

## Focusing on Management in the Family:

# YOU, THE MANAGER

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"Mother and Dad," said the young man on the day of his college graduation, "you didn't help me get this degree. You only helped me establish my philosophy of life."

What is it that makes one capable of changing or directing another person's life?

That young man could have been at the door of a prison, on a concert stage, or in the cab of a truck. The statement would still apply.

An organization's officers and leaders influence its activities. A country has legislators. A family has a mom and dad. These people function as change agents, leaders and managers who direct our lives.

### WHO IS A MANAGER?

A manager is a person in an organization, group or family who, because of his ability and authority,

can solve problems through planning and directing the work of others. The manager should influence the group's behavior.

In a family the manager isn't always mother or father. Children, too, can also be responsible for:

- decisions concerning family policies
- organization and integration of resources and activities
- interaction in all family decisions to achieve family goals

In this publication when we speak of "manager," we mean anyone who *manages*, not just the homemaker.

Managers usually perform four independent processes:

#### The Processes

- (1) Managing oneself
- (2) Allocating resources
- (3) Administering operations
- (4) Integrating activities and developing staff

#### How They Apply to Home Managers

All managers must be realistic about their abilities and limitations. They must be willing to seek help, if needed.

Managers must decide whether resources will be used for present or future needs, used alone or combined with other resources to achieve family goals.

They must act as bookkeeper, stock boy and president of the "corporation" all at the same time. These jobs require thinking before doing, guiding and directing or involving others. Managers must accept responsibility and consequences for their decisions.

They must be aware of the total picture in order to fit together all the policies and activities of the family for both family and personal satisfaction.

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## WHO IS A GOOD MANAGER?

Successful companies have different philosophies and so can successful families. Depending on resources available, some families just get by, others do what is expected of them and still others are achievers. However, two managers seldom manage the same way.

These five "C's" are personal characteristics by which good managers are known:

1. *Capability* — using fully one's own and others' talents and accepting responsibility. The good manager cares about the development and use of family capacities. She needs to achieve.
2. *Cooperation* — working with others, for others and getting others to work toward group goals.
3. *Conscientiousness* — having drive or adequate work capacity. The manager must handle boring tasks as well as interesting ones. She plans her work so family priorities are met.
4. *Curiosity* — desire to learn, to reason, to accept new ways of doing things and new ideas and to help others through workable ideas.
5. *Creativity* — innovating and imaginative.

A good manager is sometimes called an "achiever"; a poor manager might be called an "underachiever." A manager who tries to achieve *things* instead of *satisfaction* might be called an "over-achiever."

Using this pattern, our five "C's" fit in as follows with their comparable extremes listed at the under- or over-achiever sides:

Underachiever	Achiever	Overachiever
Indifferent	Capable	Eager-beaver
Lone wolf	Cooperative	Yes-man
Lazy	Conscientious	Work addict
Closed mind	Curious	Constant reporter
Security seeker	Creative	Compulsive changer

## MANAGEMENT MINDEDNESS

A good manager must be aware of events and the feelings of persons around her. No mind can be creative or solve problems unless it draws regularly and generously from a variety of observations and ideas.

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A mother doesn't automatically know the emotional stresses of her adolescent daughter, the school adjustment problems of her 6-year-old son or the sources of investment for future family financial security. She needs an understanding of human behavior and some basically good information.

A good manager must constantly know the thoughts and feelings of others. She doesn't try to organize everything according to her own values, goals and standards. A good home manager can:

- Aid the family in working toward individual and family goals.
- Strive toward the maintenance and strengthening of the family unit.

## HOW CAN YOU AND YOUR FAMILY BECOME BETTER MANAGERS?

### *Avoid the manager stereotype*

It's not a law of nature that men must be the breadwinners and child discipliners and that women must cook, clean and calm the children. Each family works out for itself the division of responsibilities that's best for it. A farm family's decision might be far different from a family where the father works a night shift and the mother teaches school.

### *Become people-oriented rather than product-oriented*

In the home, people are important, not how clean the house is or how good a cook you are or the number of dresses made. The happiness, satisfaction and achievement of family members are important.

### *Help your family recognize the consequences of poor management*

Consequences of poor management are as follows if each person does not assume his share of responsibilities:

- Lack of harmony within the home
- Level of living below what the family thinks it should be
- Lack of pride in the home

### *Help your family see the "Big Picture"*

Families as a group are important. But the bigger picture is how they relate to the community around them. Families must cooperate, communicate and be part of their community.

How does your family management stack up against the future?