

PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT ADVANTAGE

Participative Management is an approach, which gives everyone in the organization an opportunity to contribute their skills, knowledge and talent to improve the organization.

Participative management is a method, which gives employees responsibility, accountability, and authority over their work. The method provides simple tools for employees to improve their work performance and positively impact the bottom line. The process provides an environment to make employee needs known and creates a vehicle for improved communication between all areas of the organization. What differentiates this work is that people's recommendations are actually implemented and acted upon. People solve their own issues and feel empowered within the process of doing so.



Executives and employees learn to redesign their workplace to be participative and self-managing. This does not mean you do away with management. People are not asked to do things that they are not capable of accomplishing. There may be training involved to improve skill sets. This does not resemble laissez-faire management in any way. Managers and employees look at a piece of work and ask what roles and responsibilities need to be placed within the boundaries of the work in order to achieve individual and organization goals? The idea is to allow as much responsibility, accountability, and reasonable authority to people actually doing the work. Participative management addresses the criteria for superior performance. These criteria have been researched, field-tested around the world and their validity has been proven in many work settings. Participative management creates a workforce that is committed to obtaining positive results for the organization such as increased productivity and improved quality. People are engaged and motivated and are willing to put forth more personal energy to improve work performance. Participative management works best when the organization has a clear and compelling mission and vision. Employees can then align their personal mission and vision to support the organization.

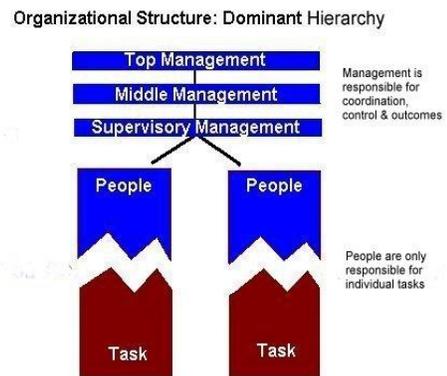
Participative management has clear goals and does not turn over the organization to employees. There is still a hierarchy but it is not a dominant hierarchy, which dictates everything to employees. A non-dominant hierarchy has as many levels as are necessary to do the work of the organization. People have clear roles and responsibilities and manage themselves as much as possible. Management tells people what the strategy is and what is expected in terms of results and then allows people to figure out the how to deliver on management expectations. Top management still decides strategy and front line employees still focus on their primary tasks. The difference is that the criteria for superior performance are utilized and leveraged for the success of the organization. The criteria for superior performance are drivers of behavior, reasons why people get up in the morning and are enthusiastic about their work. Pay is considered a satisfier all things being equal. The criteria for superior performance are:

- Control
- Learning – clear goals and feedback
- Variety
- Mutual Support and Respect
- Meaningfulness
- A Promising Future
- Engage one or several of their preferred life interests
- Challenges that match and stretch individual skills
- Concentration and Focus
- Fun

When the criteria for superior performance are leveraged in an organization the performance will dramatically improve. This has been demonstrated over and over again in thousands of organizations all over the world.

Management in most organizations is constantly attempting to get people more involved in improving the organization. People run up against a brick wall because of the bureaucratic structures that still exist in their organizations. This occurs even after many attempts at improvement. Management has not made it to people's advantage to participate, communicate, and share what they know with teammates. Why participate and give ideas for improvement when they are disregarded or not rewarded. People will always do what is in their best interest. If the stated culture of the organization is one thing and the actual behavior of management is another, then people do not trust what is communicated by management. People are very resourceful and learn to survive in any culture. Management can attempt to dictate results and people will do what is required of them to meet the very minimum of expectations in this kind of environment. They will rarely do excellent work. The majority of people want to do good work yet the work structures they find themselves in do not reward good work. When you are competing within an organization to get a raise or a promotion and you have to impress your supervisor to get ahead, you will not share important information with your team members. It is not to your advantage to do this because you are not rewarded to do so.

Command Control -- Coercion Model



In order to implement participative management, we need to change how we structure work, pay for work and appraise work. Participative management makes it to people's advantage to share their knowledge because when their team is successful they are successful. The group excels because the criteria for superior performance are being applied and top management sees the benefit of all employees contributing to the organization.



Participative management enables organizations to improve performance through a fast, economical method called the **participative design workshop**. The design principle underlying the work is a participative method that has clear goals and simple tools for work process improvement.

It can be utilized to improve the structure of the organization or just for work process improvement. This will depend on the needs of the organization. The workshop begins with the **assessment phase**, which begins with briefing one. *Briefing One* is a short presentation of the bureaucratic design principles and its inverse relationship to the criteria for superior performance. Participants fill out the criteria for superior performance and the skills assessment

matrix. The **design phase** begins with *Briefing Two* which is an introduction to the participative design principle and why it leverages the criteria for superior performance. It explains why organizations perform better using these methods. Groups chart their current work process or work flow and flag areas for improvement. They are given clear boundaries in which to work by management. Next, they design improvements for the areas that are deficient and negotiate with management on what is possible to change within the work process. If management wants structure

addressed then the group can tackle this issue as well. The workshop gets excellent results even without addressing the issue of organizational structure.

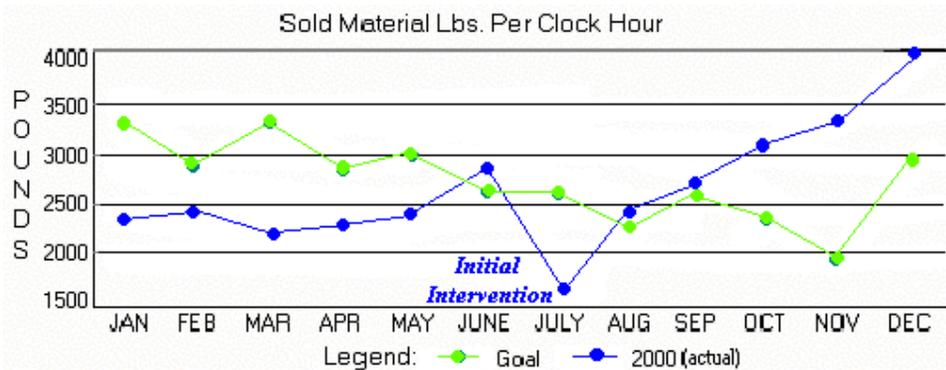
Resistance to the Participative Management Process

Whenever there is change we can expect resistance to the process. Many people do not welcome change even if it is in their best interests. People do not want to lose power and control. It is the fear of the unknown that causes problems for people. Wilfred Bion's work on group process, or what he calls **fight** or **flight** behaviors, or **dependency** is constantly at play in most bureaucratic organizations. Most organizations are still in part bureaucratic. People will either fight or run away and these behaviors can be very subtle in nature. A question to ask is what does the person acting out perceive they have to lose if a new initiative takes root?

An effective method for managing this type of situation is to reassure the person or group that the change is for the best interest of the organization. From our facilitation experience, all stakeholders are likely to reap tangible and intangible rewards. A top manager that is interested in having a successful Participative Management initiative will be on the constant look out for sabotaging behaviors from threatened individuals. Another behavior to be on the look out for is **pairing**. Threatened individuals will want to pair up with another individual who feels the same way they do or one they perceive has power in an attempt to inhibit the new participative initiative.

Examples and possible results using participative management...

Results using Participative Management at a **Manufacturing Plant** were dramatic. Mr. Daniel, President, reports the situation at QuietFlex has dramatically improved. Workers in one department have been able to increase production from 2500 lbs per hour to 4000 lbs, and continue to progress. In the meantime, scrap and reject have been reduced dramatically. Safety has greatly improved, since the work redesign. People's ability to participate has greatly improved the speed and quality of production.



By incorporating participative strategies at our company, employees have been given a role in solving future problems. "Participative Design has given the managers a way to deal with specific issues. Now they know to ask the employees to really define the problem and what they think the solution should be." Mr. Daniel is pleased how CCI helped his organization both increase quality production and communicate with their workers. "I ask everyone to bring me solutions with their problems," he says.

Participative Management at a **Mental Health Clinic** helped turn around the performance and increase productivity.

Immediate Results: Ms. Driscoll Director of the Southwest Center reports that group performance has improved dramatically. They have **increased face time with clients by 33%**. Another positive result of incorporating participative management into their work is that people who enjoy working with children or with geriatric clients are able to choose that assignment. This choice creates a greater fit between the individuals interests and skills and the work they do. Although it may seem small, the individual's opportunity to choose greatly improves both the quality of service and overall morale.

Long-term Results: The mental health group used the output of the work redesign to create two cross-functional teams, a specialized clinical unit and a service coordination team to institute a better process for conducting rounds. Communication is more effective and overall administration works more effectively. People take positive control over their work and strive to problem-solve creatively and continuously. Other clinic locations now use the work of the Southwest group to improve their own work processes. Incorporating the criteria for superior performance is allowing these organizations to dramatically improve their performance.

Internal consultants at an **Oil Company** in Canada have reported that several business units have been using participative management tools and report dramatic results. For example the company reported a **40% increase in productivity** with minimal technical changes. The results came about through modifications of organizational structure. They define productivity, as oil production divided by labor costs. In addition to productivity gain, costs were reduced.

The excellent results outlined above represent the benefits of participative management. In an organization with participative design people are multi-skilled in a variety of technical as well as social tasks. When people are able to perform multiple functions, they add more value to the whole system. Responsibility is located where the work is done, not in levels above. People are more likely to implement ideas they have had a hand in creating.

If organizations want to create an environment where people give their best and create positive results then Participative Management is a useful and practical tool. These are methods that honor people and the creative talent they have to offer. With Participative Management all stakeholders win-management, employees, clients and the community.

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