Black managers in a white world : Strategy formulation

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This article takes a look not only at the strategies which could be employed towards the solution of the problems faced by both the black manager and his employing organization, but also at the possibility of providing a tentative formula for decisions relating to the amount of time, money and effort which should be expended on efforts to ameliorate problems of this kind. It is argued that attempts to successfully introduce black managers into an erstwhile 'white' world will require a combined socio-economic method of decision-making. In other words, it would appear that, in the majority of organizations which are attempting to integrate black managers into their managerial structures, it is necessary to devote resources to the partial resolution of conflict whilst at the same time not detracting from goal achievement aims. It is further argued that short-run resource allocation with regard to social versus economic ends should be based on a comparison of the relative equilibrium or growth conditions in the economic and social systems within the organization. In the long-run, a second principle — which involves working towards a reduction of the conflict between efficiency and psychological well-being and which generally involves the adaptation of the social system to the requirements of efficiency — has also to be introduced. With respect to the black manager in a white world, a number of strategies relating to manpower planning, the identification of management potential and training needs, the job itself, education and training, the organization and the total environment are put forward. All of these strategies could assist in alleviating the strains and pressures faced by both the black manager and the employing organization whilst at the same time leading in the direction of greater efficiency and possibly increased profitability.
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Hierdie artikel kyk nie net na die strategieë wat aangewend kan word om 'n oplossing te vind vir die probleme wat beide die swart bestuurder en sy diensgewende organisasie ondervind nie, maar ook na die moontlikheid vir die verskaffing van 'n tentatiewe formule vir besluite rakende die hoeveelheid tyd, geld en pogings wat aangewend behoort te word om diesulke probleme te verlig. Daar word beweer dat pogings om swart bestuurders suksesvol aan 'n eens 'wit' wêreld voor te stel 'n gekombineerde sosio-ekonomiese metode van besluitneming benodig sal word. Met ander woorde, dit wil voorkom of in die meerderheid van organisasies wat poog om swart bestuurders in hulle bestuurstruktuur te integreer, dit nodig is om hulpbronne toe te sê aan die gedeeltelike oplossing van konflik maar terselfdertyd nie afbreuk doen aan doelbereikingsdoelwitte nie. Daar word verder beweer dat korttermyn hulpbrontoekenning met betrekking tot sosiale versus ekonomiese uiteindes op 'n vergelyking van die relatiewe ekwilibrium of groeitoestande in die ekonomiese en sosiale sisteme binne die organisasie gebaseer behoort te wees. Op die lange duur moet 'n tweede beginsel — wat werk na 'n vermindering van die konflik tussen doeltreffendheid en sielkundige welstand en wat gewoonlik die aanpassing van die sosiale sisteem met die vereistes van doeltreffendheid verg — ook ingestel word. Betreffende die swart bestuurder in 'n wit wêreld word 'n aantal strategieë rakende mannekragbeplanning, die identifisering van bestuurspotensiaal en opleidingsbehoeftes, die werk self, opvoeding en opleiding, die organisasie en die totale omgewing voorgestel. Al hierdie strategieë kan bydra tot die verligting van stremminge en druk wat deur beide die swart bestuurder en die diensgewende organisasie ondervind word terwyl dit terselfdertyd in die rigting van groter doeltreffendheid en moontlike verhoogde winsgewendheid kan lei.
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Introduction

Much of the research undertaken in both the USA and South Africa on the problems faced by black managers employed by essentially 'white' organizations has tended to attribute an almost pervasive underperformance amongst black managers to cultural factors, a lack of educational qualifications and racial discrimination (see Hofmeyr, 1981a). Research undertaken recently at the School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa (Hofmeyr, 1982; Human, 1982) has substantiated the evidence relating to the obviously disadvantaged position of the black South African manager in terms of these three sets of factors whilst at the same time highlighting the experiences and needs of the black manager within the essentially 'white' organization. For example, Human's (1982) profile of the black manager highlights his need for adequate and meaningful relationships in the work situation; his need for feedback and the accessibility of superiors; his need for respect, appreciation and encouragement; his need to know where he stands and his need for support. These needs, it was discovered through further qualitative research, arise as much from the ambiguities, inconsistencies and conflicts with which the black manager is faced as from cultural and educational discrepancies and racial discrimination. The black manager is a 'marginal man' who must function in a series of diverse, conflicting and often ambiguous environments and whose performance in the work situation reflects the role conflict and role ambiguity with which he is faced (Human, 1981a; Human, 1981b; see also Jones, 1973 on the USA). Thus, apart from solutions to problems associated with blatant cultural differences, apart from those to problems associated with discrimination and apart from those to problems associated with an educational system grossly inferior to that of Whites, solutions also have to be found for the problems of marginality experienced by the black manager. Having obtained consensus on this point, decisions then have to be made with respect to:

(a) *how* the problems faced by the black manager and *how* the problems experienced by the employing organization are to be tackled; and

(b) *how much time, money and effort* are going to be invested in efforts to ameliorate the problems with which both the black manager and the employing organization are faced.

This paper takes a brief look at both of these questions.

The decision-making process

Within many organizations, economic rationality has often constituted the sole core of the decision-making process. These

organizations have felt that the only way to make decisions is to evaluate ends in terms of alternative costs and to allocate means in terms of marginal (or comparative) utility. The assumption is made that the ultimate objective of all decisions and actions must be the maximization of some measurable entity. The principles and rules of this viewpoint have, over the years, not only been developed by various economists and justified by certain utilitarian philosophers but also constituted the foundations of innumerable policy proposals and business strategies (Diesing, 1955: 18).

In recent years, the limitations of economic rationality have become increasingly more apparent and a wider perspective on the general nature of decision-making has been proffered (see, for example, Diesing, 1955; 1958; 1962). Indeed, many organizations have, probably, on many occasions, integrated economic and social decision-making processes but on an unconscious or *ad hoc* basis. It is submitted, however, that, in order to begin to solve the problems faced by the black manager in a white world:

(i) a blend of both economic and social rationality has to be employed, the blend varying according to the current profitability and market position of the organization; and

(ii) the process of decision-making and the subsequent implementation of strategy have always to be both conscious and 'rational' (in the broadest sense of the term).

Let us briefly follow this argument through:

'Economic decisions attempt to maximize the achievement of given ends (goals, desires, interests, needs) through the careful use of available means, in a situation where not all ends can be fully achieved. The means can be used in a number of alternative ways, and decision consists of a selection of one of these alternatives'(Diesing, 1958: 1).

According to Diesing (1958: 1), a decision is reached by:

(a) Evaluation of what the probable effects of each alternative on the ends are going to be.

(b) Estimation of the degree of probability of each effect.

(c) Estimation and comparison of the value of each effect on a single scale (such as dollars).

(d) Choice of the alternative which has the greatest probability of producing the greatest value.

This type of decision is a *'maximizing'* decision in the sense that it consists of finding the alternative which will prove itself as possessing the maximum value (or minimum loss) according to a chosen scale.

Although many complex variations in economic decision-making exist, all of these variations involve attempts to maximize the achievement of predetermined goals. Social decisions, on the other hand, attempt to adapt personalities and/or social relations in the direction of greater essential harmony and stability (Diesing, 1958: 2). According to Diesing (1958: 2), this type of decision is reached by:

(a) Definition of a reasonably independent problem area and discovery of the conflicts that exist in it as well as the factors responsible for their maintenance.

(b) Estimation of the changes that are possible in each problematic factor, together with the degree of strain such changes would bring.

(c) Discovery of strain-reducing supports for each change.

(d) Prediction of future conflicts, strains and stresses which are either likely to accompany each direction of change or which will occur irrespective of the change.

(e) The search for a change at a manageable level of strain which will reduce conflict, increase flexibility or prepare for future stresses (Diesing, 1955; Diesing, 1958).

This type of decision is essentially *'integrative'* inasmuch as it frequently leads to some sort of integration. As in the case of maximizing decisions, many complex variations exist.

From this extremely brief but hopefully not too simplistic summary, it can be seen that integrative and maximizing decisions are opposites in several ways:——

(a) A maximizing decision-process begins with given ends which are never questioned and which an attempt is made to achieve; an integrative process regards given ends as pointers to hidden beliefs, fears, strains, values and the like. Such ends may not necessarily be satisfied in the course of being changed.

(b) In a maximizing decision, ends are treated as quantifiable (measurable), comparable entities; in an integrative decision, factors are taken in contexts that make each factor a unique set of relations, not readily subject to measurement or comparison. In an integrative decision, in other words, ends are not 'measurable' in terms of some basic unit of measurement but are, rather, situational; for example, a specific reduction in a certain type of tension in a specific context at a given time.

Although maximizing and integrative methods are, in many ways, opposites, and although some situations may demand one sort of method as opposed to the other, for complex practical situations a combined method is often required. Indeed, according to Diesing (1958: 6):

'A basically integrative method is called for if a problem is basically one of disorganization and conflict, while supplementary maximizing considerations are necessary if the solution to a disorganization problem requires the use of scarce resources. A basically maximizing method is called for if a problem is basically goal-oriented, while supplementary integrative considerations are necessary if incidental elements of disorganization or potential disorganization are also involved. A blend of both methods is called for if a problem includes both important goals and important elements of internal conflict.'

For Diesing (1958), questions of individual and group conflict are difficult to deal with by a maximizing method in view of the fact that tension-reduction and the like are not definite, homogeneous entities and cannot be rationally compared with 'economic' goals. When such questions occur in an otherwise economic problem, a combined socio-economic method of making decisions is required.

Thus, following Diesing (1955; 1958; 1962), it would appear that, in order to confront the problems faced by the black manager in a white world, *a conscious,* combined socio-economic method of making decisions is a prerequisite. But what does this method entail? And why not employ a basically maximizing method with supplementary integrative considerations? After all, the primary goal of business organizations in capitalist society is profit; so why place such an emphasis on harmony and stability?

To answer the last question first, a basically maximizing method with supplementary integrative considerations is relevant only to situations in which a problem is basically goal-oriented and any (potential) disorganization is merely incidental. Integrative aspects are of minor importance and pose no real threat to the effectiveness of either the organization or

of the individual. However, when a problem contains both important valid goals and important elements of (potential) disorganization, a more complex method is necessary. In a country such as South Africa, which faces not only acute shortages of skilled manpower but also a political and economic need for racial integration and organizational stability, disorganization and instability in human relations within organizations would appear to constitute rather more than problems of an incidental nature. Moreover, the research of both Hofmeyr (1982) and Human (1981a; 1981b; 1982) indicates the extent to which the introduction of black managers into essentially white organizations creates problems of both an individual and collective nature; the problems confronted by both the black manager and his employing organization are extremely real and potentially disruptive. Thus, it would appear that, in the majority of organizations which are attempting to integrate black managers into their managerial structures, it is necessary to devote resources to the partial resolution of conflict whilst at the same time not detracting from goal-achievement aims. When the effectiveness of the individual, the organization (and possibly also the country) are at stake, then a combined socio-economic method of making decisions would appear to be a necessity.

But what does this method entail?

In one form or another, the conflict between integration and efficiency occurs in all organizations, thus making a comparison between the two, in terms of importance, necessary. Thus, the first step is to find a common element that will serve as a unit of comparison or measurement. That element cannot be utility, or money, or preference, as in economic rationality, because none of these economic standards can be applied to integrative problems. Instead, a common element has to be found at a rather more abstract level — namely, in the fact that both social and economic systems constitute 'systems of equilibrium' (Diesing, 1958: 15).

'That is, both types of system will, in favorable circumstances, maintain a steady state by counteracting random forces of change, either through expulsion, or by neutralization with opposing forces, or by assimilation, or by a walling-off process. Further, if circumstances make preservation of equilibrium impossible, both types of system will change in a cyclical or spiral fashion. In unfavorable circumstances, this will be a vicious circle moving toward degeneration, shrinking, simplification, and ultimately to destruction; in favorable circumstances, it will be a "virtuous" or "benevolent" circle of growth, expansion, increased power and complexity. All these terms can be applied in analogous fashion to both economic and social systems', (Diesing, 1958, 15).

In systems of social relations, growth consists of increased understanding, increased communication, increased trust, security, toleration and the like. Since each of these factors leads to the others, a self-sustaining positive growth spiral is produced. Equilibrium occurs when the forces of conflict and hostility are balanced by the positive forces of understanding and acceptance whilst a vicious spiral downwards consists of increased and increasing misunderstanding, fear and intolerance within social systems and increased neurosis or psychosis amongst individuals. An equilibrium is, moreover, never static although the degree of stability or tension within it may vary greatly from situation to situation.

An economic system can be said to be in equilibrium when its product is just sufficient to maintain and replace factors of production. Economic growth, on the other hand, involves capital formation which is employed to finance technical improvements, leading to greater efficiency and hence to greater profit and capital formation and so on. Economic decline is characterized by a spiral in the opposite direction; capital loss leads to technological stagnation and to the gradual disappearance of productive factors (Diesing, 1958: 15-16).

Thus, both economic and social systems display equilibrium characteristics which in turn implies that resources *differ immensely in importance* in different states of the sytem. For example, a system in equilibrium has the capacity to lose or absorb considerable resources without any noticeable change; for a system which is close to the critical boundaries of equilibrium, on the other hand, a comparatively small additional loss will cause a vicious spiral downwards whilst a relatively small gain will initiate a positive growth spiral. A system in decline will require immense resources over a long period of time if equilibrium is to be re-established whereas a system in a growth spiral can, up to a critical point, give resources away. Such resources generally constitute economic resources in the case of economic systems and socio-psychological resources in the case of social systems (Diesing, 1958: 16).

Resource allocation should be based on a comparison of the relative equilibrium or growth conditions in economic and social systems. As Diesing (1958: 16) states:

'The variation in importance of resources in different states of a system provides the key to problems of resource allotment. If either system is near one of the two critical points, it should be allotted sufficient resources, both economic and noneconomic, to move it out of danger or to produce a shift to the next higher state of the system. But if a system is in equilibrium or in decline, it should either be allotted massive resources over a long period of time, so that a shift to the next higher state can be stabilized, or it should receive no outside resources at all. A small short-run allocation would simply be wasted. Conversely, a system that is growing can spare considerable resources for an indefinite period of time, and a system in equilibrium can yield resources for a shorter time; but a system that is near a critical point cannot spare any resources at all'.

Thus, an organization that is making a reasonable profit and is not faced with foreseeable economic difficulties can spare resources, or postpone increases in efficiency, for a reasonable time. If these spare resources are sufficient to establish an equilibrium in a problematic social system, they should be allocated; if not, some other solution has to be sought. Diesing (1958) goes so far as to say that an organization that is just maintaining a sufficient operating margin should not sacrifice efficiency for social relations aspects at all.

For Diesing (1958), this method of resource allocation applies not only to the broad, fundamental decisions of the strategy formulation process but also to more specific details. After a decision concerning the general direction of resource allocation has been taken, particular points of strain — both economic and social — have to be eradicated and relieved.

However, the principle of basing resource allocation decisions on comparative equilibrium conditions can only settle short-run allocation questions. For long-run development, a second principle has to be introduced. This principle involves working towards a reduction of the conflict between efficiency and mental health requirements and generally involves the

adaptation of the social system to the requirements of efficiency (Diesing, 1958: 17). With respect to the black manager in a white world, this may involve strategies to reduce marginality, bridging training and language tuition — to name but some of the suggestions mentioned in greater detail below.

Strategy formulation

Now, what about the organization which is making a profit but is experiencing not only acute shortages of skilled manpower but also problems — both individual and collective — with those black managers it has appointed? This organization can spare resources to establish equilibrium in its social system and has isolated the main conflicts which exist within the organization as well as the factors responsible for the maintenance of such factors. For example, the organization may feel that its major problem with regard to a deteriorating social system concerns not only the problems individual black managers are facing (because of a relative lack of confidence within the business world) but also problems with some white managers who feel that their jobs are threatened. This organization is looking for changes in each problematic factor together with strain-reducing supports for each change; it is, moreover, looking for manageable changes in the form of development strategies which will reduce conflict, increase flexibility and prepare for future stress. What options are open to it and what kind of success can it expect?

Although needs will vary from organization to organization and although no single programme for integrative decision-making with regard to black managers can be neatly defined, various strategies are available and can be employed as and where appropriate. Some of these strategies are discussed below:

Manpower planning

Despite manpower and economic indicators which repeatedly stress the critical shortage of skilled and management personnel, very few black employees are moving into senior positions in companies and very few will be promoted in the future, unless companies deliberately establish targets and plans for black advancement. Hofmeyr (1982) suggests that an appropriate basis for determining these targets and plans is the manpower planning framework: the company's strategic plans are translated into a forecast of the employees needed in each job category in the future; this demand forecast is compared with the likely supply of manpower, taking into account likely transfers, promotions, and wastage; management is then in a position to decide how many of the vacancies revealed by the gap between future demand and supply should be filled with black personnel. Hofmeyr (1982) argues that without a formal plan for the appointment of black employees to senior posts, advancement of black managers would not take place to any significant extent.

Identification of management potential

Once it has been established how many management positions should be occupied by black employees in the future, candidates should be identified by means of assessment centres, interviews and the like so that career and development programmes can be formulated. Candidates can either be selected from within the company or be recruited.

Identification of training needs

One of the major tasks Hofmeyr (1982) set himself in his research concerned the identification of training needs. A sample of managers and potential black managers evaluated the relative importance of a list of managerial dimensions; they also rated the current performance of the potential managers — and these two sets of ratings, importance and performance, were combined to establish the most important training needs. The effects on the ratings of manager and subordinate variables such as age, function, and educational level were measured to explain and refine the findings. The most important general training needs were clearly established to be the 'management functions' of decision-making, planning, organizing, problem-solving, and control. The findings resulting from a quantitative study were employed by Hofmeyr (1982) as a basis for discussions with a sample of black managers who provided some reasons for the findings and made recommendations for developing potential black managers in these areas.

Hofmeyr (1982) suggests that while his findings provide useful information in themselves and could form the basis for management training programmes for potential black managers, individual development and advancement programmes should be based on the identification of individual training needs. For example, managers and their subordinates could assess the current performance of the subordinate against a list of job dimensions which are necessary for effective performance. This approach was evaluated by Hofmeyr (1982) who claims that if a manager and his subordinate follow the same process, then meaningful training needs should be identified. The need for joint consultation and a commitment to development plans was also stressed.

The job

The research of Hofmeyr (1982) highlights the fact that if black employees are to be developed and promoted into management positions, it is essential that, firstly, their jobs be clearly defined and, secondly, they be given jobs and assignments which allow them to develop the managerial competencies. From the 'marginal' position of the black employee in the business world (Human, 1981a; 1981b) to the overwhelming consensus amongst the black managers that potential black managers are not given the opportunity to develop management skills (Hofmeyr, 1982), the point has been made repeatedly that management development for senior black employees should start with the work itself. As part of this strategy, Hofmeyr (1982) recommends that the black managerial advancement be made part of the organizational manpower plan. Such a plan would give focus to the company's advancement plans and would enable career paths and progress targets to be drawn up.

Numerous writers, for example Humble (1968), Drucker (1974) and Schutte (1981), have emphasized the need for job descriptions, job objectives, and standards of performance. These clarify for the individual: what is expected from him; the limits of his authority and responsibility; and how his performance will be measured. Humble (1968) suggests a process of establishing the objectives for a job by:

(a) determining what the purpose of the job is;
(b) identifying the functions of the job;
(c) deciding what the main functions of the job are;
(d) comparing the present situation with the desired situation in each of the main functions to determine in which areas specific objectives for improvement should be set;
(e) setting standards of performance to ensure that performance in the other functions is maintained;
(f) ensuring that a process of progress review and performance appraisal takes place to monitor progress and assess the

employee's strengths and weaknesses on a regular basis.

Whatever process is preferred, it would appear that management development has to start with the definition of the employee's job. If the potential manager is to plan, make decisions, or solve problems, then he must know what his objectives are, what his responsibilities are and what the limits of his authority are. These issues are particularly important in the case of the black employee because, firstly, he is likely to be somewhat less sure of himself than his white counterpart and, secondly, informal communication on performance and job requirements is less likely to take place between a white manager and a black subordinate than would be the case if both parties were white. It goes without saying that as far as possible the job which is being defined for the potential black manager should be as meaningful as possible. Fernandez (1975), for example, describes job enrichment as one of the key elements in an effective advancement programme.

All of the black managers interviewed by Hofmeyr (1982) emphasized the fact that Blacks, generally, are not exposed to situations in which they are required to carry out the management functions. One black manager said simply that 'what is lacking is the exposure that translates itself into management skills; planning, organizing, and controlling can only be learned on the job'. Similarly, another manager expressed the view that 'if you don't know what you are supposed to do, if your responsibilities are not clear, it is impossible to make decisions or develop the other management skills'. A pessimistic view was that 'most Blacks don't have "real jobs" because functions like planning and decision-making are typically reserved for whites. Blacks are usually given a portion of an assignment, not a complete job; bosses tend to delegate "little" jobs'.

In conjunction with the clarification of the job and its requirements and appropriate training, managers who are committed to developing their subordinates should ensure that the job allows the employee to gain the practice and experience which is necessary to develop those skills which have been identified as training needs. It is worth noting that the 'management functions' which were identified by Hofmeyr (1982) as the most important training needs comprise cognitive skills which are somewhat easier to learn and develop than, say, qualities such as independence, flexibility, or risk-taking propensity. Furthermore, the development strategy being recommended here, namely job clarification and exposure to meaningful work, seems to be particularly relevant to the development of these 'practical' skills.

A logical outcome of the process which has been recommended above is an evaluation of progress and performance. Without this, it is unlikely that significant improvements will be made. Merely practising a new skill does not guarantee that learning will take place. Byham (1977: 3) comments that,

> 'Without feedback relative to the success or quality of performance, a person cannot improve . . . The supervisor starts out doing a poor job and keeps on repeating the mistakes, because no-one tells him or her anything differently.'

Education and training

Relevant experience has to be supplemented with appropriate education and training. Whereas education in the context of management development refers to the attempts to broaden an individual intellectually with little attention to immediate job application of the programme content, training involves the systematic improvement of the specific skills, knowledge,

or attitudes needed by an individual to do his current job.

The disadvantages experienced by most Blacks in terms of their education are many. A black manager who was interviewed commented that, in his opinion, the damage done by the black education system could never be recouped. Numerous South African companies have attempted to deal directly with the problems relating from the inadequate or insufficient education received by their black employees. One approach has been to employ competent teachers to organize and offer education to employees after hours, thus affording them a 'second chance' to obtain a Standard 8 or matriculation certificate. In view of the emphasis placed on education by black people, and the influence which this education can have on an employee's opportunities, quality of life, and job competence, these efforts should be encouraged. However, while such an approach may support the general development of employees, it cannot be described as a specific, management development strategy.

Another approach which has been adopted by some South African companies has been to design so-called 'bridging courses' to close the gap between the education received and some of the basic demands of the employee's job. While undoubtedly there may be some merit in these programmes, or aspects of them, it should be noted that some of the black managers who were interviewed by Hofmeyr (1982) expressed doubts about their role in black advancement. The view of one manager was that the bridging courses and other 'Blacks only' programmes encourage what he referred to as a 'negative self-fulfilling prophecy'; if potential black managers were consistently told that they were 'disadvantaged' and needed 'special training', they would begin to accept this and perform less well than they might. Another manager expressed the opinion that bridging courses can become an end in themselves if companies concentrate on the courses and not on developing black employees through meaningful responsibility and job experience. This was particularly the case if the bridging programme took place over, say, a few months prior to the employee taking up his job, and was not integrated into the performance of his job. Yet another manager warned of the frustration which may result from such a programme which was likely to be 'all theory and no practice'.

In addition to the experience and on-the-job opportunities which should be provided for potential managers, training which supplements what is being learned on the job should also be provided. In the first place, any job knowledge which is needed for the employee to carry out the technical aspects of his work must be provided. (Although *job knowledge* was identified as the most important managerial dimension, most potential black managers in Hofmeyr's, 1982, study rated well on this attribute and it was therefore not identified as an important training need.) Indeed, the 'management functions' were highlighted as the most important training needs. With regard to these, Hofmeyr (1982) makes the following recommendations:

(a) training in the management functions should be designed to support the employee's on-the-job experience in these functions;

(b) to facilitate a transfer of learning from the training environment to the work situation, training should be integrated with on-the-job application;

(c) as far as possible, training should be experiential in nature;

(d) an eclectic approach to the use of different training approaches should be encouraged: Hofmeyr (1982) refers to the use of case studies, criterion-referenced instruction and

role-plays as well as to other traditional methods of training.

In addition to training in the management skills, attention also needs to be paid to the adjustment of the black employee to the world of work, his attitude towards business and success in that environment, and the attitudes of his white colleagues and superiors towards him. The movement of black people from rural to urban areas and the difficulties experienced in adapting to, and feeling comfortable in, the business world have been discussed elsewhere (see for example, Human, 1981a). Numerous other writers have dealt with the problems of acculturation: Burack, Staszak, and Pati (1972:269), for example, describe the process as 'a major challenge which is not readily accomplished . . .'.

Clearly, both skills and attitudes need to be addressed. Where training can be used to assist in the adjustment of employees to their work and the norms which dominate business, it should be encouraged. At the same time, it should complement the other activities suggested here for the development of potential black managers: activities which range from manpower planning, to management training, to support which has to be given by the organization. These activities are partly aimed at upgrading competence, but in themselves also aim to bring about changes in the attitudes of employees and employers towards black advancement.

The organization

The all-important relationship between the potential manager and his superior has been referred to briefly above. The black managers who were interviewed by Hofmeyr (1982) and Human (1981b; 1982) stressed that potential managers need encouragement and support if they are to develop. A number of these managers noted that the traditional relationship between white manager and black subordinate was one of paternalism. One manager commented that:

> 'There is a lot of paternalism . . . you can feel it. You get the impression that your manager is not talking openly to you and that he is saying to himself, "I must not hurt this person".'

With the emphasis which has been placed on opportunities and experience as the major developmental processes, it is clear that, to the extent that these elements do not exist, potential black manager development and advancement are not likely to take place. So how can this problem be handled?

A black training manager, who was interviewed by Hofmeyr (1982), commented that he always insists that black and white employees are trained together because this allows them to mix with, and learn about, each other in addition to what is learned in the training itself. Furthermore, he had arranged 'training' sessions to deliberately address the issues which were causing barriers and problems between white and black employees so that these could be resolved. As the training manager, he had to ensure a climate and structure during these sessions which would encourage candour and objectivity. His experience had been that integrated training and sessions designed to deal with black/white barriers had led to greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each other and a discovery on the part of black participants that they were 'just as good as anyone else'.

Clawson (1980), in his attempt to identify the characteristics of an effective coach, draws attention to the fact that the relationship between many white managers and their black subordinates is unlikely to contain a 'coaching' component. He has suggested training programmes designed to 'teach' managers

how to be good coaches. In addition to the skills training which Clawson includes in his training, the issue of black-white attitudes and understanding of each other would also have to be addressed in a South African programme. Clawson's (1982) training covers the following topics:
(a) on-the-job training in corporate life today;
(b) coaching: a 'macro-view' of on-the-job training
  (i) coaching defined,
  (ii) learning implications in coaching;
(c) understanding the adult learning process: the critical factor for any manager who intends to coach his people;
(d) development of the coaching model
  (i) assessing,
  (ii) planning,
  (iii) interviewing;
(e) problem-centred cases in coaching.

Some companies have adopted a 'mentor system' whereby selected black employees have been assigned to a 'mentor' whose role it is to assist in the development of the employee and, in particular, his integration into the non-formal systems and structure in the company. Specific functions outlined for mentors in one company (Reese, 1978) included the following:
(a) establish a programme of projects to facilitate the employees' interaction in and understanding of the company;
(b) establish a relationship with the employee whereby he has regular discussions with his mentor;
(c) establish a procedure within the mentor's department (or at least an attitude in the mentor's department) which will facilitate the lowering of any tensions and stimulate the integration of the employee into the department;
(d) develop, together with the personnel department, procedures which will monitor the employee's progress in terms of his performance, motivation, and morale.

The recommendation made earlier that manager and subordinate define the potential manager's job, identify his training needs, and review his progress, improves the understanding which exists between the two individuals. This structure provides a framework for regular discussion of performance and progress.

The total environment

The environment in which the black employee lives and works will have an impact on his attitudes and behaviour in the workplace. An attitude may be seen as a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable way to objects, persons or concepts. Based upon his attitudes towards something, a person is predisposed to behave in a particular way. Attitudes are acquired from parents, teachers and other people who play an important part in a person's life. Thus attitudes are learned: an individual acquires attitudes through experience and interaction with the world around him (Robbins, 1979).

Some research into the attitudes of black employees towards work, for example, research undertaken by Bhagat (1979), suggests that, in general, American blacks do not identify closely with the western work ethic. Andrisani (1976) found that young and middle-aged black men in America were consistently less 'internal' than whites in their outlook; they perceived little payoff for initiative as they felt that events and performance were determined largely by events outside of their control. In South Africa, Templer (1980) argues that, amongst black employees in general, there is evidence of a lower level of identification than white employees with the values of the traditional work ethic. He believes that 'this non-identification with the work

ethic means that black employees are unable to perform as well as their white colleagues, or to respond to challenging jobs' (1980: 3). To the extent that these attitudes and beliefs exist amongst potential black managers, there may be a lack of commitment towards advancement and management development.

In Hofmeyr's (1982) interviews with senior black employees, he found a considerable degree of commitment and motivation towards success and achievement in management. However, in South Africa, there is a fundamental difference in the experience of whites and blacks and in the opportunities available to them, and these differences will, to a greater or lesser extent, influence the black employee's attitude towards his work. One of the black managers referred to 'a need for consistency in the total environment of a manager'. The 'total environment' included the legal environment, the social environment and the political environment, and he argued that for the black person there was an inconsistency and uncertainty associated with each of these environments which would always prevent him from becoming part of the 'white man's world'. His view was that until there was a greater measure of consistency, black management development would be severely hampered (see also Human, 1981a; 1981b; and 1982).

One black manager commented on a need to 'prepare the environment' for black advancement. Management should talk to the people who would be dealing with the black management candidates and advise them as to the rationale behind, and programmes for, black advancement. This manager felt there was not enough communication in companies about what their plans and activities were in terms of black manager development. He also suggested that management should communicate to other companies what they were doing to develop managers and, in particular, what success they were having. Through these measures, companies would create a healthier climate for black advancement, both in their own organization and in the business community in general.

A number of black managers referred to the restrictions placed on blacks both in the past and at present which prevented a 'free enterprise system': they are not free to live and work where they please, to establish businesses where they see opportunities, or to obtain the same benefits and advantages as whites in business. These factors will continue to serve as barriers to the full incorporation of Blacks into the business system and will affect, directly or indirectly, their performance and development (see also Human, 1981a; 1981b; 1982).

All of these points relating to the social, political and economic environment in which the black South African manager must function lend especial support to Human's (1981a; 1981b) findings with regard to the marginal position of the black manager within a white world. Essentially, Human (1981a; 1981b) argues that the black South African manager is expected to function in possibly three different worlds. Firstly, he is expected to function in the world of the black township and black urban culture. Secondly, he is expected to function as a 'Non-White' in apartheid society. Thirdly, he has to contend with the work situation where he may be expected to function as an equal with his white colleagues. As the black manager's position in the work situation (where he is regarded as an equal of his white colleague) is inconsistent with his position in apartheid society, there is small wonder that he is confused and that his performance in the work situation may suffer as a result. Indeed, in view of the inconsistencies, conflicts and ambiguities thrown up by involvement in these three diverse and conflicting environments, it is hardly surprising that all of the black managers interviewed by Human (1981a; 1981b)

described what could be called an inner strain or malaise with respect to their work situation. Many said that in the work situation, they feel as though they 'do not belong'. The general feeling was that black managers are living a schizophrenic existence: they are living in a no man's land between two cultural groups; they are partially accepted and partially rejected by the white world in which they are expected to perform; they face the psychological burden of not knowing 'where they stand'; they cannot take the knowledge they require for practical competence in routine performance for granted. The world of the black manager is rife with inconsistencies on the socio-political and cultural level which in turn are exacerbated by an attempt at integration in the work setting. Thus, on top of cultural inconsistencies, conflicts and ambiguities and on top of being classified as a 'Non-White' for the greater part of the time, the black manager is expected to function as a White in a white world during his working day. This is in spite of the fact that he may have had little previous exposure to white informal networks, in spite of the fact that he may confront tokenism in the work setting; in spite of the fact that he may receive inadequate exposure and consultation; unequal remuneration; hostility from the shop-floor; a top-management policy of non-discrimination but discrimination at lower-management levels; unwilling secretaries; poorer promotion opportunities; little forward career planning; discrimination on a social level and encouragement to be individualistic while at the same time being constantly reminded of his ethnic background.

The experiences of the black manager in a white world evade adequate description unlike behaviour or performance which can be both quantified and assessed. Lack of clarity and quantification should *not,* however, be regarded as an excuse for dismissal. The marginal experience of the black manager is real and, in some instances, acute. Thus Jones (1973) describing his experiences of 'What it's like to be a black manager' in the USA, which professes a philosophy of racial integration in all spheres of life, puts forward an argument very similar to those put forward by the black managers interviewed in South Africa. Jones's (1973) experiences highlight a phenomenon — the marginal situation — which he himself admits he did not understand at the time. Jones (1973) was a black man in a unique position in a white company; he was anxious because of internal conflicts and confused because of external inconsistencies. His lack of previous exposure to white informal networks, his own need to 'prove' himself, organizational inconsistencies, cultural differences and above, and including all, his marginal position affected his performance. According to Jones (1973: 116), the net effect of his experiences is, moreover, similar to that of other black people with whom he has discussed the matter.

From these findings, it would appear that the problems faced by the black manager are not unique to South Africa but are rather generalizable to anyone with a black skin who attempts to function in an erstwhile white world. Such problems result moreover not only from cultural, educational and discriminatory factors, but also from the peculiar situation — the marginal situation — in which the black manager finds himself. The black manager who is faced with a wholly discriminatory system is not marginal; he knows precisely 'where he stands'. It is the black manager who is in certain ways rejected or discriminated against and at the same time and in certain other spheres accepted as an equal who confronts problems of a marginal nature. Thus, even in the USA, a history of racial discrimination and the reaction of certain individuals towards

a black skin, together with a lack of previous exposure to a specifically white informal network, put Jones (1973) in a position in which he could not take his work-world for granted; he was never quite sure of how particular individuals were going to react to him and he could never quite dismiss the fact that he was black from his mind. The implications of the marginal situation could be construed as suggesting that black people should be employed by companies which employ only black people and which are owned and run by Blacks. This is undoubtedly one solution. However, humaneness and economic reality suggest the diametrically opposed solution. In order for South Africa to function viably and peacefully, we must examine the effects the marginal situation has on black managers and attempt to find solutions to their dilemma. Our task is to reduce the conflicts, inconsistencies and ambiguities with which black managers are faced in order that their performance in the work situation might not only improve, but also be meaningful to them. Initially, however, let us examine the effects the marginal situation may have on the performance of the black manager.

The inconsistencies, ambiguities and conflicts confronted by the black manager would appear to leave him doubtful of where his loyalties lie. They also create a level of strain and sensitivity which, it is acknowledged, may vary from individual to individual. The cumulative effects of the marginal situation may, however, affect the performance of the black manager in the work situation. In other words, underperformance, a lack of assertiveness or self-assertion, affiliative tendencies, tension, dissatisfaction and the like, *may* not *only* result from cultural factors, an inferior education system and discrimination, but also from the inconsistencies, ambiguities and conflict with which black managers are faced. Although research in this area is needed, literature pertaining to role conflict and role ambiguity, concepts which may well be related in some way to marginality, suggest that ambiguity and conflict may well cause lower productivity, tension, dissatisfaction and psychological withdrawal from the work group (see, for example, Van Sell *et al*, 1981). It would thus appear that the marginal situation may be a partial cause of problems previously associated with culture, education and discrimination and that our failure to recognize its importance may go some way towards explaining a persistently unsatisfactory level of performance amongst some black managers. If this is the case, then we must commence the search for ways in which inconsistencies, ambiguities and conflicts can be reduced. Many of the strategies discussed earlier will obviously have spin-offs in terms of a reduction in marginality. For more sensitive individuals, however, such strategies may have to be exaggerated in order to produce favourable results. For example, the definition of Key Performance Areas would give the black manager a clear idea of his roles and responsibilities *vis-à-vis* those of other managers, and charges of discrimination or window dressing could thus be dismissed. Moreover, a standard evaluation procedure could be developed with respect to the Key Performance Areas of all managers. Evaluations would, however, have to be discussed with the particular managers concerned in order that they might be seen as reasonable and objective and as void of any discriminatory overtones. Black managers could also, as stated earlier, be placed in the care of sympathetic mentors who would attempt to share the burden of the machinations of the informal organization. In this regard, Jones (1973: 115) suggests an appraisal of managers on their contributions to the company's equal opportunity objectives. According to Jones (1973: 115),

'The entire management team must be motivated to change any deep beliefs about who does and doesn't fit with regard to color. Accordingly, companies should use the appraisal system to make the welfare of the black trainee coincident with the well-being of his superior. Such action, of course, will probably receive considerable resistance from middle — and lower-level management. But managers are appraised on their ability to reach other important objectives; and, more significantly, the inclusion of this area in appraisals signals to everyone involved that a company is serious. Failure to take this step signals business as usual and adds to any credibility gap between the company and black employees'.

Moreover, this kind of appraisal system motivates the mentor to school the black trainee in the realities of the political process in the organization. According to Jones (1973) no one can survive in an organization without this kind of information. Jones (1973: 115) also suggests unquestionable top management involvement in and commitment to well thought-out plans of equal opportunity and direct two-way channels of communication between top management and trainee black managers. With regard to the latter, it would appear that Jones (1973) is tacitly recognizing a problem particularly pertinent to the South African context, namely, that of resistance on the part of first line white managers who may feel that their jobs are threatened. Jones (1973) argues that open channels of communication facilitate the intercession of a disinterested party if the black trainee finds a particular situation problematic. Moreover, Jones (1973: 115) feels that,

'Clear channels of communication will also enable top management to provide empathetic sources of counsel to help the new black trainee combat the potentially crippling paranoia that I encountered. I didn't know whom to trust; consequently, I trusted no one. The counsel of mature and proven black executives will also help mitigate this paranoia.'

In the final analysis, it would appear that a moral commitment by organizations to equal opportunity is not enough. In order to surmount the inconsistencies in the total environment of the black manager, top management must not only be committed to black advancement but must also be seen as committed by its entire workforce.

Conclusions and discussion

In this article we have attempted to take a brief look not only at the strategies which could be employed towards the solution of the problems faced by both the black manager and his employing organization, but also at the possibility of providing a tentative formula for decisions relating to the amount of time, money and effort which should be expended on efforts to ameliorate problems of this kind. It has been argued that attempts to successfully introduce black managers into an erstwhile 'white' world will require a combined socio-economic method of decision-making. In other words, it would appear that, in the majority of organizations which are attempting to integrate black managers into their managerial structures, it is necessary to devote resources to the partial resolution of conflict whilst at the same time not detracting from goal achievement aims. It has further been argued that short-run resource allocation with regard to social versus economic ends should be based on a comparison of the relative equilibrium or growth conditions in the economic and social systems within the organization. In the long-run, a second principle — which

involves working towards a reduction of the conflict between efficiency and psychological well-being and which generally involves the adaptation of the social system to the requirements of efficiency — has also to be introduced. With respect to the black manager in a white world, a number of strategies relating to manpower planning, the identification of management potential and training needs, the job itself, education and training, the organization and the total environment were put forward. All of these strategies could assist in alleviating the strains and pressures faced by both the black manager and the employing organization whilst at the same time leading in the direction of greater efficiency and possibly increased profitability.

In view of the fact that many South African companies are well-placed to invest time, money and effort in the development of potential black managers, it would appear that the time has come to look at the whole problem of black advancement rather more seriously and rather more 'rationally' than has been the case in the past. This paper has attempted to provide a framework within which strategy formulation can take place; it is now up to individual organizations to take the initiative and to plan for black advancement in a constructive and meaningful way.

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