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**TEAMWORK:
RE-ENGINEERING THE
DIVISION OF LABOUR FOR
NEW ZEALAND'S WORKPLACE
OF TOMORROW.**

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ABSTRACT

Conventional workplace structure in New Zealand is based on a Fordist specialist division of labour that fragments and isolated the workforce, reinforcing the individualistic nature inherent in society. Changes in the economic circumstances (primarily deregulation, internationalism and the Employers Contracts Act) have manifested into extensive organisational, cultural, social and political workplace re-engineering. Understanding the transformation of the division of labour from a Fordist separatist hierarchy to a flexible team-based cooperative system details the orchestration of social labour in the multiplication of industrial organisation. The rationalisation of unskilled mass labour has been replaced with the concept of the flexible multi-skilled labour force and the ability to transform the human element in production. By adapting new team-based methods of work composition, companies are able to internalise continuous quality improvements through individual self-empowerment. Encouraging the highest degree of satisfaction for the individual and the most effective work performance for the organisation, teamwork is able to provide the basis for productivity improvements while simultaneously delivering better work conditions to all team members. Organisational innovation and revitalisation are deeply implicated in the shape of uneven development, so rather than analysing a specific plan of workplace reform, the interpretation of key factors of work systems will be addressed to provide a framework of change; an unsettling period for internal politics between employees and employers, as they must reorganise themselves in line with new forms of interactive working. An emancipatory team environment improves communication and employee participation, re-aligns New Zealand's economy with the requirements for success in the modern global market as detailed by the sustainable advancements made by the Dairy Processing Board, BHP New Zealand Steel, Interlock Industries, MacPac Wilderness Equipment Ltd, Weddel Tomoana, Thames Toyota and Christchurch Parkroyal.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the last century New Zealand's predominantly European population has held traditional beliefs about the work ethic and the centrality of employment as the dominant way of working. Like others who become dependant on getting a job, New Zealanders have found it difficult to change their thinking about employment and work structure, and to realise that radically different economic and social circumstances demand different patterns of living and working. The maintenance of the status quo - the traditional pattern of comfortable existence - is being increasingly encroached by a revolution: the normalisation of organisational structures, business practices and people systems which implement policies of rigidity are being exposed. The source of the growing recognition is that tighter controls, greater pressure, job demarcation, and increased supervision have run their course in their ability to provide society with the productivity gains required to compete effectively in the world market place. The days of the rigid job description are limited as organisations begin to emerge from an era of conflictual industrial relations and pyramid hierarchies, and progress toward a society of human resources and the networked company.

There are three powerful interrelated levels in every workplace that can fuel change: *purpose, relationships and structure*. Purpose (what business one is in) embodies future visions on which security and meaning depend. Relationships (connections between co-workers) require cooperation across lines of hierarchy, ethnicity, gender and function. Structure (who does what) affects self-esteem, dignity, learning and motivation. Articulating purposes develops attractive future goals by mobilising team-based responsibility and ownership, providing a powerful exercise for any organisation facing a strategic turning point as it creates awareness and resolve throughout a company.

Rather than generalising that is contained under the subject of workplace reform, teamwork is focused upon to establish a consultative process that can help identify and address the re-engineering process. Workplace reform is a model which recognises patterns of practice and theory that are able to be reproduced, while teamwork is the philosophy which governs value laddened strategic and management styles and the paradigm that provides the specific framework to bring about change. Relationships situated within a team culture provide the best environment for learning to maintain innovation faced with continual change. The specific team advocated depends upon developing awareness, skills and cooperation against the backdrop of the individual social and business situation. Evolving to a team-based structure involves the re-engineering of work design to create rewarding jobs, higher output and quality at lower costs, greater system flexibility and increased self-control (in terms of personal autonomy); compelling people from all functions and levels to re-think how they operate in light of the increasing pace of change.

This teamwork re-engineering thesis is structured in four sections: *revitalisation - recognising the need for change, creating a new vision, institutionalising change and resistance to change*. Revitalisation centres on the challenges companies encounter as a result of globalising economies and consumer behaviours. Need for change, often triggered by external environmental pressures, must be perceived and responded to in order for the transformational process to begin, with the felt need for change providing the impetus for transition. Creating a vision involves the process of focusing organisational attention on an image of the future that is positive, motivating and rewarding. It needs to be readily accepted by all team members as a desirable change for the company and communicated in such a form that is congruent with the company's overall philosophy and style. The third section focuses on the institutionalisation of the changes, brought about

by the reforms during the re-engineering, which requires a culture that reinforces and encourages the revitalisation of the company. If teamwork is so advantageous to companies as this thesis advocates, why is there resistance to change? The final section addresses this issue, postulating that within New Zealand's economy, patriarchy, individualism, politics and legislation combine to influence company decisions of whether to embrace teamwork or distance themselves from change.