

'Pure nectar – a distillation of management with passion. Not only a book for management but should be required reading for any sales executive.'

Dr Paul Mycock, Principle Consultant, Ampercom Ltd

THE LITTLE BOOK OF “BIG” MANAGEMENT WISDOM

**90 important quotes and
how to use them in business**

James McGrath

THE LITTLE
BOOK OF BIG
MANAGEMENT
WISDOM

QUOTATION 24

ROBERT TOWNSEND ON HOW
TO KEEP THE ORGANISATION
LEAN, FIT AND VITAL

Use this to help you decide when to expand the workforce.

Robert Townsend (1920–98) was an American businessman who is best known for turning Avis Rent a Car into the giant company it is today and for his number-one bestseller *Up the Organisation*, a book which, I believe, should be on every management course reading list in the world.

His often humorous asides, suggestions and exaggerations usually contain within them an essential truth, e.g.:

To keep an organisation young and fit, don't hire anyone until everyone is so overworked they'll be glad to see the newcomer and won't mind where they sit.

Robert Townsend

Townsend is not suggesting that you work people into the ground. However, he recognises that very often an organisation will create a post almost as soon as the workload starts to increase and there is insufficient work to keep the newcomer occupied, which can cause friction with other staff.

WHAT TO DO

- Recognise that people like to be busy at work and that a certain amount of pressure is good for both staff morale and productivity. When a team is busy they often pull together. A shared sense of purpose and pride in working hard unites and motivates them. So don't jump in with new staff too soon.
- Look for the signs that people are genuinely overworked rather than just busy. Such signs include: increased sickness and staff turnover, missed deadlines, short tempers and arguments between staff members and staff and managers.
- The trick is to react to the increased workload just before the problems listed above occur. This is not easy. It's the type of

judgement call that relies on your knowledge of the staff and business conditions. Is it just a temporary increase in work or is it here to stay? If a hard-working member of staff who seldom complains is wilting and moaning about workloads, you need to respond to what is happening. Rely on your tacit knowledge to make the call.

- Tacit knowledge, or what Professor John Adair calls deep knowledge, resides in your subconscious but informs your thinking and actions on a daily basis without you being aware of it. This unconscious knowledge is the sum total of all you know about your job, the organisation and the people who work in it. The more information you can collect, the more useful this knowledge will be to you. Therefore, use meetings, management by walking about, conversations at the coffee machine or over lunch and every other interaction you have with staff, customers, suppliers and investors to add to your store of knowledge.
- Record briefly any interesting comments, events, trends, problems, opportunities, threats or juicy gossip in your learning journal (see How to get the most out of this book).
- All of the above information will compost down in your subconscious and form linkages and connections in your brain which will enrich your tacit knowledge. When faced with a problem, this knowledge will resurface and provide you with an answer.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- When was the last time I checked that everyone in my team was fully employed?
- Is there anyone in my team who is overworked? Do I need to redistribute work?

QUOTATION 25

WARREN BUFFET ON WHY INTEGRITY TRUMPS INTELLIGENCE AND ENERGY WHEN APPOINTING PEOPLE (TOP TEN ENTRY)

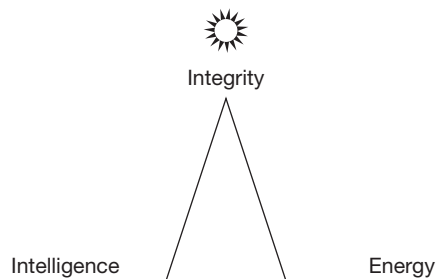
Use this to remind you of the key characteristics you should be looking for when you appoint or promote staff.

Warren Buffet (b. 1930), the world's leading investment manager, likes to keep things simple: e.g. his investment strategy is to buy good stocks and hold them for a long time. He has applied the same simplicity to the appointment of staff and suggests that there are three things you should look for when recruiting people:

Somebody once said that in looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence and energy. And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you. You think about it; it's true. If you hire somebody without integrity, you really [do] want them to be dumb and lazy.

Warren Buffet

Integrity is the key factor for Buffet. If a person lacks integrity, they are a danger to the organisation. Indeed, much of the 2008 financial meltdown can be blamed on a lack of integrity among highly intelligent and well-motivated bankers.



WHAT TO DO

- Whenever possible, promote from within. Such a policy creates staff loyalty and you are less likely to appoint a dud because you (should) know the person's strengths and weaknesses. Only if you need new blood or a skill set not found in your organisation should you consider going outside.
- At the interview concentrate on identifying which applicant/s demonstrate integrity, intelligence and energy. If you can spot those, then any shortfalls in skills can be taught.
- Integrity/character is the hardest trait to confirm. Look at how the person presents themselves. Are they confident without being arrogant? Do they recognise that they don't have all the answers? Do they take pride in their work and achievements? If they do, they won't want to let themselves and, by implication, you down. Do they talk about what they and their team have achieved or is it all about them? Ask them about any ethical dilemma that they faced in the past and how they dealt with it. The problem doesn't have to be work-related. If they can't think of an example, it's very likely that they have few, if any, guiding principles.
- Intelligence is fairly easy to identify. Obviously, start by looking at the person's educational attainments. However, their interaction with you or the interview panel will tell you more than any certificate. Do their answers show a level of analysis? Do they try to contextualise their responses in terms of your organisation? Can they see the bigger picture and how their work will fit into the whole? Are they inquisitive and interested in your operation? Do they possess common sense or are their ideas unworkable in the real world?
- Energy and enthusiasm is easy to spot. Simply ask yourself, 'Do I feel energised speaking to this person?' If the answer is 'yes', then other people are likely to be similarly enthused by the applicant.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What's the first thing I look for when appointing or promoting people?
- How successful has my current approach to recruitment and promotion been?

QUOTATION 26

MARCUS BUCKINGHAM ON
MANAGERS AND THE GOLDEN
RULE

Use this as the basis of your relationship with staff and colleagues.

The Golden Rule suggests that you should treat people as you would like to be treated. Marcus Buckingham (b. 1966), management writer, argues that to be effective, managers should not always treat staff as they would like to be treated. He suggests that:

The best managers break the Golden Rule every day [as the rule] presupposes that everyone breathes the same psychological oxygen as you [the manager]. For example, if you are competitive, everyone must be similarly competitive. If you like to be praised in public, everyone else must, too.

Marcus Buckingham

The fact that people differ is obviously true. Not everyone will share their manager's views and attitudes about work. Nor should they. We all have our own priorities, hopes and dreams and these may have very little to do with our work. But the Golden Rule is not concerned with the tactical issues outlined by Buckingham. It deals with the strategic relationship that should exist between all people, a relationship based on mutual respect and that I think most people want but few ever find at work, whatever their level in the organisation.

WHAT TO DO

- As suggested by Immanuel Kant, you should always remember that individuals are ends in themselves. Do not use them as a means of achieving your ends, especially if they are harmed in the process.
- Accept that every person deserves a level of unconditional respect, simply because they are a human being. You may not like them. You may not agree with them, but they are fellow human beings and should be treated as such.
- When considering people for promotion or appointment, the only acceptable form of discrimination is who's best qualified/suited for the job.

- Don't exploit staff, especially those who are willing to work ridiculous hours to get the job done without extra pay. Either reallocate some of their work or ensure that their pay/status reflects their efforts.
- Never steal ideas from staff and claim them as your own.
- Ensure that people's achievements are recognised in an appropriate way.
- Don't indulge in mushroom management (keeping staff in the dark and regularly shovelling manure on them). Unless information is genuinely sensitive, keep staff informed of any and all events that affect them.
- Don't treat staff as idiots. They may not be as smart or well-educated as you, but they can see through management bullshit, shams and contrived and manipulative presentations and speeches from a thousand metres.
- Deal with people as individuals who have a life outside of work. Learn about their interests and passions, partner and children and what their hopes and ambitions are.
- Be willing to listen to staff's ideas, concerns and worries, and take action if appropriate. Often, staff recognise that you can do nothing about the issue they have raised with you. They just want to express their feeling and have you acknowledge how they feel.
- If you treat people as intelligent adults, they will respond accordingly.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How much do I know about the people who work for me?
- Do I view staff as people or just another resource which I have to get the most out of?