New Shop Floor Management: Empowering People for Continuous Improvement

By Kiyoshi Suzaki

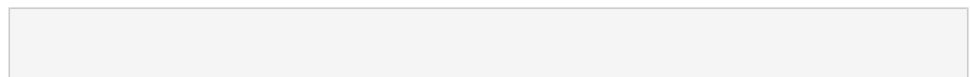**New Shop Floor Management: Empowering People for Continuous Improvement** By Kiyoshi Suzaki

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The role of management today, Suzaki argues, is to eliminate its own responsibilities by thinking of the organization from the *genba,* or shop floor, point of view. In this challenge, Suzaki claims, organizations need to collect the wisdom of people by practicing "Glass Wall Management," where organizations become transparent, enabling employees to contribute maximum creativity as opposed to blocking their potential with what he calls "Brick Wall Management." Further, to empower individuals to selfmanage their work and satisfy their customers, Suzaki asserts that they all should learn to manage their own "mini-company," where everybody is considered president of his or her area of responsibility.

Front-line supervisors, Suzaki shows, must develop a mission and goals and share them both up and downstream. He cites examples of the "shop floor point of view" -- McDonald's Corporation's legal staff learning how to sell hamburgers and fix milkshake machines; Honda's human resource staff training on the assembly line -- that narrow the gap between top management and the shop floor. By upgrading people's skills, focusing on empowerment, and streamlining processes, Suzaki illustrates that an organization will realize concrete improvements in quality, cost, delivery, safety, morale, and ultimately, its competitive position.

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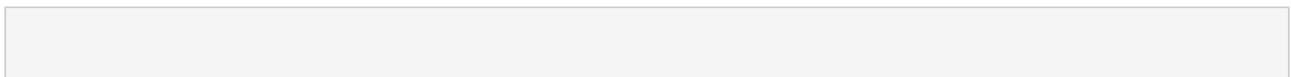**New Shop Floor Management: Empowering People for Continuous Improvement** By Kiyoshi Suzaki

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Editorial Review

Review
Siegfried P. Adler President, Borg-Warner Automotive, Inc. Suzaki shows how to extend the role of management down to the shop floor, thus making the front-line workforce share in the responsibilities and achievements of the company. His insights are invaluable.

Alan R. Monahan Vice President, World Wide Manufacturing, Xerox Corporation American manufacturing has, for far too long, neglected "front line" workers in day-to-day business activities. This book is an excellent source of ideas, techniques, and approaches for improved business results through the engagement of this critical resource.

Lee M. Gardner President and COO, Masco Industries, Inc. Suzaki helps us to see the shop floor as a critical battleground in today's business and illustrates ways to break our mindset to achieve continuous improvement for everybody.

James P. Womack Coauthor, "The Machine that Changed the world" Suzaki moves far beyond individual techniques and presents a new way to think about how people add value in any production or service activity. Managers need to read this book to learn how to create the "New Shop Floor."

L.W. McDonough Senior Vice President, Operations & Quality, Bissell, Inc. This book is an excellent road map that can be used on the journey of continuous improvement, no matter the level of associate involvement.

John D. Robechek Senior Vice President, Toledo Scale This book provides a comprehensive review of the basic principles employed in creating a world class organization.

Richard Cohon Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce and President, C.N. Burman Co. Suzaki offers invaluable, practical advice for those who have come to recognize that the factory floor is an important place where corporate survival can be insured.

Fujio Cho President, CEO, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, U.S.A., Inc. As the world of business becomes more and more competitive, it is imperative that every company offer consumers the highest quality product at the lowest cost...this book is an extremely useful resource in offering a variety of ideas and suggestions for accomplishing our goals.

About the Author
Kiyoshi Suzaki, president of Suzaki & Company, is an internationally recognized consultant and educator on manufacturing competitiveness, having worked with hundreds of companies in over 20 nations around the world. He is the author of *The New Manufacturing Challenge* (The Free Press, 1987).

Chapter 1

DEVELOPING A VISION OF SHOP FLOOR EXCELLENCE

In this chapter, we will try to understand the characteristics of today's business environment which have a significant impact on all of us. Then we will address the need to transform our organization to meet new challenges. And last, we will address the change processes we must each go through to prepare ourselves for the future.

SAILING IN TODAY'S BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Today's world is filled with change and uncertainty. As compared to even a decade ago, products or services become obsolete much more quickly. More and more new technologies and new companies emerge, and those that cannot cope with change often find their very existence threatened.

In spite of the fact that better products and services make our lives more convenient, a quickly changing business environment can threaten our companies and our jobs. This in turn may affect our relationships with co-workers, family, friends, and many others. In fact, changes happening in the business world may have a traumatic impact if they result in sudden layoffs or bankruptcy. If we are foresighted and prepared, however, these changes can provide increased opportunities for utilizing our potential. Instead of riding in stormy seas, we can alter our course and find a clear path through them.

To this point, someone once said, "Even if we cannot change the direction of wind, we can trim our sails to get where we want to go." In keeping with this idea, the purpose of this book is to prepare ourselves for such turbulent times by developing skills to manage the situation better and explore a better work life.

CHANGING ENVIRONMENT -- PAST VS. FUTURE

To begin with, let us study the environment in which we live. Exhibit 1.2 summarizes our changing environment, comparing the past to the future and listing major reasons for such changes. Of course, specific situations may differ from this table. Yet, if we look around us, we may find some interesting trends. Turning our eyes to the international scene, for example, as more countries join the Western world from the old Eastern bloc and developing nations, more and more people will participate in the free market, free trade, and free information exchange of our society. These people then become new members of our global society as suppliers of labor and brainpower as well as beneficiaries of goods, services, and knowledge.

Opening this gate is similar to conducting a brainstorming exercise on a global scale, with more people exchanging their ideas and values, and utilizing their collective wisdom. We may at times find this situation chaotic because of its massive impact on our political, social, and economic systems. As more people travel, watch TV, read, and exchange ideas, the process of change seems to take its own course.

So, even if the environment we live in seems chaotic, if we find more people contributing their talent as well as gaining benefits, such an environment is in fact, desirable. We should also note that this globalization of business activities follows the free market system of using everybody's ideas and values.

If we understand this point, the strains caused by these changes may be better understood. Yet, as democracy requires everyone to contribute ideas and values to the whole, as opposed to blindly following someone who happens to be in a position of leadership, each of us should seek the answer for ourselves. In other words, collectively, we are the reason for the change. And at the same time, therefore, it is up to us to become either a beneficiary or a victim of such changes.

OUR VISION

History has shown us that many factors influence progress. Clearly, creativity in overcoming hurdles seems to be one major factor. Further, when creativity is tied with survival or prosperity, we find ourselves even more driven.

Now, if we look back on our personal experiences, we may find that our vision and actions have changed over time as well. By assessing these changes further, we may see if we are deepening our understanding as to what is important in our (work)life and how creative we have been to grow continuously. The organization as a whole may also go through a similar process. So, we might ask: (1) Is our organization growing to meet new challenges? and (2) Are we moving forward to create our own future?

In order to respond to these questions, we need to consider many factors, such as intensified competition, changes in management or unions, shifts in customers' taste, changes in working relationships with peers, guidance from leaders, level of accomplishments, or new insights gained from newspapers, TV, and the like. Since vision is something individuals or groups of people within the organization create, each of us should examine how these factors might impact our collective vision.

Then we may further ask ourselves: (1) Is our vision changing in a positive direction or negative direction?, and (2) What can we do about it?

CREATING AN ORGANIZATION WITH SELF-MANAGED PEOPLE

Of course, if we move to a remote mountaintop and live as hermits, we might find a different solution to our question. Yet, most of us find ourselves in an environment where change is the norm. Therefore, we need to develop self-management skills so that we can sit in the driver's seat and chart our own course into the future.

To do this, however, each of us needs to:

* Understand our business environment better

* Be more alert to forthcoming changes

* Share and utilize information effectively

* Take initiative to continuously improve our skills and position

If we use sailing as an analogy again, this situation is similar to sailing in a stormy sea (Exhibit 1.3). Unpredictable waves, wind, and rain may make it most difficult to steer the boat and get to where we want to go. We must have good knowledge of our environment, read the forthcoming changes, share information well among our crew members, and continuously upgrade the skills of the crew. Like today's business environment, there is not much room for misjudgment.

If we consider that this sea of change in our society is the result of good intentions, such as a free exchange of information, a free market economy, better utilization of people's talent, and so on, and we see that we ourselves are the cause of the changes as well as the ones impacted, then we should be able to find ways to steer the boat to get where we want to go, by practicing the same principles.

To do this well, however, we need to be self-motivated, self-thinking, and self-controlled. In other words, we need to be self-managed. Whether we work in an organization or not, and regardless of our title or rank, each

of us should accomplish a certain mission as a part of our job.

OWNERSHIP AT THE SOURCE

In contrast to a military- or power-based society, what we see now when we look around is that people's individual abilities are becoming the major driving force of these mass changes in society. As more information is made available, more people's talents are utilized, and the free market economy provides greater opportunity for more people. This allows more people to excel than before. Within this self-induced chaos, we find an opportunity-filled world for those willing to test their potential.

While increased self-management skills will give individuals closer control over their destiny, they also provide major benefits for the company and the society, as summarized below:

Addressing problems at the source. Even if there are capable people who can solve our problems at the top of the organization, there would certainly be limits as to how much information could be absorbed by them as well as how fast it could be converted to action. If instead people can solve problems at the source, additional resources, such as support staff or extra layers of management will be unnecessary. Also, addressing problems at the source saves a precious resource -- time.

Serving the customer better. As we solve problems, we can better control the process so that we can continuously serve our customers better. Here, the customer is the person in the next process, not only the end user of the product or service. Since each person on the shop floor is adding value to the process, total customer satisfaction, or total quality control of all company processes is only achieved when everyone in the organization is involved in addressing the problems at the source and maintaining good standards.

Developing highly motivated people. Self-management puts people's destiny more in their own hands. It will give them increased responsibility and allow them to utilize higher-level skills. By applying creativity to solving problems, people will develop greater pride and confidence in their abilities. In other words, companies can prosper by unleashing the potential of highly motivated people as they grow with the company.

LOOKING OURSELVES STRAIGHT IN THE MIRROR

We know that without ownership of what we do, it is hard to accomplish things and have pride in ourselves. Also, without ownership, we may simply find ourselves drifting as the business situation changes. However, as we also know, looking at ourselves in the mirror and reviewing our progress is not easy when we are too busy with day-to-day activities, or even consciously trying to avoid facing the issues. We may be living in the past and trying to ignore new competitive threats.

Similarly, because of the way things have been done, it may be difficult for people at the shop floor to speak up with a new improvement idea to the boss. Also, cleaning up our own area may not seem worthwhile if nobody else practices it. Yet if we are to be honest with ourselves, we may have to act upon our belief. An organization without people's ownership is similar to a nation without true democracy. We must be convinced that by practicing what we believe in, we can accomplish our vision.

As we look at ourselves in the mirror periodically, we should review our organization's progress or lack of progress objectively. For example, we may ask if the people on the shop floor are gaining more ownership in running the business, or if the gap between management and workers is narrowing.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN SHOP FLOOR MANAGEMENT (SFM)

To answer these questions, we need to look at a business with the idea that the shop floor is the most crucial point of conducting business, where the tire hits the road. It is where values are added, goods are produced, and services are provided to satisfy our customers. We need to address problems and explore opportunities at the source, rather than looking at the company, say, strictly from a financial point of view. Even though numbers are important in developing a perspective of the total situation, the company cannot function without addressing reality on the shop floor. From this perspective, each customer and each employee are respected for their values.

Instead of finding better ways to do things right and control the process at the point where value is added, we see that the traditional way of conducting business has created an environment which encourages just the opposite. Exhibit 1.4 lists some of the problems that we find at the shop floor, and shows that we need to look at our work in more detail.

Whatever we do, any company's operations may be broken down to a chain of processes as shown in Exhibit 1.5. Here, the higher the effectiveness we can achieve at each process, the better the end result as measured by defect rate, performance against a standard, or on-time delivery.

If we measure defect rates, Company A's rate is 23070, while Company B's is 5%. So, if Company A is competing with Company B, it requires more than four times the resources of B to fix the problems. If we also consider all the fire fighting Company A needs to do as well as the impact of these on customer relationships, we can easily see the advantage Company B enjoys over Company A.

Here, we should note that the process may represent (1) a manufacturing process to make goods, (2) a service process dealing with people, (3) an information process dealing with paper or computers, or (4) a management process to share information, get things done, and lead people effectively.

The point is, if we cannot control the process or ignore the basics of SFM, chaos will be created. Exhibit 1.6 describes the typical impact of lack of SFM on a company's key performance. As shown in Exhibit 1.5, even though the impact of each process across the system seems small, when compounded, the total impact can be enormous. Furthermore, increased product diversity and introduction of more new products will magnify the situation. In order to improve customer satisfaction while minimizing waste, therefore, we should find ways to control each of these individual processes better.

CONTROLLING THE PROCESS

As we try to control a process, then, we need to develop some kind of feedback system, as shown in Exhibit 1.7. The premise here is that proper feedback of information allows us to take corrective action and thus control the input or process itself better.

If we measure productivity as representing performance of the process, it may look like this:

Productivity = Output/Input = Output/Minimum Input + Waste

or

Productivity = Value Created/Values Invested = Performance in QCDSM (Quality, Cost, Delivery, Safety, Morale)/Man + Machine + Material + Method + Measurement

In other words, we need to control these 5Ms to eliminate waste and provide high-quality products on time to our customers at low cost while providing a safe environment and high morale for people in the organization. An important question that we will address throughout this book, therefore, is how to provide adequate feedback and control the process most effectively and efficiently.

Reflecting on Exhibit 1.5, we should recognize that even 99 percent effectiveness is still unsatisfactory. If we put ourselves in the shoes of the customer who receives that remaining 1 percent, this should be quite obvious. We need to remember that one defect represents a total failure on the part of the organization that provided the good or service to the recipient.

TRADITIONAL AND PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZATIONS

If we are to control the process at the source and have the whole organization prosper, we cannot depend solely on certain people who are "responsible" for doing this. Rather, we should seek to involve everybody in the organization, utilizing their talent so that the whole organization and everybody in it performs better and benefits.

Of course, many hurdles must be overcome if everyone is to be involved in this process. Oddly, however, a very common hurdle is the idea that improving their own work is still foreign to many people. This is especially true when it comes to solving problems as a group. Without encouragement from their managers or peers to make improvements, this hurdle may seem higher than it really is.

To better understand the benefits of a progressive organization, two models of organizations are compared in Exhibit 1.8. The spindle-shaped model on the left represents the traditional organization where skill and knowledge are concentrated in a small number of management or staff people. There is division of labor between those who think and those who do manual work. This type of organization is common in feudal societies or centrally planned economies. If the people at the top of the spindle are excellent, in theory this model should work. Yet, the potential power of all the people is not recognized, and people's ownership and their creative spirit are not apparent.

Even in a free market economy, similar situations exist. For example, top management of a company may "monopolize" information, and make decisions, leaving others oblivious to what is happening. (Here we will refer to this type of management as "black box management" or "brick wall management," where information does not go across the organizational boundary smoothly.)

In theory, this can still work when information gathering, analysis, and decision making at the top are done effectively and without delay. But in today's turbulent business world where the pace of change is rapid and new technologies and products pop up frequently, the chance of black box management being effective becomes slim.

Information overload or a traffic jam of miscellaneous information at the top is symptomatic of black box management. Since the contribution of people on the shop floor is limited to manual skills, more and more fire fighting has to be done at the higher levels of management, robbing managers of precious time needed to steer the organization in the right direction. As the late Konosuke Matsushita pointed out, we should realize that "only the intellects of all employees can permit a company to live with the ups and downs of and requirements of its new environment."

Reflecting such a notion, the thicker cylinder on the right in Exhibit 1.8 represents a more progressive organization where a much larger pool of organizational talent is utilized. Here, people may contribute

suggestions for improvements, participate in problem-solving activities, and work as a team rather than merely focusing on individual concerns. Also, as their skill base broadens, they may clean up and organize their own work areas, conduct basic maintenance jobs, and become so flexible in doing multiple jobs that the group may become self-sufficient, functioning as a mini-company, or an autonomous organizational unit.

In other words, instead of being managed, people manage themselves. Instead of solving the problems at the top, they are addressing the problems much earlier on, leaving more room for management and support people to work on future and large-scale issues instead of fire fighting issues.

Exhibits 1.9 and 1.10, however, indicate the attitude changes that need to take place for an organization to transform itself and adopt the new shop floor management. Naturally, we are not talking about changes that can be made overnight. Everything that is connected to the shop floor will be affected in the change process. Yet since a company will not realize its full potential if its employees' capabilities are not fully utilized, everybody in the organization needs to make changes one at a time -- continuously, consistently, and with commitment.

The change process will require many people's involvement. Every attempt to hit singles and bunts counts, as opposed to everybody waiting to see a few star players hit home runs. To accomplish this change in attitude we need a good leader -- a catalyst -- and individuals with self-improving initiative; not a dictator and a passive audience.

DEVELOPING A PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZATION

Of course, some may still prefer the traditional type of organization, especially because of the efficiencies created by the division of labor. Certainly someone who is used to doing something over and over may be better equipped than others to do that job. Yet, if we push such an idea to the point of dividing those who use their brains from those who use their hands, we may not only be underutilizing the talents of people but we are lacking respect for the individual.

To understand this point better, let us look at a specific example. I find it very strange, but in many traditional organizations the supervisor on the shop floor does not conduct even a five- to ten-minute daily meeting with his or her people at the beginning or end of the shift. Yet, this type of meeting should be compared to a quarterback's huddle in football. By analyzing the situation, the team can confirm a strategy to perform better. Without this huddle, how can the team deploy strategies to perform well?

Still, some may think it is more efficient for a supervisor to communicate one to one with each employee rather than stop the line to meet with everyone. While this argument may sound reasonable, there is a potential of not utilizing people's talents. For example, not everyone will understand the concerns of the organization about meeting the targets on key items. Or people may not be informed about new products, new processes, or engineering changes, so that they can be better prepared or contribute their ideas (see Exhibit 1.11).

From the people's viewpoint, if communication with supervisors is limited, then when a machine starts to make noise, vibrate, or consume more oil than normal, if defects start to show up, or if an interesting idea comes to mind, there may be no opportunity for discussion or brainstorming.

Another common characteristic of traditional organizations is that people on the shop floor are called "direct or hourly labor." Again, this is a notion that people on the shop floor should be involved only in *doing* jobs, as opposed to *managing* their jobs. In the worst case, problems may be characterized as a dichotomy between

brain and muscle, creating a gap wide enough to cut off crucial communication, coordination, and cooperation. Because of this, people on the shop floor may even develop hostile attitudes, or become withdrawn or indifferent.

Just as in the case of the economic failure of communism in the Eastern bloc, if we alienate people by concentrating power, skills, or information at the top, such a rigid hierarchy will not allow people's creativity to flourish. Instead of constraining them within rigid boundaries, we need to find ways to address people's concerns and unleash their creative power.

In contrast, if we can come up with approaches where everybody participates in improvement activities, they may encourage people to upgrade their skills, utilize their creativity, and develop pride and higher self-esteem in their jobs -- and most likely in their personal lives as well. For this very reason, we should try to transform our organization at all possible levels, creating a harmonious blend of guidance from management and self-management on the part of shop floor people.

In summary, the transformation of a traditional type of organization to a progressive one will generate huge benefits:

* More people's creativity will be utilized. Since creativity is one of the fundamental characteristics of human beings, it is more humanistic to involve everyone.

* We can tap into the unknown potential of people. If we provide opportunities for people in the organization to contribute their talents, the growth potential will be unlimited, as history has proven.

* Since skills will not be monopolized by a few individuals, the higher overall skill level of people will make it easier to coordinate activities and get the necessary work done smoothly.

* As the capabilities of people are realized and better utilized, the organization as a whole will become more competitive. The difference in mass between the two organizations in Exhibit 1.8 reflects the difference in their competitiveness.

A note of caution here is that letting people utilize the potential of their creativity does not necessarily mean a "free hands" situation where they can do anything to explore their potential at their whim. Business is an ongoing concern, and resources such as time or money are always limited. Thus, we need to figure out ways to allocate resources intelligently and have people prove their contribution to the company's progress.

WHAT WE SHOULD WORK ON

In order for us to develop a progressive organization, however, we need to work on several areas:

* *Develop clarity in vision.* As shop floor activities and individuals' roles and responsibilities change, people may become uncomfortable. We need to confirm our vision and core values if we are to establish excellence in our work.

* *Develop customer orientation.* By viewing the next process as a customer, every person in the organization needs to grasp the importance of customer orientation and find ways to ensure customer satisfaction.

* *Promote involvement of everybody.* In order to address customer orientation, we need to tap into people's creativity and emphasize customer satisfaction, which may require the roles and responsibilities of people to

change.

Increase problem-solving capability. As more responsibility is borne by each individual, in order for the organization to be more responsive to customer demand, each individual's problem-solving skill base needs to be upgraded.

Provide adequate leadership. Instead of "managing" the situation, more leadership qualities will be required of managers. More and more of the traditional managing functions will be taken care of by people's increased self-managing capabilities.

Clarify the management support system. The management process needs to be redefined and clarified to accommodate the new thinking and values as well as individuals' new roles and responsibilities.

The subjects listed here are broad in scope, but they must be addressed if we are to accomplish our vision. A critical point here is that it is the people at the shop floor who need to understand these subjects and execute them. In other words, this is the ultimate competitive edge of the organization which is based on the total value-added work of everybody in the organization.

As we address each of these subjects more fully in the following chapters it is important to remember that they are also closely linked to each other. As the shop floor is the place where all of the different disciplines meet, instead of narrowly focusing on one subject at a time, we need to find an integrated approach.

In order to do this, instead of treating each of these subjects individually, we will study each subject's linkage with other subjects as much as possible. This approach will seem repetitious in some cases, but I believe it is necessary in order to deepen our holistic understanding of shop floor management.

This subject of SFM requires a different kind of learning. Simply accumulating knowledge does not add value by itself when it comes to the practice of SFM. Just like talking about swimming in the classroom can do little to build up muscles or improve skills, our orientation should be effective execution rather than intellectualization. Learning the essence of shop floor management, therefore, requires returning to the material over and over as we move on; it takes years of actual practice.

The numerous appendices and exhibits in this book are included for the purpose of providing tools, reference points, and checklists to aid readers in retaining the key points and to make it easier to reflect upon them later.

WHERE DO WE STAND NOW?

As we develop an understanding of SFM, we need to assess where we stand in relation to some of its key elements. To do this, we might rate the organization, either the company or department, in each category discussed above. (Use Exhibit 1.12 for a self-assessment.):

After we assess where we stand now, we need to ask ourselves if we are committed to transforming the organization from a traditional one to a more progressive one -- whether the organization itself is a unit, a department, or a whole company.

As illustrated in Exhibit 1.8, gaining ownership at each individual's level and being able to involve everyone in the practice of shop floor management takes a tremendous effort. There will be changes in the roles and responsibilities of people, people's problem-solving capabilities, leadership skills, and the management

system. In other words, as problems are addressed at the source, more managers and staff people will spend their time on future-oriented issues while assuring the coordination, cooperation, and communication among people. Top management also will assure that all of these happen and will think about future business directions.

Whether we are at the front line, top management, middle management, or support staff, everybody will be affected by such changes, and everyone will need to find meaning in what he or she does differently. Thus, we also need to ask: Is there a shared understanding, and commitment? Are people willing to try?

THE CHANGE PROCESS

As we can imagine, changes of this magnitude do not happen automatically or overnight. In a sense, this is a cultural change process for the whole organization. It may even be compared to the development of children into adults. In order to understand the organization's change process and prepare ourselves better, let us think back on our own experiences.

Since our behavior results from our way of thinking, unless our thoughts are on point, we will not have the right behavior. As a result, the outcome may not be satisfactory. In that sense, what we think or how we think is often more important than any specific action.

Exhibit 1.13 shows changes in the thinking process as applied to children and to adults who are learning a new sport or new skills.

As you can see, all three cases follow similar steps, even though the objectives are different in nature. Also, we may realize that often stimuli do not trigger reactions to the point of changing habits, and the process may stop at step 2 or 3. An individual's upbringing, concerns at a given time, and other factors, naturally, can affect behavior even if the stimulus or training process is the same.

However, the nature of the change process still seems to be consistent. And since organizations are collections of individuals, we may be able to apply the same process to the organization. That is, if change is necessary, then the organization may need to go through steps similar to those described here. Again, however, we need to realize that the same stimuli may not affect every individual in the same way.

Since we live in a complex world, full of new information or stimuli, moving through these steps requires an increasing level of effort before any new behavior becomes a new culture within the organization. This means that if we do not clarify each step and sort out the relevant information, we may be disturbed by new stimuli and get lost in the process before we accomplish anything. As with successfully accomplishing a new year's resolution, therefore, sorting out the stimuli (i.e., distinguishing important information and noises), developing a clear vision, and having a strong desire to accomplish the objective should be the first key steps in the growth of our organization and ourselves.

Exhibit 1.14 shows how the change process can be applied to an organization. Again, the first key steps are to sort out the stimuli, develop a clear vision, and have a strong desire to realize that vision. That is to say, for an organization to achieve coherent behavior, first, it needs to establish shared values and vision. Then, this becomes a foundation to accomplish the organization's mission as a group.

Even if this is understood in concept, we still need to realize that there is a difference between knowing what we do and doing what we know. Therefore, we need to make practicing our new thinking a habit. Once internalized, however, we may find such process is the equivalent of "making people," or making a whole

new person in the organization as Matsushita pointed out.

CHANGING OUR DESTINY

If we look back, our society has advanced from animalistic ways of communication in the prehistoric era, through sign language, spoken language, and written words, to the use of television and computers -- even to the point of sending messages over satellite networks or fiber optics. As a result, we are able to respond to new information very quickly. And this new information triggers new insight as more and more people are involved in the process of sharing information, thus causing chain reactions.

Naturally, this process has had a significant impact on our society. As we find ourselves in the middle of mass-scale information exchange, therefore, we should realize that our responses to information (stimuli) can change each of our lives significantly. To summarize, Exhibit 1.15 describes the nature of the change process that an individual or organization may go through, even leading to changes in our destiny. For the sake of discussion in this book, we will call this the *behavioral change model.*

The point here is that, depending on how we respond to outside stimuli, our individual or the organization's destiny will be determined accordingly. Of course, we need to be skilled at sorting out the stimuli and deciding whether or not they are meaningful. Yet, if we seek out good ideas, maintain a positive attitude, practice good behavior or habits, and take each step one at a time, I am optimistic that we can change our destiny accordingly. As Walt Disney said, "If we can dream it, we can make it."

As we face our challenges in business and the need to continuously improve our organization's performance, it becomes very important to progress through these steps in such a manner that both the individual and the organization as a whole can find meaning in it.

CLARIFYING OUR VISION AND MISSION

While our day-to-day focus may change depending on the stimuli we receive from outside, our fundamental values do not change so radically. To illustrate, Exhibit 1.16 summarizes the vision of shop floor excellence as viewed by the people who attended a shop floor management workshop I gave in Spain. As we review these comments, we find that even if our backgrounds may differ, our fundamental beliefs are similar. Also we may realize that if we are to change our behavior with regard to the way we manage the shop floor, we need to find ways to clarify these values and use them as our yardstick to measure our day-to-day behavior.

As an organization needs to renew itself and thrive until it accomplishes its mission, it needs to go through the change processes described in Exhibit 1.13 over and over again. Just as a person without core beliefs can easily lose sight of the vision in the midst of turbulence, the same is true for any organization. (See Exhibits 1.17 and 1.18.)

Ultimately, we need a vision for the future that everyone can digest and buy into at any time. If we can develop such a universal vision, beyond time and national boundaries, both our companies and the society at large will benefit. As we move forward in this book and as we go through our own change process, we should be able to develop our own vision of excellence and get ready for it.

SUMMARY

* In order to prosper in today's turbulent business environment, each of us needs to prepare and internalize skills for responding to change.

* When everyone addresses problems at the front line (i.e., shop floor), all of us become problem solvers, reducing the need for additional resources such as extra support staff or layers of managers.

* Self-management puts people's destiny in their own hands. People will have greater pride, self-esteem, increased responsibilities, and contribute more to the company and society.

* In achieving excellence in shop floor management, traditional problems such as the dichotomy between manager and subordinates and a lack of coordination between functions need to be resolved.

* Even though the effectiveness of each process may look small, when compounded throughout the whole organization the total impact can be enormous. If we can manage each of these processes better, we can significantly improve customer satisfaction while reducing waste.

* For shop floor management to be successful, the impact on the organizational structure, the management system, people skills, and attitude issues also need to be addressed.

* The first major steps of change are sorting out the stimuli we receive as an organization, developing a clear vision, and having a strong desire to accomplish that vision. As we move down these steps, we may find that even our destiny is changing.

* The vision of shop floor excellence is something everyone of us needs to seek as opposed to being given to us by someone else. As we train our own minds, we should be able to hold a vision of excellence in our own hands.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anna Maples:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or read a book eligible New Shop Floor Management: Empowering People for Continuous Improvement? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have additional opinion?

Virginia Dunn:

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Dora Gourley:

Are you kind of occupied person, only have 10 or perhaps 15 minute in your moment to upgrading your mind talent or thinking skill also analytical thinking? Then you have problem with the book compared to can satisfy your short period of time to read it because all of this time you only find guide that need more time to be go through. New Shop Floor Management: Empowering People for Continuous Improvement can be your answer since it can be read by you who have those short time problems.

Lucy Broussard:

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