

REGIONAL NURSING SEMINAR

Teheran, 9 - 19 November 1966

EM/NURS.SEM./10
26 October 1966

ENGLISH ONLY

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT : A FORCE IN
PERSONAL GROWTH AND SATISFACTION

by

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"Sound personnel policies are the foundation of good employee relations".¹

In developing good employee relations, personnel management must undertake to perform tasks that will assist both the institution and the employee to better meet the needs of the people and the community served.

In meeting the goals of the institution, those responsible are charged with administering the resources to meet the needs of the community and the public it serves. Health facilities have varied responsibilities; individual hospitals have chosen a particular geographic area or certain types of illness as their area of concern. While the goals of the hospital or the health institutions may vary in nature, there are many common techniques that can be applied. These techniques have been developed over the years by progressive companies and institutions. Personnel management has evolved so that in many institutions there is a formalized personnel department that does the recruiting, job evaluation, wage-salary administration and performs other personnel services required by the whole institution.

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¹ American Hospital Association, Administration in Hospitals and Related Care Facilities,
Chicago : American Hospital Association, 1964

Personnel management does not stop in the personnel department. It can act as a stimulating, positive force to ensure that those working in the institution grow in accordance with their abilities and are happy on their job. It is this facet of personnel management that will be developed in this paper.

As hospitals are most concerned with patients as individuals, so too must they be concerned with the individuality of those working within the institution. It is only with satisfied personnel that we can create and maintain what we would like to have - a hospital of high technical and professional calibre, oriented to the highest level of individualized patient care.

Each person working in the hospital differs in the amount of education he has received, his physical abilities, and his emotional responses and social groupings. Every person has different interests, background and training, and as a result applies himself to the work situation in a different manner. These differences need to be recognized so that the individual can be better understood. No two people will necessarily react in the same way to the same set of circumstances. It is only by recognition and acceptance of individual differences that we can stimulate employees as individuals.

A happy employee is one who is motivated to do his job well. In an effort to establish an environment which will stimulate the individual and meet the goals of the service, there are techniques and knowledge which can be used. In using this information and these techniques, we should remember the growth of the individual so that he may make the most of his abilities and be, for want of a better term, a satisfied employee.

Motivation is concerned with attitudes. One could say that with proper motivation the individual will give more of himself than is usual, and may even sacrifice some of his personal satisfaction so that the institution can meet its goals. People do not necessarily like to work between twelve at night and eight in the morning. Few like to get up at six in the morning to be on the job at seven.

In motivating the individual to do his job well, and be happy doing it, there must be a goal. This may be to do a job in a better way; it may be to reflect a positive attitude in the individual's relationship with the patient; it may be to acquire more information. The effect of motivating the individual is to release an additional amount of energy, which is directed towards the achievement of the goal.

This energy or drive that the individual is releasing requires that the proper tools be provided so that the job can be done properly. To ask and to motivate people to work in a difficult situation without offering support would be to negate the effect of motivation. How do we motivate? There are two distinct areas of motivation, one is job satisfaction and the second is financial. This paper will not deal with the financial factors except to say that financial factors in themselves do not always create continuing motivation.

Some of the non-financial areas which will motivate and at the same time create an environment for personal growth and employee satisfaction are security, opportunity for advancement, recognition for the job being performed well and respect as a person. If the individual feels secure because he has been taught to do his particular work well and understands its relationship to the goals of the institution, many of his fears will disappear. Being asked to do something and not knowing how, creates a real sense of insecurity.

The possibility for advancement should be recognized as a major step in the development of a satisfied employee. Someone who is doing a job well and has the capacity for further development should be given the opportunity to acquire the technical knowledge and skills to progress. Where progress is eliminated from an employee's future, the employee will consider himself in a dead end job and in many instances develop frustrations and a chip on his shoulder. It is important to recognize, however, that many people will find a level which satisfies them because they feel they are working to the best of their ability. To force such people to advance would create a difficult problem for them. Even to those who do not wish to advance, the fact that the opportunity for promotion is available to those who wish to advance will act as a motivating factor for them and permit the continuation of a high level of performance.

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Recognition of the person as an individual and as a valued member of the health team is important. No matter what this person does, he would not be doing it unless it is part of the activities necessary for patient care. Each member, each employee, should be recognized for the job that he is doing. This recognition may take many forms but the individual supervisor, the department head, must recognize and evidence the importance of the individual if we are to have a satisfied and happy team.

The best employee is one who respects himself, who has confidence in his ability and who understands his role in the team. To achieve self-respect one must be respected and one must have the respect of others. If respect is not offered to each member of the team, no matter what his job, then the individual may lose his self-respect and feel as if he has no personal worth. He may then become a mechanical worker: that is a person who is not motivated and who will not have satisfaction on the job.

In preparing for writing this paper, a number of common comments made by many people who have written in this field have been considered. The writer thinks that one of the most important is the desire of the individual for commendation. Along with commendation, the writer thinks that people expect to be criticized when they are not performing their tasks properly. Commendations and reprimands should always be based upon information that is factual, accurately observed and preferably recorded.

Criticism should never be made in public. This would result in the development of an antagonistic attitude in the person concerned, because his self-respect has been attached. Criticism made privately and discussed thoroughly has a much better chance of having a positive effect.

When a person's performance is criticized one should discuss not only the particular incident but the work history of the individual. One should endeavour to point out the more desirable qualities and activities of the individual, as well as where the person's performance has been weak. In this way one can help the person to understand how he can improve. One should endeavour to have the employee understand why he is being reprimanded and very often a series of questions directed to the employee will permit him to understand where he has made mistakes.

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When one gives commendation or praise, it should be based upon the actual performance of the individual or the demonstration of superior ability at a particular time. The average individual can see through the person who offers praise too frequently. It should be understood that commendation is given when merited and is not like a routine "good morning" greeting. Commendation should be based on an individual's activities, on improvement of his work, or presented as group commendation when it is a group activity.

All employees like to know of their progress and each employee should be assessed and have his assessment discussed with him by the supervisor at least twice a year. This will permit the employee to know where he stands and in this way better understand his role, and his activities. Periodic meetings to explain changes within the organization should be undertaken or the individual will not know how to fit into the changed circumstances.

Every employee should be given a chance for self-expression. In meetings there should be two-way expression of ideas and thoughts. It is not enough to merely allow expression, employees need to feel that their opinions will be considered in decision making. It should be clearly understood by employees that final decisions must be made by management. Supervisors should help employees to understand the why of the decision and their role in assisting to meet the goals.

We should always allow for a reasonable amount of self-determination because, if we eliminate this opportunity, once again we will be creating a mechanical worker who will not be able to develop beyond the small limits of his job. One of the greatest difficulties in creating a satisfied employee is too much close supervision. Working with supervision of work continuously and excessively creates an environment which will keep an employee in a constant state of fear and create tension which will affect his ability to do the job properly.

Technology is changing very quickly and the opportunity to acquire both knowledge and techniques to do a better job is vital. Continuous education, to meet the needs of the institution, as they are being established, and to upgrade the employee's ability to do his job, must be established within the institution and extra-murally.

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