



What happened to common sense?

Often I find myself reading articles and reports touting common sense ideas as revolutionary, industry changing paradigm shifters. The news media frequently joins in the hype surrounding one of these ideas and runs a big story. I often wonder if I'm alone in my criticism of these new alleged paradigm shifters, especially after reading the article and then thinking "What took you so long to figure that out?" An issue of USA TODAY ran a July cover story in the money section that must have certainly turned the head of common sense minded individuals like you. The story was all about cross pollinating employees in an assembly line operation with one of the world's largest automotive manufacturing companies.

It's fascinating that Henry Ford created the assembly line before 1915, while General Motors an early adopter of the assembly line phenomena did not discover cross pollination of assembly line workers until 2001? Further, according to the 2011 USA TODAY report, some GM plants still haven't implemented multi-task training programs. This article, if true, certainly clears up questions about the high cost of American made automobiles.

Multi-task training of workers is a management practice long employed in service industries like restaurants, retail, etc. The need for flexibility is a basic part and common, everyday practice in the service industry. Perhaps the biggest shocker of all in this article, was the new concept touted by USA TODAY and GM regarding hiring practices. USA TODAY quoted a Manpower Staffing Group representative proudly stating that companies now require hiring managers to hire people good at multiple things. That statement makes you wonder what they were doing previously.

GM mentions multi-task training reduced their head count in one plant by 10%. It's astonishing to learn that GM with its deep rooted six sigma program missed this opportunity. Six Sigma experts loudly lay claim to millions of dollars in savings through their quality programs. So how could something so simple and as old as multi-tasking go unnoticed? Often is the case with today's over worked, over burdened, senior management, they seem to overlook simplistic solutions. More often incredibly bright IT and management leaders look for software and hardware solutions to solve simple ordinary problems.

In this particular case, one can safely assume that GM employs a sophisticated human resource management tool that provides work preference requests, generates work schedules automatically based on the employees personal preferences. Time-off requests are probably routed through approval chains in a sophisticated process that tracks every move of the request. This sophisticated system requires constant maintenance, feeding and monitoring at a cost that's considered part of doing business. However the software package cannot substitute for the common sense that an individual leader can add to a process.

Unfortunately, often times, when companies discover a problem, the corrective solution generated is unnecessary. Additionally the solution can become bloated with too many features, and winds up costing more to implement and maintain than the original cost associated with the problem. Leonardo Da Vinci said it best, "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication," make it your goal to find the right solution for your business problems by taking a common sense approach. If the only solution for your



business problem includes a long list of hardware software and hundreds of resource hours to implement and maintain the solution.....chances are you may have missed something.

About Rosewood Partners, LLC

Rosewood Partners, LLC is a unique management consulting group headquartered in a rural East Texas town. Its teams are comprised of industry specialists with centuries of combined practical hands on business experience in the areas of change management, operations management, off-site and staff augmentation services. Rosewood's leadership philosophy is drawn from actually having led teams located all over the world through corporate downsizing, merger and acquisition activities and everyday business operations. With its down-to-earth small town roots Rosewood believes in keeping things simple.

Real-life experience has granted its team members the ability to employ simplicity to solve real world business problems. The straightforward tasks that simplicity demands deliver the reward of constant and consistent results. It is this simplicity that drives Rosewood's OES methodology, Operational Excellence Simplified.