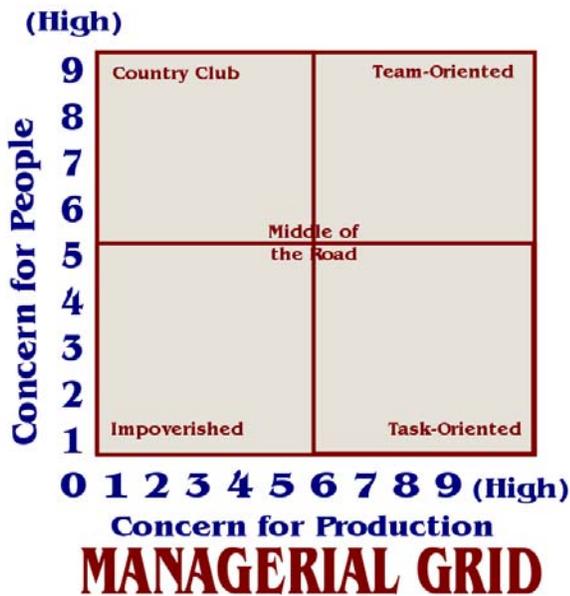




WHAT KIND OF LEADER ARE YOU?

While it must be recognized that there are leaders in every field, leaders in every walk in life, and leaders at every level of an organization, this article is directed at YOU, because you are an executive, a decision-maker, a policy setter. One who has considerable influence on the operation and effectiveness of your agency.

A 1969 book by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard, **Management of Organizational Behavior**¹ took a close look at several models of leadership, notably the Ohio State model, the University of Michigan study, and the **Managerial Grid** (popularized by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton). While some of the language in these studies requires a healthy vocabulary and post-graduate education, the Managerial Grid should be familiar to most of you:



In 25 words or less, the Managerial Grid looks inside your head, to determine your degree of concern for getting the job done (production) vs. your concern for the social order and motivation of your staff (people).

¹ **Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources**, Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard, Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1969.

Impoverished You don't care much for the job, or the people in your organization, so your focus is on the minimum effort to get the job done, with limited interface with your staff.

Country Club Your organization is pretty much a sheltered workshop, pampering staff, creating a friendly, family organization where nothing gets done, but nobody cares, because the staff meetings serve great refreshments.

Task-Oriented You are obsessed with getting the job done, without kowtowing to human needs. You rant and rave when staff have the audacity to call in sick, or take maternity leave, scream when the Legislature delays approval of your budget request, and don't return phone calls from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) liaison.

Middle of the Road Some may view this style as mediocrity, others as sanity. You've got to balance competing demands – recognizing staff and resource limitations, while still trying to get the job done without obsession. And parts of the job are impossible anyway.

Team-Oriented Utopia, here we come. You have somehow managed to recruit and retain highly motivated staff, who are on board with you, delighting in getting the job done in the most efficient and effective



Internal Control – More Than a Good Idea – It’s Also the Law!



manner.

You get bonus points if you recognize **Team-Oriented** as the ideal leadership style. This is the style you should espouse during Civil Service oral examinations.

More realistically, most of you are probably somewhere around the **Middle of the Road** in style. You started out with high ideals, imagining an efficient and effective work environment, presuming all your staff would be educated and motivated. But then four weeks later when your first paycheck cleared the Comptroller’s payroll system, you noticed that even those staff with good attendance patterns had their limitations.

Like the secretary who is still tangling with MS Word’s mail-merge feature. The motor vehicle operator with a drinking problem. The lounge lizard hitting on all the female staff. The whiner who is always complaining about the job, the people, the computer system, the forms designs. The veteran employee who has been passed over for promotion too many times, and is now just counting the days till retirement. You may also be saddled with a computer systems analyst who insists the solution to everything is a complicated, artificial intelligence system that only she can maintain.

You’ve probably also identified at least one employee who makes work avoidance an art form, and another who thinks they should have been given your job.

So how do you motivate these disparate elements to share your vision of a **Team-Oriented** workplace, where people are collegial and collaborative, the focus is on getting the job done effectively and efficiently, without concern for individual egos and rewards?



Here’s a few practical hints:

- **Don’t lord it over them.** Perhaps you are believed by the Front Office, or have friends in high places. That will not impress your staff.
- **Set a good example.** Don’t expect your staff to work longer hours than you put in. This may be problematic with flex-time. Still, the rest of the crew get paid lesser salaries for being on hand 37 ½ hours a week. It wouldn’t kill you to give 40 hours to the State.
- **Listen to your staff.** There may be people who have been there longer than you, who have a few ideas on the subject (and may have been rebuffed by past administrators). There may be people new to the operation who have relevant experience elsewhere, or fresh perspective on an operating problem.
- **Be scrupulously honest when it comes to management perks.** That private office is provided to you to get things done, not have lots of personal phone calls with your fraternity brother (or sorority sister) in Cleveland.
- **Avoid travel junkets.** Don’t spend all of your training budget on a convention in Las Vegas. Consider group memberships for your staff, so that all your workers can get in on training opportunities, with member discounts.
- **Don’t stretch the truth.** If you leave the house at 7:30 on a business trip, don’t pretend that you left at 6:30 so that you can qualify for a free breakfast (like the new Awesome Omelet at Embolisms’ R’ Us). Besides, an auditor will be checking your EZ-Pass records.
- **State cars are for State business.** Too many would-be leaders have sacrificed more than their reputations, treating the company car as a status symbol. State agency license plates are distinctively numbered – don’t park in front of an establishment that would offend your mother.



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- **Cell phones are not toys.** Sure it may be capable of text messaging and low-resolution photos. Let the middle school kids enjoy those features (and let their parents pay dearly for them). Besides, you will be so busy motivating your staff one-on-one, that you won’t have time to jabber. And turn the rude thing off when you are at a conference, in a restaurant, riding up the elevator, or at an Inaugural Ball (West Wing staff excepted).
- **Don’t sweep things under the carpet.** Deal promptly and effectively with situations that adversely affect your staff and/or your program.
- **Don’t pressure your staff to contribute to your pet causes.** Whether it is political, religious, charitable or social, their time and money is theirs alone. You do not want the Ethics Commission to know your name.
- **Don’t play favorites.** Sure, some of your staff are easier to deal with than others, and some of your staff are more productive. You are responsible for ALL your people, so make sure each and every one benefits from your leadership, and is provided with opportunities to excel.
- **Fight for your people.** You are in a chain of command, which effectively makes you “monkey in the middle” when problems occur. This may irritate your own bosses, but they need to be kept in the loop. Just be sure you have a list of solutions to offer them.

Maybe this sounds a bit like “Eight Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter”. The important thing to remember is that you are NOT a breed apart. Your group may have had fewer cavities than theirs, but it wouldn’t hurt to floss after lunch.



You’ve all seen examples of those “clear and concise” brochures aimed at the rank and file – insisting that they toe the line on countless rules and regulations, all in the interest of accountability. Well take a look at the alternative brochure **“What to Expect from Management.”** The brochure is written from the perspective of the rank and file – and their expectations of what managers should do, and how they should treat their staff. Take a good look at the brochure, then ask yourself: “Can I live up to these expectations?”

The brochure (you probably ignored my advice to read it just now) also details a lot of expectations for a positive work place - a drug-free, bias-free sanctuary (unlike the outside world where parents worry about drive-by shootings; immigrants, minorities and other “different” people are demeaned by bullies; hospitals double-bill; and hung-over mechanics both a simple oil change).

Come quitting time, each of your staff must go out and deal with that outside world (including gasoline costs, heating bills, supermarket lines, traffic jams, etc.). Wouldn’t it be nice if they could focus on the job at hand during office hours? **Read the brochure.**