

THE BUSINESS DOCTOR By HAROLD WHITEHEAD Author of "The Business Career of Peter Flint" and "Bruno Duke—Solver of Business Problems"

Three Reasons for Failure

WHEN the head of a comfortable moderate-sized manufacturing concern died, the management of the business fell into the hands of his son Bob.

Hob was twenty-five. He had a good education. For the last three years he had "worked in the office" at such times as gold and a certain charming young lady permitted.

Being made of the right kind of stuff, he now put his golf clubs on the shelf and asked the young lady to marry him. She promised to become Mrs. Bob as soon as he could get the business running properly.

Bob always felt that his father had been behind the times, so he determined that the factory should be modernized and systematized.

He started on a tour of investigation and visited some of the largest concerns in the country. There he studied the methods they used and marveled not a little at the wonderful labor and time saving plans he discovered.

Eagerly he returned home and began to apply many of the ideas he had absorbed. Systems of report-cards were installed. Every day he had "raphs" made of work in progress and so forth.

Yet at the end of the trading period profits were smaller than ever! He had a chilly sensation in his lower extremities and sought the advice of an old friend of his father—a man who was a successful exporter.

After hearing Bob's story, the friend smiled and said: "It's easy to see where you fell down. You're full of the 'hows,' but shy on the 'whys.'"

Bob looked puzzled. "How, and why? What are you driving at?" "Listen, Bob," began his friend. "You've studied how successful concerns do things, but you didn't get the real thing, which is why they do the way they do. You got practice, but not principles—not rules.

"You can't play any game successfully without mastering the rules of the game. Business is a game, a great wonderful game, and it must be played according to the rules—the principles—of business if you mean to make good.

"Turn yourself into an animated question mark for a year or so. Ask 'Why?' about anything that you want to know and you'll obtain the rules of the game, and learn how to apply them quickly and surely."

Bob got the idea and began to study business from a different viewpoint. He looked for the reason why things were done in a certain way, rather than merely how the work was performed.

Readers' Questions Answered Mr. Whitehead will answer in this column questions on business, bookkeeping, advertising, letter-writing, business education, etc. All questions will be answered in as plain a manner as possible. Readers' initials only to be given days for a reply to appear.

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