

Chapter Review

11

Modern Approaches to Management

Objectives...

- 1 explain how management theory has evolved
- 2 identify and discuss the key management issues of the first decade of the 21st century
- 3 list the main contributors to management theory over the past 25 years
- 4 compare traditional with contemporary management approaches

Key Terms

learning organization

An organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights

Postmodernism

"A more recent view of organisations and management that rejects a rational, systems approach and accepted explanations of society and behaviour. Postmodernism places greater emphasis on the use of language and attempts to portray a particular set of assumptions or versions of the 'truth'."

Management is complex. Throughout this part of the book we have tried to arrange and organise the major (popular) approaches to management, successful throughout the 20th century, see Figure 11.2 Evolution of Management Theory. We have presented an overview of the ideas, theories and management philosophies that have contributed to making the workplace what it is today. The principles provide a foundation and framework for us to explore the practice of management and analyse organisations. In this chapter, we have considered more recent trends and approaches and built on our management understanding. Since no one management approach provides universally applicable principles of management, today's manager must take those ideas, from the different approaches, which best suit the particular requirements of their culture, organisation and their job. In some cases the classical theories and principles along with systems theory and contingency approaches may be adopted whilst in other cases ideas from the human relations movement may be of more value. The different approaches are not generally in competition with each other and in many cases we can trace a progression of ideas, each building upon or complementing the other; all of the approaches discussed in this part of the book contribute to the blend that defines contemporary management. We should also recognise, particularly in complex and ever changing contexts, that many view management as much of an art as science. There are many aspects to management and we will attempt to illuminate some of the more important ones over the following chapters of this book.