

## *Preface*

Erwin H. Schell was a warm man, full of character and personality. As the head of the Department of Business and Engineering Administration he was the focal point of management at M.I.T. He was in close touch with American industry as a consultant; he was active in every management aspect and development; he was often the active participant in, and contributor to, each new concept and technique. His recorded deeds only suggest the vital contributions to generations of students who carried forth not simply the thoughts but the principles of the man — and made both an integral part of their own existence.

Professor Schell was, above all, a teacher of philosophy. Over a period of many years he made substantial and thoughtful contributions to management thinking and administrative practice. His whole being was dedicated to an unending search of the meaning of management, and from that search came his own inspiration and conviction. He sought to bring into clearer perspective the totality of the manager's human experience and responsibility. Out of his concern for

the development of a management career, there flourished a particular genius to serve as a catalyst for sensible action. He helped create modernity in executive action through his exceptional insights into the true character and nature of management.

His methods were gentle, yet persuasive. He gave of himself freely and he exercised influence by virtue of his kindness and high purpose. He not only lifted up the mind; he lifted up the heart by his genuine ability to listen and by his facility for the apt phrase and story to bring a point into focus. He was remarkable for a simple and humble quality — humanness. He believed in dignity and decorum; yet he was able to laugh at them. He talked of values, purpose, and self-discipline in his attempt to balance human nature with the nature of things. He conceived the end product of both good management and good education in terms of lasting attitude for constructive action. Unafraid to speak of duty, he encouraged all who came to him to explore and to contribute to our world of perpetual innovation, but he also reminded them of their lasting duty to preserve and honor whatever is necessary for personal and professional integrity.

Moreover, he viewed the manager as a kind of “hero,” a professional person of far-reaching consequence. He related the everyday goals of the manager to deep and abiding national principles and aspirations. With his belief in the dignity, freedom, and responsibility of man, he tried to bring into clear, understandable perspective the fullness of a manager’s human experience and his social responsibility toward his role. He saw the manager as a catalyst who helped his people realize their potential, not only for their personal bene-

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fit, but for the good of the company, the community, and the nation as a whole. In this respect, Professor Schell was among the first to introduce "professionalism" into the manager's role.

He was a forerunner of numerous human-relations concepts that are so widely accepted in industry today. Out of his wise and fruitful "overview" came many of the practices of participative management. His human sympathy and sincere belief in other people led him to realize that a worker could help the manager in solving problems related to his daily work. He encouraged each man in a group, regardless of his status, to assume responsibility, contribute his ideas, and receive recognition for his involvement in the problems of management.

He was always teaching, whether before the young men at M.I.T. or before the older men at management meetings. For him, life was an experience in management, and management was a constant challenge to his best thinking and exposition. He was at his best when actively responding to the group before him and obviously enjoying the opportunity to explore ideas in a new and fascinating way.

It is on the theme of his management ideas that the purpose of this volume rests. In some way it constitutes a sentimental journey for two of his appreciative students who were also privileged to be his assistants, co-workers, and friends. But more important, by using our personal resources in combination with much generally unpublished material, our intention is to present Schell, the contributor to management. The man lives in pleasant memory, an author whose well-known works speak for themselves. But he was also a man who lived

and worked, taught and thought, during that span of time when management was undergoing its most fundamental development; and he was an intimate part of that movement — from Taylor and the Gilbreths to Likert and McGregor. Whereas all the others had their special areas of concern and endeavor, his was the broad perspective of management thought and action, the total managerial view.

To capture this total view and the various pieces of the mosaic, tapes and films of Professor Schell's talks, letters to his former students, lecture notes, little-known articles, and excerpts from his published works have all been thoroughly reviewed, selected, and arranged in a pattern of thought and ideas. The final selections were, however, most influenced by the best of memory that reflected years of pleasant association.

Erwin H. Schell dedicated his life to management and to those who manage. This volume is intended as a continuing resource to the student of management and the practicing manager.

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