

3E6 OB & Change – Cribs 2003

In general terms, each question is designed to give some opportunity for fairly basic descriptions of various concepts/practices but then to give more open-ended analytical questions which offer the possibility for greater originality and a wider spread of marks.

1. The first, main part of the question requires as a minimum explanation of the 4 main principles of Taylorism; of the notion of separating conception and execution and of the assumptions about 'soldiering' and economic motivation. Better answers will also identify contextual issues (e.g. the emergence of large-scale industry; migrant workforces). Sophisticated answers would draw attention to the specifically engineering assumptions in Taylorism, perhaps referring to Shenav's analysis of this. The second part of the question invites an assessment of the commonly held view that HRT is differentiated from Taylorism by virtue of its attention to the human factor. All answers should be able to explain this, and better answers would identify the origins of the Hawthorne experiments as scientific management experiments, the fact that Taylor had been aware of informal organization and the shared pursuit of control. Sophisticated answers might follow authors such as Nikolas Rose in seeing HRT as a considerable extension of the locus of control.
2. The first part of the question calls for some simple descriptive material of the basic Tuckmann 4 stage model (possibly updating to the 6 stage model). The PE model should explain that group performance increases at the midway stage (possibly adding that there is another step change predicted at the end). The second part, on roles, is again descriptive in the first instance, and could choose from a number of models of group roles (e.g. Belbin); the explanation of reasons for this must go beyond issues of personality by pointing to other determinants (task, culture) but also identify emotional or psychological drives to particular roles. The final, main part of the question should cover group think, freeloading, risk shift and more sophisticated answers will also cover splitting and projection.
3. The first part of the question invites some descriptive material covering saturation of mass markets, global competition and the rise of consumer societies. Better answers might point to the geographical and social clustering of these shifts. The second part requires explaining the culture model either in its generic form (shared values replacing rules etc) or more specifically some model such as 7S or Excellence; the PB model will likely be explained in terms of Heckscher, although there are other possibilities. Answers should be able to understand how culture and PB models differ – principally in terms of the fluidity of the organizational boundary and possibly in terms of time-space changes associated with mobile technologies. The third and main part of the question should rehearse the problems of contradiction, resistance and interpretation for culture management; the enduring need for rules in large organizations for PB, and the issue of organizational commitment. But there are many possibilities here for sophisticated answers to explore (e.g. trust, dynamics of control etc)
4. The first part is descriptive and should include not just the unfreeze-change-refreeze model but some indications of techniques for achieving each stage. The second part invites reflection on the limitations of mechanical models, probably focussing on issues of temporality, control of variables and, for strong answers, human agency. The third, main part is quite wide-ranging but it is inviting answers which look at the 'non-rational' aspects of organizational change. Simple answers would focus on tactics of organizational power, perhaps also giving some material on leadership. Stronger answers will consider issues of bounded rationality, muddling through and perhaps even make some links back to groupthink (whether or not they have answered q2)