Summer Employee
1968 or 1969

Analysis of My Job Environment

I

In over a hundred-and ten years of progress Johns-Manville has become internationally known, serving many industries in many ways. It is not limited to building materials or asbestos as some people think. In all Johns-Manville manufactures more than 500 product lines designed for the control of heat and cold, sound and motion and to protect against fire, .

The business was born in 1858 in a New York City basement. Henry W. Johns opened a small business for the production and sale of roofing materials,and was called the H. W. Johns Manufacturing Company. Shortly afterward, the company started to produce and sell asbestos roof coatings and asbestos roofing.

died in 1898 of lung disease

Then, in 1886 the Manville family formed the Manville Covering Company. They produced various types of pipe coverings and other insulations, but their line was limited in demand because it did not include asbestos.

Meanwhile, Johns had been developing new uses for asbestos and in 1891 he and others organized a merger of leading asbestos companies, under his company. While Johns was broadening markets for his products, the Manvilles were expanding in the midwest. With rapid changing production methods came a higher demand for high temperature insulation. This led to an arrangement by which the Manville Co.

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managed the Chicago branch of the H.W. Johns Manufacturing Company. Then in 1901 the two companies were merged under the name H.W.Johns-Manville Company and the Manville family assumed full management of the business.

In 1927 the company was reorganized and became Johns-Manville Corporation. At that time J-M changed from a family organization to one of public stockholder ownership.

A new era of intensive research, development and expansion followed the 1927 reorganization. Before that time the company's basic raw materials were asbestos fibre, asphalt and cement. Since then wood and mineral fibres, diatomite, fiber glass, rubber, plastics, perlite and other raw materials have become vital to the widely growing J-M line. Fiber glass insulations, insulating board products, Celite® products, Transite® pipe, adhesives, decorative laminates, and polymer plastics are some of a number of important additions to the line since 1927.

The company at the present time, employs some 21,000 people, owns and operates four mines, and runs a total of 59 Johns-Manville plants in the United States and Canada with sales offices in many of the principal cities in the United States.

Johns-Manville is owned by over 30,000 stockholders whose money goes into the buildings, machinery, and equipment which enable J-M to provide jobs and make many kinds of useful products.

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About four-fifths of the stockholders are individual men and women, with no one of these owning as much as one per cent of the company. Other stockholders include insurance companies, investment groups, universities and other institutions.

As owners of Johns-Manville the stockholders elect the Board of Directors. This Board consists of a group of usually about a dozen men. Some of these are officers of the company, and some are outside experts with wide expreience in such fields as finance, law, engineering, management, and public service.

The president is chief executive officer of the company, and is responsible to the Board of Directors for all aspects of the administration of the company. To assist him in coordinating the activities of the company, the president has a staff of specialists who provide certain services or who assist the president in planning and in observing the various activities.

The operations of the company are organized by divisions. Typically, each division operates somewhat like a seperate business enterprise, having an assigned group of products which it manufactures and sells. Thus, a division usually has its own plant and its own sales organization, and it is responsible for its own profits. Each division is under the supervision of a division general manager who reports to the president.[1]

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The Billerica plant is in the Industrial Insulations Division, and the Press Department, as well as all other Johns-Manville departments, has its channels of operation. The Plant Manager is in charge of all departments: Production, Planning and Scheduling, Industrial Engineers, Quality Control, and Plant Engineers. But the Press Departments chief concern lies in the Planning and Scheduling Department, for it is this department that the orders for materials are received and from this imformation they work out a schedule of is to be produced by the press. This responsibility then falls into the hands of the Production Supervisir or General Forman, who actually carries out what is to be done and also sets up work for the formen on all shifts.[2]

Here in the Billerica plant theproduct mostly produced is asbestos boards called Marinite®. It is here in the Press Department, where I worked, that the board first takes its form. The department consists basically of seven unified operations.

First the semi-raw asbestos fiber is dumped into a grinding machine (different amounts according to size and type of board) where it is milled into a cotton like fiber. The fiber is then blown over,via a duct, to the mixer, where the fiber is mixed in ratio with other materials such as water, lime, Celite® (a diatomite product) and others. After the

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stock is mixed, it is pumped directly over to the press, where the standard 4'x8' sheet is produced. These sheets are then placed in steam pressure tanks for a period of twenty hours at a pressure of about 100 pounds per square inch.[3] Next the sheet must be placed in racks with spaces between each sheet. This is accomplished by either a vaccum hoist or manually depending upon the weight of the sheet. The racks are now placed in ovens for a period twenty-one hours at which time the higest temperature reaches 400 degrees andthe lowest is 300 degrees.[4] In the ovens the hot air circulates around each sheet, so that all traces of moisture have been evaporated and that the sheet is baked hard. Finally, the racks are taken from the ovens, cooled and then unracked into piles, from where they are sent to the Finish Department for testing, cutting, sanding, painting and shipping.

II

The role of racking and unracking was my major duty at Johns-Manville. Though to some this job may seem trivial, it is really one of the most important, because this job is directly related to the speed of production. Another of my duties was being assigned to cleaning and vaccuming, again one would think this to be a totally unimportant job and the only reason it is done is because there is nothing to do. Thinking like this is wrong, cleaning and vaccuming

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is done for the main reason of personal health, and if it was not accomplished greater amounts of dust would collect in the air, thus causing a health hazard for everyone should know that anything that enters the lungs other than air is harmful. Other duties performed included washing pallets, (which also helped in dust control) unloading freight cars and sometimes filling in the job of operating the grinding and mixing machines.

In working here at Johns-Manville a main consideration stressed is that towards safety and its principles. Safety is used constantly throughout our lives and at Johns-Manville it is no different. Certain operations require protective apparel such as safety glasses, respirators, gloves, safety boots and other items.are necessary to safeguard oneself from possible injury. This is true also of my field of education, and any individual who knows the basic principles, knows how to take care of himself. As in any sport or industrial plant a person must be alert at all times to any hazardous condition and react constructively towards it. The protective pads a football player wears serve and do the same purpose as wearing safety boots in the plant. Also, in physical education, as in industry, there is a right way of doing things, a person should never attempt to preform a new stunt on the parallel bars without first learning the correct way to preform it, neither should

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an industrial worker attempt to do anything or operate any machine without first taking into consideration of how to go about it.

Another principle that is found at Johns-Manville is that of team coordination. This is something that is developed by people, through working with people. A person could almost say that the Press Department is some what like a track team, everyone doing his individual job, but not forgetting that he is part of a team, and if someone makes a mistake the other can help compensate for it by either doing his a bit more harder or in some other way.

Though this job has not directly helped me in my career, it has widened my education. For one thing it made me realize that some people in this world have to work hard and long hours to make a living, and just how fortunate I am, to be able to further my education, not that I am any better or more inteligent than they are, for some of these men probably could have gone to college, but because of financial or personal problems, they were not able to persue this opportunity.

Also by working at Johns-Manville I have benefited through personal relationships. Meeting new people, talking and working with them is something a university can never teach you, schools can show you the formality, but that is it, the rest has to be developed by yourself to round out

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your personality and without that, what good is an education?

Another aspect is that of working under others, receiving instructions from the formen and carring them out. For whoever you are , you have to learn to take orders, no matter if you were working in a hospital, school department, or what have you, it is all the same.

Not only is it enough to do your job, but also to make a quick decision if something unexpected arises and to take some responsibility for your job. Like safety, personal relationships, and team coordination, responsibility is something that we will deal with for the rest of our lives.

In closing I would like to say that though working for Johns-Manville was probably not the best job for my career, I do believe that it did give me some basic fundamentals, as stated above, and from these I can build up my life ,and may be , become a better person.

Sources of Infcrmation

1 Working Together in John-Manville.Johns-Manville Publication.

2 Interview with forman Mr. Walter Clarke.

3 Interview with employee Mr. Guilmette.

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