

Introduction

What kind of manager do I want to be?

The question should most effectively be rephrased as: "what kind of manager can I be at best?"

Management is in fact just another type of human activity that lies and heavily depends on the foundations of personality, that constitute what I will refer to as the "structure". Training and acquired skills sit on top of this structure and are the "system" put in place to deliver our end product: effective management. Lastly we have will and commitment, that in my metaphor will constitute the "driving factor" or the "intensity" by which the system is exploited.

This view explains why not everything is achievable to everybody, but rather why each of us should opt to follow his or her natural inclinations and make the best use of them. I do in fact believe that certain characteristics, such as entrepreneurship, proactiveness, drive, responsibility are rarely and with difficulty taught, but rather relate to a set of deeply rooted individual characteristics that can be enhanced if present and not "created" ex-novo. Notwithstanding this, and at the same time, each individual has (luckily!) a uniqueness and inimitable "blueprint", the combination and mix of his unique skill set, that make him or her uniquely apt for a specific job, or more inclined than others to efficiently perform certain kinds of tasks or duties.

For the rest, life is about steering the path of the drop that makes its way to the bottom of the window on a rainy day. The origin is fixed, that is where the drop hits the window, and the target is also pretty much given, the bottom of the frame of the window. A random action will deliver the drop on the vertical of the originating point, but a consistent set of steers in the same direction will veer the course and deliver the drop to the far end of window, where no one would have told (maybe not even the drop itself) that the drop could made it. Luck on the course, in the form of a favourable wind, of course helps and should always be taken under consideration and

acknowledged. On the other hand it is the consistent application of will and commitment that enables us to achieve what is otherwise to remain as sketched plans.

Self assessment

My life experience up to now has given me plenty of opportunity to observe and reflect on myself "in the field" and benchmark against peers.

School, the military service, professional life, this two years intensive and important pause constituted by the MBA program, have all served as opportunities to watch as a set of people starting on equal or similar footing end up in totally different directions and with a varied array of results.

So far I have been lucky enough to be able to play among the very best, which in itself I find rather inspiring.

Earlier on this year, during a conversation with a senior officer of the firm I worked for during the summer, I was asked whether I wanted to be "the big fish in the small pond or the small fish in the big pond". Well, I have always found more attractive the second option, it stimulates growth and further achievement.

In other words I will track down my three most important character features as determination, commitment and adaptability. By the third one I refer to the relative ease with which I take decisions that have potentially a important impact on my life's course, or the ability to live and work in different settings and/or to get along with diverse people. These would probably constitute the core bottom of my "order winners", that sit on top of other important features, that are nonetheless useless without what I identified as these true differentiating agents.

Where to, from here?

The outlined self-analysis is meant to understand the "as is" positioning of this one person organisation that I constitute. Once recognised the true capabilities, as in any well thought of development plan, it is time to decide what these capabilities are best suited for.

Having identified as key skills a rather generic and broad-spectrum set of inclinations, I am, hopefully and in a best case scenario, left with a wide array of possible outcomes and possible development options.

This life's equation has some solutions that are trivial and others that are non-trivial.

Rather straightforward would be to take up one of the prospective corporate carriers that are offered to promising MBA students. Trivial solution, not in the sense that I mean to denigrate it as an achievement, but to point out that it does not require the extra effort, creativity and skills of an entrepreneurial initiative, the non-trivial solution.

After all MBAs pretty much had promising corporate carriers upon embarking on the non-trivial project of pursuing an MBA. A big jump, from the relative ease of corporate life, to the harshness of putting it all at stake, re-measuring oneself against the others and taking a rather conspicuous amount of debt, in itself a symbol of uncertainty. Was all this meant to speed up the ascent on the corporate ladder? Was it meant to jump ahead a couple of steps in the salary scale and insuring a more comfortable life afterwards? Was it meant, finally, to redirect a career that was ending up in an unwanted direction? Maybe all of the above mentioned motivations are true at the same time, but most noticeably, in my and in many other cases, an MBA is someone looking for challenge.

Being hyperactive, effective and unsatisfied with what one already has under the belt are, to the best of my experience, the most common ground in the rather diverse set of experiences that MBAs share with one-another. This leads to an unavoidable contradiction. An MBA is condemned, for life,

to be unable to fulfil what he aspires to for the simple reason that his aspirations will always lie a yard ahead of what he has already achieved.

This is the MBAs' recipe for success, since the journey, in itself, will take the MBA further away than the "normal creature".

This is also precisely my dilemma. Looking back I am pretty happy with what I got so far, and looking ahead I know that I have to opt for the "non-trivial" solution in order to be able to continue to look back and be happy. Of course, the start point of having a distinctive set of achievements support my inclination to believe into the more positive outcome on future undertakings.

Future goals

Most of my colleagues at this point have a rather confused idea of where they want to head in the future. I consider myself fortunate enough to have a rather clear perspective of where I want to head after my MBA course.

Having worked in the consulting industry I found it an appealing profession that suits very well my ambitions and, most importantly, my character. The travelling and continuous challenge inherent in the profession, as well as the vast degree of freedom and the recognition of the individual professional contribution of a typical management consultancy make it probably the best suited profession for me. The deeper level of detail and more attractive lifestyle when compared to I-banking, another intellectually challenging job, convinced me to drop the latter from my wish list.

I do have on the back of my mind an entrepreneurial venture, but I don't feel urged to get started immediately. It will happen when and where appropriate, waiting for the right opportunity and idea.

That implies that I won't be a corporate manager, at least in the short term, but rather be part of a consulting team, giving up power in exchange for intellectual challenge.

In this capacity the ideal managerial type to which I would like to adhere is a blend of a best suited academic model and some real life experiences that developed my understanding of the archetypal (consulting) manager.

I would quote as ^{the} most important characteristic of this profession openness of mind. This is intended as the ability to pick up new ideas and approaches, praise and not denigrate a better solution, the ability to co-operate with people in a real exchange of ideas, where the sum of the contributions is worth more than the equivalent standalone values.

Secondly, the ability to inspire or, at least, bring the best out of people. Having worked with several different human types, I know how much of our performance and commitment depends ultimately on a superior ability to stimulate positively, for the ultimate benefit of both parties. This is probably where I will have to work hardest, but as it often heard, recognising the existence of a problem it represents already a half solution.

An important side of the equation will be the ability to actively manage my professional life in order to make consistent with my private one. As I have found in the recent years, sometimes the ability to integrate effectively the two transcends individual will. But I also know very well from past experiences that it all depends ultimately on the ultimate desires and ability to compromise. A decent quality of life, where profession doesn't spill over onto all the available time is as top priority, and something that I intend to carefully watch.

Finally, I have a desire to give back. I had a lot from the Institutions, from my family, from my friends and associates and society in a wider sense. I was lucky enough to be born in the position to be able to take advantage of these contributions, but I also worked very hard to achieve what I have so far. I do feel that people like me are now in the position to give back even more than they received, since they end up being rather influential in what they do.

In a sense, even the enhanced competitive standing enabled for a firm at the end of a successful consulting assignment is a way to give back. The relevant stakeholders are all better off, from the customer, to the investor, to the employees, if the project has been carefully actuated. And a more effective world is ultimately a better world for everybody.

You wrote a very well thought-out personal mgmt. Statement. Good luck in your career goals (i.e., consulting) and thank you for your work on Shadowing -
(Pass)