Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
PRODUCTIVITY AND TRUST:

APPLIED RESEARCH IN A NEW ZEALAND WORKPLACE.

A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of
MA (Social Sciences)

in Sociology at
Massey University

ADAM BARNARD

1999
THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO WORKPLACE DEVELOPMENT.
Abstract

The literature on work and employment routinely postulates a post-Fordist era, the third industrial divide, with implications for the division of labour and the organisation of work in modern Western economies. Some see such changes as contributing to the success of the German, Japanese and Scandinavian models but others see the same changes as a managerial strategy to extend control and to exploit workers. In this context, this thesis seeks to explore new options for workplace reform to enhance worker satisfaction, the quality of working life and productivity.

Workplace performance and satisfaction are built on the motivation of individual workers. This motivation can be created and sustained by a high-trust workplace culture. Traditional workplace cultures are often built on low-trust employer/employee relationships and these relationships ensure that workplace performance and satisfaction remain poor. This thesis argues that workplace performance and satisfaction can be improved if workplace culture can be shifted from low to high trust. New managerial practices espouse the rhetoric of high-trust workplace cultures and their positive relationship with productivity. This thesis argues that workplace change must go beyond the rhetoric to genuinely achieve a high-trust culture. Positive changes of work organisation are based on high-trust relationships between employer and employee, and among employees.

In the context of the workplace examined in this case study, people assume poor productivity is due to the fact that there is a low skilled and special need workforce. However, it is demonstrated that productivity can be increased with a different workplace culture built on high trust. The key is the development of people through inter-related management practices such as leadership style, involvement, training and teamwork. As one of the employees of the research group put it: "Before, I couldn't care about my job but now my job means everything to me". This thesis provides an assessment of the success in developing high-trust work relations in a particular setting.
Table of contents

Acknowledgements

List of Figures

Part One – The literature in context

Introduction

Chapter One

The workplace in this study

Chapter Two

Developing Distrust: The Low-trust Workplace and the Evolution of Economic Production

1. The factory system and its contribution to control
2. Marx and alienated labour – The dignity of the worker
3. Marx and the labour process – Managerial privilege
4. Control and social responsibility
5. The low-trust culture – The workplace in context
6. Managerial strategy – Control vs worker autonomy
7. Unions and the low-trust workplace
8. Ethical arguments for employee involvement

Chapter Three

Labour's Social Nature

1. Challenges to the traditional system in the late twentieth century
2. Social circumstances and the influence on economic production
3. Challenges to the organisation of work
4. Improvement in the quality of working life
5. The challenge to and for management

Part Two – Developing a high-trust model in the workplace

Chapter Four

1. Workplace culture as a key component of high-trust relations
2. Trust and the workplace
3. Is teamwork the key to change
Part Three – The Research

Chapter Five

1. Introduction
2. The central research questions
3. Trust assessment
4. Job satisfaction survey
5. Trust building as basis for culture change
6. Leadership
7. Training
8. Teamwork

Chapter Six

Results

Chapter Seven

Summary
1. The significance of supervisory practices
2. The implications of culture change for management and supervision
3. Culture change in the research group: Productivity, Satisfaction and the quality of working life
4. Are the culture changes sustainable?

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

Bibliography
Acknowledgments

My sincere gratitude to the many persons who assisted in any way during the course of the study. Their valuable contributions to the completion of this study are appreciated.

A special word of thanks to some major contributors:

The Academic Director of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at Massey University (Albany) for his constructive criticism and able guidance during the course of the study, his interest and much needed encouragement at all times;

My employer, colleagues and co-workers, for their participation, encouragement and support;

My wife, Regina, who believed and understood my ideas and actively and successfully participated in the research;

My family, for their continuous support, love and encouragement at home;

THE ALMIGHTY GOD, for His grace, the talents given to me and the opportunity to complete this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Figures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fig 1. Distinction between low-trust and high-trust cultures</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 2. Comparison between traditional and emerging systems</td>
<td>42-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 3. Comparison between old and new team environments</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4. Autocratic supervisory style - $/H</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 5. Trust assessment &quot;before&quot;</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 6. Trust assessment criteria (Shaw, 1997)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 7. Overall satisfaction &quot;before&quot;</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 8. Facet satisfaction &quot;before&quot;</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 9. Overall satisfaction &quot;before&quot;</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 10. Overall satisfaction &quot;after&quot;</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 11. Facet satisfaction &quot;before&quot;</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 12. Facet satisfaction &quot;after&quot;</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 13. Trust assessment &quot;before&quot;</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 14. Trust assessment criteria (Shaw, 1997)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 15. Trust assessment &quot;after&quot;</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 16. Trust assessment criteria (Shaw, 1997)</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 17. Autocratic supervisory style - $/H</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 18. Participative supervisory style</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 19. Productivity comparison</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>