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METHODS AND CRITERIA USED BY OHIO FIRMS IN SELECTING SALES SUPERVISORS.

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The literature especially pertaining to sales supervisor selection contains three kinds of writings, first, articles recognizing and describing the need for improved selection of sales supervisors; second, articles discussing the selection tools that may be used; and third, articles describing the selection methods and experience of individual companies.

Basic literature in the field of sales management has recognized the problem of sales supervision and the importance of good supervisor selection. Typical of writings on the general nature of sales supervision is that of Maynard and Davis. Another work in this category worthy of note is that by Phelps and Westing. Two major studies in the field of supervision of outside salesmen are those by Lapp and Robert T. Davis. Lapp, in discussing the selection of sales supervisors, outlines the bases for policies in selection and suggests a list of twelve desirable character traits as criteria. In addition he mentions a quality which he refers to as "man-building ability," which, he says, summarizes all the qualities of the sales supervisor. The bulk of Lapp's work is concerned with the function and method of field sales supervision, and with a description of the organization and content of the sales supervisor's job.

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2Ibid. pp. 456-488.
4Charles L. Lapp, Personal Supervision of Outside Salesmen (Columbus: The Bureau of Business Research, The Ohio State University, 1951).
5Robert T. Davis, Performance and Development of Field Sales Managers (Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1957).
6Lapp, op. cit. p. 261.
Job performance factors

Based upon questions exploring the reasons for selecting a given sales supervisor as a case example, the sales executives revealed a universal insistence upon effective job performance as a prerequisite to consideration for promotion. Job performance of salesmen may be regarded as being made up of two general classes of activities: sales performance and other job performance factors.

Sales performance.--The practical attitude of the respondent sales executives toward sales performance was revealed by the sales records of the men placed. In two cases "star" sales performance was a factor in the placement decision. In nineteen cases a good or desirable level of sales performance was referred to and in nine cases sales performance was not mentioned as a criterion. However, other questions in the interview schedule developed the fact that in these cases a normally successful level of sales performance was a prerequisite to consideration. Thus it was universally expected that the salesman meet whatever sales goals or quotas are established and in some of the cases the sales managers indicated that until the salesman distinguished himself in terms of sales performance he would not be considered for any kind of promotion.

Sales executives interviewed stated their sales criterion in general terms. Among their statements were the following: "good salesman," "ability to master the job," "successful attainment of selling quotas," "good producer," "sales record," "effectiveness in performing his (sales) jobs," "good job record," "outstanding sales record," "good sales record," "he can sell--four successive 100 club memberships," "because
of his extremely successful sales record over a long period of time."

It should be noted that these were statements made about men who were selected, after they had been selected, and were to some extent relative to the group from which the selection was made. Even in this area where performance can be measured in terms of dollar or unit volume the criteria are loosely and subjectively defined. In no case was sales performance the only factor considered.

The usefulness of the sales performance record as a criterion varies according to the nature of the selling job. In a multiple product company, or where the salesman is called upon to sell a number of different types of accounts, his sales performance in terms of distribution of sales across the whole product line, or development of all classes of accounts successfully, will give valuable indications of his ability to handle a variety of situations. Where sales are confined to a single product sold to or through one type of customer, other criteria which cannot be measured in terms of sales become more important.

Sales executives were of the opinion that by excelling in sales, the salesman can distinguish himself more positively than in any other way. The fact that he is an outstanding salesman does not guarantee that he will win a particular promotion, but it is a sure way to win consideration when a supervisory opening is impending. A good sales record earns the respect of other salesmen as well as consideration from top sales management and contributes to the self-confidence and influence of the new sales supervisor.
Other job performance factors.--The duties and responsibilities of the salesman other than his responsibility for sales make up an additional list of job performance factors that are valuable in a supervisor placement decision. As an example of this the salesman of an appliance manufacturer working at the distributor level has the responsibility of training dealers' salesmen to sell appliances. His position is similar to that of a sales supervisor. If he can win the confidence of his customer, the dealer, he will act in many ways as his dealer's sales manager in performing the supervisory functions of continued training, communication, and motivation. These three functions plus control are the four functions of the sales supervisor according to Lapp.\(^1\) Sales executives of companies manufacturing and selling appliances, tires, petroleum products, and paint referred to the importance of job performance factors of this type.

The sales executive of a tire company referred to a section of their salesman evaluation form which he believes is of major importance in identifying men who make the best supervisors. The performance factor is merchandising ability and the definition associated with top rating in a ten point scale reads: "Knows and recognizes merchandising methods at Distributor and Dealer levels; exceptional ability in developing and putting into effect merchandising ideas; takes full advantage of training and sales promotion materials; works well with customer's organization; holds sales meetings regularly."

\(^{1}\)Supra, p. 14.
Additional job performance factors referred to included conducting training sessions for dealers, sales and market planning for the territory, assisting dealers with advertising and sales promotion activities, and helping customers to improve their operations through the intelligent use of the company's products. Orderly thinking about these criteria is achieved by including them in the salesman evaluation and rating form. When summarizing the reasons for the selection of a sales supervisor in a given case the responses of sales executives were general and subjective, for example, "does all phases of his job well," "understands the business," or "he is a servicing type salesman."

The usefulness of these other job performance factors as criteria is greatest where the selling job is broadest. Where the salesman spends 100 per cent of his time in selling and does not incur any sizeable dealer or customer service obligations there is little chance to draw conclusions as to his managerial potential from his job assignment. Some selling situations fit this latter pattern, for example, route salesmen for bakery companies using door to door retail distribution. Except in cases of this type the job enlargement concept referred to earlier may be used to provide, through additional job performance elements, the basis for more complete evaluation of the capabilities of salesmen for supervisory assignment.

**Summary.**—The emphasis placed upon job performance factors as criteria for the selection of first line sales management varies considerably from one firm to another. Sales executives agree fairly

15*Supra*, p. 20.
well that the potential supervisor needs to prove his ability as a salesman before he can be considered ready to be advanced to first line management, but there does not seem to be a strong insistence that he be a star salesman to be considered. Other elements of the salesman's job performance that resemble supervisory activities provide more useful criteria of the salesman's potential for successful performance in the first echelon of sales management. Where the salesman's job does not contain such activities in addition to sales, developmental assignments should be made, or a policy of job enlargement should be adopted.

Character and personality traits

Sales executives interviewed referred to certain traits of character and personality as well as to certain physical attributes which they feel are criteria for qualification for promotion to sales supervisor. The definition of such traits and the appraisal of the individual salesmen in terms of those traits is usually done in an entirely subjective manner. In the case of the lamp division of a large electrical manufacturer an elaborate evaluation form is used which forces the district manager, when rating his men, to appraise these traits in terms of the daily activities of the salesman. While systematic rating forms and procedures may make the ratings of different salesmen more comparable they still do not achieve objective or scientific measurement of personality or character traits. Furthermore, no evidence was found of any firm carrying on any programs for the correlation of character or personality traits with successful performance as a
manager or supervisor. One firm in the oil industry, among those interviewed, is beginning some work in this direction.

The free responses of sales executives in accounting for the decision in a given case of supervisory placement included thirteen traits or statements of traits which could be reduced to the following five: industrious, ambitious, good citizen, favorable temperament and personality, and strength of character. It should be kept in mind that these are not predetermined standards by which supervisors are selected, but are simply the characteristics which the sales executive believed the successful candidate possessed at the time he was chosen. There is no assurance that some portion of the desirable attributes in a given case was not ascribed to the candidate who was best liked, or best known of the group under consideration for promotion.

The traits and characteristics by which sales executives attempt to measure supervisor candidates ranged from two very general bases for a subjective comparison of candidates, character and leadership, to a formal list of items combined into a periodic appraisal chart. One such list is that shown below, used by a large electric utility firm. Some of the factors in this list are job performance factors, some are personality characteristics and some are character traits.
The rater is assisted in his evaluations by a schedule of definitions of varying degrees of each factor. Summarizing the contents of rating and evaluation forms of nine of the firms studied produced the following list of traits and characteristics:

1) Physical characteristics
   a. Personal appearance
   b. Health and vitality

2) Mental characteristics
   a. Alertness
   b. Adaptability
   c. Maturity

3) Character traits
   a. Dependability
   b. Integrity
   c. Stability
   d. Loyalty
   e. Sincerity
   f. Emotional balance
   g. Ambition

4) Personality traits
   a. Enthusiasm
   b. Fairness
   c. Self-confidence
   d. Social dependence
The remainder of the firms studied did not use a formal rating and evaluation system, but the executives interviewed in these firms were fairly specific in ascribing to supervisory candidates placed, desirable traits and characteristics.

In the above classification the last three groups are admittedly arbitrary and there is some overlapping. There is fairly common agreement on the significance of physical attributes. Personal appearance needs to be appropriate to the type of customers on which the salesman is to call. The aspects of personal appearance that are of most concern are those that are within the salesman's control, such as neatness, dress and a general attitude of alertness. Health and vitality are made a part of the systematic review to reveal changes over a period of time in individual cases and to record the possession of the levels of energy required to perform effectively in a competitive business.

Sales executives generally recognized the weakness of the subjective evaluation process in terms of character and personality traits. One firm in the business machines industry avoids evaluations of subjective factors by placing its emphasis on job performance evaluation. Another firm, in the same industry, uses a rating form prepared by a firm of psychological consultants. This form includes a group of personality and character factors related to a psychological testing and depth interview program. The whole evaluation process is subject to periodic validation studies.

The particular assortment of traits included in an evaluation program may be the result of the personal preferences of the sales executives responsible for the program. For example, the first of
the personality traits listed above, enthusiasm, was regarded by one sales executive as being the single most desirable characteristic of a candidate for promotion, and the executive supported his view with a great deal of that same enthusiasm. Recognition of the surface manifestations of this trait presents little difficulty. On the other hand the fourth personality trait referred to above, social dependence, is extremely difficult to detect by observation. Included in a list of 16 "general psychological traits" this factor is presented to the rater as follows: "Is the subject socially dependent? ___Yes; ___No."

It seems unlikely that uniform or comparable evaluations could be achieved on factors of this type, or that such evaluations would bear any demonstrable relationship to future performance as a supervisor.

Another aspect of the salesman's character which is considered significant by some sales executives is his attitude toward self-development. The measures a man will take to advance himself through development of his own knowledge and skill are a criterion of his ambition and initiative. They are especially useful indicators if they show an understanding of the salesman's own weaknesses and if they are organized by the salesman into a systematic program for growth.

The policy of management on the subject of self-development will greatly affect its value as a measure of promotability. Self-development may be made a goal of the counseling and evaluation program with the supervisor responsible for guiding and motivating his men in the conduct of their individual plan for growth. The results of such an approach in one supervisor placement case was stated by the executive
to hinge on the fact that the salesman "wanted to advance and made it known; demonstrated impatience; was aggressive."

**Summary.**—In summary three observations can be made. First, compiling a list of attributes, traits or characteristics, most of which are intangibles measured only on a highly subjective level does not go far of itself in solving the problem of selecting personnel of any type. In the *Marketing Handbook* the comment is made: "... such lists are idealistic, in fact, few top sales managers possess even half of the qualities usually included."¹⁶ This statement, made in reference to the selection of salesmen, applies with equal force to the selection of the first line of sales management. Second, the proper function of such a list is to furnish a scale of values and descriptive concepts against which the qualifications of a given candidate for promotion can be thrown in sharp relief. Seeing all possible candidates in the light of such a scale permits managers to rank them more accurately relative to the requirements of the job for which they are being considered.

Finally, the significance of lists of traits and characteristics as criteria for selection results from attempts to break through a semantic barrier. The sales manager is looking for a man with a total personality-behavior pattern that will enable him to function effectively as a sales supervisor. The traits employed in any given selection system may be derived from the experience and observation of sales executives on a subjective basis, or from behavioral studies

Robert T. Davis has also made a significant contribution to the understanding of the nature of the sales supervisor's task, especially in terms of the attitudes and expectations existing among the various echelons of the sales organization and their influence upon the nature of supervision. He writes:

In addition to the influence of environmental and personal factors upon their behavior, managers performed in terms of what they thought the key expectations of their sales superiors were. These key expectations, although they usually prescribed behavior in only certain limited areas, were ordinarily the ultimate measure of performance because executives were the final arbiters of field results.  

And further, pointing up the intangible characteristics of desirable supervisor performance, Davis says:

The proficient manager and the manager who has attained a good standing in his company are not necessarily identical because so many executives have purely personal definitions of job success and the qualities of successful managers. It unfortunately follows that field sales managers may acquire a substantial standing in their organization without necessarily being competent.  

The foregoing suggest the degree of subtleties influencing selection criteria and the selection decisions of sales executives. A major problem exists in staffing the salesman and sales supervisory levels in the sales department in order to secure coincidence between personal capabilities on the one hand and organizational requirements and objectives on the other. An inner consistency is called for in line with the goals of the sales organization that will maximize performance of the group, provide individual opportunity, and reward originality and initiative.

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8Ibid. p. 266.
such as those conducted by Henry. The weakness of lists of traits based on the opinions and observations of executives is that there is no basis for measurement and validation of such factors. Unfortunately, this is the primary source of this type of criteria. The use of sound, controlled behavioral research into the measurement and validation of these criteria offers real hope for improvement in this area of sales personnel management.

Management aptitudes and skills

Criteria mentioned by sales executives in this area may be classified in three groups, management aptitudes, human relations skills and management job skills essential in supervising salesmen.

Management aptitudes.---Desirable management aptitudes as criteria were found in the performance evaluation forms used by firms studied. A composite list includes initiative, originality, judgment, co-operativeness, capacity to accept responsibility, inclination to growth, and personal aspiration. There is some overlapping of these factors with the character and personality traits discussed in the preceding section and the same problems of identification, measurement, and validation apply to both categories.

Human relations skills.---There was a tendency among executives interviewed to refer to criteria in this area in terms of two separate but not mutually exclusive categories, ability to handle or get along with people, and leadership ability.

17 Supra, p. 83.
The ability to get along with people was stated in various ways: "the ability to handle people," "gets along well with people," "ability to be helpful to other salesmen," a statement which implies a training concept and, "flair for getting men oriented to the job." The statement of this ability in one case was qualified by regarding the man as "not domineering," implying that the man in question had an ability to secure the cooperation of others through suggestion rather than in an authoritarian manner. Conclusions as to the possession of this skill were arrived at by different sales managers in a variety of ways from a purely subjective judgment based on daily contact and supervision, to group appraisals employing formal evaluation or merit rating schedules. In some firms special developmental assignments are made for the purpose of providing the basis for the evaluation of human relations skills.

The criterion of leadership ability or potential mentioned by sales executives was usually regarded as an irreducible factor, the definition of which was assumed to be common knowledge. Where its presence was recognized in terms of specific evidence, such evidence was in terms of third party attitudes toward the person in question. For example, one executive referred to the "respect which other salesmen have for him—a measure of his natural leadership." Another executive referred to, "other men look up to him," and "outstanding customer relations." These very general statements describing the influence which one man has on another were regarded as evidence of leadership ability by the sales executive of a firm selling technical
products to industrial consumers. Within whatever activity situation the sales executive had reference to in a given sales organization, whether salesman-supervisor relationship, salesman-salesman relationship or salesman-customer relationship, the leadership concepts expressed seemed to conform to the definition of leadership stated by Shartle\textsuperscript{18} which regards the essence of leadership as being the influence which causes another person to act in the direction intended.

The definitions of leadership contained in evaluation schedules further explain the criterion as it is used in individual cases. In one rating form leadership is defined as "unusual ability to set standards of performance for others," and in another under the heading of leadership skill, three questions were asked: "(1) While under your supervision has the subject shown in his work, your meetings, and his personal life, the ability to make people want to work for him? (2) In your observation has the subject shown a more than average ability to get along with people? (3) To summarize, do you definitely feel the subject has the necessary skill to be a good leader of our salesmen?" To each of these three questions the rater is asked to check either a question mark, yes, or no. Responses to such questions can only be on the most general, subjective level, with a severely limited opportunity to differentiate between two or more candidates in terms of the questions asked. Furthermore, no other opportunity to amplify or qualify the judgment as to leadership ability is provided, except in an overall way at the end of the rating form.

\textsuperscript{18}Supra, p. 9.
Elements or manifestations of the criterion, leadership, are shown in the following excerpt from a rating form used by a firm in the electrical industry. All questions are to be answered by the rater with either a question mark, yes, or no.

**Leadership**

An experienced Manager must, of course, have the qualities which enable him to maintain his business leadership of the men he is working with and through; a new Manager, taking over a District, is faced with the task of establishing this leadership under somewhat adverse conditions.

Does the candidate habitually take the initiative in selling his accounts unpopular policies, explaining frankly the reasons behind unpopular rulings?  

Does he, at the same time, always have constructive suggestions for making the best of bad situations?  

Is he habitually successful in getting acceptance of Company policies with his accounts?  

Do you sometimes feel that rather than sell the reason for an unfavorable decision or policy, he is inclined to pass the buck to or blame the District or Home Office?  

Has he demonstrated natural business leadership ability among the men within your own organization?  

Have you from time to time found it necessary to push him into a position of assuming the leadership?  

In your own sales meetings has he shown a willingness to lead discussions on major questions? Do you have to call on him before he will offer his suggestions or comments?  

Does he usually handle the dirty jobs himself? Or does he make a habit of calling on others?  

Have his accounts indicated to you in one way or another that they think he supplies unusual leadership in the conduct of his line of business?  

Would you say he is sometimes inclined to be a bit too shrewd or cagey in his dealings with others?
Is he sometimes unnecessarily blunt and abrupt in expressing his ideas to others?____

So far as you know, do others feel at ease in discussing matters with him?____

Has he shown a proper interest and leadership in civic affairs and accepted his fair share of community responsibility in his home town?____

Can you say that the remarks of key men in other departments of our company indicate a rather general feeling that he will make substantial progress in the company?____

FROM YOUR OBSERVATION OF THE CANDIDATE IN ACTION, DO YOU FEEL THAT HE IS NATURALLY A LEADER IN BUSINESS MATTERS? ABOUT AVERAGE IN THIS RESPECT? SOMEWHAT RELUCTANT TO STEP OUT AND ASSUME LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES?____

Additional or Explanatory Comments______________________________

The concept of the criterion, leadership, is built up in this rating form out of decisions about the subject's behavior in a variety of job situations. The rater is led through a fairly long list of items that throw some light on this factor of leadership before he is asked to make a decision as to the leadership ability of the man being evaluated. The final question about leadership asks only for a judgment of whether or not the person being rated is a leader in business matters.

Of all the criteria used to measure the acceptability of a potential sales supervisor, leadership is the central one. The selection of a sales supervisor is essentially a process of predicting the future behavior in a leadership situation of a man who has had only limited opportunity to demonstrate his ability. Sales management
must either find leadership elements which are demonstrated in the performance of salesmen, design the salesman's job in such a way as to provide opportunities for the salesman to develop and demonstrate his ability in this area, or pursue research in the behavioral sciences that will define and validate suitable criteria of leadership ability.

**Management job skills.**--Management job skills must be differentiated in the thinking of sales executives from the general list of traits and characteristics, aptitudes, and human relations skills, if appropriate measures are to be taken in developing and measuring these skills in the salesmen. Speaking of these skills on an overall basis some executives referred to the ability to plan, organize and control the accomplishment of a project.

A more specific skill in this area is the ability to train. Several sales managers interviewed regarded this as a significant criterion. They were generally found in firms where the salesman is selling to dealers and distributors.

The selection criterion about which there was more agreement than any other was the requirement for a high level of ability in self-expression. Self-expression or the ability to communicate may be evaluated on two bases, written and oral. In the opinion of sales executives interviewed, it is closely correlated with success in merchandising where merchandising activities of the salesman include the conduct of sales training meetings for dealers and distributors. Self-expression is therefore one of the important skills of a
supervisor. Skill in self-expression is also an asset to the salesman. He is continually demonstrating this skill within the scope of his regular duty assignment. Communication as a function of supervision requires a high level of skill in self-expression, both written and oral, as does the training responsibility of the sales supervisor. The ability of the sales supervisor to verbalize the goals and aspirations of his salesmen, as a phase of motivation, is also dependent upon the supervisor's skill in self-expression.

A typical definition of a desirable degree of self-expression in written communications is found in one of the rating schedules. It is: "well organized, accurate, concise but sufficiently detailed." In the same rating form the salesman having desirable oral expression is described in these terms: "clear, forceful, articulate; good vocabulary; thinks well on his feet; fits discussion to the situation."

The inter-relation of a number of criteria including management job skills, personal traits, and leadership ability is illustrated in the viewpoint of one of the sales executives interviewed. It is his opinion that enthusiasm associated with a high energy level is the most important personality trait, that skill in self-expression is indispensable in communicating enthusiasm and creating it among salesmen, and that the amount of enthusiasm for product and sales department objectives a district manager can create among his salesmen is a primary index of his leadership ability.

Sales executives rely on subjective criteria patterns of this sort in the absence of more objective measures. Even in one case
where a battery of personality and aptitude tests yielding an eight point profile is used, the sales executive emphasized the weaknesses of tests and seemed inclined to give his own subjective judgment greater weight in the selection decision.

**Summary and evaluation**

The approach to the prediction of managerial success most relied upon is by means of the opinions of executives based upon general and subjective observation of salesman performance. Sales managers do rely on the salesman's record of sales performance, the way he performs other elements of his job, the character and personality traits that he displays, and whatever demonstration of his skill with people there has been. With the exception of certain aspects of job performance that can be counted, for example, sales volume, new accounts, customer turnover, order size, and reorders, the measurement of these criteria is subjective.

The use of test scores as criteria for the selection of supervisors is primarily on a negative basis for the purpose of eliminating obvious misfits, and the point of test administration frequently is at the level of salesman selection rather than at the first level of sales supervision.

Looking at the cases of supervisor placement described in the interviews conducted in this study the nature of significant criteria can be deduced by summarizing the qualifications which led to the selection of the man actually chosen. In 29 cases reported, 97
deciding factors were given, which can be classified into six groups, listed here in order of the frequency of mentions: (1) job performance factors, (2) improvement of performance over a period of time, (3) secondary measures of performance including appraisal and evaluation reports, test scores, performance on developmental assignments, recommendations of his supervisor, and acceptance by his peers, (4) human relations skills, (5) personality and character traits, (6) situational factors.

The judgment of the salesman's managerial capacity in the light of these criteria and the conclusion that the salesman who fits a certain pattern will be a successful sales supervisor are largely subjective. A sizable portion of the job of selecting first line management personnel as it is currently practiced lies in the realm of the art of management.

The recognition, selection, and development of management personnel, as a phase of organizing, is a part of one of the organic functions of management. The selection of first line sales managers is a part of this function. The selection decisions made are influenced not only by the criteria involved, but also by the outlook and characteristics of the executives responsible for selection. There is an interplay of forces and effects at work in the organization which conditions the selection of executive and supervisory personnel. This relationship is developed and explored by Bakke and is termed by him, the

19 E. Wight Bakke, The Fusion Process (New Haven, Conn.: Labor and Management Center, Yale University, 1953), p. 58.
Fusion Process. The Fusion Process refers to the forces and relationships by which the organization influences the individual and the individual influences the organization in terms of characteristics, methods, and goals. Executives tend to select and promote juniors similar to themselves or similar to their image of themselves, which results in a tendency toward homogeneity among the executive personnel of an organization. It is to be expected that this force has some influence on the nature of judgments made in selecting men for the first line of sales management.

The weaknesses of conventional criteria are serious. The elements of salesman performance most strikingly displayed are not usually indicators of supervisory ability. There is an implication here that the salesman's job could well be broadened in many cases to permit the exercise and development of the performance elements associated with the first level of sales management.

One clear implication of the study of selection criteria stands out. A positive program of criteria development should be undertaken by sales managements. A beginning step in this direction is a procedure for keeping informed of developments in the field and a continuing search for applications of known techniques to the problem of selecting first line sales managers.

A further step in the direction of criteria development is the active sponsorship by sales organizations of sociological and psychological research in the areas of leader behavior. Such studies could be carried on with special reference to and in terms of the situational characteristics of a given sales organization.
Another area of research and writing that offers some help in identifying the nature of the problem is found in the literature of foreman selection. Although the great differences in job content limit the applicability of foreman selection studies to the problem of selecting sales supervisors, the similarities of the two as first echelon management jobs justify a review of the nature of research applied to foreman selection. Outstanding among sources in this area is a two-volume handbook of management selection published by the American Management Association.9 Part One of this work pertains to the selection of industrial supervisors and foremen although some of the examples used by contributors are in terms of sales department management personnel. Another useful book in this area is one by George D. Halsey.10 Halsey takes a procedural approach and provides a useful program which may be adapted to the needs of particular companies.

Still another type of research that promises to be of help to sales managers in the future is being carried on in the fields of social psychology and sociometrics. Typical of references in this area is a study in the usefulness of peer ratings in the selection of supervisors,11 and case studies in the use of the Ohio State Leadership Opinion Questionnaire.12

CHAPTER V

METHODS AND TOOLS

Selecting a new sales supervisor calls for gathering information about the performance and characteristics of a number of salesmen who, by virtue of having met certain routine requirements as to age, sex, length of service, health, and education, may be considered as candidates for promotion. The personnel tools used for gathering this information must provide it in a form that will permit comparative evaluation of all candidates in terms of predetermined criteria. They must also permit gathering of information in an objective and systematic method so that the progress and development of individual salesmen can be measured and stimulated. The methods and tools used, when related in an orderly and constructive sequence, constitute a selection procedure which then may serve as the basic framework of a management development program aimed at upgrading the entire sales force.

Factors influencing the use of particular tools of selection

A number of factors exist which influence the selection tools and methods of a given firm. Some of these are the frequency of the placement decision, the criteria which management thinks are significant, the dependence on internal sources for sales supervisors, and the beliefs and experience of the sales executive.
Frequency of the placement decision

The frequency with which the decision to place a man in the job of sales supervisor needs to be made varies considerably from one firm to another according to the size of the organization, the number of salesmen and sales supervisors, nature of the selling task and amount of supervision required, the rate of growth of the selling organization, and the amount of labor turnover among sales supervisors. The nature of the selection aids or tools used will vary with the frequency with which the selection decision must be made. Where the frequency is low, more time is available to secure knowledge of the general abilities of the salesmen, and the decision tends to be made with primary reliance on purely subjective criteria. Under such conditions, observation may be the only method used. The practice of a large firm making industrial equipment fits this pattern. The sales force of this company is moderate in size and the occasions on which a new district manager must be found are very few. A testing program this firm once had has been abandoned, a formal rating plan has been discontinued, and the supervisor placement decisions are based upon the ability of the members of a promotion committee to size up a man.

Significant criteria

The decision as to the selection tools to be used is also dependent upon the criteria which management thinks are significant in the particular job situation. How much managerial ability is sales management looking for? If the supervisor's job is designed in such a way that the assignment is a stable, relatively permanent one, then
it will not be so critical to discover the potential for promotion through the supervisor's job to a higher echelon of management. The information called for may, therefore, be relatively simple. If, however, a considerable flow of personnel moves through the sales supervisor job to higher levels of sales management, more comprehensive estimates of the individual's qualifications and potential are called for. One sales manager illustrated this condition by saying, "we can't afford to have the Zone Manager's job blocked by a man who cannot be promoted." In this firm a decision as to the candidate's managerial potential was made at the time of hiring the salesman, and each succeeding assignment provided him opportunities to qualify for promotion to the next echelon.

Sources of sales supervisors

Another factor influencing the selection tools used, their nature, and the conditions of their use, is the almost complete dependence on internal sources for sales supervisors. As a result the selection tools used tend to be those which provide a basis for evaluating the performance and characteristics of the company's own salesmen.

Beliefs of the sales executive

The beliefs of the top sales executive in an organization are obviously influential in determining the methods or tools used in selecting first line sales managers. Faith of the executive in his ability to "size-up" a man, lack of understanding and faith in the use of tests or other specific devices, or the inclination to oversimplify
the selection decision may play an important part in deciding what methods or tools to use.

The particular tools used by a firm are the ones they hope will identify the man to promote by revealing his qualifications for the job to be filled. Thus the purpose of selection tools is to yield either objective or subjective evidence of the characteristics of an applicant or candidate for promotion. The major tools used will be discussed in this chapter. They include the personnel file of the salesman, the record of job performance, evaluation and appraisal records, tests, interviews, and developmental assignments.

Reference to the personnel file of the salesman

Because sales supervisors are selected primarily from among present employees a personnel file is already in existence. Contained in this file will be the initial application form, references, credit report if used, report of medical examination, tests, and records of the hiring interviews.

The application blank

In the rare cases of specific hiring the application blank is of major importance in revealing the applicant's personal data, education, business experience, activities, hobbies and references. It is the basis for interviews, reference checks, decisions as to testing, medical examination, and the entire selection procedure.

When an advance hiring policy is followed the application blank for salesmen applicants is also relied upon to develop information
that may be of value in subsequent placement as a supervisor. In this case there is a definite intention to place the individual being hired in a position of supervisory responsibility within a predictable time, and it is necessary to make some evaluation of the candidate's management potential.

A similar evaluation must be made when an organizational hiring policy is followed, the objective being to build an effectively operating sales organization by providing an inflow of personnel with the requisite qualifications, both operative and managerial. Nearly three-fourths of the firms interviewed indicated this approach to hiring for the sales department. There are varying degrees in the use of this approach, some sales managers stating that they operate in this way without qualification, others on a partial basis. For certain companies having relatively high qualifications for salesmen, the managerial potential may be inherent in the type of men they select for salesman. This was especially true in the case of firms selling products of a technical nature.

The "crown prince" approach would also fall into this category with the decision as to managerial potential being made at the time of hiring for salesman, but only in a certain per cent of the cases. One firm recruiting two separate classes of men for salesmen used the same application form for both groups, but used different interview schedules and tests in order to develop additional areas of knowledge about the background and characteristics of the managerial candidates.

Still another variation in the organizational hiring approach, which has some effect upon the extent of the information in the personnel
file, is found where the firm has a large enough volume of salesman placements relative to supervisor needs that the law of averages solves the problem of the supply of potential managers. Reliance on this relationship was mentioned by some sales executives. In this case the salesman is hired as a salesman and distinguishes himself through performance on the job. The application blank, interviews, and tests may be simplified and directed more specifically toward the selection of a salesman. In fact, in this case the original application blank would not be referred to for supervisor placement except as a basic item in the personnel file.

Illustrating this approach was the statement of one sales executive: "We're hiring for a good job as a salesman, not for a training program. We expect that one out of four will be qualified for managerial duties. There is a fairly good opportunity for advancement to a management job, but it depends on the man." Thus in organizational hiring under these conditions no attempt is made at the time of initial hiring to judge the candidate from the standpoint of supervisory potential. The same general conditions are in effect in a firm following a general hiring policy and the original application blank will not necessarily contain any information specifically designed to throw light on any future decision to place a man in a supervisory position.

Records of test results

Tests administered to men prior to employment as salesmen are available for review when the man is later considered for promotion. This is a useful source of additional information and an aid to judgment if the tests administered are designed to measure factors related
to supervisory potential. One of the firms using tests in salesman
selection administered only a single test, a measure of mathematical
ability, which is used on a "go-no-go" gauge basis. Applicants who
cannot qualify are quickly eliminated. Such a test, of course, is of
no value for future reference as to managerial potential. In the
firm in question primary reliance for information of this type is
placed upon the continuing evaluation of job performance.

Typical of practice at the other end of the scale is the firm that
makes use of the services of a staff psychologist or a psychological
consultant to secure a fairly extensive psychometric evaluation of
salesman applicants. These records, available in the personnel file,
are referred to for salesman training and counseling, for promotion,
and for executive development.

Records of hiring interviews

Records of hiring interviews may be of great value in the personnel
file under certain conditions. Where information developed is designed
to provide an evaluation of the future qualification of the individuals
for promotion, these interview forms may be supplemented by periodic
evaluation and counseling interviews and thus become a major source of
data for the selection decision.

Performance records

The performance record of the salesman can serve as a major tool
in presenting a significant group of qualifications of the salesman
for interpretation. Since all salesmen in a given sales organization
are functioning under relatively uniform conditions of operating and
managerial policy and procedure, the records of the salesmen may be compared directly as a primary basis for decision in the selection of first line sales managers. Decisions as to the relative merit of a number of men being considered for selection as sales supervisor are based upon fairly objective data to the extent that sales volume and other specific elements of job performance are considered. The less tangible elements of salesman performance require the development of more or less formalized systems of review and comparison to supplement the information available and recorded in the salesman's personnel records.

Evaluation and appraisal records

The third major element in the selection of sales supervisors is made up of the evaluation and appraisal records that are created and maintained by the sales organization. These records are a source of information on which selection decisions may be based and, together with the systems and procedures used to create them, may be regarded as a selection tool.

The effectiveness of a salesman evaluation system depends on a number of critical factors. First, the information required for the selection decision must be provided for in the content of a rating form. The rating form, once designed, must not be subject to frequent

1Where absolute sales volume is not a desirable basis for comparison, more objective measures may be found in sales against quota, full line sales, profitability, new accounts, or other criteria of successful sales performance.
change. Information gathered must be accumulated over a period of several months to several years and such periodic evaluations, to be comparable, need to be based on a uniform approach to the appraisal task. One firm, in changing its rating forms, took great precautions to insure comparability of appraisals made on the old forms and the new. At the time of the introduction of changes in the evaluation system, raters may be called upon to relate or summarize all old evaluations in terms of the new.

A second consideration in maximizing the effectiveness of an appraisal system is thorough and uniform training of all managers in the procedure for using the system. This is needed to provide for the greatest degree of uniformity and comparability of appraisals. Clear definitions of factors and explicit instructions to raters as a part of the rating form also contribute to the value of appraisals.

Some plans for rating and evaluating salesmen fail to include provisions for accumulating data as to the managerial potential of the salesman. Such rating systems merely provide for periodic review of job performance factors as a basis for supervision and training, or as in one case, for the distribution of bonus compensation.

Organization of the appraisal system

The salesman's immediate supervisor is the obvious one to make the most useful evaluation of the salesman's daily operations. In addition, the next level of sales management is often in a position to observe performance and make evaluations. In a sales organization with staff people rendering assistance to salesmen in the field, a
third group can often render useful appraisals of the salesmen. In this category are found district sales promotion managers, sales training managers or service managers, to name a few. The number of people making systematic appraisals will vary with the size and organization of the sales force.

Ratings are commonly taken every six months although some annual ratings are found. The frequency may vary with the length of service of the salesman with new salesmen being rated, for example, every three months for their first eighteen months of service and annually thereafter.

All salesmen are rated periodically in some companies with an evaluation form covering all aspects of their performance. In other companies all salesmen are rated on a job performance rating form with a formal appraisal of management potential or eligibility for promotion being made only on certain selected candidates for promotion. The identification of such candidates may be made in terms of certain objective criteria for advancement, such as a predetermined number of years of service, the attainment of a certain level of sales production or the completion of a series of job rotation assignments for training purposes.

Another aspect of the organization and nature of the rating program in which practice varies is the degree of formality of the evaluation schedule. Rating systems may vary all the way from a completely unstructured open appraisal to a very specific evaluation form with all factors and degrees of factors clearly defined. The
Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are three in number: (1) to investigate and analyze current practices of certain Ohio firms in selecting sales supervisors; (2) to discover and describe any unique practices and emerging trends in this field of sales management; and (3) to develop recommendations useful in making supervisor selection an integral and consistent part of a complete sales personnel program.

Statement of the problem

As a prerequisite to the statement of the problem it is necessary to point out by way of definition that the term sales supervisor as used in this study refers to the individual in the sales organization who is charged with the responsibility for performing the actual field contact with salesmen. It is the functional job assignment that is significant to this study rather than the title or physical location of the first line manager.

The problem confronting sales management in selecting sales supervisors is one of selecting men, usually without previous managerial experience, who have an above-average expectation of success as first-line managers. The difficulties stem largely from the differences between operative performance as a salesman and managerial performance as a sales supervisor. It is necessary to achieve a reorientation from performing sales activities to supervising the performance of others. The salesman needs to plan his own operations, but the sales supervisor needs to plan the work of others and coordinate their activities in such a way as to achieve sales and promotional objectives. Another difficulty stems from the fact that the salesman is concerned only
sales manager of a firm using a completely informal group appraisal program made this explanation of his viewpoint:

Many books have been written and many fine procedures developed. They work in many organizations, but in our business we have a day to day association with the man by several management people. As close as we are together, and with the high level of supervision, we find this informal method fills our needs. . . . We have tried formal rating systems in the past. The novelty wears off of the form and then it has no advantage over the previous method. We use an open, written appraisal.

The sales force of this firm is a local one, closely associated with headquarters line and staff sales executives. Communication channels are short, generally face to face, and group appraisals are made in conferences of line and staff sales executives. At the other end of the scale a large, widely dispersed, sales organization will find need for more formal tools for securing uniformity and comparability of salesman evaluations.

Content of appraisal and evaluation forms

The greater part of the appraisal forms is devoted to the description or rating of the subject salesman in terms of a list of performance and personal factors. These factors are summarized and discussed in the preceding chapter where their usefulness as criteria for the selection of first line sales managers is analyzed. In addition, some rating systems contain one or more of the following four sections: summary evaluation, forecast of potential ability, plan of action, and report of the appraisal interview.
Summary evaluation.—In this section the rater is asked to rank the subject in terms of his qualification for management or to place him in a scale ranging from poor to superior. If a point system is used the points are totaled and this sum is compared with a graded scale to establish an over-all rating. In less highly structured rating systems the rater may simply be asked to make his summary evaluation as another subjective judgment.

Forecast of potential ability.—The procedure may go one step beyond the over-all evaluation, and require the rater to indicate the management job for which he believes the subject qualified, if any, establish upper limits to management progress in terms of present qualifications of the subject, and indicate any deficiencies believed to be present.

Plan of action.—This may then lead naturally into recommendations on the action to be taken, worked out in a specific way by the sales- man's superior in terms of a plan, a time table, and definite provision for follow-up steps to insure that the program is carried out. This section ties in with a supervisor or management development program designed to create a pool of promotable men.

Appraisal interview.—A final section may be included, reporting the progress of an appraisal interview in which the evaluation is discussed with the subject and his reactions and comments recorded. His participation in developing a plan of action and establishing goals
may also be sought. In this way the appraisal and evaluation forms and procedures become not only a means of discovering management potential among the salesmen, but also of providing the basis of the development program.

Importance of evaluation and appraisal systems

Firms that recognize the importance of careful selection of the first line of sales management place heavy reliance on an evaluation program of some sort. While there is considerable variation in the degree of formality of the programs used, they all provide the means of marshaling the desired information in a systematic form that will permit comparison and provide the basis for measuring the progress of a given man over a period of time. Evaluation reports represent the recorded judgment of sales supervisors, district managers and other sales executives. They may be considered a major tool for the selection of first-line sales managers.

Peer ratings

A special type of salesman rating and evaluation process is the peer rating technique. The usefulness of this personnel tool was explored in a study made under the auspices of the Life Insurance Agency Management Association. An analysis was made of the peer nominations on a fourteen item questionnaire by 2200 agents of one company in 127 districts.² The results of the peer ratings correlated well with

future performance of those promoted. It was felt by the author that the peer rating technique is established by this study as a useful element in management selection procedure. It was concluded that there are certain identifiable characteristics which differentiate good and poor supervisory personnel, and these can be identified in potential supervisors by their peers at the time they are all in the subordinate position. Two kinds of questions were used, work-oriented and socially oriented, expressed simly in terms of the regular work and social situation.

Among the firms interviewed in this study no formal use of peer ratings was found, but some sales managers gave consideration to peer approval when selecting a man for promotion to sales supervisor. Three statements made in one case history reflect a consideration of the subjective judgment of the degree of peer approval enjoyed by given supervisor candidate. These statements are: "other men look up to him," "respect which salesmen have for him—a measure of his natural leadership," and "can earn the respect of his men."

Establishing a formal procedure for securing such evaluations would require considerable care in order to avoid undesirable effects on morale and in order to insure that the responses or ratings obtained would be honest and significant. Once such ratings become available on a continuing basis, their use will provide another avenue of approach to the selection of sales supervisors.
Tests

The use of tests in the selection of personnel of any type must be approached with considerable care and reservation. Tests are properly regarded as aids to judgment rather than fully qualified selection tools. This precaution is voiced by writers in the field of personnel selection with the further admonition that the usefulness of tests depends upon the attitude which management takes toward the testing program, the measures employed to validate the tests used with reference to the particular firm, and the care with which the use of test results is related to the other elements of the selection procedure.

Tests are highly susceptible to misuse. Some of the failures in their employment have led sales executives to abandon a testing program once installed at considerable cost. One of the errors in test use is in placing too great a reliance on test results and in consequence ignoring or minimizing other elements of the selection process. Other errors include failure to identify the criteria subject to measurement by tests that are associated with successful performance as a sales supervisor, and failure to correlate test scores with successful supervisory performance. Many tests, particularly those measuring psychological and personality factors, require the services of a professional psychologist, and tests of any type will fail to yield full benefits, and may actually be misleading, unless the choice of tests, and their validation and interpretation are carried out in accordance with sound research practices.
Because of a lack of understanding of testing techniques, sales managers who are not using tests have voiced doubt that tests would add anything to their present selection procedure, even when admitting that they would like to find a better way to evaluate personnel.

When tests are administered

Tests useful in making selections of sales supervisors may be administered at the time of original hiring of the salesman or at a later date when the individual is being considered for promotion, or for admission to a promotability pool. Of the firms interviewed, seventeen used tests only when selecting salesmen, two firms administered additional tests when appraising management potential and fifteen firms made no use of tests. Those tests administered at initial hiring are available in the personnel files for review where the salesman is being considered for promotion to a supervisory job. Where a well-planned long range program of supervisor selection is not in effect, sales managers indicated that they do not place much emphasis on the review of such tests. The impressions and judgment pertaining to the man gathered through constant association on the job far outweigh, in the sales manager's mind, the scores which the man may have received on tests taken several years earlier. However, once the critical nature of the problem of selecting first-line sales supervisors is recognized early, testing for indications of supervisory potential should provide a better opportunity for verification of the effectiveness of the tests.
Examples of testing programs

A baking firm distributing its products door-to-door through route men administers the following tests to salesmen who have proven their sales ability and demonstrated promotability characteristics through their performance of training assignments: (1) Otis Self Administering Test of Mental Ability, Higher Examination, Form "A", (2) Johnson Temperament Analysis, (3) Bell Adjustment Inventory, (4) Washington Sales Aptitude Test, and (5) Washington University Social Adjustment Test. Commenting on the use of this testing program, the sales executive said:

I insist that not more than 50 per cent of the men upgraded be those who do not show up strong on their tests. At least one-half of our supervisors must be capable of further promotion. We see a very close co-ordination between test results and further promotional success.

According to the approach of this sales manager to the use of tests, it is not essential to score among the top group on these tests to reach the job of supervisor, but the test is relied on very heavily in selecting those who will move on through the supervisor's job to that of branch manager. Research on this particular test group and validation of the results was done under the leadership of a staff psychologist at national headquarters.

Another example of the development of a reasonably complete testing program is the case of a firm in the electrical industry. Tests are administered at the time of recruiting salesmen. The breadth of the tests used is designed to provide measures which can be correlated with supervisory management success, as well as with sales performance. Included in the battery of tests are (1) The Bernreuter
Personality Inventory, (2) a general business skills inventory, (3) a sales aptitude inventory, (4) Otis Employment Test, (5) a social intelligence inventory, and (6) a vocabulary test. A profile is derived from the interpretation of the test results in terms of nine factors: extroversion, dominance, self-confidence, social dependence, sales aptitude, mental alertness, vocabulary, social intelligence and basic business skills. The profile of a candidate is compared with a profile band based on the test scores of present successful salesmen and considered as an important aid to judgment in the hiring decision.

No special profiles have been developed by this company for the first level of sales supervision. It should be noted here that the decision to promote is jointly made by the regional and district managers. Considerable variation exists from one region to another. Some of the regional managers who may be considered "old line" managers place much less emphasis on test profiles than do others. The recommendation of the district or branch manager is also of considerable influence and situational factors may easily outweigh the test profile when the decision to promote is made.

Fairly extensive testing programs may be set up by a firm of psychologists on a consulting basis. This is the case in the firm just referred to. Another company using the services of a consultant administers an extensive battery of tests to salesmen before hiring, and later sends men regarded as likely candidates for promotion to the headquarters of the consulting service for a period of
testing and interviewing. The sales executive of this company indicated they were "pretty sure" of these men before sending them off for this session. Under these conditions the primary use of such a program would be as the basis for further training, education and development.

General attitudes toward tests

Among the non-users of tests attitudes were based on doubt as to the usefulness and applicability of tests on the one hand, and great faith in the ability of present sales management to identify successful managers in other ways, on the other hand. Among the users of tests a variety of opinions was found. One firm using a comprehensive battery was considering a change to a simpler testing program. The reasons given were the time involved in administering a large battery of tests and the feeling that many of the areas tested were not significant in selecting either salesmen or managers. A single test was being considered, the Activity Vector Analysis, but there was some reluctance to invest the time and effort required for proper validation and establishment of norms. Sales executives interviewed seemed fully aware of the limitations of tests and the frequently stated warning that tests are merely an aid to judgment, so much so in fact that there was a reluctance to investigate thoroughly the contribution which a sound testing program could make to salesman or sales supervisor selection.

Of the 86 sales executives attending the 1958 Sales Management Seminar at Rutgers University, some 22 per cent reported that tests
are used in hiring, in an attempt to identify supervisory potential. Another 14 per cent use tests of salesmen being considered for promotion, with practice varying from administering a single test to use of test batteries designed by outside personnel consultants.

Bases for the use of tests

The basis on which sales executives interviewed justified their use of tests in the selection of first line sales managers was in terms of identifying common characteristics or traits of successful sales supervisors, then measuring candidates for such jobs in terms of their possession of such criteria.

Research into the soundness of this basis has been done in the area of general managerial ability, and has some applicability to the sales management field. One such study was made of office, production and technical executives. Carefully designed and statistically controlled, there were 468 executives in two samples, one of 232 and the other, 236. The factors measured and the tests used were these:

(3) Vocational Interests: The Vocational Interest Blank for Men, (revised) E. K. Strong, Jr., 1959; (4) Personality: The California Psychological Inventory, H. G. Gough, 1951; (5) Biographical Experiences: The Personal History Questionnaire, Management Development Laboratory, University of Minnesota. These measures yielded 98

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with his own motivation, while the sales supervisor finds that he must contribute something to the motivation of others as well as himself. An exception to this relationship is found in the case of the distributor's or manufacturer's salesman calling on wholesalers and retailers. Here the salesman's job includes many relationships with his dealer's salesmen that are similar to the duties of a supervisor.

The simple difference in the list of daily activities of the salesman and the supervisor may raise some problems for the new supervisor. The salesman spends most of his time and effort working with people who are outside the organization, while the supervisor is working primarily with people inside. This change makes some demands in terms of attitude re-orientation. The selection of men who can successfully make the transition from salesman to supervisor requires a planned approach and procedure, a continuing search for predictors of success, and a never-ending comparison process for validating the predictors.

A concept of the importance and scope of the supervisor selection problem can be gained from a consideration of the number of supervisors found in sales organizations, the ratio of supervisors to salesmen and the rate at which replacements are called for.

In a survey of 104 companies participating in an American Management Association conference on sales supervision, 93 companies reporting on the number of first-line sales supervisors indicated the following: 35.5 per cent have fewer than 5; 21.5 per cent, 6-10; 22.6 per cent 11-25; 20.4 per cent 26 or more. The median company employs 8.7 first-line supervisors.\(^{13}\) A group of 186 sales executives

specific scales and measures of personal characteristics or experiences.
The identification of individuals in the group possessing managerial
effectiveness was made by a six man panel of executive appraisers in
each of the 13 companies where the 468 executives were employed. The
study developed a high degree of correlation between predictions or
identification of managerial effectiveness and the measured character-
istics. A general verbal description of the more effective manager
was derived:

The "more effective" manager is somewhat more intelli-
gent than the "less effective" manager; his vocational
interests are more similar to the interests of sales managers,
purchasing agents, and manufacturing company presidents; and
they are less similar to the interests of men engaged in bio-
logical sciences and technical crafts such as dentistry,
veterinary medicine, printing, carpentry, farming, and teach-
ing vocational agriculture; he tends to be more aggressive,
persuasive, and self-reliant; he has had more educational
training and was more active in sports and hobbies as a young
man; and his wife also has had more educational training and
worked less after marriage.4

The authors of the report go on to point out that the description
of the "more effective" manager is similar to that which might have
been developed in conversations with managers but that it is superior
because it is based on tested relationships rather than on opinions and
hunches.

Applying this basis to the use of tests in the selection of sales
supervisors, it seems evident that tests designed to measure certain
pertinent characteristics can be useful if they are properly validated
in terms of the particular sales organization.

4Ibid., 161.
Projective techniques

Closely related to the more conventional kinds of tests are the projective techniques for depth analysis of personality traits. These techniques and devices are the product of clinical psychology. As such their original orientation was toward the detection of deficiencies as the basis for psychiatric treatment of serious cases of maladjustment. Application of such techniques to the operational problem of management personnel selection, however, seems well justified in the light of a fairly extensive study of the causes of managerial inadequacy. Failure of management personnel according to the results of one research project\(^5\) is more frequently the result of personality problems than either lack of knowledge or proficiency. This study was based upon a survey of management people in 177 industrial organizations. To the extent that projective techniques can be designed that will measure personality factors, and to the extent that such measures can be validated, specifically and generally, some contribution to personnel selection can be expected.

One of the best known of the projective techniques is the Rorschach Test. The basic element of the projective methods is the presentation of some conceptual stimulant to which the person being tested is called upon for a free response. The response in the Rorschach Test is evoked by the subject being confronted with a predetermined set of ten ink blots. The person being tested then responds with an identification

of what the image suggests to him. The usefulness of the Rorschach Test in personnel selection has been thrown into question by some research studies. Kurtz, a psychologist with considerable background in sales personnel, suggests in the conclusions derived from his study that insufficient attention has been given to validation of such tests. Claims for the usefulness of Rorschach tests he holds in serious doubt, stating that a scoring system established for one group "must be validated on a second group to assure that the 'validity' results from more than capitalizing on the chance idiosyncrasies of the first group." In his study he finds that the Rorschach Test failed to predict the success or failure of life insurance managers. It has also failed to predict success or failure in a number of other industrial and military occupations.

The Thematic Apperception Test is another of the Projective tests. Using pictures rather than ink blots, it is more structured than the Rorschach Test, and like it, its interpretation requires the services of one or more skilled psychologists. Taylor and Nevis state that this technique, which can be adapted to the industrial

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8Ibid., 462.
selection situation offers considerable help in the selection of managerial personnel. Projective techniques, including the Thematic Apperception Test, were used by Dr. William E. Henry\(^9\) in creating a generalized image of a successful executive.

Two other projective methods are the sentence-completion and word association methods and the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study. These methods are even more completely structured than the two preceding tests. As a result they can and would need to be cast in terms and situations encountered by the salesman or sales supervisor.

The Worthington Personal History form is an example of another class of projective techniques. Presented as a relatively unstructured personal history questionnaire, it may be considered by the applicant as an ordinary application blank. Projective analysis is used to interpret the responses and phrasing of responses of the applicant, and ratings are applied according to a scoring system validated for hiring in the given placement situation. When applied to a problem in the selection of salesmen\(^10\) the ratings on the history form were positively correlated with two indices of salesman desirability, tenure and average sales. The conclusions of the authors are, that if the personal history technique had been used in the selection of this group of salesmen, estimated total sales volume would have shown a gain of 38 per cent, amounting, in the company studied, to a quarter of a million dollars.

\(^9\)Henry, op. cit.

\(^10\)Gilmore J. Spencer and Richard Worthington, "Validity of a Projective Technique in Predicting Sales Effectiveness," Personnel Psychology, V, No. 2 (Summer 1952), 125-144.
As a final word on projective techniques it should be pointed out that their use requires careful validation and the services of competent psychologists. A competent psychologist would be defined not only as one whose clinical background was appropriate, but as one who also has an understanding of and an orientation to the sales personnel selection problem. The application of projective techniques to the specific problem of selecting first line managers in the sales department is not widespread among the firms interviewed as evidenced by the number of companies reporting projects in this area. Two sales executives report that their companies are generally exploring the applications of projective techniques to selection, but they have no findings to report. Two other firms utilizing the services of consultants in selection report the use of personal history questionnaires of a projective nature. These are administered to the applicant for hiring at the salesman's level along with a series of tests. The analysis and test profile of the applicant become a part of the individual's personnel file when hired as a salesman and are available for reference in the event of future consideration for a supervisory assignment.

The requirement that the services of a competent psychologist be available for adequate use of projective techniques will remain as an obstacle to their widespread application. Most firms will probably rely upon the services of consultants if the use of projective techniques is to increase.
Summary

Tests used in selection of sales supervisors, when properly chosen and carefully validated can be expected to serve, in the first instance as a negative screening device, and in the second, with more carefully controlled and analyzed experience, as a positive tool of selection. The reliance placed on tests in the selection of sales supervisors among the firms interviewed is at a minimum. While testing of candidates for jobs as salesman is widespread, considerably fewer companies administer tests to salesmen being considered for promotion. Review of the hiring test scores prior to promotion was mentioned only twice in the interview phase of this study and in those cases the respondents stated that little weight was attached to the test results in making a selection decision. Demonstrations of the skill, performance, and personality of the candidates, and the subjective judgments of the men making the decision overshadow the intangible impressions gained from a test profile.

An improvement in sales managers' use of tests can best be realized through the conduct of further research of the kinds done by Henry, Ghiselli, and Bass referred to in the preceding chapter.\footnote{Supra, p. 83} Very large firms employing a staff psychologist can conduct research activities to measure the validity of specific tests and would do well to establish long range case studies to improve their personnel selection and development performance. The sales personnel or training executive in smaller concerns should at the least keep himself
Informed of personnel research being conducted by universities and professional associations and have access to the services of an industrial or personnel psychologist on a consulting basis.

**Interviews**

One of the major selection tools is the interview. In selecting a sales supervisor from among a number of salesman candidates the interview provides a method for gathering certain types of information and a basis for the formation of judgments about the observable characteristics of men.

**Attitudes toward interviewing**

Attitudes vary considerably among sales executives toward the use of, and the importance of, interviews in the selection of sales supervisors. In one case the interviews between salesmen and their immediate line superiors, and between salesmen and other line and staff executives, were regarded as the major basis for arriving at decisions to promote. At the other extreme was the view which held that interviews with salesmen were "rather silly" since the salesman and his superior were in close contact every day.

**Types of interviews**

Interviews contributing to the ability of sales managers to make the decision as to whom to select as a new supervisor can be divided into two general classes, selection interviews and counseling interviews. Selection interviews are those that are held with
the candidate for the express purpose of forming the basis for a selection decision. Counseling interviews conducted as a normal part of supervision or as a part of a management development program will contribute heavily to the ability of the sales executive to evaluate the relative potential for growth of the men in his sales unit.

The organization of interviewing programs varied in terms of the amount of formal planning and the regularity of scheduling of interviews. This type of variation was present in the organization of both selection interviews and counseling interviews.

Selection interviews.--A case of the least formal use of interviewing is found in the firm referred to above where selection interviews were considered superfluous. The only use of a selection interview per se is in the event a man is being considered for promotion and assignment to another district, in which case an interview is arranged between the district manager and any salesman recommended from other districts or divisions. This firm and a number of others rely primarily on a system of continuous counseling to provide the knowledge and understanding of a candidate's qualifications for promotion to a supervisory job.

A second approach to organization of selection interviews involves interviewing one or more candidates by the next higher echelon of line authority as a part of the selection process. The district manager may nominate one or more salesmen for consideration and the regional manager or home office sales manager will interview them.
A third and more comprehensive approach is a formal plan of multiple selection interviews. One arrangement provides for four interviews within the sales department and one interview with a staff member of the personnel department. Another firm reported that the supervisor candidate is interviewed by the branch manager, the regional manager and the sales manager. A firm manufacturing presses and other equipment for the printing industry uses a series of interviews in the home office for men recommended by the division managers. Recommendation for these selection interviews is made from a national list of promotable men which is based on evaluation reports and counseling interviews. As many as seven interviews are held with the candidate by different members of the sales department all the way to the vice-president of sales.

Multiple interviews may lead to selection through successive endorsements in the candidate's file or they may be preliminary to group discussion of the candidate in a promotion or selection conference.

Counseling interviews.—The discussion of counseling interviews is pertinent here because the conduct of such interviews over a period of time builds up a file of information and knowledge about a candidate that may make any further interviews for the purpose of selection unnecessary. One approach to the use of counseling interviews held that counseling is simply a normal part of the job of the supervisor. Where a narrow concept of the supervisor's job is held
such counseling would be primarily in terms of continued training in
the elements of the salesman’s job. This approach to counseling
would not necessarily develop any understanding of the salesman’s
management potential, and such interviews would not contribute much
to a selection decision.

At the other end of the scale is found the practice of a firm in
which the evaluation form is made the key to the supervisor selection
procedure. There is provision in the evaluation form for the super­
visor to record the salesman’s attitude and comments when his evalua­
tion is discussed with him in a counseling interview. Thus, as a
result of the formalization of a normal function of supervision, the
counseling interview, based upon performance and management potential
appraisal, provides a series of regularly scheduled evaluations on
which the selection of sales supervisors may be made. The counseling
interview in conjunction with an appraisal system becomes a key tool
in the selection of sales supervisors. The sales manager of this com­
pany in discussing the assumptions underlying this method, said:

The supervisor, to perform his job properly must develop
his people. The appraisal system forces him to evaluate, to
look for weak points, and to devise a program for eliminating
these weak points. Growth and development is an individual
matter and the supervisor must motivate his men to accept
the responsibility for their own development.

The frequency of counseling interviews varies with the approach
of the management. One concept of the function looks upon counseling
as a daily process of an informal nature, the statement being made
by one sales manager that all contacts with the salesman are oriented
toward his continuous development. Other arrangements with respect
surveyed by the American Management Association\textsuperscript{14} estimated that in a five year period, 26 per cent of their sales supervisors will have to be replaced owing to retirements, terminations, and the like. This same group of sales executives anticipates the need to increase the number of sales supervisors by 50 per cent to accommodate the expansion of their sales forces.

While the number of sales supervisors that must be secured is obviously not as great as the number of new salesmen required, the difficulty of selecting supervisors is increased by the need to find men who have some degree of managerial capability. The problem is further complicated by the difficulty of establishing objective findings in the study of leadership as to its nature and the qualities of successful leaders. A further complication is found in the situational aspects of leadership. Discussing this phase of the problem, Pigors and Myers write:

Finally, there is much research evidence to indicate that the qualities of successful leaders are not universal. Instead, they are specific to the situation, and one type of situation or organization will call forth a different type of leader from another. For example, the type of leader needed to initiate action in a moribund organization is clearly different from the type needed to maintain in smooth working order an already established and successful organization. Furthermore, the "situation" may be created by the "gatekeepers"—the present top executives who, in selecting new candidates, tend to think in terms of personality patterns similar to their own. These candidates may be more "successful" (in the sense that they get promoted more rapidly) than totally different personality types who would be more successful in an organization dominated by a different type of top management.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 99.
to frequency of contacts with salesmen in which a counseling relationship exists, were weekly, monthly, semi-annually and annually. The latter two categories were usually associated with a conference on the evaluation and appraisal of the salesman's performance. Group counseling at branch meetings, where used, would probably fail to yield the basis for any evaluation of the salesman unless it made provision for individual consideration of each salesman.

Value of interviews in supervisor selection

The value of an appraisal interview between a manager and his salesmen will be severely limited if the daily working relationships between the two are close. Through daily contact the manager will already have formed rather firm opinions as to the salesman's qualities and characteristics. It is doubtful that a formal interview between the two would shed any new light. Where a series of interviews with upper echelon or home office line and staff people is a part of the selection procedure the interview can be of real value in helping these executives, who already know only the man's performance record, to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the individual as the basis for selection.

Developmental assignments

Developmental assignments as tools of supervisor selection are special projects or activities temporarily assigned to an individual salesman for the purpose of providing an opportunity for him to demonstrate and develop his abilities in a particular skill. The
salesman given such assignments is one who has been singled out as probably possessing qualities which will enable him to become a successful supervisor. Careful observation of the way the salesman performs these tasks will provide a basis for appraisal of his potential and contribute to the selection of men for promotion to the ranks of sales supervisors.

Developmental assignments are useful when the sales job itself is comparatively routine. They enable management to observe the salesman's ability to assume responsibility, to plan, to train, to solve problems and to accomplish limited tasks requiring some of the qualifications of a supervisor.

Nature of developmental assignments

Individual training is an important element of developmental assignments and their use for training is fully as important as for evaluation and selection. For this reason the salesman is given individual coaching in the performance of the project and his ability to absorb training and to apply what he has learned is indicative of the kind of performance to expect of him in the future. Thus developmental assignments must be regarded as training activities. Executives using this method of training and selection indicated that assignments are usually made on an individual and informal basis.

The individual aspect distinguishes the developmental assignment from a systematic enlargement of the salesman's job to include activities of a supervisory nature. For example, a firm having a low ratio of salesman trainees to present salesmen may assign trainees to
selected salesmen for on-the-job training. The salesmen who are selected to serve as coaches thus have an opportunity to demonstrate their skill in one of the basic functions of supervision. Fundamentally, the salesman's job description does not include training of junior salesmen and the assignment is made for the purpose of locating and identifying salesmen with supervisory potential. In contrast to this method of organizing the field training of new salesmen the job might be performed by the sales supervisor without recourse to the services of other salesmen. Where the salesman's job has been enlarged by the addition of training, communication, and territory management responsibilities, the developmental assignment is not required in the same degree.

Another approach to the problem of providing salesmen the opportunity to demonstrate and develop management potential is through the design of the job structure within the sales force. Designating senior salesmen to work with trainees or junior salesmen is one arrangement commonly found. Another is the use by bakeries selling door-to-door of the route captain or crew chief who has certain duties in the operation of his unit but not full supervisory responsibility. A firm selling business forms has many sales offices with two or three salesmen. Wherever there are two or more salesmen in a single office, one is designated Sales Agency Manager, with the responsibility for opening the mail, recording the sales of the office, and assigning salesmen to accounts and inquiries. If these duties are performed by one salesman as a permanent assignment the fixing of such responsibilities would be a problem in organization structure and job design. If the
salesmen are rotated in the position of sales agency manager, then it could be regarded as a case of developmental assignment. The purpose in this exploration of the nature of developmental assignment, job design and pre-supervisor training is not to split hairs but to emphasize the fact that there are a number of approaches to the problem of identifying potential sales supervisors. Also it is important to emphasize the fact that as a tool of selection in this case the developmental assignment is appropriate in certain situations according to the nature of the selling task and the organization structure of the sales force. Characteristics of the salesman that may be adequately demonstrated by a senior salesman in one organization, or a territory manager in another, may call for special assignments in a firm having a fairly routine task for its salesmen.

Activities used as developmental assignments

Developmental assignments take a variety of forms. One firm makes an alternate supervisor assignment when the regular supervisor is on vacation or called away from his field assignment. Another activity that is assigned intermittently is the preparation of sales meetings at the branch, region or national headquarters. In an electrical products firm such assignments are combined with a modest degree of job enlargement under the title of senior salesman. The sales manager's comment was that this was a "non-regimented plan that lets the best man rise."

One sales executive sounded a note of warning that a formal
program of upgrading and development may ruin a good salesman if he
doesn't make good in terms of achieving advancement. This firm has
three grades of field salesmen, sales trainee, junior salesman, and
senior salesman. The senior salesman's job is regarded as a position
of high attainment and status. Developmental assignments can be used
on an informal basis without any implied commitment to promote and
without suggesting any time table for promotion. The sales personnel
manager commented:

When the district manager sees a man who shows promise
he lets him help in certain jobs, for example, preparing
budgets. The man is primarily responsible for his own
development. We also give potential managers training
assignments in conducting training meetings.

In this way men who otherwise give indication of possessing some mana-
gerial potential may be given an opportunity to demonstrate their
ability and at the same time be coached to a higher level of readiness.

Among the specific assignments noted were (1) alternate or sub-
stitute supervisor, (2) training assignment, (3) job rotation, (4) con-
ducting or having some special part in headquarters, district, or
local meetings, (5) assistance to the district manager in the prepara-
tion of budgets, sales planning or market development projects, or
other activities of local branch management. Performance of assign-
ments of this type by the salesman either confirms or denies the ac-
curacy of the subjective judgment of management as to the salesman's
capabilities, and in this way serves as a tool of selection.

Use of developmental assignments

When the sales executives interviewed referred to an example
of supervisor placement, experience gained in developmental
assignments played an important part in management's decision to promote. Examples of such experience reported by sales executives included (1) training men, (2) handling assistants, (3) performing as route captain, (4) supervising a junior salesman, (5) developing cub salesmen, (6) orienting new men to their jobs, (7) handling tough sales assignments, and (8) accepting training responsibility.

The use of the developmental assignment as a tool of selection is based upon the fact that it contributes one very important element to the decision to promote, namely the foundation for a judgment of the candidate's ability to perform some of the important elements of the job to which he is being promoted. Further, it permits enlarging the dimensions of the salesman's job without involving the organization structure and without creating a web of implied commitments to all salesmen. Finally it permits flexibility in the development of sales personnel so that returns from training effort can be maximized.

Summary

The function of a selection tool is to facilitate the accumulation and evaluation of data and opinion to serve as the basis of the decision to place a given man as a sales supervisor. Some of these tools, the personnel file, performance records, and most tests, are largely passive in that they are primarily repositories of information. They provide a historical record of his demonstrated nature and ability. The other tools are active. They elicit information that cannot be known through any other medium. Certain kinds of tests, for example projective tests, fall in this category along with evaluation and
appraisal records, interviews and developmental assignments.

Successful use of the passive tools requires proper design of forms and records and accuracy in record keeping. They must be related to hiring policy for first line sales managers to insure that they accumulate the kinds of information required for future decisions. Once established, such tools are relatively stable; however, their content should be subjected to periodic review and revision as needed.

The active tools place greater demands on the executives using them. In the use of an effective evaluation and appraisal system, for example, the rater is called upon for a summary, a forecast, and a plan of action. These steps are forward looking and constructive; their proper execution helps to create some of the values that are being sought. Among the interviews, the counseling interview should contribute an active force. Its subject is constructive change which, if intelligently directed, will tend to add to the qualifications of promotable men. The active aspect of developmental assignments is most apparent. They force the salesman to exercise his latent abilities in a setting in which he not only demonstrates his potential for success in management activities, but also develops appropriate skill, attitudes, and knowledge.

Evaluation and appraisal records, when properly designed, provide the most complete and pertinent information of any of the selection tools. The major weakness in the use of appraisal systems is in the excessive dependence upon subjective traits of character and
personality. Their strength is in the broad base of personnel measurement which they may encompass. If so designed, they can include appraisals of current performance in all phases of the job, appraisals of characteristics and attitudes, and evaluations of performance in developmental assignments.

The selection tools used should be designed to provide data in terms of the criteria for supervisory placement that are considered most important, that will lend themselves to the most specific measurement, and that can be validated for the particular selling organization.

Developmental assignments do not occupy as prominent a place among selection tools as their usefulness requires. They perform a dual function of providing the means whereby the salesman can demonstrate his abilities in activities similar to those he will be performing as a supervisor, and providing a medium for training and developing the salesman for his future assignment to the first level of sales management.

A more fundamental approach which would integrate the developmental assignment with the salesman's job content is possible under a thoroughly implemented policy of job enlargement. A consistent set of objectives, policies and tools is required to provide an effective sales supervisor selection procedure.
CHAPTER VI

PROCEDURES

A procedure is defined as a relationship of complementary functions that is set up as a basis for the execution of a project.\(^1\) It is adopted for the purpose of facilitating the accomplishment of specific objectives in an orderly and economical way. It insures uniformity of action and conserves executive time. The content of a selection procedure must be consistent with the personnel policies of the firm. In the absence of a written policy statement some executives interviewed talked in terms of objectives and procedures when discussing the primary forces which guide their sales personnel activities. In the absence of a clearly defined procedure, responses to questions of this type tended to be in terms of the training approach used to develop managers, or in terms of individual tools of selection.

The steps in a selection procedure

The basic steps in a selection procedure for the first level of sales management can be summarized in five major groups with sub-groups

\(^1\)Davis, Ralph C., op. cit., p. 744.
as presented in the following general five-point outline of procedure:

A) Review:
   1) Personnel file
      a) Personal history
      b) References
      c) Test results
      d) Interview reports
   2) Job performance records
      a) Sales records
      b) Other job activities
   3) Evaluation and appraisal reports
   4) Counseling interview records
   5) Training records
      a) Formal training activities
      b) Developmental assignments
      c) Self development activities

B) Test
C) Interview
D) Consult with other executives
E) Decision

This outline is a composite of the procedures discussed by sales executives interviewed and no one firm could refer to a formal, written procedure of this scope. Due to the lack of testing of salesmen immediately prior to and for the purpose of promotion, only three firms pursued informal procedures including all of the major steps. Considerable variation in the extent of records reviewed exists since only some of the records listed are used by some firms.

All of the steps in the outline above lead to the final one, the decision. The selection or placement of a sales supervisor occurs as the result of a decision being made by someone in authority. The location of the responsibility for making the decision varies from one organization to another. Several executives may participate in the selection decision as in the case of a firm manufacturing and selling large installations of industrial equipment. The decision in this
This view of the particular determinants of managerial success advanced by Pigors and Myers suggests a possible explanation of the casual and popular observation of the wide variety of personal characteristics displayed by a group of executives all of whom may be termed successful. The special ingredient in their success is not apparent to the observer because it may exist within the social and psychological relationships within and surrounding the organization.

Such relationships are involved, abstract, and subjective. The members of an organization are seldom aware of the implications of the social and psychological framework within which they operate and find it difficult to describe the situation when asked specifically about it. Responses to questions on the subject of executive success are usually in terms of leadership ability or of a list of traits which the successful supervisor should possess.

The identification and description of leadership are subjects that have challenged men's minds for centuries. Many approaches to the subject have been taken, but the results have been primarily in the nature of lists of personality and character traits that still leave unsolved the problem of identifying and predicting leadership ability. Recently, scientific analysis has been attempted by sociologists and psychologists, the Ohio State Leadership Studies being an outstanding project in this area. Shartle summarizes the work being done in the study of leadership, particularly with respect to the identification of leaders. He says,

In the Ohio State Leadership Studies the phenomenon has been studied several years. After careful review of the literature, it seemed that the trait approach was less satisfactory than defining leadership in terms of performance. A human trait, such as
case is made by the vice-president of sales after consultation with the president, the product sales manager, the director of marketing, the director of personnel and the district managers who are the immediate superiors of the men being considered. The practice of a firm manufacturing and selling an item of consumer durable goods through home demonstrations is in sharp contrast, in that the authority to select and place the sales supervisor is delegated entirely to the level of line authority immediately above the sales supervisor.

Certain questions can be asked about the making of this decision which throw some interesting light on the process. First, what are the limiting factors that surround the decision? One of these factors is the number of candidates or eligible individuals from which the choice must be made. Four to five men usually are subject to detailed screening and comparison in the final stage of the decision making process. In the cases discussed by the respondents in this study, the men not chosen were passed over either because they were relatively less qualified in terms of breadth of experience, because of personality factors, or because of some special situational factor associated with the particular supervisor position to be filled. These limiting factors sometimes served to reduce the numbers arbitrarily and very quickly to one or two candidates.

Another question has to do with the nature of the logical process by which the decisions were made. Such decisions were based almost entirely on subjective evaluations of intangible elements of the salesman's performance. In only one case was specific reference made to
the consideration of test scores, and that only to a minor degree. Consideration was given to the tangible aspects of the salesman's performance, but in the majority of cases a normally good sales record rather than an outstanding sales record was characteristic of the man promoted. All men considered were qualified in this respect. The subjective evaluation of the man's demonstrated or undemonstrated potential for performing the duties of the first line management job dominated the decision making process.

Factors influencing the extent of supervisor selection procedures

The factors influencing the extent and nature of the procedures used in selecting first line managers from among the salesmen may be summarized in a list of five elements: (1) frequency with which vacancies need to be filled among sales supervisors, (2) complexity of the selling task, (3) training approach which requires early differentiation of job assignments for supervisor development, (4) policy toward the identification of a promotable group, and (5) philosophy of management pertaining to the development of people.

Frequency of placement

One of the major factors influencing procedures in this area is the frequency of selection and placement of a new sales supervisor. Since the problem of placement is not encountered with very great frequency, the need for written standard practice instructions is not felt. Hence the procedures found tend to be unwritten and informal.
Complexity of the selling task

The variation of procedures from the simple to the complex tends to be related to the complexity of the selling task. For example, a firm selling household products door-to-door in a metropolitan area takes action after subjective review of the salesman's job performance record by his district manager and review of the recommendation by the sales manager. More extensive procedures are used by companies selling consumer products through dealers or industrial goods to skilled buyers, including, in addition to simple observation of performance, some form of systematic performance evaluation or merit rating, interviews with upper echelon sales executives, and developmental assignments.

Early differentiation of assignment

Procedures differ significantly in terms of whether or not they are aimed at an early differentiation of assignment for individuals with high managerial potential. There is a tendency here for the creation of a "crown prince" atmosphere. In this situation some measures are called for in the selection of salesmen to provide the basis of a judgment of potential. Where the salesmen are members of a homogeneous group, no problem of this nature arises, but where the intake of men includes, for example, some college and some non-college men, or where two separate recruiting systems are used to bring in men of different basic capacity, then the procedures for placing, training, and developing these men must be more carefully designed. They must provide the basis for judging many aspects of the individual's capabilities. Job
rotation plans for management trainees call for special steps in the selection procedure, first, to control admission to the program and, second, to evaluate the progress of men in preparation for promotion. 

Early identification of a promotable group

One distinct approach which carries significant implications for procedure is that calling for identification of a promotable group. Firms using this device do not necessarily make a point of judging management potential when hiring, but they do make a specific effort to identify such ability through the appraisal and evaluation of the salesman's performance. A continuing attempt is made, through counseling and action plans based on performance evaluation, to upgrade the qualification of salesmen in anticipation of an opening at the first line sales management level. One vice-president in charge of sales, in referring to the results of their efforts in developing men qualified for promotion said, "There are management candidates available in depth."

District managers in a large consumer products company file an annual evaluation form on each of their men. When a form is received at headquarters indicating a man is promotable he is added to the home office promotability list. Special assignments, such as conducting a part of a home office sales school, are made to these men and the results observed. Thus, when a first line manager is to be chosen the Manager of Marketing Administration, the Commercial and Industrial Sales Manager, the Retail Sales Manager, the Personnel Development Manager, and the Regional Manager concerned review the list and make
the selection. The title of the job for which they are selecting is District Manager.

In a tire company, in addition to a semi-annual evaluation report filed by the district manager for each salesman covering his sales performance, a special Potential Management Report may be requested by the Sales Personnel Development Manager on certain individual salesmen. In this way pertinent information is accumulated at headquarters where new district managers are selected, but only for those salesmen whose performance ratings have earned them a recommendation from their district manager.

A company whose sales force is widely dispersed, and in which promotion decisions are coordinated at headquarters, uses three major forms as the basis for decision. The first of the forms is a promotability appraisal filed annually for each salesman by the district manager. This appraisal is made in consultation with the division manager. The second form is an appraisal summary made by the division manager in an interview with the district manager. The third form is a promotability summary kept in the salesman's home office personnel file. Eleven items used to describe the characteristics of the salesman affecting his promotability are age, education, experience, total earnings for the previous year, interview rating when hired, basic school rating, field merit review rating, field promotability rating, personnel department adjustment of field rating, test scores, and the general interpretation of his Activity Vector Analysis, a projective test.

The procedure of this firm is specified by the nature of the
forms used and the specifications for their periodic filing. The information accumulated is uniform for all salesmen evaluated and the structure of the appraisal forms is designed to make the subjective judgments of appraisers, and district and division managers as specific and comparable as possible.

In contrast to this program is the method of another company whose salesmen are likewise widely dispersed, but whose sales force is much smaller. A sales performance evaluation form is used as a basis for calculating annual bonus compensation and this form is on file. The General Sales Promotion Manager in describing their methods, said:

The staff sales promotion manager makes a periodic review of sales personnel, has a file of information of all promising men. He picks three or four, checks with the vice-president of public relations, then with the vice-president of sales, then down to the next echelon, then to the man himself, and then consults with the regional manager. It is a thoughtful intelligent process. Our procedure is informal but it goes through channels.

Here there is no special promotable group, instead, the sales manager indicated that potentially every man is considered when an opening at the district manager level occurs.

Philosophy of management

As pointed out in Chapter II, a philosophy of management is an essential preliminary consideration in the establishment of policies and the procedures required to implement them. A policy, unless it is consciously established and positively communicated, will not likely have any measurable influence on the conduct of the business
in the direction of a consistent approach to a given class of problems. The presence in the firms interviewed of a communicated philosophy was generally associated with a more carefully thought out and more fully developed selection procedure for first line sales managers. A communications utility and a manufacturing concern in the electrical industry were conspicuous examples of this scale of development.

The preceding five factors generally condition the content of selection procedures for first line sales management personnel. Another over-all conditioning factor is the opinion or attitude of the major sales executive. As the opinions of sales executives are significant in the determination of criteria used, so are they significant in emphasizing one or more elements of the selection procedure.

Classification of selection procedures

Observation and analysis of the selection procedures in the firms under study permits the derivation of a useful classification made up of three general groups of programs, non-directive, directive, and fully structured. These groups are relatively distinct in approach and the degree to which management injects itself into the task of determining the quality of its own extension and replacement.

Non-directive

The non-directive programs are founded on the belief that leadership ability required for effective sales supervision cannot be created. There is an assumption here that the men who have such capacities will automatically rise to the top. Such an assumption is idealistic.
The organizational environment may be such as to prevent the best leaders from reaching positions of responsibility within the organization, in fact, their ambition and desire to assert themselves may force them to leave the organization.

The policy also rests on the idea that all development is self development and it is the responsibility of individuals to develop themselves. The idea that the man who will make a really successful manager is one with the initiative and aggressiveness to distinguish himself is an application of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. A corollary of this is that only those who so distinguish themselves have the capacity to become good supervisors. Viewing the issue from this side reveals its weakness and inadequacy as a basis for the selection. Only in the case where supervisory needs are very small would it be suitable and even then there is no assurance that there will be a man available when the need arises.

Appropriate objectives of the procedures in a non-directive program are (1) to hire qualified salesmen, (2) to provide a job assignment designed to challenge the ability of the man and give room for growth, and (3) to provide for recognition and evaluation of the relative capacities of different individuals.

A major criticism of the non-directive programs is that they may lead to a failure on the part of management to take an active part in the performance of a significant phase of one of its organic functions, namely organizing. Non-directive programs should include especially heavy emphasis on the hiring of qualified salesmen. Such salesmen
would need to be qualified in some degree for possible advancement to the first line of sales management and should be selected in part on that basis. Furthermore, the informality of a non-directive approach may lead to indifference to the supervisor selection and development problem.

Directive

The foundation for directive programs is the belief that the performance of management duties is a skill which can be developed in men who have adequate intelligence and are properly trained and motivated. If the law of averages does not provide enough men among the salesmen with the ability to advance, then attention must be directed to finding some method of identifying men with a superior chance of managerial success.

Appropriate objectives of procedure in a directive program are to (1) recruit as salesmen an adequate proportion of men with the capacity for managerial performance, (2) provide differential job assignments which will maximize the growth opportunities for qualified men and which will also provide selective measures of ability, and (3) develop with the salesman a plan of action for the improvement of his performance based upon sound, continuing evaluation and supervision of his progress.

The objections raised in the discussion of the non-directive programs are largely met by this approach, however, one significant element still may be missing. It is a communicated organizational environment which identifies the efforts and interests of management with the
objective of developing the manpower of the company to the highest practical level. Acceptance of the requisite philosophy for this approach and the creation of the procedures to implement such a philosophy leads to the establishment of a fully structured program.

Fully structured

Programs of this type are based on a recognition of the responsibility of management to provide a continuing supply and flow of fully qualified operative and managerial personnel as one of the basic factors of business. Action taken to secure this supply is a phase of organizing, one of the organic functions of management. Acceptance of this responsibility leads to the policy that all measures shall be taken to insure an intake of salesmen with an appropriate assortment of qualifications to meet the requirements for effective performance of all the operative and managerial functions of selling. Again the problem arises as to whether to depend on chance providing sufficient men adequately qualified for promotion. The fully structured programs include measures by which some estimate of future managerial ability can be made at the time of hiring.

Thus the objectives of procedure in a fully structured program are to (1) secure among the salesmen recruited an adequate proportion of men with the capacity for advancement to the first level of supervision and beyond, (2) advance men through a job structure that will provide a series of gradually expanding duties and responsibilities, e.g. trainee, junior salesman, salesman, senior salesman to field sales supervisor or first line manager, (3) provide pre-supervisory training
honesty, ambition, or leadership, is not easily defined unless it is done in terms of performance. Thus, one might omit the trait altogether and define leadership directly as a particular type of performance.

... We may think of leadership as something which influences persons. Therefore, executive performance that influences would be leadership performance. More specifically it would be acts which influence the acts of others.

This definition may cause trouble, however. Suppose one asks his staff to speed up their work, and instead they slow down. He has influenced them, but they have responded in the wrong direction. Thus, it would seem that a leadership act should be one that gets results in the direction intended. We can, therefore, say that a leadership act is one which results in others acting or responding in a shared direction. Leadership is therefore judged in terms of what others do.

One could, if he wished, call a person a leader who performs leadership acts frequently, or who displays leader behavior a large proportion of the time.

The Ohio State Leadership Studies are more concerned with the upper and top levels of administrative management than with the first line supervisor. Selection for this latter group is more difficult because of the lack of indicators of future performance. Shartle compares selection for the two levels. He says:

Theoretically, the selection of inexperienced persons for executive positions should be more hazardous than choosing those who have demonstrated themselves in administrative work. It is the author's point of view that experience is the best single indicator of the type of performance to expect from a person in the future. Without experience data, other types of information must be depended on entirely as a basis for decision. 17

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17 Ibid., p. 238.
activities, (4) provide for individual development through counseling and developmental assignments, and (5) motivate individual development by means of an appropriate, communicated philosophy of management. This philosophy should be one which seeks organizational growth through individual growth. It should permit, encourage, and provide maximum cooperative growth of all members of the organization.

It is in this area that the greatest observed deficiency of company practices is found. Tests, appraisal systems, and counseling programs may be installed and utilized in a routine manner to help in the solution of certain problems, but unless they are employed as consistent parts of the whole organizational environment they are not likely to yield maximum benefits. What is called for is nothing less than the creation of a whole value system designed to integrate individual and organizational objectives.

Summary

The scarcity of written procedures observed was nearly as great as the previously noted absence of written policies. It raises some question as to the ability of the managements concerned to maintain uniformity of action from one department or branch to another and from one time to the next.

Informality of procedures makes it easy to skip one or more significant elements of the selection process under the pressure of time or special circumstances. Taylor and Nevis investigated and found a

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high correlation between short tenure of sales personnel and the failure to use the selection procedures called for. An explanation which they advanced for this relationship has two aspects, one, that the failure to use one or more of the steps in the selection process fails to produce information that might lead the employer to reject the applicant, and the other that insistence by the employer on every candidate taking all tests and all interviews might lead some candidates to withdraw. These candidates were ones who, according to the research, would later prove undesirable or unstable.

The need for definite procedures soundly based on known policies is recognized, but the degree to which this view results in a system of written policies and procedures varies widely from one firm to another. A number of deficiencies in current practice can be noted. First, there are far too few written policies. Secondly, as a result of this, practices become too heavily dependent on the current views and attitudes of the executives. A third point is that the procedures in use rely primarily on subjective measures with little effort being expended in validating objective measures as indicators of future performance.

Companies whose sales executives expressed some statement of their personnel philosophy had selection and development procedures that were more easily described and understood. A known philosophy contributes an element of unity and purpose to the sales organization that is associated with a professional approach to the field of sales management.

The sales supervisor selection procedure employed in any given company is related to the frequency of supervisor placement, the nature of the selling task, the existence of policies pertaining to job
assignments for supervisor candidates and the employment of special lists of promotable men. A final factor, the approach, or philosophy of management toward personnel in general and toward management personnel in particular, is a conditioning element that influences the entire pattern of personnel practices. In addition, it determines the judgment of executives responsible for making selection decisions, the orientation of their attitudes toward the human factor, and the scale of values by which they judge the objectives of the business.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Professional students of management and marketing must meet on common ground if suitable answers are to be found to the problems raised in the selection of first line sales managers. The business enterprise cannot be successfully created and maintained solely as an economic institution. The sociological and psychological aspects of human enterprise as well as the organizational aspects need to be investigated and developed. The problems encountered in locating, identifying, developing and placing sales supervisors illustrate the complexity of the continuing managerial function of organizing. The effective performance of managerial activities is significantly conditioned by the attitudes, aspirations and motivation of the managers, which in turn are to a great degree a product of the organizational environment. This is the first general area about which conclusions can be made. The second group of conclusions is made concerning the operational elements required for the effective selection of sales supervisors.

Organizational environment

The primary determinant of the organizational environment within which managers function is the philosophy of management. Regardless
of the content or nature of such a philosophy there are certain characteristics which should be present. It must be determined, stated and adopted at the top management level. It then must be communicated, understood and accepted throughout the organization. Given these characteristics the management philosophy will effectively establish the value structure of the organization and will thereby condition and guide the efforts of executive and operative personnel.

The philosophy, to make a maximum contribution, must be of such a nature as to permit the integration of organizational and individual objectives. In addition to contemplating the effective achievement of the service and economic objectives of the firm, the philosophy needs to be broad enough to include the values of organizational stability, flexibility and growth. It must, in addition, contemplate the achievement of these values through the achievement of the personal objectives of the employees, both managerial and operative. The result will be a supportive atmosphere rather than an atmosphere of conflict or exploitation.

The widespread lack of a consciously determined and fully communicated philosophy indicates that this area offers a broad opportunity for the improvement of managerial practices in general and the selection of first line sales managers in particular.

The second major influence on the organizational environment is a group of consistent and related concepts pertinent to the selection of first line sales managers. Two of these are closely related and have to do with the vitality of the organization, the concept of the flow
of personnel into and through the organization, and a realization of
the great importance of the staffing phase of organizing. A widespread
appreciation of these concepts will lead executives to place the proper
emphasis on their efforts to recruit, develop, and place a continuing
supply of sales supervisors. Two other significant concepts have to do
with the nature of the jobs of salesman and sales supervisor.

The first concept of this group is that of the salesman as a mana-
ger. The extent to which this concept is applicable will vary with the
sales organization and the type of selling, but it is obvious that the
managerial aspects of the salesman's job are more frequently understated
than overstated. Analysis of the salesman's job to identify the areas
of judgment and decision making will emphasize this concept. The pro-
cess of job enlargement for the salesman through the revision of proce-
dures and the delegation of authority will implement the concept and
thus provide for the improvement of the major source of sales supervisors.

Traditionally and functionally the salesman's job is to sell and
his job content has been designed primarily in terms of this one consi-
deration. Longer term sales requirements as they are expressed in the
need for maintaining a source of first line sales managers should also
be considered in designing job content. The result will tend to broaden
the concept of the salesman as a manager. Greater utilization of the
salesman's full potential will be achieved under these conditions and
job satisfaction will also be greater. Furthermore, the managerial
concept of the salesman's job is consistent with the concept describing
the personnel flow through the organization. It is a dynamic process
varying with the rate of growth of the organization. Maximum
development of individuals at the salesman level will create the personnel resources required to supply the need for first line sales managers.

The last of the four concepts fundamental to an appropriate organizational environment is that of the contribution of the sales supervisor. Sales managers' concepts of their supervisors' contribution fall into two general classes, procedural and managerial. In the former, emphasis is placed upon the performance of routine management duties and the achievement of sales goals. In the latter, leadership and creative activities predominate. Obviously all four elements are necessary; the point in question is one of emphasis. Because the managerial aspects of the supervisor's job are less tangible, they are more difficult to describe, more difficult to select and train for, more likely to be neglected. This is the area where the concept of the first line sales manager's contribution needs to be broadened. It must be recognized that his position at the point where management is brought to bear on operative performance calls for the ability to adjust plans and procedures to the requirements of the situation. It calls for a degree of imagination and creativity that is often either absent or ignored.

Sales managers and other top management executives must actively assume the responsibility for formulating and communicating these basic concepts. By so doing they will further interpret their philosophy of management and determine the character of the organizational environment.

The final element in establishing the organizational environment
is the set of policies adopted by top management. Policies provide for the implementation of the philosophy of management and must be consistent with it. The lack of written policies among the firms covered by this study is evidence of a need for reflective thinking on the part of top managements and the formalization and communication of the results of such thinking. Specific policies relative to the sources of sales supervisors, transfer, promotion, training, education, and development make explicit the general intent of management. Their contribution to the organizational environment should be a supportive one. The result will be to add incentive to the long range motivation of all personnel.

**Operational elements**

The operational elements of a sales supervisor selection system include criteria for selection, selection tools and selection procedures. Under the influence of a desirable organizational environment an appropriate degree of individual development is taking place. The operational elements must be designed to guide and maximize this process of development and to identify and motivate the best men for placement as first line sales managers.

**Criteria**

The criteria used in the selection of sales supervisors fall into two broad categories, those that are primarily descriptive, and those that are derived from the salesman's activities.

The descriptive criteria include character and personality traits, and test results. Character and personality traits cannot be summarily
dismissed as being of no value even though they are highly subjective. They enter into nearly every personnel selection decision. They are a semantic shorthand by which sales executives express judgments of the differences between salesmen. Where only a few traits are used, and they are made the subject of a systematic, periodic evaluation program, the opinions of a number of sales executives developed and expressed over a period of time may facilitate comparison of several candidates. One weakness still remains in that there is no way to correlate such ratings with future success as supervisors.

Two means are available to enhance the usefulness of such ratings based upon descriptive criteria. First, if traits are to be used as criteria they may be measured by some projective testing method, analyzed by experienced psychologists and validated for the organization through a continuing study. Second, if the criteria used are made part of a carefully designed rating system and the various traits are defined in terms of activity patterns present in successful job performance, the subjective element will be reduced and the value of ratings increased.

Reliance on a profile of test scores covering intelligence, verbal and computational ability, personality and interest factors, will, according to studies made, improve the executive's average in selection, particularly in an organization with a large number of men at the sales supervisory level. Not many companies have a large enough number of first line sales managers to provide a basis for stable criteria of this type. Demographic and behavioral studies based upon descriptive ratings or test profiles present avenues of research by which suitable
criteria may be identified, correlated with effective first line management performance, and validated for a particular selling organization. Unfortunately, while such procedures are well along in the experimental stage, little of practical value is available to this time.

Criteria derived from the salesman's activities offer the best measure of his ability to perform. Such criteria will permit some estimate of future success as a supervisor if the salesman's job contains managerial or supervisory elements. Manufacturers' or wholesalers' salesmen calling on dealers or distributors have jobs that normally include useful action criteria. Training and motivating dealers' salesmen and giving management advice and assistance to the dealer are examples of job performance factors that throw a useful light on the potential managerial ability of the salesman.

In summary, criteria expressed in terms of the activities performed by the salesman are more useful as predictors than purely descriptive criteria. If the present job design of the salesmen in a given organization does not include some elements similar to those found in the job of the first line sales manager then a program of job enlargement or a system of developmental assignments for salesmen should be adopted.

Tools

The tools used in the selection of sales supervisors may be classed as either passive or active. The passive tools are necessary as repositories of information on which personnel planning and preliminary selection decisions may be based. They contain a record of whatever descriptive information has been accumulated on the members of
There are some pointed implications in the above viewpoint for the design of supervisor selection procedures, for the organization of the field sales units, and for pre-supervisor training.

The foregoing establishes the framework and sets the limits of the major problem which is defining and describing the requirements and content of an effective sales supervisor selection system. This leads to three secondary problems.

1) Identifying the basis elements of the supervisor's job in terms of its functional content.

2) Determining the nature of the most reliable criteria of the management potential required for successful performance as a sales supervisor.

3) Specifying the requirements of organization, recruitment, and selection policies and procedures, consistent with personnel objectives and management philosophy, which will maximize the performance of the sales organization by providing strong, positive sales leadership in the field.

Organization of the study

This study is confined to the area of sales personnel. Its purpose is threefold; first, to investigate the nature of actual performance of sales managements in the selection of sales supervisors; second, to compare such performance with what is known of the basic nature of management functions; and third, to deduce recommendations for improving the practice of sales supervisor selection.
the sales force. They also are a record of each individual's growth and
development in the light of action criteria that have been established.
Thus, the personnel file contains the salesman's background data, his
performance records and his descriptive test profile, and in addition a
continuing record of his evaluation and appraisal ratings, counseling
interview and follow-up reports, and summaries of his progress reports
on developmental assignments.

The active tools should be designed to expose, develop, and measure
the managerial action capabilities of salesmen. To succeed in this they
must be part of an integrated system resting upon a supportive organi-
zational environment and an appropriate assortment of action criteria.
Projective tests fall in this category of active tools and may be of
value if properly interpreted and validated.

The salesman evaluation and appraisal system is the key element
among the active tools. Included as the principal factors to be meas-
ured should be the action criteria that are most similar to the activi-
ties of a first line sales manager. If, due to the nature of the sales-
man's job, it is impossible to include such elements then a program of
developmental assignments should be established. A program of counsel-
ing interviews correlated with the salesman appraisal system will per-
mit the operation of an integrated supervisor selection procedure.

Procedures

The classification of selection procedures described in the pre-
ceding chapter into three groups, non-directive, directive, and fully
structured places the emphasis on the significant variable, the degree of responsibility which management assumes for providing a continuing flow of first line sales managers.

The non-directive procedure is a type of hands-off approach to the problem of insuring the availability of first line sales managers when needed. The directive procedure involves management in the responsibility for providing some opportunity for salesmen to develop their abilities to the extent that potential exists and is demonstrated. The fully structured procedure differs from the directive only in the degree to which management assumes the responsibility for the maximum development of the individual employee. It requires that management assume the responsibility for creating an organizational environment that will provide for maximum integration of company and personal objectives.

Where a fully structured procedure exists it is part of a highly integrated management program of principles and practices. The foundation is in an organizational environment which provides maximum integration between individual and company objectives. It includes in this environment a management philosophy and a pattern of concepts and attitudes that establishes the firm as a cooperative social unit whose objectives are common to all members. Primary reliance for measurement of managerial potential is placed upon action criteria, the existence of which is amply demonstrated either through a broadly designed job for the salesman or through a series of developmental assignments. Emphasis in measurement methods is placed on the active tools rather than the passive.
Each of the three classes of procedure may be appropriate to certain kinds of sales organizations. The area of usefulness of the non-directive procedure is not very great since it will not produce a reliable or predictable number of first line sales managers. Management in a growing firm needs to take a more positive part in selecting and developing sales supervisory personnel and this calls for either a directive or fully structured procedure.

Summary of recommendations

The following recommendations present in a series of steps a logical approach to the improvement of the selection of first line sales managers. Application to a given firm calls for adjustment and accommodation of the proposals to the current practices of the firm and the basic character of its selling situation. The significance of time must be recognized in considering a major change in management methods. In every case change must begin at the top management level. Where a significant reorientation of management thinking is called for more time will be required to develop the policy and operational implications.

1) Formulating a management philosophy is a prerequisite step on which the organizational environment is founded. The pattern of concepts and attitudes derived from this philosophy should create a supportive atmosphere in which personal and organizational objectives can be integrated.

2) Adopting a set of administrative policies is a second preliminary step. The relevant policies pertain to organizing the firm in
general and the sales department in particular. Having assumed the responsibility for determining the organizational environment, top management must provide the policy framework within which it can be created and maintained.

3) Deriving appropriate personnel and, more specifically, sales personnel policies consistent with the management philosophy and administrative policies is the third preliminary step.

4) Designing a job structure for the sales department is necessary to provide the basis for upgrading the experience of men. The concepts of job enlargement should be applied for the purpose of providing, at the salesman's level, opportunities for demonstration of some of the skills of a manager. It must be recognized that the ability of some sales organizations to achieve this step may be restricted due to the nature of the selling task.

5) Conducting a job analysis is necessary to provide the information for job descriptions and man specifications for all jobs in the sales department. Recognition of the managerial phases of the salesman's job will be reflected in the job description gradually, since a program of job enlargement will require time to be achieved.

6) Identifying and describing criteria for selection is a task that can be performed as soon as the sales supervisor's job description is complete. The ultimate determination of the salesman's job description is guided by these criteria. Emphasis should be placed on action criteria rather than on purely descriptive standards.
7) Providing for special assignments as a medium for the demonstration of the salesman's management skills and aptitudes is a step that can be used where job enlargement is not possible and where the development of management skills among salesmen has become a training objective.

8) Securing understanding and acceptance on the part of all line executives of the responsibility for personnel development is necessary if a program of developmental assignments is to be productive. The method of achieving this step is through the integrative effect of a fully communicated philosophy.

9) Establishing procedures for accumulating and recording evidence and judgments of individual qualifications and progress is the next step. This calls for some form of salesman evaluation and rating program which includes a program of counseling and development interviews. The selection procedure should be based on criteria of managerial action derived from an analysis of salesman performance by means of active selection tools.

10) Analyzing the situational factors in all cases of supervisor placement is necessary to determine the extent to which a given supervisor position deviates from the basic job description. It is also necessary to determine whether the situational factors will make any special demands in terms of the qualification of the man chosen for the position and to interpret these factors in terms of the selection criteria.
Organizing for sales supervisor selection by assigning responsibility for the system to a qualified staff executive who is capable of keeping abreast of current developments in personnel research, making applications of any such developments to practices of the firm and proposing needed modifications in the procedure is the final step. Such an executive should also be capable of conducting a continuing analysis of criteria used for validation purposes, and should maintain a critical watch on the selection tools and their use. He should be able to recognize the limitations of present systems and to take an experimental approach to the solution of supervisor selection problems.

**General conclusions**

The importance of the first line sales manager is especially critical to the successful operation of the field sales force. He is capable of contributing reflective thought and imagination at the point where business plans and policies come into contact with the market for the product. He is the man most continuously in the field seeing things from the management viewpoint. He contributes an adaptability factor that adjusts the sales effort of the firm to the realities of the sales situation. He also initiates an upward flow of information that enables management to plan, organize and control the selling function in a realistic manner. This scope of his function is found in companies whose first line sales manager has a relatively broad statement of duties. The more narrowly defined sales supervisor, as found in the bakery companies selling door-to-door, makes his greatest contribution
in terms of the continued training and motivation of his routemen.

Major emphasis in choosing criteria for the selection of first line sales managers should be placed on those criteria derived from the analysis of the salesman's ability to do the kinds of work managers are required to perform, since the quality of performance of management functions is still the best criterion for predicting success as a supervisor. The implication of this conclusion for selection procedure is that the tools of selection used should include some measurement of the salesman's skill in the performance of management tasks. The frequently overlooked concept of job enlargement or the systematic use of developmental assignments for salesmen offer the means of developing potential supervisors and at the same time generating the most useful type of information on which selection decisions can be based.

In the final analysis, success in selecting sales supervisors hinges on a philosophy of management and its resultant organizational environment. A broad integration of organization and personal objectives supports a high level of morale and motivates individual development. Under these conditions the firm will be more fully capable of meeting its needs for an adequate supply of first line sales management personnel.
APPENDIX A
FIRMS IN WHICH INTERVIEWS WERE HELD AND

POSITION OF INTERVIEWEES

Addressograph-Multigraph Co. ..................... Vice-President, Multigraph Sales
American Steel and Wire Division of
U. S. Steel ........................................ Manager, Sales Personnel and
Borden Ice Cream Co. ................................ Branch Plant Operations and
Cleveland Electric Illuminating Co. .............. Residential Sales Manager
Cook Coffee Company ................................ Vice-President, Sales Manager
Cooper Tire and Rubber Company ................. Field Sales Manager
Diebold, Inc. ....................................... Vice-President
Egry Register Co., Div. of Allied Paper ........... Director of Sales Education
Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. ..................... Vice-President, Sales
General Electric Co., Lamp Division ............... Manager, Marketing Personnel
General Tire and Rubber Co. ....................... Director of Sales Training
B. F. Goodrich Company ......................... Staff Coordinator, Training
Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. ..................... Manager of Sales Training
Harris-Intertype Corp. ............................. Director of Training
Libby-Owens-Ford Glass Co. ....................... Manager of Marketing
Lincoln Electric Corp. ................................ Assistant General Sales
Wm. S. Merrill Co., Division of
Richardson-Merrill Corp. ......................... Manager
National Cash Register Co. ........................ Manager, Sales Training
Nationalwide Insurance Co. ....................... Branch Manager
Nickles Bakery ...................................... Supervisor, Sales Management
and Development
Vice-President and Sales Manager
Ohio Bell Telephone Co. ........................ General Sales Manager
Ohio Oil Company ............................. Divisional Sales Manager
Sales Manager
Manager, Market Development
Assistant Sales Manager
Omar, Inc., Division of Continental
Baking Co. ............................ Personnel Director
Proctor and Gamble. ........................ Manager, Sales Training
and Methods
Royal-McBee Corp. ............................ Branch Manager
Scott and Fetzer Co. ........................ Assistant Sales Manager
Sherwin-Williams Paint Co. ............... Central Sales Manager
Regional Branch Operations
Supervisor
Standard Oil Co. of Ohio ........................ Consumer Sales Manager
Telling Belle Vernon Co., Division of
Sealtest ..................................... Personnel Employment Manager
Toledo Scale Company ...................... Vice-President of Sales
Tremco Manufacturing Co. .................. Director of Field Operations
Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Appliance Division ........................... Director of Sales Employment
and Training
Manager, Sales Personnel
Training
Central Regional Sales
Manager

The above list includes 45 executives in 32 companies. In addition to these interviews in which the full interview schedule was completed, partial interview schedules were completed in the two firms shown below.

Electric Storage Battery Co ................ Director of Sales Training
The Standard Register Co .................... Sales Personnel Manager
APPENDIX B

DEPTII INTERVIEW FORM USED IN INTERVIEWING

SALES EXECUTIVES

SELECTION OF SALES SUPERVISORS*

Depth Interview Pattern

I. Company Data
A. Identification
1. Name of respondent ____________________________
2. Position ________________________________
3. Company ________________________________
4. Business ________________________________
5. Standard Industrial Code ____________________
6. Approximate annual sales __________________
7. Selling to: _____ Industrial or Business Consumers
    _____ Wholesalers _____ Retailers _____ Consumers

B. Products (description)

C. Type of sales force _____ Technical _____ Non-technical

II. Organization Structure of Sales Force
A. Chart

B. Description of sales force
1. Number of salesmen calling on: _____ Manufacturers
   _____ Wholesalers _____ Retailers _____ Consumers
2. Levels of supervision:
   Number Number supervised
   _____ Field sales supervisors
   _____ District or Branch manager
   _____ Regional manager
   _____ Divisional sales manager
   _____ Home office sales manager
   _____ Product line sales manager

III. Supervisor Selection Procedures
A. Sources of Sales Personnel
1. Salesmen Policy (copy if available): Written=Formal? _____
   Practice: Moving toward:

*The spacing of this form has been condensed for reproduction here.
In describing the tasks of the sales supervisor in Chapter II, an attempt is made to analyze the job, not only in terms of the duty assignment, but also in terms of the basic functional nature of the activity relative to the whole performance of the business enterprise. A similar objective is present in the analysis of the sources of sales supervisors in the context of the organic functioning of the firm. The criteria used in the selection of sales supervisors are analyzed and evaluated in Chapter IV in the light of the question as to whether, with present methods of measurement, they can be correlated with successful performance.

The significance of the tools of selection discussed in Chapter V is to be found in their use relative to the overall purpose of selection rather than in the particular set of tools used in a given firm. Chapter V further explores the bases on which selection methods and tools are related in a complete selection procedure. The significance of a philosophy of management and its concomitant organizational environment as a foundation of supervisor selection procedures is developed. A critical summary of selection procedures is presented in the final chapter to provide the basis for relating practice in this area of management to appropriate principles.

Research methods used

Throughout the period of this study a continuing search of published materials has been carried on to discover work done directly in the field and to find related materials in the fields of psychology and sociology. Secondary sources suggested approaches to various segments of the problem and provided valuable material on the work done in leadership studies.
(III A. Sources of Sales Personnel - continued)

2. First line sales supervisors:
   
   Policy (copy if available): Written=Formal? ____

   Practice:

   Moving toward:

   B. Do you have a formal, written job description for the sales supervisor? _____. Is a copy available? ____

   C. How is your sales supervisor's time distributed among the following activities? (Estimate fractions or percentages)

   1. Recruiting and selection of salesmen
   ____

   2. Training
   ____

   3. Administration
   ____

   4. Field direction and supervision
   ____

   5. Customer relations
   ____

   6. Other ___________________ (specify).
   ____

   D. Do you have a statement of man requirements for the sales supervisor? _____. Is a copy available? ____

   E. Check the steps involved in your supervisor selection procedure.

   ____ Do you attempt to select salesmen with management potential? If your answer is "yes" how do you estimate or detect management potential?

   ____ Periodic evaluation or rating of salesmen.

   ____ Counseling interviews for development.

   ____ Selection interviews.

   ____ Training and development programs.

   Method used: ____________________________

   ____ Are these programs open to all salesmen?

   ____ Amount required __________________________

   ____ Where held

   ____ By whom administered

   ____ How is trainee's progress evaluated?

   ____ Tests of salesmen prior to promotion ______
IV. Policies involved in the selection of sales supervisors.

A. Please make a brief statement of actually existing, written policies on: (copies if available)
1. Nature and amount of experience required for placement as sales supervisor.

2. Nature and amount of pre-selection training and development required.

B. Are your present written policies augmented in any way by a philosophy or approach to the problem that conditions your efforts? (Ask:) What is the central, controlling objective of your selection of first line sales managers?
1. To find a man to fill the position
2. To fill the position with a man who will work smoothly with the rest of the local sales organization, -- add to the overall effectiveness of the sales organization.
3. To find a man who will expect to make that job his permanent career.
4. To build an effectively operating team through a continuous process of upgrading the men in the organization, using the sales supervisor's job as a source of men for higher management positions.
5. Other. (Explain)

C. (Record a brief statement of the management approach or philosophy expressed in the respondent's sales supervisor selection policies.)

V. Case History of recent placement of a sales supervisor.

A. When did you last appoint or place a new sales supervisor?

B. What job did he hold before?

C. How many other candidates were there?

D. What were their jobs?

E. Why were they not selected? (Give specific reasons in each case)

F. Were any from outside the organization considered?

G. Why did you select the man you did? List factors considered.

H. Who was consulted in making the decision? (Identify by job title)

Who made the decision?
I. Is this placement case typical of your procedure?  
   Yes. ___ No. 

J. Is it in line with your policy? (Note any deviations) 

K. Would you like to change this procedure? In what ways? 

L. Did this man receive any pre-selection training?  
   ___ Yes. ___ No. Describe: ____________________________

M. What kind and how much orientation training did he receive? 

N. Is there a continuing training program for him?  
   ___ Yes. ___ No. Describe: ____________________________

VI. Summary of Selection Tools Used. 

A. Developmental 
   1. Salesman selection for supervisory potential. 
   2. Pre-selection training 
      (a) Counseling interviews 
      (b) Conferences 
      (c) Academic courses 
      (d) Other—Specify ____________________

B. Evaluative 
   1. Testing: 
      (a) of salesman candidates ________ 
      (b) of supervisor candidates ________ 
      (i) among salesmen ________ 
   2. Selection 
      (i) outside candidates ________ 
      interviews 
   3. Recommendation of salesman's supervisor ________ 
   4. Recommendation of other executives ________ 
   5. Interviews with other salesmen ________ 
   6. Sales performance record ________ 
   7. Rating by other salesmen ________ 
   8. Ratings by customers (informal or formal) ________ 
   9. Ratings by immediate superior ________ 
   10. Other—Specify: ____________________________

VII. Summary of Criteria used in Selection of Supervisors 

A. List the desirable personal qualities you look for in selecting sales supervisors. ____________________________

B. List the undesirable personal qualities you wish to avoid in selecting sales supervisors. ____________________________
VII. C. List the job performance factors you look for in selecting sales supervisors.

D. What is the unique function or contribution of the sales supervisor to your selling organization?

VIII. Supervisor Development Program

A. Do you have a formal program for developing sales supervisors? _____ Yes. _____ No.

B. Do you do any:
   1. pre-selection training and development.
   2. new supervisor orientation training.
   3. continued training for supervisors.

C. In pre-selection training, what training methods do you use?
   _____ Conferences
   _____ Counseling interviews
   _____ Academic
   _____ Reading programs
   _____ Job rotation
   _____ Other. Specify:

D. In orientation training what methods do you use?
   _____ Conferences with immediate superior
   _____ Formal management training course
   _____ Job rotation
   _____ Reading programs
   _____ Academic
   _____ Other. Specify:

POST INTERVIEW SUMMARY

I. Rating of person interviewed
   _____ Was he interested in this project?
   _____ Did he know all the details of the program?
   _____ Is another contact required? With whom
   _____ Did he discuss and describe fully and freely?

II. Briefly classify the program
   _____ Complete, consistent program of supervisor selection integrated with salesman selection and training on one hand and with middle and top management development on the other.
Logical and complete system, related to management
development on one hand, but not integrated with salesman selection.
Logical system integrating salesmen and sales supervision,
but not open for movement on up from sales supervisor
into middle and top management.

III. General hiring policy
   General hiring
   Organizational hiring
   Advance hiring
   Specific hiring
   Other

IV. How much importance is attached to supervisor selection?

V. Organizational status of personal interviewed.
   Line sales executive
   Sales staff, personnel
   Home office location
   Subsidiary or branch plant location
   Full national sales responsibility
   Local or district sales responsibility
   Position of interviewee's immediate superior.
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMITTED TO SALES EXECUTIVES ATTENDING
THE 1958 SALES MANAGEMENT SEMINAR AT RUTGERS
UNIVERSITY SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL
SALES EXECUTIVES, INC.

Ten Questions Relative to your Company's Policies,
Practices, and Attitudes toward the Problem of Selecting
Sales Supervisors

1. a. What is your position title? ____________________________
   b. How long in this position? _______________________________
   c. Job title immediately prior to your present one. ______
   d. How many salesmen employed by your company? ______
      Or: How many salesmen in your division or your sales
      organization?__________________.
   e. What is the title of the person in your sales organization
      who actually performs the task of field supervision of
      your salesmen? _______________________________________
      (this man will be referred to below as "sales supervisor")
   f. Number of "sales supervisors" in your organization? _____
      (answer to correspond with your answer to 1-d above)
   g. Place an "X" on the line or lines below indicating the type
      of customers your salesmen call on
             Wholesalers or distributors
             Retailers
             Ultimate consumers
             Industrial or business users
             Professional people who recommend or prescribe your
             product

h. Nature of your "sales supervisor's" major method of contact
   with salesmen. (Check one)
   ___ Face to face contact
   ___ Mail
   ___ Telephone

i. Location of your "sales supervisor."
   ___ Home office
   ___ Regional office
   ___ District office
   ___ Local branch

2. What job did the majority of your "sales supervisors" hold imme-
   diately before becoming "sales supervisors?"
Are there any exceptions? Yes. No. If yes, what other jobs

3. When does the first evaluation of a man's supervisory ability take place? (Mark with "x") If none, apply, please write a brief statement.

- When he is first considered by the company for employment.
- After he has established himself as a successful salesman.
- After he has been given some minor supervisory responsibilities for training and development purposes.
- After he has been promoted to the job of "sales supervisor."
- Other. Explain

4. How do you discover supervisory ability? (Please mark with "x" all items that apply.)

- Interviewing program:
  - Hiring interview:
    - Single interview.  Multiple interviews.
    - Counseling and development interviews.
  - Promotion interviews.
- Tests:
  - For hiring.
  - For promotion. Please name the tests or kinds of tests used to indicate or reveal supervisory aptitude.

- Salesman evaluation and rating program:
  - Number of raters rating each man.
  - Frequency of ratings and evaluations.
  - Observation and evaluation of a salesman's performance by his boss.
  - Analysis of his performance in supervisory training projects.
  - Other:

5. Even though we are all aware of the weakness of a long list of personality traits as a means of describing people and as a standard of selection, it is necessary that we recognize the existence of concepts, beliefs and practices in this area. Please be as objective and specific as possible in answering this question.

a. What one, two or three personal characteristics do you believe have a positive correlation with success as a "sales supervisor" in your organization?
b. What one, two or three personal characteristics do you believe have a negative correlation with success as a "sales supervisor" in your organization?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

c. Are the above beliefs (5a and b) widely held in your company by men who are instrumental in selecting "sales supervisors?"

Yes. No.

d. Are the above characteristics (5a and b) made the subject of standard definition and widespread application throughout your organization by use of a formal rating and evaluation program?

Yes. No.

6. What factors or aspects of job performance as salesmen are associated in your company with a potential for becoming a successful "sales supervisor?"

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

7. a. Have you ever had a salesman who refused promotion to "sales supervisor?" Yes. No. Reasons given:

________________________________________________________________________

b. Have you ever had a "sales supervisor" who wished to be returned to the status of salesman? Yes. No. Reasons given:

________________________________________________________________________

8. When you have a "sales supervisor" opening impending in your organization do you: (Check one below)

- Consider only present salesmen to be eligible for the job?
- Consider present salesmen and other sales department employees eligible?
- Consider present salesmen and other sales department employees, plus employees of other divisions or departments of your company eligible?
- Consider hiring a man with supervisory experience from outside the company for direct placement as a "sales supervisor" along with men from within the organization?
- Consider hiring a man with supervisory experience from outside the company in preference to men within the company?
9. When hiring men for salesmen do you: (Check one)
   a. ____ Hire only men who will be "promotable." (This implies some recognition and measurement of supervisory ability.)
   b. ____ Hire men strictly in terms of the selling job's requirements, depending on the law of averages to provide sufficient men with the qualifications for "sales supervisor?"
   c. ____ Hire men strictly in terms of the selling job's requirements for the salesman's job, and supplement this with a separate recruiting and hiring program for "management trainees?"

10. IF YOU CHECKED 9c:

Do you have a "management training program" which includes spending some time as a salesman and developing a successful record of performance as a salesman, as a prerequisite to promotion? _____ Yes. _____ No.

Are salesmen who do not have the "management trainee" status considered eligible for promotion to a "sales supervisor" opening? _____ Yes. _____ No.
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David Paul Loyd

1963
The principal basis of this study was a series of personal inter­views with forty-five sales executives in thirty-two Ohio manufacturing concerns, supplemented by correspondence with several of these and other executives subsequent to the interviews. The firms selected were those with substantial field sales forces totaling, in Ohio and other states, approximately 25,000. An attempt was made to secure geographical distribution of the firms throughout the state as well as distribution of the firms as to industry and type of product. Of thirty-four firms included, fourteen are in the Cleveland area, four in Akron, four in Columbus, three in Dayton, two in Cincinnati, Findlay and Toledo, and one in Mansfield, Canton, and Navarre.

Thirteen companies covered are consumer goods firms, thirteen are in the fields of industrial and business goods and eight sell products in both markets. Sixteen sell directly to industrial, business or ul­timate consumers, six sell primarily to and through wholesalers and retailers, and twelve sell through multiple channels to various mar­kets. The purpose in securing this distribution of firms is to bring within the scope of the study a wide variety of sales situations, thus providing the basis for the qualitative analysis of a wide range of individual practices. A list of the firms selected and the position of the persons interviewed is presented in Appendix A. The guided interview form used is shown in Appendix B.

To supplement and broaden the basis for certain types of infor­mation, a questionnaire was submitted to eighty-six sales executives attending the 1958 Sales Management Seminar at Rutgers University sponsored by the National Sales Executives. This questionnaire is presented in Appendix C.


Periodicals


"Needed More Executives," *Newsweek* (September 13, 1954), 33-34.


Reports and Proceedings


Unpublished Materials


Ohmann, O. A. "Executive Appraisal and Counseling." A talk given at the Detroit Industrial Relations Conference, Bureau of Industrial Relations, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, January 9, 1956.
I, David Paul Loyd, was born in Warsaw, Indiana, September 1, 1916. I received my secondary-school education in the public schools there and my undergraduate training at Ashland College, which granted me the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1941. After military service in the Twentieth Bomber Command of the United States Air Force, I entered Ohio State University and received the Master of Business Administration degree in 1947. Since that time I have been a member of the Faculty of Ashland College, Ashland, Ohio, except for a year in residence at the Ohio State University and a period of approximately two years in the Sales Personnel Training Department of the Appliance Division, Westinghouse Electric Corporation at Mansfield, Ohio.
No attempt has been made to develop statistical data relative to supervisor selection methods and criteria. The interviews were conducted to determine the attitudes and state of knowledge on which supervisor selection policies of the firms studied are based and the nature of the resultant selection procedures and criteria.

Of the executives interviewed, seventeen had top management responsibility for sales, seventeen were staff specialists having major responsibility in selection, training and development of sales personnel, and eleven were other executives having assigned responsibilities in the selection of sales personnel. The interest in the study expressed by the executives interviewed, and the thoughtful consideration with which they responded to all questions are evidence that the recorded findings represent their sincere viewpoints on the topics discussed.

Basic definitions

The investigation and analysis of salesman supervision calls for careful definition of terms. While the problem of definition is not peculiar to this subject it is complicated by the lack of standardization of terms and practices in this area. Basically the subject of this study is the field sales supervisor, the representative of management whose duties include the supervision of salesmen in the field. The terms involved and the job titles used must be defined and described.

Supervision

As narrowly defined in management literature, supervision is a phase of the organic function of control which is made up of routine
planning, scheduling, preparation, dispatching, direction, supervision, comparison, and corrective action. R. C. Davis defines supervision in this context. He says:

Supervision is the function of assuring that action is taking place currently in accordance with plans and instructions. It has to do with overseeing the work of others to make sure that it is performed correctly.18

The study of sales supervision has developed along lines that are somewhat broader than the definition just referred to. Lapp directed his attention to personal supervision of outside salesmen, and defined the activity in terms of the elements involved in its performance. He said:

Personal supervision is the function of establishing and maintaining the proper, direct, working relationships between a superior and/or superiors and a subordinate (in this case, the salesman), for the purpose of implementing sales objectives by continued training, motivation, control, and communication.19

Lapp's definition of supervision is appropriate to this study in that it uses the term, supervision, to embrace a set of duties that may be made the basis for a job assignment in the sales force.

Sales supervisor

The sales supervisor, as referred to in this study, is the man who is primarily responsible for the personal supervision of the salesmen in the field. His location in the line organization structure is immediately above the salesman. Organizations he is in the first

echelon of sales management. Recognition of the sales supervisor is sometimes difficult because of the wide variety of titles assigned to executives who have the responsibility for performing sales supervision. The varying degrees of decentralization of the sales force and the variety of organization bases in the sales force lead to the creation of many titles by which the first line sales manager may be known.

The primary data gathered revealed a wide range of titles as shown in the following list:

1) Director of sales
2) Sales manager
3) Field sales manager
4) Regional sales manager
5) Division manager
6) Assistant sales manager
7) Regional supervisor
8) District sales manager
9) Branch manager
10) Area sales manager
11) Unit manager
12) Assistant division manager
13) Assistant district sales manager
14) Sales supervisor
15) Area supervisor
16) Territory manager
17) Account executive
18) Route manager
19) Crew manager
20) Senior salesman

In all cases these were the titles of executives charged with the performance of direct supervision of field salesmen. The amount of personal field supervision performed by executives found at the upper management levels may be quite small. The findings of this study will have greater applicability to the selection of the lower echelon sales supervisor.
CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The first echelon sales manager is the source of certain definite and indispensable contributions to sales management. His importance rests upon two fundamental relationships. First, the effectiveness of current marketing plans and operations depends upon performance in the field. The sales supervisor has the direct responsibility for this performance. Second, future members of the top marketing management group will be drawn primarily from the ranks of present first echelon sales managers. The basic capacities of the men placed at this level are the raw materials from which future executives will be made. Thus the present and future success of the business enterprise depends in large part upon the effectiveness with which sales supervisors are selected.

In spite of the critical nature of this job, selection practices of many companies are indefinite, based upon unwritten policies and aimed at filling jobs for which there often are not even written job descriptions. While the usefulness of a selection procedure is not entirely dependent upon its containing any particular number of steps, the lack of form or system is symptomatic of an unplanned approach and of an absence of a purposive philosophy designed to lead directly to predetermined objectives.

Conditions precedent to the establishment and operation of a sound sales supervisor selection system include a suitable
organizational environment consisting of a consciously determined philosophy of management and the development, adoption and communication of a number of basic concepts and attitudes.

Organizational environment

The organizational environment is a conditioning force that affects the conduct of every aspect of the managerial process. It likewise has a continuing influence on all phases of operative performance. It must be established prior to the creation of an effective selection system and it must be maintained as a constant in the sales personnel management situation. The elements which determine the character of this environment include a philosophy of management and a small group of basic concepts and attitudes which flow from that philosophy and are consistent with it.

The creation of the organizational environment is obviously the responsibility of top management, and it must be done through the application of conscious effort. There is always a milieu of psychological values which exists within an organization. Its nature may be determined by positive action on the part of top management, or it may simply exist as the by-product of the acts and judgments of executives. Top management needs to perform a reflective function aimed at determining the nature of this organizational environment to insure that it will make a maximum contribution to organization morale and effectiveness. Then top management must communicate and establish it in so compelling a way that it pervades and conditions the performance of all managerial activities.
Philosophy of management

Fundamental to the creation of the organizational environment is the formulation of a statement of philosophy embracing a specification of the firm's approach to personnel and their employment to achieve organizational objectives. The executives, in discharging their managerial responsibilities, must perform in a manner that is logical and consistent. There must be uniformity of action and approach throughout the organization. A philosophy known and accepted by all members of the organization provides the basis for effective coordination of executive thought and action. In discussing this idea Jucius says:

Develop a conscious philosophy of management. Whether it is aware of it or not, every company has such a philosophy. . . To be most effective a philosophy should be devised and utilized consciously. ¹

As suggested by Jucius, companies and their executives may not be aware of the philosophy which guides their actions. In fewer than half the interviews conducted in this study did respondents provide any statement of an approach or philosophy which guided their action in the selection of the first line sales managers. Some of these statements were more an expression of objectives than of philosophy. In fact, in only two cases did the request for a statement of a philosophy of management evoke a statement of what the respondent considered to be a company-wide attitude in this area.

The philosophy of one firm, a regulated public utility, as it applied to personnel was stated: "Every man coming into the company

should have the opportunity to rise to top management." It was the belief of two executives interviewed in this company that all members of management subscribed to this ideal and worked to provide opportunities for the development of personnel within each department.

In a company in the glass industry the executive interviewed referred to a "teamwork approach to operations" as their philosophy of management, and explained how it conditioned the decisions of their management personnel selection committee.

The inability of sales executives to state a philosophy under which the company operates does not prove that there is no working philosophy conditioning the attitudes and approach of sales executives, but it does indicate that no effort has been made to establish and communicate any such concepts within the organization.

The relationship between a philosophy of management and the effectiveness of the work force is direct. It determines whether management is hiring "hands" to perform a routine set of prescribed duties or whole men to assume the responsibilities of full functional performance in an assigned position. It is not possible to hire part of a man. The whole man is on the job, and if only a part of his capacity is called for he does his eight hours on the job as a necessary evil and hurries home to some avocation that allows him more complete expression.

The nature of operative and managerial job assignments is conditioned by the philosophical approach to the management task. This
relationship is illustrated by Drucker in a quotation from the IBM story. He says:

The story goes that Mr. Thomas J. Watson, the company's president, once saw a woman operator sitting idly at her machine. Asked why she did not work, the woman replied: "I have to wait for the setup man to change the tool setting for a new run." "Couldn't you do it yourself?" Mr. Watson asked. "Of course," said the woman, "but I am not supposed to." Watson thereupon found out that each worker spent several hours each week waiting for the setup man. It would, however, only take a few additional days of training for the worker to learn how to set up his own machine. Thus machine setup was added to the worker's job. And shortly thereafter inspection of the finished part was included, too; again it was found that a little additional training equipped the worker to do the inspecting.2

Drucker further comments:

Enlarging the job in this way produced such unexpected improvements in output and quality of production that IBM decided systematically to make jobs big. The operations themselves are engineered to be as simple as possible. But each worker is trained to be able to do as many of these operations as possible. At least one of the tasks the worker is to perform—machine setting, for instance—is always designed so as to require some skill or some judgment, and the range of different operations permits variations in the rhythm with which he works. It gives the worker a real chance to influence the course of events.3

The policy of "maximizing jobs" is the result or expression of a specific philosophy of management that also generates a whole pattern of complementary policies and organizational relationships whose inner consistency is mandatory. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to establish and maintain a policy toward the selection of sales


3Ibid., p. 253.
supervisors that is inconsistent with the fundamental character of the firm. Only in the case where the top executive of the sales department is particularly strong and is himself the sole source of sales personnel policy could these policies differ from the personnel policies of the whole firm.

A recommended philosophy is one that recognizes the value of the individual employee to the firm and also recognizes the obligation of the company to provide for the maximum growth and development of the individual's abilities and potential. It demands of the individual maximum effort in self-development, and contributes to that development through providing job assignments that require and utilize the best efforts of the worker. This philosophy would require, in the selection of sales supervisors, that the men selected have the capacity to achieve a degree of personal growth and development commensurate with the ability of the organization to utilize it.

The stated philosophy of one of the firms interviewed recognizes that since all work is done by people the surest approach to improving the general level of performance, whether it is operative or managerial, is through developing and upgrading its people. In this philosophy is the implicit assumption that all employees desire to improve and advance, and that the way for the organization to ensure its progress is to provide for the growth of its employees. By way of contrast, another firm studied is characterized by the absence of a stated philosophy. The operations of this firm are dominated by an opportunistic approach to personnel and marketing problems and in organizational matters a lack of long range planning. In this company, which has not enjoyed significant growth in recent years, the salesmen are seemingly indifferent
METHODS AND CRITERIA USED BY OHIO FIRMS

IN SELECTING SALES SUPERVISORS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

David Paul Loyd, B. A., M. B. A.

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The Ohio State University
1962

Approved by

James A. Davis
Adviser
Department of Business
Organization
to opportunities in management and middle management personnel in the sales department tend to be brought in from the outside.

Adverse morale effects may result from the absence of a specifically determined philosophy. They may also result from an inadequately communicated philosophy since inconsistencies in approach to personnel questions may exist between departments, districts, or other organizational units, and from time to time. The organizational environment must be uniform throughout the sales organization and the source of this uniformity is a broadly conceived philosophy of management communicated to and accepted by executives at all levels.

Concepts and attitudes

Certain basic concepts which flow from the established philosophy need to be defined, communicated and accepted throughout the organization. Three major ones are the concept of personnel flow, a concept of the critical nature of the staffing phase of organizing, the concept of the sales supervisor's contribution, and the concept of the salesman as a manager. It is top management's responsibility to formulate these concepts and to see that they are understood and accepted. The inability or disinclination of most sales managers interviewed to express concepts in abstract terms indicates a pre-occupation with operational details and a resultant lack of reflective thinking. The criticism implied here is not that sales executives do not have a certain set of concepts, but rather that the concepts they do operate by are not verbalized and hence are difficult to communicate and analyze. Only by clear statement and analysis can it be assured that the concepts held at operational levels are consistent with the intended organizational environment.
Personnel flow.—The concept of the personnel flow through the organization visualizes a constant though gradual upward movement of personnel from operative levels into management and upward along the line to middle and top management levels. This flow may occur by way of a rotational series of transfers and promotions, or a series of horizontal and diagonal movements from line to staff to line jobs, progressing ultimately to higher management levels. This concept leads to a dynamic view of personnel development and relates the growth of the organization to the growth of the people in it. The values created by this concept of personnel flow provide the basis for manpower planning and organization planning. These values are improved morale and greater availability of qualified personnel when openings occur in the ranks of management.

A static concept of the relation of men to organization growth is inadequate because it fails to utilize the self-motivation of individuals as a force behind organization growth. Furthermore, it is inadequate because it tends to put the individual sales executive in competition with the organization. His efforts for personal advancement may not always produce improved organizational effectiveness if their identity is not established and recognized by top management. On the contrary, they may be opposed to the best interests of the company, or they may result in good executives finding better opportunities in other companies or in starting their own businesses.

The recognition of a dynamic concept of the individual in the organization makes a valuable contribution to the organizational environment and conditions all of the decisions pertaining to the selection of first line sales managers.
The critical nature of staffing.—Staffing, providing qualified personnel to man the organization, is a phase of organizing, one of the organic functions of management. The performance of this function is conditioned by an awareness of management's responsibility in this area. The strength and vitality of the organization is dependent upon the people who man its posts. The incidence of the burden of staffing will vary with the age of the business, the phase of the business cycle, the vitality of the industry, and policies for business growth, expansion and diversification. Recognition of the critical nature of this phase of the management process is an important prerequisite to the achievement of the organization's objectives.

Lawrence A. Appley, President of the American Management Association, attaches the highest degree of importance to the personnel phases of the management process. Appley writes:

Management is the development of people and not the direction of things. . . . Management is personnel administration.  

Peter F. Drucker places the emphasis on a threefold division of the management task involving first, the requirement that management's primary job is managing a business. It is necessary, in carrying out the economic function of enterprise to "manage by objectives." Second, is the requirement to make a productive enterprise out of human and material resources. This is done by "the function of managing managers."

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5Lawrence A. Appley, "Management the Simple Way," Personnel XIX, No. 4 (January, 1943), 598.
And third, "to manage workers and work," in order that the enterprise may function to achieve objectives. This third element is of prime importance. Drucker says:

It implies consideration of the human being as a resource—that is, as something having peculiar physiological properties, abilities and limitations that require the same amount of engineering attention as the properties of any other resource, e.g. copper. It implies also consideration of the human resource as human beings having, unlike any other resource, personality, citizenship, control over whether they work, how much and how well, and thus requiring motivation, participation, satisfactions, incentives and rewards, leadership, status, and function. And it is management and management alone that can satisfy these requirements. For they must be satisfied through work and job and within the enterprise; and management is the activating organ of the enterprise.⁶

Concepts such as these have important implications for management's approach to and utilization of the sources of sales supervisors and for the policies and procedures in the acquisition and development of first line managers.

**The salesman as a manager.**—One concept that permits a desirable orientation toward the selection of sales supervisors is the concept of the salesman as a manager. There is some evidence of a trend in thinking toward this concept in the increasing use of such titles as territory manager for the salesman. The use of this term is more than an attempt to convey status to the job of salesman. Its use is in part descriptive of the nature of the job assignment of wholesalers' or manufacturers' salesmen who call on dealers or distributors. It can also be applied to an industrial goods salesman who has responsibility for territorial market development, quota-setting,

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profitability or other activities which involve planning, organizing, and controlling performance in the achievement of objectives.

Applying the concept of the salesman as a manager in a given organization may call for organizational planning and modification of the present job content of the salesman. Job analysis may be called for and a process of job enlargement begun in order to transfer to the salesman's job the responsibility for certain management activities at the territory level. Such a move will create important values in training, developing, and motivating salesmen and will establish the basis for the first step in the selection process for first line sales managers. The full scale development of a concept of the salesman as a manager will only be possible if it is established within the framework of a philosophy with which it is consistent and then only to the extent that the scope of the salesman's job permits.

The sales supervisor's contribution.—Ideally, the basic contribution of the first line of supervision is the multiplication of the effectiveness of the operative employee through the exercise of managerial skill. The sales supervisor exists because his efforts add something to the productivity and effectiveness of his salesman. He may function primarily as a watchdog in which case his contribution will be essentially negative. He may also act as a coordinative force to maximize the effectiveness of selling effort, or he may act in a creative way, initiating or modifying sales strategy to maximize the local effectiveness of overall marketing effort. As a preliminary consideration to the determination of a proper sales supervisor selection system, management must analyze the actual contribution of their first-line sales managers and determine ideal
relationships in this area of management. Such ideal relationships should be consistent with the basic philosophy of management and with all other related concepts and attitudes.

The job analysis will provide part of the answer to questions on this topic, but a mere recitation of duties and responsibilities is not enough. Such a limited view, however, is the one most frequently expressed by sales executives interviewed. It may be referred to as a procedural concept. As a basis for a selection program it is inadequate. A concept of the creative managerial aspect of the first line sales manager's job is essential as a guide to executives responsible for selection. The concept would also be of value to the supervisors themselves as a partial guide or standard for their own performance and it would be useful in the design of developmental assignments for salesmen, or as a guide for job enlargement at the salesman's level.

Formulating such a concept may not be easy, possible, or even desirable in the eyes of a sales manager deeply engrossed in the conduct of sales operations. There should be, however, at some level in the management hierarchy where the opportunity and capability for reflective thinking exist, the responsibility for formulating and communicating fundamental concepts of this nature. Such a responsibility falls at the level of top management.

The preliminary considerations involve a philosophy and a consistent pattern of concepts and attitudes. Also preliminary to the establishment of a sales supervisor selection system is a clear understanding of the exact job content of the supervisor's job.
The task of the first line sales supervisor

Considerable variation is encountered in the job assignment of the first line sales manager from one company to another. The four basic organizational patterns for supervisors described by Lapp outline the general conditions. These are the four patterns: (1) president or general manager type, (2) sales manager type, (3) branch manager type, and (4) field supervisor type.\(^7\)

The president or general manager type is found in small companies with few employees and a small number of salesmen. Broad responsibility for the operation of the firm, characteristic of the top executive, would leave little time for personal supervision of salesmen. As in the case of a small rubber products company making door mats and similar items sold through wholesalers and large retailers, the sales force is composed of three salesmen who are relatively independent and who receive and seemingly require very little supervision. Another small firm in the heating equipment field sells through jobbers and dealers. Four salesmen cover the eastern half of the country and report directly to the president.

The sales manager type is also found among relatively small firms or firms having a small, widely scattered sales force. A printing company having six salesmen, each located in a large city, falls into this category. The sales manager has broad responsibility for the marketing activities of the firm and has very little time to engage in personal supervision of his salesmen. The selection of a new sales manager in

\(^7\)Charles L. Lapp, Personal Supervision of Outside Salesmen (Columbus: The Bureau of Business Research, The Ohio State University, 1951), pp. 40-41.
a firm of this type would not occur very frequently. Each salesman
has delegated responsibilities which would provide the basis for judg-
ments as to his ability to be advanced to the sales manager's job.

Characteristic of firms using the branch manager as the primary
supervisor of salesmen are manufacturers of business equipment and
supplies, and manufacturers of consumer durable goods marketed through
wholesalers and retailers. A branch or district sales manager may
have, in addition to the supervision of his sales force, responsibility
for physical operations, advertising, sales promotion, credit and clerical
activities. Branch sales managers, as well as the sales managers
in the preceding category, may be specialized by product as in the case
of an appliance manufacturers, or by customer type as in the case of
an electrical utility.

The field supervisor type places the performance of personal
supervision of salesmen in a specialized supervisor who reports to a
branch or district sales manager. In this category, for example, are
found bakeries, milk distributing companies and firms selling coffee,
tea, groceries, and household items door-to-door. In some cases the
supervisor may act as a "swing man" or "route captain" filling in on
some routes on the route man's day off.

There are many variations of the foregoing general organizational
patterns, but one common factor with which this study is concerned is
present in some degree in each of them. This common factor is found
in the fact that, except for the few men already possessing management
experience, the individual selected for and placed in the supervisor's
job must be reoriented. Where before he was supervised, he now must
supervise others. He will have responsibility for the performance of others and will be called upon to participate in training, motivation, control and communication in such a way as to contribute to the effectiveness of his selling unit.

Specific elements of the sales supervisor's contribution

In the depth interview phase of this study two avenues of questioning were used to discover the job content of sales supervisors. The first called for data as to the distribution of the supervisor's time among the major elements of his job and the second asked the respondent to name the special or unique function of the sales supervisor's contribution to the effectiveness of the selling organization. Responses to the first line of questioning will be treated later under the heading of the job description for the sales supervisor. The purpose of the second approach is to arrive at an expression of the functional character of the sales supervisor as distinguished from a statement of his activities.

In the interviews with sales executives, thirty-one responses from thirty-four companies produced thirty-seven statements classified as shown in Table 1. Because sales executives had never thought of their supervisors in the light of a special or unique function they generally responded in terms of what they considered to be the most significant aspect of the sales supervisors' contribution.
Table 1.--Sales executives' opinions as to the most significant contribution of the sales supervisor to the effectiveness of the selling organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of function</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance of routine management duties</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement of sales goals</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation and leadership</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative factors</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interviews with sales executives of 32 Ohio business firms.

The classification used in Table 1 was derived from a study of the responses of the executives interviewed, not only in terms of the nature of their response to this particular question, but also in terms of the general concept of the supervisor's job as revealed by the organizational status of the first line sales manager and the philosophy or approach of the executive.

Performance of routine management duties.--This category embraces the supervisor's responsibility for his own sales organization. The routine management duties referred to by the respondents included recruiting, selecting, training and developing, planning, organizing, administering, follow-up, and communicating. Such activities can hardly be regarded as unique and the sales executives who considered these to be of major significance are taking an operational rather than a managerial approach to the sales supervisor's job.

The statement of the branch sales manager of an office equipment firm epitomizes the responses in this group. He described the supervisor's most significant contribution as the "ability to weld together all elements of the branch or district into a hard hitting, aggressive team that can go out and get the job done."
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A public statement of appreciation is due several people in connection with the conduct of this study. First, I wish to acknowledge a great debt of gratitude to Dr. James H. Davis for his continuing faith and patience during the time this study was in progress. His criticism and suggestions were invaluable.

Dr. H. H. Maynard supplied the inspiration which gave rise to this particular inquiry. The interest shown by Dr. Arthur Cullman is also very much appreciated. Dr. Viva Booth offered many helpful suggestions on the contents of the depth interview form and the survey questionnaire.

The cooperation of many sales executives in Ohio businesses was drawn upon in accumulating the information on which this study is based. Without their frank discussion of methods and problems this paper could not have been written. Finally a word of recognition is due Mary Loyd, my wife, for her patience and forbearance during the preparation of materials and the typing phase.

August, 1962

David P. Loyd
Achievement of sales goals.--Some of the executives interviewed placed greatest stress on the ability of the supervisor to meet the sales goals for his unit. In a large tire and rubber company the sales supervisor's major contribution was referred to in this way: "The ability to make his quota is the capstone of all his job performance factors." Closely related to this statement was one made by the sales manager of a business machines firm: "The ability to assume the responsibility for territory and quota allocation."

These statements imply that the sales supervisor is held responsible for the performance of his marketing unit. This is true, even though his scope of authority varies from company to company according to the extent of his delegated powers. In some organizations where interviews were conducted, the salesman's immediate supervisor has full marketing responsibility for his own unit and for each salesman in his unit. His ability to develop plans, to organize for operations and to control the performance of his unit in the achievement of its objectives are of a critical nature and are a direct determinant of the company's success. Regardless of the level at which the sales supervisor is found, whether he supervises the entire sales force, a region, a district, an urban branch, or a single crew of route men, responsibility for the sales performance of his unit is a major part of his job. Evidence of this responsibility is found in the frequency with which the ability to get the job done is mentioned as a prime attribute of the successful sales supervisor.

Motivation and leadership.--A third set of factors contributing to the key position of the sales supervisor includes supplying leadership,
inspiration, enthusiasm, and motivation. Closely related to these elements of the job is the responsibility for the maintenance of conditions of good morale within the selling unit. Positive action in this area centers around motivating the sales force. This specific activity was referred to in five cases as being the sales supervisor's most important contribution.

The sales supervisor's task in motivation is creating the conditions which permit the salesman's self-motivation to become effective. Approaching the problem of increasing the salesman's effectiveness logically identifies motivation as one of the key contributions of the sales supervisor. It is a proper function of training and education with respect to individual and company objectives to identify one with the other, and with the aid of proper job assignments and compensation plans to make them coincide in the salesman's mind. This should form the basis for enthusiastic acceptance of company goals and enable the salesman to find his leadership within himself. The sales supervisor, because of the closeness of his contact with the salesman, is influential in creating an awareness of these relationships in the mind of the salesman, and he can be expected to do so, given the prerequisite policies, programs and attitudes by top management.

Creative factors.—Finally, the sales supervisor can be viewed as the link between actual sales performance and planning for performance. His location in the organization structure is strategic. As the final link in the chain of command, he has an opportunity to make a major contribution through his ability to communicate, interpret and apply plans and policies. Even when supplementary methods
of communication are used to reach the salesman, the supervisor is re-
quired to create the desired attitude toward, and understanding of, 
policy among his salesmen.

He is the potential contributor of an adaptability factor. He 
sees conditions as they exist in the field, and he is in a position 
to observe results. He is called upon to perform a continuing func-
tion of creative leadership. By observing changing conditions and 
their effects on the results of present policies and procedures, he 
plays the role of an intellectual randomizer whose position enables 
him to perform two essential steps in control—comparison and correc-
tive action. By means of communication, both up and down the line he 
is a key to comparison, adjustment and follow-up, and by means of 
alternative seeking he maximizes selling effectiveness. The adapta-
bility factor is a key to the success of any organizational unit, 
because it is the source of flexibility. Sales managers who identi-
"imagination;" "helps in deter-
fied factors in this area referred to "imagination;" "helps in deter-
mining strategy for our current sales negotiations;" and "contributes 
ting strategy for our current sales negotiations;" and "contributes 
to the development of men by assigning accounts that will be a 
challenge."

The sales manager of a firm manufacturing electrical equipment 
for the construction and manufacturing industries referred to this 
creative contribution of the sales supervisor. He said,

There isn't any one thing done by our district 
managers that is not done in some degree by others. 
(He) supplies imagination, drive, resourcefulness, 
finds avenues of incentive, (has) a will to win, 
sets an example of industry and hard work. Imagination 
more than any other is his contribution. This 
separates the animal from humans.
Another factor mentioned by four sales executives might be regarded as the result of the first line sales manager's successful performance of his entire job at a level of creative leadership. For example, the sales executive of a manufacturer of soaps and detergents and other chemical products referred to the supervisor's "ability to take a group of men and make a successfully performing unit of it—to get the business." An executive of an ethical drug company spoke of the "ability to build up a good field organization to get the sales. Most important job in the company—or at least third most important." Similar statements were made by the branch manager of a business machines firm, the manager of market development of an oil company, the vice-president for sales of a manufacturer of weighing and measuring devices, and a sales executive of a firm making equipment for the banking and other fiscal institutions.

Summary

From the foregoing it can be stated that the sales supervisor's contribution to the sales organization is not a single or unitary thing. It varies from company to company and probably varies from one branch to another within a company. Two basic concepts of supervisory activities exist, one a procedural concept, the other a managerial concept. The two are not mutually exclusive, but interviews indicated that usually one or the other tends to dominate the thinking of a given sales manager. The procedural concept is characterized by a narrow view of the sales supervisor's duties and a relatively high degree of centralization of authority and responsibility. Examples of firms in this class are bakeries selling through door-to-door route men.
The managerial concept of supervisory activities involves broad responsibilities for the first line of sales management, with the local manager required to recruit, select and train his own personnel, develop local operating, sales and advertising budgets and conduct the affairs of his unit in such a way as to create a profit.

The statements discussed in this section also must be recognized as the opinions of the managers interviewed. They revealed in many cases a lack of reflective thinking about what the real nature of the sales supervisor's job should be. Clear formulation of a concept of the sales supervisor's primary contribution to the sales organization should be made as a starting point for the job description.

Factors distinguishing the sales supervisor from the salesman

Certain elementary observations are necessary at this point. The supervisor is the one who supervises and the salesman is the one supervised. In terms of the function of training performed by the supervisor, the supervisor is the one who trains, the salesman is the one trained. In the performance of his function of motivation, the supervisor must motivate the salesman. While the salesman needs to control his own activities, the supervisor has the responsibility for controlling his entire selling unit. Finally, the sales supervisor is a liaison man between top management and the salesman, being responsible not only to communicate policies, programs and procedures, but to secure their understanding and acceptance by the salesmen. The supervisor must also provide a channel for upward communication so that the upper echelons of sales management may be informed of conditions in the field.
Orientation

For the salesman promoted to the job of supervisor, an about-face is required. The sales training manager of a national consumer products company, writing about this problem, said:

I might add by way of personal experience that one of the greatest problems confronting the new sales supervisor is that of attitude orientation. He must learn to think like a sales supervisor. He must realize that his greatest task lies in getting other people to do the various things which must be done. He must also learn how to bring the best out in the individuals who work for him, even though their best may prove that they are smarter than he is.8

Almost without exception sales managers interviewed stated that all or practically all of their supervisors were secured from the ranks of their own salesmen. Most of the remainder were secured from within the company, being promoted to a line supervisory job from a previous assignment in some sales staff capacity. As a result, practically all sales supervisors are called upon to go through the reorientation process.

Activities

In addition to making the change from one who performs a group of activities to one who supervises the performance of those activities by others, the new supervisor is now called upon to perform a set of activities of which he has formerly been the recipient or beneficiary. The new supervisor may be the victim of a misleading feeling of familiarity with the job of the sales supervisor. This feeling may become a real obstacle in the way of his assuming his new role. Phelps and Westing point out that the supervisor engages in a set of activities

8Letter from George Halsted, National Sales Training Manager, Motorola, Inc., December 13, 1955.
far different from selling, and refer to a case in which 65 per cent of the supervisor's duties were new duties, and only 35 per cent of the salesman's previous experience was called upon in his new job.\footnote{D. Maynard Phelps and J. Howard Westing, \textit{Marketing Management} (rev. ed.; Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1960), p. 653.}

The arithmetic of the inter-personal relationships suggests the size of the problem of reorientation. No two salesmen are alike and the supervisor must learn to communicate with and motivate from six to fifteen different men, each with his own set of attitudes, ideas, ideals and problems. The difficulty of the reorientation is contributed to by the fact that the men most often promoted are the most successful salesmen. The fact that successful sales performance came easy to them may partially blind them to its difficulties and may tend to make them impatient with salesmen they find themselves supervising.

Responsibilities

The managerial responsibilities of the supervisor's task also serve to separate the operative salesman from the first level of supervision. The presence of geographical designations in the job titles of sales supervisors emphasizes the point that the sales supervisor often has a great responsibility for planning, organizing, and controlling all local operations. Where this is true it might be argued that the job is more than that of sales supervisor; but the fact remains that the responsibilities of sales supervision are often combined with full local management responsibility under such titles as district or branch sales manager. This adds to the difficulty of selecting and developing sales supervisors.
Job description for the sales supervisor

Considerable variation exists, among the companies interviewed, in the organization and presentation of the job description for the first line of sales supervision. The approach to the job description may be from the standpoint of a general unclassified verbal description, as in the case of an insurance company, a listing of activities and functions, as in the case of a steel company, a classified statement of duties and responsibilities, as used by a building and construction supply manufacturer, or a combination of these. Among the firms interviewed, twelve were able to supply written job descriptions of the first line sales manager's job. Analysis of these job descriptions revealed the following five major areas of functions and responsibilities:

1) Supervisory responsibilities
   a) Field training and communication
   b) Motivation and morale
   c) Control

2) Unit sales responsibility
   a) Sales volume
   b) Expense control
   c) Profit

3) Individual sales responsibility
   a) Quota in terms of sales volume or per cent of time spent in selling
   b) Key account responsibility

4) Responsibility for local operations
   a) Office management
   b) Warehousing and inventory
   c) Delivery and installation
   d) Recruiting and selection

5) Marketing responsibilities
   a) Upward communication or information feedback from territory
   b) Sales promotion
   c) Pricing
   d) Policy participation
   e) Public relations
In addition to the variation found among job descriptions, there is also variation among sales organizations in terms of the emphasis given the various functions and the interpretations of these functions by different sales managers. Part of this variation can be accounted for by the nature of the sales task and its implications for customers, salesmen, and the sales organization. The absence of standard definitions of terms and a scarcity of written policies also contribute to the difficulty of describing the job of the first line sales supervisor.

Supervisory responsibilities

Responsibilities of the sales supervisor in this area are primarily a phase of human relations. Businesses generally recognize the need for good human relations even though their very intangible nature defies specific description. The sum total of all inter-personal contacts is included here. Good human relations are inconsistent with dissatisfactions, grievances and conflicts; they are fostered by sympathy, empathy, cooperation and mutual respect. Training, motivation, and communication, three of the four phases of supervision discussed by Lapp, are primarily human relations activities. Their performance with a high degree of skill and effectiveness creates the conditions of good morale. Because of the close relationship between good morale and the process of motivation, the supervisor's human relations responsibilities are high.

An excerpt from the job description of the branch manager in a firm manufacturing and selling equipment for banking and accounting purposes is part of a job description covering eight general areas. These areas include: selection, training, operation, market analysis, sales meetings, sales promotion duties, supervision and self analysis.
It contains the following statement of supervisory responsibilities:

**TRAIN PERSONNEL**

A) **SALES** - Follow established procedures within the Branch training programs. Work with men in field. Follow through with refresher programs.

1) Prepare men for advancement.

**SUPERVISION**

A) Sales personnel

1) Assign territories.

2) Provide sales tools and make periodic inspections.

3) Stimulate men—earn their confidence and respect. Study all aspects of motivation.

4) Guide activities. Assist and review planning of individual men. Review carefully, call reports and prospects.

5) Calls with men—help sell the tough one.

6) Help with personal problems.

7) Interpret management policies for men. Establish communication to and from all men.

8) Protect the interests of each man.

9) Develop team effort.

10) Maintain discipline.

11) Encourage after failure and give recognition for a job well done.

Also, in this job description, assigned responsibility for sales meetings made specific reference to the training, communication, and motivation aspects. The supervisory nature of the branch manager's job is described in terms of the functional characteristics of supervision. The branch manager's responsibility for mastering the
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techniques of his job is made specific by such phrases as "stimulate men," "study all aspects of motivation," "establish communication."

By contrast, the job description of the retail supervisor of bakery route men makes very little reference to the basic elements of supervision. Instead, it is presented in terms of a detailed analysis of work performed, specifying in a step by step manner what the retail supervisor does from the time he checks in on Monday morning until check-out time on Friday. The nature of the managerial responsibility differs widely between these two examples of first line sales managers.

At the same time the obligation of the first line supervisor to supervise implies that the job description should contain a specific statement of the supervision to be performed in addition to listing the daily activities by which supervision is to be achieved.

Unit sales responsibility

The core of the sales supervisor's duty assignment is made up of the supervisory responsibilities just discussed and some requirement for the production of his unit. This production responsibility may be stated in one of a number of different ways. Standards or quotas may be established to measure performance of the sales unit in terms of total sales volume in dollars or in units, product mix, per cent of quota for each salesman in the unit, or more complex standards involving a combination of dollar and unit volume, product mix and customer performance.

Where the nature of the supervisor's task allows him some influence over costs and expenses, expense control or unit profitability standards may be made the supervisor's responsibility. An example of this in
the case of a business equipment firm is the requirement for the branch manager. The job description says: "Plan net profit of at least 5 percent on sales. Attainment is a minimum for acceptance as good management." A tire company's requirement for the branch manager in this respect simply states, "see that quotas are met."

Individual sales responsibility

Flowing naturally from the fact that virtually all sales supervisors are experienced salesmen is another fairly common though not universal requirement that the sales supervisor also sell. In the case of a crew manager for bakery route men, the crew manager may have a route of his own, or may rotate among the routes of his crewmen on their day off, or he may travel with a different route man each day for three or four days per week, thus working with each man at least once in two weeks. His requirement for selling in this latter case is for the purpose of keeping in touch with conditions on each route. One office equipment manufacturer assigns the branch manager the responsibility for selling key accounts. The divisional manager of an industrial equipment company assists his salesmen in closing major sales.

The selling requirement in the supervisor's job is not merely vestigial. There are sound reasons in many organizations for the supervisor continuing to act in part as a salesman. The prime responsibility of any sales organization is to sell. Selling in a broader sense is achieved by the sum total of all the efforts of the marketing division of the firm. It is contributed to by all the activities engaged in, including advertising, sales promotion, marketing
research and personal selling. Each of these has operative and managerial aspects requiring technical competence and effective coordination. Where continued performance of personal selling by the supervisor is necessary to maintain technical competence and to secure effective coordination, then such an activity is a bona fide element of the supervisor's job.

In cases where the volume of supervision required in a selling unit is not sufficient to justify the full time service of one man, individual selling responsibility for the supervisor is used to balance the work load and thus broaden his productivity base. Something of this relationship exists between the swing man and the route salesmen in a company selling household and food items door to door. In a business machines firm, the senior salesman, while primarily a salesman, has a supervisory relationship to one or two junior salesmen who assist him in making proposals to customers and in training customer personnel in the use of machines and systems. Additional supervision of both senior and junior salesmen in this firm comes from branch product sales managers and from the branch manager.

Responsibility for local operations

Companies that add responsibilities in this area to the basic function of supervision of field salesmen make a significant change in the man requirements for the job. It now becomes necessary for this first line management man to recruit, select, train and supervise office personnel, warehouse and delivery people, and to assume the responsibility for the effective performance of routine procedures differing markedly
from actual selling. He may have some staff assistance in these areas when provided with a senior clerk in the office, a warehouse supervisor, and a service manager, but in any event the addition of these added responsibilities will require a sizable reduction in the amount of time that can be spent in direct supervision of the sales force. However, because of the greater technical competence of salesmen necessary in the sale of certain types of products, the volume of supervision required in the selling unit may not call for the full time services of a field supervisor.

The employees supervised by the zone manager of an oil company illustrate the scope of responsibility for physical operations that may be encountered. The list includes, in addition to sales personnel, one to three maintenance men, one warehouse foreman, one to three warehouse operators, one dealer specialist, one to three warehousemen, one to four service station managers, one to two tank wagon drivers, and one to two driver agents, commission. The number supervised, according to the job description, may vary from six to fifty.

Marketing responsibilities

In sales forces where the size of the unit sale is large, where the number of salesmen is small, technical competence of salesmen is high, and local selling conditions vary from one district to another, the first line of sales management may be given additional powers and responsibilities in the area of marketing strategy or marketing policy. An example of an organizational arrangement of this type is found in the job description of the southern district manager of a firm manufacturing
graphic arts machinery, equipment and supplies. Two pertinent sections are quoted:

**RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES**

**POLICY**

Measure effectiveness of district policies and initiate new or revised policies when necessary. Encourage subordinates to consider such policy matters and to make suggestions and written recommendations on them.

Refer important policy and administrative matters to the Assistant General Sales Manager and make recommendations to him, preferably in writing. Participate in formulating over-all sales policies, particularly those that affect southern district activities.

Keep informed on over-all policies and procedures of the company to extent necessary to administer effectively activities in the southern district. By interpretation and application of such policies and procedures, assist subordinates and associates to determine proper course of action.

**ORGANIZATION PLANNING**

In collaboration with the Assistant General Sales Manager, initiate, develop and establish changes in the plan of organization of the southern district when new objectives and changing conditions require new activities and responsibilities.

Work with the supervisory subordinates in developing such plans, particularly when their specific activities are affected.

In the case of this district manager, upward communication becomes more than simple reporting of market and operating information and involves local interpretation designed to make such information directly usable for headquarters policy decisions. The district manager participates in making such decisions. This is a focal point in the application of intelligence to the solution of business problems in the field of sales. Business plans and policies formulated at higher levels of managerial authority are based in part upon the experience encountered
at the operating level. Likewise the application of such plans and policies occurs at this operating level. When the responsibility for intelligent application of plans and policies and participation in the process by which future plans and policies are determined becomes a part of the first line sales manager's duties, then the broadest concept of the job is being employed. Such a description of the sales supervisor's job may be used because of the nature of the selling task, or as a means of implementing a policy of developing management capability among lower echelon executives as part of an executive development program.

The physical location of the marketing unit manager may be at the home office with the title of president, general manager, vice-president for sales, or sales manager, or in cases where marketing responsibilities are decentralized, the titles, regional, district or branch manager may be used. In cases where multi-product or multi-channel conditions exist some local specialized title may be used, e.g., zone manager, commercial sales manager, district manager for jobber sales, or some designated product sales manager.

Basic patterns in assigning sales supervisory responsibility

Alternative methods of organizing the sales department exist in terms of the assignment of the responsibility for field supervision of salesmen. An infinite number of variations may be encountered from one firm to another. Chart I summarizes the relationships in five general examples. Case I represents the nature of the job of the sales department employee at the primary operative level. He will be supervised
## Chart I -- Five Basic Patterns in the Assignment of Sales Supervisory Responsibility

<table>
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<th>Case</th>
<th>Responsibility for-</th>
<th>Job titles</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual sales</td>
<td>Salesman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Primary Operative Employee</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Individual sales</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partial supervision of others</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Individual sales</td>
<td>Sales supervisor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Branch or district sales manager</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unit sales</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Individual sales (minor)</td>
<td>Branch manager</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>District manager</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unit sales</td>
<td>Zone manager</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local operations and personnel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Individual sales (minor)</td>
<td>Branch manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>District manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unit sales</td>
<td>Regional manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local operations and personnel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing plans and policies</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Branch manager</td>
<td>General manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District manager</td>
<td>Sales manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional manager</td>
<td>General manager</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marketing plans and policies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vice-president</td>
<td>President</td>
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from above in some degree in all selling organizations, but where the sales force is small and widely scattered, and in cases where the technical competence of salesmen is high and the selling task complex, the amount of field supervision which he receives will be relatively small. As a result, he may be regarded as self-supervising. This case would be present in the president or general manager type of organization for supervision referred to by Lapp. The supervision he would receive would be general due to the other duties of the president, general manager, or home office sales manager.

Case 2, involving a relatively small amount of supervisory activity, is characteristic of a job sometimes referred to as senior salesman. The senior salesman is basically a primary operative employee, but he is given some responsibility for supervising a junior salesman, sales trainee, or sales assistant. Not only does this arrangement contribute to the preparation of sales trainees, it also prepares the senior salesman for future assignment as branch sales manager. Individual sales responsibility represents the major part of the senior salesman's job.

The first level of a full supervisory responsibility is found in Case 3. The title may be one of many already discussed, but the essence of the job is the responsibility for supervision of the men in the sales unit and responsibility for their performance individually and as a group. The supervisor may or may not have any responsibility for sales on his own account as a salesman. An example of this type of organization is found in an electrical appliance manufacturer's sales

10 Supra, p. 28.
department. The branch major appliance sales manager in the large branches is responsible for the supervision of his salesmen and for major appliance sales volume. He also, in some branches, sells department stores as key accounts.

The first level of sales management found in many firms is like that in Case 4. Responsibility for the operation of the local selling unit involves, in addition to the functions of sales supervisor, the management of local physical operations. Branch manager or district manager are titles commonly applied to this class of sales supervisor's job. The selling unit manager, if he remains primarily a sales supervisor, may delegate the performance of managing physical operations to an office manager or operations manager. This is true in the case of the small branches of an electrical appliance manufacturer. Participation in determining selling unit sales goals and responsibility for cost control will be a part of the job of the selling unit manager.

The fifth case in Chart 1 represents the broadest example of the sales supervisor's job, the marketing unit manager. In a small sales organization this would be descriptive of the sales manager; in a large decentralized organization this job might be found at the regional or district level. Included in the job assignment would be some degree of delegated responsibility for local advertising, sales promotion and selling plans and expenditures. Some influence over pricing may be delegated in certain lines of business. The nature of the selling task and the quality and technical competence of the salesmen would be such that detailed supervision in the field would be at a minimum. At the same time the gap between salesman and manager would be a wide one to bridge for the salesman being promoted to this first line of sales management.
In the process of making the transition from salesman, an operative employee, to sales supervisor, a management employee, the first step in specialization of function in a managerial sense is the assignment of the responsibility for supervising others. The salesman in the field can be said to be self-managing to some extent, in that he is responsible for planning, organizing and controlling his own activities. He must perform some degree of self-supervision. When he becomes a sales supervisor, the least addition that can be made to his job is that he be given the responsibility for supervising the activities of others doing the same kind of work he is doing. He may still perform some sales activities on his own account, and in addition, assume responsibility for the activities and performance of other salesmen. The extent to which his particular job assignment allows him to specialize in the function of supervision depends upon the nature of the selling task, the size and organization structure of the field sales force, and the policy of the firm toward the problem of developing candidates for promotion to higher echelons of sales management.

Developing sound policies and procedures for selecting men from the ranks of salesman for promotion to sales supervisor must rest upon a clear understanding of the functional nature of the sales supervisor's job, its place in the organization structure, and its actual contribution to selling effectiveness within a given firm. If these three facets of the supervisor's job are known and understood then realistic criteria can be determined by which to evaluate men being considered for sales supervisory positions.
In many of the cases studied it is obvious that no such clear understanding exists. Evidence of the lack of understanding is the fact that some sales executives had some difficulty identifying clearly the sales supervisors in their organizations. There is a lack of analytical thinking on the part of sales executives about some of the details of their organization structure and the functional relationships among the jobs in the sales department. Further evidence of the lack of a systematic approach to organizing on the part of sales executives is the absence in some organizations of a written job description for the first level of sales management. Criteria reported by some sales executives could only be stated in general, subjective terms because there was no place where the man requirements or specifications were recorded.

A further deficiency which must be corrected before satisfactory criteria for supervisor selection can be determined is the lack of a clear concept of what the first line sales manager actually contributes to the achievement of organization goals. Sales executives interviewed were more inclined to recite lists of activities than to formulate a statement of the supervisor's managerial function.

Still another bit of evidence of insufficient attention to the job of sales supervision is found in the training activities in sales organizations. Pre-supervisory training in managerial duties and responsibilities is not common. While it is not clearly established that it is possible to teach anyone to manage, yet education and training in the data, methods, and situations with which the manager has to deal will be valuable as preparation for the reorientation process that the salesman has to undergo to move successfully to the first echelon of
sales management. An appliance manufacturer had a management school available at corporate headquarters but in many instances the men promoted to manager's jobs were not sent to the school until six months to two years after being elevated.

There are three recommendations that can be derived from the preceding criticisms. First, that the jobs in the sales department be analyzed with particular attention being given the relationship between the salesman and the first level of supervision. Second, that the managerial nature of the sales supervisor's job be studied and made the subject of reflective thinking in order that the principal function can be identified and be made the basis of his job description. Third, that other job assignments in the sales department be related to the jobs of salesman and sales supervisor in such a way that a completely integrated organization structure will be the result. These steps, in the field of organization planning, are a prerequisite to determining criteria, policies, and procedures for selecting sales supervisors.
CHAPTER III

POLICIES AND SOURCES

In the preceding chapter consideration was given the preliminary aspects of the problem of establishing a system or procedure for the selection of sales supervisors. In this and the next two chapters the nature and variations in policies, sources, criteria, selection tools and procedures are considered.

Business policy underlying sales supervisor selection systems

The proper determination and execution of business activities relating to the selection of sales supervisors requires the prior establishment of suitable business policies. A business policy is defined as "a principal or group of related principles, with their consequent rules of action, that condition and govern the successful achievement of certain business objectives toward which they are directed."¹ The performance of managerial and operative activities is guided by the existence of sound policy. Personnel policies pertaining to the selection, promotion, and development of sales department line managers are of concern to this study.

Advantages and characteristics of sound policy

The advantages and characteristics of sound policy need to be reviewed before proceeding with the consideration of policies in supervisor selection. First, policies conserve executive time because action can be taken in many cases where factors and conditions are uniform without restudying the problem each time. A second advantage is the assurance that the course of action has been determined after due deliberation. Under the press of events, sufficient time is not available for the complete study that would be necessary for the solution of a problem in the absence of a suitable policy. A third advantage is that action is uniform, both from time to time and between different organizational units of the firm. This advantage is particularly important in personnel issues where fairness and consistency of action are essential to organization morale. The dictates of policy carry the weight of authority of the executive level that has created and endorsed them. When suitable policies have been adopted, lower echelon executives deal with problems that might otherwise be beyond their abilities. Thus the process of delegation is facilitated and duties can be performed and decisions made at the lowest level at which the information required is available.

The creation of sound policy calls for careful deliberation to insure that policies possess certain basic characteristics. It is not the purpose of this study to explore these characteristics
in detail\(^2\) but two call for some discussion. These two are definiteness and the requirement that the policy be known and understood within the organization. The policy attribute of definiteness imposes the requirement that policies be clearly stated, free of ambiguity, and written. Policies stated orally and communicated orally are open to a wider variety of interpretations among organizational units and from time to time, than are written policies.

In order that policies may be known and understood within the organization they need to be communicated frequently by means of directives or as the subject of training sessions. The purpose of this communication is to insure that uniform interpretations are being placed on policies by all executives involved in their application. This is probably more true of policies in the field of personnel than in other areas of business operation. It is also more true of some personnel policies than of others.

For example, it may be the policy of a firm to hire only college graduates as salesmen. This is simple, specific, and capable of but one interpretation. On the other hand, a policy of providing

opportunities for salesmen to demonstrate managerial skill within the framework of their current job assignment is general and calls for considerable ingenuity in devising means of implementation. It is the kind of policy that can be conveniently ignored under the pressure of daily operations. Its implementation calls for the development of specific procedures and a continuing program of training and supervision of the executives involved in its application. Its desirability would depend upon the need of the organization for a continuing flow of qualified first line sales management personnel.

This need will vary over a wide range according to the type of product and the market which is served, the organization structure, the conditions of organization growth, stability and flexibility, and the nature of complementary policies pertaining to personnel hiring and promotion. In the case of a local dairy operation of a national corporation, the management personnel was stable. There had not been a case of supervisor placement for six years. Near the other end of the scale is the case of the large firm selling directory advertising. The sales personnel manager described their situation in this way. He said,

There is a flow of men upward through the organization. At present there are 21 men, of which sixty per cent are college graduates and forty per cent non-college. Average cycle time from hiring as salesman to promotion to second level of supervision, four to five years, to first level, two to three years.

In this firm, policy supported the practice of recruiting some eight college men out of a total of 25 to 30 new salesmen per year. Men from elsewhere in the organization and from outside make up the non-college recruits. The normal upper limit of progress for the
The non-college group is to the top of the salesman classification. The college men are selected as salesmen but with a management goal being definitely provided for. College and non-college men are treated alike during their salesman assignments, with a definite attempt being made to avoid any "crown prince" status. College men who do not demonstrate anticipated potential may be separated after two years. The number of college men recruited is based upon projected management requirements derived from long range forecasts of demand for the company's services. The policies involved are not written. They are implied in the table of organization and the lines of promotion, but the primary conditioning factor is the communicated philosophy pervading the organization that every man coming into the firm should have the opportunity to rise to top management. Much is made in this firm of the fact that the present president and the one before him rose from the ranks of operative employees.

The dairy products firm referred to likewise does not have written policies. On the subject of hiring college men, for example, practice is governed by the general expression of opinion that, "(We) can't use all college men; we must have men who will be happy to stay on as salesmen." Responsibility for local personnel is fully decentralized, with the local manager guided by an operations manual and periodic training activities. Upward movement of personnel within the organization is provided for informally by the fact that, as the sales manager said, "Division or headquarters staff people rotate or cover the various plants. They are aware of the people in each plant position. This helps prevent any one manager holding good men back."

The foregoing examples are illustrative of the fact that sales
personnel policies governing the selection of sales supervisors are formulated under widely differing conditions from one firm to another. While it is preferable that policies be written, and it is known that written policies do contribute to the likelihood that uniform action will be taken under similar circumstances, unwritten policies do exist. In fact, among the firms interviewed, formal, written policies were the exception rather than the rule in the area of sales personnel selection.

This absence of written policies is one of the more specific deficiencies encountered, with less than one fifth of the firms interviewed indicating the existence of recorded policies. They were found in various sources including a policy manual, manager's manual and in some cases were only implied in the job description of the salesman or sales supervisor through the statement of line of promotion. It would be easy to exaggerate the significance of this deficiency, but certainly there is an indication here of a lack of overall study and systematic analysis of the problem of selecting management personnel for the sales division.

Policies of firms interviewed

Since all of the policies found had definite implications for procedure, and, in the absence of written policies, often were only evident in terms of the procedures involved, only a brief summary of policies will be made here. From the standpoint of frequency, one policy, that of selecting sales supervisors from the ranks of present salesmen, is most uniform. Every firm claimed this as a major policy.
A few exceptions in the application of this policy are found but they are rare.

Another policy, one that suggests an emerging trend, has to do with providing the salesman with a job assignment that enables him to develop and demonstrate capacity and skill required for a supervisor's job. The use of the title, territory manager, for salesman is not just an attempt to convey additional status to the job of salesman. It is descriptive of a type of job assignment that includes responsibility for a more complete marketing task than is involved in the traditional concept of the salesman's job.

The territory manager has responsibility for determining and achieving sales goals, dealer development, training of dealer salesmen, planning and executing sales promotional activities for and with dealers, and in some cases helping with the assignment and supervision of a junior salesman or sales trainee. This approach to the salesman's job may be referred to as a policy of job enlargement as discussed by Drucker.3 Not only does this policy contribute to identification and development of men with managerial potential, it also makes the job of salesman more challenging and utilizes the abilities of salesmen more fully.

Sales personnel policies must be related to the nature of the selling task. If the salesman's job contains elements that are similar to some of those performed by the supervisor, and if the ratio of supervisory needs to number of salesmen hired is appropriate, then

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3 Supra, p. 20.
a policy of consciously looking for management potential when hiring salesmen is unnecessary. One sales manager said:

We are looking for a man who can become a fully qualified salesman. We expect that one out of four will be qualified for managerial duties. Our salesman has a lot of activities that are like the manager’s, doing forecasts, surveys, planning, etc.

The above results in an approach to the hiring interview that is specific and factual in discussing the future with a man.

We tell our applicant "We’re hiring for a good job as a salesman, not for a training program. There is a fairly good opportunity for advancement to management but it all depends on you."

In the above case, selection of sales supervisors is an internal affair not involved in the recruitment of salesmen. No specific attempt is made at the time of bringing the man into the firm to judge or predict his future qualification for a supervisor’s job. He is hired strictly as a salesman, and although a certain degree of management potential is inherent in the type of salesman required, no commitment is made at the time of hiring pertaining to future placement as a supervisor.

A policy of careful evaluation of all sales department employees is accompanied by a policy of providing opportunities for salesmen to develop their maximum capabilities. Thus, salesmen who demonstrate initiative and desire for advancement are identified and it is from such individuals that promotions are made. Policies guiding this approach to sales supervisor selection and development are not written
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in this firm. The products sold are in the industrial goods category and the dimensions of the job are such that the salesman normally has some opportunities to develop management skills. Thus sales personnel policies are related to the nature of the selling task and periodic evaluation of all salesmen furnishes the means of identifying promotable people.

The need for consistency in policies can hardly be overemphasized. There is a variety of approaches to the task of securing sales supervisors several of which may be effective in any given sales organization at any given time so long as the policies adopted to meet the problem are related and realistic. In the firm just referred to, the expectation of the sales manager that "one out of four will be qualified for managerial duties," may be misleading and unrealistic. Such assumptions should be subject to frequent review and testing. A body of hiring policy for sales supervisors founded on such an assumption may be ineffective, or may become ineffective due to changing conditions. A gradual shift in the quality of men hired as salesmen should be guarded against. Increased supervisor needs related to changing methods of distribution, changes in channels of distribution, increased competition, or sales force expansion must be anticipated. Top management must take steps to insure the accuracy of the assumptions on which supervisor selection policies are founded.

The policy of a small, localized and highly decentralized unit of a national corporation in the dairy products line is unwritten and
exceedingly simple. Using a policy of general hiring the manager said, "We try to attract men who will come and do any job we ask them to do. If they can become a manager they will be promoted." The only selection tools used are the application blank and informal interviews, with evaluation of performance and potential being carried on in a purely informal and subjective manner.

The policies of a firm in the business machines field are aimed at achieving the objective of making "so many people qualified for a management position that when an opening comes we have enough men to choose from." One executive of the firm stated, "We are not going to wait until the job opens up to find a man." The policies here support a program that is loose and flexible and its informality engenders a spirit of individual development in the sales organization. The dimensions and content of the job of territory manager in this company provide ample opportunity for the man to demonstrate his capabilities and also allow him a high degree of job satisfaction.

Policies vary somewhat as to the emphasis on the responsibility of the individual for his own development, and there is a corresponding variation in the procedures used. Another policy emphasis encountered regards supervisor selection as an inseparable part of the manager's job, and not the subject for a development program as a separate and distinct process. There is a broad delegation of authority and responsibility to the district sales manager and the selection and development of first line managers is carried on entirely within the district. Under this policy the manager assigns certain supervisory activities to an assistant and prepares him for promotion by individual coaching.
One difficulty encountered under this policy is that there might be a lack of the company-wide viewpoint. Further, this policy would not provide an adequate supply of first line managers in a company with an expanding sales force.

In recognition of the idea that "upper line management levels will undoubtedly come from the districts" one firm states the policy that in hiring salesmen, "we try to get the best man we can find." As a statement of policy this is so general as to be almost meaningless. However, as this policy is interpreted by a highly qualified staff sales personnel and training director it serves as the basis for an extensive and carefully developed selection system.

In the same firm a corollary policy is to keep the development of men informal to avoid ill effects on salesmen who might not make good in the management area. It is also a policy and a practice in this company to maintain a national promotability list as a device to provide for the maximum utilization of men with management potential.

Evaluation

The statement of unwritten policies by the executives interviewed was general and subjective in most cases. There was also a tendency for the policies to be stated in idealistic terms, e.g., the "best man" referred to above. In the absence of a statement of criteria of the "best man" and without knowledge of the procedures used to locate such a man the statement of policy is without real significance. It is inadequate as a means of securing uniformity of action and it fails to provide any guidance to executives in its implementation. Thus
the burden of providing for uniformity and consistency of action falls on the procedures and systems that have been adopted.

Sources of sales supervisors

The labor supply from which sales supervisors may be drawn is limited. The decision as to the sources from which to secure new sales management personnel is conditioned by the need for men with certain capability and experience and by the influence on the morale of salesmen of the opportunity to advance. To maximize these values and meet these needs certain policy decisions must be made pertaining to the sources to be relied upon for a supply of first line management people in the sales department.

Four basic policies as to the source of sales supervisors

Analysis of the depth interview responses of sales executives revealed the existence of four basic approaches to the labor market as a source of first line management personnel for the sales department. They are classified and referred to as policies here because in the absence of formally stated policies these general approaches served as de facto policies, determining the nature of procedures and guiding the thought and action of executives. The four basic policies outlined are relative to the objective of obtaining effective first line sales manager personnel. They take into consideration both internal and external sources of manpower. They also integrate the original hiring decision and ultimate placement as a first line manager into a general policy framework. They may be referred to as policies of general hiring, organizational hiring, advance hiring and specific hiring.
General hiring.—General hiring is the broadest of the four management hiring policies. Under this policy, new sales management personnel is brought into the organization at the first level of operative performance. A new employee's first job assignment is sales trainee or salesman. There is no expectation that any particular man will ever be considered for promotion to a supervisory position. Judgment as to the acceptability of applicants is made solely in terms of their anticipated ability to perform as salesmen. The job of salesman is a permanent assignment.

The usefulness of this hiring policy in providing a source of sales supervisors in the future is dependent on the ratio of salesman hiring to supervisor placement. Sales managers using this approach occasionally make the comment that they depend on the law of averages to provide a supply of promotable men from whom to select sales supervisors. Their success in this regard depends on the type of sales job for which they are selecting, the criteria used to predict sales ability and the care with which selection is made.

By leaving open the channel of promotion from warehouseman, shipping clerk and other operative jobs into the job of salesman, general hiring becomes an even broader policy. The initial assignment of men within the organization who later on may be considered for placement as sales supervisors may then be in any capacity. An example of this scope of the policy is found in the practices of a paint manufacturer whose warehousemen may be considered and placed as salesmen.

Organizational hiring.—Organizational hiring is a policy of selecting men to satisfy future managerial needs. These needs are only very loosely defined but their existence is certain. The objective
is to provide for all the personnel requirements of the organizational unit over a relatively long period of time. As applied to the hiring of sales supervisors, no commitment as to placement as a supervisor is made. The initial assignment is probably as a sales trainee, junior salesman or salesman. There is a definite expectation that a certain per cent of new salesmen will become first line sales managers.

Judgment as to future supervisory ability is made at the time of hiring, particularly in cases where the firm has a management development program in effect. Since salesmen in all cases are the principal source of sales supervisors and in many cases the only source, a certain amount of selectivity is called for in order to provide a supply of promotable men. The firm that has a small and stable first echelon of sales supervisors and a fairly large sales force might be able to depend on the law of averages for promotable men and general hiring would meet their needs. On the other hand, a dynamic, growing firm that is enlarging its geographic coverage or product offerings will find its need for branch, district, product or channel managers so great that pure chance will not provide enough promotable men. Consequently, an organizational hiring policy is called for relative to first line sales management personnel.

**Advance hiring.**—Advance hiring is a supervisory hiring policy that is more directly related to specifically foreseeable and scheduled needs for supervisory personnel than either general hiring or organizational hiring. The need for such a policy is felt whenever replacement needs based on retirement schedules are known, or whenever expansion of the
sales force is planned. A drug firm pursuing an aggressive policy of company-wide and sales force expansion provides a good example of this policy. The need for additional sales supervisors will be experienced whether sales force expansion is based upon broadening geographical coverage, enlarging the product line, widening channels of distribution or cultivating the market more intensively. In any case, once plans have been made, time becomes a controlling factor. Deadlines must be met.

The lead time involved in advance hiring may range from many weeks to months or even years. If a personnel audit reveals an inadequate supply of men already available for promotion to sales supervisor, then advance hiring procedures will be initiated as soon as future requirements can be estimated. At the time of hiring a tentative commitment is made to place as a supervisor, and hiring interviews and other selection tools used are specifically oriented toward locating and qualifying supervisory personnel. The function of time is significant here. Under conditions of reasonably long range planning, the men hired can be selected on their indicated ability to serve as adequate subjects of a supervisory development program. The evaluative and developmental techniques and devices used may logically be considered a part of the supervisor selection procedure. Under the conditions imposed by the advance hiring policy, a judgment as to the supervisory potential of the candidate must be made.

Because of the imminence of assignment to supervisory responsibilities, a planned schedule of qualification activities is employed. If placement as a supervisor is contingent upon attaining certain
standards of performance, then such a program would be a part of the supervisor selection process.

While the actual assignment in advance hiring is as a supervisor trainee, or management trainee, such titles are sometimes dispensed with for morale purposes to avoid the stigma attached to the "crown prince" practice. In the drug firm referred to above, the management trainees are referred to simply as salesmen. Certain urban territories are designated training territories and the trainees are to some extent separated from the remainder of the sales force in this way. In this company district managers needing salesmen may recruit them locally, the management trainees being recruited by the headquarters sales department through a college recruiting program.

Specific hiring.--Specific hiring is a hiring policy designed to fill an immediate personnel requirement. It takes place immediately prior to placement as a supervisor. Acceptable candidates must demonstrate supervisory ability and experience as a condition of being considered. Because of the specialized nature of the supervisory task in a given company, the number of sales supervisors hired in this way is very small. Of the thirty-four companies included in this study only one had a policy that gave preference to an outside man, and that only in the case of his having local connections within a given territory. One other company recognized the need in expansion to go outside the company to find men already qualified as supervisors. Two other firms replied to questions on this point that their supervisors were recruited ninety-five per cent within the company. The remainder referred to the
# Four Basic Policies for Hiring Sales Supervisors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisory Hiring Policy</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Qualification as to Supervisory Potential</th>
<th>Pre-Selection Training</th>
<th>Initial Assignment Training</th>
<th>Orientation Training</th>
<th>Continued Supervisor Training</th>
<th>Management Development</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. General hiring</td>
<td>Not related to placement in supervisory assignment</td>
<td>Depends upon ratio of salesman hirings to supervisor placements as well as character of sales trainee needed</td>
<td>General programs providing opportunities for individuals to exercise initiative to distinguish themselves</td>
<td>Could be in any capacity-clerk, warehouse sales trainee, etc.</td>
<td>To company and any other area related to initial assignment</td>
<td>Designed to bring new supervisor to adequate level of performance. Likely basis-difficulty analysis. Related to management development program, if there is one.</td>
<td>Periodic objective evaluation of man's progress to induce attitude of improvement and growth, plus a planned program of development activities. Central reporting not required below certain labor grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organizational</td>
<td>Weeks to years in advance of possible placement as sales supervisor—no commitment to place as supervisor</td>
<td>Judgment as to supervisory potential desirable—particularly if related to a management development program</td>
<td>Ditto (as above)</td>
<td>Sales trainee</td>
<td>Ditto (as above)</td>
<td>Ditto (as above) except central reporting is made of all persons receiving a &quot;promotable&quot; rating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Advance</td>
<td>Weeks to months in advance of placement as supervisor. Tentative commitment to place</td>
<td>Judgment made as to supervisory potential essential, and a condition of hiring</td>
<td>Definite program aimed at early qualification as supervisor or management trainee</td>
<td>To company, products--policies--sales work</td>
<td>To company, products--policies--sales work</td>
<td>Designed to bring new supervisor to adequate level of performance. Likely basis, difficulty analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Specific</td>
<td>Immediately prior to placement as supervisor</td>
<td>Demonstrated supervisory ability as a condition of hiring</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>To company and its policies and products</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
policy requirement that supervisors be found within the company, thus precluding the use of a specific hiring policy for sales supervisors. When used, the specific hiring policy would require that an orientation period be established as a minimum preparation for job assignment. Chart II summarizes the essential characteristics of the four basic hiring policies.

Summary.--Each of these four basic hiring policies has its own area of applicability; however, general hiring and specific hiring have certain weaknesses that detract from their usefulness. In the case of general hiring, too much is left to chance. When the need for a new supervisor arises, there may be no one available among present employees who can be considered adequately qualified. Desirable standards may have to be compromised, or stop-gap training activities provided. The action required would be characteristic of the management method of drift and correction rather than management through planning, organizing and controlling. If there is no one available within the organization a specific hiring effort will have to be made. Management would then be exposed to the risks of this hiring method.

The weaknesses of the specific hiring policy include the risk that when a new man is needed in the ranks of the first level of sales management none may be available from outside the company. There may be difficulty in finding a man who is properly qualified in terms of experience. There is an additional difficulty encountered in measuring the qualifications of a man from outside the organization. A man may be found filling the same kind of job for a competitor and his qualifications in this case are comparable and easily confirmed. However,
<table>
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<td>Four Basic Policies for Hiring Sales Supervisors</td>
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if he can be hired away from competitors he may also move on to another competitor in a short time, thus increasing labor turnover among first line supervisors with its attendant disadvantages. Still another weakness of a specific hiring policy is found in the effect on morale of bringing in a new "boss." Salesmen may resent his appointment if they have come to expect that one of their number would be promoted. For these reasons the specific hiring policy as an approach to securing first line sales managers is less satisfactory than either an organizational or advance hiring policy.

Organizational and advance hiring policies are preferable for two general reasons. First, they permit a constructive use of time for the purpose of organization planning. This involves the advance determination of quantitative and qualitative aspects of personnel requirements. Second, both approaches permit the use of a variety of selection tools designed to measure and evaluate individuals being considered for placement as sales supervisors in terms of appropriate criteria. The choice between organizational and advance hiring policies should be made in terms of whether or not management feels it is desirable to make a tentative commitment to place in a first line manager's job at the time of initial hiring.

Findings of the study relative to sources of sales supervisors

All but one of the firms interviewed relied almost entirely on internal sources of personnel for their supply of sales supervisors. All but three implied one hundred per cent reliance on internal sources and two of those three indicated the exceptions are very few.
Reliance by these firms on internal sources is tantamount to placing that reliance on the sales organization, with little movement from other divisions into the sales department to the job of sales supervisor. One exception noted was the movement of a service department manager to a sales department district manager's job in a firm manufacturing and selling weighing and cutting devices to retail food stores. This man had had experience as a salesman prior to his job as service manager.

These general findings among the firms interviewed was borne out by the responses to the Rutgers questionnaire. The question asked was, "What job did the majority of your 'sales supervisors' hold immediately before becoming 'sales supervisors'? Are there any exceptions? If yes, what other jobs?" Of 87 replies received, 86 qualified for counting, five left the question blank, two answers to the question were ambiguous, 79 were measured. Sixty-one indicated salesmen as the source of their sales supervisors with no exceptions. The remaining 18 indicated salesmen as the major source and listed 23 other job titles held by sales supervisors immediately prior to their selection. These other titles were listed as exceptions by the respondents and six respondents pointed out that they were single cases. Of the twenty-three listed, 18 were clearly sales department jobs, two others, office manager and airport station manager, may well have been related to sales. The remaining three were engineer, product engineer, and research and development staff.

Thus 100 per cent of the 79 replies that could be counted indicated salesmen as the primary source of sales supervisors. Of the other sources which supplied sales supervisors on an exception
basis, about one-half were line jobs and one-half were staff, if the
judgment can be made on the basis of job titles. Job titles also
implied some pre-supervisor managerial experience opportunity in an
assistant capacity or as manager of a staff activity, e.g., assistant
sales supervisor and sales training manager.

A considerable portion of the interview time was spent developing
a case history of a recent supervisor placement. Without exception
the supervisors placed had served as salesmen prior to their evaluation.
In nine of the thirty-three case histories recorded, other job assign-
ments were held between service as a salesman and promotion to full
sales supervisory responsibility. These assignments, designated train-
ing supervisor, training manager, assistant to manager, sales agency
manager, field instructor, senior salesman and home office service
supervisor were regarded by the respondents as training or developmental
assignments. In twenty-five of the cases promotion was directly from
the sales force.

A slightly different approach to the same type of information
was used in the Rutgers questionnaire. The answers given were on com-
pany policy, or what the respondent thought company policy to be, or
upon recollection of a recent instance of supervisor placement. Accord-
ing to the responses received (as shown in Table 2), 48 or approximately
60 per cent gave primary consideration to sales department personnel.
There seemed to be more willingness to consider employees of other de-
partments within the business than was indicated by the group interviewed.
However, the fact that employees of other departments receive considera-
tion does not throw any light on the likelihood of their being placed as
a sales supervisor.
TABLE 2.--Policies reported by sales executives as to sources of sales supervisors

<table>
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<th>Policy Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>Consider only present salesmen to be eligible for promotion to sales supervisor</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider present salesmen and other sales department employees eligible.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider present salesmen and other sales department employees, plus employees of other divisions or departments of the company eligible.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider hiring a man with supervisory experience from outside the company for direct placement as a sales supervisor along with men from within the organization.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider hiring a man with supervisory experience from outside the company in preference to men within the company.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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Source: Based on a questionnaire submitted to participants in the Seminar in Sales Management at Rutgers University, August 1958, sponsored by the National Sales Executives. See Appendix C for copy of the questionnaire.

In the eyes of sales managers the best possible qualification and preparation for a sales supervisory job is experience as a salesman. In too large a percentage of the cases this is looked upon as being sufficient. Promotion directly from salesman to supervisor disregards the need for an intermediate assignment in which partial supervisory responsibilities enable the individual to develop skill in supervisory activities before attaining full supervisor status.

Summary and Evaluation

Proper determination of sources to be relied upon for a supply of sales supervisors is a major element in the selection system. A
consciously planned approach to the sources of qualified or potentially qualified men is consistent with good managerial practice. It should be founded on certain written policies and should be implemented with a group of complementary practices and procedures whose objective is the maximum development of the manpower resources of the firm. Managers in some of the firms interviewed generally recognize these relationships and in some cases have established highly developed policies and practices in this area.

More typical, however, is a failure to recognize the overall relationships between general policies and personnel policies, between developing the effectiveness of the business and developing the effectiveness of individuals. Consequently, values in the nature of improved motivation and morale of salesmen are lost. To maximize benefits in this area a concept of the flow of personnel from appropriate pre-determined sources into the sales organization at an appropriate level should be defined and communicated. In view of the practices of nearly all firms, this level is that of the salesman or sales trainee. The channel through which first line sales managers are acquired should then be clearly defined and progress through that channel should be governed by the development of individuals. Since the source of sales supervisors is primarily internal it becomes mandatory that the firm adopt policies and procedures to maximize the effectiveness of salesman selection and to permit the maximum development of their managerial capabilities.
CHAPTER IV

CRITERIA

The exercise of judgment in making selection decisions requires the prior establishment of standards. The problem of arriving at suitable standards for personnel selection is twofold, first, the determination of significant elements of human behavior or business performance that are related to the desired capacities, and second, the establishment of patterns and values that constitute, and are associated with, desirable levels of performance, and that will, therefore, provide the basis for accurate selection decisions. The intangible and subjective nature of the managerial task raises many obstacles to the discovery of useful criteria. The solution of such problems, however, is essential to the successful conduct of business enterprise.

The problem of identifying individuals who will become successful first line sales managers is similar to that encountered in identifying, in advance, other types of management personnel. Historically it has been dealt with in studies and speculations on the nature of leadership. In modern business organization operative employees often do not have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate leadership ability. This fact complicates the problem of determining, measuring, and establishing values for the criteria on which promotion decisions will be based. In spite of the fact that the problem has
attracted the attention of thoughtful men for centuries, the scientific
prediction of executive success is in an embryonic stage.

The search for predictors
of managerial ability

In every situation in which a man is promoted from salesman to the
first level of supervision some criteria must be used. Some promotions
occur as a reward for long and faithful service, others result from the
fact that the man promoted is the only one available. Nepotism has un-
doubtedly played a part in selection decisions, as have the personal
preferences of the sales manager and other purely subjective factors.
Criteria by which sales supervisors are selected may be left to the in-
dividual discretion of district or regional managers or they may be cen-
trally determined at the upper levels of sales management using the
technical assistance of competent staff psychologists.

A criterion is defined as a standard by which to determine the
correctness of a judgment or conclusion. In discussing business stand-
ards, R. C. Davis states:

They are necessary for measuring, proportioning, and
maintaining business factors, forces and effects in proper
condition and relation to one another. Measurement is a
process of evaluation in terms of accepted criteria. . . .
It is obvious that there can be no measurement in the ab-
sence of satisfactory units of measurement. These units
may be any logical or convenient subdivision of the parti-
cular factor, force, or effect. They should be capable of
expressing all the degrees in which the value or attribute
may exist, and with the required accuracy.

. . . Standards must be (1) reasonably stable, (2) re-
ducible to permanent form, (3) reproducible, (4) representa-
tive, (5) applicable, (6) universal within the limits of the
problem, and (7) free from ambiguity.

Ralph C. Davis, The Fundamentals of Top Management (New York:
A further requirement when establishing criteria for the selection of personnel is that the criteria chosen must be demonstrably related either directly or inversely to future successful performance.

In the light of the above characteristics and requirements the difficulties and problems in establishing criteria for the selection of sales supervisors are obviously many. Personnel standards or criteria related to managerial ability are almost entirely subjective, hence they only conform in a general way to the requirements set forth.

The problem of determining criteria for the selection of sales supervisors presents four difficult elements: (1) identification of significant criteria, (2) relating such criteria to future performance, (3) measuring the extent of such criteria possessed by individuals, and (4) establishing minimum standards in terms of which placement action will be taken. These elements imply a greater degree of scientific accuracy than is likely to be achieved in a field as subjective as the determination of managerial ability. Research by psychologists and sociologists and the continuing efforts of operating sales executives are the means by which progress in the field may be achieved.

There is a need to discover whether there are any objective criteria by which the ability of a salesman to assume supervisory responsibility may be predicted. Furthermore, to the extent that objective criteria are lacking or insufficient there is a need to identify and evaluate the subjective criteria that are used. The continuing search has yielded statements and analyses of the opinions of executives and has led to research into demographic and behavioral factors. In addition situational and job performance factors have been studied in the
attempt to identify criteria which can be associated with future managerial ability. The contributions of these studies need to be evaluated.

Opinions of executives

Identification of the abilities, characteristics, or traits of managers is often the subject of conferences, seminars, or round-tables of outstanding executives. The assumption is that men who have made their mark in the world through the exercise of managerial skill know what it takes to make an executive. Conferences of this type may be directed at some particular level of management or simply at the characteristics of management in general. One such conference under the chairmanship of Eli Ginzberg brought together nineteen leaders from industry, education, government, and philanthropic foundations. Their discussions of the qualifications, identification, development, and evaluation of executives were oriented toward the whole range of the executive hierarchy. Their statements were opinions based upon wide experience. The conclusions arrived at in this conference seem to be useful in determining overall policy toward executive development, but the statements of the conferees pertaining to the identification of managers are of little help to another executive facing the same problem. The reason for this is that the criteria mentioned by these executives did not go beyond the statement of desirable character.

or personality traits. Taylor\textsuperscript{3} refers to statements of this type as "pontifications of the successful," and holds little hope that they can add anything to the scientific identification of people with management ability. It seems reasonable, however, to assume that their experience can be of value to sales management, if not in the area of criteria determination, then in some other aspects of the problem. Their philosophies of management are often distinctive, and the resultant policies which they advocate may be applicable in other companies. The procedures which some may have developed and the principles which they have observed may well provide guidance to sales managers generally.

Demographic studies

Another group of criteria which may, after an adequate amount of research, be correlated with supervisory or managerial ability is produced by demographic studies. Some important investigations have been conducted into the social backgrounds and relationships of business executives. The available studies do not go directly to the problem of identifying managerial ability but they do represent an intensive search

\textsuperscript{3}For a concise statement from each of three top executives in American industry see: "Needed: More Executives," Newsweek, September 13, 1954, pp. 33-4. This article contains interesting statements of subjective criteria by Donald W. Douglas, President of the Douglas Aircraft Corporation, Thomas J. Watson, Board Chairman of International Business Machines Corporation, and Ben Morrell, Board Chairman of the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation. Their statements were made under the heading: "What I Look For in Picking an Executive."

\textsuperscript{4}Erwin K. Taylor, "The Unsolved Riddle of Executive Success," Personnel, XXXVII, No. 2 (March-April, 1960), 8-17.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the essential results of the management process is the multiplication of output which flows from the division of labor between operative performance and the first echelon of management. This specialization of function separates the organic functions of management—planning, organizing, and controlling—from operative performance and makes possible greater effectiveness in the execution of both managerial and operative tasks. To maximize this gain it is necessary to distinguish clearly the unique elements of each job and then to select men whose qualities and abilities properly qualify them for the job they are to do. In their nature and content these two classes of jobs in a business organization differ markedly, and the attributes required of men to fill them likewise differ.

The process of organizing a sales force requires accurate job descriptions for salesmen and sales supervisors, followed by systematic selection and placement procedures to ensure the presence of properly qualified men. The literature on the selection of salesmen is large and the techniques evolved are well designed.¹

¹See, for example, Harold H. Maynard and James H. Davis, Sales Management (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1957), pp. 219-221.
for common denominators of business executives. Warner and Abegglen\(^5\) provide an exhaustive analysis of the relationship between occupation and social status of fathers and sons. They also report some data for a third generation. Other elements analyzed include geographic location of families and educational backgrounds of executive fathers and sons.

A study similar in method to that of Warner and Abegglen is that by Mabel Newcomer.\(^6\) Newcomer's work is even more restricted to dealing with top executives. The principal significance of such studies to the selection of sales supervisors is that they suggest an analytical approach to personal data of sales applicants. The usefulness of personal history forms, either the simple descriptive type, or the projective types could be improved if criteria revealed by demographic studies were correlated with predicted managerial success.

Behavioral Studies

A third group of criteria flows from work being done in the behavioral sciences. Research in this area offers considerable hope for steady progress toward objectively identifying the characteristics of successful managerial personnel. Along with the identification of these characteristics will come devices and procedures for locating or identifying individuals possessing them. Work of this type is being done by


Dr. William E. Henry at the University of Chicago, Edwin E. Ghiselli, at the University of California and by a number of researchers working with the Personnel Research Board at Ohio State University.

Research by Dr. William E. Henry is aimed at measuring certain psychological characteristics and social attitudes of the executive. The technique he employed in one study included the administering of the Thematic Apperception Test, a short undirected interview, and a projective analysis of a number of traditional personality tests. The qualities which were indicated to be present in the executives judged by performance standards to be successful were (1) high achievement desires, (2) a strong drive for mobility, (3) an attitude of acceptance toward authority, (4) special attitudes toward organization, (5) decisiveness in terms of the ability to make a choice among several alternatives, (6) strong self structure, (7) high activity and aggression factors, (8) apprehension and fear of failure, (9) strong reality orientation, (10) an identification with superiors and an impersonal attitude toward inferiors in interpersonal relations, (11) an attitude toward his parents in which he has severed his ties and (12) a dependency judgment in which he rejects the mother-image but retains the father-image personified by the organization.

This very condensed statement of the outlines of the study made by Henry suggests a framework of analysis and testing which would

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support special research by qualified psychologists and sociologists
directed toward the first level of supervision. It presents an approach
for sound, scientific determination of the predictors of supervisory
ability that offers real promise of success.

The criteria in the list above bear some resemblance to the traditional personality or character traits referred to by executives when summarizing their subjective judgments and opinions. The difference is found in the fact that the qualities derived by Henry were established by research techniques that permit validation of findings and that also permit the design of testing and evaluation programs for measuring individuals in terms of these criteria.

An examination of one of the studies made by Ghiselli® yields a comparison of a measure of the factor, "initiative," with age, occupational level, intelligence and self assurance. In summarizing his findings Ghiselli says,

Scores on a forced-choice inventory scale designed to measure initiative were found to bear a low relationship to measures of intelligence and a substantial relationship to measures of self-assurance. With increasing age there was a slight reduction in initiative scores. A positive relationship was found between occupational level and initiative. With line workers there was a sharp reduction in initiative with increasing age, whereas with management personnel there was a slight increase.9

Ghiselli begins with the assumption that initiative is a desirable characteristic in a manager and he defines it in two phases, first, a capacity or willingness for taking action, and secondly, an ability to

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9 Ibid., 311.
visualize new relationships among factors in a problem. The latter phase seemingly is related to intelligence whereas the willingness to take action seems to be a function of self assurance. The correlation with self assurance is higher than that shown for intelligence due to the fact that demonstration of initiative calls for action according to Ghiselli's findings.

One of the Ohio State Leadership Studies that is especially pertinent is one conducted by Bass\textsuperscript{10} in the leadership situation existing between salesmen and sales managers. As part of a test validation project, the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire was administered to 265 salesmen and sales supervisors of a foods distributing company. The tests administered in the study by Bass were these:

1) Wonderlic Personnel Test, Form D
2) Gestalt Completion (a mutilated figures test developed by L. L. Thurstone aimed at measuring perceptual flexibility)
3) Concealed Figures (similar type hidden pattern test)
4) Kerr Empathy Test, Form B
5) Bruce Business Judgment Test (human relations multiple choice questions)
6) Bruce Sales Knowledge Test (merchandising, advertising, and marketing multiple choice questions)
7) Bruce Sales Interest (items similar to the Strong Vocational Interest Inventory)
8) How Supervise
9) Famous Sayings--Conventional Mores
10) --Hostility
11) --Fear of Failure
12) --Social Acquiescence
13) Gordon Personal Profile--Ascendancy
14) --Responsibility
15) --Emotional Stability
16) --Sociability

The test scores and the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire scores were also compared with performance ratings of salesmen and sales supervisors. It was found that none of the personal characteristics were highly correlated with leader behavior scores of the salesmen nor were the performance ratings related to leader behavior scores for salesmen or supervisors. In summarizing the results, Bass says:

The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire and a large battery of other tests were administered to four samples of salesmen and two samples of supervisors. Supervisors endorsed a higher degree of Consideration and Initiation than did salesmen. Supervisors who are older and have been longer with the company score higher on Consideration. Initiation is positively related to sales interest and ascendency in all samples. Consideration is positively related to scores on the How Supervise test on all samples. Responsibility is positively correlated with Initiation for salesmen, but negatively for supervisors. Some regional differences are also noted.

The findings of the study by Bass support the statement by Shartle illustrating the weakness of traits as criteria of leadership ability.

The behavioral studies referred to provide a means of validating particular tests. They may also be used by competent psychological staff to identify and measure behavioral patterns associated with successful managerial performance. When this is done in a way to permit the analysis of salesmen at pre-supervisory levels, the development of valid predictors may well be possible. The long range nature of such a program, the cost, and the lack of immediately visible results in terms of sales dollars are obstacles to projects in the field by individual companies.

\[^{11}\text{Ibid.}, 138-139.\] \[^{12}\text{Supra}, p. 9.\]
Study of situational factors

The search for the predictors of managerial success is a complex one. In addition to the intangible, subjective nature of the leadership function, the problem is further complicated by the situational aspect of the management task. The number of variables is great, not only with respect to the characteristics of the supervisor, but also with respect to the environment within which he must function.

Situational factors play a part in filling a given job opening because they make special demands in terms of the capabilities of the man placed. If a district manager is being selected for a particular location where special background or abilities are called for, such considerations should be given great weight in selecting the man for the job. More than one special situational factor may be present in a single job position. Thus, not only will a decision need to be made as to the criteria involved, but also there will be a problem of weighing a number of factors in the situation. An example is the case of the sales manager of a firm manufacturing graphic arts equipment. An opening for the southern territory district manager made special demands because of its geographic location. In addition, two of the salesmen in the district were highly independent and, in the opinion of the sales manager, difficult to supervise. The decision in this case represented a compromise judgment on the part of the executives responsible.

The net effect of situational factors is that jobs at the first level of sales supervision which may appear equal on the organization chart are not necessarily homogeneous. The impact of this on the
problem of establishing criteria for the selection of sales supervisors is to reduce the opportunities for successful generalization.

Analysis of current performance

The analysis of current performance may be carried on in two areas, first, the analysis of the performance of first line sales managers to identify desirable job performance factors and second, the analysis of the job performance factors of salesmen that may serve as criteria of managerial potential. This analysis has the advantage to the sales manager of being readily available and of being carried on and evaluated in the language he understands. The criteria derived from current performance of the salesman are the most useful indicators of his future performance for these reasons. Such an analysis will fail to yield satisfactory criteria, however, unless the salesman's job is designed to provide activities that will allow him to demonstrate his capacity for managing. In some cases this can be accomplished by a practice of job enlargement and in other cases through developmental assignments.

Summary

The search for the predictors of managerial ability has not produced any list of specific criteria by which sales executives can identify future managers with certainty. The opinions of experienced executives are stated in subjective terms that are no doubt highly meaningful to the executive making the statement, but that are difficult for another executive to visualize, adopt, and apply.
The research work of sociologists and psychologists makes a contribution by establishing standards for research in the field and indicating the weaknesses of character and personality traits as selection criteria. Situational factors will always need to be taken into account but their basic contribution is in the description of variations in assignments and positions rather than in providing a basis for generalizations. Job performance factors derived from the analysis of current performance are most available and understandable to sales executives and probably occupy a disproportionate place in the determination of criteria for selection of first line sales managers.

Criteria used by sales executives

When sales executives are called upon to make a decision to select a sales supervisor or promote a salesman to the job of sales supervisor, they rely upon a wide variety of ideas, impressions, and records pertaining to the men from whom the selection is to be made. The decision might be made on the basis of a general impression described by the sales executive who said, "Of the four men available he seemed to be the best man for the job." Other executives may not make the decision until after detailed comparison of a wide variety of records, reports, tests, and interviews of the men considered.

A logical source of a statement of the criteria for selecting sales supervisors is the job specification. As a part of the job description, and based upon job analysis, the job specification or man specification should summarize in definite terms the criteria called for. In the firms interviewed the specifications found were of a very
general nature. Although there is no statistical significance which can be attached to the fact, fewer than half of the firms interviewed had written job descriptions for the sales supervisor, and of these firms, only one-half had prepared man specifications. Specifications found in these cases were rudimentary. For example, in one case the only stipulations were: education, B. A. or B. S. degree; and experience, a minimum of three years as agent or equivalent selling experience, plus some service as a regular special agent or in other sales supervisory activities. In another case the sales supervisor must have had experience in route or "swing" work and must show good job capability plus definite qualities of leadership. In addition, his training record must show him to have completed the salesman school, successful route operation school, and supervisor's school. In a third case the specifications were: male college graduate, age 40 to 50 years, with experience to include four to six years in an office position in the firm, four to ten years as a salesman and two to four years as an assistant manager of sales. In each of the foregoing cases the specifications were included as part of the job description.

The scarcity of formal man specifications may be attributed to three major reasons suggested by the executives interviewed. First, the infrequent and relatively small number of supervisor placements does not call for a man specification either for communication purposes or for securing uniformity of action. Second, the fact that nearly all sales supervisors are secured from the ranks of present salesmen means that the candidates have already been subjected to a screening process. They are, therefore, to a large extent, pre-selected. A third reason
is that the situational aspect of the manager's job may make demands in terms of the differences among candidates rather than in terms of their similarity. Consequently, once certain basic guides are estab-
lished in terms of age, sex, and experience, further detail in job or man specifications is not called for.

Sales executives, when talking about criteria for sales supervi-
sors beyond the basic items of age, sex, and education, spoke almost entirely in terms of factors summarized in either the job performance records or the performance evaluation and appraisal systems.

In an attempt to determine the criteria actually used rather than those which might be given by the sales manager as criteria to which they aspire, the respondents were asked a number of questions pertaining to an actual case of supervisor placement. In thirty interviews records were available to the respondent pertaining to a recent place-
ment of a sales supervisor. One point of unanimity was found in that in all the cases reported, the men considered for placement as a first line sales manager were already employed within the sales department. Also in every case the men considered were either salesmen or men with experience as salesmen. Other current assignments of men being con-
sidered included sales training assistant, office manager and assistant office manager. The criteria given can be generally classified into three groups: job performance factors, character and personality traits, and management aptitudes and skills. These will be discussed in this chapter under these headings.

13See Section V of the Interview Form, Appendix B, page 183.