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Management is difficult to define. In fact, there is no universally accepted definition of management. Henry Fayol is among the founders of definition and elements of management. According to Fayol (1949), “to manage is to forecast, to plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate, and to control”. His definition of management actions and roles distinguishes between these five elements.

Forecasting and planning involves examining the future and developing an action plan to deal with the unforeseen. This includes putting strategies in place to direct the future of an organization. To organize entails establishing the structure, both human and resources required to undertake the organizational goals. Conversely, to command deals with ensuring smooth flow of activities among the person within an organization (Fayol, 1949). To this end, commanding as a managerial function concerns with supervision of subordinates and inspiring them to put unified effort in achieving organizational goals. Fayol saw the function of coordinating as harmonizing and unifying all the activities of a firm. Fayol defined control function as ensuring that everything occurs in conformity with expressed command and rules (Fayol, 1949). The control function served as a means of identifying deviations from plans and objective in order to take corrective action. The work of Fayol was not known outside Europe until 1949 when the first translation of his work landed in the United States (Fells, 2000). Needless to mention, Fayol’s work regarding the practice of management has had noble impact on modern management texts.

References:

Fayol, H. (1949). *General and Industrial Management*. London: Pitman.

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