

Classical management function flashcard



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“ In everyday language usage, management refers to the people in organizations who manage, and to the activities they perform. ” (Fulop, Frith, Hayward 1992 p. 187) To be more specific, management is the process of organizing work activities with and through people to ensure the activities are completed efficiently and effectively (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg, Coulter 2006, p.

9). Through management, the goals of the organization or business are to be achieved. Henri Fayol, one of the most influential contributors to modern concepts of management, proposed that there are five primary functions for management, which consist of planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling. Nonetheless, the functions of commanding and coordinating have metamorphosed into leading (Crainer 2003). However, some influential management authors believe that the classical management functions need to be update. Williams (2005, p.

7) updated the management functions and came out with four functions: making things happen; meeting the competition; organizing people, projects and process; and leading. To make things happen, it is essential to determine goals, planning ways to attain the goals, gathering and managing needed information to make superior decisions and also controlling performance to enable corrective action to take place if performance worsens. This function actually combined Fayol’s idea of planning and controlling. The thought of determining things to accomplish and developing plans to achieve goals is similar to function of planning suggested by Fayol, which is to define goals, establish strategy and develop plans to implement the strategy in order to reach the goals. Besides, Williams mentioned about

controlling performance and corrective action, which is corresponding to Fayol's classical management functions of controlling.

Controlling, according to Fayol, involves observing organization performance and take action if necessary to ensure that goals are to be achieved.

Nevertheless, the action of gathering and managing needed information to enable good decisions to be made is not stated in classical management functions. Based on the updated functions, organizing people, projects and processes included consideration of people issues and work processes. At the same time, Fayol mentioned organizing, which is the management process of determining best way to arrange organization's resources and activities. They actually have the same meaning where both are about locating organization's resources, which are the employees and also the work processes or activities. The Learning Company, a company that develops and markets games and software, was purchased by toy company Mattel.

It was experiencing loss after three years of the purchase because each department in the company works independently and do not share resources. After organizing the people and resources appropriately, the company gains profit. (Williams 2005, p. 10) In this case, the importance of organizing is clearly shown. The most significant difference between Williams's idea and Fayol's thought is that Williams included meeting competition in the updated functions while Fayol did not mention about competition at all. Managers are required to consider threats from competitors and think of competitive strategy, where the ability to embrace

changes and foster new ideas on product or service is crucial, to meet the competition.

Besides that, the capability to structure the organization in order to adapt to varying customers and competitors is important as well. Another similarity between both functions is leading as both Williams and Fayol included leading in their management functions. For both of them, leading means motivation, inspiration or influence and effective communication. However, Williams think perspiration is an element of leading as well while Fayol stress on ability of dealing with employees' behaviour issues. In my opinion, planning, organizing, leading and controlling enable managers to serve an organization well.

Yet, the updated management functions are more detailed and they are more suitable for the usage of management in today's organizations if compared to the classical management functions. They actually covered most of Fayol's idea and added new element that is essential for today's management as globalizations take place. For instance, in order to establish and implement strategy to achieve an organization's goals, good and appropriate decision is the key issue. In this case, assembling and handling information needed to make decisions is definitely important. The classical management functions do not include this step while the updated functions added this under the function of making things happen. Other than that, meeting the competition is another function which I think is important.

This is because, in this new era of globalization and modernization, it is important for an organization to remain competitive in order to be successful

in today's ever-changing marketplace. In another words, the ability to adapt to quick changes and being innovative is essential. The reason for me to say so is because, the increasingly international competition due to free trade agreement impacted the market by topple the barriers to entry for most industries. Organizations are now exposed to more competition.

Therefore, in order to remain as the market leader, an organization needs to practice the updated management functions which consist of meeting the competition. For example, in 2006, readers of The Wall Street Journal Asia rated Maxis as Malaysia's most admired company. Still, Maxis is now facing competition from another company that offers similar services, which is Digi. In order to retain as the market leader, Maxis has to meet the competition.

In spite of this, as shown in Management in Malaysia (2001), the management functions written are derived from Fayol's classical management functions as well. The new management functions comprise planning and decision making, organizing, staffing, leading and communicating, and controlling. Both idea of planning are similar. However, planning in Management in Malaysia (2001) included identifying alternatives, compare and contrast where decision making is to take place. Fayol did not clearly mention about decision making while as written in Management in Malaysia (2001), decision making is one important function that a manager performs.

On the other hand, Fayol combined organizing and staffing under the second function, which is organizing, whereas according to Management in Malaysia (2001), organizing is only concerned about the allocation of resources,

excluding the employees, to reach the organization's goals. The management of the people in an organization is separated and converted into the function of staffing independently. Staffing considered the shared responsibilities of managers in managing the employees. Thus, staffing is intimately aligned to organizing.

In addition, the Management in Malaysia (2001) explained more specifically on communicating compared to Fayol. This shows that they think communicating is as important as leading. Leading is only about directing and motivating the employees while communicating embraced communicating effectively through verbal and non-verbal communication. I personally think that the management functions suggested by Management in Malaysia (2001) are obviously formed to adapt to the rapid changes in today's marketplace.

The functions of management need to be modified as organizations experienced changes to arrive to today's increasingly global marketplace. This is clearly shown when decision making is stressed on. Decision making is also encouraged for lower levels of an organization mainly because there are problems encounter at each level of management and there are plenty of solutions for each problem. As a result, decision making played significant role in the management of organizations. Besides, employees are the most important assets for an organization.

In consequence, appropriate human resource planning, selection, induction, evaluation, incentive and skill development are vital. This is why staffing is treated as the function of management apart from organizing. In Fayol's

classical management functions, communication is included in leading where it is not discussed in particular. However, in order to achieve goals, effectual communication within the organization is obligatory.

Managers should be able to express themselves clearly and logically while employees should be able to report precisely. Furthermore, filtration of information when messages are sent from one to another is strictly prohibited. Hence, good communication skill is necessary to avoid conflicts. In conclusion, Fayol's classical management functions are the foundation of management. The functions have been modified and updated to make them more applicable in today's organizations.

Making things happen, decision making, meeting competition, organizing, staffing, leading and communicating are all the management functions that are necessary for an organization to be successful in terms of achieving goals and being the market leaders. (1349 words) Reference List Crainer, S 2003, ' One hundred years of management', Business Strategy Review, vol. 14, no. 2, pp.

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Robbins, S, Bergman, R, Stagg, I & Coulter, M 2006, Management, 4th edn, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW. Williams, C 2005, Management, 3rd edn, Thomson South-Western, USA.