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Out with the old, in with the new? Training for new management issues in the year 2000

Burke, ME

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Abstract

The management profession is subject to change, evolution and development. Old techniques and practices are continuously being replaced with new ideas and tomorrow's manager needs to be aware of these changes in order to be effective.

Management is a true 'core discipline' subject in Library and Information Studies, (LIS) and is thus an integral part of the training at all levels. However, there is now an established move away from 'hard' management issues towards 'softer' management issues such as empowerment, creativity, and innovation.

These new trends may be vital to the managers of the future, yet how far can the 'core' elements of traditional management teaching be removed, without resulting in a loss of important foundation knowledge and thus perhaps creating an unbalanced weighting towards the newer topics. - Many classic management theories were originally created during post war years - this paper will provide the opportunity to discuss whether they still have relevance for students who will become key managers in the year 2000 and beyond.

Introduction: The Management Subject

The initial management training of LIS undergraduates is a vital component in the students potential management career. Many new areas have emerged in the last ten years, which are moving management away from a concentration on authority and leadership towards softer issues such as creativity and empowerment. Most of these new developments are based on key concepts such as flexibility, freedom and openness ie. the flexibility of the manager, the freedom of the individual, and the creation of organisations which are generally open to new ideas. It thus follows that as management has changed and developed the teaching must develop to reflect these changes. The question which this paper attempts to answer is "What should our syllabus of management teaching be for the undergraduate who is likely to be a middle to senior manager by the year 2000?" This question is approached in two ways. First, in order to compare 'new and old' a brief examination is undertaken of the older established theories of management and the relatively recent 'newer' ideas. Secondly a suggested management syllabus which combines the 'old and the new' is outlined, based on the new undergraduate course at the Department of Library and Information Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University

The Problem: Established Theories v. New Ideas

The 'Established theories' can be defined by briefly examining some of the original schools of thought and approximate dates in which they were conceived :-

1) Scientific and Classical Management

1856 -1915 Frederick W. Taylor

Taylor proposed the first principles of scientific management i.e The fact that good management was about increasing the productivity of the company and that of the individual worker

1860's - mid 1920's The Gilbreths (Lillian and Frank)

This husband and wife team developed motion study as a way of analysing work operations. They recognised that workforce output was dependent upon other factors as well as level of pay.

1841-1925 Henri Fayol

Fayol identified the five elements of management - Planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling. In this way he produced one of the first set of guide-lines for managing complex organisations.

2) Behavioural Theory

1868-1933 Mary Parker Follett

Follett first proposed theories on the understanding of social grouping in relation to work place situations.

1880-1949 Elton Mayo

Mayo was famous for the Hawthorne experiments which resulted in the conclusion that special attention frequently causes people to exert their efforts.

3) Systems theory

Developed during the 1950's and 60's systems theory is based on the idea that all parts of the organisation are interrelated. If one part is changed or remodelled in some way then this will affect another part of the organisation.. System theory stresses the importance of looking at the overall significance of decisions on the whole organisation.

The above ideas combined to form a variety of schools of thought such as scientific and behavioural theories of management. Other theories included the systems approach and the contingency approach i.e. that the solution depends on the type of problem and may be dealt with in a variety of different ways. However the workplace today is very different from the mid 1850 and 1940's when many of these theories were created. The question is, do they still have an important role to play in the LIS management syllabus, or should the syllabus deal only with the newer modernistic approaches and issues. What, then, are these new issues? No doubt there are many, but listed below are some of the themes which seem to compose the main elements of modern management thinking.

Most of these ideas seem to have become popular in the late 1980's and 1990's.

As it is more difficult to associate these ideas to specific authors, these theories are listed under the appropriate heading.

1) Empowerment

Empowerment can be defined as giving 'power' to others. Empowerment has been said to be a method which seeks to remove all the unnecessary rules, procedures and bureaucracy which stands between the organisation and its goals.' Mitchell Stuart 1 put forward the notion of several 'E's of empowerment' i.e. in order for organisation members to be empowered there must be

Education, (Of employees)

Elimination, (Of doubt)

Expression, (Of worries and fears)

Enthusiasm, (For a new style)

Equipment, (Resources, funding)
Evaluation (Feedback)

provided within the organisation.

Other writers have put forward the ideas that all empowering starts with a visioning process ie. a vision of how the organisation should be, what the organisation would look like in an ideal world, concerning climate, culture, and resources. This vision is then communicated to all organisation members. If successful, this communication process then allows the members to become inspired, and thus empowered by the shared vision.

2) Innovation

Innovation is the encouragement of new ideas and new ways of seeing things. It can refer in particular to the encouragement of innovation and innovative practices in organisations. However, in order to become an innovative organisation other issues such as the organizational climate, the structures and techniques necessary to foster innovation, and the strategies for dealing with change must all be considered and given careful attention.

3) Creativity

Creativity and creative management concepts involve allowing people to be creative in their work, to break rules, to try new ideas, to encourage the creativity of all members of the organisation. There are many models of creativity - one simple but effective model is that of the four P's which allows creativity to be examined from four different angles ie person, process, place, and product:-

person	-	(The potential for creativity in all individuals)	
process	-	(All management functions and processes are open to	new and different creative
strategies)			
place	-	(The climate and culture of the organisation, the	location of the
organisation, the type of building)			
product	-	(The creative end product or service)	

4) Flexibility

In many ways flexibility is the key to all of the new concepts and ideas. None of the new ideas would work effectively work without flexibility on the part of the manager.

Many of these concepts call for freedom and new ways of thinking, rather than the old leadership and authority models of past era's.

5) Kaleidoscopic thinking

This is a strategy which can be used to assist with new and different ways of thinking.

"A kaleidoscope is a device for seeing patterns. It takes a set of fragments and forms them into a pattern. But when the kaleidoscope is twisted shaken or approached from a new angle, the exact same fragments form an entirely new angle" 2

The metaphor of a kaleidoscope is useful in that by twisting and turning the same pieces of a problem, the same situation is seen but from many different angles, thus allowing different solutions to be created.

6) Teleworking

The effects of technology on the working environment is changing the whole face of the workplace. The increased speed of communications due to the increasing use of electronic mail, the fax and the internet are making the place of work much more mobile than ever before. This in itself has implications for the managers of the future and for managing employees as if they were volunteers.

This school of thought has arisen as people increasingly work from home or from different locations rather than the organisation itself. The emphasis is therefore on the different ways of communicating. There is a need to move away from hierarchy and authority towards recognition of the fact that people may enjoy their job and become motivated if

they were treated as volunteers, rather than as employees.

7) Continuous change management.

Recent writers have said that change is now a continuous process. It is no longer something that happens every now and again but something which all managers must live with on a day to day basis. The management of change is no longer a subject which should be studied as a separate entity, but change is now so all pervading that there is reason for it to be linked to all parts of the management curriculum.

Many of these ideas emphasise a move away from the manager's authority towards the individual's authority and power. However it should be noted that most of these ideas will only work in climate which is conducive to such ideas. Studies³ have shown that there is a need to create a climate where there are feelings of trust and freedom- a culture where new ideas are encouraged and supported.

A Solution

At the Department of Library and Information Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University, a complete review was undertaken of the undergraduate course. This review presented the ideal opportunity to consider and reflect on the courses. The following is an account based on the management syllabus of the new BA(Hons)/BSc(Hons) Information and Library Management.

Year One

The Management Context Self Management

The first year is the ground work and lays the foundation for future years. The Management Context module looks at how management has evolved, and includes an examination of the established theories and practice of management eg. the scientific, behavioural theories along with the system and contingency schools of thought. The module also addresses the reasons why management is essential to library and information studies. Once these basics are established, the second half of the first year turns to the individual and concentrates on Self Management..

Within the Self Management framework aspects such as assertion, group work, team work, communication skills, and interpersonal behaviour are studied. Personal effectiveness involving decision making and the art of resolving problems are also studied.

The aim of combining these two areas of management together has been to give the student first, an overview of the topic, and second, a sense of self- confidence. This confidence is built up by students having studied the fact that management is applicable to self, and so prepared for next stage of management- the management of others i.e. Personnel Management.

Year Two

Personnel Management Resource Management

Personnel Management is taught in such a way that it encompasses the traditional methods such as recruitment, selection, induction, training, appraisal, and equal opportunities but with some of the newer modern creative approaches introduced at this stage. This module gives ample opportunity for "the old and the new" to come together in harmony. Issues such as creativity, innovation, flexibility, kaleidoscopic thinking are all introduced at this stage. In this way, instead of management being perceived as 'being in authority' it is seen in terms of allowing the individual to

manage themselves to the best of their ability - to empower others through the function of personnel management.

The Resource Management module , looks into finance its capabilities and limitations along with the marketing of the service so again it concentrates on the traditional role of management but with the emphasis on the need for an open mind and the need to be receptive to new ideas.

Year Three

Management of Change
Future of Management

These modules were considered to be of vital importance and therefore these two modules combine to finish off the training. Change deals with all aspects again from established change models to newer models and issues. It is stressed how importance the need for Kaleidoscopic thinking is and the necessity to keep viewing things from different angles. The module looks at how the world has changed, how rapid change has become, and discusses strategies for dealing with change. The course closes with a module on what the student group see to be the problems and solutions on management issues in their lifetime and the future.

Conclusion

To conclude then, we have looked at the established theories versus the new ideas and examined a new management syllabus based on the Department of Library and Information Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University.

There is no right or wrong answer to the question of management theories and practice, but it is important to train the managers of the future in such a way that they are flexible and are able to view situations with an open mind. The conclusion that the Department came to was to combine the old and the new rather than merely dismiss the established theories. One way to ensure that graduates are up to date is to allow the final module to be self taught, looking toward the future and the world of work in the next century, It is however essential to stress to the undergraduate that management training and development is a lifelong process and not one that finishes when the books are closed and filed away in a dusty corner. Management is an alive and changing process which is constantly enhanced by the growth of new ideas and concepts.

Maria E Burke
Department of Library and Information Studies
Manchester Metropolitan University

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