

Part 1: Machiavelli, Fayol and Taylor

The 20th century was remarkable for the rise of the professional manager – often basing his or her approach to management on a particular theory or favoured guru. MBA students all over the world have investigated these theories and written countless assignments discussing their value. As we progress through the 21st century, are these theories still relevant or have they had their day? This article is the first in a three-part series that looks at ten influential theorists and the influence they still have. The series does not attempt to create a ‘top ten’ or rank contributions in any way (they are presented in chronological order), but aims to provide food for thought and debate. Part 1 looks at Machiavelli, Fayol and Taylor – three famous theorists who have all passed into management mythology, but whose views are sometimes misunderstood.



NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI, 1469–1527

The end justifies the means

Machiavelli lived in Florence, where he worked for the Florentine state as a secretary, then a diplomat. His best known work, *The Prince*,¹ is based on his observation of Cesare Borgia – a cunning, cruel and self-seeking man. Machiavelli did not regard Cesare Borgia as an ideal person, but thought that, under him, the Florentines could unite Italy – and this was his long-term goal. In fact, Machiavelli’s tactic did not work, as the Medici (the ruling family of Florence) took exception to what he said, and Cesare Borgia himself also found the work insulting.

Machiavelli was essentially a republican, preferring a state controlled by citizens (in his day, citizens made up only a small part of the population). However, the adjective ‘Machiavellian’ has become synonymous with corrupt, devious government and with the ethos that ‘the end justifies the means’. Machiavelli’s Prince uses devious, immoral political behaviour to achieve his ends.

Therefore a prince, so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal, ought not to mind the reproach of cruelty ... Upon this a question arises: whether it is better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered

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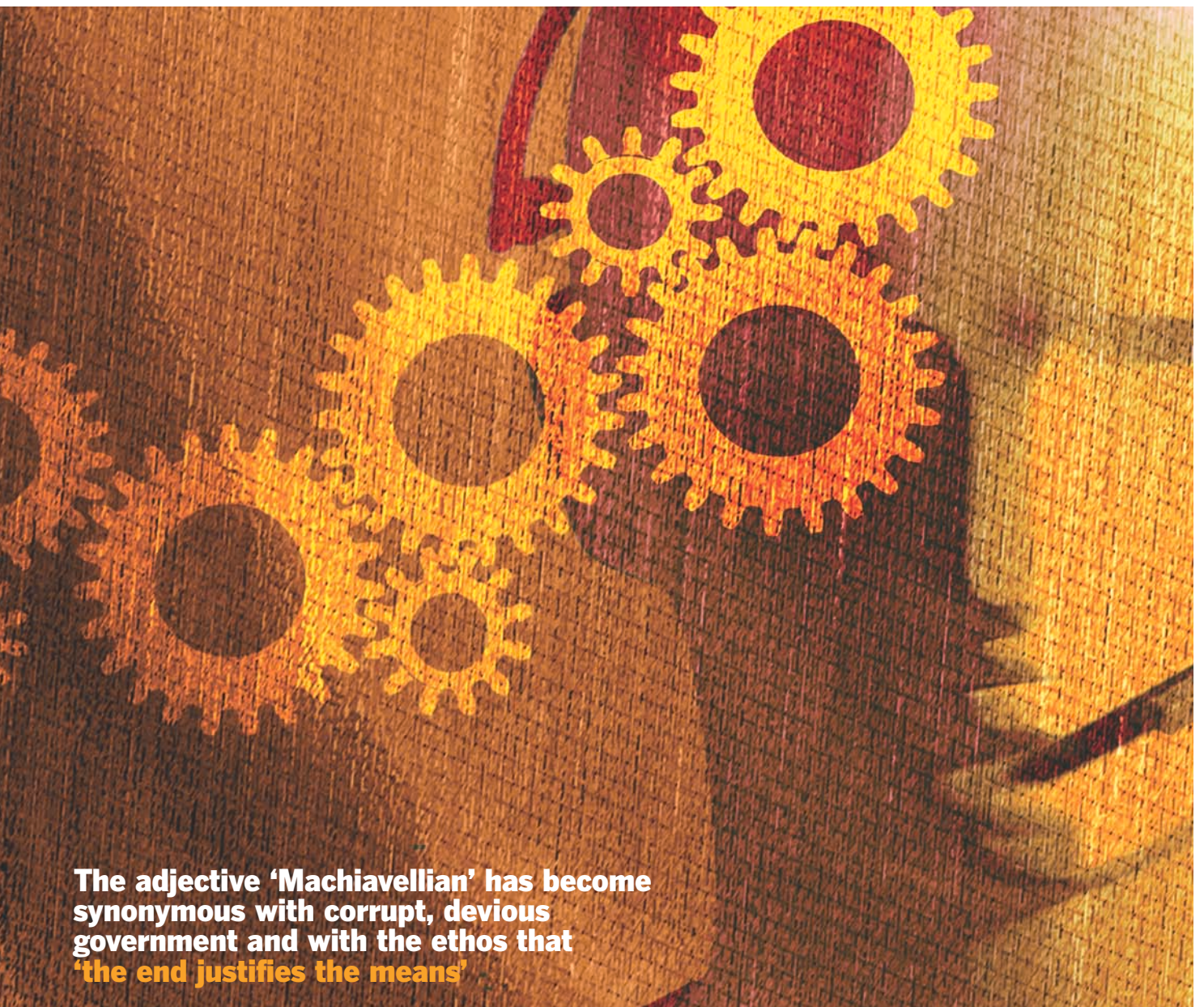
In a three-part series, **Dilys Robinson** looks at ten influential theorists and assesses their influence in business today

that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, it is much safer to be feared than loved.

... [I]t is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity.

Today, ‘Machiavellian’ behaviour is denounced as self-seeking and immoral, and the ‘end justifying the means’ ethos is considered morally wrong. However, the fact is that people do behave like this, and a lot of successful managers employ these methods – some more consciously than others.

Take Harold Geneen (1910 to 1997), CEO of ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph) from 1959 to 1977. He had an autocratic management style, was a relentless workaholic with no interest in personal life (and expected the same from his employees), and subjected his executives to harsh and bullying behaviours such as humiliation and cross-examination. Yet he was highly successful and created a huge conglomerate; he masterminded 250 acquisitions at ITT, some hostile. He was obsessed with profits and took ITT’s profits from US\$29 million to US\$550 million. Some of his sayings resonate closely with Machiavelli’s description of how a leader should behave to achieve his ends.



The adjective ‘Machiavellian’ has become synonymous with corrupt, devious government and with the ethos that ‘the end justifies the means’

The soul of a business is a curious alchemy of needs, desires, greed and gratification's mixed with selflessness, sacrifices and personal contributions far beyond material rewards.

You read a book from beginning to end. You run a business the opposite way. You start with the end, and then you do everything you must to reach it.

The best way to inspire people to superior performance is to convince them by everything you do and by your everyday attitude that you are wholeheartedly supporting them.

Geneen took the ‘Prince’ analogy even further by embroiling ITT in political scandals such as subsidising the 1972 Republican convention in San Diego and the company’s influence in elections in Chile, during which ITT was accused of funding CIA subversion. There were also allegations of tax evasion.

It appears that the reality of many organisations is that management is a political activity, and most managers have to use situations to advance their own or their function’s interests. Most are uncomfortable about admitting this and would prefer to think of themselves as ethical. Chris Argyris picked up on this dilemma

when he described the ‘espoused theory’ and the ‘theory-in-use’: The former is what managers say they believe, but the latter is what actually guides their behaviour.

As we headed towards the 21st century, the rewards of Machiavellian behaviour could be seen in the research carried out by Fred Luthans.³ He found that successful managers (those who get promoted) spend a lot of time engaged in the political act of networking – using their contacts and influences. By contrast, effective managers (those who are perceived as being good at their jobs) spend relatively little time networking. Instead, they put their efforts into communicating and people managing. Sadly, for the ethicists among us, effective managers do not get rewarded by career advancement or at least not to the same extent as successful managers. And as we progress into the new century, a recent article in the *Harvard Business Review* points out that leadership is not a moral concept and that leaders are not necessarily good people; they are like everyone else, ‘trustworthy and deceitful, cowardly and brave, greedy and generous’.⁴ ➔

HENRI FAYOL 1841–1925

Command and control

Fayol is famous for the classical school of management, which emphasises ‘command and control’. A Frenchman, he wrote *General and Industrial Management* in 1916, but it was not translated into English until 1949.⁵ Fayol taught that the functions of management are five-fold: planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling. He also defined 14 ‘principles of management’.



1. Division of work – specialisation and repetition, leading to speed and accuracy.
2. Authority and responsibility – together, these require increasing judgement and morality at senior levels: ‘Responsibility is feared as much as authority is sought for.’
3. Discipline – obedience, application and respect.
4. Unity of command – workers receiving orders from one superior only.
5. Unity of direction – one plan, one leader.
6. Subordination of individual interests to the general good.
7. Fair but not excessive remuneration, which rewards effort.
8. Centralisation.
9. The scalar chain – a line or hierarchy of authority, although it was permitted to cut out the hierarchy to improve communication (juniors can interact with each other in the interests of efficiency).
10. Order: a place for everyone and everyone in their place.
11. Equity – equal and fair treatment of employees.
12. Stability – people need to stay in their jobs long enough to deliver, so should not be moved around too much.
13. Initiative – allowing employees to think through a problem and implement a solution (which, Fayol believed, increases motivation).
14. Esprit de corps – keeping the team together, using harmony as a basis of strength: ‘Dividing enemy forces to weaken them is clever, but dividing one’s own team is a grave sin against the business.’

Although ‘command and control’ appears at odds with today’s emphasis on employee participation, it is undoubtedly true that many organisations require a degree of hierarchy, and clear lines of command and accountability, in order to function effectively. Any organisation that has to respond quickly to a crisis – the armed forces, for example, or the emergency services – needs to know exactly who is in charge and who does what. Fayol has his supporters today among management theorists. Elliott Jaques, for example, points out that management hierarchies are still needed because managers are accountable, so must have authority too.⁶ In practice, hierarchy is not necessarily autocratic; it is important to work out the desirable layers of management, and the authority associated with each, so that employees know where they stand and can therefore fulfil their potential. Jaques believes that concepts such as de-layering, group objectives and empowerment can lead to confusion and problems due to an incomplete understanding of where accountability lies.

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5. Henri Fayol, *General and Industrial Management*, Pitman, 1949.
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7. Frederick W Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management*, Harper & Row, 1911.
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FW TAYLOR 1856–1915

Scientific management

Sigmund Freud would have had a field day with Frederick Winslow Taylor. From an early age, he was obsessed with control, and with planning, scheduling and self-regimenting. Childhood games lost all spontaneity and fun as Fred insisted on precise rules and measurements. Today he might be dismissed as a crank, but at the time his principles of scientific management yielded results and hit a chord.



In 1878, Taylor began working at the Midvale Steel Company, where he rose to be foreman and tested out his ideas, later published as *The Principles of Scientific Management*.⁷ Taylor believed that responsibility for the organisation of work belonged with the manager; workers merely implemented what they were told to do. He taught that the most efficient way of doing the job should be specified precisely, then followed. Workers should be carefully selected, trained and monitored via tools such as the time and motion study. Some of Taylor’s sayings make bleak reading today.

You are not supposed to think. There are other people paid for thinking around here.

In the past man has been first; in the future the system must be first.

Taylor’s view of the separation of hand and brain, and belief that workers could be motivated by ‘payment by results’ incentives alone,⁸ make us feel uncomfortable – and, interestingly, were by no means universally popular in his own day. He was, for example, termed ‘the enemy of the working man’ and was summoned in 1911 to defend his system of management before a committee of the US House of Representatives.

However, before we adopt a condemnatory stance we should remember that Taylorism is still flourishing today. McDonald’s employees are taught to follow tick lists that break down their activities into small component parts; production lines are closely controlled and monitored by computers; and call centre operatives follow scripts that have been written for them.

Taylor’s ideas were developed by others. Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, for example, founded a highly successful business in the 1890s to 1910s based on time and motion studies, the elimination of waste and the reduction of time spent on work activities. However, their analysis of work at a micro level began to develop a movement away from an obsession with control and tasks towards an interest in, and understanding of, the importance of the individual. Lillian Gilbreth herself returned to university to study psychology in more detail, and wrote *The Psychology of Management* – the first detailed application of psychological concepts to management.

[T]he emphasis in successful management lies on the man, not on the work; that efficiency is best secured by placing the emphasis on the man, and modifying the equipment, materials and methods to make the most of the man.⁹

Taylor would not have approved of this focus on the individual – later developed by Elton Mayo, whose well-known Hawthorne experiments highlighted the importance of social interaction. Given Taylor’s obsession with control and self-discipline, it is unlikely that he would have even understood such theories. 📌

Next month the theories of Max Weber, Mary Parker Follett and Abraham Maslow are examined.

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Part 2: Weber, Follett and Maslow

In Part 1 of this series, which appeared in the January 2005 issue of *Training Journal*, we looked at the influence of Machiavelli, Fayol and Taylor. Part 2 moves on chronologically to examine the work of three more theorists – Weber, Follett (a female theorist whose views are not widely known, but who is highly favoured by some of today's influential gurus) and Maslow.



MAX WEBER, 1864–1920
Bureaucratic organisation

A German sociologist, Weber has been somewhat misunderstood. He is often portrayed as an advocate of bureaucracy, but he was in fact sceptical about its merits and saw clearly how the organisation could become an instrument of domination. He observed, however, that bureaucracy was the most frequently found type of rational legal authority (that is, authority based on a set of rules and procedures). He also saw that bureaucracy had replaced other forms of authority – for example, charismatic (based on personal qualities) and traditional (based on respect for tradition and the past). Weber believed the bureaucratic form is a manifestation of the process of rationalisation of society. Unlike Fayol, he did not see bureaucracy as the best form of organisation; his main interest was in explaining how rulers legitimately exercised authority. Weber was concerned about the trend towards increasing bureaucratisation and rationalisation, which he likened to an iron cage that threatened the human spirit.

Despite his concerns, Weber is inextricably linked with bureaucracy – an organisational form that endures today and is likely to continue to do so. In its purest form (in practice not likely to be found), Weber characterised the bureaucratic organisation as giving the following features.

- Official functions bounded by rules.
- Specialisation – a clear division of labour and an understanding of what is expected, with job holders having the necessary authority.
- A clearly defined hierarchy.
- Stable and comprehensive rules.
- Impersonality – equality of treatment.
- Selection on the basis of qualification, not favouritism.
- Full-time paid officials.
- A career structure.
- Officials detached from ownership of organisation – lessening the possibility of bribery or corruption.
- Systematic discipline and control of work.

Bureaucracy clearly led to some benefits that Weber approved of. In particular these were a levelling of social classes (because technical competence was the main criterion for advancement), a greater degree of social equality, and plutocracy (because the many different offices required specialist qualifications).

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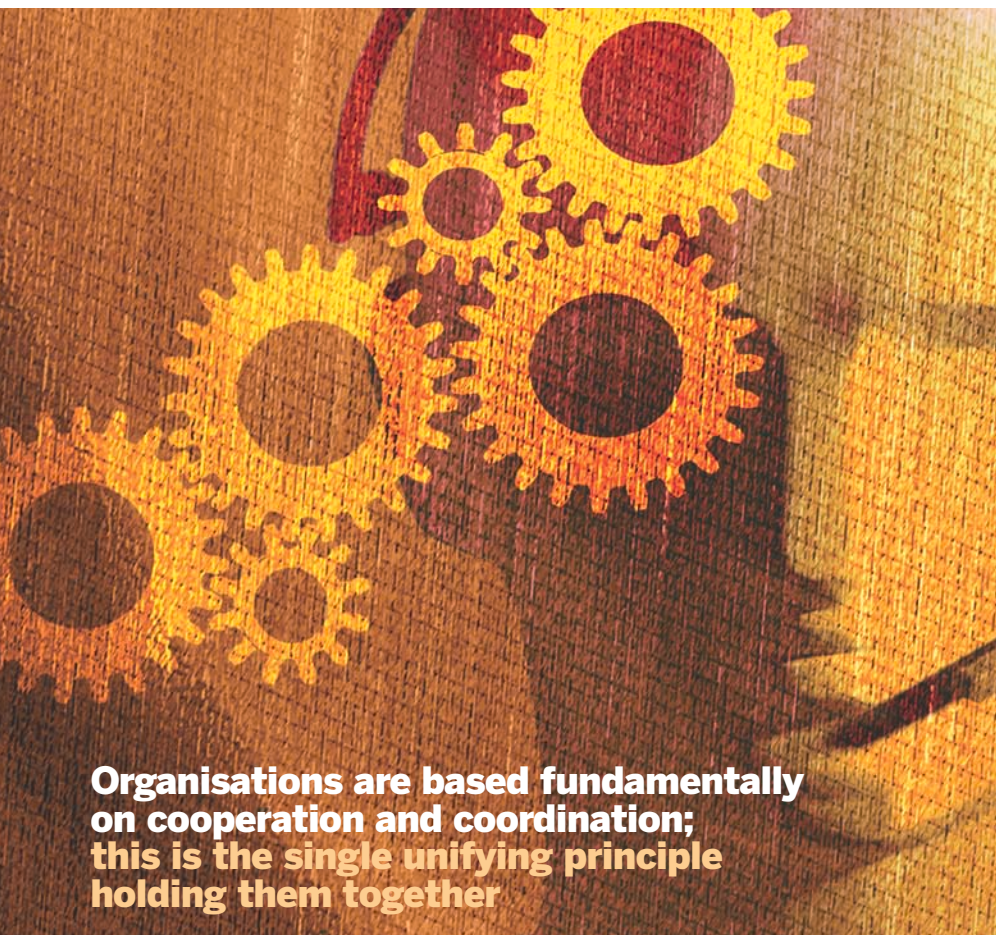
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MARY PARKER FOLLETT, 1868–1933
A prophet before her time?

Follett was an American political scientist and management thinker who experienced a late and somewhat unexpected career as a management guru. In the 1920s she was well known on both sides of Atlantic, but her star was later eclipsed by the more masculine approaches that seemed to be better attuned with the Second World War era. The principles of democracy and cooperation permeate all Follett's writings, be they about politics, business or education. (Indeed, she thought that democratic principles should be taught from an early age.)

Follett theorised about community, experience and the group, and how these related to the individual and the organisation. A business, she reasoned, is a microcosm of human society. An organisation is one in which people at all levels should be motivated to work and participate. They should gather their own information, define their own roles and shape their own lives. Organisations are based fundamentally on cooperation and coordination; this is the single unifying principle holding them together. She advocated 'power with' (a jointly developed power) rather than 'power over' as the key to social progress and business success – which did not suit the prevailing mood before, during and after the Second World War, but is much more in tune with recent management thinkers. Henry Mintzberg and Rosabeth Moss Kanter, for example, are fans of Follett's approach.



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The following quotations serve as examples of Follett's ethos of management and resonate with today's ideas about organisational citizenship and the importance of employee involvement.

The ramifications of modern industry are too widespread, its organisation too complex, its problems too intricate for industry to be managed by commands from the top alone.

You must have an organisation which will permit interweaving all along the line ...

[I]t is my plea above everything else that we learn how to cooperate ...

The leader knows that any lasting agreement among members of the group can come only by their sharing each others' experience.

The difference between competition and joint effort is the difference between a short and a long view.

Follett's theoretical emphasis on integration, synthesis and unifying differences and her work on group processes, crowd psychology, neighbourhood and work, governance and the self in relation to the whole now appear way ahead of their time. We should remember, however, that in the 1920s – before the spectre of war reared its head – she was received with empathy and understanding. Her current resurrection is an indication of the relevance of such theories to many working environments today.

Further reading on Weber

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Further reading on Follett

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Further reading on Maslow

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ABRAHAM MASLOW, 1908–1970
Motivational theory

Maslow is famous for encapsulating a theory of human needs which is fundamental to the understanding of motivation. His 'hierarchy of needs', derived from research into human behaviour between 1939 and 1943, describes five sets of goals, each of which cannot be attended to until the previous goal has been satisfied.

1. Physiological – such as hunger, thirst, shelter and sleep.
2. Safety – security, stability and freedom from attack.
3. Love and belonging – friends, family, partners, identification.
4. Esteem – success, self-respect, mastery, achievement.
5. Self-actualisation – self-fulfilment, realisation of potential, creativity, 'the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming'.

The motivational theorists that followed Maslow built on his work and have produced well-known and much-quoted

theories, two of which are briefly outlined below.

→ Herzberg's two-factor hygiene and motivation theory

Frederick Herzberg overturns previously held received wisdom about pay being the ultimate employee motivator. He describes pay and other organisational factors such as working environment as 'hygiene factors' – they can cause dissatisfaction, but do not motivate. Intrinsic factors like achievement, recognition, advancement and job interest are the true motivators.

→ Vroom's expectancy theory

Victor Vroom states that individuals have different needs and will be motivated if they believe that there is a positive correlation between effort and performance; that favourable performance will result in a desirable reward; that the reward will satisfy an important need; and that the desire to satisfy the need is strong enough to make the effort worthwhile.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is now so well known that it is hard to imagine managerial life without it. Maslow started a debate about motivation that will continue into the 21st century and probably beyond. As evidence increasingly mounts that highly motivated individuals perform better, every CEO and HR professional would like to be able to possess the magic key to motivating their workforce. 🗝️

Next month the theories of Peter Drucker, Geert Hofstede, Henry Mintzberg and Peter Senge are examined.

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KEY LEARNING POINTS

- 'Management' as a discipline in its own right did not emerge until the mid-20th century.
- Despite the predominance of US management theorists, the practice of management varies hugely between countries and cannot be divorced from the society in which it sits.
- Most management theories, even those that do not resonate comfortably with the prevailing mood, have attractive and valid elements.
- Female management thinkers are unusual – but this may change, given the current emphasis on softer, people-orientated skills.

Part 3: Drucker, Hofstede, Mintzberg and Senge

This is the third and final part of a short series describing ten influential theorists and the influence they still have today. Part 1 looked at Machiavelli, Fayol and Taylor, while Part 2 examined Weber, Follett and Maslow. Part 3 offers four more recent (and still living) theorists whose views continue to have a major impact.



PETER DRUCKER,
b.1909
Management as a discipline

Peter Drucker is renowned as the creator of management as a discipline in its own right. He was born in 1909 in Vienna, and was educated both there and in England before emigrating to the USA in 1937. When he became Professor of Management at New York University in 1950, he was, in his own words, 'the first person anywhere in the world to have such a title and to teach such a subject'.

Drucker's ground-breaking management book about General Motors, *Concept of the Corporation*, was published in 1946. In it, he asserted that management was not a rank or a title, but a responsibility and a practice – a discipline that can be taught and must be studied, just like other disciplines. Drucker is a prolific writer who has coined new phrases and introduced new concepts that have become firmly established as facts of management life. His two famous books, *The Practice of Management* (1954) and *Management Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (1973), describe his philosophy and approach to management and are also textbooks that teach the reader how to manage. His five basic principles of management are:

1. setting objectives
2. organising
3. motivating and communicating
4. establishing measurements of performance, and
5. developing people.

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Dilys Robinson looks at the final four of her ten most influential theorists and assesses their influence in business today.

Despite advancing years Drucker has continued to contribute fresh ideas, publishing *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* in 1999. He has the guru's knack of presenting concepts and ideas clearly and persuasively to his audience, and is eminently quotable.

The best way to predict the future is to create it.

A manager is responsible for the application and performance of knowledge.

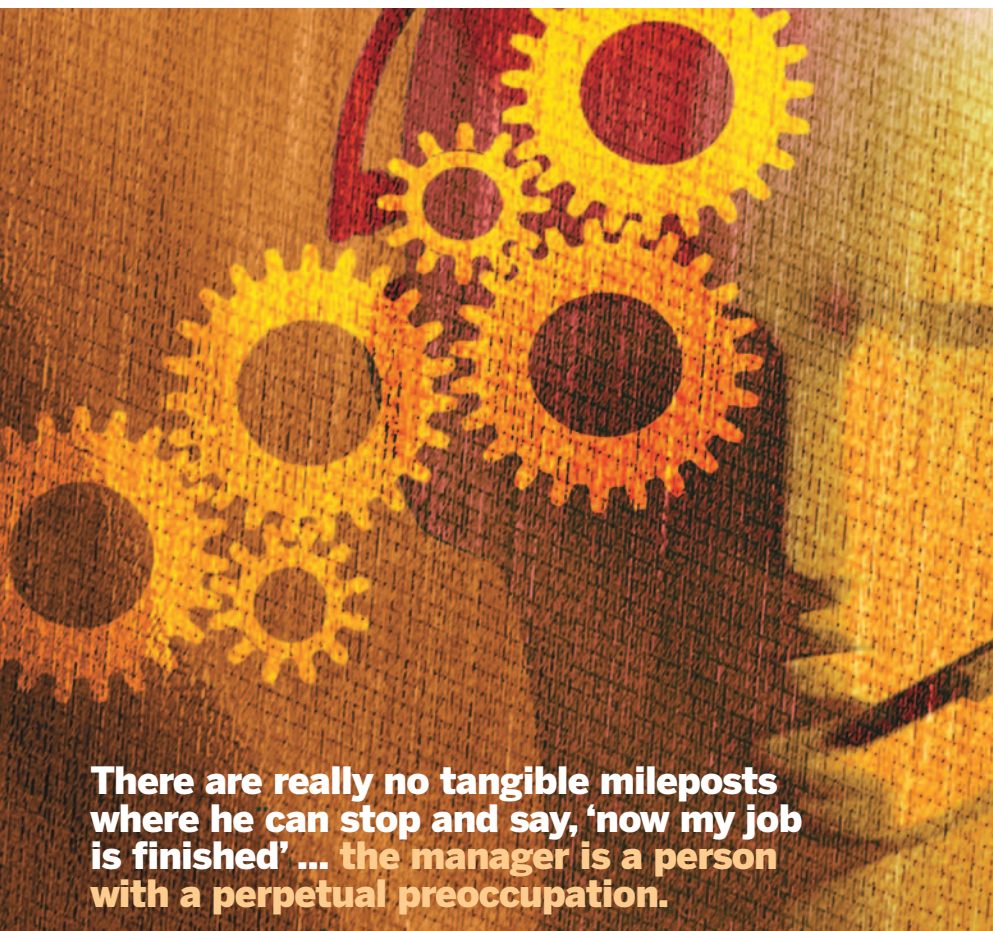
The most important contribution management needs to make in the 21st century is ... to increase the productivity of knowledge work and the knowledge worker.



GEERT HOFSTEDE
b.1928
Cultural differences

Born in 1928, Geert Hofstede is renowned for his work on cross-cultural management based on a worldwide survey of IBM employees – people who had much in common (such as educational attainment, nature of work and company) but who belonged to different nationalities. He derived four dimensions (later, he added a fifth) that distinguish cultures at a national level.

1. Power distance – perceptions of the degree of inequality in society. Those with a large power distance put greater stress on hierarchies and often have extreme politics, while those with low power distance stress equal rights.



There are really no tangible mileposts where he can stop and say, 'now my job is finished' ... the manager is a person with a perpetual preoccupation.

2. Collectivism *versus* individualism – the former base their societies on social groups, while the latter stress the identity of the individual.
3. Masculinity *versus* femininity – masculine societies are assertive and competitive, and feminine societies prefer cooperative relationships.
4. Uncertainty avoidance – the avoidance of risks and the creation of rules (countries with low uncertainty avoidance are tolerant of ambiguity and are uncomfortable with regulations).
5. Long-term *versus* short-term orientation – Anglo-Saxon Western countries are decidedly short-term in their focus, unlike China and Far Eastern countries.

Hofstede observed that management is seen very differently in different countries. In the US, for example, the manager is a cultural hero, whereas in Germany, where technical qualifications are prized and held by many workers, the engineer is more likely to fulfil this role. The core of Japanese enterprise is the permanent worker group – those who are tenured and aspire to life-long employment. Control is via the peer group rather than the professional manager. In France, a hierarchical, stratified society, where management cadres are responsible for running organisations, matrix management is frowned upon; the principle of unity of command dominates. Dutch management operates by consensus and open-ended exchanges of views. Dutch workers value being given freedom to adopt their own approach to the job, being consulted, being given training opportunities, contributing to the success of the organisation and helping others; this consensual employment relationship contrasts with the contractual relationship prevalent in the USA. The overseas Chinese, another cultural group studied by Hofstede, favour small, family owned businesses, with no separation between ownership and management; they are flexible and opportunistic, with few professional managers.

Hofstede's observations about management will be relevant in the 21st century and beyond – for as long as we have different cultures in the world. His observation that management cannot be isolated from other processes in society is a valuable one for managers educated on a diet of predominantly US thinkers. He finds it particularly amusing that US writers of management texts often misrepresent his research, stating that he surveyed IBM managers rather than employees – thus unconsciously reinforcing their prejudice in favour of the managerial role.



HENRY MINTZBERG
b.1939
The reality of management

Henry Mintzberg's *The Nature of Managerial Work*

was published in 1973 (based on his PhD research). It created waves by describing what managers actually *do* rather than the *theory* of what they do, what they *say* they do or what they *should* be doing.

[T]here are really no tangible mileposts where he can stop and say, 'now my job is finished' ... the manager is a person with a perpetual preoccupation.

In practice, Mintzberg found that managers' work occurs in very short episodes, is highly fragmented, frequently interrupted and brief in duration. Managers are not systematic, reflective planners, but prefer (and gravitate towards) activities that are current, specific, well-defined and non-routine. The complexity of organisations means that managers are driven to brevity, fragmentation and superficiality.

[They] focus on that which is current and tangible in [their] work even though the complex problems facing many organisations call for reflection and a far-sighted perspective.

The reality of managerial behaviour is untidy and not at all in line with the rational model. In practice, managers use a 'bounded rationality' model of decision making (see Figure 1 on page 32).

Since 1973, Mintzberg, a professor at McGill University in Montreal, has continued to be iconoclastic and provocative, and has applied his attentions to a variety of subjects. In his own field, strategy, he has remained at the forefront of the debate. A champion of strategy as a creative and emergent process, he has consistently defended it against those who seek to reduce it to prescriptive analysis. His value to 21st-century managers lies in his constant questioning and challenging of received wisdom, and his emphasis on people and relationships within organisations.

The MBA is really about business, which would be fine except that people leave these programs thinking they've been trained to do management. I think every MBA should have a skull and crossbones stamped on their forehead and underneath should be written: 'Warning: not prepared to manage.'

And the issue is not just that they are not trained to manage, but that they are given a totally wrong impression of what managing is; namely decision making by analysis. The impression they get from what they've studied is that people skills don't really matter.

The global style is not global, it is American. The trouble is everywhere else people think that the universal way of managing is what happens in the United States. But each place has its own different style.



PETER SENGE
b.1947

The learning organisation

The youngest thinker in this article, Peter Senge was born in 1947. His 1990 book *The Fifth Discipline* popularised the concept of the 'learning organisation' and brought it to the forefront of management thinking. Senge describes the learning organisation as a place where:

... people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

In an environment of rapid change, Senge argues, only those organisations that have the flexibility and skills to adapt will survive – and to outperform the competition, organisations must gain the commitment of all employees, no matter what their level, and nurture their capacity to learn.

Being a true learning organisation requires a mind shift to enable the organisation not just to survive but to acquire the continuing capacity to create. Learning organisations must master five basic disciplines.

1. Systems thinking – fundamental to the learning organisation philosophy is the ability to see the whole, rather than focusing on the parts.

2. Personal mastery – the proficiency to live in 'a continual learning mode', which brings self-confidence to the individual, who is not afraid to admit ignorance and the need to grow.

3. Mental models – deeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations or even pictures and images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.

4. Building shared vision – a genuine vision that encourages people to excel and learn because they want to.

5. Team learning – because people need to be able to act together and learn from each other in order to achieve maximum creativity and innovation.

Within the learning organisation, the leader is not so much a decision maker and motivator as a designer, steward and teacher.

Senge's learning organisation is hard to find in practice, and appears at odds with the need to deliver short-term profits to shareholders. However, the late 20th and early 21st centuries are fast-moving times, when knowledge and the ability to muster it to create and innovate are at a premium. If not yet a reality, the aspiration of the learning organisation has helped many individuals and organisations to focus on learning as a benefit, rather than a cost – and it will be fascinating to see whether true learning organisations develop during our lifetimes.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

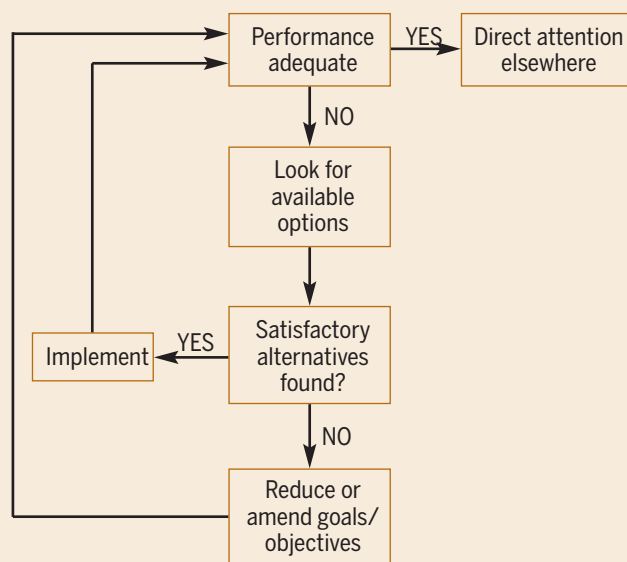
Looking at all three parts of this series, what can we conclude from our quick sprint through some of the ideas of the influential management theorists we've discussed?

One observation is that female management thinkers are a rare commodity and, if anything, are getting thinner on the ground than they were in the earlier part of the 20th century. The '50 most important living management thinkers' list derived by FT Knowledge Limited in 2000, for example, had just two women in its ranks: Rosabeth Moss Kanter at number 14, and Meg Whitman scraping in at number 50. Perhaps the current move towards the softer aspects of management – emotional literacy, employee involvement and organisational citizenship – will redress the gender balance somewhat in the 21st century. It is good to see a home-grown theorist, Linda Gratton (of the London Business School), rising in prominence.

A second observation is that the majority of management thinkers and gurus are American, thus reinforcing the belief (so criticised by Mintzberg) that the USA is the fount of all knowledge about things managerial. Doubtless Hofstede would say that this is inevitable, given the masculine and individualistic nature of US society.

Finally, it is very hard to discount any management theory completely, even those we instinctively do not like. Perhaps this is a function of the perplexing, complicated, multi-faceted, confusing, yet always fascinating nature of management? 🧠

Figure 1: 'Bounded rationality' decision making



Source: Open University Business School

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Further reading

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