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Unit I - Lecture 4

Hawthorne Experiments

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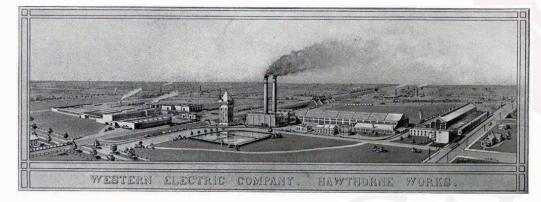
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During 1920s Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger conducted a series of studies on relationships between productivity and job satisfaction at Hawthorne plant of Western Electric Company.



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Experiments were conducted in four phases:

- 1. Illumination experiments (1924-27)
- 2. Relay assembly test room experiments (1927-28)
- 3. Mass interviewing program (1928-30)
- 4. Bank wiring observation room experiments (1931-32)

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Illumination Experiments

Coil Winding Room at Night with 150 Watt Holophane Reflectors. Photograph taken in 1925. Photograph by Marty Labnos.

Credit: Charles D. Wrege Collection, History of Management Photographs, Kheel Center, Cornell University



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Illumination Experiments

Relay Assembly Room at Night with 200 Watt Glassteel Diffusers. These light fixtures created considerable glare. Photograph taken in 1925. Photograph by Marty Labnos.

Credit: Charles D. Wrege Collection, History of Management Photographs, Kheel Center, Cornell University



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Illumination Experiments

The experiments concluded that illumination didn't effect productivity. The inference of the study was that there is <u>some human factor</u> which effects productivity.

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Relay Assembly Test Room Experiments

Over five years, performance of six women assembling relays was tracked. These women were placed in a room separated from main assembly hall.

Image: Women in the Relay Assembly Test Room, ca. 1930

Western Electric Company Hawthorne Studies Collection

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Relay Assembly Test Room Experiments

The rise in productivity made Elton Mayo to conclude <u>the six individual</u> <u>operators became a team</u>.

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Mass Interview Program

Over three years, about 21,000 interviews were conducted at the plant.

Image: Mass Interview Western Electric Company

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Mass Interview Program

At the end of the interviews researchers found that mental <u>attitude, proper</u> <u>supervision and informal social relationships</u> are critical for increase in productivity.

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Bank Wiring Observation Room Experiments

Purpose was to know the impact of small groups on productivity and job satisfaction. A group of 14 male workers assembling terminal banks for telephone exchanges.

Image: Factory Cabling Department, ca. 1925 Western Electric Company

Hawthorne Studies Collection © 2007 President and Fellows of Harvard College



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Bank Wiring Observation Room Experiments

These experiments led to conclusion that humans beings social beings rather than just economic beings. Group attitude and group psychology are important for management.

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Insights from Hawthorne Experiments:

- Men are social beings.
- Groups and informal associations are important.
- Motivation
- Communication

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References

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