

This copy of *Bill Reddin on Managing* is provided compliments of [Lawrence Creaghan](#).

“BILL REDDIN ON MANAGING”

W.J. Reddin was one of the world’s top experts on behavioural change and managerial effectiveness. The *Financial Post Magazine* called him “the consultant other consultants call in.” His “3-D Theory of Managerial Effectiveness” has been described as “the most powerful situational analysis of management of its time.”

I had the very good fortune of working for Bill Reddin at the beginning of my career. We kept in touch over the years and he sent me a copy of his *Smart Manager’s Book of Lists* to be used as “filler” in *The Corporate Report* whenever needed. Excerpts from that book made great filler and great reading and are included here for your continued reading pleasure.

[Bill Reddin](#) wrote many books and countless articles during his very productive and effective life (he died in 1999), including his classic *Managerial Effectiveness* (McGraw-Hill, 1970).

— Lawrence Creaghan

Bill Reddin on...

- [CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS](#)
- [GROUPTHINK](#)
- [WHEN THE NEW GROUP FIRST MEETS](#)
- [ROLES PEOPLE OFTEN TAKE IN GROUPS](#)
- [BUILDING A MORE EFFECTIVE GROUP](#)
- [EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAMWORK](#)
- [INEFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAMWORK](#)
- [PETER F. DRUCKER ON MANAGERS](#)
- [PETER F. DRUCKER ON COMPANIES](#)
- [WHAT JOB PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS MEAN](#)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

- The ideal CEO would be a poet, historian and student of weather maps. Writing poetry gives precision in thought and language, history teaches strategy, while studying weather maps teaches decision-making under uncertainty.
- CEOs should be paid according to the amount of time they could remain dead in their offices with no one noticing. If a long time, it means they are concentrating on low-frequency, long-range decisions for which they are being paid.
- If CEOs are concerned, as they should be, about world infant mortality or that a third of the world's population goes to bed hungry, they should improve their managers' effectiveness. It is the only way a country can create added value.
- The single best piece of advice I can give to a CEO is to get rid of the desk.
- When I see a CEO with a span of control of 12 or more I am reminded that the Son of God could handle only 11 effectively.
- If a staff group initiates horizon decision studies, then the CEO should get rid of the in-basket.
- I once asked a farmer for directions to a neighbouring village, and I was told, "You can't get there from here." I run into the same problem with some CEOs when discussing change objectives.
- As all CEOs can create subordinates and assign them any results area, CEOs' jobs are fully flexible and they can make the job what they will.
- The principle behind the system of deputies to the CEO is exactly the same as the tradesperson's assistant and both are usually under-employed.
- There are green-light directors and red-light directors. A good CEO works well with both.
- Most CEOs have a chance at major reorganization only once or twice in their work life. Shouldn't they check out some options as to method rather than assuming they instinctively know them?

- A keen apprentice is definitely more useful and admirable than an incompetent CEO.
- The organization chart can be a long shadow of the CEO.

From *The Smart Manager's Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

GROUPTHINK

“Groupthink” is what led the lemmings astray. If any of these symptoms start showing up, it’s a good sign that the group is losing its grip:

- Illusions of group invulnerability
- Rationalizing unpleasant and disconfirming data
- Belief in inherent group morality
- Stereotyping competitors as weak, evil and stupid
- Applying direct pressure to deviants to conform to group wishes
- Self-censorship by members
- Illusions of unanimity
- Mindguarding – members protecting the group from disturbing ideas or viewpoints

From *The Smart Manager's Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

WHEN THE NEW GROUP FIRST MEETS

Sometimes groups are formed to complete a specific project in a particular time. These groups are sometimes called project teams or task forces. In matrix-type organizations these groups are the norm. To get these groups off to a good start, here are some questions to be resolved and tasks to be completed at the first meeting.

- How will the team know when it has done its job, so that the team can be terminated? In other words, in output terms, what specific things was this team formed to complete?
- What are the team’s resources at the moment in terms of skills, time availability, budget (if applicable) and so on?

- What other resources does the team require if it is going to complete the project on time and with high effectiveness?
- Draft a tentative plan for your team with schedules and responsibilities, specifying when each necessary activity will be completed. Be specific: for example, use “completed by” instead of “start to.”
- List the issues you would like to raise about the way you should work together.

From *The Smart Manager's Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

ROLES PEOPLE OFTEN TAKE IN GROUPS

The following is a list of discussion roles that you may find members of your committee or your discussion group taking from time to time. Do members usually take the same role or vary their roles? What effect does each of these roles have on the other members and on the quality of the discussion? What role do you prefer? Do you use it too much? Too little?

- **The Encourager:** sides with others, aids group activity, shows positive enthusiasm, jokes or laughs in agreement
- **The Agreeer:** agrees with the proposed course of action, complies with directions or requests
- **The Negativist:** takes negative attitude, doubts, argues against most ideas or proposals
- **The Arbitrator:** attempts to consider both sides of the question, smoothes out conflicts
- **The Egotist:** interrupts, demands attention, is overly positive and assertive
- **The Action Person:** suggests a solution or course of action, insists that the group make some decision
- **The Questioner:** seeks information, opinions or suggestions from others in the group, seeks clarification of the situation
- **The Informer:** gives information, cites examples

- **The “Now I Think” Person:** consistently gives own opinions unrelated to facts
- **The Problem Poser:** initiates new discussion topics
- **The Active Aggressor:** shows irritation and frustration, criticizes, blames others, ridicules others, uses sarcasm
- **The Passive Aggressor:** acts indifferent, aloof, cold, evades or postpones compliance with a suggestion, becomes excessively formal
- **The Autocrat:** controls behaviour, gives commands, denies permission
- **The Group Summarizer:** defines group position, verbalizes “where the group is now in its thinking,” brings group back to the point when it has wandered
- **The “Where Do We Stand Now?” Person:** wants to know where group stands, requests summary
- **The Passive Deserter:** daydreams, doodles, whispers to others, engages in socially irrelevant behaviour
- **The Active Deserter:** takes off, walks out

From *The Smart Manager’s Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

BUILDING A MORE EFFECTIVE GROUP

An ex-football player of about 26 was invited to make a list of requisites for an effective group. Although he had never done anything like it before, he came up with this list in about ten minutes. Obviously, he was drawing on his experience in football. Management analogies, added by the author, are indicated in parentheses.

- Must start with selection of good players. (How much time do we spend on our selection process and do we entrust it to the right people?)
- Frequent positional changes for experience. (Job rotation.)
- Widening experience of players by the manager. (This could be management development, such as serving on task forces, acting as

understudy for certain jobs, being given particular challenging projects to complete as an addition to the job.)

- Maintaining flexibility within the structure. (Flexible job trading, work redistribution as needed, flexible hours where possible.)
- Creating a sizable pool of players for competition. This keeps teams on their toes, individuals fighting for positions and wanting to maintain them. (Selection and recruitment.)
- Preferably more than one manager. Possibly assistant manager – better for discussing team tactics. Two opinions are better than one. (Not sure about this one, perhaps an aspect of the football player’s personality or the way he likes to see things run.)
- Good incentives to keep team together, which would obviously lead to a more successful team spirit. (Teamwork.)
- If you have a winning group, you attract other winners wanting part of the action. (Set high standards.)
- Strategies to minimize injuries. (Stress.)
- Avoidance of inconsistent refereeing, particularly when there are problems. (Appraisal – clarifying roles, authority.)
- The best communication possible. (It seems I’ve heard that song before.)
- The best listening possible. (Ditto.)

From *The Smart Manager’s Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAMWORK

Eight clear types of management teamwork have been identified. Four are more effective, and four are less effective. The four more effective types are described below to help you recognize what kind of teamwork you have now and to give you some guidelines on how you might change it.

- **Problem-Solving:** a team that attempts to examine the problem as broadly and deeply as possible and thus reach an optimum solution to which all are committed. Due consideration is given both to the task

at hand and to the feelings of team members. Ideas are of high quality and highly relevant to the task.

- **Productive:** a task-oriented team whose primary concern is the immediate task. Contributions come from those who push for their own ideas. Disagreement occurs frequently but is usually useful. Discussions in the productive team may be dominated by a few members, but their leadership is beneficial. Evaluation is usually focused on making the team more efficient.
- **Creative:** a team that focuses primarily on developing its members and their ideas. Much attention is paid to the minority opinion and to incorporating the ideas of all members in the decision. Disagreement, although rare, is looked into closely so that benefit is derived from it. Evaluation of the team's efforts usually is aimed at improving team creativity.
- **Procedural:** a team that follows procedures and established patterns. Creativity and contributions, although forthcoming within defined procedures, are sound. Members listen politely, and disagreement is handled in a formal manner. Leadership is routine. Evaluation usually amounts to a comparison of the team's efforts with those of another team or a previous meeting, but is, however, functional.

From *The Smart Manager's Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

INEFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAMWORK

Eight clear types of management teamwork have been identified. Four are more effective, and four are less effective. The four less effective types are described below to help you recognize what kind of teamwork you have now and to give you some guidelines on how you might change it.

- **Mixed:** a team that attempts to compromise between getting the task done and sparing people's feelings. The result is less effectiveness. The team lacks focus on the problem, member comments are often

irrelevant, and attempts at creativity usually fail. Disagreement exists but serves no useful purpose. Leadership is often absent when needed and present when not needed. Evaluation is weak.

- **Fight:** a team characterized by conflict and argument. The conflict is not functional, as contributions and creativity are usually blocked by argumentative team members. Leadership is dominated by one or two members, often those with the loudest voices. Disagreement between individuals sometimes becomes personal rather than based on the issues. Evaluation of the team's efforts usually amounts to attacks on members.
- **Dependency:** a team whose byword is harmony. More attention is paid to avoiding conflict than to discussing the problem. Most of the contributions are ones with which everyone can be expected to agree, and creative ideas are blocked when they are seen as possible criticisms of members or the team as a whole. Disagreement, even when obviously functional, is avoided. Leadership sometimes evolves, but it is usually friendly and weak. Evaluation of the team's efforts is usually in the form of compliments.
- **Flight:** a team that displays little interest in getting the job done. Conflict is kept at a minimum because of the energy it requires. Creativity and contributions are low, and leadership appears to be absent. Usually the decision is, in effect, not a decision but a re-wording of the problem as it originally existed. There is rarely any effort made to evaluate or improve team performance.

From *The Smart Manager's Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

PETER F. DRUCKER ON MANAGERS

- The poor manager costs much more than the good manager.
- Above all, managers must manage themselves.
- Most of us are good at improving things but not at doing the right things.

- Too many executives invent urgent work to get out of the things they don't want to do.
- Engineers and accountants are inclined to think that human beings behave like metals and figures.
- A manager should ask, "What are the few things I can do well?"
- The incompetent make themselves known fast, and so do the brilliant.
- A most important managerial quality is courage.
- Authority usually stems from character.

From *The Smart Manager's Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

PETER F. DRUCKER ON COMPANIES

- There are no profits inside a business, only costs.
- It's a company's social duty to make a profit.
- Few businesses lack ability – they mainly lack effectiveness.
- If an organization cannot hold or attract people, it is doomed.
- Profitability is the productivity of capital.

From *The Smart Manager's Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin

JOB PERFORMANCE: WHAT THE DESCRIPTIONS REALLY MEAN

The military uses fitness reports in the evaluation of personnel performance. The following comes from the US Navy but applies to general use.

- **Average:** not too bright
- **Exceptionally well qualified:** has committed no major blunders to date
- **Active socially:** drinks heavily
- **Zealous attitude:** opinionated
- **Unlimited potential:** will stick around until retirement
- **Quick thinking:** offers plausible excuses for errors
- **Takes pride in work:** conceited
- **Stern disciplinarian:** a bastard

- **Tactful in dealing with superiors:** knows when to keep mouth shut
- **Approaches difficult problems with logic:** finds someone else to do the job
- **A keen analyst:** thoroughly confused
- **Spends extra hours on the job:** miserable home life
- **Conscientious and careful:** scared
- **Judgment is usually sound:** lucky
- **Meticulous attention to detail:** a nitpicker
- **Strong adherence to principles:** stubborn

From *The Smart Manager's Book of Lists* by Bill Reddin