



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Management Trainee Program

The importance of professional management in organizations needs no stress. The success of an organization depends considerably on its management, the environment, and job satisfaction. A large number of organizations are recruiting management trainees with the objective of building them into high caliber, motivated and dedicated managers.

The objective of the management trainee program is to introduce fresh management graduates into the organization so that they can occupy suitable positions after successful completion of the training. The management trainee programs should be designed in view of the organization's expectations from its trainee. To be effective, a new executive should possess the following qualities:

- Ability to get the job done; ability to identify the problem and to cope with it.
- Ability to accept organizational realities and also understand factors such as group loyalties, informal power arrangements within the organization and organizational politics.
- Ability to generate and successfully promote new ideas.
- Loyalty and commitment.
- High personal integrity.
- Capacity to grow.

The following approaches can be used during the training period:

- **Job responsibility sans supervision:** This involves a new employee being given a job that entails less responsibility with a minimum of guidance or supervision. In some cases, no specific responsibility is fixed and only the general area of operations is indicated. It is left up to the management trainee to translate the general assignment into a specific job. In such situations, the success or failure of a trainee depends to a great extent upon the reaction of the management to his initial failure. He may be punished by being given less responsibility or negative feedback without curtailment of responsibility, or the trainee may be left to do what he or she feels is appropriate.
- **On-the-Job Training:** With this approach, the trainee is assigned to a department and not included in the training group. His/her work generally involves some responsibility and is carried out with the help of superiors. The trainee can also be assigned challenging and important jobs with guidance from more experienced members of the organization. After a year or so, the trainee is exposed to other departments and also sent for formal training.
- **Working while training:** With this method, the management trainee is assigned to a formal program that operates either part-time or full-time. An element of this

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approach is to entrust minor projects to him/her that may involve real work. Another variation of this approach is putting the basic responsibility for training in the hands of the training/personnel department while the trainee is rotated among a number of departments or projects. Training activities are spread over assignments or are confined to several hours a week at set times. After completion of his formal training, which may last anywhere from 3 to 24 months, the trainee is assigned to a department or a project.

- **Full time training:** When the training is full time, the trainees are assigned to the training department for a specified period. Whatever the work assignments, they are primarily routed through the training department. The work allotment may also involve rotation to various departments, but the trainees end up either merely observing others or, at best, being given special projects of little organizational importance that are designed to test them on work.

Most organizations follow only one type of program for all their trainees on the assumption that they all have the same needs regardless of their qualifications, even if some of them hold a management degree. Such an indiscriminate approach will create a perception gap, frustration and other problems. However, for a successful management trainee program, careful managerial manpower planning, a methodical recruitment system, an appropriate training approach, and an appropriate appraisal and feedback system are necessary.