

# **A Holistic Approach to Management**

**Mehdi N. Bahadori**

Professor (emeritus) of mechanical engineering

Sharif University of Technology

bahadori@sharif.edu

## **Abstract**

Innovation, productivity and profit of any enterprise can be increased if the personnel are content and happy, and have love and respect for one another and for the natural environment. With love and respect for nature, clean sources of energy will be employed, waste production and the environmental pollution decreased.

Human values, including love, respect, ethics and motivation to do one's best can be taught and cultivated in the personnel of any corporation. It is recommended that the managers, at all levels of the enterprise, adopt an attitude of treating their personnel as their brothers and sisters, developing love and respect for them, encouraging- and creating a working atmosphere for them to do likewise.

A procedure to implement holistic management in an enterprise is presented. In this method, particular attention is to be paid to human relation, energy and material consumption and their environmental effects. Areas where renewable sources of energy and material recycling can be employed are to be identified. Workshops are to be organized in order for the personnel to cultivate human values and ethics in themselves, and have the motivation to do one's best. Personnel at different divisions of the enterprise are to be encouraged and helped to come up with a code of ethics for their divisions. The top management is to come up with a code of ethics for the corporation. A sense of belonging to the enterprise is emphasized. Economic performance of the enterprise, and the contentment and happiness of the personnel are to be monitored during the implementation process. The results are to be compared with the conditions prior to the implementation plan.

## **Introduction**

Management deals with establishing and achieving goals and objectives [1-9]. It involves making use of human resources as well as materials, machines and money. Management is a process consisting of planning and organizing to motivate the people involved to innovate in order to achieve the objectives set forth for it.

People are by far the most important resource available to management. Management is by, through and for people [1]. A successful manager knows how to select, allocate, and update the utilization of resources, and most importantly, how to communicate with his/her personnel in order to make their tasks challenging and satisfying. He/she knows how to provide a work- place environment to flourish creativity and innovation in order to achieve the stated objectives; to getting the personnel to want to do what is wanted of them to do [2]. An individual can be motivated by having a very good relationship with a supervisor who provides emotional support and help in solving their personal problems [3]. Greatest motivation is achieved when the management has created an atmosphere of love and respect in the work place; treating each individual as his/her brother and sister, and the personnel treating each other the same.

Rapid depletion of natural resources and global warming are the most pressing problems that humanity is facing today. These problems are not merely technological; they are social, political- and transnational [4]. A new approach is needed to solve these problems. We need to consider a holistic approach to solving these- and many other local or regional problems that we are facing today. We need to adopt a holistic management in order to deal with these problems, and many other problems we are facing today.

## **Major hypothesis**

We believe the following:

1. For whatever we are doing, there is always a better way of doing it. We need to find it out.
2. The people involved in any work place perform their duties best, are more motivated, have a higher degree of innovation and creativity, if they are content and happy.
3. Possession of human values, particularly love and respect for colleagues, the natural environment, and all beings lead to happiness.
4. It is possible to teach and cultivate human values in people working at any enterprise.

5. One can change, or modify, his/her attitudes in life, believing that ***we are born to be happy***, and all activities should be aimed at increasing one's long-range or life-time happiness. Wealth, fame and power do not bring about happiness. They can secure conveniences in life, but not necessarily happiness.
6. ***Rendering of the most effective and unselfish service to those who need it most, with unconditional love for them, can bring about the greatest long- range or life– time happiness.***
7. Desire and motivation for rendering such a service can be cultivated in people everywhere.
8. A higher degree of innovation and creativity is needed to solve the problems we are facing today, particularly global warming and the rapid depletion of natural resources. This is also true for any entrepreneurial and development problems.
9. Managers at different levels in a corporation can increase the innovation and productivity of their personnel by treating the men and women working directly under their supervision as their brothers and sisters, loving and respecting them as such, and encouraging them to have the same relationship among themselves.

## Discussion

### Evaluating one's happiness

A somewhat different approach to management is presented. It is based on the belief that ***we are born to be happy***, and all activities should be aimed at increasing our long-range or life-time happiness [10, 11].

All elements contributing to one's happiness, or distracting from it, can be considered in the following equation, which we call *happinometry* equation [11].

$$\mathbf{H} = \mathbf{J} - \mathbf{F} - \mathbf{E}$$

In this equation **H** represents one's happiness, **J** all elements directly contributing to happiness, the most important of which are: rendering of unselfish and unconditional *love and service*, having a sense of accomplishment, and possessing human values, such as forgiveness, gratitude, hope, optimism, well- wishfulness, etc. [11].

In this equation **F** indicates the elements related to our physical body which distracts from our happiness; elements such as hunger, malnutrition, physical discomfort, and sickness. We call **F** as physical misery. Similarly, **E** refers to emotional miseries, which includes: anger, anxiety, arrogance, attachment, fear, gossip, grief, guilt, hypocrisy, jealousy, lust, malice, vengeance, worry, worthlessness, etc. [11].

***In our approach for holistic management, we should make every effort to maximize H.*** This is done by maximizing J and at the same time minimizing F and E.

If we could somehow quantify our happiness, by assigning numbers to the elements constituting J, F and E [11], we could come up with a value for our happiness, H, every day. If all members of the enterprise do the same evaluation every day, then we could determine an average value for the personnel's happiness in a given period, for example, a year. We can call this average value of happiness as *Personnel's Index of Happiness (PIH)*. The purpose of the holistic approach to management is to maximize the productivity and the profit of the enterprise, while making every effort to increase *PIH* to the highest value possible.

The first step toward increasing H or *PIH* is to reduce, or eliminate, the elements constituting physical misery, or F. The management should first make sure that the following necessities of life are secured for their personnel under all circumstances:

1. Clean air,
2. Clean water,
3. Healthy food,
4. Health care,
5. Education for the personnel's children, both to teach the children how to make a living, and also how to live. That is, (a) to develop skills in students so that they can secure good jobs, (b) develop a stewardship for the natural environment, and (c) teach and cultivate human values in them. That is, to develop a holistic education in them.

## **Development of human values**

As a means of reducing the elements constituting the emotional miseries E, and increasing the elements of joy J, we need to teach and cultivate human values in people at all levels and ages, employing all means possible. Some of the human values to be considered are [11, 12]:

1. ***Desire and motivation for rendering the most effective and unselfish service to those who need it most, with unconditional love for them,***
2. Acceptance of others as they are,
3. Courage,
4. Devotion,
5. Enthusiasm,
6. Forgiveness,
7. Gratitude,
8. Humility,
9. Hope,
10. Integrity,,

11. Love and respect for all beings
12. Moderation,
13. Patience,
14. Persistence,
15. Sacrifice,
16. Self-confidence,
17. Stewardship for nature and the natural environment
18. Trust,
19. Truth,
20. Well- wishfulness.

### **Consideration of various management schemes**

Conventional scheme of management in an enterprise is to maximize the profit, while obeying the rules and regulations dictated to it. Human resources, educated and trained to carry out various tasks, are made use of. Management makes use of natural resources available to them at the lowest cost, with the financial support of banks or loan institutions. Normally no attention is given to the impact of the project execution on the local, regional or global environment, or on the depletion of the natural resources. The main objective is to reach the production goal, with maximum short-range or long-range profits possible. Quality of products is maintained in order to compete with rivals. Motivation, innovation and observance of work ethics are encouraged, and often rewarded, if they lead to increasing the economic gains of the stakeholders.

Great majority of enterprises throughout the world follow this scheme of management.

### **Sustainable development**

After many years following the *care-free* scheme of management described above, scholars and concerned scientists throughout the world, primarily in the developed countries, realized the limited capacity of natural resources and the environment to sustain life for long. They started appreciating and respecting nature more. They proposed the term *sustainable development*, implying the use of natural resources to the extent that people who will live on earth later will have the ability to maintain their life-style.

Because of the realization of this fact and concern of the general public, laws were passed and enforced in many developed countries to use natural resources more wisely, reduce their wastage, and to reduce the environmental pollutions. However, these efforts have been very small and insufficient.

With the care-free management and development schemes which have been going on throughout the world for many centuries now, we are facing the threat of global warming, and the rapid depletion of natural resources.

### **Holistic management**

In holistic approach to management, shown in Figure 1, emphasize is made to maximizing the productivity and the profit of the enterprise, while keeping the employees content and happy, and the natural environment as pure as possible. Because the personnel possess professional ethics and a high degree of human values, including love and respect for one another and a sense of belonging to the enterprise, they are motivated to innovate and perform best. The productivity and profit of the company then increase.

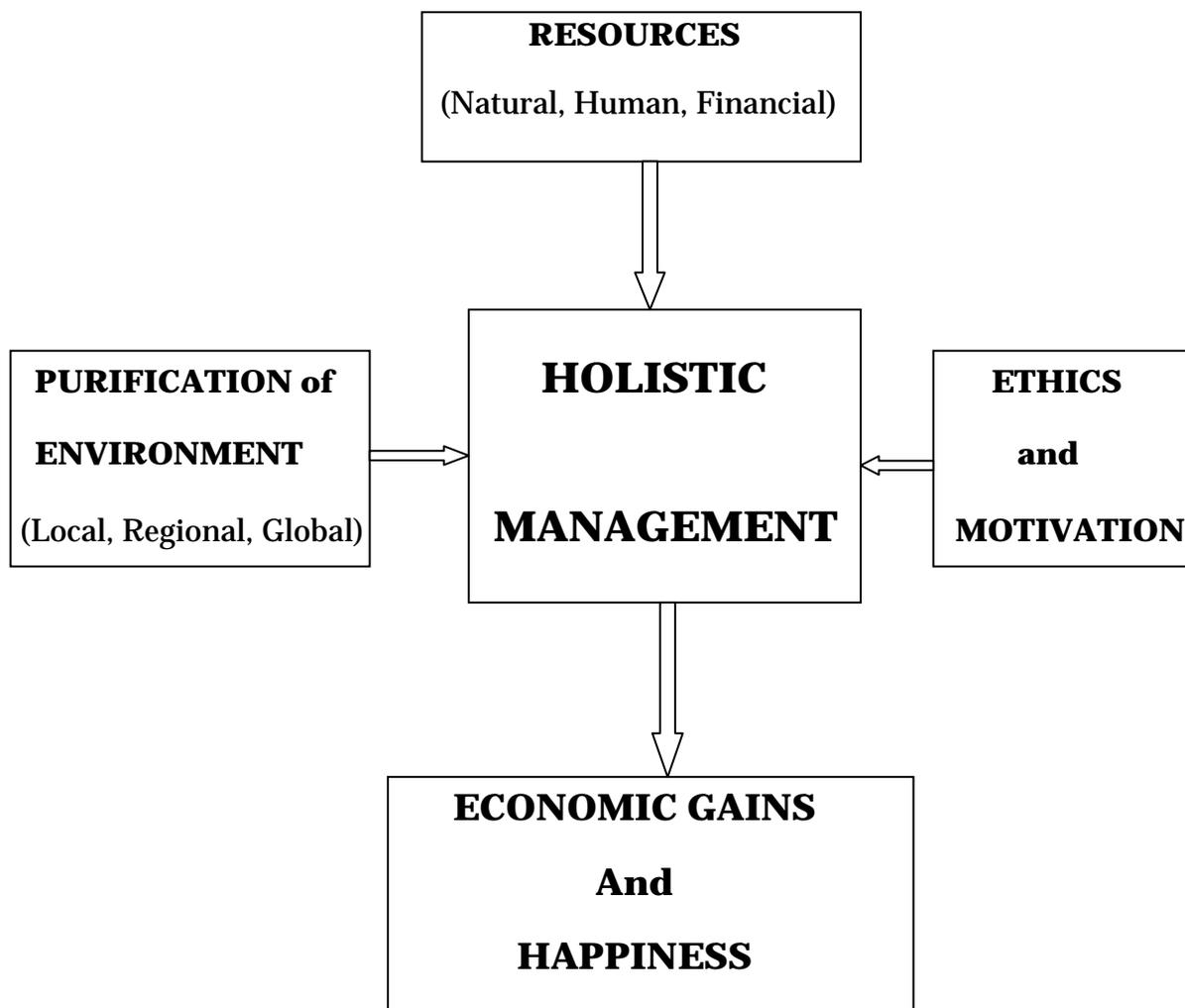


Figure 1, Holistic management. The objective is to maximize the economic gains of the enterprise, along with the contentment and happiness of the personnel. Attention is particularly given to the governing rules and regulations, and to the cultivation of ethics, motivation and human values in personnel.

## **Implementation of a holistic management**

The following steps are to be taken:

1. Evaluate the management of the enterprise, paying particular attention to the human relation, energy and material consumption, environmental effects resulting from the operation of the enterprise.
2. Identify the areas where renewable sources of energy and material recycling can be employed. Effects of such applications on environment are to be assessed. Attention to this point is not just for economic reasons, or complying with the rules and regulations, rather out of love and respect for the natural environment.
3. Arrange workshops to identify the human values which need to be cultivated in the personnel of different divisions of the enterprise [11].
4. Devise plans, and organize workshops in order to cultivate human values in the personnel at various divisions.
5. Help the personnel at different divisions of the enterprise to come up with a code of ethics for their divisions.
6. Help the top management to come up with a code of ethics, to be adopted for the enterprise.
7. In the cultivation of human values, and in adopting the code of ethics, emphasis should be placed on the values of love and respect for the natural environment, and all people concerned, treating each others as brothers or sisters. A sense of belonging to the enterprise will be emphasized.
8. Economic performance of the enterprise, and the contentment and happiness of the personnel are to be monitored. The results are to be compared with the conditions prior to the implementation plan.
9. Make a general assessment of the holistic management scheme for the enterprise.

## References

1. G.R. Terry, *Principles of Management*, sixth ed., 1972, Richard D. Irwin, Inc.
2. K. Williams and B. Johnson, *Introducing Management, a Development Guide*, second ed., 2004, Elsevier.
3. R.K. Jain, H.C. Triandis and C.W. Weick, *Managing Research, Development, and Innovation, Managing the Unmanageable*, third ed., 2010, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
4. B. von Stamm and A. Trifilova, *The Future of Innovation*, 2009, Gower Publishing Ltd.
5. R.A. Webber, *Culture and Management, Text and Reading in Comparative Management*, 1969, Richard D. Irwin, Inc.
6. A. Chapanis, *Human Factors in Systems Engineering*, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
7. / *mental Management*, 2008, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
8. W.A. Wines, *Ethics, Law, and Business*, 2006, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
9. L.M. Field, *Business and the Buddha, Doing Well by Doing Good*, 2007, Wisdom Publishing.
10. M.N. Bahadori, *University of Life*, second ed., 1993, Blue Dolphin Publishing, Inc.
11. M.N. Bahadori, *Love to be Happy, Secrets of Sustainable Joy*, 1994, Blue Dolphin Publishing, Inc.
12. M.N Bahadori, *Ethics in Engineering and Engineering of Ethics* (in Farsi), 2009, Yazda Publishing Co., Tehran, Iran.