

# Leading by Example:

An Analysis of Effective Management

Jane Doe

Mercy College

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### Abstract

This essay is an examination of management and the effects of poor management in a large corporation. The purpose is to identify a problem in the workplace with real-world examples of problem areas in my previous workplace. Aspects of the work environment, training of staff, and overall efficiency of management will be explored. It is the goal of this essay to identify issues with management and offer solutions through various types of trainings and utilization of various management principles and concepts and mechanisms.

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Have you ever worked for a company with poor management? Were you perhaps a manager of a department and you knew you weren't the best or most effective at the position? There are many people in leadership positions who aren't well equip for the position and the responsibilities that comes with it. This essay is an exploration of the world of management. Using my previous workplace, I will identify the company's corporate values, illustrate poor workplace morale through ineffective management practices, and reveal how poor management can become great leaders and effective managers on all levels.

### **Understanding and Defining Management**

It is important to understand the elements of management and the functions in which a manager oversee and implement. The most fundamental function to management is planning (Liebler, McConnell 2017). It is this function that precedes any other management function. When planning, managers identify objectives and create policies for their departments, while keeping the organizations overall goals, policies and ethics in mind. During the planning process managers must be aware and honest about the constraints that may hinder departmental progress. These constraints could be related to budget, staff in addition to other issues. Many issues are bound to arise while carrying out the plans of the department and the over-all goals of the organization. Another important component to management is organizing. The organizing process includes detailing and articulating goal-oriented plans, exhibiting power and authority so individual interactions are productive and in alignment with the goals of the department and organizations overall goals, among others. (Liebler, McConnell 2017.) Identifying

clear understanding of the scope, function and priorities is critical to make sure the department is on track and is moving in a purposeful direction.

### **Understanding the culture of the workplace.**

Having an understanding of the workplace culture is crucial to understanding why and how the employees do what they do, and why they chose to do it that way. While working for the largest hardware store in the United States, I have encountered many different managerial styles and processes. These observations are objective, and my best effort for honest opinions I have witnessed through experience with the **management on all levels**. I have been both rewarded and overlooked by the same management. The fabled corporate culture of this company is one driven by ethics, honesty, integrity and over all “doing the right thing”. The company offers an “open door” policy and encouraged any one to go to any manager, on any level if they had an issue, about anything or anyone including management. All complaints and concerns would be handled with care and without resentment and without retaliation. I originally bought into these idealistic notions about this organization. I later found out the reality that my location was not in alignment with these concepts. The true culture of this location is one of stress, cliques and favoritism and underappreciation which is the attitude of the management and was understood and felt by the subordinates. The stressful environment is created by the management because they are expected to reach quotas and goals for the organization, in addition to being a flagship store and having the expectation to elevate the customer experience. The fervor was then placed on the associates to meet the demands of these quotas, thus creating a stressful environment

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for all levels of associates. While working with the same people for a certain number of months and years, it is natural to build relationships with colleagues and subordinates. Sometimes with this comes the tendency to gravitate toward these familiar individuals and these bonds could be perceived as favoritism or cliques. Sometimes these are just perceptions and sometimes these observations are true. There are many instances where individuals who were promoted were close to management. It is hard to say if this is a direct connection to favoritism or hard-working individuals who happen to be close to management. There is a theory that managers tend to manage from a bias position (Goodhew, Hamilton, 2007). In an experimental study, when management believed staff was performing poorly, they were more inclined to see errors made which supported their original interpretation. Conversely, when they believed staff was doing well, they would watch the staff for positive behaviors and their high performance would be taken as example of favorable performance, poor performance was interpreted as an anomaly. These studies argue that appraisals are more about the *judger* than the *judged*. The judger is prone to being lenient to the individual being assessed because "similar-to-me" feelings from the manager (Goodhew, Hamilton, 2007). If these findings are true, this could explain why staff who are close to management tend to get promotions and praise, while others are bypassed or looked over. Another popular complaint about this organization is underappreciation. Many staff members feel underappreciated. Much of the underappreciation is a direct result of feeling like they are under-praised for their work and being over looked for promotions. Lastly, this company promotes their open-door policy. Associates are encouraged to go to any manager, no matter the level and it doesn't have to be an immediate manager, in the

event there's an issue or concern. The idea is to "fix" the issue before it goes to the corporate level. The problem with this is that many associates feel like management protects each other and the problem is only exacerbated. There are a few situations where associates felt they were being unfairly targeted after complaining on management. Associates complained of being micromanaged and their work over-scrutinized after a complaint.

### **The Importance of Employing Effective Management Techniques.**

Many of the associate opinions and perceptions of management in my previous organization, is considered poor. The staff is often unmotivated and unproductive, resulting in goals not being met, poor morale and ultimately, lost revenue. This organization is in need of retraining to remind them of the company's overall goals and ideals they continue to strive to achieve in addition to departmental goals, management trainings to help develop the management team to be their best which will have a direct effect on the subordinate staff.

Retraining management could be time consuming but necessary. If the line managers take the time to conduct a SWOT analysis. Evaluating the organizations strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with an objective attitude would help direct the management team into the right direction (Liebler, McConnell,2017). Further trainings to help develop the management team managerial skillset is also necessary. Many of these managers were originally regular associates and were promoted to management and only received training on how to perform their new managerial duties

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but not how to deal with people and lead a team. “A superior manager creates a work environment conducive to achieving the goals of the organization” (Huband, 1992 p.44). In order for a manager to successfully achieve their goals, they need to know their department as much as possible. Their available resources and there’s no greater resource than human capital. With poor management, there’s a high probability that there are missed opportunities to utilize many staff associates in ones’ department. As an efficient manager, being aware of each associates strength is of great importance. It is advantageous to match the right person with the right job.

Managing is not just delegating tasks and making sure goals are met. It also includes leadership skills. The most competent manager is not only able to assign tasks, but they are also able to motivate a team of people. A good leader is not cohesive or does not bully staff into completing tasks. They are able to engage the staff and make them want to follow because they *want* to follow the example being shown to them (Huband, 1992 p.44). Making sure that you are, a leader by example will help ensure the team is brought together to move toward the common goals of the department.

When staff is not trained to the best of their ability, it is a lost for the company. It becomes a waste of time and money for the company to pay people who aren’t doing their jobs well. “Underperforming employees can have a major impact, especially in the service organization where they deal directly with customers (Goodhew, Hamilton, 2007).” This could mean loss of customers due to poor customer service experiences. The estimated cost of poor hiring and poor management exceeds \$100 billion, making

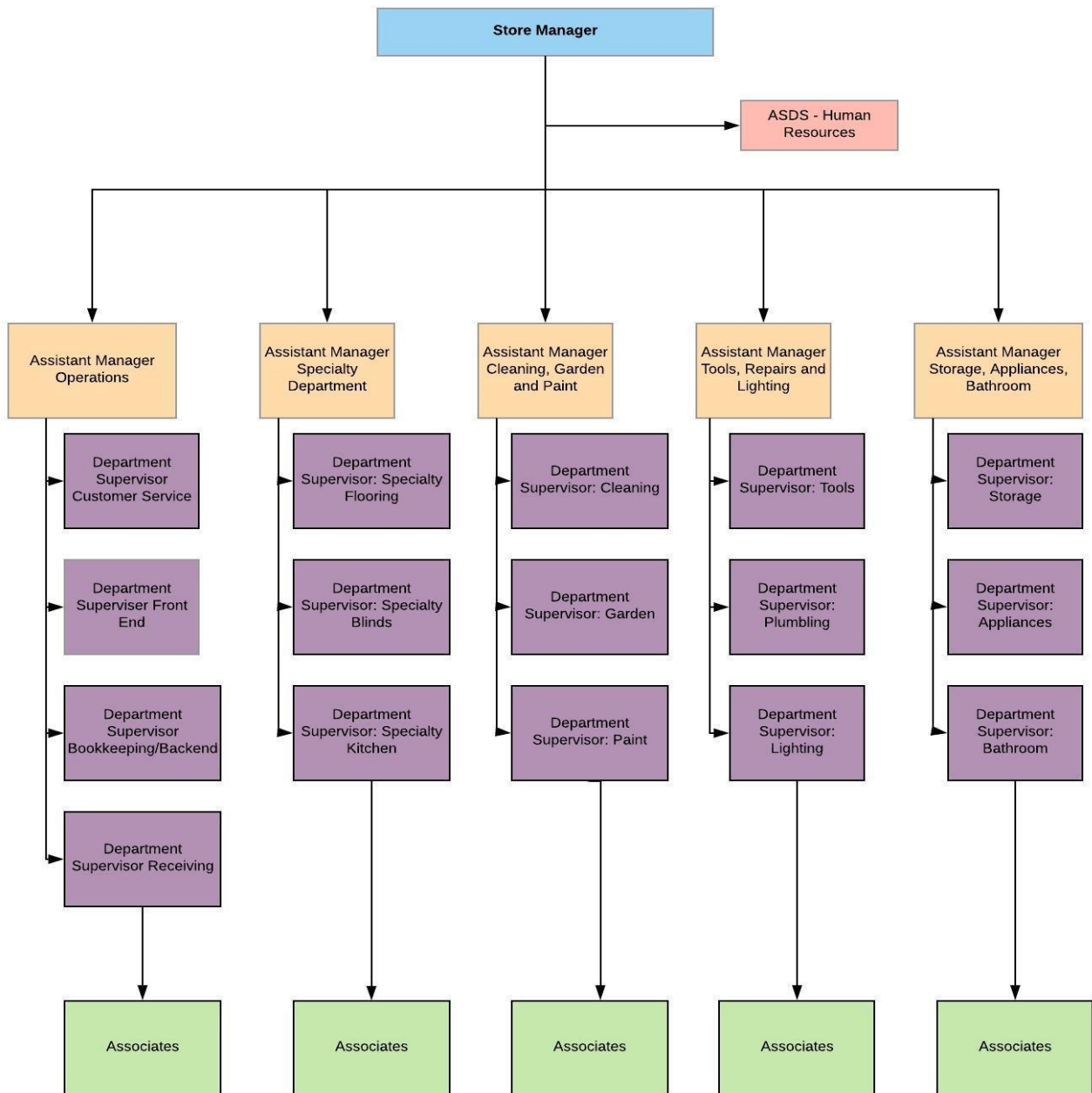
these decisions having a profound affect not only on productivity but in loss of revenue alike (Kowalski, 2005).

**Conclusion.**

It is important for anyone in management to understand how to effectively motivate and move their team toward the goals and objectives identified by the department and the organization as a whole. Identifying poor management habits such as favoritism, unpraised and underappreciated staff and poor training can mean the world of difference for the morale in an organization. When the staff feel they are working in an inclusive environment, a fair and just environment where all hardworking associates have an equal chance of promotion, and they are following the lead of a well-rounded, knowledgeable manager who sees value in the staff individually creating a win-win environment for the staff of the organization and the community that is being served.

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## Company Organizational Chart



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