Models of change | free essay | management essays

Models of Change

Throughout the last decade there have been numerous changes and developments in the way we manage work. From the classical era Frederick Winslow Taylor introduced the scientific approach, often criticized for the lack of scientific rigor and one dimensional view of human motivation (Burnes 1989; Kelly, 1982). Rose (1988) argues, that Taylor portrays human beings as ' greedy robots': indifferent to fatigue, boredom, loneliness and pain, and driven solely by monetary incentive. However, Taylor does not ignore the fact that individuals have different abilities. He was quick to point out that not everyone was capable to work in a scientific ' one best way', and that individuals needed to be selected on their ability to work hard and in accordance with instruction (Linstead, Fullop & Lilley, 2009).

It would be wrong to say that Taylorism or scientific management is a thing of the past, these theories are alive today. Giving strength to the French proverb ' The more things change, the more they stay the same', Burkard Sievers (1995) argues that changes in the structure of work, such as Taylorism job specification / simplification, have deskilled many jobs and made work meaningless. He goes on to state, we only need to look at McDonalds, behind the strong family image of the company, both internally and externally and the importance of team membership, is a highly Tayloristic organization which studies have demonstrated depend on a high proportion of expendable part-time and contract labour and a punitive control system.

Taylors view was to achieve the highest productivity you had to follow " one best way" which was subject to rigorous control, however, Elton Mayo's experiences in the Hawthorne Works Experiments disproved those beliefs.

The experimenters at Hawthorne had discovered that teaching employees to become a team rather than inflicting " one best way" also had a strong influence on productivity. Also the employees would have the opportunity to vary their work methods, avoiding boredom. Unlike Taylorism, the employees at Hawthorne had a great deal of freedom in comparison.

These experiments lead us to the humanistic management approach, where changes were being implemented in consideration for the working environment for its employees with the aim to be more productive.

In 1951 saw the introduction of Kurt Lewin's three step model for change. This theory set out to answer the questions " How does successful change happen? (Comparison of Change Theories, 2009)

The key was to see that human change, whether at the individual or group level, was a profound psychological dynamic process that involved painful unlearning without loss of ego identity and difficult relearning as a cognitive attempt to restructure one's thoughts, perceptions, feelings and attitudes. (Change Management, 2009)

Unlike previous theories which looked at how we approach the way we work, Lewin looked at how we implement the changes in how we work, devising the three step approach set out below.

Unfreezing – Changing to overcome the pressures of both individual resistance and group conformity.

Movement – A change process that transforms the organization from the status quo to a desired end state.

Refreezing – Stabilizing a change intervention by balancing driving and restraining forces.

(Robbins, fig 19. 3, 2009)

The introduction of this new way of thinking is regarded to be the corner stone model for understanding organizational change and also the beginning of Organizational Development (Understanding the Three Stages of Change, 2009).

Our existence is defined by the fact that we have to shape our lives to fit reality. In the sense that there are universal constants we have to make the best of, like a finite amount of resources or physical laws. Our final aim is to reach a point where we can shape the organisation to fit our lives. Which begs the question; if we achieve this what will we do then? This is why we have culture. To do something is not an end in itself. We need culture to reflect on how we managed to change something and how it changed us and what we need to change for the future.