The Changing Role of Today's First Line Managers
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Finding Ways to Better Help and Support the People Who Add Value

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Abstract

Workers' minds and the creative solutions they produce are wasted using Scientific Management techniques developed in the last century. The practice is a wasteful cost that manufacturers can no longer afford. The thesis of this research seeks to answer these questions:

1. How does the role of today's first line managers need to change?

2. How can today's first line managers better help and support the people who add value?

3. Can leaders, by giving up managing individuals, gain better control of their organization?

The report employs three themes- paradoxes of leadership, autonomous teams and LEAN process, and the changing demographics of today's workforce. To narrow the thesis further it focuses on first line managers in heavy industries such as large construction projects, shipbuilding, and making large specialized construction equipment.

The Changing Role of Today's First Line Managers

Introduction

Competitive, constantly changing forces that can form or fracture an organization, compel organizational leaders to find new innovative ways to create value to help make sure the company survives and for long-term sustainability. Since the Industrial Revolution, the job of leaders has been to give orders and then make sure workers followed them. As machines improved productivity and lowered cost to consumers, demand increased for more goods and more factories. Factory supervisors needed a way to control workers and processes, which lead to the development of Classical Scientific Management Theories; theories still employed today in many traditional manufacturing settings.

Since the late 1800's, Classical Scientific School gurus ushered in new ways to getting work done in the factory, finding the best way to perform work and manage tasks to improve productivity. Babbage promoted division of labor, breaking processes into simple steps so workers could master skills quickly. Taylor saw management as a scientific process developing time and motion studies. And the Gilbreths sought to make processes more efficient by reducing motions involved. Classical Scientific Management thinking focused on defining, measuring, and controlling, taking a mathematical approach, much like solving a linear equation.

Adherents to the Classical Administrative School focused on the principles of becoming an administrative manager. Fayol promoted the notion that managers can learn leadership skills and he developed principles managers should follow such as Division of Work, where specialization was key to improving productivity. He espoused that managers had the right to give orders and should use discipline to enforce conformity. Fayol advocated unity of direction and command with one leader issuing clear directives, and for workers to follow a chain of command with

defined reporting relationships. Fayol believed that cross training and the time needed to learn new skills reduced productivity. Weber devised organizational structures based on control of information and created bureaucracy. Organization charts graphically depicted a manager's level of knowledge and authority, putting people with the most knowledge and authority at the top of the chart. (Onkar, 2008)

Although Scientific Management and Classical Administrative Methods increased productivity, the methods also induced negative aspects. Managers treated humans as programmable machines, discouraged creativity, and directed workers to "do as you are told, use the best practices I developed". Employees were not involved in developing or improving processes. Repetitive tasks created boredom, repetitive injuries, and we saw little evidence of cross training. Managers focused on mass production. Hitting short-term production goals became the most important performance indicator, not quality, not customer satisfaction. "Bureau-crazy" of a hierarchical system created vertical silos and frustrating communication barriers.

From the 1880's through the late 1900's, manufacturing enterprises could succeed using Scientific Management Methods, it was a seller's market and demand was exceptionally high. In year 2012, respected author Ken Blanchard claims "All that has changed. A manager's job is no longer that of a watchdog, policeman, or slave driver. Managers must be able to shape a more supportive work environment and find ways to help each employee be more productive" (Blanchard, 2012). Inventor Grace Murray Hopper said "You manage things; you lead people". People do not want to be managed, they abhor being managed; they want to be led. Yet many

organization leaders over manage and under lead their people, employing Scientific Management tools developed for success in the previous century.

During the semester, we considered a broad spectrum of important approaches to the study of leadership including psychology, theory and practice of leadership. In the text "Leadership in Organizations", we covered topics that included Changing theories of leadership, Strategy and leadership, Ethics and leadership, Leadership development in public sector organizations, Followership and distributed leadership, and Leadership development in multi-national firms (Storey, 2011).

Editors Messick and Kramer, prodded us to consider, "What are the personal characteristics of leaders? What is the nature of the relation between leaders and followers? Why do we perceive some people to be better leaders than others? What are the circumstances that evoke leadership qualities in people? Can leadership be taught? And so on." (Messick&Kramer, 2011)

Dr. Lion asked us to explored salient questions. "What are the different task-related personality traits of leaders? Why is the concept of "building community" as a function of leadership important, and, how does this benefit the leader? What are the strategies aimed at gaining power? What was the outcome of these tactics? How do transformational leadership and situational leadership serve similar and how do they serve different purposes? Can a person be one and not the other? How can a leader or a manager in a coaching opportunity use expectancy theory with a disenfranchised employee that was under performing? Why is feedback an important part of leadership? Why has innovation become an important part of the leadership puzzle? What is the link between "leadership" and "communication"? How would you structure a leadership development program for global/international leadership? What is the concept of

"crucibles" and are they "one of the most reliable indicators and predictors of 'true leadership'. Can leadership be taught? Are corporate universities effective? And Gender Equality: Why are women under-represented in leadership roles?" (Lion, 2012)

The thesis of this research seeks to answer these questions:

4. How does the role of today's first line managers need to change?

5. How can today's first line managers better help and support the people who add value?

6. Can leaders, by giving up managing individuals, gain better control of their organization?

To answer these questions we will explore themes not covered comprehensively in the texts or questions posed during the course of study: The themes include paradoxes of leadership, autonomous teams and LEAN process, and the changing demographics of today's workforce. To narrow the thesis further we will focus on first line managers in heavy industries such as large construction projects, shipbuilding, and making large specialized construction equipment.

Paradoxes of leadership

In 2011/2012, I was able to work in a large, rapidly expanding manufacturing facility where we needed to solve complex problems that spanned several trades and departments. It was a fascinating time in regard to use of technology and working with cross-functional problem solving teams. One project involved installing a large, heavy, delicate and expensive component, to extremely tight tolerances, and it was a key system vital to the entire project.

To load the system required coordinated efforts of people, processes, and heavy equipment, including cranes, hoists, slings, chains, and telescoping work platforms, and the job needed detailed process steps and possibly a handling device. The most important element to the

safety and success of the project was highly skilled, safety conscious people that included engineers, top notch riggers and fitters, machinery installation mechanics, crane operators, vendor support and many sets of attentive eyes, as we needed to ease the system into a tight space that seem akin to threading a needle.

A small task team of fitters, riggers, machinery installers, who had been working months to prepare the foundations for the new system, worked with engineering to devise a detailed installation method and build a handling fixture to load the system. The hands on team developed a well thought out plan, establishing a detailed systematic process, and then they designed and built a handling fixture. I was amazed at how well they worked together, building on each other's ideas, and how proud they were of the result. It was great to be part of seeing this creative process.

Unknown to the team, another group of experts planned the installation process, designed a handling fixture at an offsite location, creating a different more complex design. Tensions flared when the two groups –the task team and the experts collided. With little understanding of the work the task team had accomplished, the experts unilaterally decided to scrap t he work of the task team. As a result, the task team was demoralized, angry, and became disengaged, but then to add insult, the experts expected the task team to then build and use the new device the experts designed. I remember discussing the issue with a project manager, the implications of not involving people in the decision making process. The response was "I don't give a (hoot) what the mood of the team is. You just tell them what to do and they do it." As a result, the expert's design never materialized, but bitter feelings festered between the task team and outside experts. Damage to already strained relationships further reduced trust between departments. In the end, the mechanics devised a method to load the system using standard slings, chains and hoists.

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       The industrial revolution spawned vast and rapid technological changes that influence manufacturers today. We see advances in technology, from horse powered machines, to steam, to electric motors to drive machinery. In a short span we went from using candles to bright incandescent lights, horses used to drawn carriages now use V8 engines in cars. From smoke signals to telegraph, to phone, to cell phones. In addition, computers and electronics allowed us to launch rockets and satellites. We harnessed the atom to be used for peacetime efforts and making immense bombs. However, one of the greatest innovations in manufacturing is not the high technology of products made, but the management methods for making products- Scientific Management. Espoused by the reigning management experts of the last century such as Gilberth, Fayol, Taylor and Babbage, scientific management tools are still with us. The tools reduced work into small manageable independent units. Experts used time and motion studies and management principles developed a century ago, to identify how much time jobs should take, reduce motion, and standardize the process in an effort to eliminate the mental effort a worker needed. Leaders with a command and control mentality, defined each process step for the worker, and the experts were responsible for making improvements and reaping the bonuses.

       Leaders with attitudes and behaviors that proved so successful in the past, have the hardest time changing. Successful leaders are stuck in the old command and control paradigm or pattern, even though systems decay and become ineffective around them. In our story, leaders

succeeded for years in a tough skinned, heavy manufacturing environment by making command decisions, being the expert with the right answers, giving orders and making sure workers followed orders. During my engineering studies at Rutgers in the late 1970's we studied Scientific Management, time and motion studies, operation management, mathematical optimization models, statistical process control, and linear programming. We used mainframe computers, wrote programs in FORTRAN, and input data with punch cards to create optimization routines. This was the latest science to command and control style management. However, times and the demographics of the work force have changed faster than the Scientific Management practices.

In Paradoxes of Leadership, author Edmunson asks the question "why should a business leader care about the quality of work life?" (Edmunson, 1999). He provides a clear answer, one simple reason – it affects the bottom line. Unlike machines with design limitations, humans and their ability to create is unlimited. If you treat people like machines, people become alienated and disengaged. Their minds and the creative solutions they produce are wasted, a wasteful cost that manufacturers can no longer afford.

What is driving change? Global competition puts manufacturers under severe pressure to produce value. Consumers demand and consume a huge variety of low cost, high quality products delivered when they want them. Information technology gives manufacturers the ability to share information precisely and quickly allowing individual employees and teams to adjust quickly to changing demands. This provides the ability to move beyond rigid sluggish bureaucracies of mass production defined by scientific management principles.

With all the information available and time and money spent defining leadership, it remains an enigma, something not easily explained or understood. Leadership is more of an art form where beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. How do you define the qualities of great art or great leadership? Leaders constantly cope with conundrums- they face problems that have no easy solutions, but somehow leaders McGyver things to make them work. If you believe leadership is learned, I sense that you may agree that learning leadership is a heuristic process. One discovers leadership solutions by one self, by trial and error, then constantly changing and adapting in response to stimulus. If learning leadership is a process, changing the inputs changes the outputs. Then add the paradoxes of leadership, notions that seems to be absurd or contradictory, but in fact are true, make the learning process all that much more confusing.

In Paradoxes of Leadership, author Edmunson provides examples of leadership paradoxes (Edmunson, 1999). In the following discussion, we will explore some of these paradoxes adding observations and comments based on of my life experiences.

"We have more influence when we listen than when we tell". Traditionally first line managers give direction. They tell people what to do. The paradox is, that really listening to employees provides more effective direction than telling employees what to do. In a way, telling makes perfect sense, it is clean, efficient, people do not get confused and it is much easier to coordinate work. If only people would just do what they are told. True listening, (not the pretend to listen smiley face stuff, then go right on and do what you always intended) initially takes time up front, but pays off with faster and better implementation. An effective way to listen employs visuals. For instance on a construction site, simple flip charts screwed to a plywood sheet and hung on a bulkhead, help not only to communicate between shifts, it helps mechanics plan work and communicate within each other. On the flip chart, shift supervisors provide a broad outline

of tasks the crew needs to focus on. Although supervisors establish clear overall goals, the crewmembers decide the details. Crews hash out priorities of who works with who, what things could cause delays, identify back up work and the tools needed from the tool crib etc. This was new for some mechanics. Over time, I sensed a transformation; mechanics began taking ownership of the charts and stopped worrying about spelling mistakes. I really enjoyed seeing team members debating with each other the options, sketching out details on the chart, or piggybacking on shared ideas. What a difference from the tell method. Using tell method, if parts, materials, or information was missing, the boss had a problem not the crew. Listening encourages engagement. Telling breeds dependence and resistance. People come to rely on the manager for direction or find every conceivable way the job cannot be done as told.

"Profound change comes from a feeling of safety, not from fear". One day a frustrated shipyard manager told me "*Joe when I worked at XYZ Fab Company, people scattered like coach roaches when a supervisor walked the floor. Look, look at them! Here they don't even bother to get up and at least look busy. Workers here have no fear of supervisors*". To many first line supervisors in heavy industry, leadership means telling people what to do. They feel like they need to instill fear and apply discipline so people follow their orders. Coercive power can produce short-term results, but it relies on intimidation. Traditionally the ability to "push" people to work and keep busy is a favorable first line manager characteristic. However real leadership comes from creating an environment where people feel safe and respected. When people feel safe, they are more likely to contribute their ideas and information. Note: busy is not always productive, but keeping people busy is a concept ingrained into traditional management thinking.

"We are stronger when we are vulnerable"- Think about how you would react to a boss who knows everything, or watch two department heads who both feel they know everything, battle over resources or who is right. Know-it-alls do not earn respect or followers. Arrogant leaders too often not only can make poor unilateral decisions, they make people angry. Admitting to workers "I do not know and I need help" can build trust and engagement. This story can help illustrate *"We are stronger when we are vulnerable".* I remember a trip to Chicago, the Boyle family got off the train at the wrong stop in a very rough part of town. We were out of place on a run down dirty south Chicago street. As I tried to study a map, young men wearing hooddies, sporting tattoos and bling intentionally bumped me, and glared as if to say, "we own this sidewalk- move". A black woman walking by yelled us- "what is wrong with you people, get out of here you are going to get hurt". I said "we're lost". She kept going, but then slowly came back. The black women then started studying the map with us. Her friends came by, joined in and started to debate better ways out of town. In the end this group of black folk gave us tips where to buy cheap bootleg bus tickets and identified places to avoid. It was becoming apparent to me this woman was a respected leader in the community. She wrote down her cell phone said several times "you call me if you get into any trouble -I can help". Some waited until we got on the right bus. In this case, we became stronger because we were vulnerable. I see the same happen on construction sites. When arrogant know-it-all leaders insist on doing it their way, refusing to admit they may be wrong, they grow weaker and lose respect. The leaders who show vulnerability and ask for help grow stronger and more respected.

"Even when we are affective, we doubt ourselves". This paradox is another confusing one. How can a leader consider self-doubt an asset? Although too much self-doubt can paralyze,

the feeling of being all-powerful can lead to ruin. The quote by Lord Acton sums things up quickly- *"power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely"* (Lord Acton, 1887). Doubt can help a supervisor lead by being more considerate of others. Leaders who seem all powerful may also seem as unapproachable. Doubt creates humbleness, making it easier for followers to connect. Doubt also makes us question- is there a better way? Without doubt, leaders can become drunk on the feeling of power, loose inhibitions, and do things just because they can. Line supervisors need to find the balance between doubt and confidence.

    "Less is more". In my work, I see many busy supervisors, especially engineers and technical people. These are skilled people, who think they can do the job faster themselves rather than teaching someone else- *"it will take too long, I can do it faster myself".* These leaders always have too much to do and highly value having more time to do more of their own work. A new untrained employee can seem like a nuisance, not an asset, and then pawned off on someone else or given busy work. Instead of paying attention to their people and working towards organizational goals, busy leaders focus on their own work and reaching their goals, often seen head buried in a PowerPoint, Spreadsheet or CAD program. Leaders need to spend less time working on their "work" and invest more time nurturing and helping their people who do work to reach organizational goals. They will both get more work done on and on the right things.

    "Our strength comes through serving, not through dominating". Given the right tools, material, and information mechanics will stay busy and busy on the right things that create value. A construction site is not the most comfortable place, it can be noisy, hot, freezing cold, constantly moving, dirty, poorly lit, and have no place to call your own, plus you are on your feet all shift. All too often supervisors bogged down with administrative work, leave the work site to

spend time in their office filling out time sheets, writing performance reviews, preparing for meetings, answering emails, creating Power Points. This leaves very little time at the work site. Many times supervisors would meet me at the beginning of a shift and ask, "*What's going on? Do you have enough people?*", and then they were gone. In construction, or in any complex assembly work, so many interconnected dependencies, one missing item, can hold up a job and idle people. And what do supervisors hate to see? People Idle- The seagull manager swoops in makes noise, craps on everything then flies off again leaving a big mess behind. They direct *"get those people busy"* yet do not get to the root cause why the job stalled. Serving, not dominating can take the form of listening, finding out what your people need. Break through the bureaucracy, cut through the rules and regulations that hinder people from doing their work. Find ways to make their work easier, faster and produce better quality. And one of the most important is "be there", be seen and to observe what is needed. A first line leader becomes effective by helping their team get the right tools, material and information. Their strength and the effectiveness of their people will grow.

"*We correct better through grace than through confrontation*". I had two experiences with similar outcomes, but the outcomes are confusing. In the first instance, a good ship fitter we will call him JJ, was an integral part of the crew installing foundations and a skilled fitter. I relied on his judgment, except one day. Variation in hull structure was always an issue. JJ was taught to align the foundation structure to the hull structure. He fitted a critical foundation aligning it to the support structure of the deck. However, in doing so, the mounting holes, the features that the mechanical components bolted to did not align. JJ, as most fitters, was proud of how quickly he could fit and weld. When I inspected the alignment I said JJ you cannot weld this foundation in this location, the holes will not line up. He said, "But Joe you can't install the foundation without

aligning to the structure". By then we were going head to head – I said no don't weld it. The holes will not align. He said I am going to weld it. I said no- It was a stand off. I said rip the foundation out and remake it to match the structure. JJ's jaw dropped. He could not believe we would rip out days of work. He came from a culture of just get'er done. Get that foundation off the project management schedule. He was in steel trades- the machinist could deal with the misalignment later. Eventually, I think JJ saw that my anger was not at him, but that I was truly concerned with alignment. On this job, the fitter team held much autonomy. So many times, he had taken the lead, made decisions and gave me advice. This helped build the relationship. The next day he reworked the foundation so the mounting hole features and support structure aligned. As a leader, sometimes, you need to say no. Going head to head is not graceful. Instead of battling who was wrong and who was right we focused on what would be the long-term result and validated JJ's years of experience. We needed to see the bigger picture- yes we could install a foundation much quicker, but it would cause much rework later. JJ and I continued to work together installing remaining foundations and have a good relationship and greet each other warmly when meeting in the yard. Grace helped.

In another case, new machinery installation mechanics were coming onto the job. The new comers seemed to have a different culture than the steel trade workers and reluctant to join in as part of a team- keeping their independence. One mechanic- we will call him Miguel, seemed to understand the mechanical systems quite well and brought strong technical skill. He also seemed very angry – sour about everything in life. After talking with him, I came to understand he was going through a difficult divorce and child custody battle. His sourness spilled over into work and it was affecting the entire crew. He needed attention and would do things to get it – much of it negative behavior. One night, when he was in a particularly sour mood, I

asked Miguel to come down from the work platform. He snarled back "I'm busy". I persisted calmly, I asked Miguel again "come on down". When Miguel came down, he blurted "what do you want". I said why don't you go get a cup of coffee. He looked at me surprised and replied, "But I don't like coffee". I said try something else. But, I don't want anything else. Well Miguel it's clear you and Bob (helper) are not happy here, you can go to the break room, no need to come back the rest of the shift, or go back to see a Mechanical Supervisor for another job. You really should not stay here. Miguel and his helper picked up their tools and left confused. They did not return to our job that night. Latter on, I would see Miguel in passing on a gangway to the ship. We would greet each other, he seemed like he wanted to talk. Grace rather than confrontation proved much more powerful in the end. Somehow I sense Miguel knew I appreciated his technical talent- this was the attention he wanted, but also he now knew his behavior was unacceptable. It happened not by making threats or direct confrontation. Grace somehow helped.

"We gain respect not by demanding it, but by giving it." Well-known comic, Rodney Dangerfield's most famous line "I tell ya, I don't get no respect", brings smiles to many a face. Unfortunately, many workers truly feel this way. What do we mean by respect? Some supervisors see respect in terms of fear or power, the boss has power to discipline, the police officer has a gun. On the other hand, people respect talent- best engineer, best fitter, and excellent welder. Others respect values and principles such as honesty commitment- She was the best supervisor, we all could trust her. Edmunson goes deeper gaining inspiration from "*all men are created equal*" not in the sense that everybody is the same, but in the sense all have inalienable rights. "*We must respect the rights of every worker as a person. We must be*

considerate of his needs for a sense of accomplishment, importance, challenge, and security." (Edmunson, 1999) Edmunson advocates if we are respectful and considerate we will receive consideration and respect. Change the scientific management respect paradigm- Workers are not cockroaches that scatter at the sight of a supervisor. How can leaders act in a way that show Supervisors are worthy of respect? By treating people as people – respect shows itself in characteristics such as honesty, really listening, and showing empathy.

"We learn by talking, not just by listening". In the first paradox Edmunson stressed we have more influence when we listen than when we tell, now here is a new paradox, we need to talk more? Well yes. This report is a good example. Expressing ideas in our own words, forces us to articulate concepts and show understanding. In the process, we went from passive learning to an active approach. When I had to teach a course, I found that the best way to master a subject is to teach it. I also saw this at the flip charts at shift changeover mechanics expressed ideas and concepts of how they planned to work a job, it wasn't just words, but sketches, drawings and physical pieces used to help themselves and others understand.

"With people, the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line". Working with the team who installed the large complex handling and recovery system, we frequently discussed that our job was not just to install the system quickly, but learn how to install the system accurately now, and on future ships. We could have approached it in a short-term manner- instruct mechanics to install the system without really understanding how its features related. Fit components as if they were independent standalone installations, using dimensions taken from as built structure. In the short term, we could have gone a lot faster- (the shortest

distance between two lines) but in this case, it was important to understand the relationship between features such as bolt patterns for bearings and how variation in as-built structure affects the accuracy of installation. Initially it took much longer to understand and set up a datum reference system, and then find a way to simulate it accurately on large scale. The datum reference system allowed us to understand where to measure from so that mating features would align. Traditionally fitters would install the foundation without regard to how it related to other features, they are trained to align foundations to as built structure, and know the chances for reworking it latter when parts did not fit. Rework is much more expensive and when you have several hulls to build, the rework will be repeated, repeatedly. It takes time to build a relationship of trust, and for people to see that you trust them to solve problems.

"The hard stuff is the soft stuff". Stephen Covey, author of 7 Habits Series, relays "*In my 35-year corporate journey and my 60-year life journey, I have consistently found that the thorniest problems I face each day are soft stuff — problems of intention, understanding, communication, and interpersonal effectiveness — not hard stuff such as return on investment and other quantitative challenges. Inevitably, I have found myself needing to step back from the problem, listen more carefully, and frame the conflict more thoughtfully, while still finding a way to advance the corporate agenda empathetically. Most of the time, interestingly, this has led to a more promising path forward and a better relationship, which in turn has made the next conflict easier to deal with.* (Covey, 2011) First line supervisors spend a lot of time measuring and documenting the hard stuff. They make linear projections, collect costs, hours used, and calculate inventory turns. They track absenteeism, they spend enormous amounts of time doing administrative paper work- time sheets, budgets, schedules, and moving bodies from job to job.

We see this in manufacturing but also we see it in education- standardized testing and teach to the standard test, and in health care with immense amounts of documentation. With all this hard measuring, do supervisor lead better, are students learning skills needed in life effectively and are people getting healthier? Are we measuring the right stuff? How do we measure and deal with the *the soft stuff*. Supervisors well versed in Scientific Management principles will need to form a new paradigm. Managers want hard measures- metrics, easy to obtain, verifiable and fast and cheap. However, the important things in leadership are hard to measure, hard to get and verify. How do you measure mood, engagement, understanding, and commitment? It means relating to people as people. They are not robots, machines, or programmable resources that can be turned on and off at will. Leadership is a heuristic trial and error learning process – first line managers need regular and frequent opportunities to learn how to face the thorniest problems - the soft stuff "*problems of intention, understanding, communication, and interpersonal effectiveness*"

"*Sometimes we have to get it wrong to get it right*". In manufacturing, you usually are not punished for not taking a risk, but you can get beat up pretty badly if you take a risk, it fails, and blame can be affixed to your name or department. After years of getting beat up, Managers with authority to approve a proposal, take no action, for fear of making a mistake. Instead, war worn managers push decisions up to another level for someone else's approval, to avoid the blame if things go wrong. I have been in meetings where there have been many experts all able to express opinions why something cannot be done, but in an atmosphere of "Don't make Errors" (ie don't make me look bad) few people are willing to step forward and take a risk. However, mistakes provide feedback and help us learn what not t o do next time. First line managers need

to develop a culture, a safety net for employees, where mistakes create learning opportunities, not blame sessions. Benjamin Franklin with many witty sayings stated- *"I didn't fail the test, I just found 100 ways to do it wrong."*

"A full life is achieved not by grasping but by giving." Try to recall Michael Douglas playing Gordon Gecko in the movie Wall Street- *"Greed is good! Greed is right! Greed works! Greed will save the USA!" - From movie Wall Street - 1987* . Granted this is a movie, but gives an example of how in North American/Western society, we have become so obsessed for more of everything. And here is the paradox - more does not make us a happier healthier society. In contrast, Michael Lerner shares*: "This focus on money and power may do wonders in the marketplace, but it creates a tremendous crisis in our society. People who have spent all day learning how to sell themselves and to manipulate others are in no position to form lasting friendships or intimate relationships... Many Americans hunger for a different kind of society -- one based on principles of caring, ethical and spiritual sensitivity, and communal solidarity. Their need for meaning is just as intense as their need for economic security."*-- Michael Lerner, journalist. It seems as humans, we are programmed to possess, it comes easy to us. On the other hand giving is a much more difficult process and requires us to understand the needs of the receiver. Managers have a full plate and at times overwhelmed, how can they have the time and energy to think about giving, sharing resources, especially when the metrics of life and scientific management encourage independent grasping behaviors- *Greed is Good.* Piece work incentive systems, independent production goals that reward speed over quality, hardly encourage team behavior or giving. What do first line managers consider important? Perhaps we should ask what they want to be remembered for. I would hope in some way they would want their people to

remember them as a person who made a positive difference in their crew's lives. Giving not grasping are the positive things people will remember you by. *People are looking for more – they have a need for meaning.*

Autonomous teams and LEAN process

In the early 90's, I worked as a manufacturing engineer making hydraulic automotive lifts. Our plant employed about 400 employees, some of the best workers I have ever met. Most were farmers or came from farm families. In the style of scientific management, the factory was organized by functions, all saws for cutting tube in one area, welders in another, break presses in another and so on, and each area had its own job classification. There was also room to store large quantities of inventory. We needed this to support the piecework incentive plan. To complete a lift took several weeks from start to finish. The incentives kept people very busy. For instance, a person running a band saw would eagerly keep the saw producing- cut parts then quickly move a pallet of cut parts and then get new material to cut. It was quite a task keeping track of all the produced parts. However, it did keep people busy and supervisors were trained to keep people busy. The plant could become cluttered, noisy and dirty with burning metals, grinding and blasting processes, trying to organize all the materials. This was a true mass production, batch and queue factory. We saw this as efficient and productive- until the Japanese at Toyota gave us a new benchmark.

My first task

Unfortunately, much of the inventory proved unusable, it seemed to never be the right inventory, took up space, hard to find parked outside under snow, or if the saw was set wrong or the drawings changed you had a lot of scrap or rework and you may not find the problem for weeks. However, people stayed busy making things we did not need, filling up space with inventory, tying up capital, required expensive tracking systems, and people to do the inventory tracking.

One of my first jobs as manufacturing engineer focused on the press department. It took 12 hours to change a press over from one part to another. No one in their right mind would consider making only a few parts when changeover was so long, except for my boss. Harold never asked me to do a job- it was always in the form of a question- in this case "Joe what do you think would happen if we could change presses in one minute or less?" I was brand new and did not know how ridiculous this request was. I helped start a task team of press operators, tool makers, and maintenance people. When I asked them what they thought about a one-minute changeover, they looked at me as if I were from a different planet. "*Joe do you know how long it takes to change over a press"*? They told me a minimum of 12 hours and proceeded to list all the steps. This would be a challenge- the first step was getting the team to believe it could be done. The team was thinking of shaving a few minutes off here and there, and perhaps reduce change over time down to 8 to 10 hours. Fortunately, located not far from us, Toyota graciously let us visit their press department. What the team saw amazed us- (and I am glad the entire team went not just me). Toyota changed presses in less than a minute and they had presses more complicated than our presses. Seeing that a one-minute changeover was possible made all the difference. In four months our team devised methods and made investments supported by management in new dies and handling equipment- (all new dies with shut heights standardized, die footprints standardized, and maintenance scheduled, dies stored at the press, handling gear designed by the mechanics used to move the dies quickly). This was the start of my Lean Journey and in Autonomous work teams.

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Autonomous or self-managed work teams have considerable discretion in making work related decisions and redefining the division of labor found in traditional hierarchical structures. They play an enormous role in Continuous Improvement, Kaizen, or Rapid Improvement Teams. In just about every event I have attended, teams always reviewed the basics- On the technical side we will review - Find and eliminate the 7 forms of waste, keep a clean and organized work place, and standardize the process. On the people side managers and workers alike, develop a team charter that is so important for both the team and managers, clearly defining roles and responsibilities.

In one of my favorite reference books, The New Manufacturing Challenge Kioshi Suzaki shares a short story about Toyota. "*Nearing bankruptcy in the 1940s, Toyota learned that banks are not necessarily helpful in a crisis. Toyota was forced to use brains, not money, to figure out what the company could do with what it already had. Instead of asking for financial or government help, Toyota addressed the core issue of its problem even while going through difficult union relationships. Its solution was for management and employees to work together to eliminate the waste which was abundant in their work environment.*" (Suzaki, 1988) Suzaki went on to describe the seven wastes that include Over-production, Waiting, Transportation, Processing, Inventory, Motion, and Defects.

The core issue in many manufacturing plants is waste. Leaders watch key performance indicators that focus on profit yet all too often we are blind to the waste at our feet, much like the batch and queue story. Safety, Cost, Quality, Delivery with the right product at the right time provides a resounding mantra. Information and material must flow like water- each component of production should fit together. CI Techniques that focus on improving Good housekeeping, U shaped lines, quality, machine down time, morale, suggestions, kanban; all can help make a

factory more competitive. When tied together they make a powerful streamlined manufacturing system. Understanding, finding and eliminating waste is so important- we go over waste every time we meet as a CI or RIP (Continuous Improvement or Rapid Improvement Process)team . However, one of the most important ingredients to any process is people and wasting people's talent is one of the worst wastes of all. "Systems make it possible, but people make it happen" (Suzaki, 1988) Scientific management Principles espousing division of labor creates vertical silos that impedes flow.

In a world where there has been so many cutbacks, multi-tasking traditional managers feel there is no time for doing important continuous improvement work or do not feel confident in giving teams self-control. They are so entrenched, too busy in doing urgent, many times unimportant work such as answering calls, checking emails, attending meetings firefighting, plus they are overburdened by directing and monitoring underutilized people. Key performance metrics do not encourage important improvement activities. *"I don't care if it's good, it needs to be done by tomorrow"* A first line manager faced with this environment needs to make tough choices.

In Scientific Management, experts design standardized methods so that employees do not have to think and managers can monitor and control the employee. In continuous improvement methods, standardization is a tool to help teams and individuals expose problems and fix them. This is a big conceptual change.

(Mintzberg, 1990) published his Ten Management Roles in his book, "Mintzberg on Management:Inside Our Strange World of Organizations," in 1990. This is fairly recent- enough so, that many of us in this class and current business leaders may have studied follow these work roles. The ten roles included terms such as figurehead, leader, monitor, disseminator,

spokesperson, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator- all these terms fit in nicely with scientific management principles and a command and control style approach. Nowhere in the list do you see terms such as facilitator, coach, innovator, advocate, developer of staff, or mentor.

In Changing the Role of Top Management, (Ghoshal&Bartlett, 1995) describe a transition from scientific management structuring tasks, to shaping behaviors. "*the strategy-structure systems doctrine [scientific management principles]that most managers rely on today is about allocating resources, assigning responsibilities, and controlling*" I remember one of my first consulting jobs in a Cut and Sew factory here in the Upper Peninsula. I was concerned – at the time that the sewing industry in North America was in decay and near death. I did not even know what a serger sewing machine was. I said to myself that this is going to be bad start. Owner Bob Jacquart wanted a new computer system to control the ever-increasing amount of inventory that was choking the lifeblood out of his business. My task was to review sewing operations and come up with a recommendation. After a day in the plant I got back with Bob, he said, "What do you think? What new computer system do you recommend?" Nervous I replied in more of a question "None? I wouldn't buy any new system now." In addition, I waited for the big wrong answer gong. "But Joe, how will I control all this inventory?" Again hesitantly I said "Get rid of it, only make what you need?" JPF's journey to LEAN started. It was Bob's willingness and transformational leadership that made it happen. He shaped the culture and behaviors of the organization where autonomous teams flourished. To this day I am amazed at how he has grown in leadership, without knowing it by name he spearheaded The purpose-process-people doctrine of management … "*The purpose-process-people doctrine of management rests on a different premise: to shape the behaviors of people and create an*

environment that enables them to take initiative, to cooperate, and to learn. The new philosophy of organization and management is built on different assumptions about motivation and behavior. The entrepreneurial process assumes that individuals can take initiative, and it creates the context and the mechanisms necessary to encourage them to do so. The competence building process both assumes and shapes an environment for collaborative behavior. And the renewal process capitalizes on the natural human motivation to learn by creating the resources and tools that people need to do so. Developing an organization that fosters those behaviors is something structure alone cannot achieve." (Ghoshal&Bartlett, 1995).

Dan Torres owner of the Border Grill restaurants also shapes the behaviors of his people and creates an environment that enables them to take initiative, to cooperate, and to learn. He told me a story recently of how another businessman warned him- "*Dan while in the restaurant, I saw one of your people giving free food away to a customer. You can't have employees doing this- you will go out of business.*" Dan beamed when he said. "*I am so happy when I hear stories like this. This means my people feel they are making good decisions- if they know a good customer I want them to feel free to reward them. It will grow my business.*" Dan as entrepreneur has shaped a safe environment where employees can take initiative, to cooperate, and learn. For Bob and Dan this also allows them to do more important work- much of it outside the plant generating new sales they will need to fill the capacity created as their teams remove waste and move away from hierarchical systems.

The scientific management and manufacturing engineering experts should not monopolize problem-solving skills. The purpose-process-people doctrine of management espouses that people and self-directed teams should be autonomous where leaders shape behaviors of people that form a culture of continuous improvement and create an environment

that enables people to take initiative, cooperate, and to learn. To develop this kind of capability we need to use techniques everyone can understand, practice, and provide an environment where people feel safe and respected. Top leaders need to help break down bureaucratic barriers and departmental boundaries that block communication, coordination and cooperation. In too many companies, each department focuses on optimizing its own self-interest. Conversely, cross-functional teams need to understand a broader picture of the entire value chain, and to identify waste and barriers that impede process flow.

The downside: The change, especially for some command and control style managers, will seam threatening. They will be anxious about losing control, creating chaos and they may not be willing to give up precious authority. They are not thrilled at the thought of giving up control, sharing decision-making or the attention they get with others. Some managers may fear their jobs will be eliminated or they become frustrated for there is no one boss or too many bosses. The paradigm or pattern set by years of success, training and experience, prevents them from seeing there can be a new paradigm. How can giving up control of individuals bring more control of the organization?

(Barker, 2001) in his paradigm studies helps us understand why change threatens some managers. He defines Paradigm and then goes on to describe how paradigms act like filters screening incoming data. Data fitting the paradigm passes easily; data not fitting the paradigm does not pass, at least not easily. The more the data disagrees with the pattern the more the data will be filtered out, refuted or dismissed. Barker goes on to give vivid examples of business paradigms we can all relate to: a male dominated boardroom meeting where gender discrimination plays a roll A woman in leadership role? Galileo tried to convince leaders of the day that the earth revolved around the sun; they were not convinced, and Galileo threatened with

torture was forced to recant publically. The card deck paradigm- a black heart, a red spade- is filtered out. Can people run seventy miles easily? Mexican Tarajumaran Indians do it. A 77 mpg car, hydraulic drive no less?—this was in 1976. The Xerox process- how scientists at a major photographic company rejected the idea. The Japanese going from cheap toys to high quality labels such as Toyota, Honda, Canon.

Traditional leaders fear the change to "purpose-process-people doctrine of management" because of the Back to Zero principle - they fear they will be put back to zero, or eliminated. For example, the best drafters cling to drafting boards and pencils while newer designers employ computer aided design CAD programs. The best drafters fiercely defend their pencil and paper as faster and better to the end - and now CAD designers cling to old versions of programs. The best typists using IBM-selectric typewriters refuse to upgrade to word processors. Some of the best inventory management people cling to their old systems of spreadsheets and refuse to use the new enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. Command and control supervisors continue to swear by piecework incentive systems. Traditional Professors, with a love of hard copy and real books, avoid using on-line learning systems, such as Educat and on-line classes. All these people fear being put back to zero – losing the status they took years to achieve. In fact, they may be lower than the new comers who understand how to use the new systems- techies spurt acronyms and flash keys strokes so quickly it is a blur trying to learn something new.

Barker's last story about the Swiss watch making industry is very interesting. The Swiss developed the original digital technology – yet because they saw no gears, springs or dials could not conceiver that this new technology could be a watch. However, the Japanese, not having this paradigm saw the idea the Swiss showed off at an international expo and created a new watch industry, putting many Swiss watchmakers out of business.

The Changing Demographics of Today's Workforce.

In 2005, while working with a plywood manufacturer based in the UP, I recall how the plant manager, anguished over how he could not get good employees and proceeded to give an example of the latest young employee who only lasted a few days. The job entailed watching plywood sheet pass by all day long and culling out suspect or non-conforming sheets. The Plant manager BB said, "*These people cannot handle one simple job- all I asked them to do was watch the plywood as it goes by.*" This nudged me to tell a story about the college intern who worked with me, using him as an example of changing demographics. "*BB, I am not sure what's happening, but younger workers are wired different- for instance last night when we got back to the hotel, you know what this intern does? – He turns on the TV, the cell phone, the lap top for email, and the I-tunes - all at once.* I said to the intern, *"Burns, how can you stand all that stuff, the noise happening all at once",* he just smiled bopping his head to the music, pounding keys on the keyboard and once in a while popping up to see the latest MTV video. *"BB if this intern is an indication, perhaps new people need more than one job- they need 10 jobs to keep their brains active".* Watching plywood all day long can get very boring.

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The demographics of today's workforce rapidly shift as older baby boomers near retirement. Noted author and management guru (Blanchard, 2012) relays: "*younger employees-- the post-Baby Boomers--are entering the workforce in droves. These younger employees have very different work and life values that have been shaped in partial reaction to the values of their parents. While their parents became slaves to their jobs and careers, today's younger workers*

are much more interested in jobs which have meaning and a larger purpose than just getting a paycheck."

Other twists changing the workplace demographic include the growth in two wage earner families, changing gender roles, single parents, the sandwich situation of caring for your own children and aging parents, and its effect on family life. We see more women taking traditional male oriented jobs such as welding fitting and grinding plus leadership roles, and more men taking on child rearing responsibilities. For these families, time and flexibility are a premium. The influx of immigrants create a more diverse work force and a widening gap in education levels add to the complexity of a changing workforce demographic.

Again (Blanchard, 2012) relays, *"If these workers' needs are not reflected in the workplace, they are quick to find another work environment that is more in sync with who they are. This is true even in tough economic times because they are also more willing to forego the trappings of material success."* So much for the Gordon Gecko's of the world – in come the Occupy Wall Streeters. *"These new values are reflected in the recent National Study of the Changing Workforce that was conducted by the Families and Work Institute in New York. The top three variables that some 3,400 randomly selected men and women considered to be most important in deciding to take their current job were: 1) open communication, 2) effect on personal/family life, and 3) the nature of work."*

DO you remember the recruitment slogan for the US Navy. *'It's not just a job it's an adventure'.* The slogan started in 1961 but, how appropriate it is for the new post baby-boomer workers. In the Gung Ho story, (Blanchard&Bowles, 1977) I recall three principles "The Spirit of the Squirrel, The way of the Beaver and Gift of the Goose", metaphors of nature that represent important worthwhile work, autonomous work, and the gift of cheering each other on. The main

protagonist Andy Longclaw relates stories based on his Native American roots and nature to teach new manager Peggy Sinclair the way of Gung Ho. On several outings in nature with Andy, Peggy observes how squirrels collect food- important worthwhile work, beavers build a dam, but no one seems to be directing them what to do - autonomous work, and how a flock of geese honk at each other- to help them keep pace they cheer each other on during long migratory travels. Peggy applied these principles in her plant for not only financial success but also, a deeper, important and worthwhile success of building community.

Anew generation of post baby boom workers want more than a paycheck. As in Gung Ho, new generation workers want to know that their work makes a difference- the work is important and worthwhile. The want autonomy – they hate being managed, and want a say in how work is done, and they want recognition for their efforts.

Another story: Recently due to rapid shipyard expansion and the increased number employees, parking space became scarce. During the shift change between 1st and 2nd shifts, not nearly enough parking space was available and projections showed it was going to get worse. This provided an opportunity for companywide problem solving and perhaps a solution better than anyone in the yard could have dreamed- much like the Swiss Watch makers. Here are some things to consider

- Short on parking spaces especially at shift turn over
- Shifts maintain strictly held start and end times for hourly employees, all start and end at the same time.
- If you review a Pareto analysis of terminations, absenteeism and tardiness consistently provide one of the highest causes for employee turnover.
- The yard needs flexible motivated committed workforces
- Communication between shifts is very important and face-to-face interaction critical.

- The world is changing and the new demographic of workforce is demanding flexibility in work hours to handle burdens of two wage earner families and its effect on family. Although the demands of family is not a women's problem , as more women join the workforce the demand for flexibility will increase.

Perhaps this would be too much of a paradigm shift, not only for managers, but for union members too, to allow work teams to decide their own staggered start/end times. This could alleviate parking issues, reduce the amount of turnover due to tardiness (point system), and provide a low cost benefit to employees. At the same time, the company could have gained a huge benefit to improve shift-to- shift communication. The yard voted- they choose 1st shift start earlier and 2nd shift start later, creating a one hour gap between shifts. Union and management may have missed an opportunity to create a better solution. Old habits are hard to change. Standardized start time is important for command and control management style.

Conclusion

Workers' minds and the creative solutions they produce are wasted using Scientific Management techniques developed in the last century. The practice is a wasteful cost that manufacturers can no longer afford. In Paradoxes of Leadership, author Edmunson asks the question "why should a business leader care about the quality of work life?" (Edmunson, 1999). He provides a clear answer, one simple reason – it affects the bottom line. The thesis leads us to answer these questions:

1. How does the role of today's first line managers need to change?

2. How can today's first line managers better help and support the people who add value?

3. Can leaders, by giving up managing individuals, gain better control of their organization?

The report employed three themes- paradoxes of leadership, autonomous teams and LEAN process, and the changing demographics of today's workforce. To narrow the thesis further it focuses on first line managers in heavy industries such as large construction projects, shipbuilding, and making large specialized construction equipment.

Prescriptions for change : lessons learned exploring the themes

In Paradoxes we learned:

- Really listening to employees provides more effective direction than telling employees what to do

- Real leadership comes from creating an environment where people feel safe and respected. Relationships based on trust make worthwhile relationships. Relationships based on fear create a relationship death spiral.

- When arrogant know-it-all leaders insist on doing it their way, refusing to admit they may be wrong, they grow weaker and lose respect. The leaders who show vulnerability and ask for help grow stronger and more respected.

- Line supervisors need to find the balance between doubt and confidence.

- Leaders need to spend less time working on their "work" and invest more time nurturing and helping their people who do work to reach organizational goals. They will both get more work done on and on the right things.

- A first line leader becomes effective by helping their team get the right tools, material and information. Their strength and the effectiveness of their people will grow.

- Grace rather than confrontation proves much more powerful in the end.

- How can leaders act in a way that show Supervisors are worthy of respect? By treating people as people – respect shows itself in characteristics such as honesty, really listening, and showing empathy.

- Listening is not enough. Expressing ideas in our own words, forces us to articulate concepts and show understanding- to master a subject is to teach it.

- Sometimes the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line. It takes time to build a relationship of trust, and for people to see that you trust them to solve problems.

- First line managers need regular and frequent opportunities to learn how to face the thorniest problems - the soft stuff "*problems of intention, understanding, communication, and interpersonal effectiveness"*

- First line managers need to develop a culture, a safety net for employees, where mistakes create learning opportunities, not blame sessions.

- What do first line managers consider important? Perhaps we should ask what they want to be remembered for. I would hope in some way they would want their people to remember them as a person who made a positive difference in their crew's lives. Giving not grasping are the positive things people will remember you by. *People are looking for more – they have a need for meaning.*

Autonomous Teams and LEAN

Author (Huszczo, 1996) of "Tools for team Excellence" compares preparing for team excellence to growing a garden: "*Developing effective teams is not unlike growing a garden. If you want to grow a great garden, you don't just buy expensive seeds and throw them into any plot of soil. You choose a plot of land that will receive adequate sunlight. You rototill the earth. You space the seeds according to the types of plants you want to grow. You provide plenty of water, and remove the weeds that will choke production. If your organization is serious about developing productive teams…that produce high-quality product or satisfy customers with desired services-, many people in the organization are going to have to follow the example of successful gardener"*

Ways first line managers need to tend the garden include: (Suzaki, 1988)

- Tend to the basics- keep work areas clean and organized, find and eliminate waste, standardize the process to expose problems. Focus on the hard key performance indicators- Cost, quality, delivery, safety and morale.

- Be on site to not only observe and listen but also be visible and be available as a resource. Be interested in your people's work, carry inspection mirror, flashlight and tape measure, review their work- it mean a lot when you show interest and builds trust.

- Develop soft skills to better understand your people and communicate. Improve facilitation mentor, and coaching skills to help your people learn and enhance their abilities. Upgrade your technical skills that will help you team- CAD, Problem Solving, Effective meetings, writing skills, trade skills, measuring, blue print reading etc. Read journals and articles, attend formal training as a group of first line managers and implement what you learn.

- Think broader. Avoid locally optimizing your own department at the expense of the organization.

- As one sensei told me, use "Try storm" instead of brain storm. Experiment; learn to adapt new concepts and ideas.

- Build the environment that encourages positive behaviors that lead to a culture of continuous improvement.

The changing demographics of today's workforce

In the Gung Ho story, (Blanchard&Bowles, 1977) provide three simple principles "The Spirit of the Squirrel, The way of the Beaver and Gift of the Goose", metaphors of nature that represent important worthwhile work, autonomous work, and the gift of cheering each other on. Much like the main characters Peggy Sinclair and Andy Longclaw in "Gung Ho", first line managers need to help create a more caring supportive work environment that meets the needs of the changing demographics of today's workforce.

- Open communication

- Greater Flexibility

- Give meaning to work

- Let people know what they do is valuable.

- Help employees develop skills to create more value

- Constantly let team members know that you appreciate their efforts. Everyone wants to be recognized for his or her contributions.

With prescriptions for action learned by exploring the three themes, we have answered the first two questions, 1.How does the role of today's first line managers need to change? And 2. How can today's first line managers better help and support the people who add value? But

what about, Can leaders, by giving up managing individuals, gain better control of their organization?

We learned that the scientific management and manufacturing engineering experts should not try to monopolize in a command and control fashion. There is a better way that engages people and their minds. People support what they help create. In "Changing the Role of Top Management", (Ghoshal&Bartlett, 1995) describe a transition from scientific management structuring tasks, to shaping behaviors. "*the strategy-structure systems doctrine [scientific management principles]that most managers rely on today is about allocating resources, assigning responsibilities, and controlling.*" It will be a slow process changing to a new purpose-process-people culture. The new paradigm switches from command and control to an environment where people and self-directed teams can be autonomous. Leaders shape behaviors of people that form a culture of continuous improvement and create an environment that enables people to take initiative, cooperate, and to learn. Effective leaders, Bob Jacquart and Dan Torres have shown me not only can this be done but also embody the Paradox, *A full life is achieved not by grasping but by giving.* Leaders instead of trying to command and control underutilized people, they can now invest their time in growing their business and deploy the capacity they gain from eliminating waste.

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