



TECHNOLOGY AND WORK

ABSTRACT

The Chief Exception Officer is defined as someone who is looking outside the organisation and is constantly changing the rules (processes and procedures) to best meet the demands of the environment

Motivation Matters Limited



Introduction

The human race's story is one of the development of technology. From the discovery of fire and the flint cutting-edge, to the iPhone and 3D printing, technological developments have changed the daily tasks of mankind, and the skills needed to do those jobs.

It would be wrong to think the pace of change has or will slow. Less than two hundred years ago aristocrats in their English country estates could reasonably say they had read every book on a subject, in English at any rate.

Today I receive half a dozen emails a day telling me the secrets of making money with Facebook, I would hazard a guess there are hundreds of pages written about the subject every day.

As a child of the fifties and sixties I look at job advertisements in astonishment. The majority of job titles advertised didn't exist 30 years ago. Work is changing faster and faster, so are the skills needed, therefore the skills providers need to change faster still.

It is difficult to detect a tipping point as it is happening – an idea going viral if you are of the Twitterati. I don't suppose the people developing the factory system and engine based ventures thought they were creating the industrial revolution. We are on the verge of the next working revolution.

Manual skills

Until the middle of the 19th century most jobs in the Western world were “manual” – people did something with their muscle power. Skills were needed to improve performance and so much of our business culture is still stuck in this era. I did my Diploma in Accounting & Finance in the 80s, and the course books still called people units of labour and discussed Taylor's work on improving shovel design to increase productivity.

The proportion of manual jobs in 21st century United Kingdom has shrunk. Those without any other skills are hard put to find employment.

Clerical and administrative skills

The explosion of office jobs since the 1950s has taken up much, but not all, of the fall in manual jobs. The skills are different; the tasks require reading, writing and some fluency with numbers. Procedures and processes need to be followed and “systems” adhered to for everyone's sake. These jobs are cogs in a great machine – rules are to be followed.





Skill downloads

Last year there was a report of research to record someone's brainwaves. The idea was to "reload" those brainwaves if a stroke or some such made the memory inaccessible.

To my mind this is a small step away from taking any set of skills and downloading them while you sleep: just as today you can learn listen while you sleep to a range of training and self-improvement materials. I'm sure there are difficulties in making this happen but where there is a method, science is good at refining the process and making it work eventually.

In the meantime the download of skills will have to be by the slower traditional methods with which we are familiar.

The downloadable skills will be rule based. Whether how to plaster (wet line) a wall or process an application for a bank account, the rules and procedures are definable and therefore downloadable.

Automated decision making

More and more clerical administrative functions are being automated. Rule and procedure based tasks can be handled by machines.

If you look around you can see this in the UK today. There are fewer office jobs, and more service jobs, jobs that machines can't do – yet.

The Exceptions

Machine-based routine tasks will fall down when faced with the exceptions that don't fit the rules. As much as the system designers would like to force us into one or other category to suit their rules, some of us don't fit!

To deal with the awkward non-conformists that do not fit the rules, there needs to be a job filled by someone who can deal with exceptions. This person will need very different skills and training. There won't need to be too many of them so let's invent the title "Chief Exception Officer". He or she is the one person in the organisation who doesn't have to follow the rules.

The Needs

The first need is to be creative. It is axiomatic that pre-existing solutions are not suitable. The person needs to have a breadth of knowledge and a creative ability to invent novel solutions.

Secondly the person will need good judgement to base the decision on this unique set of circumstances. He or she will have to make new rules to fit the novel circumstances.

Creativity and good judgement are not always natural bed-fellows. How does the Chief Exception Officer acquire the grounds for the decision, the decision itself, the relevant precedents, the relevant factors and the changing cultural ethics of the business/country/world?





The Resources

Probable skills are:

- decision making
- strategic planning
- thinking
- understanding people and society
- futurology

Can you add any skills to the list?

Aside from those skills what resources are needed?

The Chief Exception Officer will need to be in touch with the full range of human knowledge, the shifting cultural realities and at the same time deliver good judgement and leadership on the subject under decision.

The first industrial revolution was fuelled by coal. It was a source of energy that drove mechanisation and productivity.

When you look at the problem of judgement, leadership and dealing with exceptional circumstances with no precedents it is clear the need is for a vast information network that can be structured as needed. The creative problem solving part of the decision is best based upon the ideas and discussions that are important today.

The resource is the internet.

Conclusion

The Chief Exception Officer is defined as someone who is looking outside the organisation and is constantly changing the rules (processes and procedures) to best meet the demands of the environment.

The internet provides the information needed to connect to creative movements, the ever shifting mores of society and new technological possibilities.

It is the Chief Exception Officer's job to simplify the future and create the best working environment for the organisation.

The best working environment will inspire people to work enthusiastically, be proud of what they do and feel they are making a difference to the world.

You might think that is a job description of a Chief Executive Officer in the Western world today.

Welcome to the future and The Inspirational Revolution.





MOTIVATION MATTERS LIMITED

VISION

Inspiring good management, and thus achievement, within organizations will improve employee attitudes, engagement and job satisfaction to create stronger companies with more productive people.

More productive companies build competitive advantage creating a sustainable business with safe growth, healthy profits, secure well paid jobs and contribute to the well-being of the UK.

PARTNERS



Anne Walker



Stephen Walker

CONTACT DETAILS

Telephone: +44 (0)1787 378851

Email: Enquiry@motivationmatters.co.uk

Website: www.motivationmatters.co.uk

