

**Which answers can management give to current and future challenges in different cultures, as well as political and economical systems?**

Management - within certain contexts, this seems to be a magic word, in particular if it is used where, within institutions, questions are to be solved which were caused by a lack of resources, by new social problems, badly trained personnel and a range of other organizational difficulties.

Management! For several years this concept has been used as a kind of panacea for all problems in the social sector. Management is supposed to make institutions of social support and health care work better and cost less, as well as to make employees and "customers" more content.

In Germany, training courses for management have been shooting up like mushrooms during the last 10 years. I don't have any exact figures, but I assume that many training institutes which used to offer training in the social sector nowadays offer "Management Training". In addition, there are those institutes which used to offer training in psychotherapy and supervision, not to mention the traditional training and education facilities for business.

But what is Management, and why is there a lasting boom in this sector?

In German, there is no one-word translation for "to manage". You can choose from a long list, including the words for "to handle, to lead, to administer, to control, to preside over, to monitor, to direct, to regulate, to bring something about, to finish, to contrive". But it also means "to persuade" and "to bring someone to heel". The noun "management" is defined by words like "handling, treatment, administration, leadership, control, board of directors and good husbandry". A Manager thus could be an agent, the head of a business unit, a director, an administrator, a director general, a CEO or a householder.

The various, sometimes ambiguous, translations show that the words management and to manage refer to very complex relationships, which are made to appear unified and rather simple by using one word to describe them. They seem to be something that can be

learned, just like cooking. Apparently, in management like in cooking you only need to know which ingredients you can combine in order to obtain a successful result. But there are enormous differences between cooking and cooking, between plain fare and highly refined gourmet meals, and in analogy, one can assume that management does not offer simple solutions for complex problems, either.

The call for management in an attempt to solve social problems, or rather to solve the problems of organizations in the social and health care sectors, resounded more and more loudly around the end of the 1980s. Up to that time, it had been tried to solve social questions "therapeutically" (from the mid-70s), and before that, politically, on the basis of extra-parliamentary opposition. But now there seemed to be a new way to their solution. By the way, the development in the social sector was always 10 to 15 years behind as compared to business. But it is important to take a closer look at the development in business, as the ideologies behind certain trends resemble each other closely. But before I address some of these aspects in more detail, I want to give a short overview of the trends in the 70s and 80s, and to describe the "hopes of salvation" associated with them

In the wake of the students' movement at the end of the 1960s, certain currents of the psycho-social sector were politicized as well. I just want to mention the institutions campaign, which was aimed at abolishing closed institutions for juveniles, the movement for antiauthoritarian day-nurseries and the campaign to unmask inhumane conditions in psychiatric wards. Ideas of solidarity, of working together with those concerned, of dissolving hierarchies, and of structuring and leading organizations on equal terms with the clientele were the concepts according to which changes, read improvements, were to be realized.

These ideas very quickly reached the limits of feasibility. The potential to change of those concerned had been overestimated, their needs not properly recognized and the potential to suffer of those in charge and the secret hierarchies and structures of power had been underestimated. Most collectively run organizations broke down by the end of the 70s. What was left were hierarchically organized institutions in the traditional sense, only that there were less lawyers, doctors and administration experts in the higher echelons of most institutions. Instead, more pedagogues and psychologists had turned up. This change of trends had something to do with the fact that in some institutions the experience was

made that leadership was not only based on the knowledge of law and administrative procedures, but also on the knowledge of people. At that time, training in the psycho-social area was characterized by new forms of therapeutic insights and methods. Individual-based therapies found more and more competition by group-, family-, and system-oriented therapy methods. The concept that understanding group and system processes made leadership and thus management more transparent, spread rapidly. Institutions which used to offer exclusively training in the field of therapy, in the mid-1980s added "understanding greater social systems" to their programs and transferred many therapeutic insights to analyzing and understanding of social organizations.

Just as in the 70s the policy-forming of the clients was celebrated as the only "way to salvation", out of suppression and social injustice, in the 80s it was mainly the understanding of people and social systems, and the vision of bringing social-support and health care organizations to more humane ways, which would also be more effective for the clients, by therapeutic interventions. Teamwork, supervision as an opportunity of personal development for the employees and of removing interferences and competition among them, understanding the problems of individuals, the expectation that everybody was to "participate" and to show, of course, understanding, were typical of the working situation in many institutions. The institution as a "big family", which only had to be conscious of its problems, or had to be made conscious of them, and then everything would be all right, was a current picture of the functioning of institutions.

This development ran parallel to the business world, where, since the 70s, changes in the style of organization and leadership had been taking place. Numerous companies, banks and administrations had reached the limits of effectiveness and threatened to break down, particularly in comparison with Asian companies (a prime example: the U.S. motor industry, which was brought to its knees by European and Japanese companies in the beginning of the 80s). The same was true for computers, audio and video technology and several other sectors.

It was tried to find out the differences in the strategies of Asian companies as compared to their European, Central and North American counterparts.

The "protestant Prussian" work ethics, based on diligence, punctuality, obedience, subordination, and the orientation on a leader, turned out to be no longer up-to-date. Branches

of industry and companies whose production and service processes followed Taylorist principles were no longer efficient enough. The idea that great minds were at the top, had a general overview of the whole, divided up orders and knew what was right for the individual, only lead to the fact that those in higher positions filled increasingly their own pockets and neglected to orient production on demand and the needs of the customers, as can be seen from the example of General Motors. It was not taken into account that "more of the same" was not always a suitable solution; in particular, the insight that the world's resources are limited (oil crisis 1972/73) caused those structures that were oriented on constantly increasing productivity without considering changes in quality, to tumble.

In addition to these insights, philosophical discussions which could be summed up under the heading "New Age" brought an end to the Cartesian world-view of the increasing mechanization of all processes of life. Holism, the unity of mind and matter, the interactions of nature, man and environment, and many other buzz words of this type played a role in discussing the leadership of big companies. From then on, management training not only focused on economic, financial and structural processes, but personal development, self-fulfillment, spirituality, even astrology and esotericism were included in the menu of training courses for managers.

That was grist on the mill of therapy schools, as they were already offering similar menus. There was a boom of training courses for managers including creativity courses, survival training, fire walking, imagined journeys, and reading the stars.

The organization of social und health care services did not lag long behind on this development. As the leadership had changed from administrative to more human-sciences oriented qualifications, the field was well prepared for all kinds of "personality development". Now it was no longer the understanding of the clientele's life situation, its limitations and the possibilities of therapeutic intervention open to those concerned and to the employees which was regarded as the solution for a good organization, but holism, the understanding of the development of social organizations, the view of an organization as a natural organism, of the organization as being embedded in its social environment, of the interactions of "mind and nature".

The ironic undertone of these sentences should not lead to neglecting to use insights derived from the understanding of complex systems for good management strategies. It was

meant to hint that the trend to employ management as a panacea for all kinds of social, economic and political problems implies the danger of becoming dependent on the latest fashions in social development.

So what is management, and which questions in social and health care institutions, but also in social and political development, can be solved by applying management strategies? I return to my example of cookery and the people's need for nourishment. Nourishment means first of all that creatures take in and digest substances which they need in order to exist. This includes some degree of balance, food which is suitable for the current situation in life, but also an element which makes food enjoyable. If you take into account only the first two elements, food could be reduced to a uniform pudding containing all the necessary nutrients and vitamins, and which is regularly fed to the people in question. (Which is what I saw in a home for children with chronic diseases.) If the pleasure part of it, i.e. the quality of life, is of prime importance, things get more complicated. In many cases pleasure is associated with higher expenditure, more resources, more material prerequisites. The alternative seems to be either semolina pudding or a four-course meal in a five-star restaurant.

The question whether social organizations need management only arose as material resources became more and more scarce. At the same time, the demands made on social support institutions increased and the need for their services grew. This can be demonstrated very well considering youth welfare in Germany. In the 1970s and 80s, youth welfare institutions were supplied with extensive resources. Whether 5 or 15 children or juveniles were looked after in a group had no effect whatsoever on the further existence of the organization. In health care as well budgets were approved on the basis of the previous year's expenditure, which could only lead to the fact that as many resources as possible were used up. In the meantime, it has become obvious that this was not always to the benefit of those concerned. Not infrequently, a virtually obscene waste of material resources was the consequence in many organizations providing social and health care, but also education and training. It was never asked where the money came from or whether it really served the intended purpose. It was simply spent. To return to the example of cookery, many institutions of social and health care considered "hot, fatty and a full plate" a good meal.

Besides the decreasing material resources, questions arose in social and health care institutions as to whether the services they offered really met the needs of those concerned, and whether it was possible to help the intended clientele this way, in other words, whether the resources used constituted "healthy nourishment". Of course it had long been obvious that this was not the case, that the solutions offered did not meet the requirements, but alternative solutions were unknown. Therefore new management concepts came as a kind of relief for the social and health care institutions in Germany, as they were combined with savings and diminishing resources.

That hopes of salvation were instantly associated with this development, seems to be a typically German phenomenon. Whenever it is discussed which methods might be appropriate to address a certain kind of problem, a certain social question or development, in Germany people tend to apply one solution for each and every problem that presents itself.

So what is management and which questions or problem areas can really be solved with the help of management techniques? For me, management includes three aspects of understanding social organizations and of acting within them. Firstly, there is the administrative-legal area. Without knowing the laws on which the existence of an institution is based and which regulate what rights and obligations the people within the organization have, one cannot run an institution. The knowledge of rights and obligations should extend so far that it is possible to represent the clients and to claim their rights, particularly in cases where they cannot do that themselves. The law is to be extensively interpreted in the best interest of the clients.

Finances are also part of the administration. The overview of what is spent for which purposes and of the opportunities of earning money is part of management. To return to the cookery example: a cook can plan a meal and calculate its price only if he knows what he can spend on the ingredients (and other resources).

The second area is the knowledge of the people and groups which benefit from or depend on the institution and the people working in it. That means that a manager of an institution must have some knowledge of the clients' life, of their needs, their problems and perspectives. He must understand what the people need and want. It is not necessarily his job to fulfill these needs in direct contact with the people. Usually, it is not the cook who serves the meal or spoon-feeds the guests. This area of knowledge is rather extensive. The di-

iversity of knowledge needed can be seen from many curricula of the training organizations represented here.

The third area is the understanding of social organizations as a whole. The knowledge of how organizations are embedded in socio-political und economic developments, of the momentum they gather, of how organizations work as "social systems" and which effects this may have on future developments, is just as important as the areas mentioned before. That is to say, the cook needs to know whether his Restaurant is "in", where the trends may lead, how much money people spend on dinner in a restaurant, whether the atmosphere is right, and whether there are plans for major building operations in the street. The understanding of social systems within a society is probably the most difficult, but also the most important part of management.

Management trainings frequently offer these three areas separately. There are still many companies which focus mainly on the administrative and legal aspects, and others which specialize in personality development of leading employees and in the understanding of clients/ customers. Training courses which focus more on the understanding of systems often neglect the first mentioned aspects. In cookery, it is not sufficient to know the recipe, or to have an overview of the ingredients and their prices, or to know how a kitchen and a restaurant work, but it is mandatory to have a general overview of what fits well with each other, how everything works together and what is to be taken into account when combining different aspects, and management can only be effective if all these areas work together in harmony.

Good management (which is not necessarily the task of just one person) offers in my opinion the possibility to structure organizations and institutions in such a way that the needs of those depending on the organization can be adequately met, that the employees fulfill the requirements of their job and carry out their tasks to their own satisfaction, and that the organization can defend and justify its place within the overall system of social and health care work of the district.

In my opinion, social and health care institutions differ in this respect markedly from business companies. Their relationships are more locally defined. Of course, they relate to a wider social environment and thus have to go beyond the immediate local surroundings, but they do not have the same global links as big companies and branches of industry do.

Therefore it is important to differentiate which areas are concerned by questions of management. That good management always needs to be aware of future developments, to anticipate trends and to take into account, besides short- and medium-term plans, also long-term visions, is self-evident.

For me, management is a sector concerned with identifying, with understanding, with methods of planning and realization, and not with saving the world or solving all social problems. Hopes and promises of salvation only divert our attention from here and now, from the essential points, and make us wait for solutions to be found in the future. Management provides the insights and the tools which allow individual institutions and the system of psychosocial support as a whole to address the arising problems of those concerned in an adequate way, which takes into consideration the needs of those concerned. Of course, there will always be loopholes and shortcomings, for another task of management is to know where the limits of the feasible lie.

A good cook will certainly be able to prepare a delicious meal from simple ingredients; but he cannot solve the problem of hunger in the world by his cookery.