

CHAIN SUPERMARKET MANAGEMENT

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Darl C. Orewiler

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CHAIN SUPERMARKET MANAGEMENT

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to set forth the major duties and responsibilities of a supermarket manager, and to present methods and principles of management that may be helpful to him in fulfilling his duties and meeting his responsibilities.

The manager's duties are grouped into four major classifications; (1) promoting maximum sales, (2) controlling expenses, (3) developing and maintaining a competent organization, and (4) knowing and enforcing company policies. It is believed that the average store manager can improve his performance considerably if he has a better understanding of how to accomplish these four objectives. To gain this knowledge he must not only participate in special manager training sessions, but also, have an additional source of information which he can refer to and study frequently. Such a source can provide information that is more reliable than that gained from other employees who, unfortunately, are not always too well informed themselves. It can also help reduce the number of managers who are stumbling along in the dark because they do not have the necessary knowledge to approach their problems intelligently.

This thesis, it is hoped, may be the starting point in organizing and presenting the information the manager must have to do a better job.

It is agreed that the manager should have a great deal of latitude in making decisions and not be committed to a specific course of action as outlined in a manual. Also, many changes take place that have an effect upon methods used in managing a supermarket. Therefore, the information must be presented to serve only as a guide for the manager and be of a broad, lasting nature so that the methods will not be applicable to only certain types of stores, and parts of the guide become outmoded in a short period of time. The material in this study has been presented with these factors in mind.

### Need for Study

Food store management is considerably more complex now than it was in the past. Not many years ago food was distributed through many small retail outlets. An operation with a volume of one thousand dollars per week was considered large. Very little training or experience was needed to manage a store of this type. Usually there were only three or four clerks employed in these stores, thus, personnel and human relations problems did not require a great deal of attention. The district supervisor kept very close control over each of his stores, usually contacting each store in his district every day. In many cases the district



manager performed most of the management functions in his stores.

Today the retail food outlets are fewer in number, relative to population, and larger in size. The average supermarket approaches a volume of twenty thousand dollars per week, and those that are considered large, have weekly sales volumes from fifty to one hundred thousand dollars per week. Many stores have from twenty-five to one hundred and fifty employees. The district supervisor usually contacts each of his stores only once a week, therefore, he does not contribute as much toward the actual management of the store as he once did.

Because of these and many other drastic changes in the retail food store, the job of store management has also changed to such an extent that it does not even resemble its old-time counterpart. The store manager is no longer considered as just a high classed clerk. He must be intelligent, well trained, and in many ways he is the key man upon which the overall success of the company depends.

Many of the larger companies in the food distribution industry have training programs for store managers, and they are very beneficial. But, in the opinion of the writer, there is a definite need for something more in developing top-notch store managers. His job has developed to the point where he is in need of a vast quantity of retailing methods' and principles, presented in a well organized, understandable way.

This thesis by no means fills this need, but it may well be the starting point in developing a well organized reference guide for store managers to use in improving their performance.

### Limitations of Study

The topic is too broad to be covered in great detail in a thesis, therefore, only the most important aspects of store management have been considered. Due to the differences in stores, personnel, equipment, locations, fast-changing methods of handling and merchandising food products, and other factors, it is believed the information presented will be of a more lasting value since many details have been omitted.

However, the study is complete in the sense that even the inexperienced student will be able to comprehend what is expected of a store manager today, and how he can go about fulfilling these expectations.

### Procedure

The material used in this study was obtained from periodicals, brochures, books, and various companies in the food distribution industry.

To get the desired material from the industry an outline of the study was sent to the selected companies and any information pertaining to the topics in the outline was requested. Several of the companies responded with material that proved to be very valuable.

However, the majority of the material used was obtained from secondary sources. Some pertained mainly to the food distribution industry, while others were in non-related fields. Material from non-related fields was used to develop methods for use in the food industry similar to those that have been used successfully in other industries.

CHAPTER II

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

OF

A STORE MANAGER

The job of managing a modern food store is considerably more complicated than it was a few years back. The manager of today has to know more than his old-time counterpart. He must know and understand (1) the company's policies, rules, and regulations, (2) the laws of the federal government, (3) the labor laws of the state in which his company operates, (4) the specific labor contracts which exist between his company and the local unions, (5) how to induct, instruct, and train new workers, (6) how to handle and where possible, prevent grievances, (7) how to improve conditions of safety, (8) how to correct workers and maintain discipline, (9) how never to lose his temper and always to be fair, (10) how to obtain cooperation from the wide assortment of people with whom he has to deal, (11) how to promote sales effectively, (12) how to control operating expenses, (13) how to get along with union representatives, and above all, (14) how to satisfy the needs of his customers.

It is evident from the above that the job of managing a

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modern supermarket is a difficult and complex task. In addition to being a manager, the operator of today has to be a merchandiser, an accountant, an engineer, a lawyer, a teacher, a leader, an inspector, a disciplinarian, a counselor, a friend, and an example. His duties and responsibilities are numerous and varied, but can be combined into four major classifications, as illustrated in Figure I on page eight.

Figure I illustrates the store organization with a single-line type of supervision. There are some food chain companies using the dual-type, with a grocery manager and a meat manager, both equally responsible to the district manager for their respective departments. Many companies have recently adopted the single-line type and certain advantages are claimed for it over the dual-type organization.

#### Qualities of a Good Store Manager

It is quite difficult to set forth any definite characteristics that go to make up a good manager, but the following outline will give some indication of what top management looks for in a store manager.<sup>1</sup>

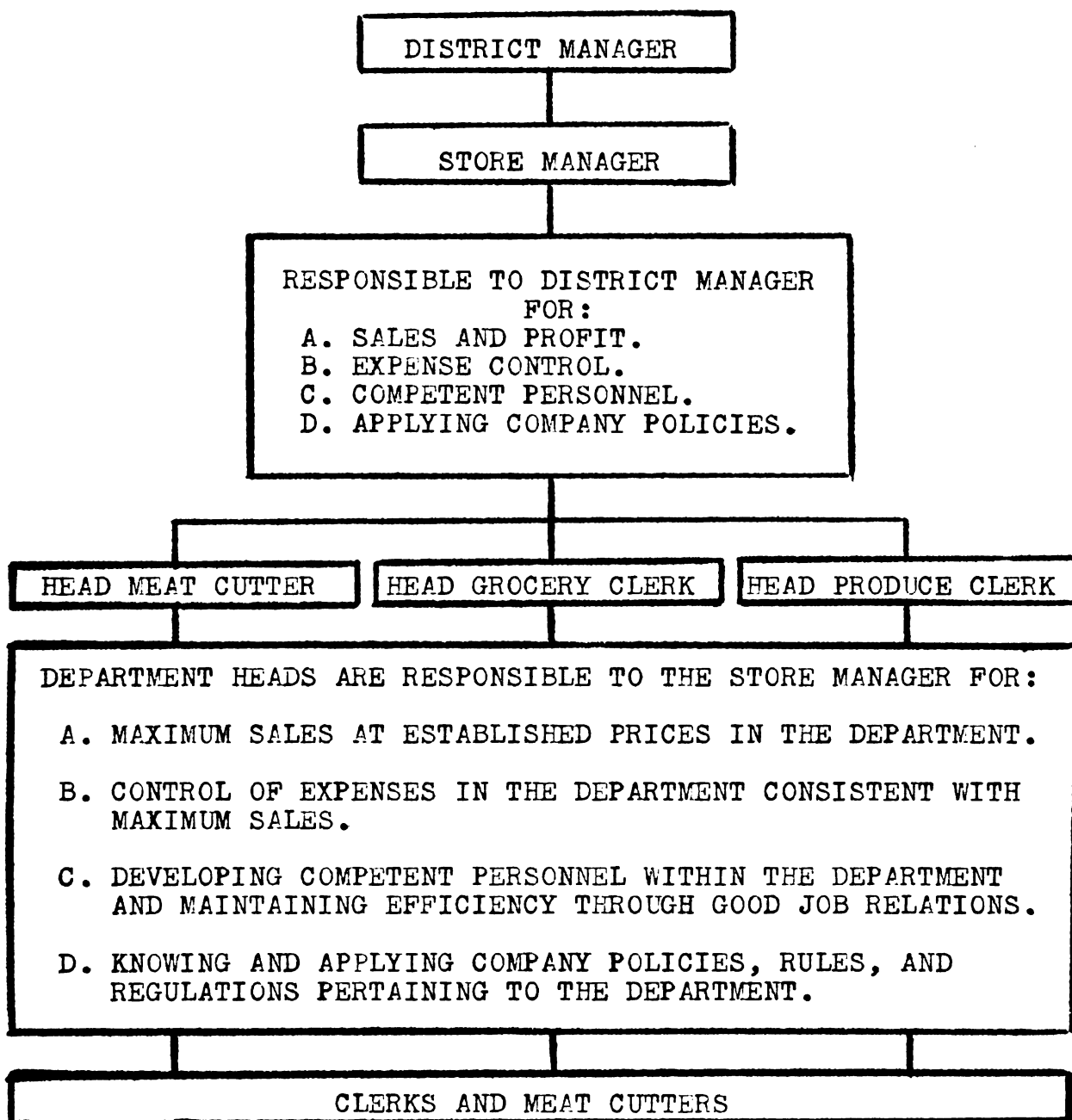
A. Merchandising Ability: He should take full advantage of signs and promotional aids provided him by the company; be able to use displays effectively; and have a thorough

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<sup>1</sup>Based on the Kroger Company's Store Manager Improvement Guide.



Figure I  
Organization Chart of a Modern Supermarket  
with Single-Line Supervision



Source: The Kroger Company's Store Manager's Reference Guide.

knowledge of buying habits, seasonal trends, and product information. He must be able to use his imagination and ingenuity in developing sales and merchandising ideas for his store; follow-through on sales plans; discover new ways to increase sales and profits; and have the ability to plan and follow-through on store promotions and get good results on high mark-up items. He should make good use of heavy traffic spots in his store and avoid overstocks through proper ordering; accept new ideas and methods with an open mind; and keep up-to-date on all new developments.

B. Leadership Ability: The good store manager gains the active cooperation and interest of his employees; knows each employee well, his strong points and weaknesses, and makes best use of his abilities. He is a leader rather than a driver and has enough confidence in his employees to delegate responsibilities to them. He not only delegates responsibilities but also willingly accepts responsibility. Because of his leadership and training, his department heads are efficient. Good discipline is maintained in his store and good men for promotion are developed under him.

C. Ambition and Drive: Ambition to get ahead and a keen interest in his job are certainly qualities of a good manager. He stays on the job during store hours; displays an attitude of cooperation and enthusiasm; and has a competitive spirit and pride in his ability to win. Due to the demands of the job he must have pep and energy and be able

to keep on the go, setting a reasonable pace for his employees.

D. Planning and Organizing Ability: He is capable of allocating his help effectively; ordinarily accomplishes his work during regular store hours; plans practical work schedules; and avoids overtime hours for his employees. He is a skillful planner and follows up on details of his job; has the ability to correct the weak points in his operation and make correct and well thought-out decisions. He is familiar with and follows through on branch and company policies, and avoids idle time for himself and his employees.

E. Store Conditions: He checks to make sure he has the right prices on merchandise and that they are in plain sight. He sees to it that merchandise is handled properly and keeps his backroom in good condition. Proper allocation of shelf space is maintained in his store, and it is clean and inviting and constantly "ready for business." He keeps his shelves fully stocked, eliminates hazards to avoid accidents, and his store equipment is kept in good condition.

F. Maintaining Effective Controls: The good manager controls clerk hours and keeps them in line with sales. He makes price changes promptly and his records are made out accurately. His store expenses are consistent with maximum sales and he is well posted on store mail and other instructions. He controls wrapping and store supply expenses

and keeps "cash over and short" in line by handling cash in the proper manner. His perishable merchandise losses are kept to a minimum consistent with maximum sales.

G. Customer Relations: He makes certain that customers receive friendly treatment; gives prompt and courteous attention to customer complaints; sets a good example for his clerks in dealing with customers; and makes an effort to become acquainted with the customers and attempts to be helpful to them. He does everything possible to avoid undue delay in handling customers at the checkout lanes and goes out of his way to make more friends and customers.

H. Public Relations: The good manager, especially in smaller communities, takes an active part in civic affairs and maintains a friendly attitude toward competitors and other businesses in the community. He has the ability to get good results in his store on Community Fund drives or other charitable campaigns, and makes an active effort to increase his acquaintance with local business, school and church leaders, newspaper editors and other opinion leaders in the community. He knows and is friendly with local community officials and makes it a point to get along with truck drivers, outside vendors, and others having business contact with the store. He makes every possible effort to build goodwill and friendship for his company in his community.

Many of the above points are complete in themselves

and need no explanation. Some will be covered in a broad general way, and others will be covered in detail in the following chapters.

### Handling Customer Complaints

The large majority of retailers are well aware that it is impossible for them to remain in business unless they develop a large repeat business. One of the ways in which repeat business is lost is through customers developing the feeling that they have a just grievance against the store. Unless the manager develops methods whereby these complaints are settled promptly on some basis which maintains the good will of the customer, the customer will turn to some other store. Moreover, she will air her complaints to her friends who may well follow her advice and give their business to a "more responsible" store. Thus, the manager should recognize that this plays an important part in building good will for the store.

Although customers should be encouraged to bring their complaints to the attention of the manager, and the building of customer good will should be the point of view from which every complaint should be handled, this does not mean that the manager should always give the customer the adjustment. Ordinarily, however, a satisfactory adjustment should be made. In the majority of cases the customer will have what is obviously a legitimate complaint and the manager should



make every effort to satisfy her. In a second group of cases, the complaint may not seem legitimate to the manager, but if he is convinced that the customer feels that she has a just complaint, the adjustment should certainly be made. Probably well over 90 per cent of all the complaints registered with the store will fall into one of these two groups.

In contrast, there is a third group of complainants who have no real grounds for complaint but are merely trying to take advantage of the store's "the-customer-is-always-right" policy. When the person handling the complaint is fairly certain that he is dealing with an individual of this type, he may refuse to make the adjustment. But there are exceptions even here. Sometimes the customer is one who is a large purchaser. If the manager feels that she is such an important customer that he would not like to lose her, an adjustment usually will be made. In general, it may be said that the complaint should be handled in such a way as to retain the good will and patronage of the customer. In practice, this means approaching each complainant with a sympathetic attitude, making the adjustment as soon as possible, and with the least inconvenience to the customer.

In addition to building good will, the adjustment of complaints should provide the manager with basic data which will enable him to reduce future complaints.

## Customer Services

It is the manager's responsibility to see that customers receive helpful and friendly service from every store employee. Unfortunately this can not be accomplished by simply telling the employees to be helpful and friendly to customers. It requires time, training, and constant attention to develop and maintain this business building attitude in the employees. The manager must recognize that many of the jobs in the store are tiring and monotonous and even the best natured employees will become irritable occasionally. He should be alert in order to detect this condition and attempt to avoid it as much as possible by giving rest periods and using good principles of supervision.

The customer should be given prompt, courteous service at the check out stands, in the produce department, and on empty bottle returns. These services are pointed out in particular because it is usually where the poorest service is rendered in the store. When lines begin to form, additional check stands should be put into use. After all check stands are in use, sackers should be assigned to each check stand to expedite the operation. Sackers should be instructed to volunteer to carry the customer's order to her car and to do it willingly. If the offer to help is made in a reluctant manner it might just as well not be made at all.

In the produce department a clerk should be at or near

the scale at all times so the customers will not have to wait to have items weighed.

Cashing checks is quite an important service performed by most food markets. Many operators consider it a function of a bank, and rightfully so, but as long as the customers demand it at the store where they do their shopping, it must be done or they will go to a store where this service is offered.

To avoid offending check-cashing customers by repeatedly asking them for identification, the manager must make it a point to know the customer on sight just as soon as possible after he has asked for identification the first time. This does not mean that the manager should leave any doubt in his mind about the identity of a customer just to avoid offending her.

Company policies pertaining to cashing checks should be strictly followed, and in addition, the manager can take precautionary measures of his own to avoid losses from bad checks. A file may be kept with the name, address, phone number, and signature of all check-cashing customers. The customers can be asked to write their address, driver's license number, or social security number on the check. If the manager wants further verification he can ask the customer to write her phone number on the check and it can be compared with the number listed in the telephone directory.

Also, the person or company that issued the check can be called or the license number of the customer's car can be taken and recorded on the check.

The customer's actions, if observed, will sometimes indicate whether she is an imposter or not. If she seems nervous or in a hurry it is a good reason to verify in some way any evidence she has presented as identification. If the check has already been signed, make the customer indorse it again and compare the signature with either the one already on the check, or the one on her driver's license or social security card.

Checks issued by the government and sent to the payees by mail must be cashed with caution. Thousands of these checks are stolen from mail boxes each year and cashed by imposters, usually in some retail establishment. Positive identification is a "must" with government checks.

There are many other services, too numerous to mention here, that are necessary in satisfying customers, but the important thing to remember about any customer service is to first recognize the need for it, and then see that the customers get it promptly and in a friendly, courteous manner. The most important competitive weapon the manager has at his disposal today is an organization well trained in customer service. Unfortunately, such organizations are few in number in the retail food industry today. It should

be the primary goal of every manager to develop an organization that has a sincere desire to treat customers the way they should be treated, as guests instead of trespassers.

### Housekeeping

The importance of keeping a food store clean and inviting is so obvious that it may seem unnecessary to even mention it here. However, many managers have good intentions about maintaining good store conditions, but they just never seem to get around to doing all the little jobs when they should be done. As a result the store never does look up to par.

In order to correct this condition the manager must turn to his job assignment methods (Chapter VII). As stated in the job assignment procedure, all cleaning jobs should be listed and specifically assigned to be done at a stated time. This places the responsibility for each job and, if it is not taken care of, the manager knows on whom to check to determine why it was not done. If care is used in scheduling cleaning jobs so they will not conflict with other assignments, the manager will have little trouble in keeping his store clean. Again, the important thing is to give each employee the responsibility of doing certain jobs, at a stated time. After the schedule is made out, follow through on it to make sure it is being used.

## Company Policies

One of the four major duties of a manager is knowing and applying company policies, rules, and regulations in his store. He must not only know the policies but should insist upon the employees knowing those pertaining to their departments.

What is a policy? Briefly, it is a statement of intention that commits management to a general course of action in order to accomplish a specific purpose. A policy is intended as a guide for management representatives who are expected to use some judgment in applying it.

Why have policies? The most important feature of a policy is that it commits management to a particular course of action. Policies, when carried out, give assurance that all customers will receive consistent and uniform treatment. When properly enforced, policies will save time and eliminate a great deal of confusion. They help develop customer good will and employee morale. Policies cut down on the number of decisions that have to be made. Above all, they clearly define the authority the manager has when acting in behalf of the company, therefore, the manager who is not familiar with policies may exceed his authority and thus get into trouble with his superiors. The manager who ignores his company's policies does so at his own risk.

The store manager is the only employee in the store who represents the company. Everything he does should be done

with the one principal thought in mind, "will my action be beneficial to the company in the long-run?" Management can not disregard long-run effects in order to achieve short-run objectives, so it is wise to look ahead when making decisions.

### Records and Reports

In keeping records on such a large scale, the branch or main office clerical department must be guided by two important considerations--speed and accuracy. Punctuality is essential if the cost of getting the necessary figures is to be kept within reasonable limits; accuracy is necessary if the records are to serve their useful purpose.

The branch or main office can keep individual records at a reasonable cost, and with the necessary accuracy, only if the work is systematized, and only when every manager makes out his reports accurately and sends them in promptly. Late orders, illegible figures, missing store stamps, no dates, and other careless omissions force the office to halt a smoothly running clerical force. Work must be stopped to learn what the figures mean, whom the order is for, when it is to be delivered, and so on. This wastes time and, consequently, increases the cost of record keeping. Furthermore, such errors, when found, are charged against the manager's ability to run his store properly.

Since most of the common mistakes made in connection

with store records and reports are due to carelessness on the part of the manager, and because they reflect on his ability to operate a successful store, he should gladly cooperate in every possible way with the office. He can do this by observing these points when making out records and reports:

1. Make out all orders, surveys, and reports on time and have them ready when due.
2. Make certain the correct date is shown on every form.
3. Affix the store stamp in the proper place and clearly distinguishable on every form made out.
4. Make all figures neat and readable. Print whenever and wherever possible. Do not mark over figures when an error has been made--use an eraser.
5. Keep a duplicate copy of all orders, forms, and surveys.
6. Keep carbon paper clean and dry. Replace worn out carbon paper immediately.
7. Keep surplus stocks of store stationery clean and free from grease spots.
8. Check all calculations by doing each a second time, and check entries by comparing them with the original copy.



## A Code for Store Managers<sup>2</sup>

The manager who gives the following code some serious thought and approaches it in an objective manner will benefit a great deal by doing so. It will not only make his job easier for him but will help him to develop a more competent organization and, thus, improve his over-all operation. By following this code he will gain the respect and confidence of his subordinates and superiors. To derive the maximum benefit from it, the manager must give each factor careful and thorough consideration.

As a store manager charged with the duty and possessed with the opportunity to lead a group of employees, and supervising the use of equipment, tools, and material, I will sincerely endeavor to guide my thoughts and actions by the following code:

1. I will honestly size up my own capabilities and endeavor to live up to them fully.
2. I will frankly recognize my own limitations and do my utmost to improve my qualifications wherever inadequate.
3. I will try never to underestimate the importance of the other person's point of view, whether he is above or below me in authority.
4. I will remember constantly that the people who work under my supervision are worthy of every consideration and try to deal with them as fellow men.
5. I will be ever mindful that the discovery and development of talent in my men is an important part of my job.

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<sup>2</sup>

Compiled by the Foremen's Club, York, Pennsylvania.

6. I will try to listen more than I talk, keeping in mind that he who listens can always learn.
7. I will maintain an open mind, in the full realization that he who shuts out the ideas of others shuts out more than he shuts in.
8. I will always recognize that I can make more friends by being genuinely interested in other people than I can by trying to get other people interested in me.
9. I will not hamper myself by carrying old grudges or prejudices.
10. I will never hesitate to share my knowledge and experience with my assistants for fear that they may eventually know more than I, because helping them to success will lift me to greater responsibility and opportunity for service.
11. I will not fear to assume the responsibilities of supervision; I will never try to shift blame for errors from myself to my workers.
12. I will not miss the opportunity to give sincere praise and credit where praise and credit are deserved.
13. I will not take myself too seriously, but will realize that blustering, putting on airs, and unnecessary display of authority are but the tactics of the weak.
14. I will maintain friendliness without over familiarity.
15. I will deal fairly with a man with a grievance, giving just as much consideration to the man with an "imaginary" grievance as to the man with a grievance that is fully justified.
16. I will treat all my men without partiality or favoritism.
17. I will take a deep concern in the safety, the health, and the general well-being of each of my men.

18. I will never forget that my status as a supervisor obligates me to be a good citizen, to set a good example, and to consider the interests of the men I supervise as well as the interests of the men who supervise me.

## CHAPTER III

### GROCERY MERCHANDISING

The term merchandising is often regarded as having an air of mystery about it, when actually there is no mystery about it at all. Merchandising may be referred to simply as buying and selling. Successful merchandising is performing the common tasks of buying and selling uncommonly well. It entails original thought, planning, and diligent follow-through, all with the one main objective in mind of creating customer interest and satisfying her needs. When this is accomplished maximum sales and profits will be attained.

#### Fundamentals of Retail Selling

A good place to start building a successful merchandising organization is with the fundamentals of retail selling. An alert store manager will make every effort to develop in himself and in his entire organization the following principles to help his customers buy wisely.

##### A. Know your merchandise:

1. Know what your store carries in stock.
2. Know the location of each item carried.
3. Know the facts about the merchandise you sell.
  - a) Facts about preparing.

- b) Special features and qualities.
- c) How to care for and use merchandise.
- d) Company's own brands carried.

B. Have wholesome attitude.

- 1. Be loyal to company.
- 2. Be helpful to customers and other employees.
- 3. Watch your health.
- 4. Keep personal appearance neat and attractive.
- 5. Keep enthusiastic about your job.

C. Understand and like people.

- 1. Get customers' point of view.
- 2. Serve people as you like to be served.
- 3. Be courteous, considerate, and attentive.
- 4. Be friendly but not familiar.
- 5. Find out what customers want.
- 6. Treat customers as invited guests.

D. Use good selling methods.

- 1. Give customers prompt and courteous attention.
- 2. Present merchandise in an attractive and respectful manner.
- 3. Give honest, convincing facts about merchandise.
- 4. Answer questions and objections fully and promptly--help customers decide.
- 5. Suggest merchandise to satisfy additional needs.
- 6. Show appreciation for your customers' patronage.



## Ordering

In ordering non-perishable commodities, many managers have the attitude that they can not get into trouble. This is true to some extent but to realize maximum potential sales, considerable thought must be given to ordering even non-perishables. Advertised and special priced items must be checked carefully so that sufficient quantities will be ordered to satisfy the increase in demand. To realize maximum sales and profits, changes in the demand for seasonal items must be anticipated and orders increased or decreased accordingly.

Some managers prefer to keep a record of orders, while others do not consider it essential. If a manager is having trouble with his ordering, it is recommended that he keep some record of previous orders, similar to those kept on meat and produce orders. With this record, future orders can be improved by correcting past mistakes.

To provide variety the commodities available on the order sheet can be checked against those in stock. Over-ordering can be avoided by recording on the order sheet commodities on hand and on order that have not been received. When deciding on the quantity to be ordered, probable effect of paydays, local buying habits, and holidays should be given consideration.

Ordering sufficient quantities of basic perishables, such as bread and fresh milk, is very important. A manager

is wise if he makes reasonably certain that he never sells completely out of such items. Having a few loaves of bread left over is less costly in the long run than losing customers because they have to make another stop for bread or milk after buying all their other merchandise at the store in which they usually shop. Build a reputation for always having bread and milk and you will build volume. At first customers will stop for bread or milk only, but will soon form the habit of coming into a particular store and become regular customers. That is, if a good job of merchandising is being done in all the other departments.

The likes and dislikes of the person making out the order should not enter into the decision of whether to order an item or not. Let the customers decide what they want.

### Special Displays

Displaced and extended shelf displays, tied-in with special promotion or advertising, are the merchandiser's most effective volume builders. This is true for several reasons. Special displays highlight values, thus, giving the customer a favorable price impression. Attractive, massive displays give the store a "live" atmosphere which in turn sells merchandise by arousing the interest of the customer.

Merchandise to be displayed should be carefully selected, using the sales plan and advertising list as guides.



Seasons, special prices, sudden changes in the market, one-cent sales, deal packages<sup>1</sup>, coupons, and many other factors have to be considered when selecting merchandise for display. It is a good principle to try to keep one special priced item, such as a one-cent sale or a special deal item before the customers at all times. When a good promotional feature comes up, such as a one-cent sale, it is sometimes wise to consider ordering a three or four weeks' supply, that is, if it is a one-time deal (order one time only). This will usually serve the purpose until another similar promotion is available. The special feature display should be moved to a different spot each week so the customers who come into the store every week will not get the impression that the item is not selling. The same is true about any display. It will lose its effectiveness if left in one spot too long.

One way in which left-over display merchandise can be moved, is to classify the display spots in the store as primary and secondary. Build all new displays in the primary spots and move any of the previous weeks' displays to the secondary spots for the purpose of disposing of the excess merchandise that was ordered for the primary display. This method permits heavier ordering and thus more massive

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<sup>1</sup>A "deal package" is a special offer, usually made up by the manufacturer, such as two like items banded together and selling for the regular price of one.

and attractive displays, without the danger of having a surplus accumulate in the back room. In short, when an item does not sell as fast as anticipated and there is an excessive amount left, move it to another display position and leave it on sale. It will sell if left on display, where as it will not if placed in the back room.

Displays must not only be attractive but also must be designed for selling. They should be built in such a way that the merchandise is easily accessible to the customer and arranged in such a manner that there is no danger of the display or any part of it collapsing. Facing the labels makes the display more attractive and the merchandise is more easily identified. A value is not a value unless the price is prominently shown, therefore, no display is considered complete until it has a price-tag on it.

Price-tags on shelf items are also very important. The customers depend upon the shelf-tags and not upon the price stamped on the merchandise. When price-tags are missing or incorrect, the customers have a feeling of distrust toward the store. They get the impression that the price-tags have been removed or left off intentionally for dishonest reasons. At any rate missing and incorrect price-tags will create a great deal of customer ill-will that can be avoided very easily.

### Balanced Movement of Stock

High profit merchandise must be promoted as well as high volume merchandise so that maximum dollar profits are realized on any given sales volume. It is obvious that sales can be increased by pushing low priced merchandise, but low prices usually mean low markup. In an operation where this is a practice, a large amount of cash may go through the cash register but very little of it remains as profit after the expenses are paid. Any operator can increase sales this way, but it takes a good merchandiser to increase sales and profits at the same time.

Now the question is, how can balanced movement of stock be accomplished? There are a number of different factors that contribute to balanced movement, such as good shelf space allocation, and proper ordering, but the most important aid is the branch or company merchandiser's sales plan. The importance of this plan can not be overemphasized. It is made up by capable specialists, who are in a position to obtain all the facts on markets, markup, price advantages, competitive conditions, and other factors that are pertinent in developing a successful merchandising plan. It is true one sales plan can not be made up for one hundred stores without changes being necessary in some localities. However, caution must be used in changing a sales plan to fit a particular store. The manager should make certain that profit items are substituted for profit items and volume

items for volume items, so that the carefully designed sales plan will not be thrown out of balance. If the manager is not experienced and sure of what he is trying to accomplish, it is better if he follows the sales plan as is even though he feels it does not quite fit his trading area.

#### Coordinating Promotions with Advertising

Another factor closely related to the sales plan is coordinating the store sales plan with branch or company advertising. When the list of merchandise to be advertised is received, the manager should check to see if enough has been ordered to satisfy the increased demand that will result from the advertising. Display the advertised items where customers can easily see them, or give them extra space on the shelf. Point-of-sale cards and posters can be used to tell the customers that, "This is the merchandise advertised." Sales should be planned so that maximum advantage is realized from all company, and also manufacturers' or brokers' advertising. In-the-store merchandising coordinated with advertising is one of the most effective merchandising techniques a store manager can exploit. However, many managers fail to take full advantage of it.

#### Shelf Space Allotment

Shelf space allotment is another factor that has a great affect upon the success of a supermarket operation. Every item should have enough space so that the shelf supply

will not have to be replenished during busy periods. Space allocated to slow moving items must not be over extended, but yet, must be kept above a minimum so the item is not hard to locate.

Maintaining good space allocation is a constant battle. Different seasons, intensive advertising campaigns, and other such conditions will make it necessary to adjust the shelf space of the items affected. The best time to check space allotment conditions is just after the busiest day of the week. Items that have been depleted substantially should be given more space, unless the increased movement is known to be only temporary for some reason.

#### Rotating Merchandise

In order to assure customers fresh merchandise, careful attention should be given to the rotation of semi-perishable and perishable items. When dated merchandise is approaching its expiration date special effort should be made to move it while it is still salable. All the merchandise in the store should be rotated at least several times a year.

#### A "Ready for Business" Atmosphere

Customers prefer to shop in stores where shelves are well stocked with a good variety of merchandise. For some reason they will pass by merchandise if the shelf is half empty, therefore, it is important to keep the shelves as full as possible at all times. However, it is not advisable



to stock during periods when traffic is heavy. Available merchandise listed on the order sheet may be used as a check on complete variety. With few exceptions stores should carry every available item in the regular line.

#### Handling Slow Moving Items

All too often the statement is made, "That item does not sell in this locality." This is true in some cases, but many times it is true only because no effort has been made to acquaint the customers with the item. An item that is tagged a "misfit" in a given store is a challenge to the manager to put forth a real honest effort to establish a local market for it, and thus increase sales, or prove to himself beyond any doubt that the item will not sell. Market conditions are too often the result of the attitude of the store manager, and attitudes are not always based on facts. Every manager should ask himself, "Do I have the facts to prove that this item will not sell in my store?" Sales are lost in many cases because the answer to this question is "no."

#### Employee Enthusiasm

To be successful a merchandising plan must have the enthusiastic support of the store employees. Unfortunately they can not be expected to show enthusiasm just because they have been told to be enthusiastic. Their enthusiasm must be aroused in some way. The plan must be presented

to them in a manner that will create interest and sell them on its merits. Developing selling spirit in the employees is one of the most difficult and important tasks of a store manager.

One approach to the development of selling spirit in the employees is through group participation. Human relations studies show that when employees help plan future events they are more enthusiastic and determined to get behind the plan and make it a success. The importance of the attitude of the employees can be stressed further by pointing out that, usually a poor sales plan will be more successful with the firm backing of the employees than a good plan without their backing. The human relations aspect of management will be covered more thoroughly in Chapter VIII.

### Friendliness

It would seem more appropriate to discuss friendliness in another chapter, but creating a friendly atmosphere in the store is just as much a part of good merchandising as effective displaying and ordering. Customers are guests in the store and should be treated with the same respect that guests receive in a private home.

Employees must be trained to be friendly, but not familiar, with the customers. The attitude should be instilled within the employees that the customer is doing the entire organization a favor by shopping in their store, and not vice versa.



### Damaged and Soiled Merchandise

Leaving damaged or soiled items on display is poor merchandising. They will not sell, therefore, it is wise to remove them from the sales shelf immediately and avoid creating customer ill-will. Establishing an outlet for damaged merchandise in order to avoid unnecessary loss is essential to good merchandising. It can be sold at a reduced price, for example, to employees, restaurants, or other type institutions.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRODUCE MERCHANDISING

The fresh fruit and vegetable department plays a very important role in determining the success of any supermarket operation. Every manager has his own detailed techniques for promoting produce sales. However, there are certain basic principles that, if followed, will contribute greatly to the success of any produce department, large or small. Unfortunately these all-important basic principles are sometimes overlooked. It is the purpose here to set forth some of the more important of these principles that will aid in building produce sales.

#### Ordering

Good merchandising is said to be, "Having the right merchandise, in the right place, at the right time, in the right quantities, and at the right price." From this definition it is evident that ordering plays a very important part in good merchandising, especially the merchandising of perishables.

Produce selling always demands merchandising daring. Every move is a risk, but it can be a carefully calculated risk. The first thing to remember in preparing the produce order is that a market must have produce to sell it.

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Check the stock of produce on hand before starting to prepare the order. Check the amount and condition of produce on display, in the backroom and in the cooler. Do not trust your memory on this first step, for produce moves in and out of the store very quickly. Then check the amount that you have on order that has not yet been delivered.

When you have determined the amount on hand, you are ready to estimate the sales for the period covered by the order. The sales for any given period can never be definitely known, but there are many facts that can be brought to bear on this question. The most reliable indicators are the sales for the previous week or two and the sales for the same week of the preceding year. Many things may change produce sales from year to year and even from week to week. The weather will not only affect the sales of produce items, but will determine how long they can be kept without spoilage. Ease off on the highly perishable leaf greens and berries when the weather is unseasonably warm. Step up on salad vegetables when it is warm and on vegetables to be cooked when it turns cooler.

Items that are to be advertised must be ordered in quantity to back up the advertising and if the price is below normal, additional amounts will be needed.

Home-grown deals, canning sales and the first-of-the-season shipments on seasonal items, such as strawberries, represent big volume opportunities for the produce market.

These are short-term opportunities that must be anticipated and planned well in advance. They can not be built up from week to week as with the volume on the basic items (refer to classification of items in Appendix A) but demand an all-out effort for a single week. Seasonal items offer the best chance to bring new customers to the market but the basic items are what keep them coming.

Effective ordering of this group of seasonal items is a test of produce management. When your produce buyer tells you that the time is right, these items must be ordered in quantity, mass-displayed and sold immediately.

A produce department that sells out every item every day is losing sales that could be obtained by heavier ordering. No matter how carefully the order may be planned, it is never possible to make the amount of produce ordered exactly the same as the potential sales.

Following is an outline of the steps just covered that should be taken in making out the produce order:

1. Consult a check list of available commodities to provide variety.
2. Check the produce on the rack, in the backroom, in the cooler and on order.
3. Check the order control sheet to determine the quantities ordered in the past week or two.
4. Consider the day of the week the order will arrive, probable effect of paydays, local buying habits, and holidays.

5. Order sufficient quantities of promotional and advertised items.
6. Order available seasonal items in sufficient quantities.
7. Check with buyer or source of supply on conditions of supply.
8. Note carefully the unit quantity of each item ordered.
9. Take advantage of below normal prices.

Intelligent ordering takes time but it is time well spent. An order that is made out haphazardly and in a hurry can and usually does turn out to be an expensive short cut. Either excessive losses are incurred because of overordering or sales are lost because of underordering and failure to order some items altogether. Ordering of fresh fruits and vegetables should be given careful attention by considering all the factors that will serve as ordering guides.

### Displaying

The key to selling fruits and vegetables is appearance. No matter whether produce is displayed in open bulk displays, prepackaged form, in refrigerated cases or in iced cases, it is the appearance of each individual item that actually clinches the sale. An attractive, well built, properly price tagged produce display is its own salesman, and it

can add to the appearance of the whole store. But above all, a good display must also be a display that sells the items it contains.

Here are ten rules which apply to all forms of produce displays:

1. Make every item in the display attractive--the customer is chiefly interested in individual items she wants to buy, not the overall appearance of the display.
2. Keep displays full. Remember that mass sells merchandise--there is nothing more difficult to sell than the last few items of a display.
3. Do not mix old and new merchandise--a small display of nothing but fresh produce will be more effective than a large mass containing some old items.
4. Place price tags on every item, no matter how expensive--no item can be a bargain if the customers do not know the price.
5. Contrast colors of the various produce items to add to the attractiveness of displays.
6. Concentrate displays--one large display will sell more merchandise than two of half the size.
7. Take advantage of special merchandising weeks, seasonal items, canning sales and gift basket promotions.
8. Rotate merchandise. One solution is to bag for

self-service the items removed from the display, place the new supply on the float and place the bagged merchandise on top--it will sell first and assure complete turnover.

9. Move displays frequently. It is good produce merchandising to move produce displays frequently so that the customers do not get accustomed to seeing items in the same display space week after week. Move them around so that when the customer goes to the spot where lettuce was displayed last week she is shown apples, or another fruit or vegetable--make her look over the produce department, not make it a one-stop express run.
10. Package for self-service. A display containing both bulk and packaged merchandise will sell more than either a bulk display or one entirely of packages. Combining the two promotes confidence in the packages, gives more selection of units and lends itself to mass display.

Displaying produce effectively is an art, and it should be the goal of every produce manager to become a master of this art. Well planned, fresh, and attractive displays in the produce department create a pleasing atmosphere throughout the entire store, and as a result sales are increased in all departments. Because of this pleasing atmosphere that is created, the produce department is a good place to



start a campaign for building sales volume for a store.

### Prepackaging<sup>1</sup>

Prepackaging is simply "unitizing," placing the produce in a convenient consumer-sized package for self-service sale.

#### Why Prepackage?

It speeds traffic--makes selection easier for the customer.

It reduces additional labor costs due to excessive handling and trimming.

It reduces waste caused by excessive customer handling.

It means products are made up and ready to go.

It reduces waste through extension of store shelf life.

It gives displays a more attractive look. The customer is able to select the size she needs for her family.

It increases sales--aids rotation--is convenient--cleaner.

#### How to Package.

Select the right size bag.

Make the package look well filled.

Give it a value appearance.

Make it look attractive.

Display all packages neatly.

Always package a variety of sizes, using catch weights.

This way you make selection easier and meet the demands of all the customers.

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<sup>1</sup>From the Fruit and Vegetable Merchandising Manual. Compiled by Raymond A. Higgins and George N. Motts, Agricultural Economists, Michigan State College.

### When to Package.

After the department is completely set up, move from one display to another and package several packs of each item.

Package enough to get a head start on traffic--package when there is little traffic--during slack hours--when extra help is available.

### How Much to Package.

Let traffic be your barometer--let the day of the week be a guide, too, in packaging ahead.

Do not get too much ahead on the slower selling days--increase the amounts for heavy weekend traffic.

### Package Rotation is Important.

Check packages frequently--packaged produce breaks down faster than bulk if it is not combined with refrigeration.

When replacing bulk merchandise in float, be sure to rotate.

Regardless of how transparent the package may be, your customers must depend more on your reputation for good produce with packaged than with bulk displays. Gain your customers' confidence--assure them of fresh fruits and vegetables.

### Hints for Speed and Efficiency.

Keep these materials handy: bag toppers, bags, staples and staplers, list or crayon, indelible pencils for

pricing, gum tape, and rubber bands.

Package from the display, not from the backroom--this gives you necessary rotation so important in maintaining freshness. (However, it may be necessary to do some packaging in the backroom for weekends.)

The past year (1951) has witnessed a very rapid advance in customer acceptance of prepackaged fruits and vegetables. And, even though the danger of a transparent wrapping materials shortage still exists, produce prepackaging is making rapid steps forward.

Experiments are still going on to determine the proper relation between the cost of packaging materials and the cost of the produce itself, and further research has brought about the increased use of new plastic materials and new types of paper bags. Fruit and vegetable producers are now offering a greater amount of their items prepackaged in mesh bags and cartons, but, in general, the trend is toward packaging at the point of purchase, where, with proper supervision, spoilage can be reduced and labor costs minimized.

Recent studies by the Kroger Company have revealed that the customer is not always receiving full value when she buys prepackaged produce. The true value received for each dollar spent for prepackaged produce was found to average between seventy and eighty cents. These studies are being conducted in an effort to correct this undesirable situation. Most of this loss is the result of improper selection of items to be prepackaged, carelessness in weighing and pricing, and

poor control after the packages are placed on display. Only top grade items should be selected for prepackaging, careful attention given to the weighing and pricing, and all packages on display should be closely inspected several times each day. These three simple steps will contribute greatly toward increasing the value received in prepackaged produce.

#### Handling Over-ripe and Over-aged Produce

A common, unsound practice of many produce merchandisers is the failure to reduce the price on an over-ripe or over-aged produce item, to move it before deterioration sets in. They just can not convince themselves that the first loss is the least loss. After the item has started to deteriorate it does not represent a value at any price. Good judgment is necessary in deciding when and how much to reduce the price of an item. Special selling effort along with a price reduction will move the merchandise faster and lessen the possibility of further price reduction. More time should be spent selling produce and less thinking about keeping it.

It has been pointed out in this chapter that produce merchandising consists of ordering a variety of merchandise in the proper quantities and effectively displaying it after it is received. Also, there are some very reliable guides that will make the job of ordering easier and more scientific. The same is true with displaying merchandise. If the principles as stated in this chapter are followed, produce displays

will secure maximum sales by attracting new customers and holding the old customers.

Many other aspects must be considered to make a produce operation successful. Not only do sales have to be promoted to make a profit, but the profit has to be maintained by proper control over such things as expenses and spoilage. Methods of control over these factors that go to make up a successful operation will be covered in Chapter VI.

## CHAPTER V

### MEAT MERCHANDISING

Great strides have been taken toward 100 per cent self-service, especially by the chains, and the trend is still toward more extensive use of this type operation. Because of this trend away from service operations, the material in this chapter pertains to the more important merchandising aspects of self-service meats.

Since self-service is relatively new, many problems have not yet been solved. However, a great deal of testing has already been done and a manager can avoid many troubles if he checks with established authority before using methods not recommended by his company.

#### Principles of Self-Service

The responsibility of the manager increases with self-service. Since meat can not be cut and wrapped on demand, it is necessary to plan ahead and anticipate customer purchases if an adequate assortment of fresh merchandise is to be maintained without excessive rewraps and carry-overs.

Such things as cleanliness and friendliness are just as important in a self-service as in a service type operation and should be given proper consideration. Some of the

problems of the service type, such as poor customer service during rush hours and wasted effort are eliminated by self-service, but other problems are created.

One such problem is that of special service to customers. It is generally agreed that special services, such as three-inch steaks, thick chops, and special ground round, should be discouraged. If this is not done, to a certain degree, the whole purpose of self-service may be defeated. Customers can be discouraged in this respect by convincing them that the stock merchandise is of the same high quality as the special cuts. Insistence on complete displays helps eliminate calls for special service. This is also important in securing maximum sales. Some customers will not ask for special service if they can not find what they want, thus, sales are lost, and if it happens too often, so are the customers.

"Eye appeal" and "sales appeal" are certainly requisites of prepackaged meat merchandising. Some operators trim closer for self-service than for a service operation. Others use the same standards in self-service as for a service operation. It is agreed, however, that the closer the trim the more appealing the package will be. Also, to increase eye and sales appeal, when back boards are used, trim them to the size of the cut. The less back board there is showing the more appealing the package will be.

Labeling of the packages should be given careful consideration. The position of the label on the package will vary for different cuts. Most operators agree that the label should contain the name of the item, the price per pound, total weight, and total price. It should be established where each label is to be placed on the particular cut. In deciding upon the position of the label, two cardinal thoughts should be kept in mind: (1) Not to conceal any waste, and (2) for easy visibility by the customer. The latter point is important because, if the label is properly placed, it will diminish unnecessary handling by customers.

Suggestive selling by use of point-of-sale posters helps increase the volume of offal and specialty cuts in self-service meat merchandising. These are high profit items and if merchandised properly will improve operating results by giving a more balanced movement of profit and volume merchandise.

Discoloration is a troublesome problem, especially for the smaller operator where volume and turnover is limited. Fast turnover is the best solution to the problem of discoloration. Lights of low intensity and soft fluorescence are helpful in minimizing fading, but they do not really solve the problem. Elimination of oxygen from within the package will definitely retard the discoloration which normally takes place when cured and prepared meats are exposed to lights. This is why it is important that each



package is sealed in a manner that will make it air tight.

### Displaying

One of the more important factors in self-service meat merchandising is to keep the display case as full looking as possible at all times. No matter how fresh or attractive the packages are, if they are not arranged in an orderly manner, the customers assume at a glance that the only items left in the case are those passed-up by other customers, because they represent a poor value.

The full appearing effect can be accomplished early in the week by increasing the space allotted to cuts that move fast on week days. The latter part of the week more space is given to roasts and other week-end cuts. On days when traffic is light one or two layers of each cut may be sufficient to give the display an attractive appearance. When traffic is heavy the case may be filled to the safe refrigeration level. At either time the display is most attractive when it has a uniform height.

Another important factor is variety. An attempt should be made to provide a good selection of cuts and a variety in the sizes of the cuts. The size of the cut that is most popular in a given locality should be used as the guide in providing variety. If a one-inch steak is the most popular size, the range may be established, for example, from one-half inch up to two inches, with most of them about one-inch.

Frequent requests for a size not stocked should prompt the stocking of that size in sufficient quantity. The same is true with the other cuts. Variety in weight should center around the most popular size.

It has been found that displaying overstocked items between fast moving items will move the overstock out more rapidly. Hostesses are also helpful in suggestive selling on slow movers.

Special meat displays located away from the meat display case have been used very successfully in promoting meat sales. Smoked meats lend themselves very well to displaced displays. Steaks, roasts, and other fresh cuts displayed on dry ice in a good traffic spot will increase sales considerably.

All outdated, discolored, or damaged packages should be removed from the display case immediately. As much of the cut as possible should be made visible to the customer. Obscuring waste and bone is a sure way to make any meat department unpopular with the customers.

The following list of practical tips for self-service operators was compiled by Armour and Company:

1. Place slow moving items between fast moving items.
2. Have attendant at the case at all times.
3. Expose red meats to the air for at least fifteen minutes before wrapping.
4. Cutting and wrapping room should not be over sixty degrees Fahrenheit.

5. Trim bone to eliminate sharp edges that will tear wrapper.
6. Code-date all packages to insure proper rotation and freshness.
7. Wrap lunch meats tightly.
8. High humidity in coolers and cases keeps meats in best condition.
9. Use backing boards to give rigidity to large cuts.
10. Too tight a wrap on red meats causes excessive bleeding.
11. Grind meats close to time of sale.
12. Use drug store type inter wrap for variety meats.
13. Recessed scales and recessed hot plates help cut costs.
14. Standardize on style of wrapping.
15. Well planned production control is essential.
16. Trim carcass meats on arrival and use trimmings immediately.
17. Package cold cuts, bacon, and smoked meats early in the week.
18. Let rolled roasts hang and drip before cutting.
19. Use a cool iron to apply labels to prevent searing the meat.
20. Do not unnecessarily expose meats to light.

### Operating Standards

The sales, production, and cost figures listed below represent efficient performances. The operator who is not meeting these figures should examine his operation critically and carefully. The operator who is doing better is in a relatively favorable position, at least compared with the typical performance of other self-service stores. These figures were also compiled by Armour and Company. As self-service operations become more efficient, these figures will change, but at present (1952) they are representative of the average self-service operation.

#### Sales

Per linear foot of display case . . . . .	\$100
Per week per man-hour . . . . .	\$ 20
Meat department to total store sales . . . . .	30%
Cold cuts to total meat . . . . .	Above 10% desirable

#### Production

Per man-hour (in packages) . . . . .	25
Per man-hour (in pounds) . . . . .	30-35
Packages per girl . . . . .	1 per minute

#### Costs

Wages (percent of sales) . . . . .	6-7½%
Packaging supplies (percent of sales) . . . . .	1-1½%
Total wages and packaging supplies . . . . .	7-9%
Packaging cost per package . . . . .	4-5¢

### Customer Dislikes

In a survey made by Du Pont, customers had the opportunity to express their dislikes about self-service meat. These comments will indicate to the good merchandiser some of the weaknesses that must be eliminated in order to build customer confidence and sales volume.

#### Some Phase of Packaging:

Fat and bone underneath; hidden waste; too many scraps in cold cuts; not sure of weight; cardboard soaks up juices; can not inspect; cardboard hides meat; can not see both sides; and can not judge number of slices.

#### Doubt of Freshness and Quality:

Not as fresh; do not know how long packaged; like fresh cuts; not as good; less flavorful; and tough.

#### Poor Variety:

Do not get correct amount; poor selection; can not get desired thickness; and have to take meat as is.

It is evident that some of these comments are incorrect, however, incorrect or not, it is the customer's honest opinion and will certainly affect her buying habits. Therefore, it is the job of the merchandiser to improve the weaknesses and build customer confidence by changing the erroneous attitudes with good merchandising methods.

### Ordering

Careful, intelligent ordering is essential if the meat

department is to make the most of its sales possibilities. It can not attract new customers and hold regular customers, if it lacks the kind of merchandise they want. Proper ordering is fundamental to successful merchandising.

To order successfully, it is essential that the following principles be kept clearly in mind:

1. Order the kind of merchandise your customers want.
2. Order large enough quantities to meet all demands of customers for merchandise.
3. Avoid overordering and the serious consequences of a slow turnover, heavy spoilage, and shrinkage losses.
4. Order enough high markup merchandise to assure a satisfactory gross profit.

Faulty ordering almost always is a result of failure to follow a sound plan of determining the real requirements of the store. Planning is so essential that the failure to consider any one of the following factors may result in loss. These factors are: (1) normal quantity desired; (2) quantity on hand; (3) effect of special prices and advertising on demand; (4) seasonal factors--weather and holiday needs; (5) racial demands--nationality and buying habits of customers; (6) general local business conditions.

To keep all these factors in mind when making out each item on an order form might seem to be an impossibility. But, if the following plan is adopted for considering them,

each factor will be covered automatically. The plan requires no more time than less systematic methods, and consists of these steps:

1. Determine probable quantity needed, based on want book, stocks on hand, and estimate of sales during the period for which order is being made out.
2. Increase size of orders slightly above estimated requirements, except in the case of highly perishable items, to guard against emergencies.
3. Check the order against items already on order but not delivered, and reduce or add to the quantities if necessary.
4. Review the order in the light of probable prices, particularly when the item is to be advertised or pushed as a special, and revise the order if necessary.
5. Review the order in the light of seasonal and holiday requirements, and revise if necessary.
6. Occasionally check orders in light of such factors as general business conditions, and number of long-profit items in the department. Increase or decrease orders if advisable.
7. Add to the order items the warehouse is anxious to move, whenever possible.
8. Be sure to sign all orders, affix store stamp, and have orders made out on time.

An order intelligently made out with each factor closely considered, will prove far more profitable than one filled out with only a casual glance inside the cooler and a hurried review of the carbon order on merchandise coming in.

### Merchandising Plan

Based upon some of the merchandising points already presented, the following six-point plan can be used to good advantage by any merchandiser of self-service meats.

Sell Advantages in Advance: Use store signs and personnel to overcome possible doubt of freshness and quality, habit and preference for the old way. Talk up convenience, independent selection, cleanliness, variety, appearance and packaging.

Prove Quality and Freshness: This can be done through advertising, "talking signs," and having a personable clerk act as salesman during peak traffic periods. Use every possible method to convince skeptics that your packaged meat is good meat, cut fresh, packaged fresh, kept fresh, and sold fresh.

Cut and Trim for Critics: Service meat is usually trimmed to the customer's specification after selection. Self-service meats must be trimmed to her liking before packaging. Surplus fat, bone and waste mean poor quality to shoppers--make every cut "pan-ready."



Provide Variety: Provide variety in thickness, size, number in package and variety in items. Know your customers' needs and establish a "pattern" to meet them. But, try new things too--new cuts, new items, new menu suggestions.

Package Professionally: A sloppy package means poor quality and lack of freshness to shoppers. Good packaging starts with the use of proper wrapping films, boards, trays, and labels. Neat, snug, attractive packages are good salesmen.

Merchandise Temptingly: Special displays, "features" and menu suggestions make regular buyers out of occasional buyers, and will tempt present non-buyers. Neat, orderly, well stocked displays sell meat--time spent arranging and maintaining selling displays is a good investment.

The importance of the above merchandising points can not be over stressed in their contribution to the success of a self-service meat operation. Omit any part of the six-point plan and the operation will suffer. Every merchandiser should strive to sell the strong points and strengthen the weak points of his operation.

Other aspects of the meat operation, such as work scheduling and controlling expenses, will be covered in Chapters VI and VII.

## CHAPTER VI

### METHODS OF OPERATIONAL CONTROL

#### I. Expense Control

In the preceding chapters some principles of promoting sales to secure maximum dollar profits were set forth. Once maximum dollar profits are secured, the operation is well on the road to success. However, the important job of maintaining the profits, after they have been secured, still lies ahead. The more expenses amount to, the less net operating profit will be, therefore, the job of maintaining profits consists of controlling all expenses that are under the control of the manager. When speaking of expenses, customer pilferage, inventory shortages, and loss due to errors and carelessness are also considered operating expenses.

Controllable expenses are those that the manager can do something about. In other words, they are under the manager's control. In a supermarket they consist of expenses such as wages; wrapping supplies; store supplies; cash over and short; store repairs and maintenance; laundry and towel service; heat, light, power, and water; trash removal; and spoilage of perishable merchandise.

In controlling any of the above items it is important

to pay particular attention to the little things. Small, seemingly insignificant practices that result in the loss of a few cents will add up to a surprisingly high total if permitted to occur often enough. Exercising good control over the little things can make the difference between a very successful operation and a mediocre one.

### Wage Expense Control

The store manager has little control over the rates of pay his employees receive, however, he has a great deal of control over the number of man-hours it requires to do the various jobs throughout the store. There are certain methods a manager can use to get maximum productivity per man-hour. One method is to schedule carefully the time each employee is to work. Another method of increasing efficiency, that can be closely coordinated with scheduling, is by work planning and job assignment. By assigning in writing specific jobs to each employee, a great deal of time is saved because each employee knows what he is to do at all times while in the store. Employee training is also important in creating an efficient work group and will be covered in Chapter VII.

Time Schedules: In making out a time schedule for each employee a definite procedure must be followed. A more reliable schedule and less changes and adjustments will be necessary if the following steps are taken:

1. List the names of all employees by department and job classification. That is, list all grocery

department employees together, and within this group list the checkers, stock clerks, and part-time employees in groups. Do the same for the produce and meat departments, using a separate form for each department in large stores.

2. Schedule time-off for each employee. Give employees time-off on days when they are least needed. Be sure not to schedule too many off at the same time and as a result have less than the minimum number that is required to operate the store properly.
3. Fill in hours to be worked by each employee on the busiest day of the week and then the second busiest day.
4. Fill in remaining days.
5. Compute total for all departments and compare with the estimated volume that is expected for the week to determine whether or not the proposed man-hours scheduled are in line.

In checking over the completed schedule make certain that lunch hours are staggered properly to avoid getting caught short of help during lunch periods. Schedule employees to be in the store when they are most needed.

Job Assignment: After the hours each employee is to work are established, each should be assigned specific duties in writing.

Assigning jobs can also be very confusing unless some

systematical approach is used. Following is a suggested approach to job assignment:

All jobs in a supermarket fall within ten major job classifications. These ten classifications are:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Ordering                                    | 6. Salvage and returns |
| 2. Receiving                                   | 7. Cleaning            |
| 3. Stocking                                    | 8. Care of equipment   |
| 4. Displaying                                  | 9. Records and reports |
| 5. Checking orders and<br>waiting on customers | 10. Miscellaneous      |

Under each of these job classifications all the store jobs pertaining to each should be listed, keeping the jobs in each department in a separate list. For example, under ordering (grocery department) list all the orders that are made out in the grocery department, and under ordering (produce department) list all the orders that are made out in the produce department. The same is done for the meat department. This is continued until all the jobs under each job classification are listed for each department.

After all the jobs in the store are listed the non-daily jobs should be underscored. Some managers prefer to assign only the jobs that do not have to be done each day. Others prefer to assign all of them. In case the employee is new to your organization it may be wise to list all jobs, but where employees are experienced this may not be necessary.

The important thing is to make sure the responsibility of doing each job is definitely placed.

The next step is to take all non-daily jobs listed under the major classifications and list them according to the day in the week each is to be done.

The final step in job assignment is to assign the jobs listed for each day to the clerks that are scheduled to work in the various departments on that day.

Job assignment results in a more efficient organization because it lets every employee know what he is supposed to do and when to do it. Better control is assured because responsibility for doing specific jobs is definitely placed. Furthermore, in a store with ten or more employees, it is impossible for the manager to assign personally, another task to each employee every time a previously assigned job has been completed.

Work Simplification: Another tool a manager can use in controlling wage expense is work simplification; that is, finding the easiest, most efficient way of doing each job by eliminating all unnecessary motion.

#### Method of Work Simplification<sup>1</sup>

##### Step I Break down the job

1. List all details of the job as done in the present method.

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<sup>1</sup>From the Fruit and Vegetable Merchandising Manual. Compiled by Raymond A. Higgins and George N. Motts, Agricultural Economists, Michigan State College.

Step II Question each job detail

1. Check each detail with these questions:

Why is it necessary?

What is its purpose?

Where should it be done?

When should it be done?

Who should do it?

How can it best be done?

2. Question present facilities:

Store layout and equipment.

Backroom layout and equipment.

Flow of merchandise through the store.

Step III Develop new methods of doing the job

1. Eliminate unnecessary details.
2. Combine details when practical.
3. Rearrange sequence of operations.
4. Simplify the necessary details.
5. Work out ideas with others.

Step IV Apply the new method

1. Sell the proposal to the supervisor.
2. Sell the new method to the employees.
3. Put the new method into use.
4. Give credit where credit is due.

Work simplification is a tool to help managers increase productivity of employees, decrease operating cost, maintain

or improve quality and make jobs easier. The above four-step method is very satisfactory in solving problems such as double handling, delays, heavy jobs, unpleasant work, congestion, storage, confusion, poor handling, and shrinkage.

Wages are the largest single item of expense. For this reason, it is highly important that the manager give consideration to these methods of control.

This should not, however, be taken to mean that the manager keep wage outlay as low as possible. Many times extra help in the store will bring about a decided increase in sales, and profits will go up regardless of the increase in wage expense. The company is just as eager to add additional employees where they are really needed, as it is to cut down the wage expense where superfluous help is being used. The principal point for the manager to keep in mind is that there are many more stores where wage expense is too high than there are stores where wage expense is too low. But, rather than work solely toward reducing or increasing wage outlay, the better procedure is to make a careful analysis of the situation in the particular store. Steps can then be taken to make any necessary adjustments in extra help wage expense.

#### Wrapping Supply Expense

The following rules are suggested as aids in controlling wrapping expenses:

1. Be sure to use the right size bag, or the right



amount of paper--enough to hold the contents safely, but no larger than the contents require.

2. Keep wrapping materials in an orderly manner to avoid the possibility of the supply running out unexpectedly, or of materials becoming unusable because of damage.
3. Order according to needs. Keep a minimum supply on hand to avoid waste caused by carelessness.

### Heat, Light, Water, and Power

Considerable savings will be realized if heat, light, water, and power expenses are properly controlled. The lights in the cooler, restrooms, and other areas should be turned off when they are not needed. Leaky faucets and other losses due to faulty equipment must be given prompt attention if maximum net profits are to be obtained. Air conditioners and heaters are very expensive to run and should be turned down to the minimum requirements during closing hours. Refrigeration equipment should be checked frequently to make certain that it is operating normally. These suggestions may seem trivial, but if neglected can add up to a substantial amount.

### Store Supplies

Store supplies should be kept where employees will not have access to them and where they can be issued as needed by the manager. Waste and carelessness can be discouraged

by making each employee responsible for the supplies he receives and uses.

### Repairs and Maintenance

It is important, and the least expensive in the long run, to keep all equipment in good condition. However, service calls are very expensive, therefore, every effort should be made to determine the cause of the trouble before special service repairmen are called. Many stores have paid ten dollars to have a fuse changed just because no investigation was made before the repairman was called. It certainly does not pay to be penny-wise and pound-foolish about repairs, but the manager should make sure there is a real need for special service before any is called.

### Laundry and Towel Service

Laundry expense can be controlled by allocating to each employee the number of uniforms necessary for one week. If employees are permitted to wear clean uniforms at their leisure the laundry expense will increase considerably. Towel expense may be reduced by ordering cleaning rags from the warehouse, if they are available. In case employees do not have personal lockers in the store, uniforms can be issued one at a time, when needed.

## .II. Protecting Profits by Reducing Losses

Avoidable losses that reduce profits considerably, arise from sources which are familiar to every store manager.

They are excessive spoilage losses, pilferage, employee carelessness, and undesirable practices in the store. It must be recognized that some of these losses can not be eliminated entirely, but in the majority of stores there is room for improvement.

### Over-Ordering

A high percentage of losses are the result of over-ordering, especially of perishables. If the ordering needs reforming, the manager himself can usually find out by looking over the stock on hand at the close of business Saturday night. If there are quantities of highly perishable items left at the close of business, over-ordering is taking place. A brief analysis of daily orders, and normal sales, will determine whether or not poor judgment has been used in ordering.

### Rotating Merchandise

When the employees make a practice of putting the freshest merchandise on top of the old, high losses are certain to result. The manager needs only to observe the methods followed in arranging the coolers, and in putting merchandise away, or to examine the dates on dated merchandise, to discover if important principles of rotation are being overlooked.

### Special Selling Effort

On overstocked or over-ripe merchandise special selling effort will reduce losses by moving these items out before they reach the point where losses may result. Losses frequently can be avoided by arranging special displays, placing slow-moving items in the "hot spots," and moving the merchandise before markdowns are necessary. However, it is far better to sell overstocked or over-ripe merchandise at a reduced price than it is to keep it until it becomes totally unsalable.

The merchandise in the coolers and the necessity for conditioning meat and produce must be checked frequently. Slow-moving items should be properly and prominently displayed. Before leaving the store at night the manager can check the stock and make plans to dispose of overstocks and slow-moving items. If loss is exceedingly high, a spoilage record of every item thrown away can be kept and checked regularly to determine how each could have been avoided. The manager should never hesitate to ask his district supervisor for advice on such matters.

### Produce Handling

Spoilage losses can be reduced by proper handling of fresh fruits and vegetables. The first step in the store protection of produce is to avoid rough handling in unloading. Lift or slide produce cases from the truck, never drop or throw them.

Plan carefully where produce will be placed before it is ready for display. Wet items must never be put on top of dry ones, and all cases with bulges should be stacked on the side to avoid bruising the top layer. Prevent any weight from being placed on banana boxes; keep them out of the sun and away from the heaters. Careful placement when unloading will reduce the amount of lifting and moving as the items are put on display.

Plan where each item is to be placed before starting to fill the produce rack. Put the price tags up as the positions of various items are planned, so that any number of people may work on the rack at the same time, and still place the color and mass where needed.

Frequent sprinkling is essential in keeping a vegetable rack fresh looking in hot, dry weather and in heated store-rooms. Water does not help some vegetables and actually injures others, so be sure how and when each item should be sprinkled.

Ice supplies both low temperature and moisture to vegetables, and it will not harm any item that water will not injure. Since the low temperature offsets any tendency toward heating, ice can be used on such items as green beans and peas under conditions of high temperature and high humidity when water would cause deterioration.

In handling produce in refrigerated cases, it must be remembered that produce can dry out even at low temperatures



and that condensation will moisten items that may be damaged by water.

Packaged produce demands almost the same amount of care as bulk items. Where packaging is done in the store, the most effective control is to package as closely as possible before the time of sale. Doubtful items should be removed immediately from the display for repackaging or possible salvage.

A produce cooler is the most effective place for overnight storage of produce. For overnight storage, items removed from display should be placed loosely in baskets and, if they show any tendency to dry out, should be covered with wet burlap sacks.

Where no produce cooler is available the old-time produce barrel may give effective over-night protection. Produce is usually left in refrigerated cases overnight. Additional ice should be added to iced cases for overnight handling and night covers will reduce the refrigeration cost with iced or mechanically refrigerated cases. When unusually hot weather makes night losses excessive, vegetables may be placed in a produce barrel and the rack cleared at night for additional savings.

The sale of fresh produce is the most profitable to the store and the most satisfactory to the customer. The most effective way to get a fast turnover on an item that shows signs of deterioration is to reduce its price. When

it is necessary to reduce the price, cut it to the point where the bargain value is obvious.

Reconditioned produce is never equal to fresh produce, no matter how carefully the reconditioning is done. Careful ordering will minimize the necessity of selling reconditioned produce.

### Pilferage Control

In controlling pilferage the manager should concentrate his efforts on how to prevent shoplifting rather than catching customers who can not resist the temptation of concealing merchandise and leaving the store without paying for it. The following are methods of making it difficult for the would-be shoplifter.<sup>2</sup>

1. Work Stations: If the employees in the store are made responsible for a definite area which they can observe while working and will constantly cast friendly glances at the shoppers, an immediate improvement will be found solely from the fact that the shoplifter will know that he is being observed. However, this should not be carried to the point of embarrassing the customers. Each store is an individual problem and needs to be carefully studied to determine what stations are necessary to effectively cover the store.

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<sup>2</sup>Store Managers Reference Guide. The Kroger Company, Cincinnati, Ohio.



2. Mirrors: Some areas of the store which can not be seen and are difficult to watch can sometimes be made visible by the proper location of decorative mirrors. The right kind of mirror properly placed will not be objectionable to the customers, but will make the shoplifter realize that this section of the store is under observation and the chances are against her getting by with any pilferage.

3. Peepholes: Many times, especially in stores having serious inventory control trouble, it will be advantageous to have peepholes between the stock room or manager's office and the sales floor, through which employees can observe the shoplifter at work without her realizing she is being watched. Each manager should use his own judgment as to the extent to which he will make use of peepholes in his store.

4. Store Arrangement: Keeping aisleways open to view discourages pilferage. Small valuable articles should be placed where they can be under constant observation. The possibility of the rearrangement or relocation of fixtures can be discussed with the district manager.

5. Store Lights: Pilferage is less of a problem in a store illuminated so there are no dark corners where it would be difficult to observe a shoplifter. If such corners do exist in the store and can not be avoided without expensive alterations, particular attention can be given these sections and merchandise that is not easily pilfered should be placed there.

6. Displays: Huge helter-skelter piles of merchandise which encourage shoplifting are not necessary. A well built, massive display has all the sales advantages without encouraging shoplifting.

7. Cleanliness: A clean store shows the shoplifter that the store employees are efficient and creates an atmosphere that is not conducive to shoplifting.

8. Back Door: It is important to keep the back door locked at all times unless it is actually in use. Whenever anyone has occasion to use the back door, an employee of the store should be present. Back door sales encourage pilferage, therefore should not be permitted. It is also important that employees be required to leave the store by the front door only.

9. Deliveries: All delivery men, whether bringing merchandise into the store or taking anything out, such as waste fats, should always be accompanied by a store employee. No one should be permitted to check merchandise, carry a basket in or out, or serve as a piece counter unless he is accompanied by and is assisting a store employee.

10. Keys to Store: The custodian of the store keys should never let them out of his sight. A wax impression can be made in less than one second.

11. Outside Storage: Merchandise stored in basements or outside buildings should be kept under lock and key. No sales should be made from these rooms.

12. Outside Displays: If merchandise displayed outside the store lends itself to shoplifting, it should be attended by a store employee. In parking lot or sidewalk promotions, an inventory should be kept to enable the store manager to make sure that his promotion has not been detrimental to store profits. It is not difficult to keep an inventory control of these promotions if a cash register is used.

13. Shopping Bags: If it is possible, a store might provide a place near the entrance where articles purchased in other stores can be checked. A large sign placed over this check space can be used to advise the customers to check their parcels or shopping bags before entering the store.

If incoming shopping bags can not be checked, the checker should ask to see all shopping bags. This must be done in a very impersonal and routine manner so as not to antagonize and must be a uniform procedure. It is best to make the request before the checker starts to record the sale on the register. No issue should be made if the customer refuses, and under no circumstances should the bag be forcibly taken away from the customer. A large sign placed near the store entrance stating that shopping bags will be inspected will help in making this an accepted practice.

14. Produce and Meat Packages: As a preventive measure staple or seal all produce and meat packages. If seals are broken, the inside of the package should be inspected by the

checker. Insist upon all prices being plainly marked.

15. Partially Concealed Merchandise: Checkers must always watch carefully for partially concealed merchandise such as a small bottle of olives inside a roll of hand towels, or butter in a margarine carton. Checkers must also watch carefully for merchandise which has not been placed on the counter, such as brooms or mops, or some item being carried in hand or under arm. The checker should ask if the merchandise was purchased in the store before charging the customer for it.

16. Lay-Aways: It is important that care be taken to insure that merchandise put away to be called for later is paid for before it is taken out of the store. Clearly mark on all packages the number of packages involved, the name of the customer, and the amount due. Inform the manager or other designated employees of the details of the lay-away when the merchandise is set aside.

17. Recognizing Shoplifting Tactics: Some of the most common shoplifting tactics are:

- a) Shopping with shopping bags.
- b) Carrying small, valuable items on top of the basket.
- c) Shopping away from the basket and carrying the items to the basket.
- d) Open handbags. Removing coin purse from hand bag.  
Opening handbag to light a cigarette, powder her

nose, or any reason other than to get her money at the cash register.

- e) Taking a complete view of the store when entering.
- f) Concealing items in baby carriages.
- g) Loitering and doubling back.
- h) Those who accompany the shopper on her regular tour through the store.
- i) Items being hid in newspapers, or magazines, or boxes being carried while shopping.
- j) Concealing merchandise in full, long sleeves or other parts of clothing.

18. Police Cooperation: In larger cities it would be well for the store manager to contact the district police station covering the store location, or for the store manager in smaller communities to contact local police, explaining the problem and asking for their assistance, advice, and cooperation. In many cases it will be possible to get photographs, names, and other data which will assist in identifying known shoplifters in the community.

In addition to the store personnel who have regular work stations, there are always those whose work requires them to move about the store stocking and cleaning the shelves. Each of these clerks should be trained to be constantly on the alert and give the impression that they are alert.

All store employees should be trained to have a common

signal to notify the store manager when they suspect or actually see shoplifting. Regardless of the system used, the clerk should always notify the store manager immediately when he suspects or actually sees shoplifting.

Rush hours present the greatest opportunity for shoplifting, especially during lunch hours or periods when some of the employees are unable to be working at the position where their presence would let the shoplifter know it is difficult to steal in the store. During these periods, all employees need to be particularly alert.

One of the most important factors in controlling shoplifting is--that the store manager should be on the sales floor as much as possible, especially during rush hours.

If possible, he should not take his lunch period at the same time each day, but should change the schedule from time to time so that a thief can not know when the manager will be out of the store.

In the event that all preventive measures fail and attempts to worry the shoplifter into paying for the merchandise or returning it to the shelf are unsuccessful, ordinarily the procedure should be to bring the matter to a head. In catching the shoplifter the manager should be familiar with company policies involved and adhere strictly to these policies. This is very important because any violation of the laws protecting the rights of the customer may result in a costly law suit.

### Controlling Inventory Losses

Inventory losses are the result of such conditions as customer and employee pilferage, overcharges and shortages on merchandise received, unsalable merchandise, incorrect prices, errors in checking customers' orders, spoilage, employee carelessness and dishonesty, undesirable practices by employees, and other less important factors that are peculiar to only certain stores.

When excessive inventory losses occur there are certain steps a manager can take to determine the cause of the difficulty and to correct it. Usually the losses can be attributed to one, or a combination of four conditions: (1) customer pilferage, (2) employee dishonesty, (3) errors in billing, and (4) errors or dishonesty in direct-to-the-store delivery charges.

Customer pilferage has already been covered, therefore, only the other three will be discussed here. However, it might be added that if a manager is having a great deal of difficulty with pilferage he may want to ask for outside help to correct the situation.

Various checks can be made to determine whether any of the employees are dishonest. However, again it is more of a problem of eliminating, as nearly as possible, the conditions that cause employees to be dishonest rather than how to catch and punish them. The formulating and enforcing of store rules will eliminate a great deal of conditions that encourage employee pilferage.

For example, one checker should be made responsible for checking out employee orders. Let no one check out his own order, and this includes the manager (set example). The manager should insist upon employees leaving the store after they have bagged and paid for their merchandise. Paying for it and then placing it in the back room until quitting time will only encourage the employee to place more merchandise in the bag and leave without paying for it. If the head meat cutter is required to initial all specially wrapped packages bought by employees, the practice of paying hamburger prices for good steaks and roasts and understating weights will be eliminated.

Checking the registers at different times during the day will usually expose a dishonest checker. If the register does not balance properly the first time it is checked and then at the end of the day it balances, there is good reason to continue the investigation until the cause of the discrepancy has been determined.

Errors in billing are uncommon but may sometimes be the cause of a store having excessive inventory losses. In checking for such errors the manager should give particular attention to the extended charges of items ordered in large quantities.

One of the most common causes of inventory shortages is that of carelessness in checking merchandise into the store, especially merchandise delivered direct to the store by an outside vendor.



Every case of merchandise received in the store should be checked against the invoice to make certain the quantity charged for has been received and the cost is computed correctly. A direct-to-store vendor should never be permitted to place merchandise on the shelf without it first being checked by some reliable employee. When shortages are noted the invoice should be corrected before it is signed and store-stamped. An outside vendor should never be permitted to use the store stamp under any conditions. When shortages occur in the warehouse delivery, a credit form should be made out immediately and sent to the proper authority.

Carelessness on the part of employees is often a source of unnecessary inventory loss. Care must be used in handling cases so unnecessary losses will not occur because of dented cans and broken glass items. Boxed items, such as cereals and cake mixes, should be opened with care so the boxes will not be cut or damaged.

If high losses persist the manager can take further action, such as having the locks on the doors changed, and if deemed necessary, outside help can be requested.

### Incorrect Prices

If prices are incorrectly marked too high, customers will tend to buy elsewhere. If they are too low, the store and company lose money. Prices should be changed immediately on all advances and declines. Incorrect prices that are

observed by the store employees should be changed immediately.

### Testing Accuracy of Cashiers

Some method of testing the accuracy of the cashiers must be used. Either a sample order may be used or a well known customer's order may be rechecked, with her consent. It should be impressed upon the cashiers how often mistakes occur and the fact that the majority of the undetected mistakes are in favor of the customer. When four or five checkers check the same order and all get a different total, it is not too difficult to convince them that they must constantly be alert to avoid mistakes.

### Heavy Backroom Stock

An excess of merchandise in the backroom increases operating costs in at least four different ways: (1) heavy backroom stock increases handling costs; (2) encourages pilferage; (3) increases losses that are caused by merchandise that is damaged and made unsalable; and (4) ties up valuable working capital that could otherwise be turned for a profit. These losses can be avoided easily by keeping surplus stock at a minimum.

There are scores of large and small leaks in every store. Eliminating them will be an easy and profitable task for the manager who attacks them properly.

## CHAPTER VII

### DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A COMPETENT ORGANIZATION

#### Employee Selection

Good employee selection is a prerequisite to developing and maintaining a competent organization. If this job is given careful attention most of the undesirable prospects and misfits will be rejected before any valuable time and money has been wasted on them.

Even in companies where centralized hiring is used, the store manager should, and usually does, have the right to accept or reject applicants sent to him from the employment office. Before the manager makes any decision, however, he should make every effort to find out all he can about the prospect.

#### How to Interview Prospective Store Clerks

Following is an interview guide as outlined by the Kroger Company to be used as an aid to store managers in evaluating applicants:

##### Put The Applicant At Ease

Be friendly and courteous.

Provide privacy--away from other people.

Be a good listener; let him talk.

#### Get His Story

Why he wants a job.

Why he is interested in your company.

What he can do.

#### Get All The Facts

Take enough time.

Ask questions with a purpose.

Avoid general impressions and hasty judgments.

#### Get Him Off To A Good Start (If Accepted)

Tell him about the company and the job.

Tell him about insurance, vacations, pay increases.

Give him brochures designed for new employees.

Introduce him to his immediate supervisor.

### Three Key Qualifications

#### 1. Personality

How will he impress the customer?

Observe him carefully. Is he clean, neat, and courteous? Can he talk well? Does he smile? Is he grown up enough?

How will he get along with the manager and with other clerks?

Ask questions such as, "How did your last boss treat you?" "Why did you quit?" Encourage him to talk.

Watch for "touchy" spots; think twice about the man who has had "troubles" on the job, with family, and at school.

## 2. Interest

Does he have personal objectives to work for?

Check application, ask questions. Does he have responsibilities? Rent or board to pay, insurance, and particularly dependents.

Are his job interests in line with the retail food industry?

Ask questions such as, "Why do you want to work in a grocery store?" "Why did you choose this company?" Does he like people? Encourage him to sell himself. Is his interest real? Is he changeable in interests or jobs? A "floater?"

## 3. Ability

Does he have ability to succeed?

Is he physically fit? Check application, ask questions, especially about time lost for illness.

Is he mentally fit? Does he appear dull? Is his education sufficient? Will he learn easily? If he claims experience, check its value by careful questioning.

Will he be promotable?

Review the interview in your mind. After training and experience, is it likely that this applicant will move ahead with the company?

### Evaluate the Applicant

Immediately after the interview, rate the applicant on each of the three key qualifications. The point beyond which the discussion should not be prolonged must be recognized, and the necessary steps taken to close the meeting gracefully.

One of several conditions ordinarily will signify that the interview should be terminated: (a) the interviewer has discovered a definite basis for disqualification; (b) he has obtained the pertinent information required for a final decision; or (c) he has collected as much information as is customary at this stage and wishes to send the applicant on to the next step in selection.

Whatever the outcome of the interview, the applicant should be sent away with a smile and a handshake, to heighten his conviction that he has had an intelligent and sympathetic hearing.

### Employee Induction and Training

The value of well-planned employee induction and training is evident if we consider what it will accomplish. First, through induction, the new employee is given information about the organization, its policies and regulations. This should be done in such a way as to help him feel at home quickly. Second, the new employee is instructed in the

requirements of the specific job that he is to perform, so that he can, as rapidly as possible, meet work standards and thus increase his earnings.

Third, training enables present employees to acquire more and greater skills, thus increasing their versatility for transfers and their qualifications for promotion.

Fourth, if employees are properly trained, accidents, spoiled work, and damage to machines and equipment are reduced.

Fifth, training helps employees to adjust to new methods and processes that are introduced from time to time. Finally, good training reduces dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and personnel turnover because it helps both new and experienced employees to use fully their individual capacities. If the training program is to get good results, employees must want to learn and managers must want to teach. Therefore, it is important that the manager as well as the employees realize how good training will benefit all concerned.

#### Steps in Employee Induction

Before a newly hired employee is trained to the company for a specific job, he should be welcomed as a new member of the organization. The first day of employment is long remembered by most people. Initial impressions and information count heavily in later attitudes toward the job and the company. Proper induction is, therefore, an integral part of the training process. By helping new employees to

feel at home more quickly, it enables them to get the full benefit of specific job training.

A friendly welcome to the organization is not the only purpose of good induction, however. An equally important objective is to give the new employee accurate and useful information about the company, the employee services it offers, and the personnel policies that will affect him as well as all other employees.

After the new employee is given introductory information about the company by a staff representative in the personnel department, the manager should give him further information such as:

1. Introduction to other subordinate supervisors in the store or department, under whom the new employee will work.
2. Store rules and regulations; safety measures.
3. Tour of the store to show (a) relation of employee's job to others in the store and (b) store facilities such as washrooms, lockers, drinking fountains, bulletin boards, and other facilities provided for employees.
4. Description of job--its duties, standards, safety on the job, hours, wage rate or incentive and method of computing pay, workplace, tools, use and care of equipment.
5. Introduction to fellow workers, with possible assignment of new employee to a "sponsor" with whom



the new men may feel freer to talk and ask questions.

In unionized firms, the new employee may be introduced to the union steward.

A follow-up interview should be conducted several weeks later either by a representative of the personnel or training department, or by the store manager, preferably the latter, who:

1. Answers questions that the new employee has about his relationship with the company, its policies and procedures.
2. Repeats some of the earlier information such as disciplinary rules and company policies.
3. Checks on the employee's interest in voluntary group insurance or other voluntary employee services or activities.
4. Checks on success of initial job placement and subsequent job training, with a view to greater improvement or possibly to transfer to another job if this seems desirable.

To sum up, the whole induction program should be directed toward giving the new employee a sense of "belonging" to the organization. Much of the success of subsequent training and performance depends on good induction, and failure is measured in dissatisfaction, poor work, and labor turnover.

## Training Techniques

Teaching is a skill--and an art--that can be learned, as thousands of key workers and supervisors discovered during the Job Instructor Training (JIT) sessions conducted in war industries by the Training Within Industry Division of the War Manpower Commission. The simple but basic methods used in the JIT program should be the core of any effective training program.

Before the actual training begins, the instructor must get ready to instruct. The JIT program suggests four steps:

1. Have a timetable--how much skill do you expect the trainee to have and how soon? This gives both the trainees and the instructor a series of goals at which to aim.
2. Break down the job--list the principal steps. The working sequence of operations should be listed, and even the exact motion sequence may be useful. "Key points," such as special knacks of doing an operation, quality requirements, safety and health precautions, and factors requiring careful judgment on the part of the employee, should be listed.
3. Have every thing ready--the right equipment, materials, and supplies. This is an important preparatory step, so that there need be no delays when actual training begins.

4. Have the workplace properly arranged just as the worker will be expected to keep it.

The instructor is now ready to begin the actual training process, which was divided into four steps under the JIT program:

1. Prepare the worker--put him at ease. Find out what he already knows about the job. Get him interested in learning the work by explaining its relationship to other jobs and to the company's operation. Place him in the correct working position.
2. Present the operation--tell, show, illustrate, and question carefully and patiently. Stress the key points as listed on the job breakdown sheet. Instruct clearly and completely, taking up one point at a time--but no more than he can master.
3. Try out performance--test the trainee by having him perform the job. Have him tell and show you what he does; have him explain the key points. Ask questions and correct his errors. Continue until you know he knows how to do the job. "If the worker has not learned, the instructor has not taught."
4. Follow up--put the trainee on his own. Designate to whom he goes for help. Check him frequently and encourage further questions. Get him to look for key points as he progresses. Be sure he understands

the reason for his job and its relationship to other jobs in the department or store. As he acquires skill and understanding, taper off the extra coaching and finally close your follow-up.

Training should not be thought of as something that is given once to new employees and then forgotten. Training is the very essence of management, for it is showing someone else how to do a job that might otherwise not be done, or be done wrong. It is, therefore, a continuing management function.

#### Employee Merit Rating

Merit rating plans are of little value unless they are designed to increase the efficiency of those who are rated. Experience indicates that this purpose is best achieved when the raters discuss their ratings with employees and show them how they may be improved.

For one reason or another, however, managers and personnel men often hesitate to discuss ratings with workers. Not infrequently this hesitancy is due to a belief that praise or constructive criticism of an employee results in "coddling" or spoiling him. Typical is the comment: "Employees are expected to do a good job; I do not believe in nursing them." Such an attitude stems from failure to realize that most workers like to know "how they stand" with the boss, want to be appreciated, like to feel they are part of the

enterprise, and believe they have a right to expect praise for performance of which they can be proud.

Many managers encounter difficulty when they attempt to talk over ratings with employees. Some managers declare they would rather dispense with a rating plan altogether then cope with the arguments that result when they discuss the unfavorable factors in an individual's rating. In other cases raters find it difficult to "get their story across," lack ability to "talk the ratings," are uncertain of the factors on which they rate the employees low--or merely prefer to have someone else "handle the tough ones."

The following principles governing merit rating will help the manager be more objective in his ratings and to use the ratings for the intended purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Purpose of a performance review interview:

1. To help the individual in his efforts to develop himself on his job.
2. To encourage him to strive for constant improvement in his own performance.

How to prepare for the interview:

1. Carefully complete the rating form as it applies to the individual being rated. Make each rating on the basis of provable facts. Avoid these errors: (1) over-rating him because of long acquaintance or because he

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<sup>1</sup>How to Use The Improvement Guide to Conduct A Performance Review Interview. The Kroger Company, Cincinnati, Ohio.

is likeable; (2) overrating him because of his long experience, or because he has a large department, or section; (3) being swayed by one dramatic incident-- a single unusual success, or one serious error; (4) being inclined to be too tough, too easy, or a fence straddler. Make your ratings accurately describe his performance. Avoid trying to make him look bad or look good, but truthfully show his performance as it is. Avoid hurrying--if there are points you are not sure of, get the facts before entering your ratings. Rate him strong on points on which you can give him honest compliments. Your weakest man probably has some strong points. Rate him weak on points on which marked improvement is needed. Your strongest man can probably improve on some points. Bear in mind that your ability to strengthen further men who are already strong is the best guarantee of your own future success.

2. Establish a desire for the interview--capitalize on his natural desire to know how he stands. Advise him that you have appraised his performance. Get him to tell you that he wants to know where he is strong and where he is weak.
3. Provide time and privacy--provide a time at which both of you will be unhurried and free from pressure.

Get away from other people and away from job surroundings.

How to start the interview:

1. Emphasize that the interview is to help him to help himself. Its purpose is to review and discuss his performance and not to prod, needle, or put him "on the spot." Advise him that all of your men are getting this same opportunity.
2. Stick to his job performance--discuss only his responsibilities and his job accomplishments. It is dangerous to compare him with other men--it invites differences of opinion, hard feelings, and the implication of favoritism. Never raise a question as to his over-all ability, judgment, or willingness. To him this will mean that you lack confidence in him; you may kill his confidence in himself.
3. Start the interview with an honest compliment.

How to handle strong points:

1. Encourage him to discuss his strong points. Compliment all of his extra or unusual accomplishments. Be specific--use examples or figures; do not use "soft soap." Find two or three points of agreement with him and introduce the rating form to show your agreement. Encourage him to talk. Refer back to

his strong points throughout the interview if it is necessary to encourage him.

How to handle weak points:

1. Get him to see for himself the points on which he needs to improve. Do not try to fool either him or yourself--simply telling a man what he should do seldom gets results. Refer to appropriate headings on the rating form and get him to tell you what should be expected of him. Give him facts or figures--or ask him "what" and "why" in order to lead him to see his own weak points. Refer to specific items on the rating form. Assist him in comparing his own performance with what he himself states, or agrees, should be expected of him. Get him to agree with your ratings. However, if he can demonstrate that you should change the rating on any item, make the changes at once. Be fair with him.
2. Get him to express a desire to improve. Ask him to state the advantages of improving. Help him along. Encourage, stimulate, or challenge him, but get a clear-cut expression of desire to improve. If he does not want to improve, he will not improve. Do not rush him to the next step but be certain that understanding and desire are present.



3. Assist him in making plans for improvement. Handle each point as a problem to be solved. Get him to tell you "how." Stick to the items on the rating form. Put your suggestions in the form of questions, such as--Will this help? Can we do this?

How to conclude the interview:

1. Summarize plans on the rating form--write down the principal points on which he is going to make special effort. Under each point list specific steps for accomplishment. Note dates, names, and other details. Get his approval, comments, and signature if required.
2. Summarize his progress and leave him encouraged. Give him a general idea of where he stands, but not to the point of promises or threats. Encourage him to act on his own, to make his own decisions, and to depend on himself for success. Guarantee him your support and backing.

Follow up:

1. Help provide opportunities for him to develop. Specifically check the points on which he is making special efforts in your further contacts with him. Help him to improve. If he is not improving, he is slipping. Correct errors when they occur and

use the steps outlined under "How to handle weak points."

2. Give him credit when it is due. Recognize his accomplishments and let him know.

Employee rating has been given particular attention here because it is considered to be very important in developing a competent organization, and also, because there is a need for a better understanding of how to use the merit rating properly. As pointed out before, the main objective of a rating plan is to improve the performance of the employees and this is best accomplished by discussing the ratings with each employee.

### Disciplining

To provide the leadership which inspires everyone in an organization to pull together under the complex conditions of a modern supermarket requires a systematized organization and a well established tradition of good discipline.

All discipline starts from the top. Without good executive and supervisory example, it is useless to expect good results from the employees. A supervisor or executive gives a pattern of acceptable conduct in everything that he does, and he can not turn his influence on and off like a faucet, or later repudiate what he has done. The way he uses or abuses his privileges gives the other people in the company a measure of his stature as a man.

There is no such thing as a good crew or a bad crew; there are only good leaders and bad leaders. The fundamental basis of all successful discipline is the mutual understanding of conditions, of regulations, and of their requirements. Whether or not this condition is fulfilled always depends on the men at the top.

Every case of disciplining occurs after some kind of failure. It always concentrates in the present the results of past events and future consequences. This causes emotional tensions which are important because, as has been stated, disciplining does not have to do merely with the individual involved but concerns the whole group. Prevention may be an individual measure, but disciplining has a universal implication.

It is clear that the avoidance of conditions which make disciplining necessary is far better than successful disciplining. But failure to carry out disciplining when required is demoralizing to group discipline.

The great danger in a disciplining case is that the store manager will make up his mind ahead of time as to how the case should be handled, and then use his superior power to persuade the employee to accept his reasoning. Disciplining should be based on respect, not fear. It is education, not punishment.

In general, criticism and reprimand should be based on facts and should avoid personalities at all times. Public

criticism is rarely justified and usually results in the development of an antagonistic attitude. Private reprimands should be prefaced with a statement of some of the more favorable factors, such as attendance, quality of work, and production records. Undesirable qualities are more easily corrected when contrasted with desirable characteristics in the person being reprimanded.

### Handling a Problem

To avoid the pitfall of employing power as a means to persuade, the following outline is suggested, not as something to be followed blindly but merely as a check list.<sup>2</sup>

Get the facts:

Review the record.

Find out what rules and store customs apply.

Talk with the individuals concerned.

Get opinions and feelings.

Weigh and decide:

Fit the facts together.

Consider their bearing on each other.

What possible solutions are there?

Check practices and policies.

Consider objective and effect of individual, group,  
and production.

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<sup>2</sup>Job Relations Training. Bureau of Training. War Manpower Commission. Washington, D. C.

Do not jump at conclusions.

Take action:

Are you going to handle this yourself?

Do you need help in handling?

Watch the timing of your action.

Do not pass the buck.

Check results:

How soon will you follow up?

How often will you need to check?

Watch for changes in output, attitudes, and relationships.

Did your action help production?

The manager gets results through his employees, therefore, the success of the manager depends upon how well he administers the principles of good selection, induction, training, merit rating, disciplining, and human relations.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HUMAN ELEMENTS IN STORE MANAGEMENT

#### Teamwork

The effective manager thinks and acts as a member of a team. He looks upon workers not as isolated individuals but as individuals in the social context of the work situation--as members of groups or teams.

It is the gospel of the modern personnel man that every individual is different from every other and that the manager should recognize these individual differences in his supervision. That is a sound principle, but the effective manager goes far beyond that. He recognizes that whenever these different individuals work together for any period of time they build up a system of human relations, which powerfully influences their behavior on the job. The effective manager recognizes that he is dealing with a group, acts so as to build up its solidarity, and wins the support of the group in the work that must be done.

Almost every move the manager makes can have either constructive or disruptive effects upon the working group. If he criticizes a worker before his fellows, that man will lose face and feel insecure and resentful. When the manager

tries to lay the blame for a mistake, rather than try to determine the cause, he forces the workers to cover up for themselves and attempt to shift the responsibility to others. When he encourages the workers to criticize each other, he creates such an atmosphere of suspicion that the workers are afraid to trust anyone. A manager can create a situation in which a worker can win favor of the "boss" only by being disloyal to his fellow workers. Holding one worker up to others as a model or getting down on a man will have disruptive effects upon the entire work group.

In contrast to the above, some constructive methods of supervision can be pointed out. The manager should discourage workers from bringing tales to him. He should never try to fix responsibility or say who is to blame when criticizing a worker. If the worker is asked to explain a mistake and his explanation is weak, he knows it without it being pointed out to him. It must be remembered that most workers have thin skins, and they take great pride in their work. This does not mean that the manager should never criticize a worker. It means that he should weigh his criticisms carefully and, in making them, be aware not only of their effect upon the individual but also of their effect upon teamwork in the group.

#### Informal Organization

Whenever men work together for any length of time, they form social ties. These social ties have a very important

affect upon their behavior both inside and outside of the store.

The manager does not need to spy or press personal questions to find who belongs to what clique. Simply by noticing which workers customarily eat together and talk together, he can learn to see his subordinates not as a number of separate individuals but as members of groups of friends. If he observes a little more closely, he will note that the members do not all exert the same influence upon each other. Whenever a group acts together, it must have leadership, and the longer the group remains together the more one particular person, quite informally, becomes the leader.

The team frequently exists quite independently of management, even developing its own leadership. It is not a question of team or no team, but a question of whether the team works in harmony with the purposes of the larger organization or whether it operates to resist the efforts of management. The answer to the question depends primarily upon the skill with which the manager is able to work with the team--through its own leadership.

The leader of the gang is not necessarily the man who is recognized as such by management; he is the man who is recognized by his fellow workers. It is up to the manager to see who the gang is following to gain the cooperation



of that man and to gain the cooperation of the group through him.

To do this effectively, the manager must indeed "recognize individual differences," but that is only a beginning. He must be observant of human relations; he must think and act in terms of the structure of the group. He will not find such things laid out in the formal organizational chart of his company, but he has to deal with them every hour of the day, and it will help him to be aware of what he is doing.

To be able to think and act in terms of human relations is the first essential of good supervision. However, stated in this way, the problem sounds too large and general. The manager needs to know the particular points that should be learned if he is to handle a group effectively. The subsequent discussion will present some of these fundamental points.

### Two-Way Communication

One vital element in good supervision is effective communication from the bottom up. With the building of our great industrial organizations, we have established highly efficient lines of communication from the top down, but the larger the organization the more difficult it is to make those lines work both ways, and even in many small organizations we find workers isolated from their manager as far

as their thoughts and feelings are concerned. And the workers resent such a condition.

When workers are accustomed to frequent communication in both directions, up and down, with their manager, they find it natural and easy to take their complaints, suggestions, or personal problems to him. When they are not accustomed to that relationship, they are afraid to talk up to him. Employees will only feel free to initiate contacts with their manager when he lays the foundation by building up friendly, informal relations with them.

The manager who says, after losing an apparently satisfied employee, "Now why didn't Joe come in and talk the problem over with me, and we could have straightened it out?" is really confessing his own failure in the case, because, if he had kept up regular and frequent informal contacts with the employee, then Joe would have come in to talk things over. It is not enough for the manager to make a good fellow out of himself by fraternizing with his employees only now and then. His contacts with them must be regular and frequent. Employees do not become accustomed to something which takes place at rare intervals.

#### Talking Over Personal Problems

As every intelligent manager knows, the worker's performance on his job is intimately tied up with his social adjustment both in the store and outside of it. Therefore,

the manager who is confided in by employees is given an opportunity to contribute to the efficiency of the organization as well as to the happiness of the workers.

However, this sort of relationship can not exist unless the worker initiates the discussion and feels free to withhold the confidences as well as giving them. Recognizing that they can understand their subordinates better if they can acquire data of a personal nature, certain managers resort to direct questions in this area. Even when it can be shown that the questions have a bearing upon the work--for example, an employee, after being out late at night drinking and carousing, is tired and nervously upset on the job--even in such a case, personal questioning is hotly resented.

If the manager is not in a position to get these confidences on an entirely voluntary basis, initiated by the worker, then he is better off without any such information. It should be clearly understood that, in the interests of good morale, the manager should know only as much of the personal affairs of the workers as they want him to know.

The manager who presses for this type of information actually ends up knowing far less about his workers than does the manager who is a friendly and sympathetic listener but never takes the initiative in such matters.

#### Communication and Favoritism

In stressing the importance of upward communication between workers and their manager, it should also be

emphasized that this must be a matter of general participation.

It appears that when workers have an opportunity to get to know the boss, they may discover that he is a human being. That is all to the good. But, when only a few workers are on informal, friendly terms with the manager, it can be predicted with certainty how the other workers are going to think and feel about the situation.

The few who have access to management are called "company men" or "company girls" or "stooges" to management. They are also known as "stool pigeons," because the group of outsiders always fear that the specially favored group is carrying tales to management.

Of course, no manager believes in playing favorites, but it is all too easy to drift into a position which will be interpreted in that manner by most of the workers.

If new workers are to be integrated into the organization, management must make special efforts to extend to them the same sort of two-way communication that grows up in a natural, unplanned way between supervisors and long-service employees.

It requires little skill in supervision to get good work from some types of persons, and the manager is naturally inclined to look with favor upon those who are loyal from the beginning. Finding that other types of workers do

not have "the proper attitudes," he looks upon them with suspicion and veiled hostility. Sensing this attitude, these workers respond with acts of hostility which prove that they are doing the organization no good, and finally they quit or are fired.

This does not have to happen. People of this type can become very loyal and responsible workers when their cooperation is won through skillful leadership on the part of management. However, these people will never do the job they are capable of if they find that workers of the first type have the inside track with management and that management does not listen to their complaints and suggestions.

It is not enough for the manager to ask himself: "Do my subordinates talk freely with me?" He should also ask himself, "Which ones talk freely and which do not?" And then, "What can I do to build effective communication with those who do not talk?"

#### Handling of Complaints

It is, of course, easy to say that a manager should listen to complaints, but the problem is much more complicated than that. The manager should listen with certain questions in mind:

1. What does the worker say he is complaining about?  
What, if anything, can I do about that?
2. Is there some deeper cause for dissatisfaction,  
which the worker is not directly talking about?

If so, how can I get at it and what can I do about it?

3. How can I meet the present situation so that the worker will continue to come to me with his problems?

No matter how unjustified the complaint, give the worker a chance to express himself freely and he may get around to the real source of his trouble.

If the manager responds immediately by turning down the complaint as unreasonable, he will not only fail to solve the immediate problem but also will block the line of communication between the worker and himself so that the worker will be much less likely to come to him with the next problem.

### Changing the Work Situation

Upward communication is valuable at all times, but it is especially vital when changes are being introduced into the process of work or into the human relations of the job.

If the manager just goes to the workers, explains the change to them, tells them it will be good for them, and orders them to put it into effect, the workers will respond with grumbling and griping. They will say that the new system is impractical, and they will sabotage it when they can. The manager in turn will be annoyed at this "irrational" resistance to change, and he will be tempted to put more pressure behind the new scheme. If he does that, he will

only build up more resistance to himself as well as the new idea.

Suppose, instead, that he consults the workers first. He tells them that he has been thinking about possible changes but wants their ideas before he takes action. They sit down together and discuss the problems freely.

If this procedure is followed through, the manager will accomplish several things. In the first place, he is likely to get valuable suggestions that will cause him to modify his original plan--because the man who does the job day in and day out knows things about it that no manager can know. However, even if the original plan is accepted without alteration, the process of consultation will serve to overcome a large measure of worker resistance to change and may even lead them to accepting the new system with enthusiasm. It is found in many cases that it is not the particular idea presented by management but the way it is presented which determines worker reactions.

### Reciprocal Obligations

The effective manager acts within a system of reciprocal obligations.

Whether talking about primitive tribesmen, industrial workers, businessmen, or college professors, you can make one generalization which holds without exception. If John Doe does something for you, you feel under obligation to do

something for him in return, when the opportunity arises. This sort of exchange of good turns helps to build cohesive organizations. It is one of the most powerful builders of morale that can be called upon. The manager neglects it at his peril.

When this relationship is properly handled, it yields a profit in two ways. The man who has the good turn done to him feels pleased, and the man who does the good turn feels more favorably disposed toward the recipient. Those who are skillful in handling people have come to realize that one of the best ways to win loyalty is to ask for help--provided that they have established themselves as the sort of people who give help in return. To operate effectively, the system must be two sided, a matter of reciprocity between workers and managers.

#### Obligations Can Not Be Argued

The favors and obligations should be felt by workers and manager, but they should not be talked about--for the simple reason that people do not like to be told that they are obligated to do something and, when approached in that manner, are likely to persuade themselves that the obligation does not really exist. Furthermore, the manager should not weigh these exchanges in a calculating manner, trying to make sure he gets back just as much as he gives, for that is resented by workers.



Of course, the skillful manager does expect to have favors returned, but he does not give the impression that he is bargaining in these matters. Perhaps the real distinction is that between a short-run and a long-run point of view. The manager who expects to balance the books with each favor he gives out will find that workers will discover his attitude and resent it. On the other hand, the manager who does favors unobtrusively just as a natural part of his behavior, with no apparent thought of being paid back, has every right to expect that in the long-run the workers will reciprocate to the best of their ability. His books may never precisely balance, but he will show a neat profit in increased effort and cooperation over anything that can be shown by the calculating manager or by the one who is unconscious of this relationship.

#### Obligations and Human Relations

It should be emphasized that obligations are matters of human relations, for here is where many managers misunderstand employee reactions. They feel that when, in addition to paying good wages and establishing good physical conditions for work, they give medical and hospitalization policies, they have done enough to put the workers under obligation to them. There are two things wrong with this point of view. In the first place, those are all broad, general policies which do not hit any of the workers in an individual, personal

way. In the second place, those policies are determined entirely upon the initiative of management and then simply presented to the workers. The personal favor, as the worker thinks of it, is quite different. Generally it is some special help that he himself asks for. And, if he does not take the initiative, at least the favor is done in response to the manager's recognition of some special, individual problem that the worker faces. If general policies are compared with these individual adjustments in terms of worker-manager communication, it can be understood why hospitalization policies and other benefits can never make as great a contribution to harmonious human relations as can be gained through the exchange of favors.

There are certain questions on the exchange of good turns or favors that must be answered before they can become an effective part of the manager's thinking.

The first concerns the meaning of the word "favor." It sounds suspiciously like "favoritism," which a good manager seeks to avoid at all costs. However, the distinction is quite clear. If the manager does something to help Joe, that is a favor. If he does something to help Joe that he would not, under similar circumstances, do for Tom, that is favoritism. The point is that personal adjustments must be available to all the workers or else the system breaks down, with some workers recognizing ties of loyalty to the manager and others feeling discriminated against.

Another question is put in this form: "If you do favors for the workers, will they not take advantage of you and expect you to do their work for them?" This question can only be answered in general terms.

When the worker begins a new job, there should be a clear understanding between himself and his manager of what he is supposed to do, how much, when, and how--under ordinary circumstances. However, in our rapidly changing industry and under constant pressure to get the work done, the worker frequently faces emergencies that he can not handle without help.

If the manager steps in with an offer of help in such a case, the worker does not feel that he is putting something over on the boss. He recognizes that he was in trouble and the manager gave him a hand.

It is only when the manager lends a hand where it is not needed that he gets himself into trouble. If the manager helps out when the worker knows his job thoroughly, is working well within his capacity, and is not plagued by severe personal problems, the worker will either resent the effort as interference on the job or will come to think of such help as a normal part of the job and complain when he does not get it.

This way of looking at it does not present the manager with a neat formula to apply to all cases. It is suggested



that he give the worker a clear understanding of what is required--under ordinary circumstances--and insist that these standards be met. He should also recognize that emergencies will sometimes arise to prevent the worker from meeting these standards. It is up to him to think through his job to determine what should be required of the worker under what circumstances. If he does that reasonably well, then he can help workers to meet emergencies without encouraging them to impose upon him.

#### Favors and Rights

Another point is raised by the workers. They understand the exchange of favors better than most managers, but they insist upon a distinction between favors and rights. They feel that they have a right to fair wages, reasonable hours, and good working conditions. Just what they mean by "fair," "reasonable," and "good" will vary from company to company, from job to job, and also in terms of the workers' past experience. But, whatever the standard, they do not feel that the boss is doing them a favor when he pays "fair" wages or puts in a new drinking fountain or toilet. They feel that those are things that they have a right to as long as they work at their jobs.

This does not mean that workers are against favors. It simply means that they want to establish certain rights first. Then the exchange of good turns or favors can develop,

and then, the worker is in a position to do favors himself and not always be on the receiving end.

### Paternalism

Even when favors are distinguished from rights, there are some who feel that doing a good turn smacks of paternalism. Whether there is any connection depends upon how paternalism is defined. It may be defined as any benefit given an employee for which he expends no effort at a time when he least expects it and does not appreciate it.

Whatever words are used in the definition, most people understand by paternalism a one-sided relationship in which management gives to the workers, without consulting them, something which management thinks is good for them.

The exchange of favors or of good turns is quite a different thing. It is two-sided. It does not involve management and the workers as a whole; rather it is a personal relationship among particular managers and their workers. The manager does not act the role of the all-wise but indulgent father. Instead, he tries to do what is expected of a friend or a good neighbor. He gives help when it is needed; he asks help when he needs it. He builds up a system of reciprocal obligations which binds workers to him and binds him to them through strong ties of personal loyalty. It is that which is called morale in industry--when it is found, and it is not found often enough.

### Originating Action with Firmness and Decision

The good manager needs to be able to originate action for his subordinates with firmness and decision. He needs to know when to consult them and when to discuss things with them, but he also needs to know when to drop everything else and act.

It is interesting to note that the workers themselves recognize this need. They know that, as a group, they are incapable of making decisions; If the organization is to function effectively, the manager must put the decisions into action. All they ask is that their thoughts and feelings be taken into account and that they be led, not driven, into action.

They have no respect for the manager who gives them orders timidly and with uncertainty. And, strange as it may seem, they like discipline--when they can see that it is important in getting the job done.

The people who have the opportunity to "run all over" their manager are not very happy about it. Their morale is low; they become disgusted with the job; they feel a need of working under someone who can keep them in line at the same time that he inspires them to work for a common goal.

While it is important to act with decision, this does not mean that a good manager is quick on the trigger with autocratic orders. Even when an order must be given, its

execution will depend in large measure upon the way in which it is expressed.

While the manager must be able to give orders, he should also be able to exercise some restraint in this sort of supervisory activity. The frequency with which orders are given has an important effect upon the employees.

In their drive for change and progress, many executives overlook the stabilizing nature of work routines that can be built up and carried on by workers without constant attention from their supervisors. They fail to see that frequent imposed changes not only upset the work habits of individuals but also have a seriously disturbing effect upon the pattern of human relations that ties workers to each other and to their manager.

If there must be changes, their disturbing effects can be mitigated by explaining them to the workers and by consulting them on the manner of putting the changes into effect. Beyond that, the manager should ask himself, "How often is it really necessary for me to step in and give orders?" The effective manager will undertake to organize his work and his relations with the workers so that they will be able to do their jobs harmoniously and efficiently with a minimum of supervisory direction.

Of course, the manager's ability to originate action is intimately bound up with his knowledge of his job. He



may begin issuing orders with confidence, but if the employees follow his directions and get into trouble, they will question his judgment and be reluctant to respond to him in the future. This situation will react upon the manager, tending to make him lose confidence in himself.

However, it is not enough for the manager simply to have a thorough knowledge of the technical side of his job. Many men with such a background are ineffective managers because they can not organize and direct human beings. For effective store management, understanding of the job must go together with ability to understand and lead people.

## CHAPTER IX

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The job of managing a supermarket is considerably more complex now than it was before self-service became commonplace. Many modern-day supermarkets have annual sales volumes of well over a million dollars and employ from fifty to one-hundred and fifty people, as compared to the store of thirty years ago with a sales volume of fifty thousand dollars annually and requiring the services of only five or six people. Not only has the increased size of the retail food store broadened the scope of store management, but the modern supermarket manager has also taken on added responsibilities because of the trend in decentralization of authority in the food chain industry. His authority to act in behalf of his company is greater today than it has been in the past, therefore, better judgment and higher intelligence are requisites of a modern manager.

The responsibilities of a supermarket manager are classified into four major parts: (1) Securing maximum sales and profits, (2) controlling expenses, (3) developing and maintaining a competent organization, and (4) knowing and enforcing company policies.

The qualifications of a good manager are difficult to define, but in general he must have merchandising ability; ability to lead and get results through other people; the desire to improve himself; have a competitive spirit; be able to plan effectively and the ability to organize; have a thorough knowledge of store operations; the ability to recognize and solve problems; and be able to maintain effective controls, and good customer and public relations.

#### Merchandising

Effective merchandising includes having a wide variety of merchandise displayed in a neat, appealing manner, with all shelves and cases well stocked and clearly price-marked. To insure maximum customer satisfaction, merchandise must be properly rotated so that freshness is maintained. Special values can be highlighted through displaced and extended shelf displays. To obtain the desired balanced movement of profit and volume merchandise, special promotions must be carefully planned. Employees have to be trained to serve the customers in a friendly, courteous and prompt manner.

Planned promotions should be coordinated with advertising and other factors that will influence the demand for a particular commodity. Space allocation must be constantly adjusted to compensate for changes in movement of different products because of seasonal demand, promotional efforts,

and price advantages. A commodity should not be excluded or discontinued until it has been given a fair trial. Sales plans are very reliable guides, made up by experts and designed to give the desired balance movement of profit and volume items. The store manager, who is an alert merchandiser, will use the branch or company merchandising plan to good advantage and will use caution in adapting it to his store. Ordering sufficient quantities of basic perishable merchandise, special priced and advertised items, is a "must" in promoting maximum sales.

A good manager is always alert and ready to take advantage of situations that can be used to develop or support a sales plan. Originating new ideas and taking a well calculated chance now and then are all a part of good merchandising. It must also be remembered that new principles and methods of merchandising are developed every day, therefore, it is necessary to keep abreast and accept new ideas after they have been introduced. Good principles of merchandising combined with original thought, planning and diligent follow-through will produce maximum sales and profits.

#### Methods of Operational Control

In controlling variable expenses and losses due to spoilage, pilferage, and carelessness, it is important that the manager give particular attention to seemingly insignificant practices.

Wage expense, which is the largest single expense item, can be controlled by developing an efficient organization with a high rate of man-hour productivity. This can be accomplished through better training of employees, time scheduling, work assignment, job simplification, and good principles of supervision.

If expenses such as wrapping supplies, laundry, heat, light, power, and store supplies are not properly controlled, losses will result, due mainly to employee carelessness.

Other avoidable losses such as excessive spoilage and customer pilferage must also be properly controlled if maximum net profit is to be realized. Losses caused by excessive spoilage can be controlled by using recommended methods of ordering and handling perishable merchandise. Customer pilferage can be discouraged by taking steps to make it reasonably difficult for the shoplifter to operate.

When correcting for above normal inventory shortages the manager can direct his investigation toward the three major sources of difficulty: (1) Customer pilferage, (2) employee dishonesty and carelessness, and (3) methods of checking merchandise into the store, especially direct-store-deliveries. Usually persistent losses are caused by one or a combination of these three conditions.

There are scores of large and small leaks in every store. Eliminating them will be an easy and profitable task for the manager who attacks them properly.

### Developing a Competent Organization

The development of a competent organization starts with sound methods of employee selection. The manager should get all the information he can about a prospective employee by knowing and using good interviewing techniques. He should check the three key qualifications of the prospect; personality, interest, and ability. All the facts available must be considered before a decision to accept or reject the applicant is made. Whatever the outcome of the interview, the applicant should be sent away with a smile and a handshake.

Induction and training are very important factors in developing an organization. The value of well-planned employee induction and training is evident if its accomplishments are considered. First, through induction, the new employee is given information about the organization, its policies and regulations. Second, the new employee is instructed in the requirements of the specific job that he is to perform. Third, training enables present employees to acquire more and greater skill. Fourth, if employees are properly trained, accidents, spoiled work, and damage to machines and equipment are reduced. Finally, good training reduces dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover.

Employee merit rating plans are of little value unless they are designed to increase the efficiency of those who

are rated. Experience indicates that this purpose is best achieved when the raters discuss their ratings with employees and show them how they can improve.

To provide the leadership which inspires everyone in an organization to pull together, under the complex conditions of a modern supermarket, requires a systematized organization and a well established tradition of good discipline. The fundamental basis of all successful discipline is the mutual understanding of conditions, of regulations, and of their requirements.

It is clear that the avoidance of conditions which make disciplining necessary is far better than successful disciplining. But failure to carry out disciplining when required is demoralizing to group discipline. Disciplining should be based on respect, not fear. It is education, not punishment.

#### Human Elements in Store Management

The effective manager thinks and acts as a member of a team. He looks upon workers not as isolated individuals but as individuals in the social context of the work situation--as members of groups or teams. He recognizes that he is dealing with a group, acts so as to build up its solidarity, and wins the support of the group in the work that must be done.

Wherever men work together for any length of time,

they form social ties, which affect their behavior both inside and outside of the store. The team frequently exists quite independently of management, even developing its own leadership. It is not a question of team or no team, but a question of whether the team works in harmony with the purposes of the larger organization or whether it operates to resist the efforts of management. The answer to the question depends primarily upon the skill with which the manager is able to work with the team--through its own leadership.

To be able to think and act in terms of human relations is the first essential of good supervision. One vital element in good supervision is effective communication from the bottom up. The workers must be accustomed to frequent communication in both directions, up and down, with their manager.

As every intelligent manager knows, the worker's performance on his job is intimately tied up with his social adjustment both in the store and outside of it. Therefore, the manager who is confided in by employees is given an opportunity to contribute to the efficiency of the organization as well as to the happiness of the workers. In stressing the importance of upward communication between workers and the manager, it should also be emphasized that this must be a matter of general participation.



The effective supervisor acts within a system of reciprocal obligations. Those who are skillful in handling people have come to realize that one of the best ways to win loyalty is to ask for help--provided that they have established themselves as the sort of people who give help in return. To operate effectively, the system must be two-sided, a matter of reciprocity between workers and managers.

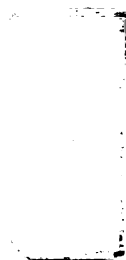
The favors and obligations should be felt by workers and manager, but they should not be talked about. Furthermore, the manager should not weigh these exchanges in a calculating manner, trying to make sure he gets back just as much as he gives. His human relations books may never precisely balance, but he will show a neat profit in increased effort and cooperation over anything that can be shown by the calculating manager or by the one who is unconscious of this relationship.

Workers understand the exchange of favors better than most managers, but they insist upon a distinction between favors and rights. They feel that they have a right to fair wages, reasonable hours, and good working conditions. This does not mean that workers are against favors. It simply means that they want to establish certain rights first. The exchange of favors is distinguished from paternalism in that it is two-sided and does not involve management and the workers as a whole.

The good manager needs to be able to originate action for his subordinates with firmness and decision. He needs to know when to consult them and when to discuss things with them, but he also needs to know when to drop everything else and act. It is interesting to note that the workers themselves recognize this need. They have no respect for the manager who gives them orders timidly and with uncertainty. And, strange as it may seem, they like discipline--when they can see that it is important in getting the job done.

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APPENDIX A

## APENDIX A

### Basic Year-Round Items

Lettuce	Potatoes	Bananas
Carrots	Onions	Apples
Celery	Oranges	Tomatoes
Cabbage	Grapefruit	Sweet Potatoes
Beans	Lemons	

### Basic Seasonal Items

Corn	Peaches	Strawberries
Squash	Pears	Melons
Watermelons	Plums	Cauliflower
Asparagus		

### Variety Items

Anise	Leeks	Kumquats	Cherries
Artichokes	Mushrooms	Limes	Coconuts
Beets	Okra	Tangerines	Cranberries
Broccoli	Green onions	Apricots	Dates
Brussels sprouts	Parsley	Avocados	Figs
Celeriac	Parsnips	Berries	Grapes
Chicory	Peas	Blackberries	Loquats
Cucumbers	Peppers	Blueberries	Mangoes
Eggplant	Pumpkins	Boysenberries	Nectarines
Endive	Radishes	Currants	Papayas
Escarole	Rhubarb	Dewberries	Pawpaws
Garlic	Rutabagas	Gooseberries	Persimmons
Greens	Salsify	Huckleberries	Pineapples
Horseradish	Spinach	Loganberries	Pomegranates
Jerusalem artichokes	Turnips	Raspberries	Quinces
Kale	Watercress		
Kohl-rabi	Yams		



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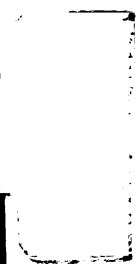
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