INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT

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Richard Pettinger

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MACMILLAN

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Preface

Everywhere in the world there is a revolution going on, a transformation of business and of the services needed and wanted by people. At the heart of this revolution is management. This is underlined by a realisation that, whatever the merits of how this was conducted in the past, new ways and new methods are essential for the future; above all, this means a better understanding of what management actually is.

The background against which this revolution takes place is one of economic, social and political turbulence and upheaval. The global environment is both unstable and volatile. The sophisticated post-industrial new economies of the West are undergoing radical transformation, driven by a combination of recession, technological advance and competition from emerging nations. This is exacerbated by the need for levels of investment and other resource commitment over periods of time that run contrary to prevailing political and economic pressures. The economies of the Far East have generated a business and commercial power bloc in the period since World War Two that dominates the global electrical and consumer goods markets and makes them major operators in the car, white goods and finance sectors. This has been achieved from a combination of investment, technology and organisation founded in the reconstruction and regeneration of the world devastated by World War Two.

Ever-greater strains and demands are placed on the finite and diminishing resources of the world by an ever-increasing global population. These have therefore to be arranged, planned, ordered and organised to ensure that they are used to greatest possible advantage. In the particular context of pressure on the one hand and finity on the other, this constitutes a drive for constant improvement in efficiency, effectiveness, maximisation and optimisation.

This is the framework of the 'business sphere' – that is, the environment of business, and background against which business is conducted. It forms the backcloth to the 'management sphere' – the actual and conceptual environment (global, organisational and departmental) in which the practice of management is conducted. The work is carried out in and by 'organisations' – that is, combinations of human and other resources drawn together for a distinctive business or social purpose.

The standpoint adopted in response to this is straightforward: management is a statement of excellence and quality and of expertise. There is a body of knowledge and skills that must be acquired by anyone who wishes to be a part of the managing – that is, the direction and ordering – of the situation. There are capabilities and capacities required in people in the pursuit of this. High

standards of behaviour, ethics and performance are required. There is a personal commitment necessary in terms of energy, commitment, enthusiasm and ambition. There is increasingly a standard of education and training necessary, both as a prerequisite to entry to the field and in the maintenance of effective and current performance in it. Finally, in common with all true experts there must be personal pride and joy in the work itself, in the organisation in which it is carried out, and in the particular department in which the manager is working.

The nature of this expertise is complex and diverse. The practice of management requires both the recognition of this complexity, and the capacity to reconcile the conflicting elements present in the pursuit of it. For the purposes of introducing the scale and scope of this expertise and in order to provide a framework for the recognition and understanding of it, the book is organised as follows.

Chapter 1 is an introduction and configuration of what management is and what it should be, and this is followed by an historical overview and review in Chapter 2, to establish the development of the expertise to date.

Chapter 3 is an introduction to organisation behaviour and an illustration and analysis of its key features. Chapter 4 then relates the processes of managing organisations, the importance of their structures, systems and cultures and the means by which these are envisioned and energised.

This is followed by an illustration and consideration of the nature and context of distinctive management functions that are carried out by organisations in the pursuit of their stated purposes. Starting with a consideration of strategy and policy formulation in Chapter 5 the book then addresses the particular concerns of marketing, human resources, industrial relations and employment law (Chapters 6–9). Chapter 10 then addresses the nature and complexity of operations management, and Chapter 11 its quantitative methods aspect..

The purpose of the last part of the book (Chapters 12–13) is to address the major current issues related to managing in the changing and volatile environment already referred to; and the particular current concerns of excellence and quality. There is also a short section on Japanese management.

This last bears another word here. Both academics and practitioners have looked at Japanese business and management practices in detail and depth in their attempts to explain the great economic successes that have been achieved in that country and by its companies since 1945. There is a relationship to be drawn between this and the practices adopted, and they thus merit particular consideration.

To bring the threads of these opening remarks together – they each feed off each other. That is, good management engenders good business, good business creates good organisations, good organisations attract, retain and develop good managers who in turn improve both the quality of organisations and of the business that they conduct. Organisations thus cannot afford bad managers or their bad practices.

The main conclusion drawn is in relation to the constant expansion of the subject, both as a field of study and as an area of practice; and of the consequent

necessity of those who work in it to keep up to date with developments, to read, to acknowledge and to accept their responsibilities for their own continuous professional expansion and to act upon all of this. The commitment needed for this matches that of any classical profession – such as medicine or the law.

This is an illustration and summary of the scope and coverage of the book. The overall purpose is to introduce concepts and features of the management sphere to the student coming to the subject for the first time; to those commencing professional studies and professional examinations who require an introduction to management or a general management reader; to those studying management as part of a technological, technical, engineering or computer course; and as a contribution to the level and content of the debate in the field.

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