

**PROBLEM-SOLVING IN MANAGEMENT:
Peculiarities of the Arts**

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evaluation. There is however, a fine distinction between these two terms as could be seen in their definitions.

According to Rosenberg (14), Administration is “designating those who determine purpose and policy in an organization”. This is also to say that administration can be described as a process of formulating and executing policies for the achievement of goals and objectives of an organisation. It is that part of management dealing with installation and execution of programme procedures laid down, as planned, to aid the progress of activities, regulated with maximum supervision through communication. Due to the extraordinary interest in management, there are many definitions of management by different researchers, and each contributes something to our knowledge of what managers do. While some researchers maintain that management is getting things done through people; others are of the opinion that management is getting people to do things. Though no one definition has been universally accepted, most definitions of management emphasise the necessity of predetermined objectives and further emphasise the organisation of group activities toward the achievement of them.

Effective management is highly dependent on people (managers), sometimes hundreds or thousands of them to implement it, and that goes without saying, that without individuals, a business cannot exist. Analyses of business failures made over many years have shown that a high percentage of these failures have been due to unqualified or inexperienced management. Management, as an essential activity, ensures the coordination of individual efforts toward achieving group goals. The aim of every manager is to establish an environment in which people can achieve group goals with the least amount of time, money, materials and personal dissatisfactions. The following elements are common to management and administration viz: planning, organising, decision-making, staffing, supervising,

Abstract

Much of a manager’s job involves problem-solving or decision-making. In the scheme of general affairs, human beings, managers as well as managers of managers are the ones who make things happen. In other words, neither the situation being managed (the organisation or group and its environment) nor the interventions and impact of the manager are static. Both organisational processes and managerial processes are constantly changing and shifting in relation to each other over time - be it a positive change or otherwise. Positive changes include growth in the market share, increased technological capability and greater understanding and support of corporate objectives by key employees. There are equally important organisational changes that represent decline. The successful manager is able to direct and support the processes that move the organisation toward strategic success and reverse or minimise the effect of processes of decline. Thus, the manager has to be given adequate training to prepare him for the challenge ahead of him-the challenge of problem-solving or good decision-making. It is against this backdrop that this essay attempts to examine the concept of management as a problem-solving phenomenon with particular reference to arts management.

Introduction

The terms “management” and “administration” are often used interchangeably because they are both processes involved in the policy formulation of organisation, their execution and their

controlling and evaluation. All managers whether in profit or non-profit organisations perform all these functions with the objective of achieving organisational goals. Stoner (8) seems to confirm this when he defines management as:

The process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of organization members and of using all other organizational resources to achieve stated organizational goals.

Management functions are the basic activities required of managers in the performance of their jobs. Fayol, as quoted by (6), identified the following as the five functions of a manager:

1. To plan
2. To organize
3. To co-ordinate
4. To control
5. To direct or command.

Managers are leaders, and as such, they have a unique organisational position which enables them to perform certain duties which their followers cannot perform for themselves. This means that they do not do same work as their followers. Following this logic, we can conclude that leaders have a unique vantage point that enables them to perform four kinds of functions most effectively for the groups they lead. These four major management functions, by simple classification, are as follows:

1. Planning and decision-making
2. Organising for effective performance
3. Leading and motivating
4. Controlling performance.

Before a group can act effectively, it must determine where it wants to go and how best to get there. The leader must see to it

that a course of action is determined in advance which is understood and agreed to, by all who will work to accomplish it. Thus, planning implies that managers think through their goals and actions in advance. This management function can also be described as predetermining a course of action. People working together tend to overlap and duplicate the task they perform so that time, effort and resources are wasted. The leader must ensure that each person has a clear-cut area of work that does-not overlap with others and that all members of the team know how to work effectively together. The function of organising is arranging and relating the work to be performed. Managers co-ordinate the human and material resources of an organisation. Work gets done and results are secured only to the extent that people involved are willing and able to work hard and productively. Leading and motivating, therefore, is influencing people to take effective action. Moreover, it is necessary to check to make sure the work is being done properly and the desired results are being secured and, if not, to rectify matters. Hence, controlling is assessing and regulating the work in progress and the results secured. These four management functions are therefore interrelated. We cannot plan effectively without also controlling, leading and organising. No control can be any better than the plan which it measures. Organising is vitalised by people and people are most effective -for themselves and their enterprises -when they work within the limits of plans, organisation and controls.

A few methods of how managers carry out their function as problem-solvers have been evolved. There is the popular case method in management training. This method is considered to have been pioneered by the Harvard Business School, and case studies have been accepted as valuable instruments with which learning may be promoted. Under this method, the manager analyses the situation, develops alternative ways of dealing with the problems and issues identified by the analysis, and decides upon a course of

action.

Another suggested problem-solving process considered to be a better method has been broken down into five stages Viz:-

- a. Problem identification listing the symptoms and deducing the causes.
- b. Generation of alternatives
- c. Defining criteria
- d. Designing an action-implementation plan- the strategy for dealing with the problem.
- e. Building feedback systems to monitor the workings of their organisations.

Whatever method is adapted, everything still amounts to the manager's job being conceptualised as processing information within the frame-work of problem-solving and decision making. In training managers to be problem-solvers, apparently, their planning skills are being developed for them to be able to carry out a good decision. A manager needs dynamic planning to get the best possible results when an important development turns out differently from expected, because he will always have to change the programme of action, the resource allocation or the objective.

Principles Underlying Arts Management.

Arts management deals with the processes involved in the effective management of arts organisations. There are two levels at which arts management operates. These are the state level and the organisational level.

The state level involves the formation of artistic and cultural policies which can be described as the governmental level involving policy makers in a country at both the federal, state and local government levels. The principle underlying arts management at this level is the cultural policy formulated for the country. The cultural policy is a document which provides the guidelines for

the direction of cultural and artistic activities of a country. The document also spells out the objective of the policy, methods of implementation, focus of implementation and methods of administration and funding of the policy. The formulation of cultural policy at the state level reflects the socio-economic condition as well as political ideology of the country. It also reflects the country's conception of culture and its role in national development.

The second level of arts management - the organisational level - is concerned with the actual management of arts institutions and organisations where the application of the necessary administrative and management skills and techniques are crucial to the achievement of artistic and institutional goals and objectives. The focus of management at this level is how to run such organisations effectively and profitably. Examples of such arts institutions are opera houses, arts galleries and exhibition centers, museums, cultural or arts centers, among others. These artistic and cultural organisations are mostly established by government of a state for the promotion, preservation and presentation of the arts and cultural activities in a country. Sometimes, such organisations are established by private bodies or individuals who may simply be arts promoters or business investors in the arts.

Training Arts Managers to Be Problem-Solvers.

The development of theatrical management has been divided into three phases by Stephen Langley (1980) in his pioneering book on the subject *Theatre Management In America: Principles And Practice*. He describes the three stages as "three centuries" of theatre management. The first century dates from 1750 to 1850 when we had actor managers who were rather naive about business. The second century, 1850 to 1950, was characterised by business investors who invaded the theatre for profit only, and were men in the theatre and not of the theatre. They quitted the theatre when other lucrative businesses like Cinema emerged, though they left

their mark on the commercial theatre of Broadway still flourishing till this day. The third century is characterised by the emergence and development of formally trained managers who will pilot the theatre from now and henceforth. The schools now teaching theatre management are obviously training the third century managers who will be knowledgeable in the arts and skilled in the art and science of management.¹

The goal is to produce arts managers who would be knowledgeable in the arts and skilful in the business practices relating to the arts as embedded in the tasks of arts management viz the issue of making the arts available and accessible to a wider spectrum of the society; the issue of funding the arts; the issue of managing the resources, co-coordinating the various sections of the organisation and marketing of artistic products, among others. An arts manager works towards the effective coordination of activities of his organisation albeit, this may not be achieved with ease. Artists are generally individualistic, at times self-centered, even though team spirit is required of them. And this attitude often leads to a lot of conflicts in the organisation. It is, therefore, not surprising that most artists resist the idea of being managed. It is only when there is a crisis that they remember the manager; suggestive of the fact that the manager's role is taken for granted and not usually acknowledged by the artists. The manager who has to co-ordinate people must learn to diffuse areas of conflicts. Crisis management connotes the ability to handle, contrive or manipulate conflict or conflicts at a decisive point wherein the result achieved is a resolution in favour; rather than a resolution against, or rather than an impasse or quagmire. As a corollary, the arts manager should be a master in crises management. Among the tools for coping with any crisis are: an adequate knowledge of the root cause(s) and effect(s) of the crisis, the commitment towards resolution of the crisis, opportunity costs or alternatives available in the resolution of the crisis, specific parameters or terms of

reference, acceptance of responsibility for the crisis and negotiations, other imperatives: compromise, reconciliation and arbitration on genuine levels with transparent effects. The arts manager must, therefore, have the administration, financial, promotional and technical know-how in the arts. Thus, the need for him to be cool-headed cannot be over-emphasised. He must be able to remain stable while others lose their heads and should be sympathetic. He may also be in conflict with the artists if he wishes to be credited and publicly acknowledged for his roles, hence, his satisfaction should be in the smoothness of the operation and the delight of the "consumers" of the product, that is, the audience² for without these, no theatrical venture can succeed.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, there seems to be general awareness as to the importance of developing our arts and culture and the need for formal training resulting in the upsurge in creating cultural infrastructures like Arts Centres, Arts Councils and the National Theatre.

At the moment, our primary objective is the revival and promotion of our cultural heritage. For us to be able to sustain the present tempo of activities, we need a substantial amount of money to maintain these magnificent buildings, and to initiate and sustain appropriate programmes necessary for their development and also for nurturing artistic creativity. It is the task of arts managers to formulate policies for the achievement of these goals. Of course, the success will depend upon the recognition accorded skilful and imaginative management. The department of Theatre Arts has a very important role to play in developing and training people who want to take to a career in theatre and drama.

I see the "third century theatre manager" (to quote Langley) taking over the management of these institutions; hence the department of Theatre Arts would continue to play a vital role in

producing the manpower and to relate her programme to the needs of the country. There is, therefore, the need to maintain the present tempo of activities and interest in the arts in line with the present expansion of theatre institutions and proliferation of theatre departments in our universities.

Notes

1. Looking at the whole business of theatre in Nigeria, we find University of Ibadan Arts Theatre, as the pioneer, playing a leadership role in the promotion of the arts. The present writer was trained in this institution under the tutelage of Jide Malomo, one of the pioneers in the area of Theatre Management and Organisation in Nigeria, coming to the field after a good number of years of practical experience and with a versatile academic training, making him a mature, rational and committed devotee of theatre management in particular and arts management in general.
2. Relating his personal relations with other artists in the theatre, Jide Malomo, as one of the pioneers in the area of theatre management and organisation in Nigeria, in interview with Dapo Adelugba (1985:53), acknowledges the fact that his success has been based largely on abundant patience, dedication, tolerance and respect for everyone's right to express his mind.

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