

# **Management Brilliance**

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One example of “management brilliance” is the idea of allowing professional knowledge workers identify areas of need within the organization and granting them the autonomy to design and execute their own projects to address recognized areas of need. Granting decision-making authority to employees and/or allowing them to formulate independent work teams has many mutual benefits for organizations. Organizations that utilize this strategy may have deficiencies not yet acknowledged by management identified by front-line employees who may have more accurate perceptions about bottlenecks in workflow and inefficient processes and standard operating procedures. Employee morale may be improved when managers demonstrate their confidence in subordinates to target and tackle problematic issues that affect the organization. Lastly, interpersonal working relationships as well as a sense of organizational unity may be vastly enhanced by the increased cooperation and negotiation skills needed to execute such a scheme; employees who feel their contributions and opinions are being acknowledged are more likely to be content with their working environment, all other things held constant.

Firstly, front-line knowledge workers are often more aware of deficiencies in daily operations since they more directly interact with components addressed by administration-established procedures than managers, who by the delegating nature of their positions are more removed from such interactions. Issues that may be very evident to front-line employees may either have not yet been identified as needing attention, or managerial staff may simply be consumed with other administrative activities than to troubleshoot minor issues that they do not perceive to adversely affect performance. Self-managed work teams, or even individual employees, with autonomy and independent project-assigning authority may in many situations better identify such areas. As summarized by Dew, “Knowledge workers want to be part of the organization in collaboration, and involved”, with which he follows up with the rhetorical

question, “We don’t stop to consider that our (managers) own thinking process is completely out of touch with the reality of the systems in which we exist.” (Dew, 15)

Secondly, employee morale may be improved when managers demonstrate their confidence in subordinates to target and tackle problematic issues that affect the organization. One continuing problem of organizations is the disillusionment of employees that managerial staff is working cooperatively to make substantive performance improvements. Other employees may feel disenfranchised when their opinions are discounted or if they are not granted the ability to rectify minor problems that no other avenue is poised to address otherwise. Empowering employees with the ability to fix problems may aid self-esteem and organizational perception issues, as affirmed by Purser and Cabana, “Self-managing organizations foster a partnership culture built on norms of equality and trust... they provide good work and treat people as adults... [And] they enhance employee commitment and involvement.” (Purser et al, 334)

Lastly, interpersonal working relationships as well as a sense of organizational unity may be vastly enhanced by the increased cooperation and negotiation skills needed to execute such a scheme; employees who feel their contributions and opinions are being acknowledged are more likely to be content with their working environment, all other things held constant. Many factors contribute towards employee satisfaction, and perceived cooperation, teamwork, and acceptance are major issues for many employees. Self-managed work teams often require a much higher degree of interpersonal interaction to bring elements of projects together toward a unified conclusion. In the course of work-related communications, personal bonds may form and misunderstandings leading to conflict may be resolved; both of these effects may positively affect employee satisfaction. Likewise, the opposite is true, according to Tsiganou, “If [workers] expectations [in participation of setting standards in issues of quality and work control] are

blocked, worker dissatisfaction and alienation increase.” (Tsiganou, 2). In addition, when employees accomplish goals and eliminate perceived organizational detriments, they experience a sense of accomplishment. Involved employees, especially those working together in a team, may increase their sense of unity through the shared success, which can promote employee confidence in ways usually unattainable except by expensive human resource motivating campaigns.

In conclusion, empowering employees to identify larger organizational issues is mutually beneficial to both employees and the organization as a whole. Granting trust in and displaying confidence in professionals, and granting them the authority to improve their own working situations can relieve job stresses, improve the working environment, and streamline production processes. Such an approach is generalized as risky or inappropriate in all situations by some managers who are not able to entrust employees with autonomic power, perhaps for fear of insubordination by overconfident employees or other reasons, or who are unwilling to relinquish a degree of strict control over employees. However, given highly competent and motivated professionals, the organization has a substantial gain to make in multiple spheres by allowing their workers to troubleshoot and solve problems. Policies that allow in-house employees to identify and solve organizational issues while they simultaneously improve their working environment for a negligible or zero cost are management brilliance by any criteria.

## Bibliography

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