Preface

To palm useless Books upon the Publick, is a crime of a very heinous Nature, a Robbery of every purchaser (Maxwell, 1747).

It has been said that those who fail to understand history are destined to repeat it, and this is as true of the management of work as it is of anything else. Research has revealed that despite the prodigious output of management books, managers still have little idea why there is so much change in the world of work or what they can do about it. Most, it seems, are still waiting for the dust to settle. They still expect that in the near future, they, like those before them, will be able to go back to doing things the way they have always done them.

Many mainstream book publishers share the responsibility for this confusion, as is evidenced by the categories of titles to which they still rigidly adhere. Their books support an understanding of the organization and management of work as it was formed more than 100 years ago. Most of the management books currently in print also suggest that the majority of their authors do not know the causes of this upheaval. Their solutions are presented as oversimplified aspirations, which any manager can attain in one minute, one week or some other period of time if he or she will just follow that author’s ten easy steps or three fundamental principles. The result has been that managers have developed a very narrow perception of the causes of their organizational problems. Such distortions create false hopes and impede progress.¹

Apparently, most people seldom read beyond the first chapter of any book. For fear, at least in part, that their books will not be read, many authors indicate to potential readers those chapters they think ought to be read and those that could be omitted. We make no such suggestions. This book is written in a very readable style and, therefore, we encourage you to read every chapter. To do so, we believe, will yield the greatest benefit.

This book sets the changes in the organization and management of work into an historical context, without which you will be unable to make sense out of the apparent chaos that characterizes the world of work today. It describes not only what has changed, but also why it has changed, and as a result will enhance the body of management knowledge. Chapter 1 provides a broad overview of organizational evolution. This will help you to
understand how and why the traditional organization was created. Chapter 2 establishes a benchmark from which the changes wrought by the horizontal revolution (Chapter 3) can be comprehended. Chapter 4 describes the essence of the value-based organization. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 describe the practical attempts of organizations to obtain the benefits of change by doing what they have always done. Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 discuss the practical implications of value-based principles for organizations, managers, employees, and human resources managers, respectively.

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