



CHAPTER 2:

Organizational common structure in hotels: The machine organization. Overall view and leadership styles: advantages and disadvantages.

"Management Gurus have been telling us for years that machine-like organizations are disappearing and with them maximum managing. Well, look around at the auto assembly lines, textile factories, supermarkets, call centers...(Mintzberg)"... And hotels! -I would say.

Machine or bureaucracy operators although evolved they still maintain, in essence, Taylor's concept management premises. The mechanistic way of thinking that separated planning from doing was pioneered by Frederick Taylor. Using his "scientific management" he would find the best way of working, timing workers with a stop-watch and observe the fastest worker did, so that he could define the "one best way" of doing the job. The "best way" would become the standard. The doers –the workers- could not be trusted to contribute to the one best way. Nowadays, we find many hotel operators working and –even worst- understanding the management like Taylor saw.

What is a machine organization or bureaucracy? Machine organizations are basically characterized by more centralized operations and management decision-making. The objective of the machine organization is to design and establish a

working system or rigid operational standard. Working processes are thought up from corporate offices, whether by staff analysts or top management. These standards are supposed to be replicated within hotels as the only way of doing and working. Workers then are expected to successfully put to practice what has been planned and analyzed from the top. So any possible improvement or adjustment to the operating standard must be done and approved by the corporate offices.

There are some advantages to this machine or bureaucracy structure. One is supposedly better management control such as in costs, or quality. But as we will see later, there is a better way to meet these two objectives within a more decentralized management structure. It is also said that in mature industries –and stable ones, with more assured revenues or demand-a mechanical organization can ensure better profits or even maximize them.

The problem is that machine organizations and bureaucratic working systems limit

