Macmillan Business Masters

Personnel Management

Third Edition

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Third Edition

Margaret Attwood
and
Stuart Dimmock

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To Bill, Abi and Jonathon

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Introduction

This book is about the search for success in the management of people at work. Unfortunately, in the past, more attention has been given to the mismanagement of employees and the reasons for this than to the development of criteria for success in personnel management. Any attempt to generate universal prescriptions for effectiveness in this area of management is likely to be misleading. What appears to stimulate work of both high quality and quantity in one organisation may not be successful elsewhere. Nor should we assume that other nations have all the answers. Once, everything American was thought likely to be the key to industrial utopia. Then many people were excited by Japanese management techniques. Now we recognise that the search for excellence is long and difficult.

This book is not a panacea for all ills. It attempts to assist the new personnel specialist or manager to develop competence in this area. It encourages more experienced practitioners to question established techniques. On the basis of such analysis it should be possible to develop strategies and practices relevant to the circumstances of the particular organisation. Management is a lonely business; there are no guaranteed steps to effectiveness. Yet, paradoxically, no problem is unique. We hope to emphasise the complexity of good personnel management practice and the rejection and questioning, where relevant, of current employment practices.

While writing this book we have learnt the difficulty of deciding how much emphasis to give to each topic. Of necessity the results reflect our own values, experiences and interests. The further reading section at the end of the book gives limited advice for the extension of knowledge in this area of management. Experience, especially if reflected upon and shared with other practitioners, is at least as important.

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