

**THE PRINCIPLES OF  
RATIONAL INDUSTRIAL  
MANAGEMENT**

***ALSO BY J. J. GILLESPIE***

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# THE PRINCIPLES OF RATIONAL INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT

BY

JAMES J. GILLESPIE

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"TRAINING IN FOREMANSHIP AND MANAGEMENT," "FOUNDRY  
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT," "ENGINEERING  
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TO  
GEORGE AND NETTE DICKSON  
FROM  
F.E.G., I.D.G., J.J.G.

## AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I ACKNOWLEDGE with pleasure my debt to Professor Elton Mayo of Harvard University for the encouragement I received from him. His work in America, together with that of his assistants, has in my opinion done much to expose the crude shortsightedness of pseudo-scientific management, and has indicated along what lines management research should develop.

It will be observed that I have drawn largely from the works of numerous authorities on sociology, psychology, economics, and logical method. I owe much to the writers of these works.

Numerous friends have read and criticized the manuscript and have given me much encouragement, Dr. V. Cofman prominent among them. To Mr. A. S. Andrews, of Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, is due special acknowledgment for his patience with two difficult subjects—myself and the book.

## PREFACE

THIS book attempts to do two things: first, to expose the pretences of what is called "scientific management" and, second, to institute a reasonable basis for balanced management practice. Writing as one who has worked under "scientific management" as machine operator and tool setter, with it as foreman, works manager, and general manager, for it as organizer and consultant, and, on more than one recent occasion, after it as repairer of the damage it had done, I find the task of exposing the poverty of its meaning and method an easy one; the task of finding in the combination of the high personal values of pre-scientific management and modern knowledge a sensible management philosophy has not, however, been so easy. This latter task has necessitated nearly three years' research into biology, psychology, economics, sociology, and logical method with, as object, the setting up of a statement of principles of management on which management practice could be based.

Before outlining the main conclusions of the book, I would like to make it clear that I, in company with many other students, regret that the word "scientific" should ever have been tacked on to the methods and procedures of this cult of industrial activity. As is shown later, the cult has never claimed to be scientific by virtue of its use of growing scientific knowledge, but by virtue of its use of scientific or inductive method. In my opinion, however, it is too late to attempt to clean off the mud which clings to the name "scientific management," and it would be better dropped entirely.

The main conclusions of the book are as follows—

1. Although scientific management is based on the use of inductive or scientific method, its largest effects have been derived from the application of well-established

economic principles backed by sharpened observation and measurement aided by stop watches and other devices and mechanisms.

2. The oft-quoted "factual analysis" and "codified knowledge" of this school of management are empty of significance if it be not recognized that fact collection and codification are very minor aspects of the management task; management's task is a function of management's experience, reasoning, and character applied to the interpretation of facts in terms of the whole management situation and, what is of more importance, to the integration of factual codes and procedures with industrial group sentiment and purpose.

3. The assumption that the search for exact knowledge by the use of scientific method, plus the instruments of that method, make management scientific, is, to be blunt, plainly ridiculous. Scientific method is only a tool of management, an important one no doubt; there is, however, no virtue in scientific method as such; its virtue or its vice is a reflection of the ability and the character of its user. The further assumption that because management uses codified knowledge, management is therefore scientific, is in much the same category as calling a poet a scientist because he uses codified knowledge of the principles of versification.

4. The relationship of management to science as a whole is such that science will afford a background for management practice in the form of generalizations which are the result of controlled observation of individuals and groups; scientific knowledge, so far as I can see, will not be a substitute for management's capacity for decision on the correct procedure to adopt towards a particular individual or group in a particular situation.

5. To the specialized sciences the attitude of management is critically co-ordinative and, therefore, philosophic.

6. Because of its narrow worship of scientific method and its consequent ignoring of the psychological and social values of



industrial fact, the scientific cult has caused much avoidable, industrial conflict by imposing technological procedures on industrial groups without reference to the significance of group emotional and mental structure. Further, it has developed organized "ca' canny" in industry among the workers.

7. This cult has contributed nothing to the problem of industrial group analysis and synthesis; its technique is confined largely to costs and output engineering.

The foregoing seven points are critical and, I feel, they will be met with the rejoinder that is usual when trouble appears on the horizon of scientific management; namely, that scientific management is not understood by me and, in any case, scientific management does not mean only what I say it means—it means, also, a "square deal" for the worker. Well, let me add point eight to the foregoing points.

8. The "square deal" of scientific management has never been expressed as a definite code of progressive worker welfare; my own frank opinion is that the idea of the "square deal" is used more as a verbal code to put across specialist techniques than as an ethical principle.

In the hands of Taylor, the founder of the school, scientific method became a vitally useful factor in industry, but it was the very thing the scientific methodists decry, personal knowledge and ability amounting to genius, which made him successful. If he had been a fool or a knave, the method would probably have remained generally unknown in industry until a greater man became aware that it could be successfully applied. Taylor did not invent scientific method; he recognized its value and brought to its use an outstanding native genius. At the risk of being judged heretical, I may add that he overstressed its value and, as discoverers of specialist fact have often done, he attempted to cap the business economy with it. In this I may be wrong but, mark this, it was Taylor's experience, character, and power of reasoning which built scientific management; we

can admire these without subscribing more than normal regard for his methods and systems—methods and systems the narrow worth of which is admitted freely.

To-day a wider management outlook is needed, an outlook subservient to no cults, whether they be scientific or political. The book, then, makes the following further propositions—

9. There is a need for a return to the high personal values of pre-scientific management while developing a rational method for the solution of industrial, material, and human problems. This method I have attempted to state, combining in it the values of scientific method. It is demonstrated throughout the book by reference to high authority and to experience that scientific method is of limited value when applied to the interpretation of human values.

10. It seems essential that the overstress of "scientific" procedures in management educational syllabuses be modified by reference to the contributions of bio-psychology and sociology and, further, that Method be accepted as a central subject of management education. At the moment, excellent though these syllabuses are in terms of the teaching of commercial and producing codes and procedures, there is too great dependence on the teaching of means rather than of meanings.

11. There is a need for stressing the principle of authority and obedience in management ; that is, there is need not only for obedience of authority by employees but, also, for obedience by management to the whole purpose which industry is serving. This is an angle of management which has not been studied, perhaps because of its somewhat stern significance and its demand for self-discipline in terms of a serving code.

12. Management as a whole serving body should be prepared to accept the social responsibilities arising from the operations of the economic institution and should develop an attitude wider than that required to keep this or that part of the institution effective only in the narrow financial sense of the word. For example, it is fairly obvious

that industry is both willing and able to supply the community with what the community needs for adequate living, but owing, it seems, to the operations of an ineffective financial mechanism, industry suffers from cycles of famine and plenty which, in the quoted opinions of many of the world's greatest authorities, are the prime cause of unemployment, strikes, and class hatred, and destroy the possibility of the economic security the people have a right to have. The effects of this state of affairs are daily felt in industry; will, then, management be content with the study of internal procedures only while other people solve or try to solve this and other problems which affect industrial effectiveness? If management remains loyal to "scientific" procedurism, it will be content to take a narrow view of industrial effectiveness, but if it is prepared to widen its philosophy it can, by virtue of its standing as a serving body within society, do much which will win back for it the leadership it lost when it forgot the social significance of industrial effort and, in response to the advance of scientific management, became a vehicle for organizing industry only for bigger and better profits. That management only serves the purpose of technological organization and no longer leads the workers is generally true, just as it is generally true that it is faced throughout industry to-day by opposing leadership which resents the narrow economic purpose which is now served by management's activities.

13. There is a need for positive integration of economic purpose with whole social purpose. With increasing differentiation of social functions it is clear that the economic institution has increasingly been judged effective or ineffective only in terms of the short-time monetary returns on its operations, rather than in terms of the service it performs for the community. What is not clear, except to a small body of progressive industrialists, is the ultimate consequence of this short-sighted outlook.

It will be seen from what has gone before that what I have chosen to call *Rational Management* is much more than merely a rejoinder to the narrow formalism of what is called "scientific management." All human conduct is managing conduct disciplined in terms of ends sought and the means used. Scientific management is really personal conduct which may or may not accept reasonable purpose, may or may not be disciplined in terms of purpose, does involve use of scientific method, but may or may not use it rationally. Rational management is personal conduct based on intelligent acceptance of the disciplines arising from its service of the dual purpose of industrial social and economic effectiveness and on adoption of a rational, unbiased attitude to the problems of industrial production and distribution and to the contributions of the sciences to the solution of these problems.

It will be observed that I have not only attempted to set up a statement of principles for management guidance but that I have also attempted to lay out a management educational syllabus in line with the findings of the book. I have laid myself open to powerful criticism by attacking the cult of scientific management, but, too, I have laid myself more open to trenchant criticism by my advancement of a management syllabus. Nevertheless, I feel it is better for me to leave the ranks of those who write reams on the weaknesses of management education without daring to erect an educational structure in place of the existing one; thus, I hope this contribution will be accepted in the spirit in which it has been made, for there is no one more aware than I of the splendid efforts that have been made by various bodies to assist industry by assisting management education.

My faith is that the industrial system, in the hands of a wise management, can become a splendid instrument for social good without losing one iota of its effectiveness—whether or not I have suggested a basis for this wise management is for the reader to judge. JAMES J. GILLESPIE.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	vi
AUTHOR'S PREFACE . . . . .	vii

## PART I

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MODERN MANAGEMENT

#### CHAPTER I

MANAGEMENT A RATIONAL ACTIVITY . . . . .	I
Definitions—Management faculty—The value of experience— Scientific method or rational method?—The success and failure of scientific management—Rational management ✓	

#### CHAPTER II

THE SCIENCES AND MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY . . . . .	23
Science and scientific management—Difficulties in selection of data—The contribution of the sciences—The sciences and man- agement education—The necessity for organized use of scien- tific data	

## PART II

### BASIC ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

#### CHAPTER III

THE INDUSTRIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND PURPOSE . . . . .	33
Human interest and human activity—The problem of human behaviour—Human similarity and difference—Group behaviour —Individual and group behaviour—Social factors in industrial behaviour—Social purpose	

#### CHAPTER IV

LEADERSHIP . . . . .	51
Limitations of the assertive-submissive theory—The necessity for leadership—Types of leadership—Faulty leadership—Ex- ample in leadership—Integrative leadership	

## CHAPTER V

	PAGE
THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE . . .	62
The necessity for discipline—Acquiescence to discipline— Acceptance of discipline—Disciplines as custom	

## CHAPTER VI

DIFFERENTIATION AND INTEGRATION . . . . .	75
Biological differentiation and economic specialization—Develop- ment and differentiation—Class differentiation—The class con- flict fallacy—Institutional differentiation—The State as co- ordinator—Socio-economic integration	

## CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE ECONOMIC INSTITUTION . . .	92
The illogic and logic of the present system—Business a social function—Economic effectiveness—The problem of profit	

## CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL AND PARTICULAR CRITICISMS OF ECONOMIC EFFECTIVENESS . . . . .	101
The industrial mechanism normally effective—Criticisms of the financial mechanism—Criticisms of the industrial mechanism— The criticisms viewed from a basic standpoint	

## CHAPTER IX

PROPOSALS FOR INCREASING ECONOMIC EFFECTIVENESS . . .	122
Social and economic reforms—The fundamental approach—The test of progress	

## PART III

INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT AND  
ORGANIZATION

## CHAPTER X

INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT . . . . .	132
The principle of management—Subjective management—Ob- jective management—Management ethics	

CONTENTS

XV

CHAPTER XI

PAGES

ESSENTIALS OF RATIONAL MANAGEMENT METHOD. . . . . 140

Right and wrong thinking—The basis of method—Principles of right procedure—Dangers of inexperience, bias, and prejudice in fact collection—Fact collection—Fact classification—Formal fact explanation—Teleological explanation—Fact application to human groups

CHAPTER XII

ACTIVITY ORGANIZATION . . . . . 163

Definitions—Purposive activity—Activity specialization—Trained activity—Integrated activity

CHAPTER XIII

THE OUTPUT PROBLEM . . . . . 172

The effect of procedure imposition on output—Conditions of work as factors in output—Methods of work as factors in output—The effects of competition on output—Effects of product design on output—Effects of executive attitude—The effects of social factors

CHAPTER XIV

THE FORMAL ORGANIZATION . . . . . 188

Responsibility and authority—Systematic procedures—Limitations to organization

CHAPTER XV

MARKETING ORGANIZATION AND CONTROL . . . . . 192

Meaning and methods of marketing—The economics of advertising—The economics of marketing—Marketing normally effective

CHAPTER XVI

TRAINING FOR MANAGEMENT . . . . . 201

The ABC of management—Syllabus on management and works and commercial procedures—The objects of the syllabus

CHAPTER XVII

RÉSUMÉ OF THE PRINCIPLES OF RATIONAL INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT . . . . . 211

INDEX . . . . . 227

# INDEX

ADMINISTRATION as science, 13  
 Angell, Sir N., 109, 125  
 Assertiveness and leadership, 52  
 Authority and obedience, 19

**BARTER** system, 110  
 Bedaux and intelligent worker, 144, 181  
 Behaviour and intelligence, 37  
 — and interest, 34  
 Behaviourism, 35  
 Business as social function, 33  
 Byng, E. S., 23

**CANNAN, E.**, 114  
 Capital, definition of, 96  
 Causality, principle of, 144  
 Cheque system, rise of, 110  
 Class conflict, cause of, 80  
 Classes, cause of, 77-8  
 Classification methods, 155  
 Community logic and illogic, 92  
 —, purpose of, 50  
 Comte, 43  
 Conflict and the price level, 105  
 —, causes of, 169  
 —, inevitability of, 73  
 Conflicting purposes, 49  
 Consumer service and management  
 137  
 Co-operation, development towards,  
 99  
 Co-ordination and integration, 76  
 —, principle of, 188  
 Currency and prices, 114

**DECREASING** returns, principle of,  
 191  
 Depressions as cause of conflict, 100  
 —, cause of, 107 *et seq.*, 126  
 — since 1763, 107  
 Discipline and intelligent worker,  
 58, 69  
 —, management, 59, 67, 133  
 —, necessity for, 63  
 Disobedience, industrial, 67  
 Domination and leadership, 53, 55-6  
 —, weakness of, 71

**EARNING** level of girls, 176

Earnings and social aims, 187  
 —, codes of, 45  
 Economic behaviour, fallacy of, 33,  
 62  
 — efficiency, 95 *et seq.*  
 — institution, cause of, 34  
 — laws, limitations of, 168  
 Education and differentiation, 90  
 — and science, 20, 31  
 — and specialism, 20  
 —, management, 119  
 —, —, and strikes, 82  
 Efficiency, ideal of, 130  
 —, short- and long-time, 181  
 Experience and logic, 146, 149  
 — and scientific method, 150  
 — in management, 8 *et seq.*

**FAMILY** budget, 128-9  
 Feaveryear, A. E., 107  
 Female workers and earning codes,  
 46, 180  
 Finance and industrial discontent,  
 77, 106 *et seq.*

**GILBRETH**, 13, 15, 181  
 Ginsberg, M., 71  
 Gold standard and prices, 112, 113  
 —, unstable, 112  
 —, uses of, 114  
 Government, function of, 66, 83  
 Group, analysis of a, 57-8  
 — behaviour, 39 *et seq.*  
 — earning codes, 45, 174 *et seq.*  
 — frustration and class conflict,  
 80  
 — logic and individual logic, 42  
 Groups, intelligent and unintelli-  
 gent, 73

**HATTERSLEY, C. M.**, 109, 111  
 Hobhouse, L. T., 29, 31, 63, 77

**INDUSTRY** and the State, 88  
 —, divorce of, from society, 117,  
 119, 209  
 Inequality, kinds of, 81  
 Instinct theory, 36  
 Instincts, list of, 37



## 228 PRINCIPLES OF RATIONAL INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT

- Institutions, cause of, 65  
 —, rise of, 85  
 Integration and co-ordination, 27,  
 75  
 Intelligence and behaviour, 37  
 — tests and output, 26, 119, 170  
 Interest and output, 182
- KANT, 5  
 Keynes, J. M., 102  
 Kimball, D., 14, 103
- LAWRENCE, T. E., 6  
 Le Bon, G., 6  
 Leaders, experiment in choosing,  
 53-4  
 Leadership and management, 51  
 — and public schools, 150  
 — and the community, 92-3  
 — and thinking, 142  
 — as instinct, fallacy of, 52  
 —, no one successful pattern of,  
 59-60  
 —, qualities of, 54  
 Levy-Bruhl, 65  
 Lighting and output, 178  
 Logic and community living, 92-3  
 Lowe, A., 15
- MACIVER, R. M., 48, 68  
 Management, a function of leader-  
 ship, 51  
 — and logical method, 143  
 — and political disputation, 188  
 — and profit, 20, 135, 137  
 — and purpose expression, 164  
 — and science, 50  
 — and scientific method, 16  
 — as codified knowledge, 23  
 — as personal conduct, 1, 17  
 — as rational activity, 2, 25  
 — attitude to science, 20  
 — authority and obedience, 19  
 —, dominative, paternal, and  
 intellectual, 56-8  
 —, duties of, analysed, 136  
 — education as cause of strikes,  
 82  
 — — in social factors, 119  
 — —, shortcomings of, 30-1  
 —, elements of, 6  
 — example, 59  
 — faculty, 4  
 —, integrative, 27, 61, 170  
 —, opposition to, 70  
 —, principle of economic, 132  
 —, rational, definition of, 22
- Management's social function, 117,  
 122  
 — — responsibility, 107, 130  
 — specialization, 167  
 Marketing, ineffectiveness of, 102  
 Markets, function of, 197  
 Marriage and output, 176  
 Mathewson, S. B., 4  
 Mayo, Elton, 22, 26, 30, 119  
 McKenna, R., 108  
 Melchett, Lord, 104, 108  
 Mobility, social, 78  
 Monotony and output, 178-9  
 Morrison, H., 93  
 Motion study, fallacies of 15  
 Myers, C. S., 16
- NOISE and output, 178
- OBJECTIVE, principle of, 147  
 Organizing technique, fallacies of,  
 42  
 Output and interest, 182  
 — and lighting, 177  
 — and monotony, 178-9  
 — and noise, 178  
 — and rest periods, 180  
 — and ventilation, 178  
 — figure publication, 181  
 — restrictions, 17, 72 174, *et seq.*  
 —, variations in, 173 *et seq.*
- PATERNALISM in leadership, 56  
 Pearson, 113  
 Pither, P. J., 3  
 Planning, economic, 123 *et seq.*  
 Poffenberger, A.T., 15  
 Poverty, abolition of, 123 *et seq.*  
 Praise and blame and output, 184  
 Price formula, 113  
 — level and industrial conflict,  
 105, 108  
 — — and unemployment, 112,  
 113, 126  
 Prices and currency, 114  
 — and money, 108  
 Profit, definition of, 98  
 — motive and evolution, 209  
 — — and service motive, 95  
 — —, *et seq.*  
 — —, shortcomings of, 19, 70,  
 77  
 — sharing, 120  
 Progress, rate of economic, 102  
 Psychology, individual, 25  
 —, —, and industry, 28  
 — of management, 6

- Purpose and management method, 159  
 — and work, 29, 41, 43 *et seq.*  
 —, community, 50  
 — of business, 22
- RACE and industrial techniques, 17
- Rational, definition of, 1  
 — management, definition of, 22, 25  
 — method versus scientific method, 11-12
- Rest periods and output, 180
- Robertson, D. H., 112
- Rousseau, 81
- SANTAYANA, G., 1
- Science and management, 20, 23 *et seq.*  
 —, definitions of, 23
- Scientific management, and ca' canny, 16  
 — and economics, 14  
 — and purchasing power, 103  
 — and social effectiveness, 103  
 — and strikes, 82  
 — and welfare, 3  
 —, definitions of, 8, 13, 14  
 — unethical, 135  
 — method and psychology, 16, 168  
 — and purpose, 159 *et seq.*  
 — and reflection, 3  
 — and thinking, 143  
 —, shortcomings of, 8, 16, 25, 48, 72, 75, 151
- Sex and leadership, 52
- Shaw, C. G., 9
- Shop stewards, socialist, 176-7
- Similarity and difference, 38-9, 170
- Simplification, 167
- Social aim and earnings, 187  
 — aspect of work, 25-6, 119, 175  
 — factors, principle of, 162  
 — function of business, 19, 94 *et seq.*, 103
- Social philosophy and management, 30, 62  
 — psychology and management, 30  
 — service and industry, 100
- Socialism and capital, 97  
 — and social service, 92-3
- Soddy, F., 112
- Specialization and learning, 168  
 —, dangers of, 20-2, 24, 32, 89, 106  
 —, supposed law of, 26, 166
- Square deal, hypocrisy of, 135
- Stamp, Sir J., 107, 126
- State, function of, 66, 68, 86
- Statistical methods, 158
- Snyder, C., 105
- TAYLOR, F. W., 8, 10, 17, 44, 144
- Tennyson, 140, 156
- Thinking and logic, 142  
 — and snap judgment, 141  
 — defined, 140
- Thomson, J. A., 130
- Time study and method, 143, 149  
 — and strikes, 161
- Tradition and behaviour, 38, 40
- Traditional management, 19
- Training, principles of, 167-8
- UNEMPLOYMENT and prices, 112-13
- Urwick, L., 12, 14
- VENTILATION and output, 178
- Viteles, M., 16, 142, 179
- Vocational tests and output, 178
- WAGE earning class insecurity, 79
- Wages since 1800, 100
- Wallas, G., 16
- Warren, 113
- Welfare activity and science, 28
- Wells, H. G., 108
- Welton, J., 147
- Westaway, F. W., 2, 10, 17, 24
- Whitehead, A. N., 20  
 —, T. N., 41, 47, 117, 186, 199
- Withers, H., 115
- Wolf, A., 3, 11
- Woodworth, R. S., 171

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