

## 2.1: Putting It Together- History of Management



The key principles of management are timeless.

At the outset of this module, we contrasted Amazon with the great businesses of the past and asked if the management principles developed a century ago are still relevant today. Let's consider that question again in more detail given what you have now learned.

It is estimated that Amazon processes more than six hundred million shipments every year. How important do you think efficiency is to the company's leadership? Consider the time and motion studies developed in the school of scientific management and their applicability to quickly processing orders in one of Amazon's distribution centers. If you are a manager at an Amazon warehouse, it is vital that you measure all aspects of productivity.

Now consider for a moment the scope of Amazon's empire. When most people think of Amazon, they think about the marketplace and the ability to buy almost anything on the company's website. CEO Jeff Bezos, however, often refers to the three pillars of Amazon's business: marketplace, Amazon Web Services (AWS), and the company's Prime membership service. Each of these units is massive in its own right. Additionally, Amazon has more than forty subsidiaries such as Zappos.com, Diapers.com, and Goodreads.<sup>[1]</sup>

With a business that large and diverse, how can leadership possibly maintain control? Think back to what you learned about the bureaucratic school of management and how that might apply to a company like Amazon. In that section, you learned that the four functions of management are planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. These skills are vital to maintaining focus across such a massive organization.

The competition for talent is intense in the global marketplace. With the emergence of social feedback sites such as Glassdoor, no employer can ignore the needs of its employees and remain competitive in the human resource space. Managers at Amazon are not immune to this reality. Your knowledge of the history of humanistic management and its focus on employee conditions has provided you with key insights into effectively managing human capital.

Think of your study of the history of management principles in this module like tools in a toolbox. Every management challenge you face will require a different set of tools to resolve. By understanding the broad spectrum of management theories, you are adding more tools to the box. This will, in turn, make you better equipped to manage the modern business organization.

1. Mac, R. (2016, April 06). Jeff Bezos Calls Amazon 'Best Place In The World To Fail' In Shareholder Letter. Retrieved August 01, 2017, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanmac/2016/04/05/jeff-bezos-calls-amazon-best-place-in-the-world-to-fail-in-shareholder-letter/#539756be7bc5>

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