

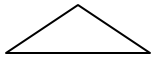
# *Preface*

My experience with the corporate world probably parallels that of many others in organizations. The successes I've enjoyed are easily explained by ambition and hard work. But I can also lay claim to a blockbuster defeat that transformed me from an optimistic young executive to a disenchanting skeptic. This crisis prompted my resignation from the IBM Corporation. This move subsequently led to the formation of Coleman Management Consultants, Inc.

During the decade following my departure from big business, through countless seminars and speaking engagements, I heard thousands of stories similar to my own. Some employees are on an apparent fast track to the presidency when suddenly, for no discernable reason, they find themselves passed over for promotion. Of course, many people handle career defeats in ways more creative than resigning. They may coast into retirement or hold daily complaint sessions around the water cooler.

Tragically, these unhappy people are sending up a massive wail from every type of occupation, from the naval yards of Virginia to the vineyards of California, from the boardrooms in Chicago to the drilling rigs in the Gulf. Ask them, and not one person can tell you how they wound up in their predicament, or how they will escape it.

This book is for the frustrated. It is for a nation of employees frozen in place like so many victims of Pompeii. It is also for those who are currently advancing their careers without recognizing defeat lurking ahead. Be careful. Many are bumped from the ladder at the uppermost rungs; a phenomenon today referred to as hitting the "Glass Ceiling."



## *Empowering Yourself*

This book is for the soldier whose ultimate goal is the pentagon, the government employee who wishes to rise high in the SES ranks, and the student who has a grasp of the technical challenge, but is unclear as to the application of "the softer skills." From educator to administrator, anyone that has to maneuver through a hierarchy to achieve his or her ultimate goals, this book is for you.

This book is also for the wife or husband who sees uncomfortable activity around the house, activity that requires their participation. If you're the spouse who is asked to take up bridge or tennis, there just might be a legitimate reason behind that request. I trust this book will help you understand what your partner is doing, though it may be a burden to understand and appreciate it fully.

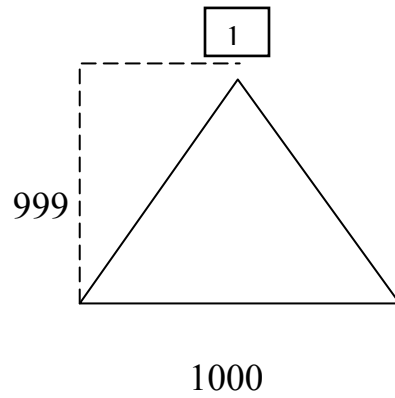
And this book is even for the few happy souls among us, those who are intuitively doing everything right. Curious about your charmed path to the top? Want to know why your route to the presidency has been lined with rose petals and admiring crowds?

Herein are chapters that suggest life is a game, not at all a trivial one, but a game nonetheless. This is a game about people and their reactions. All else is just the chatter of detail. Further, this game of life is governed by rules, with the most important rules being ones that are unwritten and apply to not only the business culture, but almost *every* organizational culture as well.

My purpose in writing this book is to expose the rules of your game...whether you're in business, education, the military, civil service or a non-profit organization. The rules apply to them all. Once we know the rules, life then becomes a series of thoughtful moves and counter moves rather than a series of bold reactions to haphazard bombshells lobbed our way.

When you know the rules, success comes to those most adept at playing.

Life's game is played out on a game board shaped like a pyramid.



The Playing Field

Notice how it comes to a point at the top. The shape means anyone entering at the bottom in a company of 1,000 employees, must out distance 999 others if their goal is to be CEO. Now, when *every* employee knows the secret of reaching that peak, the game shifts onto a more equitable playing field, one, which assures all candidates, an equal opportunity for promotion, based on their quality of play.

When the rules of the game become common knowledge to everyone, this is a rare business situation where everyone wins. Employees win because they know the choices they must make to have an opportunity to reach the top. Thus, more employees will participate fully in their work when they understand how promotions are made. The company also wins when motivated employees improve productivity and quality.

## **Choice? It's Your Move**

Every game player understands the importance of *choice*. A series of well planned, well executed moves drives any player closer to success. But at the same time, one serious miscalculation can sidetrack a career.

The organizational game involves a series of increasingly difficult choices, which come in the form of trade-offs. These trade-offs help us *choose* when and where to plateau our career. Many of us, for example, wouldn't want to be President of the United States. The pressures, the lack of privacy, the life-and-death decisions of the Commander in Chief, for many of us, these trade-offs just isn't worth the rewards. However, the choice of moves is always ours to make.

For those who want to play hardball, for those who *really* want to reach that top rung of the ladder, no sacrifice is too great. That's what makes the game so fascinating. It's guided by rules, moves and counter-moves, and consists of a series of trade-offs we choose to make or not to make.

If you're willing to play the game for upward mobility versus maintaining current status and are willing to dedicate extra hours to improve the strategy and execution of your game, the rewards are advancement within your chosen career. However, you must develop your own game plan and execute that plan in order to maximize wins and minimize losses. Along the way, you will find that you are in total control of your own destiny. It is completely your choice.

The purpose of this book is to introduce you to the major elements of the game. The charts are designed to help you assess yourself and your developmental requirements as you create a personal game plan.

# *Reading the Environment*

Successful play in any organization requires careful attention to the work environment. We find that the best players are those who work hard to familiarize themselves with the rules of the organizational structure and its culture. They understand rules most of us have buried at the subconscious level, and they eagerly adapt to changing requirements.

The Japanese are a good example in this area. About four decades ago, they embarked on a farsighted mission to learn about the American business culture. They enrolled in our finest universities, and hired our best consultants. They studied, pondered and absorbed our business sense. Then they began to manufacture shiploads of notoriously inferior consumer items. They had learned our game, but were struggling desperately with quality.

For a full decade, at least, the “Made in Japan” label sold more extended warranties than any salesman! But somewhere along the way, sometime between the Korean War and the Vietnam Conflict, they got the hang of it and have subsequently built an international reputation as quality manufacturers.

The Japanese became experts in reading our business environment and converting it to their advantage. They looked at our game board, adopted our rules and then, some years later, beat us soundly at our own game.

## **Where Did It All Begin?**

Every culture has a beginning. Once a custom or practice is repeated over and over again, it is eventually incorporated into the group’s value system and

becomes a standard or norm. These norms are not always written down and usually are passed to the next generation, either by role modeling or through stories. Eventually these standards and norms make up what I call “Cardinal Rules,” those rules that rarely, if ever, have exceptions.

To understand our current unwritten rules one must apply one of those Cardinal Rules. The rule simply states, “Whoever is at the top of a pyramid, has the right and the responsibility to make the rules.” Subsequently, with the rise of the British Empire to the top of the pyramid, (it was once said that “The Sun never set on the British Empire”), they had the right to make the rules. It is no accident that every Russian, German, Japanese, and American child learns English in school. Why? England said the world would speak English, and it does. It is no accident that if you wish to socialize at the top of the social structure in any country, anywhere in the world, you will participate in four activities: golf, yachting or sailing, tennis, and activities surrounding the horse (i.e., polo, fox hunting, racing). All of these activities were given to the world by the British Empire. Interestingly, three years ago, upon contemplating a more global environment, China built its first golf course. Russia, one of the newest players in the world economy, opened the Moscow Country Club in October of 1994. Vietnam, about to enter the game, is currently building six golf courses. Japan, a now veteran player, cannot get enough of golf.

You will rarely find an executive retreat that isn't on a body of water or doesn't have a golf course and tennis courts. You will rarely find an executive resort with a bowling alley. This merely suggests that there are standards of behavior embraced by members of executive groups that go beyond corporate and national boundaries.

Although Americans come from all over the world, England's influence on us and the rest of the world cannot be denied.

England has given the world many things. Among them are social activities such as golf, polo, tennis, yachting and fox hunting; our justice system of a trial by a jury of peers; representative democracy as a form of government; and our government structure of two houses of the legislature based on the House of Commons and the House of Lords. One of the most significant legacies the British empire has passed down is its social-economic class structure. The foundation of this structure and the various levels within it are built around the value system instilled in us by our parents. Remember that, in part, culture is a set of values passed from generation to generation. Everyone enters the game at the level of their parents at the time of his or her birth. Therefore, *WE ARE ALL BORN INTO A CLASS*, and as a result pick up the values of our parents and the general community in which we are raised.

## **Culture Says It All**

Every identifiable group has a culture. As an example the Irish have theirs, as do Italians, Mexicans, Germans and African Americans. Within these groups there are a number of subcultures such as women, the elderly, disabled, and young people. Whenever a group can be found whose members share a common set of beliefs, customs, values, language, and traditions that have been passed from generation to generation, you have a culture. Business organizations, the military, and the government, to name a few, all have cultures. These organizational cultures are responsible for shaping every rule we must follow to be rewarded within these environments.

An appreciation of cultures, or groups, is vital to individual advancement. If you were to invite a friend to a party, the friend, if very different from you (background, language, interests and positions, etc.) will be in an awkward environment as soon as he entered the room. He will not be comfortable, he doesn't fit in, he is different from the others in every regard, such as dress, speech, and conversation. He is from a different culture, and will not be totally accepted until he adapts to the culture of the group attending the party. He might not be invited again if he is too much out of step with the cultural language, because people who disrupt the harmony of the group are usually excluded.

The culture of the work environment is similar to the social one, in that the ramifications of not "fitting in" are just as severe in a career as they are in a social setting. The implementation of the business culture is so rigid, in fact, that whenever a person violates one of its rules, the offender's career is jeopardized. Further advancement is then predicated on other personal strengths and the weaknesses of their competitors.

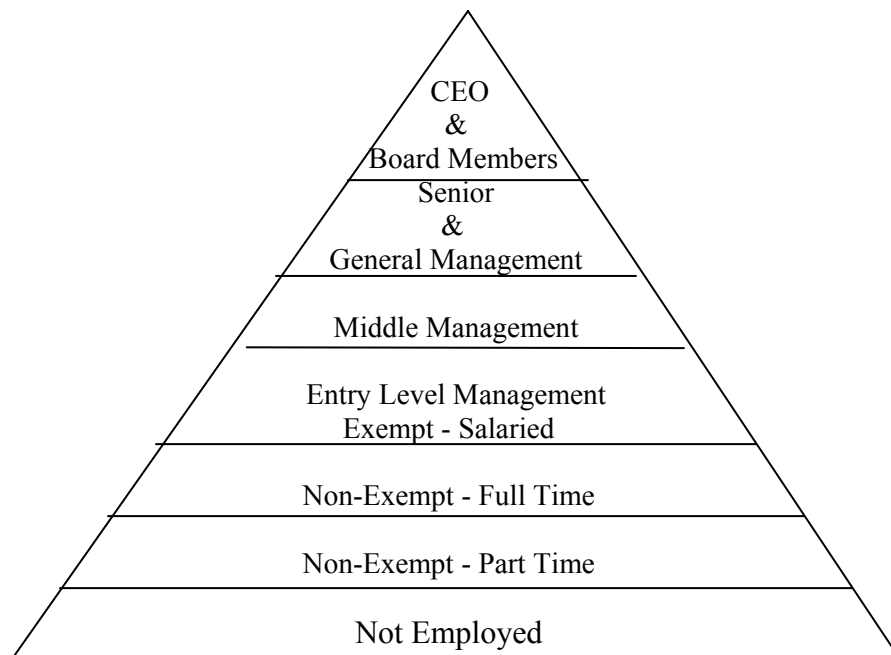
## **Languages...And Their Impact on Advancement**

When we speak of a person's organizational language, we are referring too much more than work usage. Organizational language is *total* communication, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal behaviors. It includes verbal interplay, manner of dress, attitude, non-verbal cues and the full gamut of communications skills which, when combined, determine the impact of personal interaction and perceptions.



For example, everyone in business speaks some form of the business language. The language you display is directly related to success both inside and outside your corporation. Neither your manager nor your clients will trust you if they don't understand or respect the language you are speaking.

One of the interesting facts I have learned over the years is that every job in every sizable organization can be placed into one of seven levels or leagues. For instance, the people who work for the typical corporation can be categorized as follows.



The player designations or titles in these seven levels can change but the organization game is always played on the same pyramid shaped game board. It doesn't matter what the organization does, the fundamental seven level hierarchy applies to all organizations even educational institutions and the armed forces. Each of these seven levels or leagues has its own distinct language, its own unique verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating. As individuals move

up the career ladder they have to discard some communication elements from the previous league and add some communication elements from the new league. Those who cannot adopt to the language of the new league will stand out like sore thumbs, like your friends at that cocktail party and they will be rejected by their would be peers. There are many things that separate the different languages within groups. They involve such things as educational background social activities, cultural interest, dress and work values. Each of them must be overcome if the next position is to be reached.

## **P.I.E. – A Formula for Success**

There are three elements important to players who want to fine tune their skills and move up in their profession. They must:

- *Perform* exceptionally well.
- Cultivate the proper *image*.
- Manage their *exposure* so the right people will know them.

These three basic elements of the business language, **P**erformance, **I**mage, and **E**xposure, (**P.I.E.**), are woven into every job category, into every advancement opportunity, and into every management decision in which promotions are considered.

Each of the three P.I.E. elements carries a different weight in upward mobility. All three are essential to promotion but they have different roles and weights relative to their impact on long-term success. The breakdown is as follows.

- **P**erformance = 10%
- **I**mage = 30%
- **E**xposure = 60%

Shocking? It was for me! That is until I examined the rationale for the weightings.

The first thing to consider is how our system rewards performance. Organization's pay for performance but tend to promote based on potential.

## *Performance . . .*

### *The Entry Ticket*

So the first element of the P.I.E. formula begins with a slight irony. Though its weight accounts for only 10% of the overall importance in a promotion, it's the ticket into the stadium. Without it, you won't even be admitted to the playing field.

### **You're Important, But . . .**

If you look around your company, you can find others who could be considered your competition. This is no accident. The replacement tables, which most companies have adopted, are designed to develop a pool of candidates who can fill any vacancy, which is sobering, for it means we can all be replaced within 24 hours!

In fact, *no one* is irreplaceable. We might look at certain executives and think of them as being necessary to the survival of the company, but I assure you that many of these so-called "critical players" have left companies, sometimes at the worst possible moment, and still the stock held its value, the business continued, and the payroll was met.

# *Image*

From the moment you step out of your car and cross the parking lot each morning, you are a visible expression of where you are in the business culture, and where you expect to go.

Image is an important tiebreaker when senior management reaches into the pool of excellent performers to promote the next candidate. A good image accounts for 30% of the weight given to a promotion, triple the attention afforded performance. Above all else, we must keep in mind the powerful impact visual communication plays in this people game.

Image includes many areas of personal expression, the way you walk, the way you sit, the clothes you wear, your pleasant (or foul) demeanor. Everything about a person, from dress to speech and attitude, sends a strong message to business associates. Image says, "I'm ready," or "I'm not ready," to play the game seriously at the next level.

Periodically, we should take a moment to review the signals we are sending. Our foremost question, "What messages am I sending, and are they the messages that will move me in the direction I have chosen?" If we don't occasionally spend some time in this candid assessment, then we're probably not playing the game very well.

## **Dress**

Your business wardrobe is extremely important to your career. Serious players dress at least one level above their present position on the pyramid. Dress is a badge in business, which states emphatically: "I want you to consider my

fluency at the next level." Dressing in that special business outfit at interview time is saying, "I fit here and I'm serious about business, hire me."

Because your clothing will have a greater impact on more people than anything else you normally do in your work day, your most important business decision may be made before you leave the house.

# *Exposure*

## **The Game Begins**

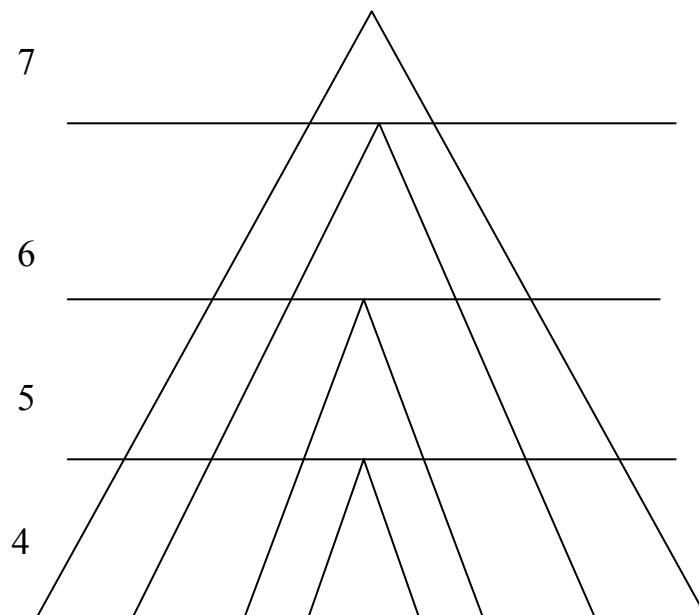
Exposure is the element of the **P. I. E.** formula that has the greatest impact on your career. This is the area of the game where all of our choices are played out and experienced. These experiences allow us to evaluate if we are content at our current level or to determine the choices we must make to change our current level, up or down. Most of all, exposure introduces one of the most powerful facts in the game of life, **you can't do it alone!** The "it" in this case is everything outside of our internal thought processes. It covers all of the areas and events where we must have help. Think about the raise you want. Can you give it to yourself? Of course not. How about the promotion you seek? Can you make that decision on your own? Sometimes we wish we could, but the reality is this: We always need other people to help accomplish any goal we want to obtain.

It is extremely important to gain, maintain and enhance personal visibility and exposure.

# *The Game Board*

In chapter five we used symbols (X, O, ✓, \*) to represent various leagues on the game board. In this chapter we now want to replace those symbols with some of the specific lifestyle elements, which define the culture at each level. It is important to remember this information is to serve as a model or guide and is, therefore, not all-inclusive. Activities and elements may differ community to community. Also note that many of your personal activities extend over several different leagues. This is not unusual. Take a close look at the league, that holds some of the newer activities in which you are engaged because this may suggest a personal transition for you. All pyramids do not apply to everyone, but over all, you should be able to determine your current level. Let's look at the seven leagues of the game board and their major elements.

The dynamics of the pyramid indicate that those at the top make the rules. However, it is important to recognize that there are pyramids within pyramids within pyramids:



If this is the case and I am at the top of the pyramid “4”, I can set the rules over the smaller pyramid “4” as long as those rules do not conflict with any of the rules established by pyramid “5”. This hierarchical structure continues until we reach pyramid “7” which sets the rules for the entire structure. In government, this hierarchy is called the federal system, with the federal government being able to overrule any state law if it is in conflict with federal law. The same is true with corporate, military and even religious institutions. Even though the parish priest operates autonomously, it is the Vatican that sets the ultimate direction for the Catholic Church.

## **Who's At The Top?**

Because there are many different pyramids in the system, many different communities have an influence in making the rules by which we live. The ultimate rule maker in our lives is the federal government. Although the American government allows other entities to freely exist, everyone understands that when any interest is in conflict with the well being of the whole society, the government will prevail. The government takeover of industry during World War II is a good example. Since most of our waking hours are spent at work, the majority of the rules we live by in our system comes from four entities:

- Government (federal, state and/or local);
- Board of Directors (private or public);
- Commission (i.e., SEC, FCC);
- Agency (i.e., FAA, EPA).

In reality a person cannot drive a city block, plug in a toaster or work in a profession without some law or regulation affecting their activity.

To define what level in which you might be or the level to which you might want to advance, we must look at the lifestyle displayed at each level. Even though very few will do all things at any given level, many individuals will be connected with enough activities to eventually be associated with belonging to that level.

So what? Why do these things matter? Well, if one is to advance in the organization, especially towards the top of the pyramid verses horizontal movement, one is expected to function at that level in many aspects on one's life. All of us want our executives to promote the organization within the community. We expect them, by their positive association with other corporate executives, to at least give our company an opportunity for additional business and a more enhanced reputation.

People usually do business with people they like or at least with whom they are comfortable. This is why top executives tend to live in the same areas, congregate at the same social organizations and clubs, and promote the same charitable activities.

So you can see that there is a great deal more to being an executive then simply excelling in your chosen profession. The intrusion into one's time and privacy is offensive to many and is undoubtedly the reason many plateau at a lower level in the organization.

Still, for those who are willing to pay the price for corporate success, knowledge of the game (and understanding the price) is invaluable. In this chapter we will review the following in detail:



- Occupation
- Where People Live
- Location of Home
- Entertaining in the Home
- Money
- Leisure Activities
- Fine Arts
- Cars
- Vacation Choices
- Committees & Boards

As mentioned earlier, this information is not all-inclusive, but should give you a clear idea of many of the elements within each league or level. Ultimately, it is our individual responsibility to make our own charts and choices.

This excerpt is just the tip of the iceberg. For a full understanding of “The Game,” be sure to order “Empowering Yourself...The Organizational Game Revealed.”

To order for \$24.95 plus sales tax and shipping and handling, please call 1-800-228-0810 and refer to this ISBN #0-7872-1386-1.

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