

How does one measure effective leadership? Most leaders develop and refine their leadership model by observation. They study those who've managed them throughout their career; note practices that seem effective as well as behaviors & styles that appear ineffective. Mentally, they develop their own model for what they believe will serve them best. They try to put into practice what they hope will be the most effective set of practices, and monitor their success. Some things work quite well, others disappoint. They continually try to refine their model.

While this is the common approach, it does have limitations. Firstly, our observation sample is quite finite. How many managers is one able to observe as they progress through their career? Secondly, our own trial & error method of developing and refining our own style can be time consuming, and fraught with risks. How many failures can our career endure? We may be on the right track, but wouldn't it be great to accelerate the learning curve process?

There is a better approach ... using the results of a leadership study based on a very large sample size – 16,000 managers! Using a study that actually correlated leadership styles and practices with results.

The Achieving Manager Study

In his study of 16,000 managers in over 50 different Fortune 1000 companies with at least six levels of management, Dr. Jay Hall rated a manager's skill set by how high in the organization he/she had achieved divided by the person's age ... a high achiever would achieve a higher level in the organization at a younger age. He quantified this, defining a Management Achievement Quotient (MAQ), as:

$$MAQ = 5 * (6 - Rank) \div Age.$$

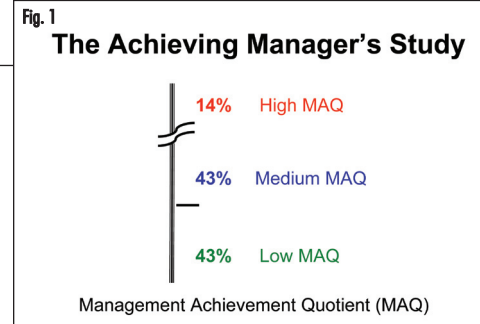
So the higher the manager had risen, and the sooner this was accomplished, the higher that person's MAQ.

What was statistically significant was that the distribution of the 16,000 MAQ scores was not nor-

mally distributed, as expected ... but 14% of the scores were dramatically higher than all the rest. And the remaining 86% were linearly distributed. (Fig.1)

So the upper 14% were defined as having a High MAQ, and the balance were divided in half, the upper 43% were labeled as having a Medium or Average MAQ, the lower 43% as having a Low MAQ.

The behaviors of the group were then studied, comparing the behaviors of those with a High MAQ with those having a Medium or Low MAQ... looking for what behaviors correlated with the MAQ scores. In order to study these behaviors, not only did the managers complete a self-assess-



ment; but at least three of their direct reports were also surveyed, who completed an assessment of the manager. The results provide strong lessons for those that desire to move up the management ladder, or for those that want to adopt behaviors that are critical to effective management.

The High Achieving Manager

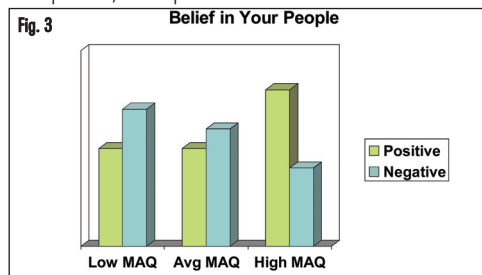
Many factors were examined for correlation. The study found that there were four attitudes / behaviors that correlated with the MAQ score:

- 1) Their (two-way) communication competence,
- 2) Their belief system in their employees,
- 3) The amount of employee participation they used in decision making,
- 4) What motivated the manager, and how he / she dealt with power.

The four charts that follow show the data for the three categories of managers, and illustrate the behaviors that resulted in the highest scores.

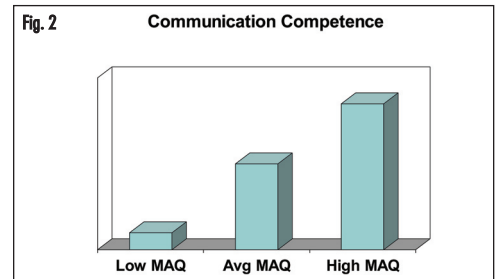
2) Belief System in Employees (Fig. 3)

The second factor that correlated with the MAQ score was the manager's dominant belief system. A positive belief system reflected an attitude that employees were basically competent and wanted to do a good job. A negative belief system held the opposite: employees were not necessarily competent, and preferred to do as little work as



1) Communication Competence (Fig. 2)

The first factor that correlated with the MAQ score was the communication skill level of the manager. It's important to note that in this context, communication is defined as a combination of listening (collecting feedback) and speaking (exposing thoughts). A manager's use of feedback & exposure affected their interpersonal style. A high level of both exposure and feedback resulted in high communication competence. Lower competence reflected both an imbalance between the two, as well as low levels of each. High levels of exposure with low levels of feedback, or high levels of feedback with low levels of exposure both resulted in average communication competence. Low levels of both resulted in low communication competence.



This particular finding is the least surprising; most people intuitively associate effective communication with effective management. What's noteworthy is that both listening skills and the ability to effectively communicate one's own thoughts are equally important.

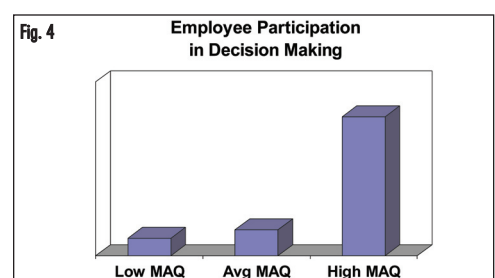
possible. Managers were found to have elements of both belief systems; what varied was the level of each. Low achievers' beliefs were noticeably more negative than positive. Average achievers had almost an equal level of positive and negative, although the negative was slightly higher.

High achievers had negative beliefs, but the positive beliefs dominated by a 2-to-1 margin.

3) Employee Involvement in Decision Making (Fig. 4)

The third factor that correlated with the MAQ score was the level of employee involvement the manager used in the decision making process.

Interestingly, there isn't much difference between the low and average managers on this component. Both used relatively little employee involve-



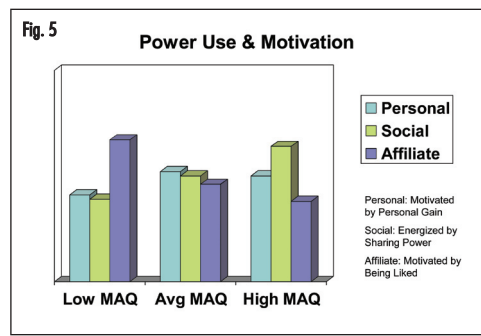
ment in making decisions. However, there is a major difference between those two categories and the high achieving managers. The high achievers used a very high level of employee participation when making a decision.

Related follow-on studies found that there was an extremely high correlation between the level

of employee involvement in the decision making process and their satisfaction with and commitment to the decision. If they were not involved, they were frustrated and had a very low level of commitment to the decision. If they were involved, even if the ultimate decision was not what they wanted, their satisfaction with the process and commitment to follow the decision was much higher.

4) Motivation and Power (Fig. 5)

The fourth and final factor that correlated with the MAQ score was what motivated the manager.



All managers had three basic motivators: the desire to get ahead, the desire to be liked, and the desire to do what was best for the organization. What varied was the level of each motivation present in the three levels of achievement.

Low achieving managers were primarily motivated by the desire to be liked. Average achievers had almost equal amounts of all three, although the desire for personal gain dominated slightly. However, while High MAQ managers were also motivated by personal gain and the desire to be liked, these attitudes were secondary to the desire to do what was best for the organization.

Results and Conclusions

So how do these four skills get reflected in the performance of the organization? Why are these factors so significant in the manager's ability to

rise through the ranks quickly? The answer lies in the performance of the organization managed. Not only was productivity measured, but morale was measured as well. The results show how the productivity and morale corresponds with the MAQ level of the manager (Fig. 6).

So the high achievers not only created a highly productive team, they also created an environment where the morale was high.

There is much discussion today regarding the three C's of organizations: Collaboration, Commitment, and Creativity, and how to get high levels of each. Fig. 7 illustrates the relationship between the four management competence factors and these three components of organizational health & morale:

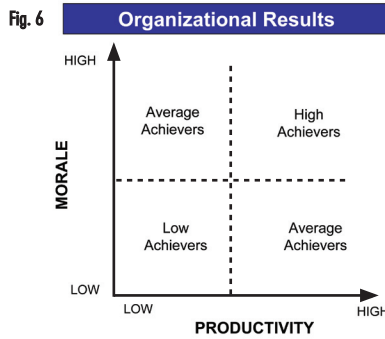
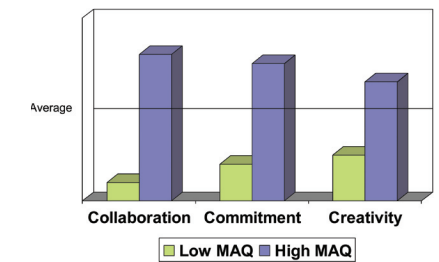


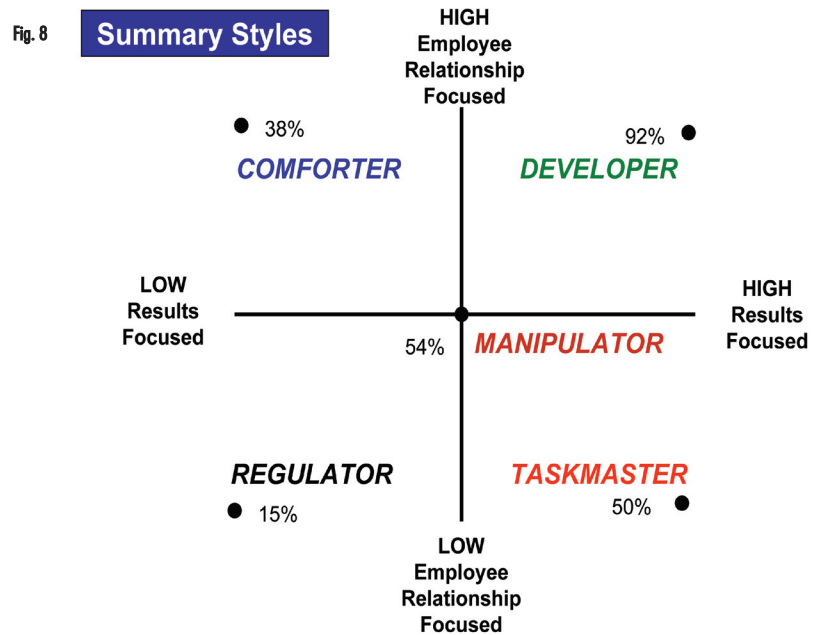
Fig. 7 The 3 C's of Organizational Health



So dramatically higher levels of collaboration, commitment, and creativity will be achieved employing these four competence factors.

The Achieving Manager's study summarizes the results in Fig. 8, graphing the level of the manager's focus on results (task) versus the level of the manager's focus on employee relationships. The study used probability theory to provide an overall competence rating based on the four key factors, and placed a management style label on the four corners (highest / lowest scores on the two scales). In reality, individual manager's ratings lay somewhere in between the four corners.

The "Developer" style has a 92% competence rating, and is characterized by a person who is equally focused on results and employee morale. The style that is singly focused on results, with little regard for the employees has a 50% competence rating, and is labeled the "Taskmaster". At the same time, the style that is singly focused on "happy" employees, labeled the "Comforter", is characterized by the manager who primarily wants to be liked, and only has a 38% competence rating. The least competent style, the "Regulator", with only a 15% rating, is the style that pays little attention to either results or morale.



What's Next?

Are you in the top 14%? What is your dominant style? What is your competence rating? Where does your organization fall on the productivity vs. morale matrix? While an honest self-assessment can be helpful, to accurately identify your style requires an assessment by peers and employees (as done in the study). Such an assessment, based on external input, is called a 360 degree assessment. Regardless of how you identify your areas for improvement, better results will depend on your ability to change. Reading books, and at-

tending seminars may increase your knowledge and awareness of more effective techniques, but

only a change program pursued over time will get you on the change course to the results you seek.

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