

William Given  
Bottom-Up Management (1949)  
and  
Reaching Out in Management (1953)

William Given received his education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale and joined the American Brake Shoe Company in 1911. In 1929, he became president of the company and in 1950, he became chairman of the company's Board of Directors. At the time of the writing of Reaching Out in Management, the company comprised 56 plants in the United States, Canada, and France. He was also active in civic affairs as president of the Episcopal Church Foundation, trustee of the General Theological Seminary and of the Industrial Hygiene Foundation, and a director of the National Legal Aid Society.

Both Bottom-Up Management and Reaching Out in Management represent Given's personal views and experiences with American Brake Shoe and his attempt to develop the company according to the principles developed in both books.

Given's reasons for developing and promoting his ideas of bottom-up management and reaching out in management are dealt with in the last chapter of Reaching Out in Management. Here, (p. 173-5) he suggests that the most disappointing and costly failures at American Brake Shoe over the years involved failure to fully develop the potentials of individual

employees within the organization.

In attempting to deal with these problems, Given devoted his efforts to developing a management philosophy aimed at helping individuals to realize their full potential.

The result has been writing, for the last fifteen years, about general policies of management in terms of helping the individual to capitalize on his inherent abilities. It has meant trying to clarify the fundamentals that contribute to one man's progress and those that handicap another. It has resulted in writing about different departments in terms of common fundamentals. It has meant trying to help people to select the paths to greater fulfillment. (Reaching Out in Management, p. 174)

Both bottom-up management and reaching out in management represent basic philosophies rather than specific management techniques. Both books are devoted to explanation of these philosophies and illustrations of how they can be applied in various industrial and community settings.

#### Bottom-Up Management.

Given sees two basic approaches to management which he calls top-down and bottom-up management. He explains each and contrasts them in the following way:

Under "top-down" management the head of the business does practically all the thinking and planning and issues orders to those under him. In the extreme form it is management under which boss decisions are seldom questioned. Nor are ideas or suggestions sincerely solicited from the organization. The current of initiative flows down from the top. In short, the chief executive runs the business. Whether he realizes it or not, he demands blind obedience. As a rule, the same situation exists in the various divisions or departments of the business, with their respective executives dominating them even as they are dominated, since the head of the business is likely to choose as

his lieutenants men of like attitude.

Under "bottom-up" management the head of a business tries to release the thinking and encourage the initiative of all those down the line, so that ideas and impetus flow from the bottom up, and the entire organization contributes to the fullest possible measure to the progress and profits of the enterprise. Ideas for the improvement of the company's products or services; ideas for advertising or sales promotion; ideas for bettering working conditions-in short, ideas for making a better and more prosperous company-flow up from below. (Bottom-Up Management, p. 3-4)

One of the necessary preconditions for the success of bottom-up management is that all employees identify with the goals of the company. Given feels that clearly-defined and carefully considered goals are essential for this identification. At American Brake Shoe, a good deal of thought was given to the development of a clear and concise statement of the company's goals. The statement reads as follows:

#### OUR AIM

To build a company which gives greater security to its people...employees and stockholders.

This means making our company:

- A better place to work.
- A better neighbor in the community.
- A better company to sell to.
- A better company to buy from.
- A better company to invest in.

To achieve this Aim we must find for everything we do-a better way. (Bottom-Up Management, p. 44)

A plaque bearing this Aim was hung in every Brake Shoe plant, as well as on the walls of executive and sales offices.

Once the goals of the company have been made clear to all employees, Given suggests several specific things management can do to encourage subordinate participation. These include;

soliciting ideas and suggestions from subordinates, giving suggestions and instructions about how work is to be done rather than orders to subordinates, giving subordinates "freedom to fail", and maintaining close, informal personal relationships with subordinates, when possible.

### Reaching Out in Management

All of us, according to Given, desire personal fulfillment. For most of us, this fulfillment comes from the respect of those around us. Reaching out in management is a philosophy aimed at giving each member of an organization a chance to achieve this kind of respect through his work in the organization. The philosophy, as outlined by Given, rests on the following three principles: 1) management needs to see that all down the line the goals of executive development are made the subject of continuous attention and unrelenting effort. Management must show a constant and sincere interest in the development of all company people. 2) management must build opportunities all down the line for executive development. To keep good men in its ranks and develop them as quickly and fully as possible, and through them develop other competent people, management must give these men maximum authority and the right to venture and take chances with their ideas. 3) management must have a policy of using company people within an organization to fill newly created opportunities or positions, even if the odds of their success are small from the standpoint of their experience. (Reaching Out in Management, pp. 5-14)

As these principles imply, reaching out in management goes much farther than the practice of "decentralized management" in that it aims at involving each member in the organization in efforts to improve the organization's performance.

Many of the management practices which Given suggests for increasing subordinate involvement in the goals of the company in Bottom-Up Management are repeated here in Reaching Out in Management. In addition, he suggests evaluating managers on the performance of their subordinates (p. 27), and giving people tasks outside their areas of specialization (p. 28) as ways of encouraging reaching out.

At the end of the book, Given provides examples of the application of the philosophy of reaching out in the areas of Research, Sales, Purchasing, and Accounting, within the company. He also gives examples of reaching out in the community in the areas of Medicine, Education, and the Church. Business Can Be a Mission

A consistent theme which runs throughout both Bottom-Up Management and Reaching Out in Management is that managers have a wider responsibility than merely assuring that companies are run profitably. In addition, they must attempt to promote the welfare of their employees and of the Community.

The underlying assumption of both books is that a career in management need not be seen merely as a means to personal enrichment. Rather, it can be seen as a mission, the ultimate aim of which is the promotion of overall human welfare.