



Changing the way we work

Turning organisations upside down

Commentary:

Technology is changing the way we work. We can be in two places at once, access a whole world of information - there seems to be no limit.

But look beyond the technology to the people using it and you'll find another more subtle transformation. The very nature of organisations, and the relationship between managers and their employees is changing. And it's these changes that will really revolutionise the way we work in future.

Professor Charles Handy

The knowledge used to be at the top of the organisation, they were the people who knew what was what. And **all** the information went up to them, and all the know-how was really there, and then they told people what to do. Now what's interesting at the moment, is that the people who really have the knowledge that matters are actually much nearer the front line. So we've turned organisations upside down.

Professor Rosabeth Kanter

There is often more brainpower, more creative ideas, more solutions to problems, in the minds of people in the work force who would never think to bring them forward. Empower them to act on their ideas, and you end up improving the company dramatically.

Commentary

Dutton Engineering manufactures sheet metal enclosures. Twelve years ago the owner Ken Lewis decided to flatten the structure of his organisation by removing all middle managers. He put his employees into self-managing multi functional teams and made them directly responsible to their customers. Today the teams have become so autonomous he's practically done himself out of a job!

Ken Lewis

'What am I doing here?'

I believe that what really motivates these people here is that they are in control. Historically I don't think we ever really tapped into the ability of the people we employ because if you are in command of a situation or if you have a job description of if you are not in a climate of trust then you won't be able to bring these talents out.

Commentary

One of the first things he introduced 12 years ago was the Japanese concept of Kaizen. Employees who came up with a small improvement or good idea would get an instant payment of 10 or 15 pounds Jack Gray, now close to retirement, is Dutton's Kaizen king.

Jack Gray

Well one example is this particular job I'm doing here - When I came here, I was shown how they were done and one day, I thought I don't think I need do that, I think I cut two operations out completely so I very near halved the time of that job.

Ken Lewis

Why they want to come to work here is because they are not kept in a box. A welder here may spend 70 % of his time welding, he might spend 10% of his time procuring materials, he might spend five percent of his time on personnel issues within his cell or recruiting new people.

So there you start to get people getting a much broader experience, and one of the great things about a broad picture is, you can make better decisions

Dave Ward

The way we're in charge of our own salaries is, it's very good actually because everyone knows that to to achieve the top grade, they have to pull their weight, so it means everybody's pulling their weight, there's no shirkers as such

Interviewer

So, you know, are you going to award yourself a pay rise?

David Ward

Hopefully in the near when the new customer comes on board, we shall look at our targets I mean we're achieving well above our target now so we should be entitled to a pay rise so we shall sit down, and we say right what do we deserve lads, and we shall actually, if it's five hundred pound a year a thousand pound a year, then we shall actually incorporate that, as quick as possible

Ken Lewls

In fact I've got to the stage where I shan't have an office in the New Year, because they say I'm not here er enough, and they can use that space better and more productively for the , for the benefit of this business, so if anyone's got a spare caravan out there I'd be grateful for it .

Professor Kanter

It's a very different kind of management style. Instead of saying, I'm the boss so you do what I tell you to do, I'm the leader, here's my vision, and I want to get you excited about that vision, so that you will bring to that the best that you can do.