

Henri fayol vs. henry mintzberg

People



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Henri Fayol vs. Henry Mintzberg. Functions vs. roles Henri Fayol and Henry Mintzberg are “two sides of the one coin”. Each man has his own opinion on what the manager does. Fayol has his “five functions” and Mintzberg has his “roles of management”. In this essay I will discuss both men’s opinions and try to come to a conclusion on which I think is better. Henri Fayol, a French management theorist and managing director of a French mining company, came up with the five functions of management.

These functions serve the purpose of predicting the future of the environment and planning a relevant business strategy, developing a social and technical structure to the organisation, managing the activities of the staff, integrating plans and activities across the organisation and ensuring conformity with the plan via authority and feedback mechanisms to correct inappropriate activity. Planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling. These five functions have been around since Fayol came up with them back in 1916 and have dominated management vocabulary since then.

These functions would seem to cover all the criteria needed for a manager to do his job but Henry Mintzberg has a different opinion. Henry Mintzberg is an internationally renowned academic and author on business and management with over 140 articles and thirteen books written. He came up with the roles of management, which he believes cover most of the things a manager will encounter in their job. These roles are split into 3 interpersonal roles, 3 informational roles and 4 decision making roles.

The 3 interpersonal roles are; the figurehead which helps reinforce what the company stands for and reinforces the organisational culture, the leader who provide their employees with a sense of mission and the liaison who mixes with others outside the business to represent the needs of their group. The 3 informational roles are; the monitor who collects information form within the group and finds out what is going on in the business, the disseminator who shares the information with others who would not find out the information and the spokesperson who represents the views of the group in the wider environment.

The 4 decision making roles are; the entrepreneur who make decisions to improve the contribution of their subordinates to the performance of the business, the disturbance handler who deals with any problems that might occur within the group, the resource allocator who allocates resources throughout their subordinates and the negotiator who negotiates to secure contracts, budgets etc. Henry Mintzberg believes that the five functions of management do not really tell us much about what a manager actually does but at best paint a vague picture of what objectives managers have when they work.

He has come up with the idea that there are 4 myths relating to the role of the manager which if looked at closely do not support Fayol's functions. The first of these myths is that " a manager is a reflective, systematic planner" when studies show that most managers work at a fast and unrelenting pace, that their activities are often brief and varied and that they dislike reflective activities but are more action orientated. The second of these myths is " the effective manager has no regular duties to perform".

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Evidence shows that managers do in fact perform a number of regular duties like rituals and ceremonies as well as negotiations and processing information with links between the organisation and its environments. The third myth is “ The senior manager needs aggregated information, which a formal management information system provides”. The fact in this case is that managers prefer to get their information through telephone calls or meetings. The fourth and final myth is “ Management is, or at least is quickly becoming a science and a profession”.

The fact behind this myth is that the manager programs to schedule time, process information, make decisions and so stay in their own head and deal with things in their own way. The first of the four myths is probably the one that conflicts most with Fayol’s functions and shows that although there is some degree to a manager’s job, they prefer to work fast and would rather take action to try and resolve a problem rather than waste time thinking on different ways to overcome it.

In my opinion, I would be more inclined to agree with Mintzberg and his roles of management over Fayol’s functions. This is because the roles of management have a lot more scope and would allow a manager more ways to deal with a wider variety of situations. They also cover the roles that I have seen managers in my working environment undertake such as the Liaison, the Negotiator, the Disturbance handler etc. In conclusion, although the five functions are a good way to look at the role of a manager I think that Mintzberg, having done all the studies on managers and actually seeing what they do in their day to day workings has given him a better idea of what the

job of the manager actually entails. Fayol's views look good when you see and hear them but in reality, is management as straight forward as the five steps that he has set out? I don't think that he has looked at all the areas and all the things that could go wrong in jobs.

In reality, I think Fayol's functions are more like the ways we would like the job of the manager to be whereas Mintzberg's roles have given us the way a managers job actually is and covers most of the things that a manager would encounter in the running of a business. By Alan Young References DR R DONNELLY , " the role of the manager", heriot-watt university. HENRY MINTZBERG, July-august 1975" the manager's job: Folklore and fact" Harvardbusiness review.