

Taylorism



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Managed Culture the New Taylorism Is managed (engineered culture) the new Taylorism? How so (or not)? Can managed culture ever fully replace bureaucratic forms of control? Why (or why not)? Today is the age of managed (engineered) culture where systems and processes in organizations all follow systematic procedures; however, these systems are subject to change with to respond to the changing dynamics of the environment that the organization operates in. systems apply to how things are done and in what environment, but this does not imply that delegation and empowerment free employees of all systems, there is in fact very much engineering done in the organizational culture which defines the company's values. The concept of scientific management, where every activity is controlled by the managers in a way that it all follows a certain system was first introduced by Frederick Taylor, followed by the system of bureaucracy which still exists and followed by government organizations. The question is can the new engineered culture which is an evolution of Taylor's theory fully replace bureaucracy? To answer this question, it is essential to first understand the concept of scientific management and how it is reflected in the organizational culture being followed today. Frederick Taylor was the father of scientific management. The ideas were instrumental in redefining the roles of workers and management, and leading to huge increases in production efficiency. Frederick Taylor developed the theory of Scientific Management in Midvale Steel Company in Pennsylvania. It is important to understand what Taylor saw at Midvale that aroused his determination to improve efficiency in the plant. At the time, there were no clear concepts of worker and management responsibilities. Virtually no effective work standards existed. Workers purposely worked at a slow pace. Management

decisions were of the " seat-of-the-pants" nature, based on hunch and intuition. Workers were placed on jobs with little or no concern for matching their abilities and aptitudes with the tasks they were required to do. Most important, management and workers considered themselves to be in continual conflict. Rather than cooperating to their mutual benefit, they perceived their relationship as a zero-sum game - any gain by one would be at the expense of another. Taylor sought to create a mental revolution among the workers and management by defining clear guidelines for improving production efficiency. Taylor defined four principles of management: (1) Develop a science for each element of an individual work, which replaces the old rule-of-thumb method; (2) Scientifically select and then train, teach and develop the worker; (3) Heartily cooperate with the workers so as to ensure that all work is done in accordance with the principles of the science that has been developed; (4) Divide work and responsibility almost equally between management and workers. Using scientific management techniques, Taylor was able to define the one best way for doing each job. Taylor could then, after selecting the right people for the job, train them to do it precisely in this one best way. To motivate workers, Taylor favored incentive wage plans. Overall, Taylor achieved consistent improvements in productivity in the range of managers to plan and control and that of workers to perform as they were instructed. Based on the concept and formulation of the scientific management theory, Taylor's scientific management had three main contributions that basically shaped up the modern business: systematic work, compensation, and personnel selection and training. Taylor brought 'organization' to organizations, whereby each defines its own standard system of operations. The assembly

line efficiency is highly based on the notion of systems brought by Taylor, which is still a valuable tool used in many manufacturing companies all around the world. Due to this systemic approach companies were able to shape each job title differently with different duties and schedules and reduced time delays in workers lagging behind schedules. Without a proper standard system, let it be for production operations, human resource management, financial operations, and so on, not only current activities can be organized but forecasting future performance also becomes difficult. Taylor induced the idea of motivating the workers to work more for more pay which worked out tremendously both for the workers and the management. The time has changed and so have the needs surely, but the notion remains the same that the workers have to have motivation to work more, thus, having strong implications in the modern business scenarios as well. " Right people at the right place," is a common practice of today and will always be as duties and tasks can only be fulfilled by those who know how to do them. Taylor gave way for the notion of recruitment and selection, without which companies today can head straight for doom, as people make the business not numbers alone. Taylor's organization of companies through giving each person a job title, the concept of Bureaucracy emerged which defined hierarchical levels by Max Weber. According to them, clear cut defined lines of authorities and responsibilities should be managed according to job titles where every person did his or her job. Bureaucracy received much praise and effective implementation in various organizations. Today, it is common in government organizations. But this system faces the drawback of 'red tape' where a person gets stuck between hierarchical structures, which lack coordination and matrix work nature. This system leaves little room for team

based work and the introduction of self-managing teams which is a call for modern organizations. Other than government organizations, pure bureaucratic organizational system is hardly found, so one can say that the new 'taylorism' whereby engineered culture is embedded in the organizations, has replaced the bureaucratic system.