

How to Nourish Knowledge Workers

Achievement is one of the great motivators of people at work. The same is true for the knowledge worker.

We describe the knowledge worker to be any one in the organization who has access to relevant information and uses this information to achieve a purpose. This is both true in workplaces that employ high-tech or low-tech management tools.

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(NANCY) Fred, thanks for that financial report. But I really wanted to see detailed breakdowns of costs per unit of service.

(FRED) Isn't that part of the inventory and purchasing report.

(NANCY) No. That report only shows the unit cost before we apply the processes.

(FRED) Well I don't really know where you can find that information. This one is for financial profit and cost reporting and the other is for inventory reporting.

(NANCY) But I can't start bringing costs down if I don't have comparisons of cost over time, the breakdown of when and how each cost

occurred and so on and so forth - this is quite frustrating!!

(FRED) Well, why don't you do what I do - go over the



rims of paper or if you know some report writing software I will provide you the raw data and you can create your own reports.

(NANCY) But that'll take forever.

(FRED) Sorry, I have to rush - they need this report.

(NANCY) What a life. Huh!! (Sigh.)

Sounds familiar?

As a manager, supervisor or team leader, there are two things you can do to nourish Knowledge Workers.

Information Systems to Produce Valuable Data

First, help them access relevant information by designing your information systems to produce data that they must have in order to solve problems or exploit opportunities.

In implementing systems, procedures and software always listen to what the users or the Knowledge Workers need. Challenge both the implementors and the users of the system to seek answers to

this question:

"How do we develop the system to produce the data that will help users perform their functions substantially faster, cheaper and produce significantly better results over the previous method?"

Allow Room to Take Action

Second, when knowledge workers have the relevant information, allow them enough room to take the needed action to meet the purpose. After all the purpose of every knowledge worker is to contribute - which is a source for motivation and aspiration.