

PERSONNEL PROGRAMS IN DEPARTMENT STORES

By

HELEN BAKER

Research Assistant, Industrial Relations Section



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SECTION
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
PRINCETON, N. J.

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FOREWORD

THE Administration's program for recovery and reform, despite the many legal and administrative difficulties which have become apparent, has already had many lasting effects on industrial relations policies. Particularly in the fields of group relations and employee economic security, managements have become acutely conscious of problems which, though gradually mounting in significance during the post-war period, were often over-shadowed by more immediate demands for expanded production, sales, and finance. No type of business has escaped this changed emphasis in management interests. While industrial and public utility corporations with long-established personnel programs have continued to be pioneers in developing new techniques, there are indications that the managements of many commercial, financial, and other service enterprises are rapidly reducing the lag which has existed.

In this new situation, department stores have found themselves in a unique position. For many years, progressive stores have been actively engaged in improving the techniques of employment, training and personnel budgeting. The importance of labor services in both sales and costs necessitated sustained attention to the efficiency of the individual employee. But in the fields of group relations and employee security programs, most department stores have until recently been content with the slower pace of other commercial and financial enterprises. An important reason for the tardy recognition of the need for definite policies in these fields has been the preponderance of women, especially younger women, in department store employment.

With the depression and the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, and more recently, the evolution of government security programs, department store managements have faced the need of a thorough reconsideration of all elements of industrial relations policy. Where such audits have occurred, not only the experience of other stores but also that of progressive industrial companies has been of marked interest. It is for this reason that the Industrial Relations Section has prepared the following survey. While based upon an intensive examination of experience in fifty representative stores, an attempt has been made to evaluate results, not in terms of department store practice alone, but in relation to criteria established throughout the whole field

of industrial relations experience. It is hoped that the concise and factual nature of its findings will make the report of use to the executives in this important branch of American industry.

J. DOUGLAS BROWN,
Director.

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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following references are suggested as affording a broader background for the developments discussed in this report. The Industrial Relations Section will be glad to send in response to requests a more detailed bibliography on personnel administration in department stores or special bibliographies on related subjects.

GENERAL STUDIES

Nystrom, Paul H. *Economics of retailing*. New York. The Ronald Press Company (15 East 26th St.). 1930. (Third edition.) 2 vols. 689 pp. \$10.00.

A revised and enlarged edition of a standard work covering the whole field of retailing. Chapters IX-XII of Volume II deal with personnel problems.

Brisco, Norris A. *Retailing*. New York. Prentice-Hall, Inc. (70 Fifth Ave.). 1935. 666 pp. \$5.00.

A survey of the retailing field including chapters on training and personnel administration.

LaDame, Mary. *The Filene Store; a study of employees' relation to management in a retail store*. New York. Russell Sage Foundation (130 East 22nd St.). 1930. 541 pp. \$2.50.

A detailed study of changes in personnel policies and organization in one store.

Dameron, Kenneth. "The retail department store and the NRA." *Harvard Business Review* (c/o McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 330 West 42nd St., New York). Spring, 1935. pp. 261-270. \$1.25.

A summary of department store experience under the NRA.

STUDIES ON SPECIFIC TOPICS

Research Bureau for Retail Training, University of Pittsburgh. *A study of employment office routine and procedure*. 1930. 64 pp. (mimeographed). 50 cents.

An outline of employment procedure with samples of forms. Useful as a check list for any store's employment methods.

National Retail Dry Goods Association (225 West 34th St.). Report of a Committee of the Personnel Group. *The effect of personnel procedure on the job attitude of salespeople*. New York. May, 1934. 16 pp. (mimeographed). \$1.00.

Conclusions as to employees' reactions to certain store procedures, and executives' opinions as to the influence of these factors on employees' success.

Federal Board for Vocational Education. *The scope of training for retail store service*. A report of the Committee representing the Personnel Group of the National Retail Dry Goods Association. Washington, D. C. 1929. 94 pp. (mimeographed).

A report on department store training including a discussion of training problems and programs, and a thorough survey of available training agencies.

National Retail Dry Goods Association (225 West 34th St.). Report of the Committee of the Personnel Group. *Executive training*. 1930. 62 pp. (mimeographed). \$2.50.

A survey of practice with outlines for suggested courses—(1) Background or store organization, (2) Training squads, (3) Leadership courses.

Bezanson, Anne, and Miriam Hussey. *Wage methods and selling costs; compensation of sales clerks in four major departments in 31 stores*. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1930. 405 pp. \$4.50.

An analysis of the various methods of compensation with some conclusions as to the results under different systems.

Emmons, Arthur B., 2d. *Health control in mercantile life; a problem of conserving human energy*. New York. Harper & Bros. (49 East 33rd St.). 1926. 234 pp. \$3.00.

A thorough survey of health problems in department stores made by the Harvard School of Public Health.

STORES COOPERATING IN THE STUDY

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- James McCutcheon & Company
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- R. H. Muir, Inc.
East Orange, N. J.
- The Namm Store
Brooklyn, N. Y.
- The H. & S. Pogue Company
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- The Rike-Kumler Company
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- Roos Brothers
San Francisco, Cal.

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The Robert Simpson Company, Ltd.
Toronto, Can.

E. T. Slattery Company
Boston, Mass.

N. Snellenburg & Company
Philadelphia, Pa.

Stern Brothers
New York, N. Y.

Strawbridge & Clothier,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Thalhimer Brothers
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John Wanamaker
Philadelphia, Pa.

H. P. Wasson & Company
Indianapolis, Ind.

Wieboldt Stores, Inc.
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