

The Productivity Paradox

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Statistics Canada indicates that 75% of Canadians now work in the service producing sector. That means businesses large and small are now entrenched in the post-industrial economy. Yet in my work with companies it is clear that productivity remains our clarion cry. And, it would seem, we've barely noticed the paradox of productivity.

When we focus excessively on ensuring and measuring productivity we become distracted from the things that actually *create* the productivity we seek: finding and engaging customers, creating new products, designing new services. When will we begin to notice the millions of people who are producing far less than they are capable of because we have them wrapped around the axle counting widgets per hour? When will we notice that far greater results are achieved by investing in helping to stimulate employee creativity, imagination and ability to interact? Today's success is about tapping into people's capacity to create ...new ideas, new concepts, new relationships, new discoveries. Productivity is a by-product of creativity, no longer the thing itself.

Because productivity was a natural element of industrial production, we developed both great comfort and great skill at noticing its presence or absence. But it may have become the thing that defeats us now that we are no longer operating in that industrial world. Will you and your company limp along (or become extinct) because you continue to measure by the standards of the old? Not noticing how this warps and distorts your outcomes. Not noticing the huge investments you make to systems that count productivity with finer and finer distinctions while denying your employees and executives access to training and growth that stimulates and develops their capacity to create and engage. As scary as it might feel, perhaps 2005 needs to become the year that you and your organization begin to shift your focus to employee creativity and engagement, knowing that productivity will follow.

About Gwen McCauley: Coach, educator, writer and veteran of the 'employee to entrepreneur' transformation process. With wit, wisdom and worldly experience, Gwen invites her clients on a journey of self-discovery, gaining clarity of purpose and increasing self-awareness and resourcefulness. Gwen brings a strong background as a corporate executive with extensive management experience to her work. She founded Odysseys Unlimited Inc. (OUI) in 1997 and

is a co-founder of the WEL-Systems® Institute. Gwen has an MA in Human Systems Intervention from Concordia University and a successful track record as a coach, program leader and businesswoman. In addition to being a WEL-Systems Educator™, CODE Model™ Coach and Quantum TLC™ Facilitator, Gwen has studied Open Space Technology, Myers Briggs, Appreciative Inquiry, Generative Leadership and Total Quality Management. Gwen published her first book *“The Alchemy of Energy: Exploring The CODE Model”* in 2004 and co-authored *“Sekhmet Rising: the restlessness of women’s genius”* with 17 other women in 2006. She is currently working on her third book.

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