In his now famous book, The Practice of Management, Peter Drucker recounts the early struggles in the medical profession when performing surgery. Drucker writes that until the seventeenth century, barbers and not doctors would perform surgery. Doctors took their oath literally and refused to inflict pain or bodily harm on their patients. Actual operations were presided over by a doctor who would sit on a dais removed from the actual surgery, and the actual surgery was performed by the barber. The doctor would read the procedure from a Latin medical text (which the barber usually did not understand), and the barber would try to follow the doctor's instructions. If the patient died, it was always the barber's fault; but if the operation were successful, the doctor took the credit. In any event, the doctor always received the higher fee for the surgery.

Those who are Assistant Directors of Forensics and assistant coaches may appreciate the spirit of Drucker's medieval medical example. Assistants in forensics programs may feel that they are required to do most of the work in their programs while receiving vague directions which sometimes seem as if they were given in Latin, not to mention, additional financial benefits for the Director of the program, additional recognition, and additional praise.

Most people involved as professional forensic educators are aware of the high stress level due to long hours of coaching and travel, and the resulting burnout of many who have been involved in the activity for more than a few years. Working as a forensic educator can be difficult enough in ideal situations, but it can be a hellish experience if the various coaches/educators in a particular program have differing philosophies regarding their program or if basic managerial and interpersonal communication principles are not followed.

The situation may be complicated by the fact that the director of a forensics team may be at a different academic level than the other members of the coaching staff. In some cases, the director and assistant director of a program may have the same academic ranks and similar experience levels; however, there are situations...
where the director and assistant will vary in their professional experience. There are cases where a tenured faculty member is the director of a program and a non-tenured person or temporary person is the assistant. There are also cases where the assistant may be a graduate student, or the entire program may be run by graduate students.

Obviously, there are many organizational variations in forensics programs throughout the nation. Despite these structural differences and the differences in academic rank with the various people involved, it seems as if the task of managing a forensics program, either large or small, may be simplified by adhering to some basic principles of management/organizational communication. The perception of some forensic administrators is that forensics is an extracurricular activity that should not be managed the way one would manage other organizations. It is ironic that some of these same people teach, as part of their academic assignment, courses dealing with elements of organizational communication. This article will present three basic elements of management that can assist in establishing a positive working relationship between the director and assistant director (and other coaches) while also maintaining a better climate within the forensics program. Many elements of management and organizational communication would be appropriate for discussion; however, the three concepts that will be discussed in this article are unity of command, delegation of authority and responsibility, and leadership style.

**UNITY OF COMMAND**

The principle of unity of command is certainly not a new idea in the area of management. A technical definition for unity of command is that the coordination of activities is easier when each person has only one superior. In other words, each person in the organization has one supervisor, and the supervisor is ultimately responsible for the organization's functions. One may also add the famous phrase attributed to President Harry Truman, "The buck stops here." One person has to take ultimate responsibility for the overall management of the forensics program when dealing with various administrators at different managerial levels within the college or university. Some people may disagree with this contention by saying that their program has prospered with "co-directors" or more than one person at the helm of the program. Indeed, some programs may survive and even prosper for a short duration with two "chiefs," but the possibility for confusion
on the part of team members and administrators as to the leadership identity of the program is a problem over the long term. Administrators want to know whom to call when problems arise or when they need to know information about the forensics program, while students want to know where final decisions lie concerning team policy, financial aid, and other issues. Having two or more individuals as directors is somewhat analogous to the "College of Coaches" situation initiated by the Chicago Cubs baseball team in the early 1960s, where coaches took turns at being manager of the team for several days at a time on a rotating basis. The situation was disastrous from an organizational point of view, because the players had to continually adjust to various personalities and leadership styles. Granted, the Cubs had poor player talent during this period, but the confusion of different managers throughout the season certainly had to affect the performance and morale of the team.

The concept of unity of command may seem threatening or discouraging to an assistant director and other assistant coaches, but unity of command should not be perceived as an autocratic style of leadership. Instead, unity of command should minimize confusion and facilitate the smooth operation of the team.

If a team adheres to the concept of unity of command, one may ask, "Where does this leave the assistant director of the program?" Depending upon the experience level of the individuals involved, there may be very little "organizational line" difference between the director and the assistant director. Traditional organizational charts often show vertical lines running from the director to the assistant, but in the forensics world the slope of the line is a very slight one; in some ways the director is a first among equals in many situations, taking ultimate responsibility for the program but also involving the assistant director, other assistants, and in some cases, student team members in the decision-making process.

There are situations where the director should probably work solo on some projects, because in the creative process there are times when an individual works more effectively than a group. The idea of the individual vs. the group brings to mind the familiar group theory exercise, "Lost on the Moon," where participants are told that they have crash landed on the dark side of the moon and they must rendezvous with the mothership many miles away. The participants are given a list of fifteen items, and they must rank them in order of importance from one to fifteen regarding which items are the most important to take on the hike to the mothership. The first time through the exercise, individuals rank the items
in order of importance, and then they discuss their rankings with group members to determine a group ranking. In most cases, the group will produce a more correct ranking than an individual because of the concept of synergy, where more people are sharing their collective knowledge. Synergy can be a useful component in the decision-making process, but one can also imagine situations where it could be detrimental.

Several people sitting down together and actually determining the line items for a team budget is probably not an ideal group project. The director and the assistant should probably share the same philosophies regarding the administration of the program. It is difficult to imagine a situation where the two administrators want different things for their program—one person wants a nationally competitive program while the other person desires a more laissez-faire or non-competitive approach. The two directors may have different means for arriving at the same ends while also having different leadership styles or personalities, but the overall philosophy of the program should be the same.

One may question how unity of command affects the students' perceptions of the various coaches in the program and whether or not assistants carry the same authority as the director. The response to this question is that the student should perceive all coaches as having authority, and that all coaches assist in the policy-making and administration of the team. It can be difficult to establish this perception among students, especially when there is a wide range of experience levels between the director and some of the assistants. For example, it would be easy for students to dismiss any graduate student coaches as not having the authority to make decisions concerning discipline or policy.

Program directors must reinforce the idea that coaches should be viewed as a staff or gestalt with regard to decision- and policy-making. Directors who fail to represent their staff as unified concerning authority and policy-making are not only asking for problems concerning student satisfaction and discipline, they are also encouraging staff discord and divisiveness.

A way of minimizing negative student perceptions and maximizing staff satisfaction and productivity is the management concept of delegation of authority and responsibility. This concept could include responsible students where appropriate.

**DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Delegation of authority and responsibility is another basic principle of management that is applied in most successful organiza-
It is difficult for the director of any forensic program to do all the tasks that need to be accomplished without the assistance of others. Tasks must be delegated to assistants and to students, because, from a practical point of view, the director cannot do all the work of the program plus maintain a satisfactory level of teaching in the academic area.

One of the major mistakes made by many managers in the private sector is that they often give assistants a great deal of responsibility with little or no authority to carry out the tasks assigned to them. Forensic coaches can probably empathize with this mistake and recount examples from their own experiences. In some ways, this is similar to the doctor and barber situation given in the introduction of this article, where the doctor was delegating the actual task of performing surgery and making the barber responsible for the surgery only if something went wrong (the doctor, of course, was willing to accept the responsibility and the praise if all went well.)

Assistant can become frustrated in a situation in which they are given the responsibility for completing a task without also getting some amount of authority and resources for getting the job done. This can result in the proverbial "toothless tiger" effect, where the assistant is powerless to carry out the expectations of the director.

Directors should give assistants authority, realizing that authority allows individuals to make decisions within the scope of their capabilities and that assistants may assign specialized tasks to others (including students). The assistant also has the right to expect that any assigned task be carried out in a timely and satisfactory manner. In order for this to happen, the assistants should be allowed a certain degree of power.

Power is often given a negative connotation, especially when associated with what are perceived to be democratic or participatory groups or organizations. Power is related to authority, but the two are not synonymous in the context of organizational theory. Authority is the right to accomplish certain tasks or to ask others to perform various duties, but power is what backs up authority. Power is something that must be shared by the coaching staff in order for delegation of authority and responsibility to succeed in an organization or team environment. Students cannot perceive the director of a program as being the only individual who possesses power in matters of influence and discipline. Power allows assistants some autonomy in decision-making, especially when the director of the program is not available to make deci-
sions, and aids in the ability of the assistants to complete tasks and expect that others will assist in the work of the organization.

An organizational concept that further refines the element of delegation and authority is the specialization of work. Specialization of work can help larger teams assign tasks in such a way that most of the work is completed, and can help in the small team situation by ensuring that the director of the program doesn't have to do all the work involved with the team.

**SPECIALIZATION OF WORK**

Specialization of work is defined as dividing work in such a way so that people perform simple activities and jobs rather than complex activities and jobs. Work is divided into small components so individuals can specialize in the performance of a limited set of activities. One can see how this concept is closely associated with the delegation of authority and responsibility. Delegation of authority and responsibility is probably a prerequisite for specialization of work because without authority and responsibility tasks would probably be completed in an unsatisfactory manner, if they were completed at all.

One can also imagine numerous larger activities associated with forensic programs where specialization of work is necessary. Tournament management is an area where many small tasks comprise the gestalt of the actual tournament. Obviously, it would be unfair for a director to assign the managing of a tournament to an assistant without giving the assistant the personnel to assist with the numerous tasks involved in hosting a tournament. The same could be said for other larger activities involved in managing a forensic program such as travel arrangements, who coaches what event, recruiting, etc.

Implementation of specialization of work can result in some initial time spent by the director and assistant discussing not only how work is to be divided, but also which persons are best suited to do particular tasks. In order for specialization of work to work as a concept there must be a proper "fit" between people and tasks. People must be given tasks that they are either well prepared to complete, or tasks that they are willing to learn, and a "nervous system" that is compatible with the particular tasks in question. It is obviously frustrating for an individual to be given a task which they have no idea how to complete or a job for which they are not temperamentally suited. The person who cannot function well in the tournament tabulation room may excel at budget planning and the various aspects of team finances.
The director and assistants must be open with each other in determining the organizational strengths of each individual. All leaders must realize that an individual has both strengths and weaknesses in the organizational environment, and that each person needs a proper "fit" between personality and task. Specialization of work has the effect of increasing ability. If people are motivated to do a certain task (and in most cases they usually are if they avoid frustration and feel they can succeed with the assigned task), the performance of the individual increases:

\[ \text{Performance} = \text{ability} \times \text{motivation} \]

From a productivity point of view the specific benefits of work and specialization are the higher levels of individual performance. One may infer that from a more humanistic point of view, individuals who succeed and perform well are probably more satisfied with their positions and feel a sense of accomplishment with their jobs.

**CONCLUSION**

No matter the size of a forensic program or whether the forensic director is the sole manager or works with an assistant(s), basic principles of management such as unity of command, delegation of authority and responsibility, and specialization of work can assist in the management of a program.

As stated earlier in this article, there may be a tendency on the part of some individuals not to utilize management and organizational communication principles when directing a forensic program because forensics is an extracurricular activity.

Some might argue that such principles turn the forensic program into a "business" and eliminates the learning and social rewards associated with the activity. Organizational principles do not have to be considered mutually exclusive from learning and group satisfaction. Individuals achieve satisfaction from attaining goals, working and socializing with others in an organization, and so one may certainly expect there to be a transfer of this satisfaction to a well managed forensic program.

The program director and assistant can do much to promote team satisfaction by utilizing the elements discussed in this article while also increasing their own job satisfaction and improving their mental health. There is certainly no reason why the director has to serve in the same way as the physician and the assistant as the barber mentioned in this article's introduction. If the director and assistant were to function as physician and barber, they would probably have few patients (students) involved in their program.
NOTES

6 Ibid., p. 98.
7 Ibid.