

Chapter 18

Five Steps to Develop Workplace Innovation

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18.1 Introduction

New technologies change the way we live, consume and meet people. As the Internet has changed our lives, the Industrial Internet is transforming the way we work and produce. The digital revolution is happening. Some sectors experience fast and disruptive changes, others will evolve slowly and steadily. In each case, there is no turning back. Success in the new industrial revolution naturally requires that our industry uses the best available technologies. But technologies alone are not the answer. We should put more focus on human resources and human factors connected to technology. This is our main resource in Europe and we do not make enough use of employees' competences and creativity. Workplace innovation (WPI) not only aims at fostering innovation capacities, it also allows business to remain innovative and adapt to changes more quickly and smoothly.

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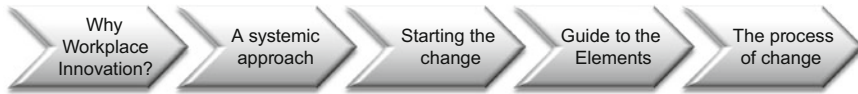


Fig. 18.1 Five steps towards WPI

That is why the European Commission launched the European Workplace Innovation Network, EUWIN, in 2013. In 2016 it connects more than 10,000 companies and other stakeholders, sharing know-how and experience. Its Knowledge Bank¹ is a rich and abundant source of case studies, films, articles and other learning resources.

EUWIN always had a practical approach. Therefore we have also decided to prepare a guide which answers the main question related to workplace innovation: “how can we actually do it?” This short guide will give you practical knowledge, inspire you with great case studies, help you to assess current practice in your organisation, suggest pathways to change and signpost you towards further sources of information and support. Other chapters in this book provide underpinning and references of the statements made in this guide.

It is built around five challenges (also see Fig. 18.1):

1. Why workplace innovation is important for your company?
2. How workplace innovation will transform your organisation?
3. Where to begin?
4. What are the ‘*Elements*’ of workplace innovation?
5. How to achieve commitment from everyone in your organisation?

The end results will deliver what you expect: businesses in every sector and size category throughout Europe report higher performance, better places to work and an enhanced culture of innovation. However, one remark with this guide: we cannot offer a full proof recipe for transforming your organisation because it just doesn’t work like that. You have to be prepared to listen, to involve, to experiment, to take risks and to learn.

18.2 Why Workplace Innovation?

The organisation of workplaces plays a vital role in a company’s ability to compete and innovate. But what is *workplace innovation*? In short it can be defined as those workplace practices and cultures which enable employees at all levels to use their knowledge, competences and creativity to the full. It builds organisations in which people come to work to do two things: to undertake their functional tasks in the

¹A link to the Knowledge Bank: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/euwin-knowledge-bank-menu-new>.

most effective way possible and to improve and innovate the business and organisation.

Such workplaces are likely to include empowering job design; self-organised team working; open and fluid organisational structures; delegated decision-making and simplified administrative procedures; a coaching style of line management; regular opportunities for reflection, learning and improvement; high involvement innovation practices; the encouragement of entrepreneurial behaviour at all levels; and employee representation in strategic decision-making.

Evidence shows that workplace innovation leads to significant and sustainable improvements both in organisational performance and in employee engagement and well-being. In Chap. 6, a list of studies is provided giving evidence of the impact of workplace innovation practices on productivity, manufacturing quality, customer service, financial performance and profitability, and a broad array of other performance outcomes. The chapter shows the complexity of ‘proving’ the business-case, but also why the positive results should not be dismissed.

18.3 How Workplace Innovation Will Transform Your Organisation

The benefits of workplace innovation are only fully realised when workplace innovation practices run throughout the entire organisation. One of the most significant obstacles to achieving high performance and great places to work is partial change—a failure to recognise that organisations consist of interdependent parts that either nurture or obliterate innovative ways of working.

Transformative changes in performance and working life can be achieved when boards, senior teams, line managers and employee representatives share a common understanding of workplace innovation and a commitment to making it happen.

High performance and great jobs are not the product of a simple initiative or a leadership development programme. They are only found when four basic building blocks (elements) are in place (see Table 18.1).

These four Elements come together to form a system of mutually reinforcing practices which create surprising synergies. *The Fifth Element* represents this synergetic outcome in stronger enterprising behaviour, a culture of innovation, high levels of employee engagement, and organisational and individual resilience. These outcomes are only generated when the four Elements combine (Fig. 18.2).

So if it is that good, why isn't everyone doing it? We know that only a minority of European managers are making full use of these evidence-based practices (Totterdill 2015). Long-established (bureaucratic) ways of doing things are, of course, a powerful force for inertia. Change can be disruptive even when we know that current ways of working are inefficient or prevent us from taking full advantage of new opportunities. Business demands may give little time for considering the

Table 18.1 4 Elements essential for WPI

Element 1	Empowering jobs and self-managed teams
Element 2	Flexible organisational structures, people-centred management practices and streamlined systems and procedures based on trust
Element 3	Systematic opportunities for employee-driven improvement and innovation
Element 4	Co-created and distributed leadership combined with ‘employee voice’ in strategic decision-making

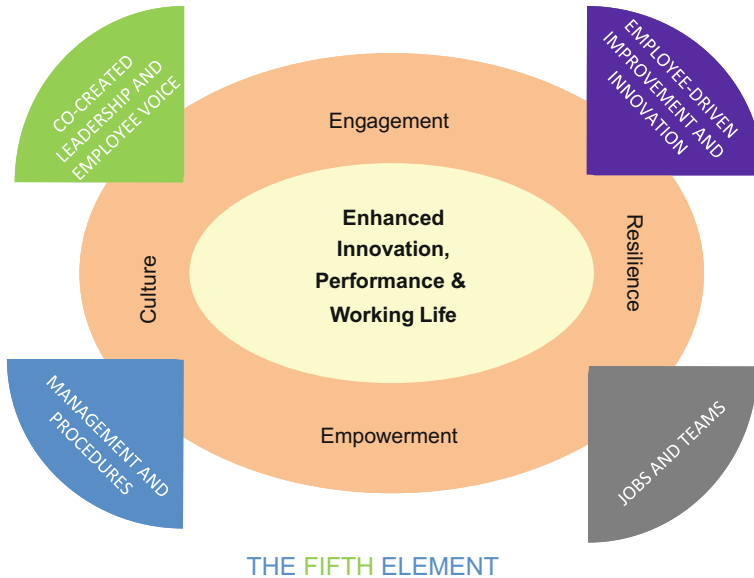


Fig. 18.2 The Fifth Element outcomes

change. From our experience, some managers are simply resistant to the idea that employees should be empowered to play a wider role in decision-making.

18.4 Where to Begin?

The answer to where to start will be different for every organisation, each with its unique history, relationships, challenges and opportunities.

A recent in-depth qualitative investigation into fifty leading companies in Europe identified at least five distinct pathways towards workplace innovation (Oeij et al. 2015). No matter how different the pathways to workplace innovation, the end

result was always better workplaces and stronger company performance. The starting point always lies in listening to employees. Employees can help to make understand what business needs and challenges are.

Employee surveys are a powerful means of gaining an overview of what is working and what needs to be fixed, but they do not provide solutions. Yet those being surveyed will have many of the insights and answers necessary to take the next steps. Survey results are best shared with all employees and used to stimulate reflection and dialogue across the organisation. Senior managers demonstrate distrust and feed rumour when they hold on to survey results and worry about sharing them.

Open and inclusive dialogue between managers and employees at every level is indispensable. Be imaginative in the way you stimulate the sharing of ideas and experience. Openness may not come easily, especially where people have not been asked for their ideas previously, and they may need reassurance. Trust and confidence are essential.

Facilitated peer group discussions involving employees at every level can illuminate the causes of deep-seated problems and point the way towards solutions. Managed well, these discussions begin a process of involvement which moves seamlessly from analysis to action.

Other companies' stories in a form of films, case studies, articles and statistics can inspire sceptics and champions alike. Many companies have started on the journey of transformation because they have been stimulated to challenge the status quo by experiencing the effects of workplace innovation in other organisations.

Sometimes the answer is to start with a pressing issue or a challenge such as new technology. How can we find the root causes of recurrent obstacles to high performance or employee engagement? An example? The following inventory of challenges is drawn from our experience of working with companies at the starting point on their journeys towards workplace innovation (see Table 18.2).

How to use your results

Sum up your scores and divide as shown, giving you a figure for each of the four *Elements*. Then ask other colleagues to complete the exercise and compare the results. This will provide you with a strong indication of what is happening in your organisation.

The outcomes provide a great starting point for dialogue and shared reflection involving people throughout the organisation as well as your immediate colleagues:

- **Which is the *Element* with most pressing issues?** Select the highest of the four figures. Do you all agree that this represents the highest priority? If so, where do the root causes for the most pressing issues lie? Is it technology that is blocking change? Or is it leadership?
- **Have you scored over 5 for more than one of the *Elements*?** If you have scored more than 5 for one *Element* it is very likely that you will also have

Table 18.2 An inventory for the identification of challenges

Starting the Journey: which are your most pressing issues?		
Score each issue: 1 = no problem; 10 = severe problem		Score
Element 1: jobs and teams	Frequent delays caused by breakdowns and bottlenecks	
	High levels of employee turnover and/or sickness absence	
	Minor problems are escalated to senior level	
	Poor team cohesion	
	Persistent quality problems	
	Total score for element and divide by 5	
	Element 2: structures, management and procedures	Line managers lack team leadership skills
	Ineffective performance management/appraisal system	
	KPIs/targets drive out opportunities for learning and improvement	
	Departmental/organisational boundaries delay decisions and inhibit innovation	
	Work gets held up by poor co-ordination between departments	
	Total score for element and divide by 5:	
Element 3: employee-driven improvement and innovation	We lack a culture of innovation	
	There are opportunities to improve or innovate but we rarely get around to pursuing them	
	Employees are frustrated that they have no outlet for their ideas	
	We need more effective ways of engaging employees in innovation and improvement	
	Employees are afraid or unwilling to challenge established practices	
	Total score for element and divide by 5	
Element 4: co-created leadership and employee voice	There is a gap between senior management and frontline staff	
	We don't share information with employees unless it is absolutely necessary	
	Senior managers micromanage the work of others rather than empowering them to take decisions	
	Decisions affecting the work of employees are taken without involving them	
	Our culture inhibits change	
	Total score for element and divide by 5	

a high score for some of the others too because different aspects of workplace practice are interdependent. For example, you are unlikely to succeed in stimulating and using employees' ideas for innovation and improvement if performance measures and line management behaviour drive out opportunities for reflection, shared learning and creative thinking.

If all four scores are below 5, you have some assurance that all is going well. It is important to recognise and celebrate what you do well if you want to maintain and develop it in the future. Are good workplace practices and the positive aspects of your organisational culture well enough embedded to survive changes at senior level, new owners or challenging external circumstances?

We have only discussed a small selection of possible issues here and it will be important to provide opportunities for people throughout your organisation to raise their own concerns.

The following sections show how the workplace innovation practices related to each *Element* address the root causes of problems such as these, directly improving both performance and working lives.

18.5 What Are the 'Elements' of Workplace Innovation?

The Fifth Element highlights the interdependence between bundles of workplace practices represented by the four *Elements*. Each *Element* does not exist in isolation but is influenced, for better or worse, by the extent to which the principles that underpin it are aligned with those of the others.

18.5.1 *The First Element: Jobs and Teams*

Employee participation and the ability to work without close supervision are highly cherished: architects, midwives and refuse collectors perform their jobs well because they make on-the-spot decisions based on background knowledge and experience of 'what works'. They avoid delays caused by unnecessary referral to managers or manuals.

In the best cases they make time to learn and to reflect on what is working well and what should be changed. This generates steady flows of improvement and innovation. Allowing employees discretion in scheduling their own work and in controlling its pace also minimises physical strain and psychological stress (Fig. 18.3).

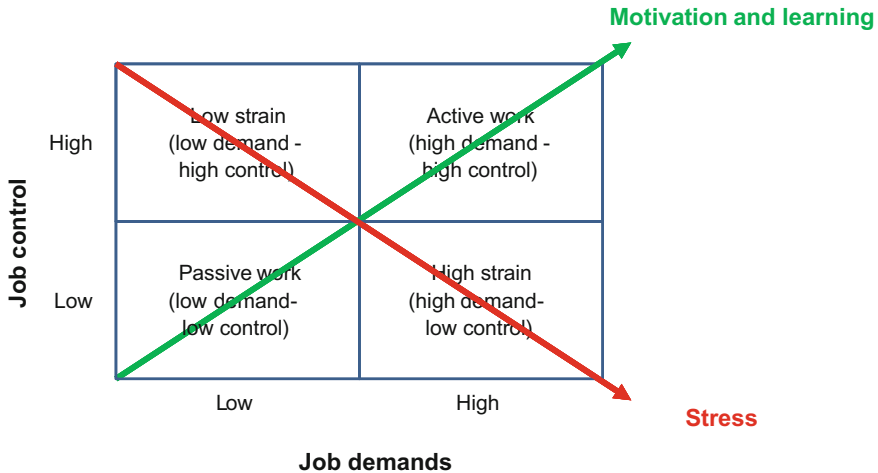


Fig. 18.3 Karasek's demand-control model of occupational stress (Karasek and Theorell 1990)

Karasek's model has had a large influence because it is straightforward and practical. Workplace stress is a function of how demanding a person's job is (factors include interruption rate, time pressures, conflicting demands, reaction time required, pace of work, proportion of work performed under pressure, amount of work, degree of concentration required, and the slowing down of work caused by the need to wait for others) and how much control the person has over their own responsibilities. Control includes the ability to make decisions about their own job, move between a variety of tasks, low levels of repetitiveness, opportunities for creativity, learning and problem solving, and influence in their own work team and in the wider organisation.

Of course individual jobs cannot just be examined in isolation. The ability to share problems and solutions with colleagues, to learn and reflect together, to provide and receive support in challenging times and to celebrate successes plays a vital role in engagement, well-being and performance. Team working lies at the heart of this equation.

Many organisations claim that their people work in teams. But are those teams simply groups of people who sit together and report to the same manager, but rarely co-operate with each other? Some work psychologists call these *pseudo teams* (Katzenbach and Smith 1993).

Real teams consist of people sharing challenges and opportunities in ways that break down barriers and demarcations, and where they generate ideas for improvement, innovation and growth using the insights that day-to-day work experiences give them. Self-managed teams empowered to plan and organise their

own work are more productive, whether in factories or offices. They also offer much better places to work.

What are ‘good’ teams? (West 2012)

- Good teams are clear about their shared tasks, and about precisely who is part of the team. Once teams grow larger than 8–10 members it becomes difficult to maintain cohesion.
- They are clear about the skills the team needs to achieve its purpose.
- The team is empowered to make appropriate choices about recruitment, and recognizes the important of recruiting people who are good at collaboration and sharing.
- Team members need to understand clearly their roles and the roles of other team members, so there is no ambiguity about who is responsible and accountable for each task.
- Good teams set themselves clear, challenging and measureable objectives every year. The aim is not just to get the job done but to achieve significant improvements and innovations. Progress towards achieving these objectives forms an important part of regular team meetings.
- Well-functioning teams assess and seek to improve their effectiveness in working with other teams inside (and sometimes beyond) the organization.
- Teams with a supportive, humorous and appreciative atmosphere deliver better results and their members are significantly less stressed. They are more optimistic, cohesive and have a stronger sense of their efficacy as a team.
- Teams must also meet regularly and have useful discussions, enabling them to reflect on how well they work together and how to improve. Teams that regularly change ways of working are not only more productive but also more innovative than teams that do not. ‘We do not have time’ is therefore an unacceptable excuse. Such teams are also better able to respond to work pressures and adversity by innovating rather than feeling overwhelmed and helpless.

Resources for Element 1: Job Design and Team Working

- Some of the principles discussed in this section can be explored further in UK WON’s resource paper on job design.²

²The full paper can be found following this link: <http://uk.ukwon.eu/pdfs/Job-Design-euwin.pdf>.

- Ederfil Becker, a manufacturing plant in the Basque country, created a management model based on self-organisation in which trust, empowerment, communication, transparency and employee voice set the lines of action of its daily operations. A full case study is available.³
- At Bombardier in Bruges (Belgium), team working was implemented to shorten communication lines, to increase the sense of ownership at the shop floor level, to avoid disturbances in the production flow, and to enhance the problem-solving capacity on the shop floor. A full case study is available as well.⁴
- Thebe is a Dutch healthcare company that has decided to put professionals at the heart of its strategy and allow them to manage care themselves through self-managed teams. Read a full case study online.⁵

18.5.2 The Second Element: Organisational Structures, Management and Procedures

Truly innovative workplaces recognise the need for a consistent approach to empowerment, learning and development running through every aspect of corporate policy from reward systems and performance appraisal to flexible working and budget devolution.

Many organisations appear to be structured around three assumptions:

1. Hierarchies are just common sense: you need somebody to be in charge.
2. People at the frontline are of lower status and less motivated so they cannot be trusted to make decisions or manage their own work.
3. Other ways of organising may be fine for some companies but they will never work here.

Of course some demarcations may be necessary, reflecting different bodies of expertise and knowledge. Yet management layers inevitably put distance between decision-making and the frontline, disempowering and diminishing the voice of those at the lower levels as well as creating an implementation gap. Hierarchy breeds caution amongst managers, encouraging decisions to be delegated upwards with consequent loss of productivity and responsiveness. Such vertically organised structures create silos and add to the difficulties of building bridges between

³Read the case study and watch the short film: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/EderfilBecker>.

⁴Read the full case study: http://uk.ukwon.eu/File-Storage/5114529_7_Bristan-Case-Study.pdf.

⁵Read the full case study: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/document-store/putting-professionals-at-the-heart-of-the-organisation-self-organised-teamworking-at-thebe>.

functional specialisms. This often causes frustration in resolving day-to-day issues and can have a particularly negative effect on the capacity for innovation.

Conversely a flat structure is the business with either no management layers or a very short chain of command. The aim is often not to erase hierarchies entirely but to allow organisations to form hierarchies naturally. Different groups within organisations can intertwine in ways that help everyone understand other people's jobs, professions, specialisms, priorities, problems and vision. Flat organisations rely on a decentralised approach to management and require a high degree of employee involvement in decision-making. Control in flat companies lies in mutual agreements between self-managing, self-organising and self-designing teams and employees who take personal responsibility for satisfactory outcomes. This in turn empowers employees, facilitates information sharing, breaks down divisions between roles, shares competencies, and uses team or organisation-wide reward systems. These team and organisation-wide reward systems do not focus on the individual task or performance: the incentive should be at the group level performance and at the level of supply of good ideas.

Getting rid of annoying processes

- How much control is actually necessary? Are the risks of loosening control greater than the (real and opportunity) costs of spending senior management time on relatively trivial issues?
- Is the formal appraisal interview a 'tick box' - exercise? Or is it a milestone in a continuous coaching conversation with a line manager who understands how to help each individual develop and deliver their best performance?
- Are there established procedures for shared learning from mistakes and failures in an open and blame-free way?
- Is the importance of shared learning, reflection, improvement and innovation recognised in the organisation's system of KPIs, targets and incentives?

Yet even within more flexible structures, mistrust and disempowerment can be embedded in the systems and processes that shape decision-making, resource allocation and standard operating procedures. They can reflect a culture of centralised control and micro-management. Truly innovative workplaces recognise the need for a consistent approach to empowerment, learning and development running through every aspect of corporate policy from reward systems and performance appraisal to flexible working and budget devolution.

One special remark is that in redesigning your organisation, you need to take into account legal and financial constraints. For example, public institutions cannot easily make the change to workplace innovation if they need to take into account the transparency and other accountability requirements put upon them by national laws. But even so, there are great examples that show how such public institutions

can mix workplace innovation with their political embedding. Financial constraints may hinder workplace innovation. Workplace innovation requires managers to not be penny-wise-pound-foolish. Workplace innovation requires investments to provide payback. The many examples from other companies show how one can balance these financial constraints with workplace innovation.

Resources for Element 2: Organisational Structures, Management and Procedures

- In Bristan (UK), high levels of employee engagement are built on a culture of trust and leadership reflected in day-to-day management behaviour. The full Bristan case study is available online.⁶
- Cougar Automation (UK) is a powerful example of strengths-based management in a medium-sized advanced manufacturing company.⁷
- By removing functional boundaries and designing work spaces that encourage people to collaborate, INET-Logistics (Austria) has empowered its employees with high levels of discretion in their day-to-day work.⁸
- Semco (Brazil) is an example of a “radical form of corporate democracy” that aims to distribute decision-making authority out to everyone.
- Breaking away from a traditional hierarchy is difficult for public sector organisations but it formed an essential element in the goal of making the British Geological Survey (UK) a more innovative and responsive organisation. Its matrix structure has created a culture in which employee-led improvement and innovation are valued at every level.⁹

18.5.3 The Third Element: Employee-Driven Improvement and Innovation

A knowledge economy is one firmly rooted in innovation, popularly associated with R&D, ICT investment and high-profile entrepreneurs. However this association can be misleading. Much of the innovation in products, services and processes that leads to enhanced business competitiveness and performance is generated by interaction, dialogue and exploration within the workplace.

⁶Read the full case study: http://uk.ukwon.eu/File%20Storage/5114529_7_Bristan-Case-Study.pdf.

⁷More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/document-store/cougar-automation-enlightened-management-gets-resultsa>.

⁸More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/document-store/inet-logistics-gmbh-breaking-down-walls-and-ceilings>.

⁹More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/document-store/british-geological-survey-bgs-case-study>.

Unsurprisingly this is more common in workplaces where employees have greater control over their own work coupled with discretionary opportunities for learning and problem solving (Karasek and Theorell 1990).

Systematic opportunities for shared learning and reflection are well embedded in that type of workplace. They allow employees at every level to reflect on what has gone well and what can be improved in the future, to share knowledge and skills gained in the course of recent work experience, and to anticipate and reflect on the impacts of future challenges and change. This can be reflected in times and spaces where people at work can discuss ideas with their co-workers or in their team meetings. Buzz boards enable ideas to be shared and dedicated spaces can enable people to think in different ways together. Meetings in cafés can offer a creative and reflective time away from the immediate pressures of the workplace.

Sometimes it also involves imaginative opportunities to ‘think out of the box’ by bringing people together across different departments and divisions to share knowledge and experience and to think creatively together. It can be as simple as establishing regular forums that enable people at all levels of an organisation to leave job titles and hierarchies behind, and to explore new ideas through open and free-thinking discussion.

A growing number of organisations provide employees with regular opportunities to join cross-functional improvement teams to identify and drive forward product or process changes that would otherwise be lost under the pressure of day-to-day workloads. Time-out sessions, ‘down-tools weeks’ and hackathons, bringing people together who otherwise would not meet, can also become fountains of constructive dialogue and creativity.

Employee-driven innovation and improvement emphasises the importance of aligning the knowledge and expertise of senior teams with the tacit knowledge and experience of frontline workers while recognising and valuing continuing learning. It must also reflect deeper structural practices within each organisation: sustainable and effective employee engagement in innovation and improvement cannot happen in isolation. It must be driven from the top and reinforced by consistent messages from leaders, aligned with organisational structures and procedures, and underpinned by empowerment and discretion in day-to-day working life. Line management culture and performance measurement invariably play a critical role in enabling, or inhibiting, employee-driven improvement and innovation.

Resources for Element 3: Employee-Driven Improvement and Innovation

- The culture of Red Gate Software (UK) “is permission to fail and expectation of failure, if we are not trying hard enough that’s when we don’t fail, so let’s make sure that we’re on the edge and we’re trying to push ourselves.”¹⁰

¹⁰More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/red-gate-software>.

- At Innocent (UK), innovation is an everyday behaviour with employees actively encouraged to suggest ways to improve the business, whether it be new products and business streams or better ways of working.¹¹
- In The Met Office (UK) a small core of innovators began a process of ‘guerrilla’ tactics designed to change the culture of a traditional public sector organisation, making innovation part of ‘the day job’ for everyone.¹²
- Polpharma (Poland) recognises that enabling improvement and innovation requires freedom to act combined with the ability to design the workplace and work environment in ways that employees want.¹³
- Employee-Driven Innovation from a trade union perspective: the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions argues that employee involvement in innovation leads to win-win outcomes for workers and business performance.¹⁴

18.5.4 The Fourth Element: Co-created Leadership and Employee Voice

It is unsurprising that enlightened leadership often plays a key role in driving workplace innovation within enterprises. Leadership theory is highly contested (Gronn 2002; Khurana 2002) but leadership development has gained increasing prominence through business schools, professional institutions and consultancy.

Early leadership theories were primarily focused on the distinction between “task focus” and “people orientation” and this remains a useful distinction. More recently theories are less concerned with the central, charismatic individual but focus on leadership as a creative and collective process where leadership is co-created through dialogue with and between employees and where employees are empowered to take initiative and contribute to decision making. “Shared and distributed leadership” is a key element of workplace innovation because it focuses on releasing the full range of employee knowledge, skills, experience and creativity. It means that workplace culture and practice provides everyone with the opportunity

¹¹More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/innocent-smoothie-makers>.

¹²More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/met-office>.

¹³More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/Polpharma-Worldwide>.

¹⁴More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/document-store/employee-driven-innovation>.



Fig. 18.4 Co-created leadership (Source <http://www.goodworkplaces.net/The-Fourth-Element>)

to take the lead in areas which reflect their own expertise or initiative, whether strategic, innovative or operational, while understanding and aligning their actions with those of others.

Leadership is therefore a collaborative or *co-created* process (see Fig. 18.4). It is not dependent on individual charisma or authority but creates shared direction and purpose through organisation-wide opportunities for strategic thinking, shared reflection and learning, and employee voice in decision-making.

Employee voice describes the alignment of strategic priorities and decision-making at senior levels with the practical knowledge, experience and engagement of employees throughout the organisation. It brings together *direct participation* through, for example, self-managed teams and improvement groups, with *representative participation* in the form of employee or union-management partnership forums. These represent times and spaces where senior managers and trade unions or employee representatives get together to tackle big issues in a climate of openness and trust.

Partnership between management, employees and trade unions can take many forms, but always requires openness, transparency and two-way communication. At the very least it can be an effective tool for positive industrial relations, minimising conflict and resistance to change.

An important body of research has begun to show that representative participation structures on their own may have little direct impact on performance or quality of working life. Rather they can exert a positive influence on the development of activities and practices that may do so (Huselid et al. 1997; Teague 2005). In short, they can become the animator and guardian of employee empowerment and engagement.

When partnership arrangements exist alongside the types of participative workplace practices described in the previous three Elements it creates a system of mutually reinforcing practices leading to improved information sharing, greater levels of trust, reduced resistance to change and heightened performance.

Resources for Element 4: Co-created Leadership and Employee Voice

- Workplace partnership and employee consultation can mean more than just good industrial relations. The British company Drax Power's 'Working Together' agreement with trade unions combined with a comprehensive consultation programme helps staff understand the major technological changes faced by the plant, builds trust and demonstrates transparency, stimulates employee ideas and creates a more entrepreneurial culture.¹⁵
- Novozymes (Denmark) demonstrates that strong partnership between management and unions can transcend traditional industrial relations, empowering frontline workers in day-to-day decision-making and actively involving them in improvement and innovation. 'Shop Floor Management' is a way of creating a forum where there is dialogue between employees who are working in the daily operations, the manager and the technical support.¹⁶
- Leadership that articulates clear values and lives by them is recognised as a powerful driver of employee engagement and an enabling culture. Skanska UK has been on a sustained journey of transformation since CEO Mike Putnam's appointment in 2009, distancing itself from traditional industry practices by embracing high ethical principles relating to safety, the environment, transparency and quality.¹⁷
- Becton Dickinson (Ireland) offers persuasive evidence that workplace partnership means more than good industrial relations. Unions can play a key role in engaging workers at all levels in innovation and improvement, creating win-win outcomes for employees and their employers.¹⁸

18.6 How to Achieve Commitment from Everyone in Your Organisation?

Change is rarely a straightforward linear exercise. It usually involves experimentation, failure and a willingness to see failure as an opportunity for learning and development. It requires consistency of purpose combined with a willingness to

¹⁵More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/document-store/drax-power-limited-working-together-for-change>.

¹⁶More information can be found here: <http://uk.ukwon.eu/Novozymes>.

¹⁷More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/document-store/skanska-uk-values-driven-leadership-creates-a-culture-of-respect>.

¹⁸More information can be found here: <http://portal.ukwon.eu/becton-dickinson>.

rethink the vision and objectives set out at the start of the journey. The more you try to change an organisation, the more you learn about it. Your understanding of the nature and extent of the change required will deepen as the journey progresses.

Above all, it means making change happen with people, not to people. They have the knowledge, experience and potential for engagement that can make change happen and make it stick. Below there is a simple checklist for change.

A checklist for change

- Do the board and senior team understand that change will involve asking difficult questions and challenging established practices? Do you really have their support?
- Have you involved all the relevant stakeholders from the beginning? Does everyone understand how they will contribute to the journey?
- Have you anticipated the potential sources of resistance? What is the best way of dealing with it?
- What are the mechanisms for ensuring good two-way communication throughout the journey? How will you evaluate progress? How will stakeholders be involved in shared learning and adjustments to change processes and goals during the journey?
- How will you know whether you have succeeded? And how will you celebrate success?
- How will change be embedded and sustained?

Be creative: Little details matter for Workplace Innovation

Workplace innovation is also about attitudes and values. It requires you, manager and employee, to change some of your deepest beliefs of how organisations need to function. You need to be aware of such little details, bring them to a discussion and get a common solution. Below there are a few examples that can give you some ideas.

- *Walking the talk*: get rid of the reserved parking lot for the CEO. In one of our Belgian company cases, the CEO told us that to make the changes acceptable to all the employees, he needed to stop with having a reserved parking space near the factory building. The CEO is now ‘one of the guys/girls’ and needs to make the long walk as all the other employees.
- *Let employees decide how to get access to management*: in one French company from Normandy, the boss asked the employees to decide where his office space should be and how it should be organised. The boss works for the employees, not the other way round.

- *Your building structures your behaviour*: it is clear that some office building strengthen hierarchy and division. Rearranging your office according to the important processes is helpful to create a new organisation that supports workplace innovation. Making sure that you have sufficient meeting space for the team meetings is crucial for a good workplace innovation environment.

18.7 Onwards

We hope you will find this *Guide to Workplace Innovation* useful in your own organisation. There is so much to gain in terms of improved economic performance and better ways of working!

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, we cannot offer a full proof recipe for transforming your organisation because it just doesn't work like that. You have to be prepared to listen, to involve, to experiment, to take risks and to learn.

It also takes discipline to maintain the momentum on top of a busy schedule. But it is surprising how far you can go once you engage the trust and enthusiasm of people throughout the organisation.

If you need further tips and examples make full use of the films, case studies, articles and tools in EUWIN's growing Knowledge Bank.

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