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ANALYZING THE EXECUTIVE'S JOB

By ERWIN H. SCHELL

Is the executive a manager? I should say, yes, and so also is any one else who consciously directs, supervises, and appraises a force. We manage our automobiles, our radio sets, our gas stoves—even the burning of our matches.

An executive is a special sort of a manager. He manages human forces which are operating in some significantly unified way. Furthermore, he does not determine the precise objective of these forces, for that is the responsibility of the administrator. Thus he does not direct in the sense of originating direction. Rather, he transmits directions, frequently interpreting them in the process. His job is the attainment of objectives as laid down.

This objective is not ordinarily expressed in terms of a total result of productivity, but as a rate of productivity and a degree of quality. In illustration, Mr. Dennison has pointed out that there is no beginning or end to the manufacturing cycle. It is in constant rotation and, as I understand his concept, it is as a result of its nicety of balance and low friction losses, as well as in the effectiveness of its direction in relation to the external situation, that profits are induced from this whirl of forces.

If we are to sense the executive job and its significance, we must accept as a fundamental concept the necessity of what may be called a momentum of productivity. Businesses are like bicycles. We must not expect equilibrium until we have momentum. We hear constant reference to the "going concern." We find seasoned business men counseling young entrepreneurs to plan the new business with greatest care,