PD’s View of Developmental Directions

(6) Information Challenges

▲ Introduction

⇒ A new Information Revolution(s) is well under way.
⇒ And what has triggered these information revolutions and is driving them is the failure of the “Information Industry”—the IT people, the MIS people, the CIOs—to provide INFORMATION.
⇒ The new information revolutions focus on the “I” They ask, “What is the MEANING of information and its PURPOSE?”
⇒ And this is leading rapidly to redefining the tasks to be done with the help of information and, with it, to redefining the institutions that do these tasks.

▲ From the “T” to the “I” in “IT”

⇒ Current IT’s areas of impact and non-impact
⇒ The Lessons of History
⇒ History’s Lesson for the Technologists
⇒ The New Print Revolution

▲ The Information Enterprises Need

⇒ From Cost Accounting to Result Control (activity based costing)
⇒ From Legal Fiction to Economic Reality (economic-chain costing)
⇒ Information for Wealth Creation (foundation information, productivity information, competence information, and resource allocation information)
⇒ Where the Results Are (outside information)

▲ The Information Executives Need for Their Work

⇒ Identifying information needs and creating communications
★ Both questions, “What do I owe?” and “What do I need?” sound deceptively simple.
☐ What I owe comes first because it establishes communications.
✔ And unless that has been established, there will be no information flow back to the executive.
✔ However, what makes communications effective at the workplace is that they are focused on something outside the person.
★ They have to be focused on a common task and on a common challenge.
★ They have to be focused on the work.
✔ And by asking: “To whom do I owe information, so that they can do their work?” communications are being focused on the common task and the common work.
✔ The first question therefore (as in any effective relationship), is not: “What do I want and need?”
✔ It is: “What do other people need from me?”
✔ and “Who are these other people?”

☐ But everyone who has asked them has soon found out that it takes a lot of thought, a lot of experimentation, a lot of hard work, to answer them.

☐ And the answers are not forever.
✔ In fact, these questions have to be asked again, every eighteen months or so.
✔ They also have to be asked every time there is a real change, for example, a change in the enterprise’s theory of the business, in the individual’s own job and assignment, or in the jobs and assignments of the other people.

⇒ Organizing Information
★ Unless organized, information is still data.
★ It is, however, not clear at all in what form certain kinds of information are meaningful, and especially in what form of organization they are meaningful for one’s own job.
★ And the same information may have to be organized in different ways for different purposes.

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★ No two executives, in my experience, organize the same information the same way.
★ And information has to be organized the way individual executives work.
★ But there are some basic methodologies to organize information.

⇒ No Surprises
★ And the ultimate test of an information system is that there are no surprises.
☐ Before events become significant, executives have already adjusted to them, analyzed them, understood them and taken appropriate action.
★ Executives have to learn two things:
☐ to ELIMINATE data that do not pertain to the information they need; and
☐ to organize the data, to analyze, to interpret and then to focus the resulting information on ACTION.

⇒ Going Outside
★ No matter how good the reports, no matter how good the economic or financial theory underlying them, nothing beats personal, direct observation, and in a form in which it is truly outside observation.
☐ Only by being a customer oneself, a salesman oneself, a patient oneself, can one get true information about the outside.
☐ And even that information is of course still limited to one’s customers and one’s noncustomers.
★ In the long run, information about the outside may be the most important information executives need to do their work.