. You should not be afraid at this point, because later on you will only take parts of his proposals (the ones you like) and hide yourself behind the recommendation given to you. Consultants can be useful for taking an other perspective than yours and knowing about the benchmark<sup>25</sup> by serving many different companies. Sometimes companies hire consultants to find out things which many employees bottom-line already know for a while – it is just a matter of communication. In our opinion the question arising is not whether Consulting is good or not then rather to use and not to misuse them. Companies relaying heavily on Consulting can have a problem of not hiring high potential people – sometimes simply because management itself has not a strong background and a consultant is not perceived as a threat as usually “overqualified<sup>26</sup>” people are.

### **5.6 Reorganize your organization**

To be active as a decision maker, reorganize from time to time your organization. More frequent than every 6 months looks if it would be hastily and made by hazard without any strategy. Always try to explain the reasons for the re-organization even if they do not be even compelling to yourself. Following the fact that the only constant in life is the change, you run from one hype to the next: every business generation has created its own hypes as in the past going from diversification back to the roots. Not to do the wrong things, do what all the others do and be average because going new ways means only additional risk. People are reluctant versus change which is the main reason why you have to keep them running: its always better to do many things at once and superficially then doing less things<sup>27</sup> but doing them right. Considering that success of any carefully planned and integrated change in the organization needs time to pay-off it makes sense not to wait until the results and turning all the wheels you can at once.

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<sup>25</sup> We do not apply “bull shit Bingo” on our own *note critique*

<sup>26</sup> overqualification is a matter of perspective and the judgement applied

<sup>27</sup> and even “*the right things*”

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### **5.7 Play the corporate game**

Do not be afraid if the company starts new projects as typically denoted by “hysterical enterprises politics”, better known as TQM, Reengineering, ISO-9000 and many more. Nobody expects any results from you but you are expected to play the game. Print the new companies policies on T-shirts and create funny slogans to make employees sensitive about the issue. Denote always a responsible for this new enterprise politics giving him a fancy new title. Remember, you will need a responsible for later on ... if the project might fail, somebody has to take over the responsibility.

Following our own experiences, often people being promoted are not the critical ones in the perspective of the companies prosperity than the ones supporting everything management proposes without having an own opinion: we are all “open” for critics but we do not like critics. Promotion policy often follows the rule that you are promoted as many times as to reach a position you can not hurt a company anymore. We completely disagree on this statement, because not doing anything as a manager is worse than doing average by doing small mistakes from time to time.

### **5.8 Mergers**

If you do not know what to do, just merge with a company which has even less a clue about what they are doing then your one and simply call the reason “synergy effects<sup>28</sup>”. Do not bother, you will always find a “synergy”, even if it is only that you can buy now your office supplies at double quantity allowing you to save 2% on this issue. Merge and outsource as much as possible and outsource always the cleaning women first. You should focus on details, remembering the learning’s about the micro management. Do not be afraid to merge and fire many peoples, even if the wages & salaries might be a neglectable part of your business because you have to be proactive as a manager. Changing as much as possible is the secret of management: after any change nothing can be easily compared with the past anymore and meanwhile your employees run your company you still get paid every month.

On the other side there are good reasons to merge as well: unfortunately the number of companies doing well by merging might be lower then 20%. From a managerial point of view, Scott Adams does not provide us the information that mergers normally lead to reductions on different management levels and therefore can be a threat for your own position. Many people think that the boom to merge is part of the Consulting business creating a large opportunity for Consulting revenues before, during and after the merge.

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<sup>28</sup> again, we do not apply “bullshit Bingo” here

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## **6. Remuneration**

### **6.1 Remuneration policy**

Use every possible explanation you like in order to reject any salary increase inquiries made by employees. To give a few examples, you can tell people that:

- “we can only pay what is in alignment with the sector we are in”
- “your performances were not sufficient”
- “the company faced a difficult year and cash flow decreased”

In any case you can not postpone an increase in salary anymore, try to offer the employee a title such as “team leader” or similar with the aim not having to pay them more money. Often the part saved at the base, can be seen as an effective cost management and therefore needs to be rewarded at the management level.

Implement complicated and sophisticated remuneration systems requiring an HR head count larger than the people adding value within the company. Here we can use what we learned about fixing employees objectives and shifting the objectives over the year in order to maximize your wage expenses. As a manager you should watch out: let the salaries for senior management open, because the need to be flexible to get the best people on the market. Offer people fringe benefits and other incentives which allows them to pay more taxes and the company to optimize profits. Do not be afraid to negotiate a reduction in labor force salaries because of a recession, meanwhile the company can still afford to buy you a new company car for over 70'000 USD: you deserve it, because it's not your fault that you did not well in the booming phase nor to have created some reserves and being prepared for the hard times coming up.

### **6.2 Push the people to leave the company**

To get rid of the employees, it is recommended to organize as many meetings as possible, to facilitate team work and, being as you are, your personality as a leader will take care about the rest. Scott Adams suggests to explain and underline the advantages of being unemployed and to give people illustrating examples as having finally time for their families – remember that working overtime is one of the most efficient ways to raise profitability.

Mainly for the US we suggest to “optimize” the proposals made by the author using statistics to avoid any harassment and related law suits: never fire somebody from any ethnical minority or similar because he might sue you. Always try to make different rounds finding balanced groups of employees having to leave the company. this way cost decrease more quickly and you have to find only once an explanation for your downsizing instead for every single person.

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From our past observations we believe that this is the right moment too to get rid of people scaring you by their performance and being highly qualified. As the author states call it simply “negotiated departures”. In order to reduce your risk, take care to find other managers feeling threaten by this person and influence this people in order to come to a consensus. In Europe you can even apply basics as mobbing to get rid of the people because mobbing is difficult to be proven by the victim.

One of the best methods of getting rid of people is to demotivate them by forcing them to work in an inefficient manner (Sisyphus method) and explaining that people inventing the process have a large background of over 30 years experience in doing it. Not to get the image of blocking changes we believe that it is essential from time to time to implement small changes which are irrelevant but leading to a good PR. Considering you developed skills for customer orientation (compare section about meetings) do not be afraid that former (e.g. fired) employees could be one day potential customers making the buying decision in an other company.

### **6.3 Job rotation**

The turnover is a good sign for your company’s health especially giving you the unique occasion to get rid off some of your employees and hire new ones. If head counts might be lower than usual, do not mind because the remaining workload will be done by the raining employees which most increase their productivity to compensate the human losses. Meeting the challenge you should find an appealing name for the whole such as e.g. “competition 2000” etc

To formulate it more clearly but cruel than the author, we suggest that sometimes companies loosing a high part of their human capital simply misuse job rotation as the fact that they were not able to maintain their human assets. We believe that job rotation can be very useful if applied to compensate for risks in knowledge as well as to motivate people. Sometimes company reorganize to often which leads to the fact that people performing well are not allowed to finish projects and earn rewards because somebody else takes over earlier and they have to move to something else.

An own theory derived from past experiences, showed that wages & salaries can be a different part of the businesses expenses. It seems to be obvious that companies delivering products and services, where the wages & salaries are a neglectable part of the expenses, can afford to pay people better than may be a company acting in a saturated market having low margins. On the first look the better payment of certain companies seem to drive motivated peoples performing well but may be the real drivers are on one side the freedom of management given to their employees (because they can afford) and on the other side they might do well because the employees are the reason for the companies prosperity<sup>29</sup>. Job rotation is an investment of the company in its employees and costs money: as a viscous cycle companies doing badly can not choose to do job rotations – they have to do !

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<sup>29</sup> what is the cause and what is the effect or is interacting ?

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## **7. How to get motivated as a manager**

### **7.1 Money does not make you happy**

To be happy money alone is not enough! In order to be motivated you need also stock options, a company car and the pleasure to torture your employees. As per Scott Adams to keep your employees on distance you should hit the people on a regularly base and your status will raise as well as offend your people. The given golden 12 rules to de-motivate employees and therefore increase your own motivation is straight forward:

1. diminish continuously their augmentations
2. eliminate the internal promotions
3. Declare the era of the unemployment
4. Reduce options for illness compensation
5. Cancel training budget
6. Create an account to deduct illness abuse from employees holidays account
7. Reduce the office space<sup>30</sup>
8. Forbid office decoration
9. Prescription of M&M consumption
10. Limit the Internet access
11. Introduce the concept of “employee of the month”
12. Shave the heads of your employees

We strongly recommend to prioritize the implementation of this points not to loose the overview and having the chance to monitor the impact of the different actions. The extract of this rules is that Scott Adams wants us to understand that we can do whatever we want, meanwhile we can give some good explanations being soundly and using management slang. As a conclusion it becomes finally clear to everybody that employees are no human been and have to be regarded as fix costs.

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<sup>30</sup> already the case for US companies

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## **7.2 How to handle complaining employees**

Assuming you are on the right track and applying the above rules provided, you should expect some of the employees to complain. In this case you have only 2 possibilities: either you ignore them or else you take counter measures. Possible counter measures could be that the complaining employee should fix his problem on his own and outside the regular office time and without being paid for that. Sometimes it is effective too, to let this employee work together with people which complain even more than himself in order to show him the kind of annoyance or simply by nominating the employee as to be the president of the controlling committee for the moral of the employees.

## **7.3 You always get the people you deserve**

In your workforce you will always have two different kind of employees: the good ones and the bad ones ! The good ones make decisions, are innovative, take risks and ... have to be eliminated. This surgical cut does not only allow to getting rid of what you call "overqualified" people (related to your own skills) than also to put pressure on the remaining workforce (remember: the bad ones) which should be happy still having a job.

We completely agree with the statement that you get what you deserve. If you would have bad employees, you can either train them and improve working conditions to make them better or hire people you need or else, and that is the worst case, you can fire them. Therefore, as a superior, you should never complain about your employees. Remember also, having the responsibility means to take the responsibility of things your employees committed: if you have problems to accept this fact, you should look around for a more calm job.

## **7.4 Train your secretary**

A very important issue for your own freedom and therefore motivation is to "train" your secretary in order to keep employees on distance. Good secretaries (good relates to your perspective ..) are rare and need a special training to transform them into a pit bull terrier. Use your secretary to make as much calls as possible, to perform stupid and useless tasks and finally to offend her, complain yourself about your low salary and confide her secrets of your life and behave afterwards as if you regret to have done so. If possible, Scott Adams suggests to share a secretary with an other decision maker even more stupid then you are. The same way as you use your secretary to delegate boring work to your employees telling them about the importance of the task. Lead your employees and secretary to take over workload which in principles should be done by their superior. By the same token you must be to busy to join the meetings and bring people at the point that they start to organize themselves: if you are a barrier for their work some day they will even start to ask you whether they were allowed to do some of your workload too.

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### **7.5 How to use the HR department**

Following the author the HR department and its individuals can be used for all tasks you do not like, such as firing people, remuneration policy and so on. The HR is even happy about that fact because you will feed them with important work which can only be handled by them. The definition of a HR Manager is to “de-motivate qualified<sup>31</sup> employees” ...

HR normally puts in place a fancy remuneration policies, preventing employees to maximize their revenue as e.g. by working overtime when the company rejects to hire more people and is running already at 200%. Normally managers of different departments hide themselves behind HR by reinsuring employees to be on their side but HR ...

Even not stated in the book, we extrapolated that this might be the reason why HR people often are paid rather high. The second reason might be their knowledge about things the theoretically should not know as e.g. the management's wages and compensations. This might also be the reason why for certain staff decision HR is simply overlooked even though claiming the employees being the real assets of the company.

### **8. Conclusion of the book**

Finally the book summarizes the rules of management. This rules can be seen as best practice and they are as follows:

1. Even if the boss is an idiot, he's always right
2. The rules of space and time have been implemented to be manipulated for your needs
3. The solution is not to multiply your workforce then to multiply the number of meetings
4. Having doubts, accelerate the whole thing
5. If you are able to speak, you are able to communicate
6. Low employees moral is only a matter of their personal psychological problems
7. If 10 employees can handle a project in 10 days, 1 employee will do it in 1 day
8. Working in teams means work is completed by someone else
9. A sick employee is a lazy employee
10. Bad treatment of an employee is a kind of recognition and to be rewarded is the dream of all employees

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<sup>31</sup> compare good employees destiny ...

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## **9. Comments**

### **9.1 Message and own conclusion**

Even considering that the book is written in a very cynical style we enjoyed sometimes to “fed the fire by additional explosives”. Anyway we will derive from past experiences and by inverting the book content our own guideline for managerial and entrepreneurial behavior<sup>32</sup>:

- ✓ as a manager your employees are the “real assets” and should be treated that way ..
- ✓ accept your employees higher specific technical skills .. if you are capable to contribute on your task ..
- ✓ Learn to listen and to communicate ..
- ✓ in order to establish a climate of trust you must live what you are praying ..
- ✓ you should not live from the company than for the company ..
- ✓ in times that teamwork seems to be the only way, you have to know that responsibility can not be shared ..
- ✓ you are responsible for everything in your area .. whether it was your fault or not ..
- ✓ be as you are by having your own strengths and weaknesses – you will win your employees confidence ..
- ✓ recognise that you will not go upwards all the time then sometimes downwards – but as well not all the time only downwards than again upwards ..
- ✓ there are no bad employees .. only bad superiors ..
- ✓ you can lay, but the truth is only a matter of time ..

### **9.2 Is there something missing ?**

After having read a book about “managerial behaviour and best practice in leadership” we might ask ourselves why this should work. Considering that a company has not only employees and a single superior level – bosses have their superiors too and so on. If superior apply the tricks used, it is likely that their superiors should know about this tricks ? Taking the view of an employee<sup>33</sup>, the question might even arise how to react on such superiors and what to reply ?

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<sup>32</sup> everybody to feel free about what he considers to be right or wrong !

<sup>33</sup> as per Scott Adams, employees are recommended strongly not to read the book ...

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Fortunately for those of us which are not sharp as a knife by finding immediately the right reply, a new book was published. This book is called “black rhetoric’s” and allows people to react in an appropriate manner to people being aggressive and impressing others by bluff etc. The book is strongly recommended to people having been teach in the past by sentences like “we are doing it this way already for 30 years” .....

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