

Hulp aan ontwikkelende gemeenskappe

Dit het betrekking op die bevordering van ontwikkelende gebiede asook hulp aan die minder gegoede lede van 'n ontwikkelde gemeenskap, en is 'n aspek wat vandag hoë prioriteit behoort te geniet. In Suid-Afrika word die noodsaaklikheid van hierdie hulpprogramme nog meer as in meeste ander lande beseef — dié land het te doen met beperkte blanke getalle en elke individu word as kosbaar gereken, en daar is ook 'n massa ontwikkelende swartmense wat in sommige gevalle in haglike omstandighede lewe, maar beslis as 'n groot potensiële arbeidsbron gesien word.

As dominante vennote het die private ondernemings derhalwe nie meer 'n keuse of hulle wil meehelp om hierdie dilemma te verlig nie — hulle móét, en het slegs die keuse van besluit hoe vinnig en doeltreffend die uitdaging aanvaar en die taak aangepak moet word.

Die onderneming en die kulturele omgewing

Dit is 'n faset van die sosiale sisteem waarmee deeglik rekening gehou moet word. Vir die ondernemer is die kwaliteit van sy omgewing belangrik, want dit vorm sy milieu — dit is die wêreld van die verbruiker asook die voedingsbron van arbeid, en hierdie kwaliteit sal in 'n groot mate bepaal word deur die kulturele peil van die gemeenskap. Daarom is dit belangrik dat ondernemers moet beseef dat daar nie slegs op nywerheidsvlak vennootskappe aangegaan moet word nie, maar dat die vennootskap tussen die sogenaamde 'kapitaal- en kultuurgoedere', dit wil sê, tussen die materiële en die geestelike, net so belangrik is.

Pluralisme in aksie

Vroeër is daar melding gemaak van die feit dat daar in die jongste tyd redelik baie oor hierdie nuwe denkgting geskryf en geargumenteer word en dat jaarverslae ook meer dikwels hiervan melding begin maak. Ongelukkig is dit ook waar dat te veel private ondernemings dit nog steeds vermy. Daar is groot waardering vir dit wat reeds op sekere terreine deur private ondernemings vermag is, maar ongelukkig is dit ook waar dat sosiale verantwoordelikheid by 'n groot persentasie van private ondernemings slegs as 'n passiewe filosofie funksioneer.

Die tyd het nou aangebreek dat, indien ondernemings op bogemelde terreine meer doelgerig wil begin opereer, daar definitiewe doelwitte en prioriteite bepaal sal moet word. Die enigste, onfeilbare metode waarvolgens dit gedoen kan word, is deur middel van 'n doelgerigte en beplande sosiale verantwoordelikhedsprogram, 'n program wat aan die ondernemer die geleentheid sal bied om die terreine waar sy onderneming 'n positiewe bydrae kan lewer, te eksploiteer, om prioriteite te bepaal en om as handige en strategiese bestuursmiddel te dien. Ook moet ondernemers hiervan kennis neem dat so 'n program nie as 'n 'aanhangel' beskou moet word nie, maar dat dit 'n integrale deel van elke onderneming se beplanningsproses moet vorm.

Voordat 'n onderneming so 'n program van stapel kan stuur, is dit primêr noodsaaklik om die grense daarvan te bepaal. Volgens navorsing blyk dit baie duidelik dat die meeste ondernemings hierdie grensbepalings as netelig beskou. Ondernemings verskil ook radikaal van mekaar in hierdie verband — nie slegs ten opsigte van prioriteite nie, maar ook die bedrae geld wat vir die doel toegeken word. Sommige beskou dit as projekte oor die langtermyn en andere wil die resultate oor die korttermyn sien. Sekere

projekte gaan om nasionale en selfs internasionale belang, terwyl sommige nie veel wyer uitkring as die grense van die onderneming nie. Vir 'n groot persentasie van die ondernemings gaan dit om die egtheid van die saak terwyl daar by andere 'n valse of selfs politieke kleur te bespeur is.

Die gemeenskap het groot waardering vir dit wat reeds vermag is, maar dit is jammer dat hierdie betrokkenheid nog te veel op individuele basis en ongekoördineerd geskied.

Indien noemenswaardige resultate bereik wil word, moet ondernemings dit eerder as 'n *gesamentlike program van aksie* sien, en vir dié doel tot die stigting van 'n *koördinerende liggaam* oorgaan, wat namens die lede as 'n liggaam met gesag en status na buite kan optree.

Betrokkenheid met gemeenskapsaktiwiteite mag nooit doelloos geskied nie, maar deelname moet suiwer op *prioriteitsbasis* geskied — alleen dan kan sosiale verantwoordelikheid as 'n filosofie in beweging gesien word.

Dit is 'n nuwe denkgting en die sukses vorentoe is in 'n groot mate van die *modus operandi* en resultate van die hede en die verlede afhanklik. Daarom moet 'n *databank vir sosiale verantwoordelikheid* as 'n ideaal gestel word.

Suid-Afrikaanse ondernemings mag nie langer oor betrokkenheid of moontlike betrokkenheid filosofeer nie. Die plurale gemeenskap het dringend hulp en ondersteuning nodig en dit is nou die aangewese tyd om 'n daadwerklike bydrae te maak.

Die kwaliteit van 'n gemeenskap word in 'n groot mate deur die gehalte, denkpatroon en optrede van die sakeleiers bepaal.

Priorities for South African managers – an informal discussion

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This will be an informal discussion on management's priorities, and particularly those priorities outside the work situation.

A major factor and priority in the life of the manager is, or should be, his family involvement. Many seminars are being offered for executives (so many, I almost believe that seminars should be taxed, and should be held exclusively after hours). But such seminars are mainly limited to the managers themselves, while I think that it is desirable that some of these seminars should be planned in such a way that they will also be meaningful to the managers' spouses. The concept that balanced and effective executive management requires a total family involvement has not yet found

general application or even acceptance in South Africa. Yet it is a fact that if a person reaches the executive management level, the spouse, usually the wife, is of great importance. In many cases the wife is the factor which determines both directly and indirectly whether the manager will reach the top or not. Consequently my first priority statement is that in the times in which we live, the highest management skill and effectiveness is required of executives in all sectors and on all levels, and that the role of the spouse in the achievement of this objective should not be underestimated. The demands made on management make it essential that the manager's wife should have a broad understanding of the responsibilities of her husband, in order to enable her to play the essential supportive role. She must know what demands are made on her husband, what his work and essential social obligations entail, so that she can adjust to these circumstances.

It always strikes me how well informed the American businessman's wife is about her husband's work, his company, and those things which could generally promote his work, his status and his reputation. The reason is, of course, that in the United States competition for executive positions is so keen that only those executives who put everything into the battle - including their wives - will gain or retain those positions. This supports the importance of my first priority, that effective management demands total family involvement and commitment.

As a background to comments on further priorities of management, I must first sketch a realistic picture of the position in which South Africa finds itself.

South Africa's position can be briefly summarized by the statement that we are in the midst of a battle for survival. Many people have stated this already, but it appears to me that most of us do not yet realize the full implications of the situation. Therefore I shall try to bring this statement home by saying that it may happen that within four years South Africa will find itself in the current position of South West Africa. Within 10 years we could be involved in an economic, military and political struggle similar to that in Rhodesia.

South West Africa is no longer South West, but Namibia. I have no objection to the name as such - I think it is most appropriate - were it not for the fact that this is the name given to South West by the Marxists. In the same way Rhodesia has come to be accepted as Zimbabwe, and the leftist circles in South Africa already refer to it as Azania.

The South West Africa question has for some time been tossed about in the conference halls of the world, and can be likened to a political football. With regard to their political future the country's inhabitants have few options open to them. One-man, one-vote, is already an established fact. The only fundamental choice is whether they will move to the left or to the right, that is, will they remain a part of the South African order, or will they become a part of the Marxist alliance. At this stage South West Africa does not have an independent viable economy, and there is no hope that this can be built up in the time available, at least to an extent that can assure the country's survival, without some such alliance.

Some years ago, Rhodesia could have chosen between a number of routes to a solution. The signs of the time were interpreted incorrectly, and slowly but surely the options vanished one by one, until open military conflict and an un-

comfortable coalition government based on one-man, one-vote, are all that remain.

What then about South Africa? What does the road ahead look like? In what way does the situation in South Africa differ from that in South West Africa and in Rhodesia? I cannot answer these questions, and shall not even attempt to. But I would like to remind you of things that you know. The assault on South Africa started more than 30 years ago. With hindsight I believe that clear signs of a strategy against South Africa, even before the Second World War, can be perceived. This has gradually increased in extent and in intensity. We have gone through one so-called incident after another, and in the past most people saw these as separate events with no common factor. We have been branded by the world's media, churches, political parties, sports bodies and other organizations, and condemned as repugnant.

Under attack, even by a part of our own press, there has been a frantic search for ways to make ourselves acceptable. We have applied new measures in various areas, expecting that if we do this or that, or make changes here or there, everything will turn out well. Many people still believe these figments because they want to believe: reality is unacceptable to them.

If we look at the Western world, we see tottering governments; declining economies and possibly another recession; increasing unemployment; a rapid increase in liberal socialism and the so-called Euro-Communism; the power of the labour unions; a breakdown of the basic economic laws; the general equalization of people by taking from those who have - be it material goods or cultural values - and giving to those who do not have these, do not deserve these, and do not know what to do with their new acquisitions.

Seen against this background, certain questions can, and should be asked: What can we, as management, do and what are our priorities in specific terms? I do not have the complete answer - I doubt whether any person has a complete and generally acceptable solution to our problems. But, I believe, we must work towards a plan of action that has as its main objective the maintenance of a viable South African way of life. This South African way of life means different things to different people. It will also mean different things at different times in the future. Basically though, I would say that it means a way of life that has developed through an evolutionary process from our cultural, religious and political heritage - free of foreign interference and ideologies - and which offers scope for the advancement of all our peoples. Let me make it clear - I do not subscribe to the far right philosophy of 'back to the good old days'. But equally, I do not believe in change for the sake of change or because the leftist press, foreign pressure groups, governments or churches prescribe to us. I see the South African way of life as something dynamic. It requires a commitment from everyone, black and white, towards a better life based, among other things, on financial or material reward, on merit and equal opportunities.

We should strive to maintain a viable South African way of life. But what does this imply and how can it be achieved? Again a question with many answers - but let us try to name but a few: We need an effective government which will ensure the optimum and most productive use of all our resources, which will create the necessary climate for development on a broad front embracing all activities of

human endeavour. We need a government strong enough to do the things we must do internally and at the same time negotiate as an equal with those outside our borders. In any democratic country the government of the day is a product of the voters, and its effectiveness or lack thereof reflects the conscious efforts of the voters towards the specific objective of an effective government. Compared with most other countries we in South Africa have been most fortunate in this respect, but in recent years concern has been expressed at the lack of interest in the affairs of government on the part of those people who, because of their inherent ability, knowledge and experience, can make the greatest contribution towards this most desirable goal of an effective government. Company executives tend to shy away from party politics, and more often than not they are extremely careful not to become involved in any way. I must seriously question this attitude, because South Africa needs all the talent it can muster at all levels of government – whether it be the central, provincial or local level. During these difficult times there is a great need for executive ability in the government of a country. Particularly in South Africa where such a small percentage of the total population has to shoulder the responsibility for managing the affairs of the country, the need to make a contribution towards this very essential objective of effective government is so great, that no one who is able to make a contribution, should withhold his or her support. The democratic process of government can only work effectively if it is supported by the efforts of all. We, who are gathered here this evening, are privileged people. But privileges incur responsibilities, and one of the most important responsibilities we have is to make our contribution towards more effective government; and the greater our privileges, the greater the contribution that is required of us.

To be specific – I suggest that you analyse your daily priorities and decide for yourselves if you are in fact making a sufficient contribution towards more effective government at all levels.

You occupy important positions within your organizations, you are part of the select group of people referred to as the opinion formers. Are you in fact in a position to analyse political trends, interpret national and international political events? Can you make an objective assessment of what is in the interest of the state and exert a positive influence within your circle to support or change the government policy of the day accordingly? Or do you rely entirely on hearsay evidence or, worse even, say that politics is only for the politicians, and snipe from the sidelines?

Therefore, I say with some conviction that a company executive who takes little or no interest in the political scene and who does not in some way consciously strive to make a positive contribution to more effective government, is not fulfilling his obligations to his company or country.

A priority for maintaining our South African way of life is, therefore, that private enterprise management should take a keen and intelligent interest in the political scene.

Another priority is that we need to work towards maintaining a viable South African economy. It is agreed that this requirement is closely linked to that of an effective government, but government can only create the environment or climate, and, in consequence, it is private enterprise that must ensure that we achieve a stable and expanding

economy. To the vast majority of people this concept of a viable economy is nebulous and although they would subscribe to the objective in broad terms, they fail to see what the individual can do towards its achievement. This fairly general supposition indicates that those in executive positions have failed to demonstrate that a viable economy, like charity, starts at home with the individual. Individuals need to be motivated to be more productive, to live within their means, to save for the rainy day and to buy with discretion, even if it hurts a little. Individuals furthermore need to be motivated to have faith in their own ability and in their employers, and it will then follow automatically, that they will have faith in their country. The faith of the person in the street is one of the cornerstones on which a country can build a viable economy. As management we must spread the good news, because the media concentrate only on the bad news. We as executives must demonstrate that the problems are in fact opportunities to be exploited.

A viable economy is based on faith in the future and if we as management can conduct the affairs of our individual companies in such a fashion that our employees have faith in the management and the future of their employers, then we have won the day. A viable economy is our best insurance against foreign interference and will enable us to do whatever is necessary to solve our internal problems in a fair and satisfactory manner.

To retain our South African way of life we need to maintain our capitalistic free enterprise system. The right of all people to sell their labour at a profit is at the heart of the free enterprise system. With the passage of time I think we have slowly drifted towards a mild form of socialism, but in recent times I have detected definite signs of a return to the basic concepts of a free enterprise system. We have an obligation, if we wish to retain our way of life, to guard against the infiltration of the various 'isms'. These are foreign concepts, not only as far as the whites are concerned, but also to the basic concepts of the black cultures.

In conclusion a comment concerning our system of free enterprise: In order to ensure that this system is maintained intact, there rests an obligation on management to ensure that it is not abused. I do believe in the profit motive, and that profit is not an indication of a man's morality, but of his effectiveness. Having said this, there is an important reservation, and that is that maximal profit at a given time is not essentially in the best long-term interests of the company or of the country. Sound policy would be to make just enough profit today to ensure that one can again make a profit tomorrow.

In so many organizations there is an uncontrolled urge to become rich overnight, and consequently many promising businesses and individuals find themselves in trouble in just that time. In the interests of the enterprise and of the country's economy, it is management's responsibility to make ten years' profit in ten years, and not in one year. The more conservative approach requires a high level of management ability; the other indicates short-sightedness and lack of ability. The issue at stake is not the fortunes or misfortunes of the greedy individual or company, but it concerns the image of our capitalist system. Particularly in times of inflation and unemployment the entrepreneur is usually viewed with suspicion by many people – then, more than ever, is the time for responsible action in order to

protect the image of the capitalist system.

The ordinary citizens are asked to make their sacrifices in terms of higher productivity and a reduction in standard of living, and they have the right to expect the private business sector to also make sacrifices in the interests of the country.

As long ago as 1961 a well-known banker, Eugene Black, said that he was not concerned about South Africa's racial problems. He believed that we had enough common sense to find some or other solution to those. What concerned him as a banker, and, what in his opinion held the highest risk in the long-term, was his fear that relative to our total population, we would not be able to develop sufficient management ability to manage our country effectively, in both the private and the public sectors. All South African managers face an enormous responsibility, an exciting challenge!