How has the enlightenment influenced management thought

Business, Management

How has the Enlightenment Influenced management thought? To begin the essay I will briefly talk about what the Enlightenment era was. I will then explain pre- Enlightenment management thought. Subsequently, I will discuss how the Enlightenment transformed management thought and how that has directly affected modern management in today's world referring to readings that have been prescribed In this module. I will then conclude my essay summarizing my main points on how the Enlightenment era influenced management thought.

The Enlightenment was where Individualism and emphasizing reason prospered over radiation. It began in the late 17th century but thrived in the 18th century when people, as the German philosopher Emmanuel Kant described, " daring to know, in having courage to use ones reason rather than rely upon the authority of others. " (Emmanuel Kant, Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment 1784) The purpose of the Enlightenment was to challenge the Ideas and traditions that were rooted Into society by the hierarchy In society.

It led to several reforms within society and structures such as the right to express your opinion without penalties, the right o vote for who governed you, the right to have a fair trial and to have equal opportunity. These values and traits from the Enlightenment can be directly seen in today's management systems and organizations in the Western World'. Within organizations and society the feudal system was the most common structure used to preserve order and maintain control in the centuries previous to the Enlightenment era.

It consisted of a hierarchy at the top, usually a king, followed dukes, knights and landowners and at the bottom was the peasantry class. There was little freedom or independence and as Robert Harrison describes it as " a body of institutions used to create and enforce the ties of dependence. " (Robert Harrison, The Problem of Feudalism: An Historiographer's Essay, 1996) There was a thought that these leaders and the hierarchy of the organizations had powers like no other person or a 'divine' gift from God. Leaders used social ceremonies and processions to Increase social integration and demonstrate their powerfulness and qualities as a leader.

As I researched further, it appeared that the Feudalism era, or pre-enlightenment, was a backwards step in human social progression. As Violation Random described the Ancient Chinese management structures she says, " They tried to build macro-social relations upon micro ones. "(Violation Random, Ancient Chinese Theories of Control 1997) This seemed more logical than those structure the macro-social relations Included " organizations and social strata as defined by the feudal hierarchy while " the micro relations were dyads such as husband-wife and ruler-subject. This eventually caused intellects to question tradition and the system. The fixed rigid classes, stoppingeducationand tying serfs and their families to land had caused a everdepression. The enlightenment didn't Just transform management and organizational structures, It revolutionized society as a whole on the key foundation of having the courage to question tradition and authority. Transformations were seen caused the Renaissance, the Reformation and revolutions worldwide.

Critics will argue that the years associated with enlightenment are far later than when it began and this is something I agree with. The management of employees changed dramatically. New theories and methods were used to gain maximum efficiency from the labor available. This, in Smith's opinion, was the principal source of a country's wealth. He also argued that the carrot should be used rather than the stick that had been used in previous centuries. Well paid workers would work " more active, diligent, and expeditious. (Koenig, Philip C. And Waters, Robert C. (2002) 'Adam Smith on Management', Business & Society Review) During the industrialization workers moved from farms to factories and more people were being educated, as predicted by Smith this led to frustration among workers as they were more educated yet repeating the name tedious tasks in the factory. The emergence of 'Tailoring' and the scientific method was as of a direct result of conflict between labor and capital.

As Frederick Taylor describes it, it is methods to increase the efficiency of the labor and its' productivity by addressing issues such as waste, inefficient workers and irrational management practices. Management was now thought of as ascience, Taylor emphasized the importance of a good relationship between employees and employers. He also stressed the importance of aligning the Job with the person in order to get a first-class' worker. Wren, Daniel A. (2011) 'The Centennial of Frederick W.

Tailor's the Principles of Scientific Management: A Retrospective Commentary') Managers were to act rationally and with this the workers can understand changes and what benefits it incurred according to Taylor. His

thoughts and methods expanded and were used internationally as he was hailed as the management 'guru. ' To conclude the impact of the Enlightenment era can be seen in today's world with a bigstresson employee-employer relations which have a direct effect on the efficiency of the labor resources.