The world requires a new MBA - step forward Thinkers50

Henri Fayol’s Planning, Leadership, Organisation and Control defined the key roles of managers in the early 1900s. These four key principles remain paramount in the 21st century. The strength and development of a manager are routinely measured against them. Success and failure are viewed as direct consequences of how well a manager has “planned”, “led”, “organised” and “controlled”.

How can and should managers take and exercise control? There are two common approaches that have been examined and championed by business schools in equal measure.

To be the best leader, there has to be an incorporation of both styles

The first promotes “directive” leaders, who are best characterised by their ability – and desire – to take complete control of a situation. Leaders who keenly relate to this style often step into projects proactively, pursuing actions and sparing teams and their organisations from unnecessary risk. They are strong, forthright and confident – sometimes to the point of arrogance.

These leaders believe they are ultimately responsible for their own destiny, and will perfectly puppeteer incompetent or ignorant subordinates into shape. One question, however, plagues the directive leader: can one person possibly control every outcome?

“Participative” leaders and managers believe the answer is no. As Mike Tyson said: “Everyone has a plan until they are punched in the mouth.” Participative leaders conserve their energy and look with open minds at a variety of sources to make a decision, leading with the assistance of historical knowledge, patient observation and by listening to the many voices in the room. Typically, delving into the detail, tweaking and correcting course in the face of stormy situations, these leaders have no trouble allowing others to take control of objectives.

But to be the best leader, our latest research suggests, there has to be an incorporation of both styles. To what ratio, and when to prioritise one over the other, is the challenge.

Modern-day management demands a blend of approaches, and the ability to adapt according to the context. There is no one best way, but an array of different ways that have to be understood and selected when needed. Championing the need for a practical blended approach to management is Thinkers50, which curates the greatest management ideas in the world today. For nearly 20 years, Thinkers50 has published and celebrated its unique global ranking of the most inspiring, cutting-edge and revolutionary management experts.

Now this wealth of global learning and practical insight is being made available through the Thinkers50 Executive MBA. “Our mission is based on three core beliefs. Ideas have the power to change the world. Management is essential to human affairs. And new thinking can create a better future. By designing and delivering a contemporary MBA, that accesses the minds of today’s celebrated business thinkers, we hope to champion and bring about a new way of managing,” says Thinkers50 co-founder Des Dearlove.

The blend is the thing. The Thinkers50 MBA offers exclusive access to Thinkers50’s reservoir of knowledge – via videos, podcasts, blogs and briefings from leading thinkers – and a powerful classroom experience. It is an MBA for the new age of management.