



Cyngor Rheolaeth Cymru
Wales Management Council



HIGH PERFORMANCE WORKING

High Performance Wales *Real experience, real success: High performance working in practice*

by John Stevens

Globalisation challenges for developed and developing countries

- the advanced economies have no monopoly in the provision of internationally traded goods and services
- international price benchmarks affect every sector of every economy
- the commodity trap is open to all
- the only escape is to raise added value and to differentiate – moving towards the market of ‘one’

Michael Porter's strategies for business success

- low cost leadership
- market specialisation
- innovation..... and differentiation



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Why should countries and individual organisations be interested? HPW enables us to

- compete on a basis other than low cost and avoid being simply low cost suppliers to richer economies
- increase value and develop niche markets
- provide jobs that need educated and skilled workers and deliver job satisfaction and self esteem

Singapore's 'Excellence' model – *aims to match USA output per head by 2030*

- embracing all but focusing on the top 3000 organisations
- seven programmes that provide frameworks and platforms for organisational excellence
- these include benchmarking, innovation organisational capability
- ten programmes that provide frameworks and platforms for people excellence
- these include on–the-job training, up-skilling and work redesign



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Why is HPW appropriate in Wales?

Because Wales needs to

- increase productivity
- be more innovative in new and traditional industries
- achieve more added value per person and per hour
- match competitors all around the World

Wales has a small but very effective leading edge and a long under-performing tail



Moving from pre- to post-industrial society



pre-industrial

draft/bespoke prod.
satisfying the locals
traditional jobs
learn for life
traditional methods
owners decide
'I decide'

industrial

large scale
cost cutting
job shrinking
learning minimised
'one right way'
central decisions
managerial elite

post-industrial

unitised
adding value
job enlargement
learning continuous
empowers innovation
decentralised
widespread
management
capability

High performance working means:

- high levels of output/value in providing goods and services that change and improve and require the willing contribution of
- everyone, not just managers, R&D and marketing
- so, people make real decisions, are really creative and work smarter not harder and learn all the time



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High performance working

- What is it?
- Is it old hat?
- A rose by any other name

CIPD/EEF say the end result:

- breaks the tradition of command and control
- taps into emotional and tacit knowledge to enhance organisational performance
- results in the exercise of discretion and day-to-day learning
- thrives in an environment of self-confidence, flexibility and continuous learning

OECD says high performance working is likely to use:

- flatter, non-hierarchical structures
- to move away from reliance on management control and use
- team working
- autonomous working, based on high levels of trust
- communication
- involvement by
- workers highly skilled and engaged in lifelong learning, mastering new skills and behaviours



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What did we find out?

Managers don't talk about high performance work practices in Wales or anywhere else – no theology – no 'one right way'

We should think 'towards high performance working'

But all the case study organisations were agreed on a common objective:

'to engage the talents of the people in our organisations so that we can change with the times and put our organisations at the leading edge within our industries'

Orangebox – *contract seating manufacturers*

- offer a distinctive, flexible product and service
- from squeezing the assets to making the most of them
- 5S and 6 Sigma training widespread
- developing managerial capability in production teams, so now the Swiss ‘come to Hengoed to see how to do it’
- project working on cross-departmental issues, eg an environmental task force
- talent spotting and development

Land Registry – *a public service organisation*

- went from the bottom to one of the top in the league – able to process the most complex case more efficiently than the rest
- coached top and middle managers
- who walked people past ‘the wall’ – ‘It’s up to me’
- used a competence framework to discuss knowledge, skills and attitudes
- leaders emerged, eg team training representatives, and influenced others
- now people move and move work within and between teams, have got away from departmentalism, and they talent spot
- ‘It’s up to me’ is the basis for induction



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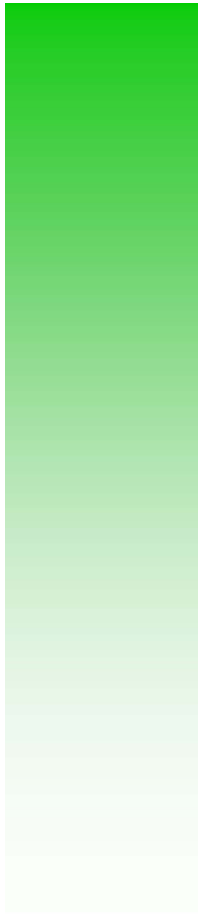


Anthony Davies – *a specialist building firm*

- have grown to 50 employees and a tail of sub-contractors in twenty years
- have all-certificated staff
- have 12 staff who have been on ‘train the trainer courses
- project-based learning for supervisors
- staff devised a flow-line process in the joinery shop
- monthly ‘all staff’ meetings and innovation on the agenda for meetings at all levels
- looking for inspiration overseas



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Conclusions

- HPW is a useful concept/mind-set not a prescribed technique – it cannot be applied mechanistically
- The HPW approach can be applied in a wide range of industry sectors
- It works best in organisations that want/need their people to use their experience and stretch their abilities to accelerate the growth of added value and differentiate their product/service
- But can be used when organisations simply want to cut costs
- And HPW provides a win-win for employers and employees