

**THE LUMBER BUSINESS,
ORGANIZATION - PRODUCTION -
DISTRIBUTION: OBSERVATIONS
AND COMMENTS ON
EFFICIENCY AND SERVICE**

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The Lumber Business, Organization - Production - Distribution: Observations and Comments on Efficiency and Service by W. M. Ritter

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W. M. RITTER

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THE LUMBER BUSINESS

Organization — Production — Distribution



OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS
ON
EFFICIENCY AND SERVICE

By
W. M. RITTER
PRESIDENT
W. M. RITTER LUMBER COMPANY

Published by
THE SOUTHERN LUMBERMAN, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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By
W. M. RITTER

PREFACE.

The contents of this little book were not originally designed for publication. My aim in the preparation was to convey to the officers and employes of the W. M. Ritter Lumber Company my views upon *organization, production, distribution*—general topics under which may be treated almost every subject important to the *lumber business*.

Some of the observations and comments upon *efficiency* and *service*, while made in respect to our business, have been deemed to some extent at least, applicable to the lumber business in general, and I have been urged to give the brochure a wider circulation than was originally contemplated. In the hope that it may serve to stimulate thought and encourage to action those similarly situated, who may happen to see it, and who are striving for a better, more satisfactory state, I have determined to comply with the request to publish it.

My interest in the broad subject has been greatly stimulated by acquaintance and association with Dr. A. F. Sheldon. His comprehension of the logical, philosophical basis upon which rests all proper consideration of Efficiency and Service is clear and accurate; and my discussions with him enabled me more definitely to develop and mold my own views than would have been possible without the benefit of his views and points of view.

While I am not always in complete accord with them, I readily acknowledge the pleasure I have had in the perusal of the works of Taylor, Emerson and Lewis, and my indebtedness to them all, especially the latter from whom I have possibly drawn more freely than from any other, in formulating my own views.

I desire also to record my acknowledgment of the valuable assistance rendered me by my friend and asso-

ciate Landon C. Bell, and to express my appreciation of his unflinching enthusiasm and cordial cooperation.

For the sake of convenience and clarity, the subject matter here presented will be set forth in five chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1—FOREWORD.

Chapter 2—GENERAL DISCUSSION. Embracing a statement of principles and definitions necessary to be constantly observed in striving for the attainment of sound, efficient business policies and practices.

Chapter 3—CODE OF PRINCIPLES. This chapter in point of space will be brief, but the importance of the Code warrants a separate statement and discussion.

Chapter 4—PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT. *The Operating Department or The Department of Production.*

Chapter 5—PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (Continued). *The Sales Department.*

The problems of organization and management affect the entire business in every department, and the fundamental considerations for each department being largely the same, duplication and repetition of expression will be rendered unnecessary by reading the brochure as a whole with that thought in mind.

Our business is managed under the following departments:

Legal Department,
Accounting Department,
Operating Department,
Sales Department.

The observations herein made will be with particular reference to the Operating and Sales Departments, but it should be understood that the same general thoughts should govern, and the same principles of efficiency given play, and insisted upon, in the Legal and Accounting Departments as in the Operating and Sales Departments. The comparative smallness of the personnel, and the character of the duties performed by these departments, seem to render it not necessary to discuss their problems and functions separately.

In the discussion of the Operating Department, the design will be to treat the subject in such a way as to serve as a general guide to efficient practice in this department.

In the discussion of the Sales Department, there will be embraced suggestion for its management, as well as the principles governing, and rules for attaining successful salesmanship.

It will be seen that the discussion largely concerns the philosophy of the subject discussed. The principles or laws controlling efficiency considerations are discussed or suggested; but no particular attempt has been made to treat the problems of technique. The omission to treat this subject is not due to a lack of appreciation of its importance, but rather to the feeling that it would not be apt to embrace it in this brochure, and it is omitted with reluctance, for the soundest abstract conclusions in respect to EFFICIENCY and SERVICE will be of little value unless they result in doing things in a superior, more perfect way.

It may be that upon some future occasion I will return to the topic and discuss at least one phase of TECHNIQUE as related to the considerations now submitted upon EFFICIENCY and SERVICE.

W. M. RITTER.

Columbus, Ohio,
September, 1920.

INDEX.

	PAGE
Chapter I—FOREWORD	3
Chapter II—GENERAL DISCUSSION.....	12
(1) Types of men. (2) The Necessity for Thought. (3) Thought as a Business Asset. (4) Efficiency—Its Problems. (5) Rules of Efficiency. (6) Overcome Prejudice Against Efficiency. (7) Business Policies. (8) Methods. (9) Leadership.	
Chapter III—CODE OF PRINCIPLES.....	45
Chapter IV—PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT, ETC.	48
(1) General Policies. (2) Preliminary Determinations. (3) Functions of the Superintendent. (4) Conferences. (5) How to Secure Accomplishment. (6) Inspection Trips—Periodical Visits. (7) Rely Upon Foremen. (8) How to Present Ideas. (9) Avoid Public Criticism. (10) Attention to Details. (11) Foremen—Suggestions to. (12) The Stores and Commissaries.	
Chapter V—PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT (Continued)	79
(1) The Staff. (2) The General Sales Manager. (3) The Division Sales Manager. (4) The Salesmen. (5) The Salesman's Manual.	
CONCLUSION	107

CHAPTER I.

FOREWORD.

The aim of our Company has always been to square its actions with a rule of justice; to deal fairly with everyone, whether employees or the public, customers or competitors. Indeed, its aim has been more—it has been its purpose to pursue this policy in a broad-minded, liberal, if not indeed benevolent spirit.

If, in actual accomplishment, it has fallen short of these ends, it has resulted not from the lack of an ideal of service, but from the frailty and imperfection of human agencies; from a failure to have co-operation where it should have had it, or from opposition and criticism where it should have had aid and encouragement.

While such has been our aim in the past, and we have striven for its accomplishment with a fair degree of success, and with an approving conscience as respects its efforts, yet we feel that the problems of the present lay special obligation upon everyone to do his best, and we should redouble our efforts to reach higher things, to attain a greater ability to serve, and to occupy an even broader and better field for our endeavors.