

## **IN DEFENSE OF AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER: A RESPONSE TO GLICKMAN, PAJAK, AND HAZI**

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I have a long-standing interest in how the study and practice of other fields might help those of us who study supervision in education. My interest in interdisciplinary approaches to understanding supervision became sharply focused about 10 years ago when I received an honorary appointment to the faculty of the Harvard Graduate School of Education (as an Associate in Education). This appointment was sponsored by Professor Chris Argyris, who has an international reputation in organizational behavior and intervention theory. At about the time I was at Harvard, I also began consulting with organizations on supervision, organization development, and change management. In May 1989, I completed the requirements for a third graduate degree in business administration from The Johns Hopkins University. My 10-year exposure to the world of business, and to those who work within it, motivated me to conduct and report on the case study presented in this *Journal*.

From interacting with people from noneducation fields, I learned that they seem more tolerant of the kinds of behaviors exhibited by the manager in my case study. They recognize and accept leadership behaviors linked to using rewards and punishments, to relying on loyalty and trust, and to yielding results. Most important, they value authentic managerial behavior; they value managers who are true to their values, who behave consistently and predictably, and who are not pretending to be someone they are not (e.g., an authoritarian trying to apply principles of participatory management).

I also learned from these noneducation professionals that many of them think educators are caught up in a "participation cult." They tend to think that educators, as a group, seek communitarian approaches to management (euphemistically called collegiality), actively subvert efforts to reward meritorious performance, denigrate those who seek to hold and use power, and view their jobs as a "nine-month-a-year" route to retirement. These noneducators also believe that educators' on-the-job performance is mediocre at best and that the field of education has a severe lack of results-oriented leadership. I believe the spate of reports on the failures of our educational system and on the subsequent need to restructure schools have influenced their perceptions.

The purpose of my case study is to present a snapshot of a successful manager who supervises a large group of semi-autonomous professionals in a context that shares characteristics with the field of education. I am not

proposing a model manager to be cloned and marketed in American schools. In fact, I concur with Edward Pajak when he points out that the writings of Lawrence and Lorsch suggest this manager's behavior probably would not fit perfectly within the context of educational organizations. But I adamantly stand by my conclusion that helping young professionals to become successful, inspiring and relying on loyalty, building trust, manifesting an outgoing personality with a sense of humor, applying knowledge of one's field, creating incentives to perform, and maintaining excellent relationships with superiors are all management behaviors appropriate for school organizations.

In reading Carl Glickman's and Helen Hazi's responses, I am tempted to conclude that they do not perceive schooling as a business. Glickman says that "education is foremost a calling of service to people, not a revenue occupation." According to Hazi, the publication of this case study here "is the first appearance of an article that promises to show how business practices can shed light on educational practice and, more specifically, on supervisory practice. While reading this case study, I was once again reminded of the lure of comparing education to other professions, especially business."

Schooling, however, is a business. It is a not-for-profit service business within the public sector of our economy. In many ways, school districts have characteristics similar to other not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. Although school districts do not strive to be financially profitable, they still set financial goals to ensure that their expenses do not exceed their revenues in any given year. The service they provide is education. Education is achieved through a process called teaching. School districts' educational goals focus on helping children and young adults to grow within the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. School districts also have personnel problems to manage—hiring, firing, promotions, career development, and performance evaluations. I believe that schooling and for-profit businesses have more in common with each other than many may think.

Glickman states that "what we should be proving in education is not the cultivation of personal and institutional loyalty [which is done by the manager in the case study] but the cultivation of equality, collegiality, and interdependence of adults working collectively with each other." This expressed value for a communitarian culture within school organizations goes against much of what we know about human nature. Despite all the utopian rhetoric to the contrary, people within organizations are not, and never will be, equal (except in the eyes of the law). Collegiality deteriorates rapidly with ego involvement (almost always). Working interdependently creates significant frustrations and inefficiencies when there are weak links in the chain of interdependence (which happens often). Business managers know these things. So why are educators trying to model a system of collectivistic management that has severe inherent weaknesses?

Glickman also says that the case study "has interest, just as the story of any influential person has interest, but the value of [Duffy's] article is the

question it asks about what we in education should value." Glickman and Hazi focus their responses on some negative characteristics of the manager in the case study. Both have difficulty with his specific idiosyncracies, and by implication, they say that I am suggesting that educators should value and emulate these characteristics. I am not asking educators to behave exactly as this manager behaves. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Instead, I suggest that we should examine the general management principles underlying this manager's behavior: He helps his young professionals to become successful, he builds trust, he manifests an outgoing personality with a sense of humor, he applies knowledge of his business, he creates incentives to perform, and he maintains excellent relationships with his superiors. I ask, Would it be valuable to look beyond the specific idiosyncratic tendencies of this manager to examine the general principles of management behavior associated with his enormous success to determine whether any apply to school supervision? Further, I agree with Pajak's conclusion that "studying the behavior, personality, needs, and motives of one individual is not enough." If we are to answer Pajak's questions—"What kinds of supervision are most successful in different organizational contexts?" "What kinds of supervision are most successful in schools of different sizes and in schools facing different kinds of organizational environments?"—then we need to start somewhere. I am proposing that examining individual behavior is a logical starting point for conducting comparative studies of supervision.

Finally, Hazi draws a parallel between the manager in my case study to the infamous Attila the Hun. She describes the leadership skills of this barbarian and then concludes that "the world and supervision need fewer Attilas." I agree. But what the world of school supervision does need is more people with sophisticated leadership skills directed toward achieving positive and productive goals. We need leaders who are authentic and comfortable with themselves, no matter what their leadership style is. We need more risk takers—men and women who are courageous enough to take a stand on important issues regardless of the consequences. We need results-oriented leaders who can cut through the vague, uncertain language and practice of education to achieve important educational goals for the children and young adults in their schools. We need leaders who can resist the misguided, albeit well-intentioned, efforts of those who would change the governance of school organizations into collectivistic endeavors. The not-for-profit and for-profit organizations in our society provide examples of this kind of leadership. The manager in my case study is one.

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