

Several questions dealt with public action on trade legislation. Only 10% of the companies had formal committees to reflect their opinion on pending legislation. However, most companies said it was reasonably easy to obtain their position on the subject. A rather striking finding was that only half of the executives said they were familiar with the Emergency Committee for American Trade formed in 1967 by a number of major firms which many people regard as the most effective spokesman for multinational firms in Washington. Of those who were familiar with ECAT, 20% regarded it as extremely effective and 60% as moderately so. Some 62% said that their industry had taken a position on trade policy, in all cases favoring more trade. In those industries which did not take a position the chief reason was difference in opinions.

THE OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT: HOW MANAGERS DETERMINE WHO IS SELECTED

Edwin L. Miller, Associate Professor, University of Michigan. Abstract from Michigan Business Review, May, 1972, p. 12.

Professor Miller made a study of one recent selection experience by each of 45 executives in 3 large international companies. He observes that the investigation was not intensive enough to make firm determinations but it did raise some interesting questions about the selection process which deserve thought by managements.

The executives were asked to classify the men they had selected according to (1) whether they had been known to the executive before the appointment and (2) the adequacy of their qualifications for the position to be filled and to indicate whether they felt there was some degree of risk in the appointment. The results followed an expectable pattern with less risk for those who were known to the executive and felt to be fully qualified. Dr. Miller suggests that selecting familiar, fully qualified men may not be sound, however. "A strategy such as this may be optimal for the manager but perhaps suboptimal in terms of the overall organization's effectiveness and the appointee's career development." It may be better to search more widely and take chances on men who, while not now fully qualified, may grow into the job.

A list of 18 possible activities prior to selection was checked for each case and the data broken down according to the managers' appraisal of the appointees as having high or low qualifications. There was a distinct difference in the two groups, those selecting men with low qualifications engaging in more activities. Most notable was the use of the

personnel department to locate candidates by 59% of those making low qualification selections compared to 39% of those selecting highly qualified men. Dr. Miller observes that the expanded activities may have been forced on the former group by lack of good candidates. But he wonders if the other group might have been more effective if they had used more activities to broaden their selection opportunities.

A breakdown of selection criteria also showed a difference between the two types of situations. When managers selected had high qualifications, job specific criteria (e. g. "Direct knowledge of this particular job") were more prominent while for the low qualification group there was more stress on general professional abilities (e. g. "Leadership skills").

On the basis of these findings, Dr. Miller suggests two issues for management: (1) whether managers in attempting to reduce their personnel risk in the difficult overseas assignment decisions limit unduly the overall effectiveness of manpower utilization in the company; and (2) whether the personnel function is effectively utilized.

CROSS CULTURAL ATTITUDES AMONG MANAGERS

Bernard E. Smith, Illinois Institute of Technology and John M. Thomas, State University of New York at Buffalo. Abstract from Sloan Management Review, Spring 1972, p. 35.

The authors made a study of middle and senior managers entering management programs of the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, identical to a previous study in Massachusetts Institute of Technology programs. The objective was to identify differences in philosophies and beliefs which would affect the transfer of American methods in the Institute programs. The authors emphasize that the men studied are clearly not representative samples of the U.S. and Indian populations.

The 19 scales in the study covered attitudes toward both external and internal aspects of business. The greatest difference in scores was the belief by most Americans that "one can be moral as a manager" compared to relative cynicism among Indians. The Indians tended to be more cynical on other points including doubts about the sincerity of managers, the requirements for promotion and the relative stress on individual goals vs. organizational conformity. The Indians indicated a greater willingness to accept intervention by both government and labor in management and they expressed a slightly stronger reliance on classical management theory with the authority hierarchy as a central feature of effective organization.