

# MATCOM

## ■ PLANNING

a learning element for staff of agricultural cooperatives

international labour office, geneva

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by Malcolm Harper



**MATCOM**  
**Material and techniques for cooperatives management training**

The MATCOM Project was launched in 1978 by the International Labour Office, with the financial support of Sweden. In its third phase (1984-1986) MATCOM is financed by Denmark, Finland and Norway.

In collaboration with cooperative organizations and training institutes in all regions of the world, MATCOM designs and produces material for the training of managers of cooperatives and assists in the preparation of adapted versions for use in various countries. MATCOM also provides support for improving the methodology of cooperative training and for the training of trainers.

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# PLANNING

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MATCOM Element No: 20-05

Edition: Universal, 1985

ISBN: 92-2-105215-X

HOW TO LEARN

- Study the Element carefully.
- Write down answers to all the questions in the Element. This will help you not only to learn, but also to apply what you learn to your work.
- After studying the Element on your own, discuss it with your instructor and colleagues, then take part in practical exercises organised by your instructor.

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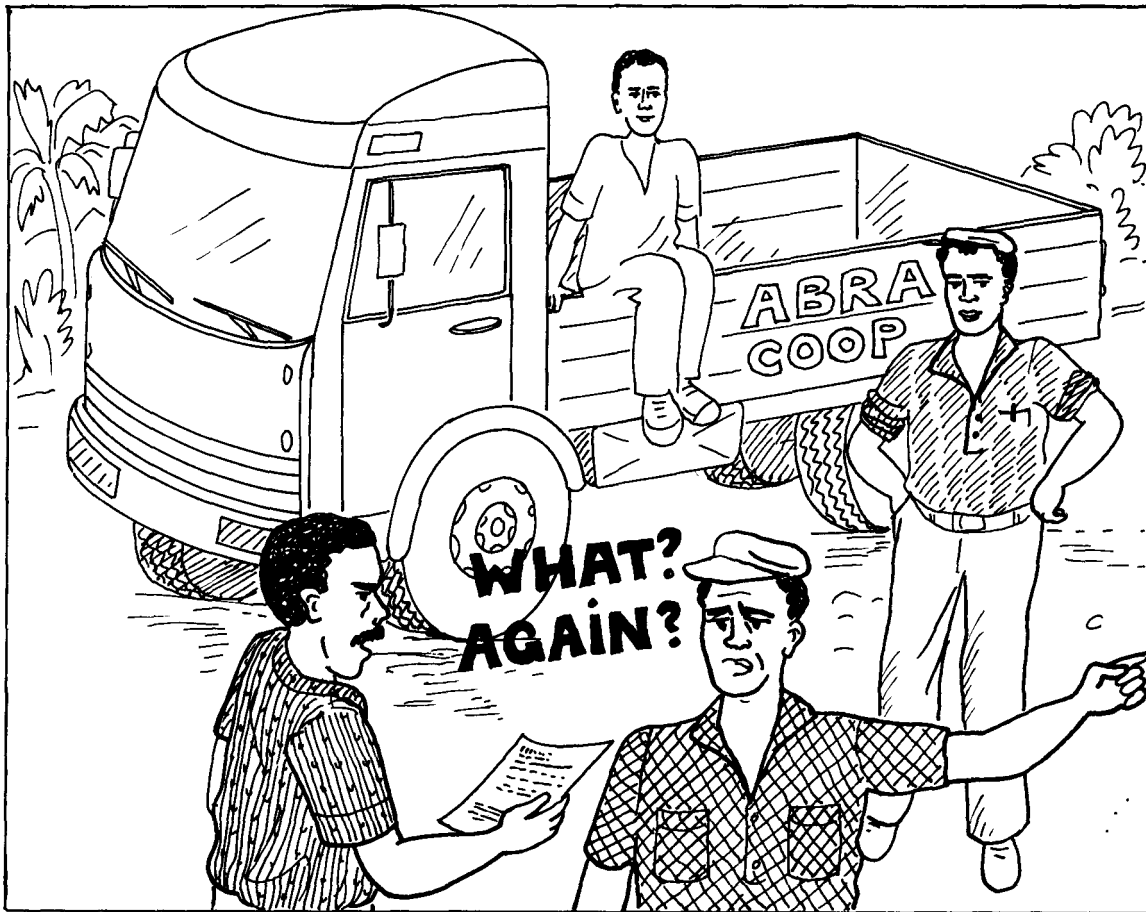
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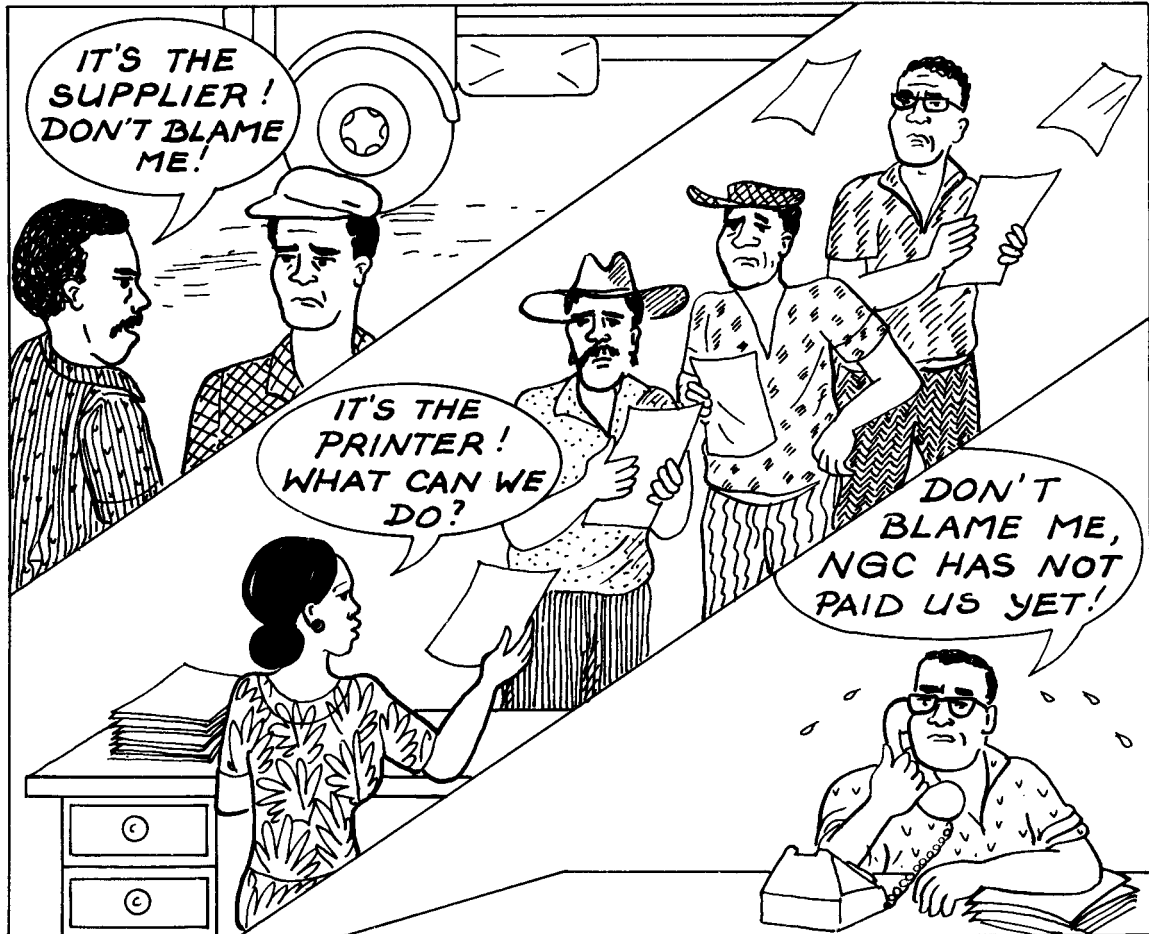
## WHAT IS PLANNING, WHY DO IT?



- The driver of the Abra Co-operative Society thought that the manager must be crazy. He kept talking about saving fuel and maintenance costs, because transport was so expensive, but had just asked the driver to take the fifteen-ton lorry to town to collect a load of fertilizer. Only the day before the driver had delivered some crops there and had come back with his truck empty!
- When the members of the Bessa Co-operative brought their crops to **the** store to be received, weighed and inspected, they needed a simple receipt showing the grade and quantity, so that they could collect their money. Unfortunately the receipts had not been printed. The papers had to be written out by hand for each member. Later, nobody knew whether these papers were genuine or not and it took weeks to sort out all the problems.

- The manager of the Cerna Society was in despair. He had negotiated a very good price for fertilizer, and had promised the supplier that the society would pay in full 30 days after delivery. Unfortunately, however, the National Grain Corporation had not yet paid for the crops which had been delivered, and there was no money in the bank. Now the fertilizer supplier threatened to force the society into bankruptcy.

Everyone working in a co-operative can recall instances of failure like this. The reasons are often obvious, and it is tempting for the managers to blame the problems on people outside the co-operative society:



Some co-operative managers are satisfied with explanations of this sort. They say: "Nothing ever seems to go according to plan. What is the use of planning when other people and organisations are so unreliable?"

Other managers think differently. To them, planning means preparing for all the work that must be done, to decide what is needed and to make sure that it is available.

Maybe the managers of Abra, Bessa and Cerna societies did not plan properly:

- Did the manager of Abra think ahead and realise that his truck could have delivered the crop and collected the fertilizer on the same journey?
- Did the manager of Bessa plan the crop receiving operation properly, did he order the receipts in good time and did he check with the printer that the job was being done?
- Did the manager of Cerna plan his society's cash flow? Did he make sure that the money would be paid in time? Did he arrange to get the cash elsewhere in case NGC did not pay in time?

In fact, good planning can help enormously when other people fail to do what they said they would.

Planning involves deciding what is needed, and ensuring that it is available. The manager who has planned will be alerted in advance when plans go wrong, and may be able to put things right in time.

Planning involves making allowances for errors. Alternative sources of supply or assistance can be identified in advance.

The very best plans are not in themselves any use at all unless they are effectively implemented. You should not think that if you prepare good plans, everything will go right automatically. But if you do not plan at all, nothing is likely to go right.

## WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?

Whatever a co-operative wants to do for its members, all activities and details must be well planned. 'think about the following tasks, for instance:

- to build a warehouse so that members' crops can be stored for some time after harvest, and then sold at higher prices;
- to carry out a member education campaign to improve members' understanding of the society's businesses and their loyalty to the society;
- to select and buy a vehicle for transport of members' crops and farm supplies.

A professional manager would certainly need several months to plan a large project like the first one: building a warehouse. Likewise he would work out all the details of a member education programme well in advance. To buy a vehicle may seem to be a simple task, but a wise manager would probably use some days to decide on the most suitable type of truck, considering running costs, service, spare parts, and so on.

Nevertheless, even if every activity is very well planned and done, all these projects may turn out to be complete failures, and of no benefit to the members. How is this possible? Let us take a closer look at the three projects, and also think about the question used as heading for this chapter: "What are you trying to do?"

The warehouse - what are you trying to do? You want to store the crops for some time so that you can sell them at a higher price. That is your objective! When you are sure about your objective you can start thinking about how to achieve it. To build a new warehouse may not solve the problem at all, the warehouse costs may exceed the higher



price which can be obtained! There may be other, better possibilities:

- it may be possible to rent storage space;
- members may be able to store their crops on their farms more economically.

The member education campaign - what are you trying to do? You want to improve members' loyalty so that they will all sell all their produce to the co-operative. That is your objective!

You believe that education and information for the members is needed, and that it will solve the problem. Are you sure? Maybe the reason for the present problem is something else? Maybe the members are already well informed about the society's role and purpose, but they are not satisfied with the society's services. They may think that the society is not giving them value for money. If so, improved management and staff training may be needed more than member education.



The vehicle - what are you trying to do? You want to arrange the transport of produce and farm supplies. This is your objective!

But it may not be necessary to buy a truck. It may be possible to hire transport, or customers and suppliers may be willing to collect and deliver with their own transport for less money than it will cost the society to run its own vehicle.

From these examples we can learn some fundamental rules.

Before deciding what to do, and planning how to do it, you must:

- *Decide what your objective is.*
- *Identify all the possible ways of achieving it.*
- *Choose that which is best.*

①



MY OBJECTIVE:

TO ARRANGE FOR CROP STORAGE

②



MY POSSIBILITIES:

- TO RENT A BUILDING IN TOWN
- TO BUILD A NEW STOREHOUSE
- TO ASK THE FARMERS TO STORE THE CROPS THEMSELVES FOR SOME MONTHS

③



I CHOOSE TO:

- ??

Building a warehouse and buying a truck might be two of the things that you decide to do, and they will also have to be planned. They must however, be selected because they help you to achieve the objective - not because they are easy things to do, because other societies are doing them or because salesmen or others suggest them.

Management starts with planning, and planning starts with choosing objectives. It is no good building the wrong building or buying the wrong truck, however well planned and implemented these tasks may have been. Objectives come first.

How to set up objectives

Usually, the by-laws of a co-operative society begin with a statement of the aims or overall objectives of the society. Typical aims may be:

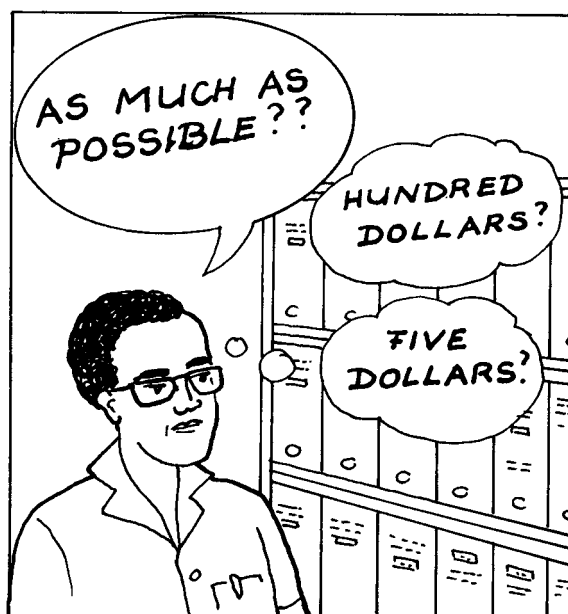
- to market members' produce effectively;
- to promote economic and social well-being in the agricultural community;
- to provide marketing, supply, credit, educational and such other services as may be needed.

Long-term objectives of this sort offer guidelines as to the kind of tasks to be done. But they are virtually useless for practical planning and management. They are too general.

To demonstrate how objectives should be prepared and used by a manager, let us take the case of Delta Co-operative and see how their manager planned his work.

The committee had suggested to the manager that the overall objective for the following year should be "..... to market members' produce effectively in order to increase their income as much as possible."

The manager realised that this objective was not a useful basis for his planning and implementation. The objective was too vague and general. The expression "as much as possible" could mean anything. By the end of next year, the manager would not be able to say whether he had achieved the objective, or not.



If the objectives are to be useful for planning and effective management, we have to make them more specific.

- *Objectives must be unambiguous, specific, not open to differing and perhaps conflicting interpretation.*
- *Objectives must state by what time they are to be achieved.*
- *Objectives must be measurable so that it can be determined whether they have been achieved or not.*

The manager of Delta Co-operative re-wrote the objective in accordance with these rules:

- "The objective of Delta Co-operative is to increase members' incomes from their cash crops by an average of ten percent by the end of next year."

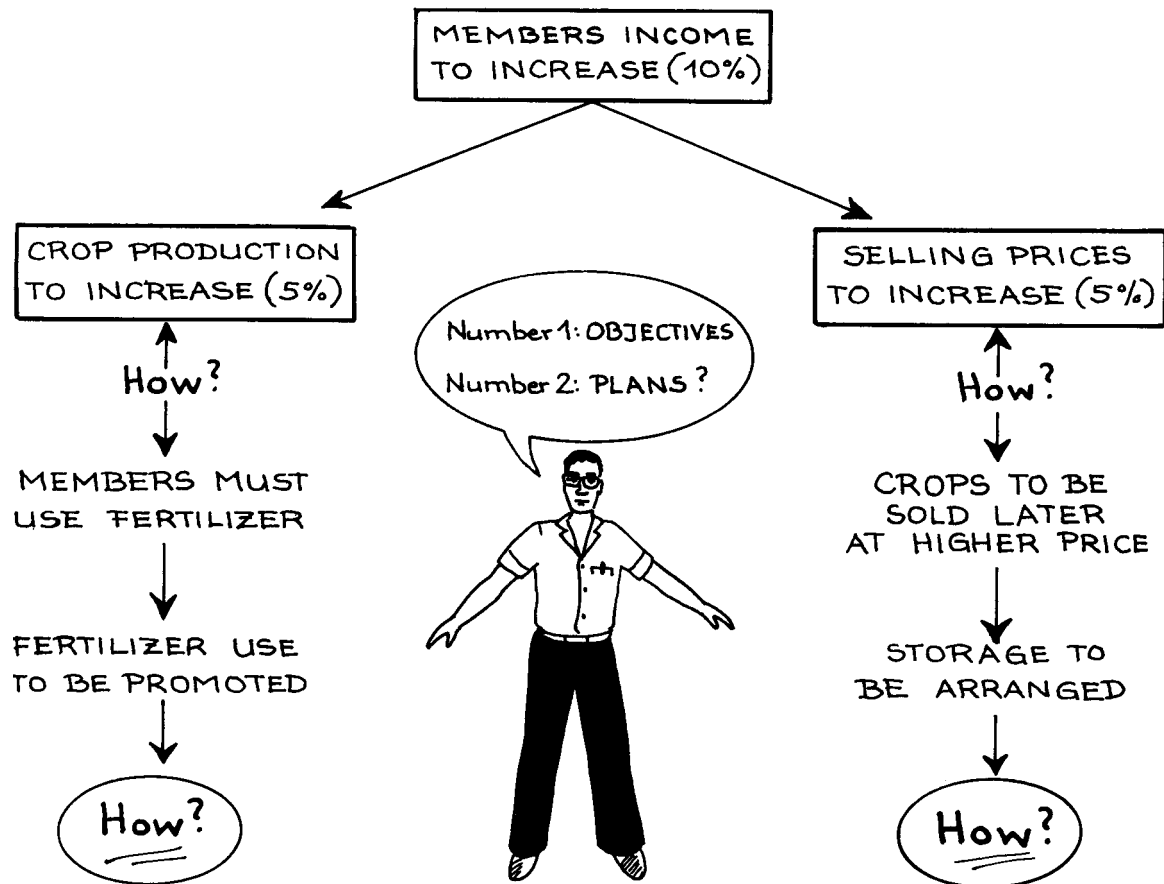
That was a good overall objective. The manager could now start to think of all the possible ways in which he could help his members to achieve this objective and choose that which appeared most likely to succeed.

He thought that it should be possible to increase members' crop production by five percent next season, and that the price obtained for the crop could be increased by five percent, so that incomes would go up by ten percent altogether.

In order to achieve this, the manager decided on the following sub-objectives:

- to inform all members about the benefits of fertilizers, and to make it available to them at the right time and price;
- to negotiate long-term contracts with customers, for delivering crops six months after harvest, at a five percent higher price.

Here again there are numbers of different ways in which each of the objectives might be achieved. However the manager decides to do them he will have numbers of different tasks, each of which will have to be planned.



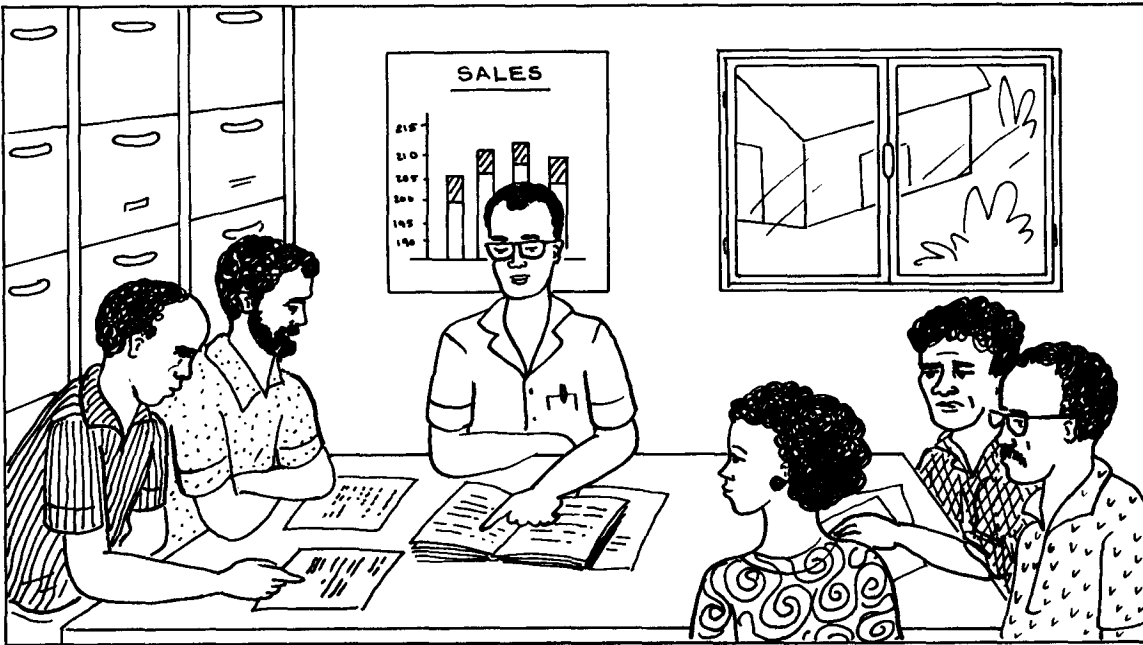
1. Write down the aim of your co-operative, as it has been laid out in the by-laws or other documents. Then write a short commentary, giving your views on the following questions.

- Is the aim expressed clearly enough? Is it relevant? If not, how would you like to re-write the aim of your society?
- Is the work of your society at present in accordance with the aim? Has the society achieved the aim, wholly or partly; are the members benefiting?

?

## ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

It is normally the job of the committee to set overall objectives for a co-operative society. The manager plays some part in this and should be ready to suggest various ways in which the objectives can be achieved.



For the manager, the objectives are the basis for his planning. They say what he must try to achieve within a certain period. But the objectives do not say what should be done, they only state the intended results. The manager has to "translate" the overall objectives into sub-objectives and activities which he and his staff will have to carry out in order to achieve the objectives.

Let us follow the manager of Delta Co-operative. His objectives were clear, he had decided to help members to increase their crop yields and their incomes by making fertilizer available to them and by negotiating a favourable long-term delivery contract with the crop buyers.

It was now up to the manager to plan and decide what should be done. What should he do first?

First, the manager of Delta Co-operative examined the present situation and tried to find out why many members were not using fertilizer. He realised that there could be several reasons, and his actions and activities would depend on those reasons:

- a. If the members did not know that fertilizer was needed,
  - publicity and training were needed.
- b. If they did not know how to use it,
  - training and field demonstrations had to be arranged.
- c. If they could not afford to buy it,
  - lower-priced supplies should be made available.
- d. If there was a shortage of fertilizer when they needed it,
  - more reliable suppliers had to be found.
- e. If they had no cash at the time when they needed it,
  - new or extended credit arrangements were needed.
- f. If the fertilizer was not available at the place they needed it,
  - new delivery arrangements were needed.

Until the manager was sure about the reasons for the present problems, he could of course not decide upon any effective remedies. For instance, it would be meaningless to arrange a good distribution system for fertilizer if the members had no money to buy it.

### Activities

After a thorough analysis of the situation the manager was able to take appropriate action. He found that the lack of credit was the main reason for members' failure to use fer-

tilizer, and he decided to set up a new "fertilizer credit scheme". He could now identify and list his main tasks and he came up with the following list:

- Calculate how much credit would be needed and for how long.
- Meet with bank officials in order to obtain the necessary credit.
- Design a credit system, with arrangements for repayment, security and so on, together with the necessary documentation.
- Decide what staff would be necessary and select, hire and train them appropriately.
- Inform members about the scheme.
- Introduce and operate the scheme.
- Evaluate the scheme's results.

Clearly tasks of this sort include hundreds of smaller sub-tasks. Some of them must be identified and planned in advance, while the minor tasks can be completed without being consciously planned, just as we carry out all the very complicated functions involved in our daily life without actually planning them in a conscious way. Once the manager had listed the main tasks, he could actually start to plan what he and his staff had to do to complete them.

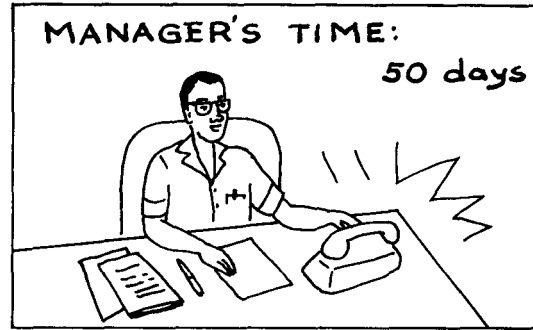
### Resources

Look at the list of tasks the manager of Delta Co-operative identified as being necessary to set up the fertilizer credit scheme. In order to complete those tasks he would need time , money and material , or what are normally called resources .

The manager tried to estimate the resources needed for the new scheme.



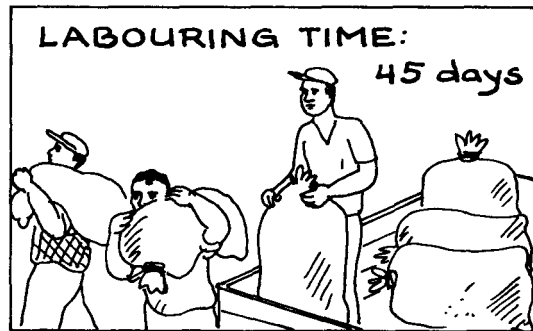
He estimated that he himself would need 50 working days to plan and manage the new scheme.



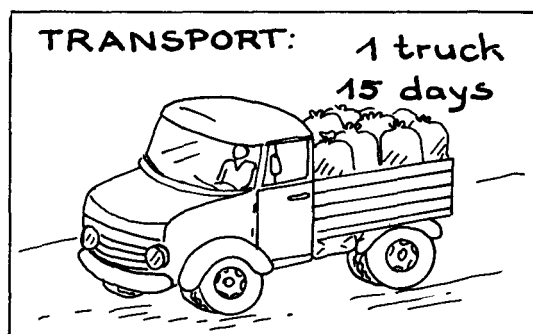
Based on comparisons with other societies he estimated that the clerks would need about 40 man-days to cope with record-keeping and administration of the credit and supply business.



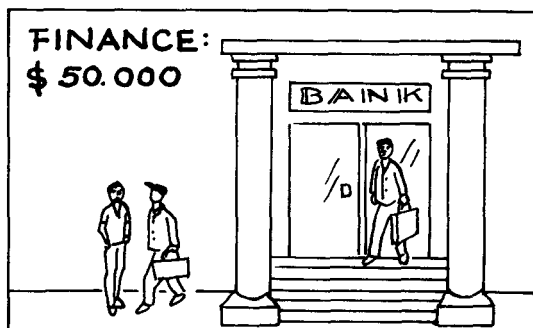
For collection and distribution of the fertilizers labourers would need about 45 man-days.



A truck must be available for 15 days for fertilizer transports.



The society must raise capital of \$50,000 for the new scheme.



The manager of Delta Co-operative thought about how he could obtain the necessary resources. Should he try to obtain a long-term loan of \$50,000? Should he hire an assistant manager, an extra clerk, some extra labour? Buy a new vehicle?

Would this necessarily be the best way? No, the manager of Delta was anxious not to increase the costs of the society without careful planning. Were there any ways in which he could improve the use of his present resources without obtaining new ones, and how could he fit in new activities without hiring extra staff, obtaining extra finance or buying new equipment?

The manager thought of possible alternatives, which he had to study closer. Could he maybe:

- try to re-organise some of his own work, so that he could have some spare time for the credit scheme in August and September;
- delegate some work to his subordinates;
- re-organise clerical workloads to free some time during the critical months;
- arrange for casual labour to be hired during the distribution period;
- arrange to hire a vehicle for a short period;
- negotiate for an overdraft for three months instead of taking up a new long-term loan?

## STAFF WORKLOAD SCHEDULING

The highest costs for Delta Co-operative were, like in most co-operatives, the costs of staff. Beside the manager, there were two clerks, three labourers and one driver employed. Still, it could be necessary to employ more people for the new credit and supply scheme. However, before doing so, the manager had to decide whether his present staff could take on more duties or not.

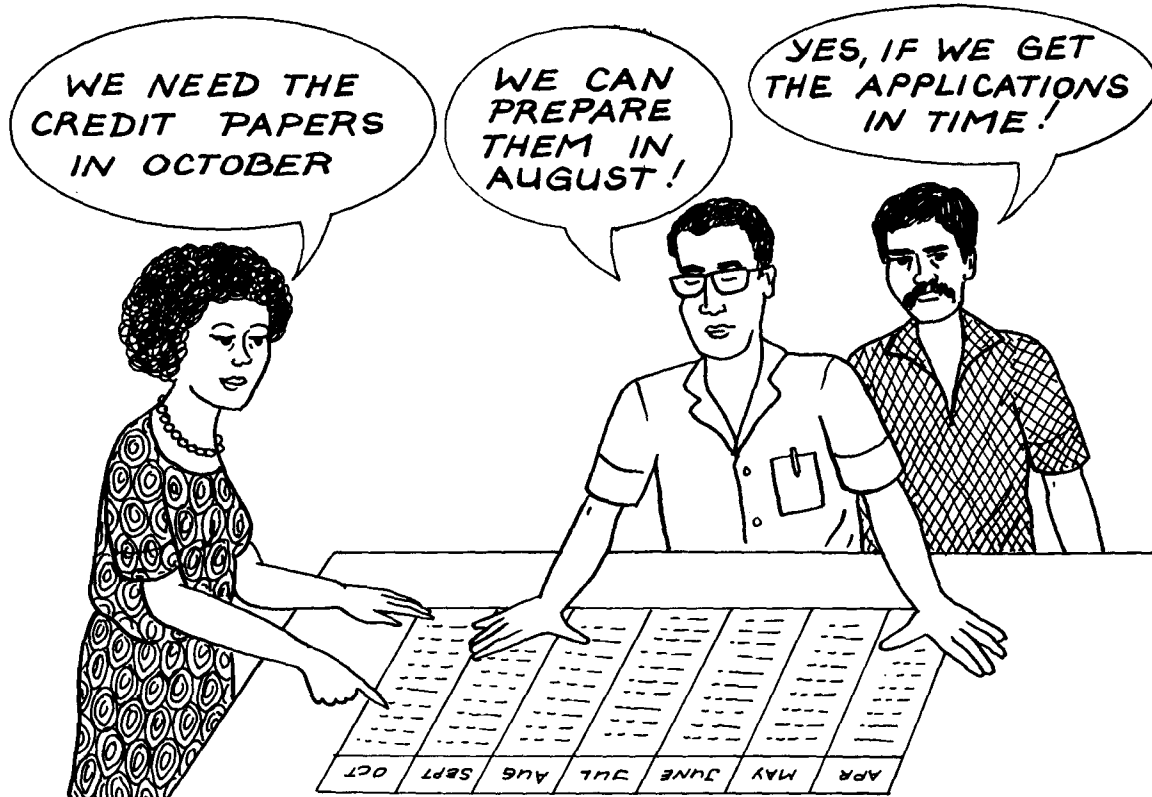
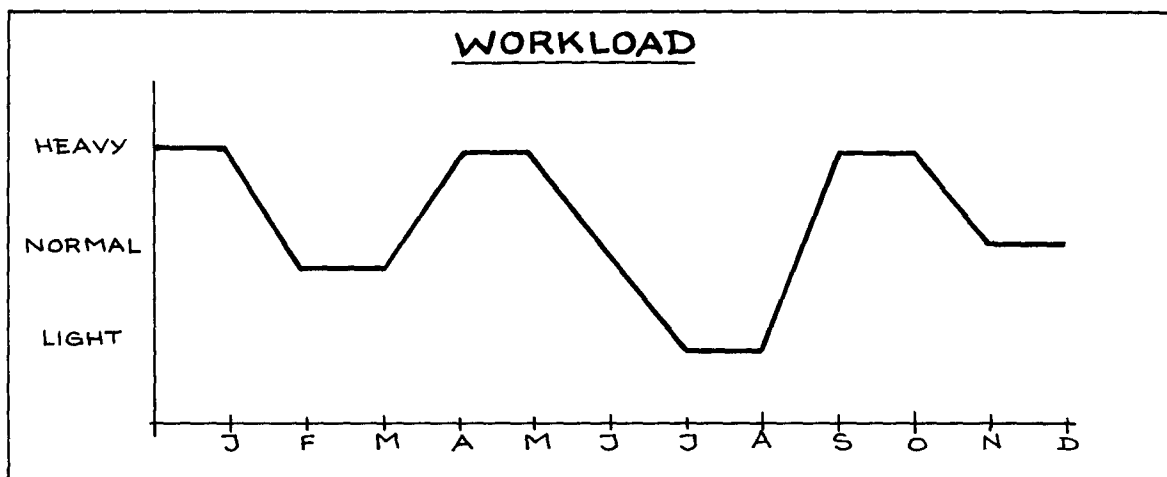
Like most co-operatives, Delta faced the problems of an uneven workload during the year. All staff were busy during the peak period when members delivered their crops. During some other months, however, some of the staff were under-employed, as is shown in the graph on the next page.

The manager had tried to solve this problem in various ways. For instance, he could vary the labour force in proportion to the workload. The three fulltime labourers were needed for the "normal" workload throughout the year, but several more had to be employed temporarily during the peak period. The manager thought that he could do this again during next year when fertilizer would be distributed over a short period.

It was more difficult to hire clerical staff temporarily. Therefore, the manager had examined all the tasks of the clerks. Certain tasks had to be done at particular seasons, of course. For instance, both clerks were fully engaged in paperwork when members delivered their crops. The trading reports to the committee and the returns to the Co-operative Union had to be prepared on specific dates. Likewise, final payments to members were done during a fixed period. However, other tasks were flexible and the manager had discussed and planned with the clerks how those tasks could be fitted into the "slack" periods. In that way, the workload was "evened out" as much as possible over the year.

Now the manager discussed the new scheme with the clerks. They agreed that they could have all the credit documents ready for members in time for the fertilizer deliveries in October, if they could begin the work in August during their slack period. But they thought they would need assistance with the paperwork for the actual deliveries in October.

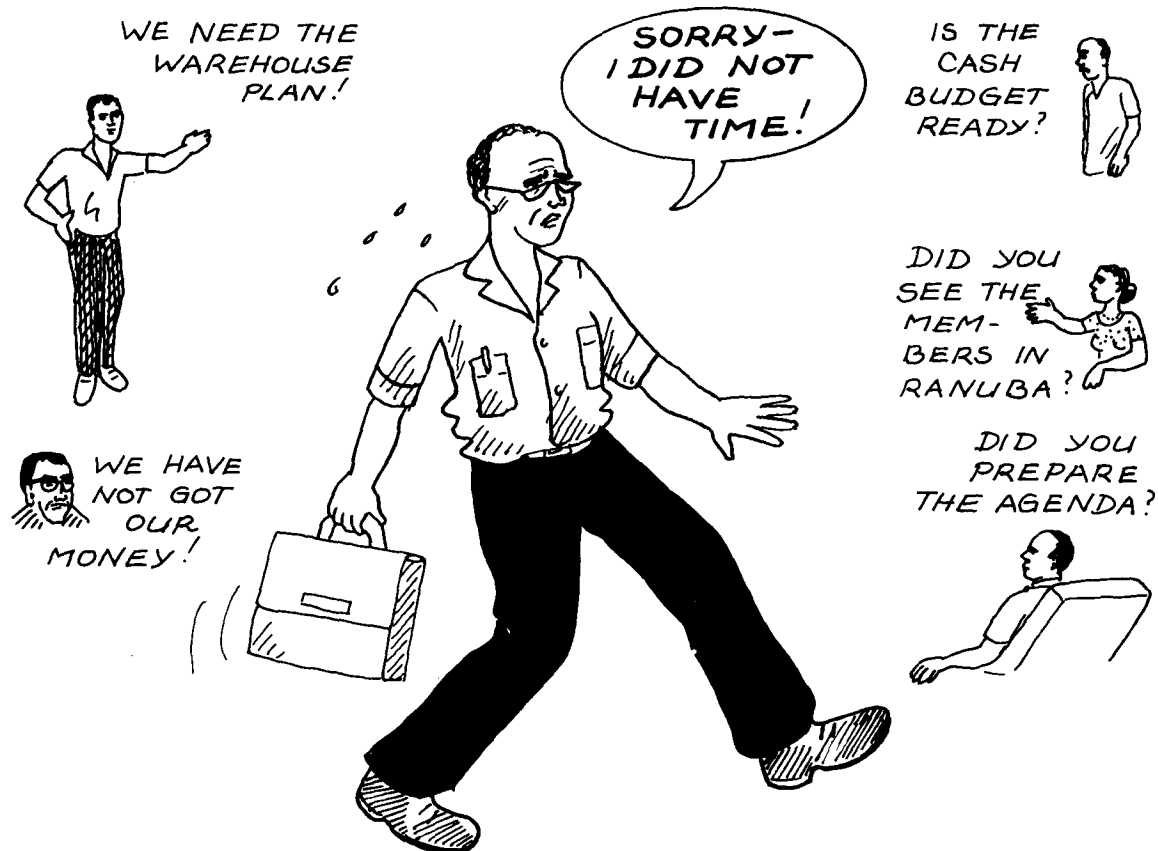
In this way the manager of Delta Co-operative made sure that his existing resources were fully utilized before he turned to his committee and claimed that he needed more staff.



## PLANNING YOUR OWN WORKLOAD

Are you over-worked? Very few co-operative managers complain that they have not got enough to do, and all kinds of necessary work is done late, or never gets done at all, because the manager says: "I did not have time."

On the other hand, can you honestly say that you are hard at work, on your society's business, every minute of every day, all through the year? There are always some periods when you are less than fully occupied.



### Yearly planning

Of course, as a manager you will also be affected by the uneven workload in a co-operative; there are certainly periods when you feel that you are over-worked. But, after all, your own time is the resource which you can most effectively control yourself. Maybe you can plan your own workload a bit better?

Think about all your different tasks. Here is a list, in random order, of things a manager of a co-operative has to perform:

- a) Prepare minutes of meetings.
- b) Submit returns to the Government.
- c) Organise the collection of member crops.
- d) Supervise crop collection.
- e) Negotiate the sale of crop.
- f) Pay staff wages.
- g) Prepare agenda and papers for meetings.
- h) Plan member education programmes.
- i) Implement member education programmes.
- j) Attend courses.
- k) Train staff.
- l) Hold staff appraisal interviews.
- m) Negotiate deliveries of supplies.
- n) Deal with credit applications.
- o) Supervise preparation of the annual accounts.
- p) Deal with member complaints.
- q) Receive visits from co-operative officers.
- r) Carry out routine visits to members in the field.
- s) Inspect stores.
- t) Control petty cash accounts.
- u) Monitor and sign cheques.
- v) [Monitor and sign local orders.
- w) Draft the annual report.
- x) Deal with unexpected crises, breakdowns and accidents.
- y) Receive visits from sales representatives.
- z) Inspect vehicles.

?

2.1 The list of tasks is not complete. Add a few tasks which you think are important.

Some of your tasks must be done on a particular day, or within a short period. Those tasks are inflexible, you cannot postpone them. Task d) in the list is such a task.

There are some tasks which we can call semi-flexible. You can do them when you wish, within a week or so. Such a task is s).

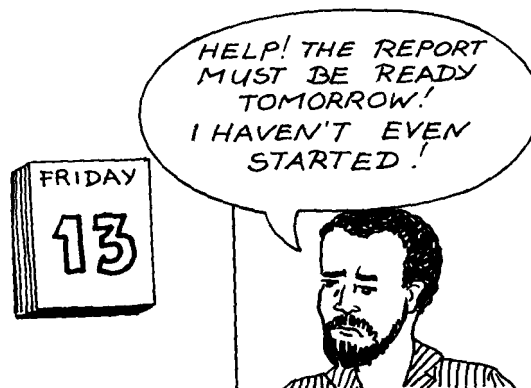
Other tasks can be done within two or three months, at your discretion. They are very flexible, like task h).

2.2 Now go through the list of tasks on page 20. Classify each task as you would like to treat it, if you plan well ahead. Write an F for the flexible tasks, S for the semi-flexible ones and I for the inflexible tasks.



Why is it that tasks like w) drafting the annual report, or n) dealing with credit applications are often treated as "inflexible"?

You knew a long time in advance that the annual report must be ready on a certain day. You could have used some of your "quiet days" earlier for preparing the draft.



Remember also that visits from salesmen and even from senior officials are not wholly outside your control. Some people can be asked to come on a specific date. In that way they will not interfere with your planning, and cause your staff and members to waste their time.



Remember the manager of Delta Co-operative? He needed more time in August and September for his new credit scheme. Maybe he could move some flexible jobs from those months to earlier months?

To "bring forward" the flexible activities may be the remedy for excessive workloads. If you can plan to carry out as many as possible of the flexible tasks as early as possible, you will have more time for the activities which must be done at fixed times.

But which tasks are flexible? Which tasks in the list on page 20 have you classified as flexible, semi-flexible and inflexible? Here is one suggestion. Do you agree?

Flexible:                   h, k, l, m, r and y.  
Semi-flexible:           a, b, c, e, g, i, k, n, o, q, s, t, w  
                                  and z.  
Inflexible:               d, f, j, p, u, v and x.

So, when planning your activities over a longer period you should try this strategy:

- *Examine all your tasks and identify those which are "flexible".*
  
- *Implement the flexible tasks as early as possible.*

Some managers prepare charts of their workload over the year. There is an example on the next page. The charts help managers to "see" when they are busy with inflexible tasks, and when they can put in other activities.

If you use such a chart, you will find that it will be easier for you to begin your tasks on time and not leave them until "the last minute". Many stress-periods will disappear and your workload over the year will be evened out.



### Activity Chart

Activities:

- Collect credit applications
- Process credit applications
- Negotiate credit with bank
- Order fertilizer
- Receive/distribute fertilizer
- Prepare crop collection points
- Prepare warehouses for storage
- Collect crop
- Negotiate crop-sales
- Deliver produce to buyers
- Budgeting
- Stock-taking
- Prepare annual accounts/reports
- Prepare reports for committee

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Collect credit applications								*				
Process credit applications								*				
Negotiate credit with bank							*		*			
Order fertilizer		*							*			
Receive/distribute fertilizer					*					*		
Prepare crop collection points				*				*		*		
Prepare warehouses for storage			*					*		*		
Collect crop				*					*			
Negotiate crop-sales				*				*		*		
Deliver produce to buyers		*					*		*			
Budgeting											*	
Stock-taking	*											
Prepare annual accounts/reports	*											*
Prepare reports for committee		Latest the third Monday each month.										

Deadlines are indicated by \*

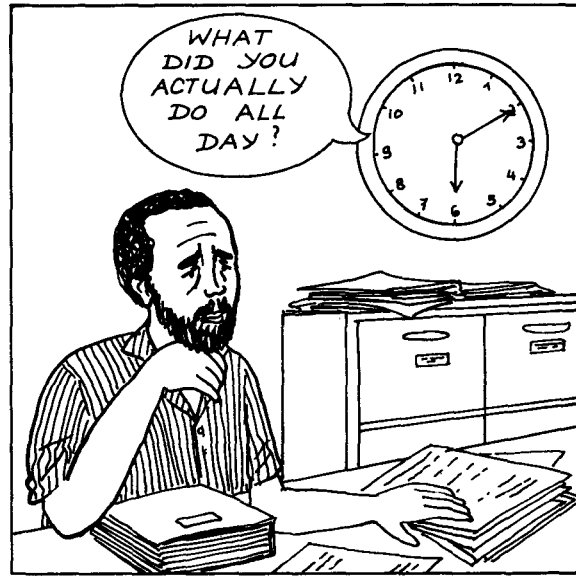
inflexible task=

flexible task=

### Daily planning

Suppose that you have made up a long-term plan for your activities, as we have discussed. You know exactly when you want to do certain important things.

For instance, you know very well what you had planned to do this week. But yesterday something went wrong. At the end of the day you had not completed much of what you had set yourself to do. Again you said: "I did not have time."



What happened actually? Yes, you may have been very busy the whole day. But did you spend time on less important tasks, so that you could not do the important ones? What did you actually do all day?

Very few managers can answer this question satisfactorily, because they actually spend most of their time looking for information that ought to have been readily available - dealing with crises that might have been avoided and communicating with people who should have known what to do earlier. Try, tomorrow, to write down what you actually do, every 30 minutes. You will be surprised how difficult it is, and how little of the time you spend actually doing the job of managing your society.

The main job of a manager is to plan and organise the work of other people, but many managers fail even to plan and organise their own work. Imagine that you had written down the things you had to do in one day, together with an estimate of how long each one would take:

Inspect the warehouse	1 hour
Collect data for annual report :	2 hours
Open mail	1 hour
Dictate replies to mail	1 hour
Weekly management meeting	2 hours (10 a.m.)
Lunch with machinery supplier	2 hours (12 noon)
Check vehicle journey books	1 hour.

If you had a nine hour day, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. it would apparently be impossible to fit all these tasks into one day. Would you put off some tasks tomorrow, and if so which? How would you actually schedule the remaining tasks?

This diary page shows how one manager scheduled the same work. He has in fact fitted in all the tasks, but still inserted two half-hour periods for unexpected items, or for getting ahead with tomorrow's work:

	TUESDAY	28 April
8.00	<i>Inspect warehouse</i>	
8.30	— " —	
9.00	<i>Open mail</i>	
9.30	<i>Check Log Book</i>	
10.00	<i>Weekly Management Meeting</i>	
10.30	— " —	
11.00	<i>Dictate replies to mail</i>	
11.30		
12.00	<i>Meeting with machinery supplier</i>	
12.30	— " —	
13.00	<i>Lunch</i>	
13.30	<i>Collect data for Annual Report</i>	
14.00	— " —	
14.30	— " —	
15.00	— " —	
15.30	<i>Check Log Book</i>	
16.00	<i>Sign mail</i>	
16.30		

Of course, this manager has a different opinion about how long some of the tasks will take, otherwise he would not have been able to do them all in one day.

- First of all, he realised that no weekly meeting should last more than one hour, and accordingly he cut down the time for the weekly management meeting.
- Then, he decided that a two-hour lunch with a machinery supplier was unnecessary and not the best way to discuss business. A one-hour meeting would be far more productive, followed perhaps by a snack in the office for half-an-hour.

In addition, it might be possible to delegate the collection of data to an assistant or another staff member, so that further time could be made available.

This is an over-simplified example. You may not go through this process every day, but you should develop a habit of planning. You must recognise which tasks can be carried out at your convenience, and which must be done at a specific time. Avoid doing tasks, or taking a certain amount of time for particular tasks, just because you or others have always behaved in this way.

If you plan and organise your work each day in this way, you will find that you can get a great deal more done, every day. You will enjoy your work more, because you will know what **you** are doing and why, and you will not have to use the excuse "I did not have time".



### Priorities

The annual report was due in a week, and was obviously the most important task for the manager. He refused to see anybody, to open any mail or do anything else for the first four days of the week. He finished the report, but the office was in chaos. "What did I do wrong?" he thought. "I did the most important thing first".



In your day-to-day work you will often have to make a choice between several tasks. Should you always do the most important thing first? For instance, which one of the following tasks would you do first:

- preparing the annual report due in a few weeks' time;
- signing a local purchase order for some stationery?

Obviously, the first is the most important, but you would rightly do the second first - because it is more urgent.

2.3 Read the following pairs of tasks and decide which of each one you would do first.

- a) Meet a local politician who has dropped in, or
- b) interview a job applicant who has come at the time requested?
- c) Go on your regular weekly field trip, or
- d) talk to the father of one of your employees who happens to be in town that morning?
- e) Arrange a loan for your cousin, or
- f) discuss the layout of a new letterhead?

?

- a) may be important, but b) concerns the efficient staffing of your co-operative and is more important. You could maybe ask another staff member to interview the applicant first, while you have a short conversation with the politician.
  
- You should do d) quickly, before c), because it is convenient. Important and even urgent tasks may sometimes briefly be delayed because an unusual opportunity to do something less important or urgent arises.
  
- You should do f) before e), because it is part of your job, and not a personal matter. Except in very urgent cases, your job should take precedence over your family in working hours.

You may disagree with some of these choices, because of your particular circumstances. What is important is that you should think about priorities, and decide in what order to do things, rather than just doing them in any random order, quite accidentally.

Some managers are not able to control their own time. They allow themselves to be controlled by events, rather than the reverse. They are diverted from one job by another and can never finish anything properly at all. When they come into the office, they do what first occurs to them; some do the easiest things first and others do just what other people want them to do.

Everybody falls into these traps from time to time, and you have almost certainly said to yourself, on more than one occasion: "Why didn't I do that earlier, instead of leaving it to the last moment?"

You must get your priorities right, and plan your own time as well as possible, before you can plan the work of your co-operative.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

You must remember that you yourself cannot do all the work in the society. You have to do it with other people, and they are the most important resources you have. Good planning will help you to get things done, by making the best use of the resources.

Which of the following methods are likely to make the best use of the people who work in your society?

- You, as a manager, plan everything they do, in some detail.
- You give your staff broad objectives, and allow them to plan their own work.

### ONE WAY:



### ANOTHER WAY:



To make the best use of people you must allow them to plan their own work. How can you do this, and at the same time ensure that they all work together for the good of the society?

- *Together with the committee you should set clear objectives for the society as a whole.*
- *You should, in discussion with your staff, agree on an objective for each of the people who work for you.*
- *You and your staff should then agree, on how each of you is to achieve his or her objective, and thus achieve the common objective of the society.*

Think back to the objective of introducing a credit scheme which will enable all members to make good use of fertilizer. If you had an accountant, a warehouse supervisor and a transport supervisor working for you, how might you divide up the overall objective? Each of you should have a reasonable, measurable and co-ordinated objective. Your joint efforts should add up to the achievement of the overall objective.

- The accountant should design, introduce and run a system for the effective and simple recording of all credit extended and repayments made, and for monitoring repayments.
- The warehouse supervisor should estimate how much extra space and labour would be required for the extra fertilizer to be used, and should ensure that the space was available by re-arrangement. He should hire extra storage or construct new storage places, then organise the receiving, storing and issuing of the fertilizer effectively and efficiently.
- The transport supervisor should estimate the extra transport required, should ensure that sufficient vehicles were available and should then organise and manage the collection and delivery of the fertilizer effectively and efficiently.
- You, as manager, should estimate the cost of fertilizer and credit required. You should negotiate the necessary supplies of fertilizer with the supplier, and that of credit with the bank. You should then monitor and co-ordinate the overall planning, organisation and implementation of the scheme.

Clearly each of these objectives will in turn be translated into sub-objectives and tasks. Each of your staff should be responsible for doing them; together with supervisors and colleagues everyone should set objectives, work out plans and implement the work.



Do you set objectives of this kind, and do you "translate" them into objectives for your staff, or do you try to plan and carry out everything yourself, telling people what to do every day and every week? *Which* style of planning and management do you think is likely to be easier and more effective?

Many managers would like to work with their subordinates in the way described above, but are not confident that their staff are capable enough. How can they find out? There is only one way, try it!

People will respond to responsibility. You will be surprised how well it works to "delegate" the responsibility to others. Of course, you will monitor their performances and you will train and support them, as a good manager.

In that way, you will soon live up to these two good definitions of management:

- *Getting things done through other people*
- *Making the best use of available resources*

#### MATCOM training material

A comprehensive six-day course on "Work Planning" has also been designed by MATCOM. The Trainer's Manual for this course is available from ILO.

Have you studied these other MATCOM "Learning Elements" for staff of agricultural co-operatives?

- Basic economics of an agricultural co-operative
- The budget
- Supply services
- Crop collection

Inquiries and orders for MATCOM training material should be sent to:

**The MATCOM Project  
c/o COOP Branch  
International Labour Office  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland.**

## COMPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

To complete your studies of this topic, you should take part in some of the following exercises, applying what you have learnt to real situations.



### 1. Objectives

Suggest an overall objective for your co-operative for the next two years. Then "break down" the objective into a few sub-objectives. Remember that each objective should be specific and measurable and state the time by which it is to be achieved, as explained on page 10.

### 2. Activity planning

Make up a list of all the important activities that has to be performed in your co-operative during one year (compare with the list on page 20). Then prepare a chart, similar to the one on page 23:

- First, indicate all inflexible activities which must be performed at fixed times.
- Second, indicate the deadlines for all other tasks i.e. when the work must be completed.
- Third, indicate when those tasks should be done. Try to fit them in as early as possible, and so that there will be an even workload for the staff.

### 3. Manpower planning

Study the activity chart you have prepared (as suggested under item 2 above). Assess the workload month by month. Without considering the present staff situation, try to estimate how many staff are needed to carry out the tasks included on the chart, month by month..

Compare your estimates with the present situation. Suggest what should be done to improve the relationship between workload and number of employees in order to keep staff costs as low as possible.