

8.19: Introduction to the Hawthorne Effect

What you'll learn to do: describe the Hawthorne effect, and explain its significance in management

Understanding and optimizing motivation is a study that dates back to the ancient Greek philosophers and scientists. Over the centuries, the focus was primarily on improving individual performance. In 1924, Australian sociologist Elton Mayo, who later became an industrial research professor at Harvard, began a series of studies that demonstrated that employee motivation is heavily influenced by social factors. Mayo's findings, referred to as the "Hawthorne Effect," marked a radical change in motivational theory and management practice. Many of today's ideas about the connection between human motivation and employee performance can be traced back to the discoveries of the Hawthorne studies.

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