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Edited by Malcolm Warner

The IEBM Handbook of Management Thinking

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Malcolm Warner**



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Figure 1: Deep Learning Cycle; Figure 2: Organizational architecture
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Introduction

This volume brings together the major contributions to management thinking in the twentieth century with some of the earlier ones that fed into this mainstream. Together, they represent a body of both theory and practice that has influentially shaped modern business and management. The collection expands upon an initial foundation, namely the *International Encyclopedia of Business and Management* (1996) which attempted to create a worldwide reference work in its field both in terms of subjects and authorships. Published in six volumes (and followed by concise and pocket editions) the IEBM attempted to create a benchmark for not only topic and country entries but also biographical ones, and covered the following subject areas:

- Accounting and finance
- Business economics
- Comparative management
- Industrial relations/HRM
- International business
- Manufacturing management/operations
- Marketing
- OR and Systems/MIS
- Organization behaviour
- Strategy

Defining management

Asking the key question ‘what is management?’ is a legitimate concern at this point. We need to not only look at its essence but also its scope. Whether it is a cohesive field of study, what are its constituent parts and where its boundaries lie are also important queries. There are no easy answers. If we have learnt anything in recent times, it is that there is ‘no one way’. Once upon a time, there was something called ‘scientific management’. Writers like Taylor thought that they could concoct a ‘science’ of management; others like Fayol

and Barnard evoked ‘principles’ of management and so on. The audience for such notions arose for a sound set of reasons: the need for managers to ‘make sense’ of what they were doing and the environment in which it was taking place. If they could do so, they could have a better chance of shaping and controlling the process.

Putting it simply, management is what managers are seen to do. So, observation was prior to theorizing. Practice invoked theory; theory in turn illuminated practice. As a consequence, there are many management thinkers who were mainly or at some point in their lives practitioners, like Taylor, the Gilbreths, Bedaux or Fayol, but also wrote extensively, at least in the pre-1945 period. After this date, academics and especially business school academics begin to predominate, but not exclusively. Some of those we have included from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been industrialists like Bata, Ford, Ibuka, Sloan, Tata and so on, who have not only created their own ways of running companies whether in North America or elsewhere, but have also written about this in more or less schematic ways.

We have tried here to present management thinking as a cumulative set of both theories and practice, accumulating over time, and built up by key, individual thinkers on the subject. The presentation is thus biographical. Many of these individuals, singly or with colleagues, ‘stand on the shoulders of giants’, that is to say they have amplified the work of their precursors, some directly and others indirectly. In some cases, a specific contribution is almost unthinkable without the work of earlier ones. The work of the so-called ‘management gurus’ represents a social process by which management ideas are invented and often but not always applied by the originators. Whilst not all would endorse the ‘guru’ concept, it has some use in explaining how management ideas occur and spread. There

was also an interaction between the individuals and the environments they find themselves in. Many were creatures of their times: others *made* history.

How such theories emerge as critical depends on how far they legitimize what managers think is 'managerially correct' and will fit their needs. New ideas must supercede what has gone before and replace the existing conventional wisdom. Managers of course seek a 'holy grail', normally to produce an end to the 'us' and 'them' divide in business, many of the supposed 'solutions' aiming to create industrial harmony. But as no one theory can solve all problems, the search is always on for the next path to salvation.

As Huczynski (1997: 234) points out:

From the turn of the century onwards management gurus have played a central role in the manufacture, transmission and application of management knowledge. To explain their influence, one has to understand both the nature of managerial work and the needs it creates among occupants of managerial positions. Those ideas which meet their needs are likely to be the most popular. Moreover, the nature of management itself also predisposes the profession to look to management gurus for guidance since, at one and the same time, these gurus develop, represent and also act as conduits for the application of their ideas into organizations.

Whether or not one accepts the so-called 'guru concept', there are clearly bodies of knowledge in the management field and many of these are distinctive. Huczynski (1997: 234) cites six of these:

- bureaucratic (Max Weber)
- scientific management (Frederick Taylor)
- classical management (Henri Fayol)
- human relations (Elton Mayo)
- neo-human relations (Douglas McGregor)
- guru theory (Tom Peters/Rosabeth Moss Kanter)

Popularity creates reputations; success breeds success in the field. The resultant

synthesis is essentially a pragmatic one: their contribution rests on acquired reputations in either the primary domain of management or in those directly influencing it. How broadly management is defined is moot however; some see it as more widely defined than others. We take here a rather 'catholic' view of what it encompasses. This step may explain the rather diverse set of contributions we have included. We have for instance gone beyond the usual list of 'writers on organization' (see Pugh, Hickson and Hinings 1964 and subsequent editions). Our roster is much longer; we have cast our net much more widely but we have kept in mind that their writings have to be theoretical, at least in the sense that they are trying to derive generalizations applicable to a wide spectrum of managerial and organizational contexts, whether they were theorists, researchers or practitioners: 'theory and practice are inseparable' (1964: 8).

Establishing boundaries

Such thinking thus extends beyond the borders of management as more narrowly defined. We have of course included the 'classics' in the field, such as Taylor, Fayol, Barnard and so on. The reasons for including such thinkers is self-evident. Many of these are normally categorized as key 'management theorists' and we would not dispute their place.

Indeed, Huczynski (1997: 234) is right to emphasize that management ideas are associated with individuals or groups of individuals; further, that such names become identified with the concept. Taylor, for example, *was* 'scientific management'.

At any one point in time, one school of thought may rule the roost. Some speak of 'paradigms' (Kuhn 1970); others use the lesser term of 'metaphor' (Morgan 1997). The latter believes that 'all theories of management are based on explicit images or metaphors that lead us to see, understand, and manage organizations in distinctive yet partial ways' (1997: 4). If weaker, ideas may exist at the margins. Factions may form and vie to predominate.

Normally, the list of such management writers extends from the end of the nineteenth century up to the present day. Yet economic activity goes back much further than that and such activity was 'managed' for a very long time (see Warner 1984; Warner and Witzel 1997). There were early transnational banks like the Medicis or trading corporations like the East India Company. What they actually did was not however conceptualized as such in modern terms. There existed in effect *management before 'management' as a subject*. But there were no well-known 'names' or 'gurus' in management at that stage.

The term 'management' as we know it in the English language dates from Shakespeare's days. The term has Latin, Italian and French roots. It comes from the Latin 'manus' meaning 'hand' but also 'power' or 'jurisdiction'. The Italian term 'maneggiare' appeared in the late Middle Ages in connection with property management and business; the French 'manègerie' also came into use. The English word 'manage' first appeared in 1561, 'manager' in 1588, and 'management' in 1589, relating mostly to land usage. According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1993: 1197) it was first used in its modern context in 1670. It meant to 'handle' business affairs, as opposed to its earlier meaning of 'handling' a sword or a horse.

However, what we call 'modern management' is essentially a twentieth century phenomenon. 'Management studies' is even more novel as a subject but this depends on national definitions of the subject and what is included. The US developed 'business administration' as a university-level subject in the late nineteenth century but the Germans had taught 'business economics' overlapping with this curriculum not long after and the Japanese almost in parallel had initiated high-level 'commerce' courses (see Locke 1996). What in fact is seen as 'management' may vary cross-culturally and may be wider or narrower, depending on the academic, professional or country context. In many US business schools, for example, there is a concentration on 'hard' quantitative subjects; in others, 'soft' qualitative ones may prevail. Even

MBA courses may have different emphases and in some countries they may not exist at all. Aspirant managers in these countries like Germany or Japan study engineering or technical subjects, often in a business and industrial context.

Criteria for inclusion

What then were the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of key figures in management thinking? Inevitably, many of the examples included are Anglo-American by origin; none the less, we have attempted to avoid the ethnocentric. However, it must be recognized that the majority of 'guru' figures were North American and most of these were actually born in the US. For example, Taylor, Barnard, Sloan, Follett and many others were native-born Americans. Most had conventional middle-class backgrounds and were university educated. Hardly any of them had gone to the newly emerging US business schools, like Wharton, Harvard and the like.

Although a few emigrated from Western or Eastern Europe in their earlier years, it is surprising that these were rather few in number. Some management thinkers who are in this category are Argyris, Drucker, Fiedler and Lewin. They also were university educated but not in business-related subjects. Some were social scientists proper.

British management writers (see Child 1969) are thinner on the ground vis a vis their North American counterparts. Some like Urwick, Vickers and so on achieved great success and high status as practitioners; later academic teacher figures like Burns, Pugh and the Aston Group as well as Woodward made their marks. More popular writers like Parkinson gained a wider readership. In economics, British contributions in both micro and macro domains were prominent, such as Marshall and Coase vis a vis the theory of the firm and many others in the macro environment of business activity. Boulding, who also contributed to systems thinking, was British born. Schumacher was born in Germany but made his name when living in Britain.

Continental Europeans are most prominently represented by Bedaux, Crozier, Fayol, Limpberg, Michels, Schmalenbach and Weber. Several, like Fayol or Weber, did not become widely known until after World War II when they acquired more widely diffused translations. Pacioli, who is credited with 'inventing' double-entry accounting in Renaissance Florence, was a recognized figure from way back, however.

Although many of the entries admittedly focus on British or North American thinkers, as they rightly deserve, enough have their roots elsewhere across the world, especially in Asia. We have for example included several Japanese contributions to management thinking, some of these never previously covered in such compilations, such as Ishikawa, Ohno, Morita and Ueno. Additionally, a number of women writers on management have been included, such as L. Gilbreth, Follett, Kanter and Woodward.

Management over time

The contributions to management thinking may be analyzed both across time as well as space (i.e. their country of origin or activity). They have both a historical dimension as well as a geographical one and within each set of parameters they can also be assessed by discipline and theme. The time line shown in Figure 1 seeks to show the development of management ideas over time. It is, however, extremely difficult to pinpoint exactly when someone made his or her contribution to this development. Some key figures from the last century are still influential today. Some people made their impact at an early age while their contemporaries may have spent a lifetime building on and developing their approaches. We have, therefore grouped our 'management thinkers' together roughly by date of birth.

Most of the contributions are 'modern' as opposed to 'post-modern' but it is difficult to draw the line. We have deliberately chosen 'established' thinkers as they had already made their impact. Indeed, most of these figures are

recognized *post hoc*. At the time, they were mostly unknown to the academic world, let alone to practising managers.

Many, however, deal with 'post-modern' phenomena involving new technology as well as globalization and their consequent employment, managerial, organizational, marketing and associated consequences. Writers like Handy, Womack and Jones, McLuhan, Morgan, Ohmae, Nonaka and Toffler have been included here.

Management by disciplines

Disciplinary bases have also played a role in the way we think about management. They may also be clustered according to discipline or subject, although some may be classified as interdisciplinary.

Accounting and finance

Perhaps the earliest contribution to management thinking we have included is that of Pacioli, who lived in Renaissance Florence, although accounting was found in ancient Babylon and biblical times (Wyatt 1997). In the twentieth century, more complex methods were needed. In the US and Germany, for example, accounting developed as a university subject, distinct but related to economics. Some recent contributions include Benson, Limpberg, Paton and Schmalenbach, for instance. Hopwood's work on behavioural accounting has also been added.

Business economics

Business economics is concerned with firms, markets and industries but in the field, economists are commonly involved with 'descriptions and forecasts of behaviour in a macro-economic environment' (Kay 1997: 44). An early influence on how we think about such links was Adam Smith in the eighteenth century. Many economists subsequently added to our understanding of business but were not necessarily 'management thinkers' per se. Some added greatly to our knowledge of the business environment and are therefore included. While we have noted most of the