

Human Relations and Human Resources Approaches

After Reading This Chapter, You Should...

- Know about the Hawthorne Studies and how they proved to be a springboard for the human relations approach.
- Be familiar with Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y as exemplars of the human relations approach.
- Understand the ways in which the human relations approach was empirically inadequate and misused and how these problems led to the human resources approach.
- Be able to explain how the Managerial Grid and System IV management describe aspects of human resources management.
- Be able to describe typical communication patterns in classical, human relations, and human resources organizations.
- Appreciate the challenges of instituting human resources principles into today's organizations.

As you discovered in Chapter 2, management theory in the early part of the twentieth century was marked by an allegiance to a machine metaphor and a search for ways to increase efficiency and productivity through systems of structure, power, compensation, and attitude. Indeed, many principles of classical management are still widely used today. However, it should be clear from our consideration of Fayol, Weber, and Taylor that certain aspects of organizational communication are conspicuously absent from classical theories. For example, these theorists pay little attention to the individual needs of employees, to nonfinancial rewards in the workplace, or to the prevalence of social interaction in organizations. These theorists were also uninterested in how employees could contribute to meeting organizational goals through knowledge, ideas, and discussion—the only valued contribution was that of physical labor. Issues such as these drove the thinking of the theorists we will consider in this chapter—scholars and practitioners who represent the human relations and human resources approaches to organizational communication. In this chapter, we will consider these two approaches that began more than eighty years ago and still influence values and practices today.

We will first consider the human relations approach that emphasizes the importance of human needs in the workplace. We will then consider developments from this early movement—the human resources approach—that concentrate on the contributions of all employees in reaching organizational goals. In discussing each approach, we will consider the historical and scholarly context that led to the approach and representative theorists within the approach. We will then consider ways in which the human relations and human resources approaches influence communication in organizations and the ways in which these approaches are exemplified in today's organizations.

From Classical Theory to Human Relations: The Hawthorne Studies

From 1924 to 1933, a number of research investigations were conducted at the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne plant in Illinois that have become collectively known as the Hawthorne studies. All but the first of these were conducted by a research team led by Elton Mayo of Harvard University (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Mayo and his research team were initially interested in how changes in the work environment would affect the productivity of factory workers. These research interests were quite consistent with the prevailing theories of classical management, especially Frederick Taylor's Theory of Scientific Management. That is, like Taylor and other supporters of scientific management, the research team at the Hawthorne plant attempted to discover aspects of the task environment that would maximize worker output and hence improve organizational efficiency. Four major phases marked the Hawthorne studies: the illumination studies, the relay assembly test room studies, the interview program, and the bank wiring room studies.

The Illumination Studies

The illumination studies (conducted before the entry of Mayo and his research team) were designed to determine the influence of lighting level on worker productivity. In these studies, two groups of workers were isolated. For one group (the control group), lighting was held constant. For the second (experimental) group, lighting was systematically raised and lowered.

To the surprise of the researchers, there was no significant difference in the productivity of the control group and the experimental group. Indeed, except when workers were laboring in near darkness, productivity tended to go up in both groups under all conditions. It was at this point that Mayo's research team entered the scene to further investigate these counterintuitive findings.

The Relay Assembly Test Room Studies

To better understand the productivity increases seen in the illumination studies, Mayo and his team of researchers isolated a group of six women who assembled telephone relay systems. A number of changes were then introduced to this group, including incentive plans, rest pauses, temperature, humidity, work hours, and refreshments. All changes were discussed with the workers ahead of time, and detailed records of productivity were kept as these changes in the work environment were instituted. Productivity went up in a wide variety of situations. After more than a year of study, the researchers concluded that "social satisfactions arising out of human association in work were more important determinants of work behavior in general and output in particular than were any of the physical and economic aspects of the work situation to which the attention had originally been limited" (Carey, 1967: 404). Because productivity remained high under a wide range of conditions, Mayo and his colleagues believed the results could be best explained by the influence of the social group on productivity and the extra attention paid by the managers to the six workers in the group.

The Interview Program

The unusual findings for the relay assembly test room group led Mayo and his colleagues to conduct a series of interviews with thousands of employees at the Hawthorne plant. Although the goal of these interviews was to learn more about the impact of working conditions on productivity, the interviewers found workers more interested in talking about their feelings and attitudes. Pugh and Hickson (1989) note that "The major finding of this stage of the inquiry was that many problems of worker-management cooperation were the results of the emotionally based attitudes of the workers rather than of the objective difficulties of the situation" (p. 174).

The Bank Wiring Room Studies

A final series of investigations involved naturalistic (non-experimental) observation of a group of men in the bank wiring room. Observations revealed that the men developed norms regarding the “proper” level of productivity and exerted social pressure on each other to maintain that level. Slow workers were pressured to speed up, and speedy workers were pressured to slow down. This social pressure existed in opposition to the organization’s formal goals regarding productivity contained in production targets and incentive schedules. Mayo and his colleagues concluded that the social group’s influence on worker behavior exceeded the leverage exerted by the formal organizational power structure.

Explanations of Findings in the Hawthorne Studies

A number of explanations can be offered to account for the findings of the Hawthorne studies. For example, productivity increases were often associated with changes in the work environment, such as work hours, temperature, lighting, and breaks. In the relay assembly test room studies, productivity also increased when pay incentives were offered to workers. Both of these explanations are consistent with classical approaches to organizing, and both were rejected by the investigating team at the Hawthorne plant. Mayo and his colleagues instead turned to explanations that revolved around the social and emotional needs of workers. First, these researchers concluded that worker output increased as a direct result of the attention paid to workers by the researchers. This phenomenon—whereby mere attention to individuals causes changes in behavior—has come to be known as the Hawthorne effect. A second explanation proposed by the Hawthorne researchers is that worker output was increased through the working of informal social factors. Recall that the women in the relay assembly test room were separated from other factory workers during the experiment.

Mayo and his colleagues concluded that these six women formed a tightly knit group and that social interaction in this group served to increase productivity. This explanation was enhanced through the observation of social pressure in the bank wiring room and the comments of the workers during interviews.

Finally, the researchers believed that management style could account for some of the observed productivity changes. This conclusion was based on the impact of open communication between workers and managers in the relay assembly test room portion of the studies. Were Mayo and his colleagues correct in their conclusions that productivity increases should be attributed to social factors, management style, and the Hawthorne effect? Subsequent analyses of the data from the Hawthorne studies clearly suggest that they were not (see, e.g., Carey, 1967; Franke & Kaul, 1978). Indeed, these re-analyses suggest that more traditional explanations, such as incentives, pressure from management, and worker selection, are better explanations of the Hawthorne findings. However, the questionable value of these findings and interpretations does not diminish the fact that at the time—and for many years after—it was widely believed that the results of the Hawthorne studies could be best explained as a function of social factors and the satisfaction of the human needs of workers. These interpretations had a substantial impact on the thinking of organizational scholars in the 1930s. Because of these studies, theorists, researchers, and practitioners began to turn away from the mechanistic views of classical theories and instead consider the possibility that human needs and social interaction played an important role in organizational functioning. As Pugh and Hickson (1989) conclude: “Taken as a whole, the significance of the Hawthorne investigation was in ‘discovering’ the informal organization which, it is now realized, exists in all organizations” (p. 175).

Thus, although the Hawthorne studies may have been lacking in scientific value and interpretive rigor, the sociological impact of the investigations cannot be underestimated. The Hawthorne investigations served as a springboard, moving organizational theorists from classical theories to human relations approaches. These studies also began to highlight the role of communication, especially informal and group communication, in organizational functioning. The next two sections of this chapter present two representative theorists from the human relations movement: Abraham Maslow and Douglas McGregor.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow developed his Hierarchy of Needs Theory over a period of many years as a general theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943, 1954). However, he and others have applied this theory extensively to organizational behavior, and it serves as a prototype of a human relations approach to organizing and management.

Maslow proposes that humans are motivated by a number of basic needs. The five types of needs that are consistently presented in his writing are listed next and

Maslow's Needs Hierarchy in the Organizational Context

Need Level	Example of Need Satisfaction in Organization
Level 5: Self-actualization	Work allowing the exercise of creativity
Level 4: Self-esteem	Internal: Rewarding work External: Bonus pay
Level 3: Affiliation	Social relationships with coworkers
Level 2: Safety	Physically safe working conditions
Level 1: Physiological	"Living wage" to allow purchase of food, clothing

Sumber: Miller (2012: 41)

Presented in Table 3.1. The first three types are often referred to as lower-order needs and the final two as higher-order needs.

1. Physiological needs

These are the needs of the human body, including the need for food, water, sleep, and sensory gratification. In the organizational context, these needs can be most clearly satisfied through the provision of a "living wage" that allows individuals to buy adequate food and clothing and through physical working conditions that do not violate the physical requirements of the human body.

2. Safety needs

Safety needs include the desire to be free from danger and environmental threats. In the organizational context, these needs can, again, be satisfied through wages that allow employees to procure shelter against the elements and through working conditions that are protective and healthy.

3. Affiliation needs

This set of needs—sometimes referred to as “belonging needs” or “love needs”—refers to the necessity of giving and receiving human affection and regard. These needs can be satisfied in the organization through the establishment of social relationships with coworkers and managers.

4. Esteem needs

Esteem needs refer to the desire of individuals to feel a sense of achievement and accomplishment. Esteem needs can be divided into external esteem—achieved through public recognition and attention—and internal esteem—achieved through a sense of accomplishment, confidence, and achievement. In the organizational context, external esteem needs can be met by compensation and reward structures. Internal esteem needs can be met by the provision of challenging jobs that provide employees with the opportunity to achieve and excel.

5. Need for self-actualization

Maslow characterizes this need as the desire to “become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming” (1943: 382). In the words of Army recruitment ads, the need to self-actualize is trying to “be all that you can be”. Clearly, this need will take different forms for different people. However, it is likely that an organization can facilitate the satisfaction of this need through the provision of jobs that allow an individual to exercise responsibility and creativity in the workplace.

Case in Point: Satisfying Higher Order Needs by Satisfying Lower Order Needs

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is organized in a “Hierarchy of Prepotency” in which lower-order needs—such as food and shelter—must be satisfied before higher-order needs—such as esteem and self-actualization—can be considered. The ruminations of an American farmer who gave up a lucrative and secure job for the chancy and sometimes unpleasant life of farming both supports and refutes this idea. As Lisa Kerschner writes: “Sweaty, dirty, hot and tired. Those are the words that describe how I feel on a typical July day.... Oh, and then there are gnats and biting flies.... It’s times like these that I’ve wondered, why on earth am I doing this?” (Kerschner, 2008: 17). In one sense, Kerschner’s “labor of love” refutes Maslow’s ideas about human need fulfillment. After all, she is deriving great satisfaction from a job that depends on the weather, back-breaking work over long hours, and the vagaries of the marketplace. Furthermore, as she notes, “farmers are not always looked upon very highly” (Kerschner, 2008). However, her explanation for why she derives such satisfaction from such work is a testament to an understanding of Maslow’s ideas. She argues: “It is often said that the three most basic needs are shelter, water and food. Growing food, then, may be one of man’s highest callings. We all need to eat, and most of our food comes from farms. I get a great sense of satisfaction knowing that my farming life is feeding people”. In other words, as Kerschner helps others satisfy their most basic desire for sustenance, she is able to feel great about herself—perhaps even self-actualize—as she realizes her critical role in this process.

Maslow proposed that these five types of needs are arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency. The notion of prepotency suggests that lower-level needs must be satisfied before an individual can move on to higher-level needs. For example, an individual will not attempt to satisfy affiliation needs until needs for physiological functioning and safety have been provided for. Thus, in the organizational context, social relationships on the job will not be satisfying if the organization has not provided adequate wages and working conditions.

Although there has been mixed support about its empirical accuracy (see, e.g., Kamalanabhan, Uma & Vasanthi, 1999; Miner, 1980), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is critical in its provision of a clear example of human relations principles and their possible application to the organizational context. Maslow's concentration on the satisfaction of human needs—especially the higher-order needs of esteem and self-actualization—reflects the shift in organizational theorizing that began when the Hawthorne researchers “discovered” the importance of social interaction and managerial attention in the workplace.

McGregor's X and Y Theory

The second exemplar of the human relations movement that we will consider is Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y (McGregor, 1960). McGregor was a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and one of the strongest advocates of the human relations movement. Theory X and Theory Y represent the divergent assumptions that managers can hold about organizational functioning. As you will see in the following list of propositions and beliefs, Theory X is representative of a manager influenced by the most negative aspects of classical management theories. In contrast, a Theory Y manager is one who adheres to the precepts of the human relations movement.

McGregor (1957: 23) spells out three propositions of the typical Theory X manager. These propositions argue that management is responsible for organizing money, material, and people for economic ends; that people must be controlled and motivated to fit organizational needs; and that without intervention and direction, people would be passive or resistant to the achievement of organizational needs.

McGregor's Theory X postulates (McGregor, 1957: 23) about human nature are even more straightforward:

1. The average man is by nature indolent—he works as little as possible.
2. He lacks ambition, dislikes responsibility, and prefers to be led.
3. He is inherently self-centered and indifferent to organizational needs.
4. He is by nature resistant to change.
5. He is gullible, not very bright, the ready dupe of the charlatan and the demagogue.

McGregor asserts that these beliefs are widely held by managers but are incorrect. He believes that managers should conceptualize workers as motivated by the higher-order needs in Maslow's hierarchy and as capable of independent achievement in the workplace. These managerial assumptions are represented in McGregor's presentation of Theory Y (McGregor, 1960: 47–48):

1. The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest.
2. External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort toward organizational objectives. Man will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which he is committed.
3. Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement. The most significant of such rewards, such as the satisfaction of ego and self-actualization needs, can be direct products of efforts directed toward organizational objectives.
4. The average human being learns under proper conditions not only to accept but also to seek responsibility.
5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population.
6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized.

Thus, a Theory X manager assumes that a strong and forceful hand is essential for harnessing the efforts of basically unmotivated workers. In contrast, a Theory Y manager assumes that workers are highly motivated to satisfy achievement and self-actualization

needs and that the job of the manager is to bring out the natural tendencies of these intelligent and motivated workers. Not surprisingly, McGregor advocates the use of Theory Y management. He believes that behaviors stemming from these managerial assumptions (such as management by objectives and participation in decision making) would lead to a more satisfied and more productive workforce.

McGregor's thinking—like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory—emphasizes a conceptualization of employees as individuals characterized by needs for attention, social interaction, and individual achievement. Employees in human relations theories are not only motivated by financial gain but by the desire to satisfy these higher-order needs. Indeed, in comparison to the machine metaphor of classical theorists, a metaphor that could aptly be applied to the human relations approach is that of a family. Using this metaphor emphasizes the notion of relationships as central to our understanding of organizational functioning. Just as a machine thrives on precision and regularity, a family thrives when needs are fulfilled and opportunities are provided for self-actualization. However, it should be noted that there are still distinctions among members of a family. Parents in a family—like management in a human relations organization—are held responsible for providing opportunities in which children's needs can be fulfilled and talents can be nurtured. And children in a family—like workers in a human relations organization—are often limited in terms of the power and influence they wield within the family unit. Thus, human relations theorists share an allegiance to principles that highlight human needs and the satisfaction of those needs through interaction with others in the workplace and through the choices managers make about motivating and rewarding employees. Indeed, in moving from the classical theorists of the early twentieth century to human relations theorists of the mid-twentieth century, we shift from a belief that “workers work” to a belief that “workers feel”. However, there was yet another movement afoot following the human relations movement. This was a consideration of how workers can contribute to the workplace through more than just “working” or “feeling” but through thinking and participating in many aspects of organizational functioning. This approach—the human resources approach—is considered next.

Spotlight on Scholarship

Half a century ago, McGregor introduced the idea that a supervisor's assumptions about workers could make a big difference in the organizational context. McGregor believed that managers who hold Theory Y assumptions are much more successful in motivating workers toward high performance than Theory X managers. McGregor—and other human relations theorists—believed that leaders' assumptions would lead to different ways of behaving toward subordinates and that these different ways of behavior would influence worker satisfaction and eventual workplace performance.

Although there has been some evidence that Theory X and Theory Y assumptions influence leadership behaviors and the beliefs and attitudes of subordinates, there has been surprisingly little research that looks at what is presumably one of the most important intervening variables in this human relations process: the communication style of managers. It makes sense that if the assumptions of leaders are going to matter in the organizational context, this difference will occur because the leaders are communicating in contrasting ways with their subordinates.

In 2008, Kevin Sager took on this intuitively logical—but under-investigated—idea in a survey study that asked organizational managers about both their assumptions regarding workers and the workplace and the typical style they use in communicating with subordinates. Sager considered six different communicator style variables: the extent to which a manager is dominant, supportive, anxious, closed, nonverbally expressive, and impression-leaving (either positive or negative). He then correlated responses on these style measures with measures of Theory X and Theory Y managerial assumptions.

Sager's results were not especially surprising, but they provide good support for the idea that the way a manager thinks about employees and the workplace can have a systematic effect on the way that manager communicates with employees. Specifically, Theory X managers were more likely to use a "dominant" style of arguing and asserting control over subordinates in the workplace. In contrast, Theory Y managers were more likely to be supportive and nonverbally expressive and less likely to be anxious in their workplace communication patterns. For both Theory X and Theory Y managers, strongly held assumptions were correlated with communication patterns that are likely to leave an impression—presumably, positive for Theory Y managers and negative for Theory X managers—on their employees.

These results are consistent with fifty years of thinking about management assumptions and support the idea that these assumptions will lead to very different communication patterns. As Sager concludes, "the warm style profile of the Theory Y superior may serve to reinforce subordinates' sense of worth and enhance their sense of relatedness to others.... The cold style profile of the Theory X superior, on the other hand, may function to heighten subordinates' sense of interpersonal distance between self and other" (Sager, 2008: 309). And to take the reasoning one step further, managers with "warm" or "cold" profiles could strongly influence the attitudes, behavior, and mental health of those working for them.

Sager, K. L. (2008). An exploratory study of the relationships between theory X/Y assumptions and superior communicator style. Management Communication Quarterly, 22, 288–312.

Communication in Human Relations and Human Resources Organizations

Content of Communication

In Chapter 2, we introduced the typology of Farace, Monge, and Russell (1977) that considered various types of communication in organizations. We noted that organizations following a classical model will emphasize task communication. However, as we consider human relations and human resources approaches, we see the other two types of communication content come into play. In human relations organizations, task-related communication still exists, but it is accompanied by communication that attempted to maintain the quality of human relationships within the organization—maintenance communication. And when we consider interaction in human resources

organizations, the third type of communication in the Farace, Monge, and Russell typology comes to the forefront. This is innovation communication, which is interaction about how the job can be done better, new products the organization could produce, different ways of structuring the organization, and so on. Because the human resources approach to organizing places a premium on input from employees, the innovation content of communication is critical.

Communication in Classical, Human Relations, and Human Resources Organizations

	Classical Approach	Human Relations Approach	Human Resources Approach
Communication Content	Task	Task and social	Task, social, and innovation
Communication Direction	Vertical (downward)	Vertical and horizontal	All directions, team-based
Communication Channel	Usually written	Often face-to-face	All channels
Communication Style	Formal	Informal	Both but especially informal

Sumber: Miller (2012: 52)

Direction of Communication Flow

In classical organizations, communication flows in a predominantly downward direction, as directives flow from management to workers. A human relations approach does not eliminate this need for vertical information flow but instead adds an emphasis on horizontal communication. As discussed earlier in this chapter, human relations theorists believe that an important aspect of need satisfaction is communication among employees, so interaction that flows horizontally among employees is just as important as downward communication in the accomplishment of organizational goals. In a human resources organization, the goal is to encourage the flow of ideas from all locations throughout the organization. Thus, in the simplest sense, communication in this organizational approach will include all directional flows—downward, upward, horizontal, and diagonal. More specifically, this multidirectional communication flow often takes place in team-based settings in human resources organizations.

That is, rather than restricting communication flow to the hierarchy of the organization (whatever the direction), a human resources organization will often reconfigure the organizational chart to optimize the flow of new ideas.

Channel of Communication

As you saw in Chapter 2, organizations run in a classical style are dominated by written communication because a strong value is placed on permanence. In the human relations approach, in contrast, face-to-face communication takes center stage. This channel of interaction allows for more immediate feedback and more consideration of nonverbal cues. Thus, face-to-face communication is more appropriate for addressing the human needs emphasized in the human relations approach. In a human resources organization, it is unlikely that any particular channel of communication will be favored over others. Human resources theorists desire to maximize the productivity of the organization through the intelligent use of human resources. Sometimes, these resources can be best utilized through face-to-face contact in meetings. Sometimes, the situation calls for written memos or e-mail. Thus, some scholars have suggested that effective managers will work to match the communication channel to the task at hand (Trevino, Lengel & Daft, 1987). For example, these researchers believe that tasks with a high level of uncertainty require a communication channel that is relatively “rich” (e.g., face-to-face interaction), whereas tasks with a low level of uncertainty require a communication channel that is relatively “lean” (e.g., written communication).

Style of Communication

I noted in Chapter 2 that classical organizations emphasize formal communication, as standards of professionalism and bureaucratic decorum hold sway. In contrast, a human relations organization is likely to want to break down the status differential between managers and employees as a means of satisfying social needs. Thus, it is likely that informal communication—with less emphasis on titles, “business” dress, and bureaucratized language—will be emphasized. However, human resources organizations have the dual goals of enhancing organizational effectiveness and fulfilling human needs.

On the needs side of the equation, an informal style is most likely to satisfy needs for affiliation. On the organizational effectiveness side, an informal style will also probably serve better than a formal one because employees will probably feel more comfortable contributing in a relatively informal manner. However, a human resources manager would certainly not eschew the use of a formal style if it were the most appropriate for the task at hand.

Human Relations and Human Resources in Organizations Today

Human relations theories were proposed as a reaction to classical management systems and to evidence that meeting human needs is a critical aspect of organizational performance. The basic impetus of these ideas has certainly carried over the decades to today's organizations. For example, the influence of human relations ideas can clearly be seen in the general attitude of management toward employees. It would be difficult indeed to find managers today who would characterize their subordinates as interchangeable cogs whose needs play no role in organizational decisions. For example, if a manufacturing organization needed to shut down a factory, management would be likely to consider both economic issues and human factors, such as the needs of workers and their families for severance pay and job placement or retraining programs. Furthermore, human relations principles can be seen in today's organizations in the area of job design. In many of today's organizations, an effort is made to enrich jobs by designing tasks that will satisfy some of the higher-order needs of workers through jobs that increase autonomy, variety, and task significance.

In general, though, it is the principles of human resources theorists that are most often reflected in today's organizations. Indeed, many of the ideas of early human resources theorists have been transformed in light of the contingencies facing today's organizations. Theoretically, two of the most important developments in this area are the consideration of organizations as learning systems and the development of systems of knowledge management.

Peter Senge and his colleagues (Senge, 1990; Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith & Kleiner, 1994) have made a distinction between learning organizations and those that could be seen as having “learning disabilities”. Learning organizations are those that emphasize mental flexibility, team learning, a shared vision, complex thinking, and personal mastery. It is proposed that learning organizations can be promoted through participation and dialogue in the workplace. Scholars interested in knowledge management (see DeLong, 2004; Heaton & Taylor, 2002), see the organization as embodying a cycle of knowledge creation, development, and application. Both of these approaches, then, have further developed the notion that effective organizations are those that can harness the cognitive abilities of their employees, and, indeed, these ideas developed from the kernel of the human resources approach are seen by many as the ideal way to run contemporary organizations.

In the final sections of this chapter, we will look at how these abstract principles are often embodied in the practice of organizational life. We will first consider the question of what constitutes human resources management in today’s organizations and then discuss how these programs can be instituted to enhance their effectiveness.

Summary

In this chapter, we looked at two related approaches to the study and practice of organizational communication: the human relations approach and the human resources approach. The human relations approach was inspired, in large part, by the Hawthorne studies, which pointed scholars and practitioners toward the importance of human needs and the consideration of management practice and job design to meet those needs. The human relations approach was illustrated by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory and McGregor’s contrast between Theory X and Theory Y assumptions. However, there was often limited support for human relations theories, and the principles of human relations were often instituted in half-hearted and manipulative ways. The human resources movement that emerged from these frustrations emphasizes the need to maximize both organizational productivity and individual employee satisfaction through the intelligent use of human resources. Human resources ideas were illustrated

through the models of Blake and Mouton (the Managerial Grid) and Rensis Likert (System IV). We then examined the nature of communication in human relations and human resources organizations by considering factors of communication content, direction, channels, and style. Finally, we considered ways in which human relations and, especially, human resources principles are utilized in today's organizations. We discussed the "what" of human resources management by looking at both specific programs and general principles for "putting people first". We concluded with some ideas about "how" human resources programs can be instituted.

Discussion Questions

1. A great deal of research has discredited many of the findings from the Hawthorne studies. Given this research, why were the Hawthorne studies influential when they were conducted? Are they still influential today? Why or why not?
2. In jobs you have had, what aspects of the workplace did you find particularly satisfying? What role did managers have in making the organization a satisfying place? How do your experiences, then, fit in with the ideas of Abraham Maslow and Douglas McGregor?
3. In Chapter 2, we noted that the classical approach follows a "machine metaphor," and in this chapter, we associated human relations theorists with a "family metaphor". What metaphor would you use to describe the human resources approach? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the metaphor you propose?
4. Is the human resources approach more appropriate for some kinds of jobs and organizations than others? Why or why not? Can human resources principles be adapted for a variety of workplaces?

CASE STUDY

Teamwork at Marshall's Processing Plant

Marshall's is a large plant in the Midwestern United States that processes corn into the fructose syrup used in many soft drinks. Marshall's is a continuous processing plant, running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There are two major components of the plant. In the wet mill, where seventy-five employees work, the corn is soaked. Then, the soaked corn moves on to the refinery (employing eighty employees), where the soggy corn is processed into fructose syrup. Marshall's is a computerized state-of-the-art plant, and much of the work in the wet mill and refinery consists of monitoring, maintenance, cleanup, and troubleshooting. There are also thirty staff members who work in the office and in various other support positions. All the employees except the support staff work twelve-hour shifts.

Three years ago, Marshall's instituted a "team management" system to enhance productivity in the plant and improve worker morale. The program included two types of teams. First, work teams met on a weekly basis to consider ways of improving the work process within their own portion of the plant. In addition, the plant-wide "Marshall Team" met on a monthly basis to consider decisions about issues facing the plant as a whole, such as benefit and compensation plans, company policies, and capital equipment purchases. Each work team elected one member to serve on the Marshall Team. Management at Marshall's regarded the teams as "consultative" bodies. That is, management used team suggestions as input but retained the right to make final decisions about all plant operations. For the first three years of the team program, the same set of people participated heavily in team meetings and the same people tended to get elected to the Marshall Team. These go-getters took their roles very seriously and liked having a voice in company decisions. However, management at Marshall's was becoming concerned about the people who did not participate in the team program. After evaluating the problem for a while, management decided that it was a complicated issue and that there were three kinds of employees who were not participating in the team program.

First, one group of employees complained that the program led to too many meetings and had a lot of extra busywork. This group was epitomized by Shu-Chu Lim. Shu-Chu was a hard worker and was well-respected at the plant, but she was also a nonsense kind of person. When asked about participating in work teams and the Marshall Team, she said: "I don't have time to sit around and shoot the breeze. When I'm on the job, I want to be working, not just chitchatting and passing the time". A second set of workers resented the fact that they had to deal with so much of their own work situation. These employees believed that management was not providing enough input and was counting on the work teams to figure everything out. For example, consider Bill Berning. Bill had lived near the Marshall's plant all his life and liked working there because the pay was good. However, he saw his job simply as a way to earn money that he could spend on the great love of his life: motorcycles. When management started asking him to do more and more on the job, he just clammed up. After all, he argued, management was getting paid to make the decisions, not him. Finally, a third set of employees refused to participate because they did not think their input would be listened to. In many ways, this was the group that most disturbed higher management because many of these people had participated in team activities in the past. Harvey Nelson was a prime example. When the team management system was instituted, Harvey was very active in his area's work team and was even elected to the Marshall Team several times. However, after a couple of years, Harvey stopped participating. When asked, Harvey said: "I thought that the team idea was great at first, but then I realized that management is just going to do what it wants regardless of what we say. I can live with autocratic managers—I just don't want them to make me wake up early for a team meeting and then ignore what I have to say. If the teams are just window-dressing, it's not worth it to me". Marshall's wants to have a team management system that really works, and they know that they need to get more participation in order to have this happen. However, they've now realized that the problem is more complex than they realized at first. You have been called in as a consultant to help them fix their program. What kind of suggestions will you make?

CASE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. Do the original goals of the team management system used at Marshall's comport more with the philosophy of human relations or human resources management? How would the theorists discussed in this chapter (Maslow, McGregor, Likert, and Blake and Mouton) analyze the current situation at Marshall's?
2. Employees identified three reasons for not participating in the program at Marshall's. How would you deal with each of these problems? Is it possible (or desirable) to satisfy all groups of employees and achieve full participation? Would human relations and human resources theorists have different ideas about the importance of these various reasons for not participating in the team management system?
3. What changes would you make in the team management system at Marshall's that would increase participation? What changes would you make to enhance the effective use of human resources at Marshall's? How would you institute these changes and communicate them to employees?