

12-1962

Status of Women

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Recommended Citation

Peterson, Esther (1962) "Status of Women," *Woman C.P.A.*: Vol. 25 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/wcpa/vol25/iss1/3>

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Status of Women

A final kind of skill which distinguishes an effective supervisor is an ability to elicit participation of the work group. Participation is a useful means by which the supervisor encourages the subordinates to become involved in the work problems themselves. Freedom to participate in the solution of problems that have meaning for the group intensifies an awareness of the group. Basic understanding of one another's abilities helps group members to establish workable relationships within the group.

CONCLUSION

Effective supervision must be thought of as a resultant of the situation, the work environment, the supervisor's own attitudes and abilities and the group itself. The environment within which the supervisor and her group operates sets the basic framework for the action of them. Since the supervisor herself has expectations and needs that must be fulfilled she will be conditioned in her relationship with her group by the kind of atmosphere within which she works. The productivity of her group will tend to be used as a measure of her success as a supervisor.

However, the supervisor must recognize that productivity alone is not enough to be considered successful. She must attempt to provide an atmosphere in which her subordinates may develop and grow and reach their maximum potential. Assuming that she knows the strengths and weaknesses of her group members, she must accept them as they are and attempt to encourage them to achieve self growth and realization. This is possible by attempting to provide security¹ on the job within which the group members will grow.

Security may be provided for the worker through establishment of an attitude of genuine approval on the part of the supervisor, through knowledge of those phases of the work and environment that have meaning for the individual, and through consistent actions on the part of the supervisor.

To achieve these conditions of security, the supervisor must develop skill in communication, counselling, and training, and must portray confidence in her subordinates by encouraging them to participate in those activities of the work that affect them, and by exercising general rather than close supervision. Mutual respect and confidence appear to be the keystones of effective supervision.

¹The author is indebted to Douglas McGregor for the ideas of security and approval as a condition of effective leadership.

The fact that the United States is lagging behind other Western nations in providing equal pay for women is a matter for great concern. The treaty establishing the European Community which was signed in Rome in 1957 binds Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands "to ensure and subsequently to maintain the application of the principle of equal remuneration as between men and women workers." The United States must adopt a similar policy if we are to join the progressive march of nations toward equality for women.

Although the demand for women workers is increasing, the notion that women are inferior workers still lingers to hamper the effective functioning of our economy. What is a notion? An inclination, a whim. Good public relations can change whims and inclinations. So, how about a good public relations program for women in the accounting fields? Whether it is packaged in gray flannel or in petticoats, the employer can be educated to buy the job a worker performs, be the worker man or woman.

Knowing that the chipping away at prejudice is not a one-man job, the President established the Commission on the Status of Women on December 14, 1961, to assure to women a full partnership in the affairs of the Nation. The Commission can neither make laws nor enforce them, but the effects of its activities and its recommendations already are evidenced.

Women accountants are invited to cooperate with the President's commission, because it is through the Commission that their voice will be heard; that their reasons in favor of equality will be properly presented. The more cases of real inequities in the accounting field presented for discussion, the sooner we can report progress.

Upon receiving the Commission's first report, President Kennedy responded in the following manner: "You can be especially pleased with the advances you have brought about by opening increased opportunities for women in the Federal Service and in the higher ranks of our Armed Forces."

The Commission's chairman, the late Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt has stated that the most important contribution the Commission on the Status of Women can make is to get the facts to the people.

The foregoing is a summary of remarks presented by Mrs. Esther Peterson, Assistant Secretary of Labor, at the joint annual meeting in New York last September.