

Contingency approach to management

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Contingency approach to management is a modern approach that has attempted to integrate findings of other perspectives. Contingency refers to the immediate (contingent or touching) circumstances.

This approach was developed during 1960s and 1970s and based on the idea that it is impossible to select one way of managing all situations, and for this reason managers have to identify the conditions of a task, managerial job and persons as parts of a complete management situation and attempt to integrate them all into a solution which is most appropriate for a specific circumstance.

The main contributors are Fred Fiedler (1967), Jay Lorsch, Paul Lawrence, Joan Woodward, etc (The Contingency Approach to Management, 2006). According to contingency approach, the manager has to try systematically to identify which technique or approach will, in a particular circumstance or context, best contribute to the attainment of the desired goals.

The distinctive feature of this approach is that it seeks to apply to real life situations ideas taken from different schools of management thought. The problem is that there is no a universal approach to management, and for this reason different problems require different approaches. Also, the contingency approach stresses the need for managers to examine the relationship between the internal and external environment of an organization.

“ Contingency analysis indicates, for example, that a set of complex tasks are necessary to bring about significant educational improvements, planners can sequence the tasks in ways that allow managers to focus on less

complex problems before tackling more difficult ones” (Amey, 1986). Organizational requirements, culture and structure are constantly changing and needed continual efforts to maintain effective working relationships.

The contingency approach examines each situation to find out its unique attributes before management makes a decision. This approach can be described as task-oriented, because decisions are made in each individual situation. In spite of evident benefits and advantages, this approach is criticized because most of the decisions are intuitive and lack theoretical foundation (Amey, 1986).

References

Amey, L. R. (1986). *A Conceptual Approach to Management*. Durham, NC: Praeger Publishers.

The Contingency Approach to Management. (2006) Retrieved from <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/management/Comp-De/Contingency-Approach-to-Management.html>