

Openings: Management guru Peter Druker has the following to say about our current state of affairs:

"In a few hundred years, when the history of our time will be written from a long-term perspective, it is likely that the most important event historians will see is not technology, not the Internet, not e-commerce. It is an unprecedented change in the human condition."

Spotlight: It is common management practise to divide an enterprise into manageable pieces. Grouping people by functionality, geography, or any other method is a natural extension of the human propensity to classify and compartmentalise. A major 20th century division was between *blue-collar* and *white-collar* work as the workforce generally lent itself to this classification scheme. As the 21st century starts to unfold, the easy division by collar colour no longer holds, but a similar division does. The new scheme divides the workforce into *knowledge workers* and *manual workers*. Roughly interpreted, the idea is that there are those who think for a living and those who do for a living.

From a business management perspective, dividing people into thinkers and doers has great appeal. It simplifies many decisions regarding the allocation of resources and process improvement. It also makes a distinction between people who must be managed and those who are self-managing. Recognising that different people require different emphasis within an organisation makes good sense for both the enterprise and the individual.

Knowledge workers, a term coined by Peter Druker almost fifty years ago, are not a new entity within organisations. The different today is the growing proportion of the workforce they represent and the number of industries where they play a significant role. Having reached a critical mass, this group is receiving serious study, particularly on how to maximise their effectiveness within organisations. As important as this issue is to knowledge workers, it is equally important to all other workers.

Increasing the productivity of knowledge workers challenges organisations because these people do not respond to the carrots or sticks previously used to motivate workers. This has forced a humanistic broadening of management practise. For strictly bottom-line reasons, ideas such as personal values, contributing to a cause, and many similarly virtuous considerations, are now acceptable in management circles. This beachhead of valuing intangibles established through knowledge workers will certainly spread across the full extent of organisations.

Borrowing from Descartes' classic statement, effective organisations know the following truth about people: *"I think and feel, therefore I do"*. No matter what role a person plays within an enterprise, their performance is a distillation of thoughts, feelings, and skills, with skills being the least important factor. Whether paid to think or do, we are constantly thinking and feeling no matter how menial the task. Both leaning on a broom and maneuvering around a boardroom benefit from beautiful thoughts and peaceful feelings.

Fully employing every individual's potential must be a priority for all enterprises. Seeking to satisfy knowledge workers may be the opening required to discover a new strategy for reaching this objective for all workers.

Musings: Viewing recent photographs of myself, I was struck by how in different shots, I looked liked various members of my extended family. Thoughts of uncles, aunts, and cousins washed over me as I sought to decide which photograph best fit the image I wanted to present.

Seeing the family resemblance in photographs of me is certainly an aging issue, not by way of wrinkles and grey hair, but rather through life experiences. With the accumulating years, I have come to know the truth in the stories I heard in my youth. Stories about grand ideas, hard work, and dogged perseverance fill my memories of family gatherings. Now that I know many of these stories first-hand, my body wears the badge of having survived the test.

I am pleased that my heritage is showing its mark upon my face. I hope that the work my hands are doing and the thoughts that I am thinking show as favourably in the world.

Just For Fun: Have you ever walked into a public space and felt assaulted by the sounds and images issuing from a television? Have you ever felt powerless to take control of the situation because the television or its controls are out of reach? Not to worry because the folks at Cornfield Electronics have developed the TV-B-Gone, www.tvbgone.com. This small universal remote control allows you to turn most any television off and back on again. Carry it with you wherever you go and silence those unattended squawk boxes.

Facts & Figures: Even as North America's No.1 fruit, bananas play a small part in our diet. In developing countries, bananas are a dietary staple and on the list of the world's most important food crops, bananas rank fourth after rice, wheat, and corn. A typical person in Uganda or Rwanda consumes more than 550 pounds of bananas each year.