

Review of the history of management



The history of management is a long-standing one, with human life comes the need to manage and control. Looking back through time, one can easily see from where the idea of management developed, grew, and turned into what people know as the modern form of management. In current time, managers are often thought of as sitting in a cushy office wearing a suit and tie, but little do most know that today's managers have stemmed from ancient Egypt, China, and even back to the paleolithic times. Management has existed for as long as humanity and it will most likely only continue to further evolve, grow with the time, and fit into more modern aspects of managing.

The origins of management are quite a long historical timeline. The earliest recorded occurrence of information related to management dates to the world's first civilization, Sumer. Sumer was a thriving civilization that created a fascinating economy as well as currency, which was used to exchange for goods. Unlike the Lydian's metal coins, Sumer had coins made from clay. It's no secret that Sumerians are often credited with the invention that developed into writing as we know it today. Writing and being able to keep record of things led to more efficient and accurate management of ancient Sumer's businesses. As for after the Sumerians, the Egyptians were also some of the earliest managers. Building the pyramids took work, work that for it to be done correctly, had to be managed. Ancient Egyptians were quite intelligent, they realized the need for things like organizing and controlling, which they did well. The pyramids remain one of the wonders of the world and we have early management to thank for it. Modern day management

may seem quite different from ancient management, but really if its boiled down, a lot of the tasks are the same.

Scientific management is an important piece of management, it focuses on efficiency and how best to complete a task or job. The father of scientific management is known as Frederick W. Taylor, who in his book *Principles of Scientific Management* quotes “ In the past the man has been first; in the future the system must be first” (Taylor 2). In a nutshell, scientific management puts an emphasis on testing, studying, and finding the most efficient way to do tasks. In a larger scale, scientific management helped to forefront a lot of standards that modern managers still use to this day. Scientific management has four principles which include developing a science for each element of someone’s work, scientifically select, train, and instruct the worker, cooperate with the workers to ensure work being done is in-line with the principles, and managers taking over the work which they are best fitted for. Despite Taylor being a relatively controversial figure among a few academics who thought his ideas had negative impacts on employees, his ideas have remained ingrained in modern day management.

The second and third main ideas of management are that of bureaucracy and administrative management. Max Weber thought that bureaucracy was the most efficient way to manage. According to Keith Rollag of Babson College “ One of Weber’s most serious concerns was how society would maintain control over expanding state bureaucracies. He felt the most serious problem was not inefficiency or mismanagement but the increased power of public officials” (Rollag). People may think the idea of bureaucracy is difficult to understand, but truly the concept is quite simple. The definition

of bureaucracy is a simple one, it is a system built for controlling. As for Weber's idea of bureaucracy, it contains characteristics including qualification-based hiring, merit-based promotion, chain of command, impartial application of rules and procedures, recorded writing, and managers separate from owners (Williams 31). Bureaucracy, as defined by Max Weber, is "the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge". The method of bureaucracy is impartial to favoritism and seeks to balance out the equality between employees. It is rational rather than emotional and has proven to be very effective by focusing on knowledge. The ideas of bureaucratic and administrative management are still being used today, especially the chain of command which is seen in most modern business practices. Administrative management follows the ideas of Henri Fayol, who developed 14 principles of management that include, but are not limited to, discipline, unity of command, subordination of interests, individual interests to general interests, order, equity, and esprit de corps. One may argue that most of Fayol's work still exists in management today and they would be correct. A lot of managers follow these principles without even realizing they're following his ideas.

Human relations management is another important management aspect, it focuses on the people rather than efficiency or knowledge. It is just as important, managing the needs of clients and employees is a difficult task that managers are constantly faced with. With human relations management comes the discussion of Mary Parker Follett, a social worker who studied political science, and her ideas of constructive conflict and coordination. Follett's ideas were largely ignored, maybe because she was a woman in a

male-dominated time period. But there is no arguing that modern management techniques can be traced directly back to her work. She did not believe domination (one party wins, but the other must lose) and compromise (where both sides work to find a solution) were the correct nor best ways to deal with conflict, Follett believed in something called integrative conflict resolution, which seeks to have both parties communicate their preferences and then discuss together how to find a solution that works for everyone involved. Even in casual conversation and ignoring the managerial aspect, this is a very productive strategy for managing conflict, even in today's time of political outrage. Another aspect of human relations management is the Hawthorne Effect, which is still commonly spoken about to this day. It has been oversimplified in the past, but it is just not as black and white as one might think. To understand the Hawthorne Effect, one must also understand the social units that come with it. The Hawthorne Studies paved the way for managers to better understand their employees and therefore, foster a more positive work environment as well as improve performance.

As for the more technical side of management, there are four that are quite important: operations, information, systems, and contingency management. In simple terms, operations management is the management of daily production of goods and services. In a more specific description, operations management uses quantitative along with mathematical approaches to increase things such as productivity and quality. It is a necessary part of management, if one does not manage inventory (a large part of operations management), they are more likely to fail. Some of the more widely used

tools and methods for operations management include quality control, forecasting techniques, capacity planning, productivity management and improvement, linear programming, scheduling systems, inventory systems, work measurement techniques, project management, and cost-benefit analysis (Williams 38-39). This method is effective, necessary, and the methods used in operations management work to foster more effective workspaces. Information management on the other hand is exactly how it sounds, managing information. Before Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press, written information was often difficult to come by. The 21st century has come a long way in sharing and managing information, especially with the rise of the digital age. The need for information is huge. If one does not have vital information, how are they going to proceed? Information was extremely delayed in the past, an example of this is news of Joan of Arc's death took over 540 days to reach where it needed to go. Imagine if they had modern technology. In modern times, information travels much quicker. Systems management manages exactly what one would think, systems. There are a few different types of systems including subsystems, closed systems, and open systems. As for what exactly a system is, it is a set of related elements that operate and behave as a whole. Managing systems is necessary to the survival of the system and with systems comes synergy. Synergy occurs when more than one subsystem work together more efficiently than they would be working separately. Systems management forces managers to be aware of things they otherwise might not realize. Lastly, contingency management is the opposite of all of the previously mentioned approaches. It discusses that there are no management theories and believes the most effective way to manage

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depends on specific circumstances and what managers are handling at the time. No single management approach is going to cover everything at once, managers must be fluid and think on their feet to decide which management approach will suit them at any given time. The contingency approach believes that management is actually much more difficult than it seems and it is correct. Often, it is wrongly assumed that a company can be managed by one technique and never change, which is simply incorrect. It is necessary to evolve, change, and grow.

To conclude, management has many theories, approaches, and methods that have developed over the long history that it has. For new managers, looking towards those of the past and learning from their ideas and mistakes is necessary. To grow, one must learn from those before them. Management has existed for as long as humanity and it will most likely only continue to further evolve, grow with the time, and fit into more modern aspects of managing.

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