

well, simply because this principle was observed. Everybody knew what the organization was trying to accomplish and what his particular job in the organization was. On the other hand, some very excellent organization-plans failed simply through a lack of a thorough grasp of the plan by the members of the organization.

The organization chart was tremendously over-rated in Washington. People seemed to fail to appreciate that a neat little organization chart with the names of the members and their functions artistically printed on it is no more an organization than a map of a city is the city. Some of us eventually were almost ashamed to be found with an organization chart on the premises. Nevertheless, I am a firm believer in the graphic method of presenting facts. I like pictures and I believe that the organization chart is the very best method of clearly setting forth the distribution of duties and authority and the inter-relation of the various functions of an organization. The disadvantage of such a chart and a written description of the organization is that it tends to reduce flexibility. It is necessary that the chart be kept very much up-to-date and be revised at frequent intervals as the need for changes in the organization become apparent.

As a corollary to the principle of complete understanding of an organization by its personnel, is the principle that that organization is the best which is the simplest possible that will do the work. The simpler the organization, the more readily is it completely grasped by its membership. There were many examples in the War Department of over-elaborate organizations. They looked very pretty on the organization charts but when put into actual operation, it was found that many of the officers who were assigned to functions which looked logical and necessary on the chart, hadn't sufficient real work to do to keep their spurred heels off the desks.

The importance of the personnel in the organization was very impressively demonstrated. It became more than ever apparent that a first-class personnel meant a first-class team—not an aggregation of stars. In some organizations there was such an array of talent that it produced a sort of organization indigestion. These organizations tended towards the Mexican Army organization—all generals. They were long on most excellent plans and theories at the top but were decidedly lacking in the type of man who could take his coat off and put those plans into successful operation all along the line. What are needed in a successful organization,

are organization men—men who appreciate the necessity for organization, and the wisdom of confining themselves to the duties and responsibilities assigned to them in the organization plan and who resolutely play the game according to the rules.

It is so universally appreciated in the field of sport that a trained team made up of mediocre individuals will invariably defeat a collection of stars without team work; that it is strange that the same truth was apparently so little appreciated by many of the men assembled in Washington. We were much upset by energetic men who prided themselves on being "go-getters" and who were continually digging up what they believed to be emergency cases which required special action on their part, and completely ignored the regular organization methods of procedure. A few such men in an organization are fatal to its success unless they can be made to see the truth that in the long run the greatest percentage of successes are secured by sticking to the regular organization method. It is essential therefore that the members of an organization be thoroughly sold on the organization plan.

It follows that the executive at the head of the organization must respect his own scheme of organization and work through its regular channels; he must put aside the temptation to get quick results in special cases by short-cutting his regular organization methods. If he finds that the regular routine is habitually too slow, it is time to correct the routine and not to ignore it. The Army emphasizes this very essential principle of organization in its insistence that superior officers must not deal directly with subordinates of their junior officers, but must exercise all official action through established channels. The tendency to bypass a weak, minor executive is quite frequent in business organization. The real remedy is to strengthen the weak member or replace him.

Too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of selecting the right man for the right job. The Army apparently operates on the theory that all officers are alike and an officer of a given rank is equivalent to any other officer of that same rank. Possibly West Point endeavors to turn them out that way. Possibly in line work, for which all officers have had the same training and in the course of which the physically, mentally and temperamentally unsuitable have been weeded out, the theory is reasonably safe. But its extension outside of this field is not justified even though many of the regular army officers displayed a truly remarkable versatility in handling creditably duties for which they had had no previous training.

Yet many organizers seemed to feel that having made their organization plans and outlined the positions to be filled, the selection of personnel was relatively unimportant and that any reasonably intelligent man could fill a square on their chart. It is terrible to contemplate the waste of priceless human energy and the hours of mental suffering caused by the placing of thousands of square pegs into round holes in the building of our war machine. Many of these mistakes were of course due to the haste with which the machine was constructed, but many were due also to a lack of appreciation of the importance of this phase of organization building. There was all too much justification for the cynical remark that a prospective officer was examined as to his training and capacity so that the error might not be made of placing him where he could use it.

After selecting the members of an organization as carefully as possible, it is important that the form of organization permit the greatest possible exercise of the individuality of each without each hampering the other. No two men are alike and no two executives do the same piece of work in the same manner. There were frequent instances of an able man being succeeded by an equally able man who got his results in an entirely different manner from the first. The organization that hopes to get the best out of all its members must be flexible enough to adjust itself to these individual characteristics. It must give the individual scope to fully exercise his strong points and it must support him on his weaker side.

No man who understands horses expects them to do good work or remain uninjured in a harness that doesn't fit. How about a man? Many an organizer made the error of building a cast iron machine for hypothetical men and of omitting the human element from his consideration.

Those of you who know anything about rowing, know how carefully the coach studies the individual characteristics of his oarsmen; how he shifts them around in the boat and adjusts and readjusts the rigging, striving always to balance one man's strong points against the weakness of his mate. He knows he hasn't got a crew until every ounce of energy in that boat is directly applied to the one purpose of moving that boat through the water. It is the last refinements that may make the difference between success or failure. And isn't the principle applicable to all forms of organizations?

In engineering, we define the efficiency of a machine as the ratio of output to input. Might we not well define the best organization as that mechanism which permits the greatest proportion of the energy put into it by its members to be delivered as useful product?

It will be noted that up to this point, little has been said about particular plans or types of organization. The experience of the war demonstrated quite clearly that the actual form of an organization was not the most essential factor in its success. Organizations succeeded or failed as a rule for other reasons than the type of mechanism which they attempted to utilize in carrying out their work.

Of course, the plan of organization must be reasonably well fitted to the duties which it is to perform, but not only was it clearly established that there is no universally best type of organization, but also that there is rarely only one good type to perform a given service. An illustrative instance occurred during the final reorganization of the Ordnance Department to a peace basis after the armistice. The old Supply Division became the nucleus for the new Field Service, to which was assigned not only the old Supply Division duties but additional duties as well. The Supply Division worked out a detailed scheme of organization for the Field Service and submitted it to Headquarters. It was not approved because it was found to be not consistent with the general scheme of organization for the whole department which was then in course of construction. The officers who had prepared the Supply Division scheme found it not a very difficult task to recast the entire scheme into a form which met the views of their higher authority. On the surface, a very radical revision was made; beneath the surface, all the real essence of the old Supply Division plan was preserved and the new organization started off without missing a beat. I have no doubt that the plan adopted will function just as well as the one originally submitted.

The Ordnance Department spent the war struggling to find a form of organization which fitted comfortably, and was still engaged in the struggle when the armistice was signed. Nevertheless, it kept right on doing business all the time. Admittedly, it was not 100 per cent efficient; admittedly, its failure to find an acceptable form of organization was a handicap; yet even so, its record of accomplishment from a standing start was remarkable and most of its failures had other causes than organization difficulties.