

Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management



- **Peter Drucker is often called 'the guru's guru'**. Drucker himself would suggest that accolade should be given to Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915):
- **'Frederick W. Taylor was the first man in recorded history who deemed work deserving of systematic observation and study.** On Taylor's `scientific management' rests, above all, the tremendous surge of affluence in the last seventy-five years which has lifted the working masses in the developed countries well above any level recorded, even for the well-to-do. Taylor, though the Isaac Newton (or perhaps the Archimedes) of the science of work, laid only first foundations, however. Not much has been added to them since - even though he has been dead all of sixty years."

Life and career

- **Although Taylor passed the entrance examination for Harvard College, failing eyesight meant that he could not take up his place. Instead, in 1874, he took the unusual step for someone of his upper-class, almost aristocratic, background of becoming an apprentice patternmaker and machinist at the Enterprise Hydraulic Works.**
- Following his apprenticeship, Taylor took up an unskilled job at the Midvale Steel Works in 1878, and after several different jobs and a master's degree in mechanical engineering he was appointed chief engineer there. In 1890 he became general manager of **Manufacturing Investment Company (MIC)**, eventually becoming an independent consulting engineer to management. By 1910, Taylor and his management methods had become well known.



Frederick Winslow Taylor

- ◉ "The Father of Scientific Management"
- ◉ Born in 1856 in Germantown, Pennsylvania
- ◉ Obsessed with order and control
- ◉ Piece rate system Increased productivity among factory workers
- ◉ Philosophy known as Taylorism
- ◉ Died 1915



Historical Perspective

- **One of the earliest of these theorists was Frederick Winslow Taylor.** He started the **Scientific Management movement**, and he and his associates were the first people to study the work process scientifically. They studied how work was performed, and they looked at how this affected worker productivity. Taylor's philosophy focused on the belief that making people work as hard as they could was not as efficient as optimizing the way the work was done.
- **In 1909, Taylor published "The Principles of Scientific Management."** In this, he proposed that by optimizing and simplifying jobs, productivity would increase. He also advanced the idea that workers and managers needed to cooperate with one another. This was very different from the way work was typically done in businesses beforehand. A factory manager at that time had very little contact with the workers, and he left them on their own to produce the necessary product. There was no standardization, and a worker's main motivation was often continued employment, so there was no incentive to work as quickly or as efficiently as possible.



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Four Principles of Scientific Management

Taylor's four principles are as follows:

1. **Replace working by "rule of thumb," or simple habit and common sense, and instead use the scientific method to study work and determine the most efficient way to perform specific tasks.**
2. **Rather than simply assign workers to just any job, match workers to their jobs based on capability and motivation, and train them to work at maximum efficiency.**
3. **Monitor worker performance, and provide instructions and supervision to ensure that they're using the most efficient ways of working.**
4. **Allocate the work between managers and workers so that the managers spend their time planning and training, allowing the workers to perform their tasks efficiently.**

1. Break down assignments into subtasks

- Rather than assigning an entire project to one individual and allowing them the proper time to complete it, managers break down larger tasks into smaller parts. These subtasks are meant to make the process more organized and efficient, with multiple employees working on one assignment – each taking care of their own piece.

2. Delegate responsibilities and train workers

- Executives measure the most efficient way to do a given task, then delegate the subtasks only to employees with the proper skills and abilities. Those workers are then trained by management.
- Workers' roles tend to be specific and fixed, and their tasks basic and repetitive. Often, employees feel insignificant, completing the same chore hours on end. But to Taylor, each worker plays a crucial role in the company's success.

3. Monitor performance

- Supervisors ensure each worker below them is doing their job efficiently; and if a more productive practice is discovered, workers are re-trained to implement it in their work.
- Because employees must repeat the same mundane tasks, incentives are high. Workers are motivated to deliver quality work because they are financially rewarded based on their performance. The more efficient the worker is, the higher their pay will be.

4. Allocate work between managers and employees

- Most companies have various levels of workers, from supervisors to part-timers. Typically, the more experience and drive you have, the more likely you are to land an executive position. This is how much of the business world operates.



- Taylor believed in a similar hierarchy of three levels, with the most powerful workers on top. Each level is given exact responsibilities and detailed instructions specific to their role. They respect and adhere to those above them and do only what is assigned to them.



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