

Broadcasting



By Robert Manna

www.mannagroups.com

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Broadcasting

Robert Manna

bob@mannagroups.com

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www.mannagroups.com
contact@mannagroups.com

The author thanks the women and men of Datotek, Inc. of Dallas, Texas, whose participation made this book possible ... Rush Fielden whose knowledge of this subject and understanding of the author gave a depth to his role as editor and photographer greater than one has a right to expect ... and Ray Whitson, Chief Executive of Datotek, Inc. for his courage in permitting his organization to try and find a better way ... for his encouragement and criticism of the activity when needed .. and for being a friend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Mema". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Foreword

At last! Here's a management book that tells you how to do it and why it works!

This short, concisely written book packs a message powerful enough to revitalize the sagging giant and accelerate the budding new enterprise. It's the best I've read in a decade.

It is a book you will read and then read again if you have the courage to manage as the author suggests. And, if you don't? You must read it because it's a book that tells you exactly how to get help ... a lot of help ... from others.

Albert P. Weeks
Management Consultant
San Antonio, Texas



Victor Ponti, our sales manager, was industriously moving his pen across a sheet in his three ringed binder. I leaned over to see what he was doing and he pointed to a grouping of words on the edge of his doodles. "The end is near," it said. I looked at him and he shrugged his shoulders as he looked off in space.

We were forty-five minutes into the meeting and my mind had taken so many excursions that I had forgotten where I was. It was another one of those something's - got - to - be - done meetings. The boss, trying to appeal to us as the leader with all of us around him locked up in a conference room, was looking for something to help meet our corporate profit objectives. Here we were, nine of the least informed on the subject at hand, trying to analyze what had gone wrong with our plans.

Paul Schoate, our resident financial wizard, took the floor and delivered one of his brilliant statements, "Gentlemen," he said, "there are only two ways to increase profitability: increase sales or cut costs." He delivered this shot of brilliance standing with a stern face and the posture of Humphrey Bogart playing Captain Quig and was all set to be admired for his performance.

"God," I said to myself. "How do people like this ever get out of school with degrees in finance and economics and further, how do they ever get positions in an organization such as this?"

Carl Clark, the production manager was quick to respond. "Paul," he said, "that was brilliant. I suggest we now hear from marketing as to how they're going to increase sales."

Victor dropped his pencil, looked straight up at Paul Schoate and said, "I have a great scheme for increasing our sales by 30%."

You can imagine what that did to everyone in the room, especially Paul, the financial wizard, and our President, Tom Hurts.

"I can increase sales 30% by dropping the cost of our product by 20%," he said.

"Whattha hell are you talking about," cried Tom Hurts? "You can't do that. That would kill our profits. Ponti, that is the most irresponsible statement I've heard you make ... and you've made quite a few in the time I've known you."

Ponti's response was, "Well gentlemen, so far all I've heard you say is that we've got to increase our profits and that profits can come from increasing sales or reducing costs. You've asked me to speak as a sales manager, and I've told you ... I have a scheme for increasing sales. Let Carl worry about production and how he is gonna cut costs!"

The production manager, Carl Clark glared across the table at Ponti. How could production cost possibly be cut by 20% or anything even close to that?



The meeting began to deteriorate, rapidly. Clark was shouting at Ponti. Schoate was shouting at Clark. Finally, Hurts, the President, was able to get the attention of the group.

Not knowing what to do, Hurts said, "Paul, get with Carl and Victor and see what we can do about some kind of cost/sales price compromise to increase profits. We'll all get together in exactly two days and, damn it, I want a firm resolution as to how we are going to fix this situation. Meeting adjourned."

Everyone began trailing out as Schoate said to Clark and Ponti, "Let's take a ten minute break and get together in my office. I'll have the financial staff bring in the books. We'll work out something for Tom."

They wasted two more hours. Carl Clark had his mind made up. There was no way that production could come up with a 20% reduction in cost.

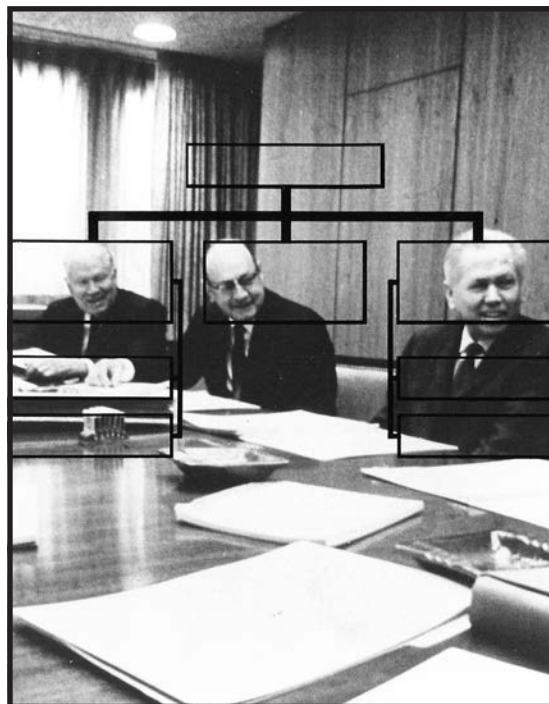
After the meeting, Victor Ponti went back to his office, pulled the resignation from his desk that he had typed the week before, cleaned out his desk and went home.

Tom Hurts was shocked when his secretary handed him Vic's resignation. Vic was a good man and Tom didn't want to lose him. So, he called for his car and drove to Vic's house. And, while Vic was leading him into the living room, he'd already asked the question, "What happened Vic?"

"Tom," he said, "I've had enough! An organization, I believe, succeeds or fails from the top down. And, the failure of your organization is clearly a case in point. I know that's putting it pretty bluntly but that's the way I see it."

"You can talk plainer than that," said Tom. "We both know every organization's success is based on the ability to make correct decisions and to carry them out ... but correct decisions and the where-with-all to carry them out doesn't just happen at the management level."

"That's right," Vic replied. "Correct decisions result from employing accurate, complete and timely information that comes from down inside the organization ... correct decisions are the result of the right people being in on the decision."



"What we are doing is using the same system we have for giving direction ... to seek direction."

"Every organization's success is based on the ability to make correct decisions and to carry them out."



Tom looked thoughtfully at Vic and then said, "I'm beginning to get the picture now. You think I've shut you out or that I don't listen to you anymore. If that's your point, forget it! That's just not so."

"No Tom, you're only half right. Nobody is listening now. In the early days, when we were small, we had an environment in which anybody could talk and listen to anybody else ... to get assistance with a problem. But, as the organization grew, we had to install a more formal structure of communication, and we did."

"Yeah," waxed Tom, "remember the hell we went through?"

"Yes, I remember it well," said Vic. "Carving out the empires has left its scars. What we failed to recognize though ... and to this very day ... is that by installing this hierarchy, we closed off all direct communication between the people who have the problem and the people with the answer."

"Vic, we tried to install channels for communication," said Tom, "which implied, at least, that in every problem and answer situation there would be a channel ... a network ... through which persons at opposite ends ... the man with a problem and the man with the answer could find each other."

"We did it well," said Vic, "there's no doubt that our growth these past years came from our developing a communication framework for getting information down through the ranks. Our need was not

what to do, but getting things done. And, the hierarchy is the way to pass the word down. That's all we needed when we had all the answers."

"Yes I know Vic," replied Tom, "that original growth spurt was the happiest time I've ever had in this job. But now I get the impression that you're going to tell me that big is bad or that I let it grow too fast. Hell, Vic success breeds growth, you know that! Besides what do I tell the shareholders 'no more dividends?' and what do I tell the upcoming generation 'no more growth?' you know I can't do that."

"...nor do you need to," replied Vic. "What we now have is a well defined system, only suited for giving direction. We have lost our ability to seek direction ... a natural way to obtain the unaltered facts from wherever they exist within the company. The facts we must have to make correct decisions. Now our information flows upward within the hierarchical communication system and believe me ... it is altered through each level of the network. Management ... the decision makers at Chestra ... no longer get the facts from the person with the most knowledge on the subject. We get the interpretation of the facts and this creates our first obstacle. Taking what comes through the channel, we formulate the problem and go to work on the solution. But consider this, if we don't get the straight scoop, we may end up formulating the wrong problem. And that's what's been happening."



“Let me give you an example. My next door neighbor who manages a credit union, came over the other night. I hadn’t seen him so excited in years. It seems as if he and his committee had been looking for three months to find a better way to invest the credit union’s excess funds.

“He had just returned from a communication oriented seminar where he had solved his problem. He said, he was asked to express what was on his mind. He told those in attendance ... and they were all outsiders ... that he was having real difficulty deciding where to invest surplus funds.

“He said he felt rather silly at first because he had no knowledge of these people, their backgrounds or positions. But, he permitted himself to be questioned, randomly, by everyone in the room. They began to ask questions like, how much surplus do you have? What kinds of returns are you seeking?

“The questions and answers literally flew around the room until someone asked the question, ‘why do you have surplus funds?’ and he didn’t have an answer.

“Someone else asked him why his company’s employees were no longer interested in loans? Suddenly there was an outpouring from people who were members of his credit union he didn’t even know.

“Unless you happen to know someone who has been to our credit union,” the man said, “it can’t be found. You are

hidden somewhere in the building. And I’ve heard people say that filling out forms on their lunch hour or after work just to get the money to buy a car made them feel like you were doing them more of a favor than wanting to help them.”

“I think you are looking for the wrong solution because you’ve asked the wrong question,” said another.

“Well, Tom, my neighbor had spent three months talking and listening to people. But, he hadn’t listened to the people who had a real grasp of the problem and the solution too. He had limited his exchanges to a committee of his peers within the hierarchy of his organization. Once they had determined that the question was how to invest surplus funds, they looked for only one solution; better investment opportunities. It never occurred to them that they should look for better ways to advertise their credit union and to make it more convenient for their members.

“You see, the question is the key to every search for a solution and, he was asking the wrong question. If he’d found a good answer to his question he still wouldn’t have solved his problem. Now, would he?”

“You really feel, Vic, that we’ve come that far” asked Tom?”

Vic remained silent. He could see Tom was thinking through the experiences that had led to this meeting.



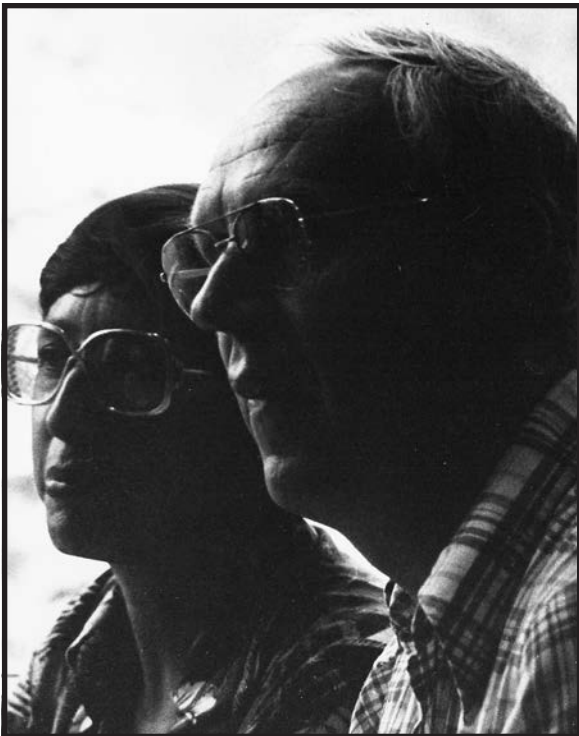
Broadcasting

“You see the question is the key to every search for a solution.”



After a while Vic said, "Let me give you another example. A controller I know that manages a large fleet of trucks his company leases, decided that he would take a representative group of his drivers with him to meet with the leasing agent before signing next year's contract. His plan was to give the men who drive and maintain the trucks an opportunity to make suggestions. He was dissatisfied with the performance of the shipping department and had run out of ideas to "fix" it.

"During the meeting, the drivers expressed what they wanted ... in comforts, utility and name brand. It was a lively meeting with much give and take. The drivers were surprisingly well informed ... even when it came to cost.



The right people asking the right questions.

"The controller, would occasionally pop in and say, 'guys, I would like you to have that, but we don't have that kind of money.'

"Finally, with all the information out on the table, the controller said, 'all right, I'll get together with the leasing agent and you guys pick a representative from your group to come back and see me. Then, the three of us will sit down and review what it is we're going to do to make sure there are no 'cracks' in our thinking before we place the order.'

"And, that is just what happened, Tom.

"My friend tells me that now the fleet is almost without down time. He says, he knows damn well there are breakdowns but he's not hearing about them.

"The drivers have too much pride to come forward with any kind of a 'beef.' It was their equipment decision and they are determined to make it work. He also indicated that the absenteeism is down among his drivers.

"You see, the guys who drive the trucks now believe that management really wants to hear the truth and is willing to act upon it. They have more knowledge of what is needed than any manager within the company ... that is the basis of problem-solving ... getting the person with the most knowledge in touch with the person with the problem. And in this case, Tom, my friend the controller, had the wisdom to go to the people who knew how to ask the right question. He decided



Broadcasting

"...that is the basis of problem-solving ... getting the person with the most knowledge in touch with the person with the problem."



the question would be best asked by his drivers. He made sure that they not only selected better equipment, but because they had participated in the process, they were committed to making the kinds of delivery schedules needed for his product, and, apparently it worked.”

“Yes, I can see the parallel,” said Tom. “What we are doing is using the system we have for giving direction ... and the same lines and boxes ... to seek direction ... and it limits us. No one at the bottom of the framework can possibly get information to us in a timely and accurate fashion, except through pure chance. And, we are spending a lot of time looking for solutions to the wrong problems.”

“It makes you wonder,” said Vic, “how many times the question: ‘why don’t they come and ask us?’ has been asked at Chestra. Instead, we sit in meetings.”

“I read you,” said Tom, “but we’ve got trained managers to handle that problem. If I run around the managers and talk to their subordinates within the organization, I’ll have mutiny on my hands within minutes...”

“... how are things working now, Tom?” popped out before Vic realized what he was saying.

As soon as he said it, he almost wished he hadn’t. Nonetheless Vic waited for Tom’s reaction. And, a faint smile broke over Tom’s face and without a word, like in

the old days, the two men communicated exactly the meaning of the words they left unspoken.

And then Vic said, “I’m not advocating abandoning the formal organization for a debating contest. Let’s talk about an alternative.

“At the present time, once a decision is made, no more information is sought except perhaps to monitor the effectiveness of the decision. When the word goes out that we are going to do something, the hierarchical network is used to get out the word. At that point in time, we are not asking what we should do, we’re telling everyone what to do.

“However, the organization’s needs are constantly changing. And, we need an efficient method for seeking information too. We must have an effective way to develop the right questions! The question before us is what is a direction seeking process as effective as the long established direction giving, hierarchical process?

“For lack of a better term, why don’t we Broadcast ... ask the rank and file for direction ... check and see if we’ve properly defined the problem and ask them to let us know what their solution is.

“Broadcasting can be our process for seeking direction. It does not replace the hierarchal process ... the process for giving direction. It will be a process that compliments our hierarchy.”



Broadcasting

“We must have an effective way to develop the right questions!”



“Have you been holding out on me?” asked Tom. Is Broadcasting something you’ve known about and kept to yourself these past months?”

“No,” said Vic, “it’s always existed and you used to be the best Broadcaster around. We didn’t call it Broadcasting in those days, but that’s what it was! We just forgot how important it was and ...”

“... I know”, said Tom, “I’ve become a rigid organization man.”

“Right!” smiled Tom. “You said it. I didn’t. But I understand how and why you changed. I’m not the free thinker I used to be either.”

“Well,” mumbled Tom, “tell me what you think would get us back on track.”

“Okay,” asked Vic, “can you admit to your managers that you don’t have the answers to all of the questions?”

“I admitted that today didn’t I, Vic?”

“Can you accept solutions from subordinates?”

“I can tell you think I’m deaf and drunk with power.”

“No, Tom, but there’s no middle ground on this point. No middle level manager is going to accept your taking answers from one of his subordinates unless you are willing to do the same.”

“... that makes sense.”

“Good! Remember, our organization, all organizations, succeed or fail from the top

down. It is up to you to recognize at times, that you just don’t know enough about an activity to participate in the solution. That is what it will take to encourage everyone in the organization to accept Broadcasting.

“The ability of a manager to say to his subordinates, I need your help, is a strength ... not a weakness ... and until we admit to that ... and until you, by example, behave that way, no one at Chestra will be willing to accept Broadcasting.

“What I’m saying, Tom, is that information without understanding is useless. Broadcasting will be valuable to us only when we understand the process and support it by our behavior. You know that the minute we make the change, the entire organization will test it. And, the validity of Broadcasting, will be measured by how you behave, regardless of what you say or what you publish. And, that’s going to be the challenge for every manager, department head and supervisor in the company.”

“Vic, I’m with you. Now tell me how to start Broadcasting.”

“I’m telling you, Tom. Stop looking for that cook book! It’s going to be hard for you to stay away from formulating the questions, your questions. With Broadcasting, you don’t do that. If you ask a question, you direct the minds of those who hear you. You want to simply Broadcast a condition ... not a question.



Broadcasting

“Information without understanding is useless.”

“If you ask a question, you direct the minds of those who hear you. You want to simply Broadcast a condition ... not a question.”



“Here, I’ll give you an example. I could go in as sales manager tomorrow and say, ‘gentlemen, how are we going to increase sales?’ And by doing that, cause them to think of solutions as salesmen ... limit their thoughts to how to increase sales ... I would be no wiser than the credit union manager with the question, ‘where do we invest surplus funds?’ It is the question that channels thinking.”

“Therefore, the question is ‘what activity or event would result in increased sales?’ In this way, the question is not confined to the sales department, but to the company at large. I did not say, give me a technique for solving this problem, but rather, what event or activity would obviate this problem, I have now Broadcast this need. Furthermore, I have not preconditioned or limited the thinking process of the people.”

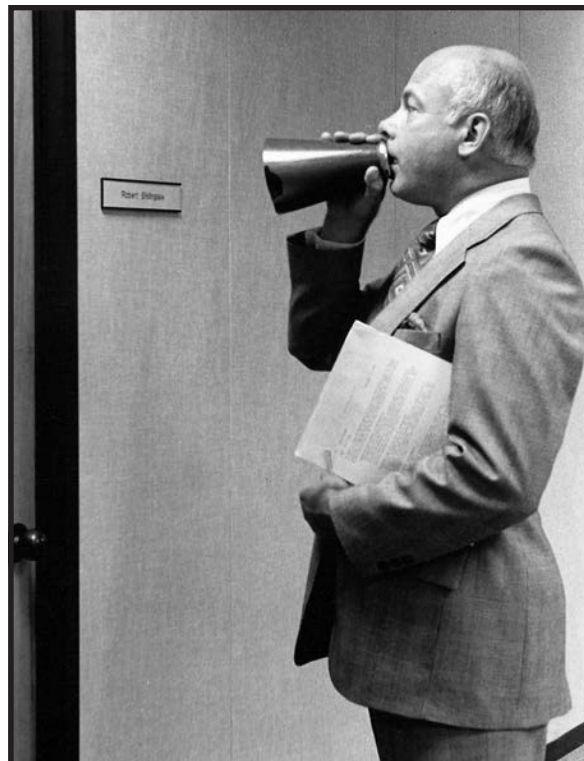
“The first thing one should do when faced with an undesirable situation is to state the conditions that exist ... a statement of fact ... not a problem. If you remember, it wasn’t until someone said, ‘why do you have the surplus funds?’ that the opportunity for the credit union manager’s solution presented itself. He had marketing inefficiencies, not investment problems.”

“As the sales manager, I must realize that interest in sales is not limited to the sales department. But, how do I give people in other departments within the company a way to contribute. The easiest way for me to Broadcast is to send out a

memorandum to those people within any department and level in each department saying: ‘sales are less than acceptable to me and to the company. Do you have any suggestions?’ I would probably write, think about this and if you have something to say come to a meeting at 2:00 tomorrow. And, if you think of someone else who has more knowledge on the subject, bring them along or let them be your substitute. Please call my secretary so we can make the proper arrangements for the meeting.”

“At this point, Tom, if I sent out ten memos ... all I know is that somewhere between eight and twelve people will come to the meeting. Who they are is still another question.

“All I would be looking for at such a meeting are other points-of-view. The



Knowledge has the right to judgment.

 Broadcasting

“The first thing one should do when faced with an undesirable situation is to state the conditions that exist, a statement of fact, not a problem.”



purpose is not how to simply increase sales, but rather to discover ideas right there in our midst ... in the company ... to explain why sales are at an unacceptable level.”

“Are these meetings going to be all day affairs?” asked Tom. “I can see we’re going to have to reallocate our priorities.”

“Not at all,” said Vic, “that would be one of the benefits of Broadcasting. Meeting times go from hours to minutes. Recognize that a Broadcast meeting has only one purpose: to get the most knowledgeable people together to formulate the question. Once all the information is on the table the meeting adjourns. We either have the correct question or we don’t. Staying around isn’t going to help things.

“You work on the premise that the first ten minutes of the meeting is productive. After that, if nothing happens, there’s no point in forcing the issue. But, if the participants are interested in looking for the question, and the subsequent answer, they’ll keep working on it wherever they are. For example, Tom, have you ever had an occasion when you are driving to the office or ... just lying in bed before going to sleep ... suddenly out of nowhere ... receive the solution to a problem you hadn’t consciously thought of for three days? It’s happened to most everybody at one time or another, I guess. But each time it happens, we’re surprised and may even remark to ourselves, ‘isn’t it funny that that occurred just now?’

“Our mind is always processing subconsciously but especially those things we’re interested in or have some knowledge about ... and problems that we feel we have the knowledge to solve really hang in there below the conscious. So, to get participation through Broadcasting, it is vital that we remember the importance of interest. Get someone interested in a dilemma or a condition you’re trying to change and you’ve got their subconscious working for you too.

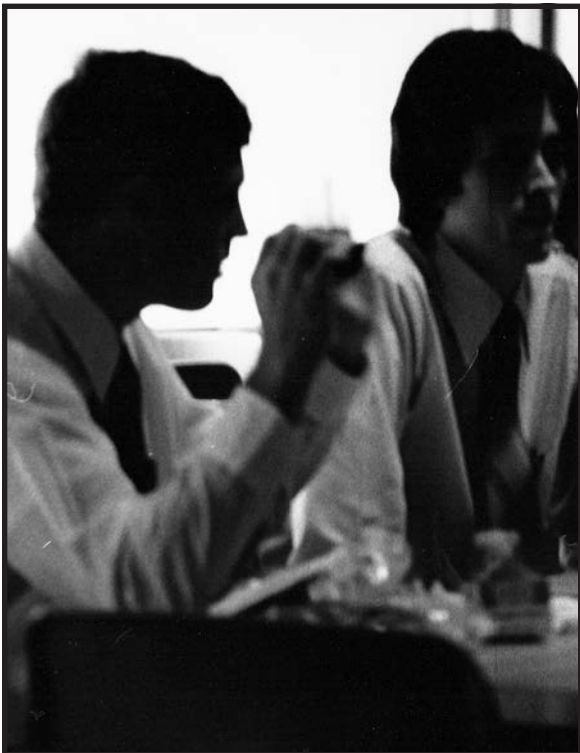
“Now, can you imagine the kind of increased productivity we could get if we were to increase the number of people in our organization who are not only consciously but subconsciously working on our problems? That means, people are finding solutions to the company’s problems, in their leisure time, Tom, and it goes even beyond that!

“Generally speaking, if one has interest in a subject and is working on a solution, that interest is expressed by retelling the dilemma to others. This is called Re-Broadcasting. And the initial value of this process is that when you tell someone else about something that is bothering you, you have to first understand it yourself. And, experience shows that many times solutions become apparent while in the process of Re-Broadcasting. This occurs, because to Re-Broadcast, the person has had to organize his thoughts more precisely than usual to explain the dilemma. And, it is during the precise organization of his thoughts that the solution will become

apparent. But even if it doesn't, those to whom he Re-Broadcasts may have additional knowledge, that when brought out in the give-and-take, will uncover an unexpected solution.

"Through Re-Broadcasting, the person or persons who heard your Broadcast may not have an immediate solution, but you can be sure their subconscious mind is working on one ... if you hooked their interest. So, it is entirely possible, in fact quite probable, that the solution to a condition will come from someone who doesn't even know the original Broadcaster. The solution will come back thought the Re-Broadcaster."

Vic stopped and waited to get Tom's response. At least a minuted passed before Tom spoke.



Re-Broadcasting

"You son-of-a-gun," said Tom, "you're full of surprises today! I think you've got the answer for us. Now check me out point by point. I want to make sure I've got it.

"First, organization's succeed or fail from the top down.

"Inefficiency occurs when the organization's size dictates the need for some formal structure to conduct communications within the company. This inefficiency occurs because management falls into the trap of assuming that the lines and boxes of a hierarchy are the acceptable means of communications, both for giving direction and for seeking information.

"An organization's success or failure is commensurate with its ability to make correct decisions. It is the monitoring of the decision making process where management must spend its time. After all, there are more people who can do something right than there are people who know the right thing to do!

"The correct process for decision making is one in which those persons with the most knowledge participate in the decision regardless of where they work.

"Broadcasting is a communication system through which the decision making process is ensured.

"In short, it can be said that an organization has two communication structures - the hierarchy, for giving directions, and Broadcasting, the process



Broadcasting

"There are more people who can do something right than there are people who know the right thing to do!"



for seeking direction. As managers, we must understand and practice both.”

Vic leaned back in his chair and said, “you’re one helluva listener, think you can sell it?”

Tom reached across the coffee table with his right hand extended and a twinkle in his eyes. “You’re damn right,” he said, “if you’ll come back and be my anchor man. We’re going to start Broadcasting tomorrow morning. Will you be there?”

“You bet I will”, cried Vic. “It’s going to be like old times again ... even better!”

“Okay then, tear up this silly piece of paper, Tom, and let’s develop a script for our first broadcast!”

The next day Tom and Vic met in Tom’s office and came up with these guidelines for conducting a broadcast meeting.

Broadcasting is a process by which a condition is made known to those persons in whom reside the greatest knowledge.



This process makes three demands on the Broadcaster:

One - suspend judgement and any definition of the problem. Instead, present it as a statement of a condition ... not a problem.

Two - distribute and permit the re-distribution of the conditional statement to persons regardless of their position and alignment in the organization.

Three - accept all responses to the condition you have presented.

Tom then called in the rest of the staff and recounted the event leading up to this meeting and distributed the newly written guidelines. He described the environment he wanted to create at Chestra and asked each person to give the program a fair chance. Everyone in the room was aware that Tom was excited.

“Tom, I don’t know if this will do what you want,” said Paul Schoate, “but it sure is good to see the sparkle back in your eyes.”

Tom winked at Paul and continued to explain how a question conditions a person’s thinking. Then, suddenly it occurred to him that there was a way he could illustrate his point. So, he looked directly at the group and said, “listen everybody, I have to arrange the tournament schedule at the golf club tomorrow. There will be 99 players

competing in match play. What is the minimum number of matches I will have to arrange to determine the winner?"

"Why its the number divided by two times n..."

"Hold it Carl," said Tom, "just tell me how many matches I will have to arrange. This is for real I really want to know."

Almost immediately Carl began writing down numbers and drawing lines left to right across his note pad. Paul inquired, "Tom you did say match play?" and Tom nodded yes. The room was quiet. Paul had taken his mini-calculator out of his pocket and was tapping on the keyboard with great authority. Susan, Tom's secretary, was drawing what appeared to be a Christmas tree showing winners and losers on the ascending branches of the tree. Each person was working on the solution.

Carl was the first to finish the exercise and dropped his pencil loudly enough for Tom and the rest to know he had the answer. He was about to speak when Tom caught his attention and put a finger to his lips to indicate quiet. Another minute passed before Susan and two more out of the nine present laid down their pencils and indicated they were ready to answer.

Tom then stopped the group and asked each to submit the answer. He polled the group in order around the room. Carl, Susan, and Ben had correct answers. Four people had no answer and two had incorrect answers. However, he gave no

indication to the group as to who was right or wrong. Instead he said, "let me ask you the same question again, but state it differently.

"Now," listen carefully," he said, "I have to arrange the schedule at the golf club tomorrow. There will be 99 players competing in match play. Therefore, how many people must lose in order for a winner to be determined?" ... and before he could continue everyone in the room groaned. The answer was suddenly so apparent. If 99 players started, 98 had to lose and with one loser per match it would take 98 matches.

"Tom, you tricked us!" laughed Paul.

"Did I?" responded Tom. "Well, if I did, it frightens me to think how often I tricked you in the past."

Tom had made his point. How many times had each of them tricked the group? How many people were at work on solutions to misdirected questions or questions that obscured the solution.

Tom let the lesson of the moment continue to penetrate. Would they now understand why Chestra was having difficulty holding on to aggressive, entrepreneurial talent at all levels in the organization? Why the fun had gone out of making things work? Why cliques had formed not only between departments but within them? Why more time was being spent explaining failure than reporting success? Would this group realize that he was sincere when he admitted he

didn't know, and needed help? Would they grasp the spirit of Broadcasting and see that it revolved around a willingness to ask all those present and not just a select few for solutions? And, hold to the principle that it didn't matter who came up with the solution but only that a problem was solved?

He re-stated point by point the need to understand the principles underlying Broadcasting so that the guidelines didn't become just another system management prescribed as a cure-all. He took great care to make the point that Broadcasting is not a system, but an environment, an environment in which the person with the question seeks aid from those with the most knowledge on the subject regardless of their position in the organization. "And so," he said, "I now put the question to you. How do we install Broadcasting?"

"Tom are you sure that's the question?" asked Paul.

The group recognized Paul's concern. Had Tom just tricked them again? Or, were old thought processes too entrenched to change?

No artificially constructed case would have made the point better. Tom was a victim of habit. He restated the condition.

"I want to install Broadcasting at Chestra," he said to the group.

Discussion began immediately. Occasionally someone commented, "Oh, that won't work because ..." and Tom

interrupted and reminded the group that no comments were to be rejected; that this was not the place to find the answer, but to formulate the questions.

After about ten minutes Paul asked the question, "Why don't we begin as we did here? Why don't each of us take our immediate subordinates and explain what we're trying to do and repeat Tom's golf tournament question? It worked here, maybe it will work again."

There was general agreement and Vic commented, "What you mean Paul is: what environment can we create that will make people want to Broadcast rather than direct them to Broadcast?"

"Yes, that's it Vic, I think it's always better to have people want to do rather than make them. Good idea Vic."

Tom and others noticed silently that this was the first time Vic and Paul had agreed on anything for a long time.

The first session had worked. The group had agreed to give Broadcasting a try. Tom's original question, "How do I install Broadcasting at Chestra?" was changed to "what environment would encourage its installation?" The group agreed to repeat the experience of the morning in informal meetings with their people. Susan was asked to prepare the notes of the meeting and distribute them to each group member with the guidelines. Tom told them that nothing further was to be done immediately. He would call another meeting in two days to check signals with



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"Broadcasting is not a system, but an environment in which the person with the question seeks aid from those with the most knowledge on the subject regardless of their position in the organization."

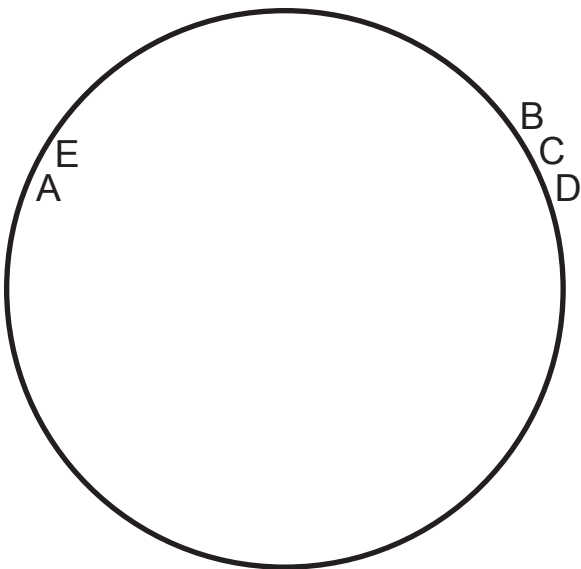
"It's always better to have people want to do rather than make them."



everyone in preparing for a company-wide Broadcast program. Before adjourning, Tom asked if anyone had anything else to add. No one spoke and the meeting was adjourned.

Exchanges of Broadcasting ideas and techniques were frequent for two days. So, when the meeting convened, the group concentrated its efforts on a technique they could use to begin a Broadcast program, in addition to the explanation and guidelines Tom had given them two days before. To accomplish this, they came up with a series of puzzles which they would place on the bulletin boards at Chestra with the instructions that anyone who thought they understood the question

Determine the system being used to place either inside or outside the circle all the letters of the alphabet. A goes inside, B belongs outside, C belongs outside, D belongs outside, E goes in the circle. Where do F, G, and the rest of the alphabet belong? What is the system being used?



When you have the solution, drop by, call or write (whichever is the most practical) and, give Susan Moore your answer.

and had the answer should contact Tom's secretary, Susan, and make their answer known. Contact with Susan could be in person, in writing or by phone. It was further suggested that the method to be used to reach Susan be determined by practicality rather than speed.

Susan was instructed to ask the respondents whether they solved the puzzle alone, whether the solution had popped into their head at an unexpected moment, when they were explaining the puzzle to someone else or if they were given the solution by someone to whom they had described the puzzle.

Without discussing Broadcasting with anyone else in the organization, the puzzle shown to the left was affixed to all company bulletin boards.

As the answers came in, Susan noted the respondents by department, job classification, and how they arrived at their solution. A new puzzle was put on the boards every Friday. On the fifth Friday, there was no puzzle. In its place was a brief explanation of what had been going on and included in the bulletin was an announcement that the results would be made known.

Susan had compiled the data and presented it at the next meeting. She reported that every department had responded to all the puzzles. Thirty percent of the time answers had occurred sub-consciously. Fifteen percent of the solutions had come while Re-

Answer: Letters with straight lines go inside the circle, letters with curved lines go outside the circle.

Broadcasting was in progress or from the person to whom the puzzle had been Re-Broadcast. No puzzle went unsolved. The production department submitted the most responses. Responses came to her in all three ways, and only 20% of the time did she have to contact the respondent to ask how the problem was solved.

Carl indicated his production department really looked forward to getting the next puzzle each Friday. Ben, in engineering, at first, treated the exercise lightly but his attitude changed when he noticed the puzzles showing up on desk tops and during conversations in the hall.

It was agreed that the puzzles were responsible for an enlightening and positive organizational experience. Broadcasting puzzles had been a success but would Broadcasting conditions in the real world be as successful?

“Well, what should we do?” asked Tom.

“What do you mean?” asked Carl and Paul almost in unison.

“I mean, should we Broadcast?”

“Tom,” said Vic, “we already have!”

“Yes, Mr. Hurts,” said Susan, “all we have to do now is work up our own business puzzles ... and personally ... I think we can make ours even more interesting than the series that was just Broadcast.”

“Ok, that’s what I wanted to hear,” cried Tom, “let’s start with this real live condition.”

“We already have,” said Carl, “I held a Broadcast meeting yesterday.”

“Really,” exclaimed Tom, “what was the topic?”

“Breakage,” responded Carl, “breakage of our 563 line of plastic baskets is causing excessive returns.”

“What did you discover was the cause?” asked Tom.

“We didn’t”, replied Carl, “because we weren’t looking for answers, but rather for the correct question.”

“Did you get one” asked Tom?

“Yep,” said Carl. “How many factors can effect breakage?”

“What immediate response did you get Carl?” queried Tom.

Carl responded, “A lot more than I would have guessed. We have inputs from design engineering, quality control, production, shipping and receiving, customer service and ... well, just let me say the responses were enlightening. For instance, it never occurred to me that the design boys could change the mold to make the baskets stack better, without effecting the functional specs. In fact, they said they could even streamline the appearance while doing it.”

“I’ll buy that,” chimed in Vic.

“Yeah, won’t we all!” added Tom. “Go on Carl, what else did you learn?”





"We also learned from accounting what that product carries as its standard cost."

"What do you mean accounting, Carl," interrupted Paul. "I didn't know my people were in a standard cost meeting."

"They weren't," corrected Carl. "They were in a Broadcast meeting and the reason you didn't know is that we needed the people who had the figures and that wasn't you."

"Whoops!" said Paul, "I just did it didn't I?"

"Go on Carl," pushed Vic, "this is intriguing."

"Well," Carl continued, "it turns out that our standard cost for the bucket is lower than any other in the 500 series."

"What does that offer in the way of a solution?" asked Vic.

"Don't know yet," responded Carl, "but it could mean we're kidding ourselves."

"Now that's a puzzler Carl," chimed in Tom. "What do you mean kidding ourselves?"

"Well Tom, while it is true that our standard cost is the lowest within the series, our recovery costs are killing us. We have extra freight charges, back-order paperwork, credit adjustments, re-manufacturing costs and a lot of people time spent in customer service with the complaint hassle. When you add in those costs, that 563 basket may be eating our lunch."

"Wow," exclaimed Vic, "and here we're pushing sales because of the attractive price. We could be guilty of losing money on every sale."

"Well Vic," responded Carl, "it might be just that, but it's too early to know. Don't go jumping to any conclusions yet, remember we're still asking the question, what factors affect breakage ... and the discussion is in process."

"I'll tell you though there was something else that startled me in that meeting yesterday. It was remarkable to see how little the separate departments knew about the effect each had on the other."

"What do you mean Carl," asked Susan?

"Well," said Carl, "in production we never knew what a hassle it was for accounting to back out sales figures, you know, credit adjustments? Here's Vic banging on the door asking for month's end performance ... screaming at accounting to close the books or at least give him an estimate ... and poor ole accounting is wrestling with credit adjustments from customer service."

"That's not too unusual is it Carl?" asked Tom.

"Not by itself Tom," responded Carl, "but listen to this kicker. While it may be important for Vic to get sales figures, it's more important to accounting to get the money."



“What do you mean by that Carl?” smiled Vic.

“Vic, we have customers that won’t pay their invoice until they get their credit adjustment voucher. That means that someone who owes us say \$3,000.00 may hold off paying until they get their \$65.00 credit adjustment.”

“Do we tolerate that?” asked Tom loudly.

Paul opened his mouth to answer, but Carl interrupted him. “Please Tom,” pleaded Carl, “let’s not go too fast. Remember, I’m describing what this first Broadcast meeting revealed. We’ll have time to address the results later, but Tom, I know what you’re thinking. Just imagine the kind of impact that makes on our accounts receivables. If we do permit that, think of the kind of strain it puts on the accounting folks to get Vic what he needs. And, at the same time, get Paul the level of receivables the company needs to maintain its positive cash flow. You begin to see why accounting doesn’t answer the phone around month-end closing ... and, by the way, to get back on the track, wouldn’t it be something if it all centered around our best selling, lowest standard-cost item?”

“Carl,” said Tom, “I would never have dreamed so much could come out of what appeared to be a simple ‘fix it’ problem. I wouldn’t be surprised if these meetings did more to educate our people than all the training sessions we conduct all year.”

“Hold it!” responded Carl. “There’s no doubt in my mind a lot of good will result, but I just think each of us is moving to a conclusion too rapidly. Remember, at this point it’s most important that we spend time in monitoring the process, not drawing conclusions. Nonetheless, I’ll have to admit its damn exciting. I have seen more information become understandable in one meeting than in a month of Fridays and to think all it took was to ask the questions, ‘what factors affect breakage?’”

“Not quite Carl,” corrected Tom. “That question was a result, what caused the formulation of that question was in our asking ‘isn’t there a better way? Let’s hope it’s Broadcasting!’”



Broadcasting

“I wouldn’t be surprised if these meetings did more to educate our people than all the training sessions we conduct all year.”

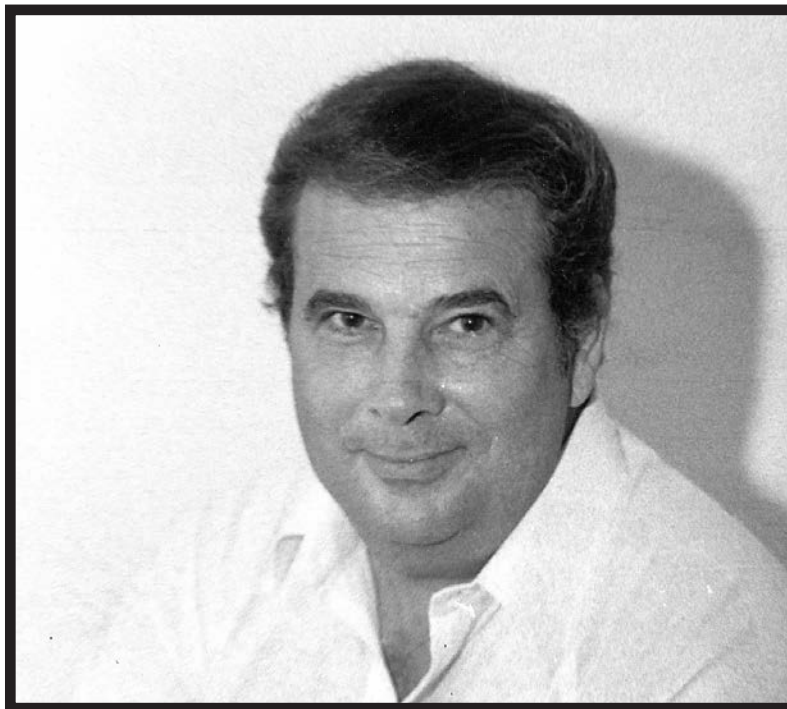


Broadcasting Procedure

01. The person, Broadcaster, with the problem requests those persons, who he believes has knowledge about the problem, to attend the meeting.
02. The Broadcaster states the condition that exists; e.g., our returns are too high due to breakage. This statement is written on the chalk board or flip chart.
03. A recording secretary takes notes of all that follows.
04. Comments are then requested. Remember, no comments are rejected! It is critical to get first reactions. If criticism of comments are made by Broadcaster or others in the meeting, some will withhold remarks or condition their comments to be acceptable. It is important that Broadcaster reject any attempt to criticize. The important thing at this point is the meeting is to hear from those who have knowledge on the subject. Remember they may not be hierarchically as high as the rest. Do not let position influence the commentary. The key is to formulate the correct question.
05. The Broadcaster prods group to comment. When no additional action is forthcoming or when interest wains, the meeting ends. Do not continue a meeting beyond that point in time when interest wains. This will in some cases be a matter of minutes ... adjourn the meeting nonetheless.
06. The notes are prepared and sent to those who attended.
07. Those receiving the notes are free to discuss them with others.*
08. All those who have seen the notes are free to contact the Broadcaster and submit comments and ask questions. This may be done in person, by mail or phone ... whatever is most convenient.
09. Broadcaster evaluates post-meeting comments and calls another meeting or repeats steps 6, 7, 8 and 9.
10. Broadcaster calls meeting to announce solution to problem or to stop the Broadcast process.

*Subject to information sensitivity.





Although readily recognized as a teacher, speaker, lecturer and soccer coach, Bob Manna spends most of his time in the role of a management consultant in search of management processes that not only yield organizational success but also employee fulfillment.

In part, the results of his work are expressed in his presentation and seminar series titles, some of which are:

Creative Thinking
Managing The Knowledge Worker
How To Make An Effective Presentation
Managing In The High Technology Environment

He entered the work force as a school teacher and industry via the computer business. Since then he has held management positions in various organizations at virtually every level. In 1970 he formed his own company to begin his search for a better way.