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*Human Relations
in Industry*



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HUMAN RELATIONS IN INDUSTRY.

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The superintendent was talking:

"After long and fairly sad experience we have learned always to find from the men threatening trouble how we happened to *hurt their feelings*. After we have squared that up the settlement of the wage or other demands is easy."

The superintendent put his finger on the heart of the biggest problem in victorious America—the problem of obtaining in our factories the efficient production required to make up the cost of the war and to put our products successfully onto the counters of international trade.

Even when at war, a huge "labor turnover" or "individual strike" and a daily tardy or absent list of unheard-of proportions supported the claim that only 40 per cent of the country's potential human energy was being actually delivered at the switchboard of productive—and protective—industrial effort.

In war or peace the biggest and most far-reaching waste in profligate America is the enormous amount of wasted physical, mental, and spiritual "gasoline" in the hands, the heads, and the hearts of the country's workers—wasted because unexploited and unapplied.

I submit that the chief cause of this vast loss is that the modern factory tries constantly to deny these two undeniable facts:

First, that while few of us do much thinking, *all of us have feelings* and keep them busy most of the time.

Second, that next to life itself, the most important thing in the world for us humans is *our associations with other humans*.

WHAT MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND.

Without the cargo of feelings, wants, and instincts which we bring with us into the world we would not stay long. We would lack the wish to "stick around," the motive power—the drive—to be or do. Without association with others, likewise, we would see no use in "sticking 'round," because we would find no outlet for those cravings and desires which make us human and which keep us going.

Try to imagine eating and sleeping through 60 or 70 long years with such words as these left out: Mother, wife, children, home, friends, love, honor!

Each is the name of an association or relationship between people. Each is the channel for the biggest and best of our feelings.

While speeding up the factory's machines and processes, the industrial chief has carelessly "balled up" the natural relationships of the factory's people. In so doing he has dammed the normal channels of their feelings, and so has slowed down their performance by shutting off the gas of wholesome human interest and driving power.

Proper production from the factory's processes and people can never be secured until this gas is turned on full and exploded by the spark of friendly relations between factory corporation and factory man.

This may be done in the same way that two people become and continue friends.

They simply put into operation two processes called Production and Selling. Call it one, if you like, for all good selling starts with good production.

Nobody can "sell" himself—or any other article—unless he first produces something which other people want. And they can't tell whether they want it unless they can learn its character by its performance—its honest and consistent performance.

This honest and consistent performance is just as necessary to show the desirable and salable character and individuality of a person as of a commercial article. It is just as necessary for a corporation. It is also much more difficult; for the job grows harder the greater the number of units or parts whose performance must be "lined up" and made consistent. The top executive of a big corpo-

ration—or one which would become big—has no bigger responsibility, therefore, than deciding what the “company character” is to be, and then trying to produce it.

SUCCESSFUL CORPORATIONS HAVE HEARTS.

“A company is known by the management it keeps,” says an expert in “reverse English.”

“If things go steadily wrong between a company and its men,” says a successful president, “take a look at the president or manager and then at the directors. If you don’t find anything there—take another look!”

Now the moment the big executive begins to build company character by insisting on honest and consistent “execution” all the way down the line to the last straw boss, he sees that this production job turns into a selling job; he has to contrive to “get it over” to them all so that they in turn can get it over to the men under them. Then is when he should drop into the sales-manager’s office and study some of the wall-mottoes he will find there:

“The seller’s sales are built on the buyer’s service.”

“We sell as we would be sold to.”

“We study our goods from our customer’s side of the fence.”

Not that the sales-manager is a philanthropist! He simply knows that if he is to make us chaps sign on the dotted line without having any authority over us, he has to contrive somehow to tie his article up with the stock of assorted hunches and hankerings we all keep on our inmost shelves and which boss our hands.

He has to be sympathetic with us or we won’t let him see those shelves. Most important of all, he knows that it is the shelves not of our heads but of our hearts that hold the real stuff which furnishes the “action” he wants—he knows that more than 75 per cent of the decisions we proudly believe we make with our thinkings we really make with our feelings.

If he got interested in helping the chief set up a campaign for selling the company to the men, he would probably wax enthusiastic:

“Your superintendents and foremen have got to carry the ball in this game. They are all of the

company most of the men ever see. They'll help you produce your good company character in great shape—*provided* you make them into bang-up salesmen."

"How?"

"Well, when the small-town Smart Alecks asked Hare-lip Bill how he came to 'cop' the ten dollars' reward for finding the strayed horse, he wobbled his nose like a rabbit and gave them the whole secret of salesmanship:

"'I 'ust thought I 'ud go down whur I 'ud 'a gone if I 'ud been a horse. And I did and he had!'"

HOW TO INCREASE PRODUCTION.

"Of course those husky foremen out in the shop will wonder why in 'h' they should bother with salesmanship when they already have authority. But the boys from France say they did their best for the officers who cut the bawling-out stuff and who respected their feelings just as if they were customers. One of them sent me this about a sergeant; he said it was by Kipling:

"'E learns to do his watchin'
 Without it showin' plain;
 'E learns to save a dummy
 And shove him straight again;
 'E learns to check a ranker
 That's buyin' leave to shirk,
*An' 'e learns to make men like him
 So they'll learn to like their work."*

Every born salesman knows why people fight—in Midvale or Mons or Moscow—because he knows people and why they do anything. Just as when Germany assumed we were too money-mad to lose the profits of neutrality by fighting, so *it is always the disregarding of feelings which lead first to the "severance of relations" and then, sooner or later, to bloodshed.*

Capital and labor have certainly thought mighty little about producing company character or labor-union characters that would be salable to the other fellow! For increasing their power to *make* the other fellow do things they have all been keen enough. As salesmen they have respected each other's feelings about as much as the Germans respected Belgium's or our own.

The result is what we see—a sword's-point industrial team with a score of 40 per cent! A very poor crowd to push the ball down the field of domestic prosperity or international trade leadership.

But let no one cast the first stone at either side until he reflects how far from simple these things we glibly call "feelings" are.

There are at least three groups of them—those of self-preservation, of self-reproduction, and self-respect.

Take the first:

WHAT MEN REALLY WANT.

If I as a worker have trouble in earning enough to deliver at lathe or ladle the power to do my job, I am sure to be keen on high *daily* and *hourly* wages. So you must not expect me to be crazy over profit-sharing or other delayed rewards *unless* you make it perfectly plain to me that these won't lessen the *daily* pay I simply must have in order to bring down to the gates a productive combination of legs and arms. In every way you must expect me to look at even a few cents a day—if *they are bread-and-butter cents*—a lot more seriously than any cake-eater can possibly understand.

The instinct for self-reproduction is a sort of future-tense or "hang-over" wish for self-preservation—I just naturally hate to quit. It gives me a family and provides a lot of bigger feelings than I've known before, and so makes me think that I'm really living. For that reason my family gives my boss and me a big chance for us all to get close together.

The why of that is this: *Real friendship between us humans depends*, not upon the number of times we see each other; not upon how we agree with each other on the tariff or such matters, but *upon sharing together our biggest and deepest experiences and feelings*.

That's why families stick together—they have shared their biggest moments with each other. That's why captains and privates are pals for life after they have faced death together for even a few hours in the front-line trenches.

So if my boss will show himself a genuine friend to my family even for an hour—if *it's their dark*

hour—he gets closer to me than in a year of being a good fellow to me alone.

Pensions, health and life insurance, the plant nurse or doctor, the relief society—all these are big “get-together” things because they help carry a fellow and his family—and his employer—through the biggest moments of life—*together*.

The moment of hiring or promoting, the breaking of a plant record, the new baby at home, the wife’s illness, the religious or patriotic holiday—all these provide the “big moments” of modern industrial life. If we prove good friends and true then, we’re friends “for keeps.”

Then there’s self-respect—a man’s wish to count among his fellows. It is responsible for more hurt feelings, more “severed relations,” and more war—yes, more h—l—than any other single thing in the world.

Not long ago I insulted a hobo by thinking he was a mere tramp. It seems that a hobo keeps his engagements with the logging camps in winter and the wheat fields in summer by the use of the “side-door Pullman.” “There would be the devil to pay if I didn’t get there, too. The tramp! Huh! He can take the time to walk, and not care a d—n whether he gets there, either!”

MONEY NOT EVERYTHING.

The worker may honestly believe that all he wants is in the pay envelope. But he is only trying to get away from those yearnings to count among his fellows which Mother Nature put into him and all of us. It is these that take him into the union when there is nothing to be gained in wages or working conditions, or into any six of the hundreds of organizations all established mainly for the purpose of giving us some new associations and a bigger chance for some grand and imposing title and the feeling that we have not lived in vain. It is these yearnings that make him the “industrial tourist,” or the “individual striker,” searching in one plant after another for success. And it is these that *hold* him in the shop where good wages, worthwhile work, maximum responsibilities and recognition, interesting committees, absorbing contests, sincere, sympathetic managers and trustworthy,

friendly foremen—all make him feel he has a good chance to become the real fellow he used to want to be, the father of the best family a man could wish!

And here is the big point we are all likely to forget. *The same self-respect which makes a man want these things makes him unwilling to accept them unless they represent the company's as well as his own best interests!*

That's why democracy is worth four years of blood. It is the only arrangement yet invented which guarantees to every human being the right to pursue his own personal hunches and hankerings up to the farthest practicable point—the point, namely, where that pursuit interferes with the similar and equal right of his neighbor. Within this limit it is the world's most powerful stimulus to individual effort and to teamwork. Nothing less than this limit ever did or ever will give a human being or a people a chance to "give her the gas" and show what it can do.

The everlasting "scrapping" between Capital and Labor is now "old stuff"—out of date in a world which has paid millions of lives to learn the lesson of genuine cooperation and teamwork.

Good wages can be retained and national wealth increased only if manager and man and machine combine to produce as never before as the first step toward successful world-wide selling.

The price of maximum production is maximum personality for every human producer. Of this the price is maximum outlet for that human producer's best and biggest feelings. That in turn can be bought only with right relationships and associations with all the persons of his world.

Of that the price—and the prize—is Democracy.

The Kaiser has furnished us with a "big moment"—the biggest this country has known since '76. Before we have moved away from the memory of that thrilling moment the industrial leader should fuse together the hearts of his headworkers and his handworkers in the joy of strengthening the political democracy so seriously threatened and in the vision of an advance toward a democracy as yet little known, the democracy of industrial production.

In terms of the happiness and the worth-while-ness and the all-around achievement of the lives of scores of millions of human beings in this country alone, that democracy will be worth all the cost of the war.

"Well, sir, we'll soon be a-m'ykin' 'istory, won't we, sir?" said a Tommy to his sergeant as they waited, watch in hand, for the "zero hour" to go over the top.

"History be hanged," said the sergeant; "what we've got to make is *geography!*"

The coming together of factory management and factory man for the best good and the biggest development of both will do more than humanize and justify this factory age. It will save us permanently from the slavery of any of the Kaiser's political descendants, and it will enable American industry to keep the home wheels thankfully and happily and prosperously turning.



