

THE IONA GROUP

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Earl T. Benson
RE: Executive Development

There are many paths which individuals travel which lead to successful executive careers – not the least of which is timing – being at the right place at the right time. Not all of us have the opportunities which fortuitous timing provides. Many of us must actually work at our careers.

In this regard, several years ago at the request of my Finance Staff, I prepared a series of management attributes and mind-sets which I found to be helpful as new managers transitioned from middle management to higher executive levels. Many of the concepts which I included in the list were those which seemed to have worked with CEO's and other senior executives with whom I worked and knew well.

I have updated the list somewhat and now offer it to any of you who may choose to benefit by it. Remember that this list was prepared from my own situations and experiences. Your business and professional circumstances may be quite different.

Also, my business background has been primarily with larger, publicly held enterprises, and, accordingly, reflect successful development factors within a hierarchical organization. Smaller, more entrepreneurial, or family owned businesses have a much different mindset and management environment.

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EXECUTIVE TRANSITION

1. I value my role as a leader and champion of people, systems and mission rather than as a technical problem solver.
2. I view my opportunities for growth and promotion less in technical achievements than in people achievements, departmental and group development, and the ability to get others to get things done.
3. I see my organizational role as creating opportunities for others to grow and develop.
4. I look at the business from a higher level than my immediate tasks and priorities.
5. I have a reputation as being an expert in one area of the business important to its strategic success.
6. I influence the results and outcomes of my area and the business through my people, systems, and planning. I do not just monitor and report the results and outcomes.
7. I am not afraid to innovate and anticipate change, but I do resist mindless change. I do not rush into the latest management fad of the day.
8. I know that implementing real, fundamental change often requires firmness, steadfastness and a big dose of "lunacy" to which I am not accustomed.
9. Although not negative or pessimistic, I am often dissatisfied with the status quo of the department and constantly challenge others to seek ways to improve or reduce costs.
10. I have my own attitude and point of view on the business, organization, and the way things get done. I follow the motto: "Not always right, but never in doubt."
11. For the most part, my agenda and work product are deliberate and planned. I am not usually putting out fires.

ISSUES ORIENTATION

1. I anticipate future issues and questions that may arise with my area of responsibility and that of my boss.
2. I consider myself to be issues driven, and I look for the hidden or unanticipated issues.
3. I am not generally worried that I do not know the answer to a technical question, as I am that I didn't think of the question or issue myself.
4. Even if I didn't think of the technical question or issue, I feel good that I have trained my people so that they can answer the question or gather data which will lead to a solution.
5. I place greater personal emphasis on such concepts as analysis, communication, facilitating, and interpretation than transaction processing, day-to-day production, or the project at hand.
6. I place more value on raising potential questions and identifying future issues than finding answers. (My staff has been properly hired and trained to answer the questions.)
7. I am known as an issues oriented manager. I seek to identify issues, achieve consensus on relevance, and use established systems and organization to seek resolution.



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PRIORITIES

1. I can handle unrelated tasks, and still get my work done despite constantly changing agendas and priorities. I maintain a relatively calm and even disposition in these circumstances.
2. I recognize the human tendency to avoid conflict, argument, and confrontation; nevertheless, I do at least one disagreeable thing each week.

USING METAPHORS FOR IMPACT

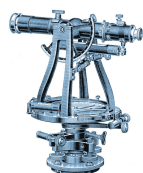
1. At times, I adopt metaphorical speech to be more convincing, savvy, and memorable. [Instead of saying, "This department is a mess," I say, "This department reminds me of the bar scene in 'Star Wars'." Instead of counseling a worker that his or her conduct was out of place, I say, "Your conduct reminded me of a Sumo wrestler high diver."]
2. I strengthen and extend my metaphors by weaving in current events and scenes from popular culture, such as music, movies, and TV shows.

MANAGEMENT STYLE

1. I have a clear management style. My style is generally positive and uplifting -- not negative and inhibiting.
2. I can clearly describe my management style, and I reappraise the effectiveness of my management style given the changing circumstances and personalities of the company, my staff, and my responsibilities.
3. Although my own style may be different, I recognize that many workers easily accept the metaphor of a "coach" or "orchestra conductor" as a management style.
4. My style is consistent, but can I be flexible in dealing with different people and situations.
5. I am aware of how my style may be perceived by both subordinates and superiors (recognizing that others' perception of my style may be different than my own evaluation).
6. I am aware of my reputation and work to have a positive "above-the-crowd" demeanor.
7. I have taken the Meyers-Briggs Personality Indicator and have discussed the results with a professionally trained counselor. I am familiar with the indicator tendencies, and work to maximize my strengths and protect my weaknesses.
8. I stay at arms-length with my staff so I am better able to be objective and offer at times critical comments regarding job performance and work attitudes.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1. I establish clear standards of performance for my subordinates and departments.
2. I have clear objective standards. I clearly communicate what the standards are.
3. In those situations where the standards are subjective, I indicate how I will interpret performance against these subjective standards.
4. I clearly articulate what I expect from the people who work for me. I talk convincingly of my personal expectations for each worker.
5. I am not hesitant to counsel individuals in the department that my personal and departmental standards have been raised and that, where necessary, skill levels, job requirements, or experience credentials have been changed.



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6. I do not make excuses for my people or sympathize with my people's position or circumstances that prevent them from achieving top quality results.
7. I require my people to be continually raising questions about the content of their jobs and positions, things that need to be done, unusual trends in performance, systems capabilities, staff attitudes, priorities, and organization. My people know that these tasks are their responsibility.
8. I am quick to point out and praise the good work and success which my subordinates achieve. I use these instances to build-up their morale and worth as an individual and a valued employee.
9. I am respected rather than liked.
10. I encourage risk taking – and expect failures. But, my people know that I do not tolerate failures which arise from neglect.
11. I expect my people to be technologically and PC savvy and literate.

THE INFORMAL ORGANIZATION

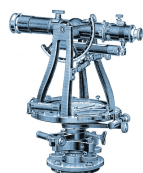
1. I know and recognize the difference between the formal organization and the informal organization and that the informal organization is often more potent than the formal organization.
2. I know that in a new job it may take a while to learn the dynamics of the informal organization.
3. I am mature enough to wisely and discretely use the informal organization network without undermining the outward, formal organization.

USE OF TIME

1. I recognize that time is the most costly and scarcest resource – and I act and direct others accordingly.
2. I challenge my people on the misuse of their time.
3. Although not a slave to plan, I do give advance thought to my day and week.
4. I write down the things that need to be done. I realize that if I don't need to write things down, I do not likely have enough things to do, or my span of control is so narrow that my position is not an executive one.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. I read the front page of Section A, the editorial page, and the front page of Section B of the Wall Street Journal – EVERY DAY.
2. I subscribe to and read the Harvard Business Review. I propose my own answers to the case study article and read and challenge the answers which the experts provide. Then, I determine which is the best response to the case study.
3. I also subscribe to and read one of the following: Business Week, Fortune, or Forbes. I am skeptical of what I read knowing that the objectives of business writers and editors is to sell newspapers and magazines and that they often emphasize what is glitzy, new, and unusual. [Case in point? The new handheld device allowing the farmer to execute mutual fund trades from his tractor is hyped. That his grain can be loaded into ships for export in one-half the time due to advanced material handling equipment is either ignored or is found in the back page.]
4. I read the trade journals for my industry.



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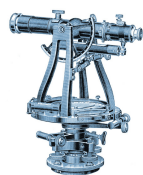
5. If my profession has an academic side, I stay current on the academic issues and journals.
6. Where appropriate and affordable, I attend technical or personal development seminars.
7. I have read the following books by Peter Drucker: "The Practice of Management," "The Effective Executive," and "Managing for Results."

THINKING AND THOUGHT PATTERNS

1. I have an on-going stream of good ideas and thoughts. (The ideas and thoughts may not always be implemented or useful, but at least there is evidence that thinking and awareness is going on.)
2. The range of my business thoughts is wide: High level questions such as strategy to low level items such as clerical tasks, why is this clerk performing this task?
3. While I do not have a pessimistic reputation, I do bring a healthy and constructive dose of skepticism to my work. I do not always take input at face value. I inwardly challenge the intentions and motives of the other party. I understand that external parties are not usually looking after the company's or my best interests.
4. I have a good numbers sense.
4. I am not afraid to identify and challenge sacred cows within the business and industry.
5. I have a good sense of internal control and internal check. I can readily spot control weaknesses in my department and in other areas of the company.
6. I am able to anticipate future favorable and unfavorable transactions, circumstances, or trends, and I can see implications of these transactions and recommend alternatives for management to consider

HIRING

1. I insist on hiring the best qualified and best credentialed people
2. I resist the quick hiring fix.
3. My hires are generally over-qualified, and I tell new hires at all levels that they are expected to develop a reputation within the Company as an expert in their field.
4. I am not afraid to hire a potential replacement for me.
5. I am not afraid to admit and confront a poor hiring decision.
6. I deal quickly with the poor hiring decision and the situation before it gets out of hand. (I realize that a new hiring decision always represents some risk, but not stepping up to the situation quickly involves poor management skills.)
7. I am not afraid to admit or take actions to correct a condition of light departmental staffing.
8. I have put my people in positions to maximize their strengths and to minimize the impact of their weaknesses.
9. The new hires that I recommend to my superior for follow-up interviews are carefully screened and represent only top choice candidates to minimize the superior's time.
10. My hires have good chemistry, and they are quick to adapt into the company.
11. I know that first-rate managers hire first-rate people. Second-rate managers hire third-rate people.



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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

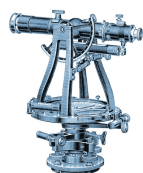
1. Everyone does not get excellent. There are good, hard counseling points which are addressed with the individual.
2. I give performance appraisals deliberately and seriously.
3. Performance is quickly communicated to people to avoid surprises during the formalized anniversary date review. Critical comments are given to the employee up front, rather than being saved for a long period of time.
4. My evaluations are documented and dated. Key consultations and critical evaluations are given with a second person present.
5. My performance appraisals are given according to documented Company standards.
6. I am able to deal with my subordinates quickly, forthrightly, and at times critically.
7. I am willing to let go of people who cannot or are unable to perform, and I replace them with top quality people.
8. I do not tolerate managers who merely maintain a department or a system, to the neglect of developing the department or system itself. I recognize the difference between individuals who are maintenance minded as opposed to development minded. I differentiate compensation on this basis.
9. I do not embarrass my subordinates (or peers) by making a spectacle of their weaknesses or mistakes in front of other people. Critical comments are saved for confidential one-on-one sessions.
10. I resist as much as possible the tendency to delve into psychology. I emphasize attributes that drive the objectives of the department or group.
11. I realize that the primary objective of performance appraisal is to direct, modify, and focus worker behavior and attitude. The only way to do this is one-on-one, eyeball-to-eyeball coaching. The forms, charts, and paper work are largely for legal and documentary purposes.

STAFF TRAINING

1. My staff training is deliberate and observable by others in the organization. I have a reputation as a person who is concerned about training and actually follows through. My training is not done casually.
2. I have a reputation for communication, training and staff development and morale.
3. The results of my management effort are seen in Peter Drucker's counsel: I make the work productive and the worker achieving.

WORK HABITS

1. I am not a perfectionist. Alternatively, I am not too loose with details, substantiation, assumptions, and reasons for action.
2. Key decisions are written down and files are maintained. Key documents are easily retrieved. I require these same standards of all of my people.
3. I avoid the quick answer.
4. I understand which numbers and issues are absolutely crucial to be correct, and I spend the time to accurately substantiate these numbers or issues. Where the figures or issues are loose or subjective, I make sure that this is absolutely clear to people who use the report.
5. I am not hung-up over immaterial matters and items.



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6. I try very hard to avoid surprises, and I insist on the same quality from all of my people.
7. I am not a deadliner. (A deadliner is a person who goes to great length to absolutely fix a cutoff point and puts off an assignment to the very end confident that the cutoff point will not be changed.)
8. When I respond to questions, I am able to clearly differentiate between the objective issues and the subjective issues.
9. I carry a bound notebook with me at all times, and it is always open on my desk. I record messages, ideas, to do's, meeting notes and follow-ups, requests from my boss, etc. Everything gets written down.
10. I understand the limitations of my technical abilities.
11. I have the maturity to say, "I don't know, but I'll find out."
12. I deal well with uncertainty: uncertainty of numbers and estimates, uncertainty of direction, and uncertainty of priorities. I am not afraid or reluctant to guess.
13. I clearly state my own biases and minimize my reliance on gut-feel. I am objective enough to want to know what the facts are and I readily embrace conclusions based upon fact.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

1. I take pride in being able to present top quality written reports using formal business English. (Reports that could go directly to the Board of Directors, outside parties or shareholders.)
2. Written reports are thorough, factually correct, clear and easy to read. The data is convincingly argued and alternatives are identified. Written work shows mature thoughts, crisp introductions and concise conclusions and action steps. My writing shows a command of the issues and an ability to clearly present a position and a course of action.
3. I make complex issues simple--both in written or oral presentations.
4. When I am involved in the production of a report or numerical worksheet, I never submit the latest version without also submitting a reconciliation from the prior version.
5. I never submit a quantitative report or schedule without also attaching an evaluation of the qualitative issues behind the numbers. I always search for and highlight hidden issues.

RELATIONS WITH SUPERIORS

1. I believe that I am easily managed, and I am quick to pick up personal likes and dislikes. I do not create trouble over petty differences of opinion which I understand the superior wants implemented in the first place. However, I am not afraid to say no or provide reasons why my position is stronger.
2. I am loyal to my superiors, and I align myself with their interests and priorities.
3. I take direction from superiors, and I recognize and look for clues on the direction of their thinking and priorities.
4. I try to anticipate the needs and requirements of people to whom I report.
5. I watch my time with people to whom I report.
6. I keep my superior apprised of personnel situations in each of my departments.
7. I can take critical evaluations maturely. (I step up to the problem and don't mope or pout about the evaluation.)



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8. I take deliberate steps to expose my subordinates to high management levels and to other departments so that people feel comfortable with my subordinates.
9. I never enter by bosses office without a pencil and my bound notebook.
10. Contrary to popular management belief, I am not afraid to present problems to my boss without a corresponding solution. But, he or she always knows that I am taking ownership of the solution process.

COMPANY AND INDUSTRY

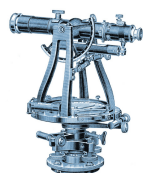
1. I am conversational with the major, critical factors that determine success in the business.
2. I know the major trends and drivers within my industry and markets.
3. I know what the competition is doing.
4. I can talk to outside parties and sound authoritative, convincing and knowledgeable about the direction the company is going and the factors that are causing the company to progress.
5. I understand in detail the major operating systems of the company. I understand what the systems do, systems limitations, and how the systems operate. I have ideas for improvement or development of the systems. I have a good sense of the direction the industry is going. I know why the company is different from others in the industry.
6. I am familiar with the company's key operating statistics and I can recognize key percentages and balances which are obviously out of line from trends and averages.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

1. I am constantly reviewing the major critical factors of my own responsibility and departments. I know the major points that need to be addressed within my position and department and the priority. I emphasize written procedures, but avoid having elaborate and ridiculous rules.
2. I strive to promote good relations with other departments in the company. I avoid the "we" and "they" attitudes.
3. I look ahead and anticipate future system needs and capacity including people, positions and qualifications. I look out one and two years.
4. I am a good delegator, but I always follow-up.
5. I regularly communicate information, changes in circumstances, and new developments to my subordinates.
6. I am not prone to get involved with turf wars, positioning and office politics.

MEETINGS

1. I make sure that all meetings have an agenda and anticipated outcomes (these can be written or unwritten). The outcomes and conclusions of meetings are NOT open ended prior to the start of the meeting.
2. My people know that when they are called into a meeting they are expected to actively participate and contribute. No silent attendees – or they will not be invited again.
3. All handouts are expected to be distributed before a meeting so attendees can review and study them.



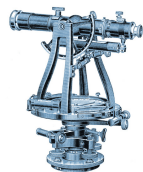
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4. When assignments are made at a meeting, I make sure that the person or department responsible for the action knows that he/she/they are absolutely expected to follow through.
5. I don't like a lot of meetings, but I do use meetings to communicate with my people.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

1. I have a sense of humor, but I am not silly.
2. I keep strict company and personal confidences.
3. I recognize my personal habits and idiosyncrasies that prevent me from-being an effective individual, and I take action to correct them.
4. I have focus in my work and am not easily distracted with minutiae.



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FOR WOMEN ONLY

1. I watch my hemlines, necklines, and see-through blouses. I leave the sex appeal and liberation manifesto in the parking lot.
6. I watch my condescending "more liberated than thou" attitude.
7. I don't like, but can accept the hard reality, that a woman may need to prove herself beyond that of a man in a similar position.

FOR MEN ONLY

1. I save the hugs and kisses for my wife or girlfriend.
2. I understand that the little jokes, innuendoes, gestures and the "just fooling around" are not appreciated by women these days – and are likely illegal.
3. I treat men and women workers the same way, and do not set a higher performance standard for women.

PERSONAL COMPUTERS

1. I am computer literate and take the time to stay current on the major applications which the Company uses.
2. I expect my people and hires to be PC literate, and I do not tolerate an indifferent attitude toward the use of computers and technology. Workers who avoid increasing their awareness and use of technology should know that they are a drain on the department and will not likely survive.
3. I expect my people to suggest new PC applications and programs. (This is part of their performance review.)
4. I watch my staff to prevent misuse of personal computers.

(ETB)

