

Management Principles That Really Work

People, not organizations or management systems, get things done. Live, breathing, thinking, feeling People.

Management is extremely hard work and most people are not cut out for the endurance and stamina required.

Subordinates must be given authority and responsibility early in their careers, at the very start of the job.

Get rid of formal job descriptions and organizational charts. Define responsibilities, but define them in a general way so that people are not circumscribed and boxed-in.

Complex jobs cannot be accomplished effectively with transients. Short rotations ensure inexperience and nonaccountability. This is particularly why corporations and institutions fail in the long-run with outsourcing and bringing in “body-shop” armies of “management consultants.”

Do not downplay problems in order to save face.

Flatten management structures but empower the remaining managers and hold them responsible as individuals and as a team.

Good ideas are almost never adopted automatically. They must be driven, hammered into practice with courageous, firm, and unwavering impatience.

The person in charge must concern himself with details. If he does not consider them to be critically important and demanding accuracy, then neither will his subordinates.

Develop simple and direct means for finding out what subordinates are doing and what is the status of every project. Nothing is ever really to be “left on the back burner” – that is how kitchen fires burn down the house.

Don't ever let your inbox dictate your priorities. Unimportant but interesting trivia pass through every office, on every ship, through every team. A moment's distraction can cost opportunities, gains, and lives.

Check all work through independent and impartial review. In engineering, manufacturing and consumer services, industry spends enormous sums on “quality control” but often loses the gains and fails to achieve stated goals because of missing the importance of impartial reviews and clear overseeing of the total operational landscape. Failure to think “over the horizon” can cost the battle and even the war.

All important issues should be presented in writing. Nothing sharpens the thought process like writing down one's arguments. Too often information technology allows people to run off the top of their heads with rough ideas and no critical analytical thinking beforehand. Write, read what was written, think out the arguments and counter-arguments, and only then present the case.

Live by the ACCORD principle and demonstrate it to all peers and subordinates – Accurate, Consistent, Complete, On-Time, Reliable, Defensible.

Source:

This is a modified and enhanced version based upon quoted text written by Richard A. Clarke in his book, "Your Government Failed You" (Harper Collins, 2009 – page 349), in which the list as originally written by Mr. Clarke is presented (accurately, in my opinion) as the management philosophy of Admiral Hyman Rickover (USN, 4-stars; 1900-1986). [mjdudziak]