

# Social era in retrospect

Business, Management



The Social Person Era in Retrospect It has been suggested that management thought forms a more coherent picture when viewed in its changing environment of economic, social, and political forces. Management is both a process in its environment and a product of its environment. The era of the social person was an age of individual hopes destroyed by the economic misfortune, and of political shifts indicating transformation in traditional relationships. Scientific management was the dominant theme in the 1920s, but sociologists and social psychologists introduced the ideas of behavioralism in management. The scientific management era, served as an intellectual bridge to the emerging approach to management era. The Hawthorne studies brought human relations movement to the forefront and led to the theme of the social person. In the cultural environment, management thought was shaped by stressful times. The Great Depression, which began in 1929, was an economic, social, political, and psychological break point. The United States was changing as the depression brought new interpretations of the role of government in economics and in schemes to establish social bottom against social problems, such as unemployment. No longer would the virtues of self-help, thrift, and hard work have been seen as the keys to success. If you were down, the government helped you up; if you your savings or bank account, the government would reimburse you, and so on through a large number of social measures to take some of the problems out of the life. Further economic growth was retarded by the depression, and the postwar boom created a need for a top-level managerial view point. The protestant ethic and the need for achievement, though they did not disappear, declined in significance as people tried to find their identity

through affiliation and getting along with others. People, not production, were the main concern of the manager. Politically, an increased role for government and the growth, power, and legal protection afforded organized labor introduced a new variables to be considered in managerial decision making. The world of management was much more complex than ever before, with more advanced technology and communications, international markets, a broader-based, better-educated work force, and an increased awareness of the relationship between business and society. It was out of this age of confusion, trauma, and diversity that the modern era in management thought was about to begin.