

sary to accomplish anything at all. It is. Also one may say that energy has an almost infinite variety of expressions, and these in turn vary greatly under different circumstances. True. What we mean here is again the *average level*. "What is the man's normal expression of dynamic power?" is the question, as far as the man himself is concerned. When we find one with a great deal of energy we recognize immediately, from our own daily observation, that he is more likely to display initiative than is the man with a small habitual energy output. We must venture, therefore, to include it among the typical factors.

The fourth factor in initiative—the first in some instances—would doubtless be constructive imagination. If I hear a murmur here from the psychological side of the house, it is not surprising. May I attempt to make peace in this quarter first.

The executive does not demand that he know all about the imaginative powers of an individual. Nor is he interested in theories of what imagination is anyway. For his general purposes in the beginning, he will usually be satisfied to know this: whether the individual has indicated the capacity for constructive and creative thought in dealing with one or more of the major fields—ideas and symbols, things and their operation, people and their relationships. Later, as techniques improve, he will ask for methods of appraisal in subdivisions of these. To him in any case, constructive imagination is a special and limited ability under the particular circumstances requiring it. As such, its average levels or even specific functionings can doubtless be appraised in whatever degree of detail may be agreed upon.

As a factor in initiative, it will necessarily rate higher under some circumstances than others; but we can hardly initiate without it. Unless we have constructive ideas in a situation requiring them, someone else has to tell us what to do, and show us how to do it.

By a rather laborious process, perhaps, we have worked out something of the probable thoughts of a group of executives as they focused their accumulated experiences and observations on the content of initiative. It is possibly neither necessary nor desirable to give further examples here. The process, as outlined in this case, has doubtless done the executives an injustice in the matter of time consumed. A few brief mental searches, a

few interchanges of experience, and they have arrived at their conclusion. They know what this and similar complex words really mean to them in simpler and more definite terms.

In fact, in our common experience, individual differences seem most clearly expressed in these simpler terms. We recognize, quite specifically, the qualities they designate, and count on them very confidently in various people. If a man generally known as self-reliant turns weakling in some situation, or a "good fighter" turns coward, we are surprised. We look for consistency in these elemental qualities. But if a man displays initiative in some things and not in others, it is no more than we expect. The word applies to too many kinds of situations, and in too many variations. Some of these simply do not "interest" the man; or he may not "have time" to go through with the whole procedure involved. But when he is sufficiently interested to undertake an activity involving initiative, his normal self-reliance and fighting spirit come into play. Then we expect these of him, and are seldom disappointed. The latter are quite distinctive and persistent personal attributes. Initiative, as a term, is decidedly indefinite and variable.

The executive, then, will dissect such terms and build up his own "operating" vocabulary. In this he will not be afraid of using the results of common business and industrial experience. His items will be relatively simple, and quite characteristic of the individual differences with which he customarily has to deal. This is exactly what he started out to get.

The next step is up to the psychologist. His share is to develop methods of detailed appraisal and measurement for these human qualities.

Perhaps we should stop for a moment to see how our typical analysis works out in practice after we get it. If it is correct it should illuminate and differentiate the meaning of initiative in each particular case considered. We should expect to find the individual factors present in varying degrees and orders of importance. Otherwise the term would always mean the same thing and there would be no object in subdividing it.

In a typical case of the president of an industrial corporation, for example, we should probably agree that all of the four factors are desirable in an unusually high degree. A proper job analysis

would, however, disclose a rather definite order of importance, probably this: (1) self-reliance; (2) constructive imagination; (3) fighting spirit; (4) energy.

Imagine a typical highly successful president without self-reliance! Even his secretary would have him under her thumb. And this latter eventuality is sometimes harder to escape than people think.

Constructive imagination in the second place is almost equally important. Initiative in the successful conduct of modern business requires a veritable brain factory of new ideas and resourceful methods. Like the fish ponds of our boyhoods, a business that stagnates gets weedy.

Third, give me the executive who loves a good fight. Not that he should be a claimant for pugilistic honors, or be anything but suave; but he needs fighting spirit if he is going to show effective initiative in the savage competition of business today. The reputation for being a "good fighter" is both a weapon and a defense.

Energy is placed fourth. This is not because it is unimportant. Most executives arrive because, among other things, they have shown more of it than their competitors on the way up. But while it is a dynamic factor in his initiative, it is not so distinctive as in the erection foreman, for example. The president may be off playing golf; but the organization knows that the voltage is there when needed on the job.

This, we may say, is the initiative of our president. By way of contrast we might look in on one of the minor clerical department heads. Obviously he does not need to rate as high as the president in any of the factors. We should also expect some other differences. As we study his job, it appears that if he is going to display any initiative, the first thing he needs is ideas—constructive imagination. Instead of being number two, as before, this is number one. Both its power and position have changed. About the only things this man can "initiate" in his job are new ways of doing old things, or old ways of doing new things. If he hasn't the ideas he doesn't do either.

Second seems to come self-reliance. This has moved down a step. Executives—or anyone—can hardly display initiative without having at least a fair amount of self-reliance. But if our department head did not have the ideas to lead it into

intelligent expression, he would be merely forward and bungling. On the other hand many a good idea has gone to waste in the owner's mind because he hesitated to push it out into the field of action.

Now we seem to be in difficulties with our schedule. We have two factors left and no call for them. This is another interesting evidence that instead of saying "initiative" we must say "kind of initiative" and then analyze the kind. The particular variety for this job needs neither super-abundant energy nor aggressive fighting spirit. Either would be apt to break loose at the wrong time.

Energy is needed, it is true, but too much native or potential energy will tend to make a man restive under the restraints of a clerical position. Fighting spirit should probably be actually negative. Inter-departmental functioning, as well as the successful running of a subordinate department itself, usually calls for below average rather than above average of this quality. We all know men who are decidedly combative by nature, who nevertheless manage to hold down these positions without any very serious eruptions while they are on the job. It is sometimes an evident struggle, however, and it is a question whether they would not be happier if they were given a place where they could fight some real obstacles, and the old job delegated to someone more temperamentally adapted to it.

In passing, this example is a reminder of the importance of negative factors. Every man has "normally" too much or too little of some qualities; as in the man who was described as "the most even tempered man in the world—always mad." These negatives must be among the things considered in giving a man a job.

Two other examples of initiative must necessarily be summarized very briefly. The lieutenant of firemen is apparently a case where fighting spirit is at the spear-point. This is in decided contrast to the clerical worker. Following this seem to come energy and self-reliance. In the case of an erection gang boss, initiative seems to lead off with energy, at least in those cases which have come under personal observation. The supine boss simply does not get his other initiative factors "over." Following energy seem to come fighting spirit, self-reliance and constructive imagination, in the order named. As in all cases, however, particular