

The college professor was about to be laid off. He did not want to be, because he was being paid a nice retainer. So he came up with a counter plan. He said, "Just a minute. Everybody knows that feelings and emotions are much less flexible and pliable than opinions. I could make you an attitude inventory and tell you what the attitudes are among your workers." "O.K.," said management. We have lost \$5,000; why not lose another \$5,000. Go ahead and build us one of those attitude inventories, if you want to." The professor did, and 2 weeks later he came up with a report of the attitudes of all their employees. It seemed like a tremendous step ahead. It fell flat on its face, too. The thing wrong with it is that a man's attitude, too, can change as soon as the adrenalin drains out of his vascular system, and this didn't work. We would have to have one of these opinion or attitude surveys about every 2 weeks if we really wanted to know what the hourly worker was thinking about.

Savage and Lewis have said we ought to have a communication center, that we ought to set up a separate department for communication. Other companies came up with other ideas. The fascinating thing about this is that when you face an American with a problem he immediately starts to build a machine. The machine is supposed to take care of the problem.

I think we have missed the boat. If we don't regard this matter of listening as a human, personal responsibility, hour after hour, day after day on the job. Of all the studies I could report to you, the one I like best was done, I think, by Loyola University, 3 years ago. They wanted the answer to one question only. That question was: What is the most important, single attribute of an effective manager? For 18 months they pursued that query. Then they came up with their reply in one short statement, so frightfully important, in my conviction, that I would like to give it to you word for word. Here is what they said: "Of all the sources of information a manager has by which he can come to know and accurately size up the personalities of the people in his department, listening to the individual employee is the most important. The most stereotyped report we have received from thousands of workers who testified they liked their supervisors was this one: 'I like my boss. He listens to me. I can talk to him.'"