

Four steps toward workplace democracy (Constitutive Codetermination)

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Provides a useful counterpoint to most students' work experiences, and usually provokes a lot of discussion about 'feasibility.'

1. Create a workplace in which every member thinks and acts like an owner. The point of business is to be of service; this is best accomplished when every stakeholder becomes responsible for decision-making and accountable for the outcomes of those decisions both to the business and to the relationship of the business to society

2. The management of work must be integrated with the doing of work. The cost of people watching other people work for the purpose of controlling what gets done and how it is done can no longer be seen as economically efficient. Moreover, it leads to bad decisions (because decisions about how to do work are best made by those who actually perform it and will be rewarded by its outcomes), and to less accountability (because "watched" people tend to resist domination by finding ways to slow down work processes or "goof-off" on the job).

3. Quality information must be widely distributed. In order to fully empower workers and the societies they serve, the current system of filling up the day with mostly meaningless memos, letters, faxes and newsletters that only encourage control and domination, should be replaced by bringing to the attention of workers "real" information about what is impacting the business and how the business is impacting society and the planet.

4. Social structure should grow from the bottom rather than be reinforced from the top. If the basic idea of a participative democratic workplace values the consent of the governed in the governance of everyday affairs, everything from routine office policies to limiting the terms of managers should be accomplished by ongoing negotiations among the multiple stakeholders.

Source: Stanley Deetz. *Transforming Communication, Transforming Business* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1995) 170-171.