

# New Challenges for Leaders, Managers and Supervisors

What has changed since 20 years, 10 years or even just 5 years ago?

A whole lot of changes and yet many leaders, managers, supervisors and workers continue to be in shackles with the old ways of leading and managing people.

There have been dramatic changes and many more to come. These changes are reshaping the tasks of leaders, managers and supervisors. Let's see what these changes are and learn the new possibilities for leaders, managers and supervisors.

There are at least four major developments that push for rapid changes.

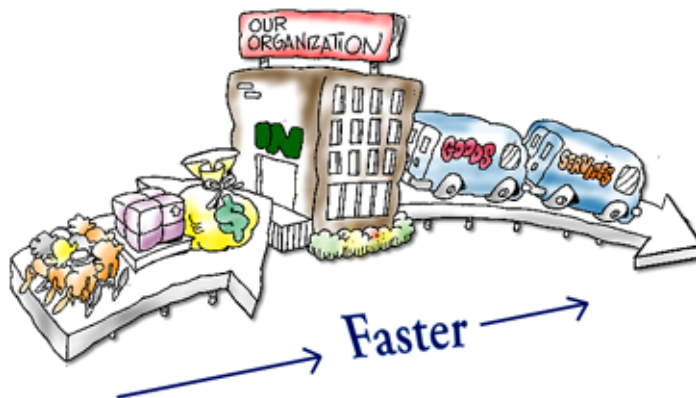
- Tight competition
- Demand for speed
- Growth in information technology
- and, New worker expectations

## Tight Competition

The first challenge is tight competition. Each day there are more and more companies with smarter products at affordable prices.

To reduce the cost of producing products or services, many companies go global. Today, it is common to see businesses in Malaysia, Ireland and China produce components of a product,

**Organizations must be first to market products to compete successfully.**



which is being assembled and sold in the U.S.

Competition is also felt in the financial markets. Almost overnight, companies are bought out, go belly-up or turn into winners or losers in the stock market.

In other sectors, the new economy or the digital economy is rapidly emerging.

The Internet and electronic tools are pushing organizations to change its processes to cut costs and improve customer service.

## Demand for Speed

The second challenge leaders and managers face is the demand for speed.

For example, customers can now order a book through the Internet and expect delivery the next morning. It's not only faster – but cheaper.

ERP or Enterprise Resource Planning systems make it possible so that RFQ's and biddings are done online – reducing paper work and accelerating transactions between suppliers and buyers.

To compete successfully, organizations must be first to market products. They must cut the product to market cycle – that is the time it takes to conceive a product and deliver it to customers. Organizations today must be really fast, flexible and malleable.

## Infoglut

Another challenge leaders and managers face is managing infoglut - with the advancement in information technology, many complain of information overload.

Managers, workers, customers and suppliers communicate faster and enjoy the free flow of information through

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the Internet, private networks, cell phones and other wireless gadgets.

However, leaders and managers must see to it that the flow of information contributes to creating and retaining value-added knowledge that enable workers to do better in what they do.

### New Worker Expectations

The fourth challenge is learning to work with workers who have new expectations. To what do we attribute these new expectations?

Studies have shown that the tight labor market, more laws on worker rights and the growth of the knowledge worker are some of the reasons why we are seeing a new type of worker.

By the way, because of computerization, there are many more types of work that demand knowledge workers.

For example the operation of lathe machines, medical devices and customer databases require less manual effort and more knowledge in the systems and applications.

**Rapid changes are reshaping the tasks of leaders, managers and supervisors.**



Going back to new worker expectations, workers today expect to have more influence on how work is done.

They expect to be more valued by their employers.

And they expect to have more freedom and flexibility.

This explains the growing popularity of telecommuting, flexible schedules, self-directed teams, continuous learning and temp and contract jobs.

Yes, there are many challenges that push us to make rapid changes.

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As leaders and managers how do we respond to these pressures for change? Do we stay in shackles? Or do we transform our organizations and ourselves?

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