Based on Gallup Research:

What Makes a Great Workplace?

What makes a great workplace? Is it pay, benefits? Is it too complex to understand? Traditional beliefs held that we should manage the workplace from the standpoint that people will always dislike work, and when they are at work, they will always want to be somewhere else. For years, organizations have attempted to measure and understand employee opinions in an attempt to understand great workplaces. Much of the outcome has been discovering what a great workplace is *NOT*, versus what it *IS*. Companies have emerged from one consulting project after another with all the "don't do's" and "quick fixes" and have still struggled to observe much sustainable change.

A few years ago, The Gallup Organization decided to initiate a multi-year research project to try and define a great workplace. The first task was to define what "great" was. They decided that while a great workplace should be one where employees are satisfied with their jobs, it could not be considered "great" if it was not producing positive business outcomes. So they studied workplaces with an eye on four key outcome variables: employee retention, customer satisfaction, productivity and profitability. Based on this research, they have made a number of key discoveries.

Discovery #1: There are no great companies. There are only great workgroups.
Gallup has discovered that to truly understand the workplace, you must be closer than the 36,000 feet level. At this level, it is impossible to distinguish the best from the mediocre workgroups. Best practices of productive workplaces can only be observed at the workgroup level. It is easy to understand why companies have focused on mostly situational factors, like pay, parking, discount in the cafeteria, etc. It is easier to influence these factors from an overall company strategy. But these factors do not really make a difference to the best, most productive employees and workgroups. In all of the companies they have studied, there is tremendous range among workgroups. And great workplaces in different companies have a great deal in common.

Discovery # 2: There appear to be 12 dimensions that consistently describe great workgroups.
There appear to be 12 key dimensions of great workplaces. While the 12 dimensions certainly do not explain everything, they consistently correlate with those workgroups that have higher employee retention, higher customer satisfaction, higher productivity, and higher profits. The dimensions do not include pay and benefits. That does not mean that pay and benefits are not important. But it does mean that they do <u>not differentiate</u> great workgroups from the rest.

> **<u>Item 1: "I know what is expected of me at work."</u>**
> Expectations are the milestones against which we test our progress. Within the workplace, knowing what is expected can be viewed as the pathway that guides us toward achievement. If expectations are not clear, we are hesitant, indecisive, and unsure of ourselves. The importance of properly setting expectations for employees is one of the 12 key discoveries from a multiyear research effort by The Gallup Organization. The objective of the research was to identify the <u>consistent dimensions of quality workplaces</u> (those in which four critical outcomes-employee

retention, customer satisfaction, productivity, and profitability-are all at high levels). The research identified 12 dimensions that consistently correlate with these 4 outcomes-dimensions Gallup now uses to measure the health of a workplace. An associated research effort, in which Gallup studied more than 80,000 managers, focused on discovering what great managers do to create quality workplaces.

Setting clear expectations is not a new concept for managers. In our attempts to set and define clear expectations, however, we often over-operationalize jobs. We put all of the focus on describing the steps to follow, and in doing so create an environment that communicates, "Check your mind at the door, follow these steps, and you will meet expectations." This roboticizing of humans builds little self-worth and self-confidence, and dramatically impairs quality output. When defining steps becomes the focus, setting expectations then becomes a question of how to control employees, rather than of how to guide very different people with very different styles toward productive outcomes.

So, how does a manager, who is held accountable for a team's performance, set expectations? The best managers tell us they define the right outcomes first, and then let each person find his or her own route toward those outcomes. This approach resolves the manager's dilemma. It allows for growth of the individual to occur via the individual's discovery of his or her own "path of least resistance." It appreciates and values differences between employee styles and flow, and allows individuals to use their strengths to their fullest potential.

This approach also encourages employees to take responsibility. Great managers want each employee to feel a certain amount of tension to achieve. Defining the right outcomes creates that tension and the thrill and pressure of being out there by oneself, having a very definite target. It is recognized and understoond that every job has a certain number of steps associated with it. Some jobs have more of them than others do. The question is, do the steps support a clear perspective on the particular outcomes that are desired? Many times, the steps actually obscure the outcome, and the result is mere activity that has no broader purpose.

Item 2: "I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right."

We have all been in the position of having an expectation put on us and not having had the tools necessary to achieve it. This is a very frustrating position to be in. The importance of employees feeling that they have the materials and equipment they need to do their jobs right is one of the 12 key discoveries from the multiyear research effort.

The challenge we face in providing the necessary tools in the workplace is how to appropriately match individuals with a wide range of skills and knowledge with the right tools to maximize their potential. If this matching is not thoroughly examined, there can be great cost for the individual, the organization, or both. Many organizations, for example, have come into the computer era boldly and rapidly. Salespeople have been supplied with laptop computers with the idea that computers will help them better manage time, keep accounts organized, communicate with the home office, and so on. But many salespeople don't use them. Companies tend to view this lack of usage as a training issue. So they send the salespeople off to computer school to build a comfort level with computers, and their salespeople end up using them to play solitaire. In other words, sometimes we give people materials and equipment they actually don't need to do their job right.

There is also another issue measured by this item. In today's nonhierarchical, flat organization, employees are looking around for clues that define where they stand in the social order of things. Materials and "stuff" have become those clues. So, a manager may receive an employee request to put a conference table in the employee's office, only to discover that the main reason given is "because Julie has a conference table in her office, and I am as important as she is." There is, therefore, a relational component to this item as well.

The best managers shift the decision to the employee. They provide criteria for employees to use in making decisions such as, how is this new tool or piece of equipment going to help:

- ✓ you as an employee
- ✓ our company
- ✓ our customers

This broadens the perspective of the employee, expands clarification on desired outcomes, and builds better communication between individuals and managers. It also takes the manager out of the traditional "parent" role and allows for true ownership and accountability.

Item 3: "At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day."

Full human potential is realized only when people are in a position to use their talents and strengths. Great performance is found when an individual's natural talents fit his or her role. Matching the right person with the right job is probably the most significant challenge organizations and managers face today.

Putting people in the roles that best fit who they are is one of the 12 key discoveries. The research found that the best measure of the degree to which employees feel that their talents are being used in their jobs is their level of agreement with the Item 3 statement above. Having an opportunity to "do what I do best every day" is tied to the integration of a person's talents (recurring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors), skills (what he or she knows how to do), and knowledge (what he or she knows). Talents are those patterns that one cannot turn on and off at will. Great managers realize that, while talents are the differentiating factor in excellent performance, they are also neither created nor altered. In contrast, one's skill sets and knowledge can be impacted and altered.

The best managers see the specific talents needed for every role. Conventional wisdom dictates that some roles are so easy, they don't require talent. Great managers rebuff this belief. The best front desk clerks in a hotel, for example, have a talent for "winning others over." They establish a trust relationship with people within the first 7 seconds of an interaction. Great telephone service and sales personnel are talented in having a "third ear" or the ability to connect visually and emotionally with people they talk to on the phone. Outstanding accountants see patterns in numbers and "hear" a message or story.

Excellence should be revered in every role. Often, we manage from the perspective that because we would not want a particular job or have the talent to perform it well, we must manage it as a job no one would want to do, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is, however, a false perspective. The task of the best managers is to clearly define the talents needed for each role, and then choose the right person for that role. A manager's job is not to make people grow talents they do not have, but to identify and utilize existing talents to their fullest potential.

Item 4: "In the last 7 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work."

Praise and recognition are essential building blocks of a great workplace. We all possess the need to be recognized as individuals and to feel a sense of accomplishment. There is nothing complicated about recognition, but it is one of the items that consistently receives the lowest ratings from employees.

Taking the time to recognize and praise good performance is one of the 12 key discoveries. Historically, praise and recognition in the workplace has been handled from the perspective of "If you don't hear anything, assume you're doing a good job." In contrast to this "old industrial workplace" mindset, the new knowledge-based worker relies and depends upon praise and recognition as the means of defining what is valued by the organization. Today, praise and recognition are communication vehicles for what is deemed as important.

Obviously, recognition can be either positive or negative. Gallup has found, however, that positive and negative recognition are not opposites. Instead, the opposite of any kind of recognition is being ignored. The worst possible thing we can do to someone at work today is to ignore him or her! Workplaces that continue to abide by the old culture ("If you don't hear anything, . . . ") will destroy the very human spirit that makes the true difference in quality output and service delivery.

Although recognition can be either positive or negative, effective recognition has the following characteristics: it is positive in nature, immediate and real-time to performance, specific about what is being praised, and close to the action. Many organizations have formal recognition programs that seem to have limited effectiveness. This is probably because these programs do not always give employees a clear idea of what, exactly, is being recognized, i.e., profit, growth, and so on. There can also be times when credit is given where credit is not due, such as rewarding the weatherman for a bright and sunny day.

Positive recognition is often thought of as coming strictly from supervisors or managers, but Gallup has found that employees cherish praise and recognition from peers. Coworkers know intimately the particulars of a job and when they notice excellence, it is a special event. So, praise and recognition do not just come "from the top down" anymore!

Item 5: "My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person."

Gallup's research indicates that employees don't leave companies, they leave managers and supervisors. The impact that a supervisor has in today's workplace can be either very valuable or very costly to the organization and the people who work there.

All of us as employees have had the unpleasant experience of having a bad supervisor or manager. Many of us have also experienced the results and benefits of a good one. When Gallup evaluates the difference between bad and good supervisors, it is amazing to see how clear the difference is in the minds of employees. Yet, when we ask employees, "Do you want to be managed?" everyone says "No." Why is this? Because we automatically think of our bad experiences.

What if someone who is similar to the best supervisor one has had could manage the employee? Would he or she want to be managed in that case? Yes. So, the issue is really this: What makes a great manager?

Gallup finds that <u>great managers and supervisors possess identifiable talents or recurring patterns of thought, feelings and behaviors</u>. The talents of great managers include:

- ✓ getting a true sense of satisfaction out of seeing their employees grow and succeed, even if the employee's success surpasses that of the manager
- ✓ intrinsically knowing how to match the right person with the right roles to produce the best possible results
- ✓ setting expectations by defining the desired outcome
- ✓ not dissecting every role down to the exact steps needed to accomplish it
- ✓ they help people grow within a role instead of grow out of it
- ✓ they always try to bring out what God left in versus trying to put in what God left out.

Great supervisors genuinely care about the people they work with, and thus treat people according to their individuality rather than treating everyone the same. <u>Supervisors are the filters from which broader organizational changes and initiatives make sense to individual employees and thus gain true acceptance and understanding</u>.

One could speculate that people are not resistant to change; they just don't have the relationships to translate how such modifications will impact them and their jobs.

For years, Gallup has learned from surveys that the credibility of senior management is critical to employee perceptions of the organization. This led them to consult with CEOs and leaders to encourage them to have greater visibility and clearer communications. Then, three years ago, they made a discovery: Employee perceptions of senior management credibility are largely driven by the quality of relationships employees have with their supervisors. Thus, rather than feeling the need for a town-hall meeting, the CEO should feel compelled to ensure that all employees have a caring relationship with their managers or designates.

<u>Item 6: "There is someone at work who encourages my development."</u>

The innate yearning to learn and grow is natural to human beings. Our jobs allow us to encounter new situations and find new ways to overcome challenges every day. Why, then, do we have a tendency to stall or stagnate?

Every employee should be consciously aware of how he or she is learning and growing. Conventional management theory has always highlighted the need for employee development. The <u>traditional approach largely involved helping employees to identify their weaknesses, and then creating a plan to correct them.</u> By focusing on their weaknesses, so the reasoning went, employees would become stronger and more productive. While this approach seems to make sense, it has had a significant, unintended consequence: It has emphasized who the employee is not, rather than who the employee is. As a result, the common theme in the management-employee relationship has been a constant determination to change something.

Change can be good and an effective means to improvement, of course, when it encompasses something such as learning a new skill; in the conventional approach, however, management has often tried to change dispositional factors that are part of an employee's wiring or talent. An example of this would be an effort to help employees better manage their time. While there are many tools to aid in this effort, the way one manages his or her time is a recurring pattern of thought, feeling, and behavior-in other words, part of an employee's wiring-not something every employee can be "trained" to do better. Great managers make a clear, definite distinction between what can be trained in and what is already hard wired.

For the past 40 years, development has also meant "getting promoted." Today, it embodies the degree to which employees are growing within their current roles. Most employees want to be promoted, but not if it means doing a job that does not match their individual talents and skills. We have all witnessed the Peter Principle in action: when an employee who is accomplished at a particular job is promoted to supervisor. While this may work, the new position often requires a distinctly different set of talents-talents the promoted employee may not possess. So, in the end, the promotion significantly impacts the quality of life for both the individuals promoted and the people they supervise.

In today's workplace, the concept of "lifetime employment" is passe; the new emphasis is on "lifetime employability." Managers who want to encourage the lifetime employability of their direct reports help them equip themselves with self-understanding and a clear perspective on what roles they will excel in. To accomplish this goal, such managers pursue straightforward discussions with employees. In these discussions, they seek to understand employees' strengths, talents, and skills, why they accepted a position with their employer in the first place, what keeps them there, what kind of relationships they need to be most productive, desired mode of recognition, and the yearnings and directions the employees wish to follow.

The best managers feel there is nothing very complicated about development. Development involves holding up a mirror to employees and encouraging them to know themselves. As employees come to understand who they are, these managers strive to provide responsibilities that will be a good "fit" for employees' talents. Then, as employees move forward in their self-knowledge, great managers persist in looking for opportunities to make the best use of employees' talents.

Item 7: "At work, my opinions seem to count."

All employees want to feel that they are making significant contributions in their workplaces. The ways organizations hear and process employees' ideas will shape, to a large degree, whether or not they feel valued for their contributions.

The need for employees to feel valued--to know that they really make a difference in their companies and organizations is critical. This is often referred to as employees' "internal stock price." It measures the sense of value that employees feel in their work and toward their organization. The degree to which a company's employees feel their opinions count is readily apparent to its customers. We have all encountered an employee who felt detached or insignificant, and we know the impact that employee's attitude had on us as customers.

If the ideas, instincts and intelligence of a company's employees are its sustained competitive advantage, then employees' responses to Item 7 are of great importance. Nothing is more demoralizing to employees than being excluded from significant decisions--decisions that affect their jobs. Great managers consult with employees regularly to make sure those close to the action have input into critical decisions. This does not mean that employees have the final say on decisions that affect their jobs. It does mean that when employee’s desires and managers' decisions differ, the best managers explain the rationale behind their decisions. These managers use the decision-making process to help employees both to see the full scope of a decision, and to understand why the decision was made the way it was. A straightforward explanation can be a real credibility and communications builder.

Great managers never ask employees for their opinions, and then decide to do the opposite, without clearly explaining why. Great ideas are the building blocks for increased efficiency and new product development. Great places to work, in which employees' opinions count, encourage ideas to flow, and to be heard, processed, and refined. Not all ideas will be successfully implemented, but the process of refining ideas is still wonderfully productive: It builds employees' confidence in the company and reinforces to employees that their efforts can make the company better.

Item 8: "The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important."

Excellence happens only when people have a deeply felt sense of purpose in their lives. Human beings want to belong to something that has significance and meaning. They want to know they are making a difference, and are contributing to an important endeavor. The best workplaces give their employees a sense of purpose, help them feel they belong, and enable them to make a difference.

Having a clear understanding of how an employee's particular role or job contributes to the company's "reason for being" can be an incredible form of emotional compensation. Employees at every level or function like to feel that they belong. Individual achievement is important, of course, but when employees of an organization feel they are an integral part of a larger whole, they are more likely to stay committed to that organization. All of us like to feel as though our companies stand for us, represent us, share our values, and have the same kinds of goals. It is more exciting to "share a mission" than simply to "complete a task."

Every individual has a different and unique sense of purpose, and individuals find different meanings in similar situations. Thus, designing the proverbial "mission statement" is not necessarily the solution to helping employees find a sense of purpose in their work. There is nothing wrong with mission statements, but they are often too vague and too broad to allow each employee to connect with them. Think about it. All employees, either consciously or unconsciously, ask themselves, "What is this company's purpose? Does this company look at the world in the same way I do?" Employees all want to know whether their purpose meshes with the company's, and since each one of them looks at the world in a slightly different way, each comes up with a different answer.

Great managers continually strive to help employees understand how the company's purpose/ mission relates directly to the work that employees do. This, in turn, enables employees to find a connection between the company's values and their own. Every employee has different values. Some value competition, others value service, others value technical competence. Great managers translate the company's purpose into language that each employee can understand.

Outstanding workplaces never confuse "strategy" with "purpose." Purpose is constant. It is the heartbeat of the company, and provides the company with power and guidance. It never changes. Strategy provides the answers to the question, "How will we get to where we are going?" Strategies do change. In fact, companies devise new strategies all the time as they try to find the most efficient path toward their business goals. If your company changes strategies regularly, this does not necessarily mean that it lacks a clear purpose. Great organizations emphasize how new strategies support the broader organizational purpose. Great managers always help to keep the distinction clear in each employee's mind.

Item 9: "My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work."

Highly productive employees tell us there is a vast difference between being named to a team and actually identifying with that team. We have all experienced being assigned to a team or a workgroup--our manager assigns us, and our name is added to the team roster. Just because our names are added, however, doesn't mean that we psychologically join the team, especially if we are afraid the other team members don't share our commitment to producing quality work. Helping all members identify the team characteristics that will result in a quality product can lead to insights into greater efficiency and increased productivity. Trusting that one's coworkers share a commitment to quality is a key to great team performance.

When employees are asked, "Are you committed to quality?" they all answer in the affirmative. This reflects employees' natural, human tendency to think highly of the work they produce. Since they all give the same answer to this question, however, the question does not differentiate the most productive workgroups from those that are less productive. Instead, employees' answers to the question, "My associates are committed to doing quality work," are much more revealing. Employees want their coworkers to share their commitment to quality, and want to be part of an organization that challenges and enables them to excel.

Often, the definition of quality sets the tone of a workplace culture. If quality is defined as the absence of defects or mistakes, we send a strong message to employees that encourages them to cover up mistakes or problems quickly, with little attention or exposure. In the best workplaces, managers realize that human beings will make mistakes, and can learn from correcting them. In these workplaces, quality is defined as the process employees use to recognize a problem and work toward its solution. In healthy workplaces, employees understand that a customer's loyalty can actually increase if the employees take a positive approach toward solving a quality problem. The best managers and workgroups do not scapegoat; rather, they see quality issues as a challenge to improve their product or service and, thus, to increase customer loyalty.

A problem can also bring out a greater sense of teamwork in a workplace. Employees who are committed to doing quality work look at a problem as a challenge to improve their team cohesiveness. They use the power of the team not only to overcome the crisis, but to correct the process to avoid future problems, and move on to greater productivity and quality. Interestingly, some of the most productive teamwork is observed during these times of crisis. The excellence and the spirit of teamwork that emerge from dealing effectively with problem situations are the stuff of great workplaces.

Item 10: "I have a best friend at work."

Human beings are social animals, and work is a social institution. Often, it is a place where long-term relationships are formed, from networking relationships, to friendships, to marriages. In fact, if you did not meet your spouse in college, chances are you met him or her at work. The evolution of quality relationships between people is a very normal process, and is an important part of a healthy workplace. In the best workplaces, employers recognize that employees want to forge quality relationships with their coworkers, and that company loyalty can be built from such relationships.

This item -- "I have a best friend at work" -- is clearly one of the most controversial of the 12 traits of highly productive work groups. In answering this item, many employees do not stumble over the word "friend" since they have many friends at work. Instead, they may get stuck on the word "best" because they feel the term implies exclusivity, and they have trouble identifying one "best friend" among their friendships with their coworkers.

Gallup discovered the power of this item in identifying talented work groups -- that the strongest agreement with this item occurred in the most productive work groups. Because some employees had difficulty with the item, Gallup went back to those groups and softened the word "best" to "close" or "good," or excluded the word "best" entirely. When this was done, however, the item lost its power to differentiate highly productive work groups from mediocre work groups. This suggested that the item's use of the word "best" actually pinpoints a dynamic of great work groups.

Gallup has also observed that employees who report having a best friend at work were:

- ✓ 43% more likely to report having received praise or recognition for their work in the last seven days
- ✓ 37% more likely to report that someone at work encourages their development
- ✓ 35% more likely to report coworker commitment to quality
- ✓ 28% more likely to report that, in the last six months, someone at work has talked to them about their progress
- ✓ 27% more likely to report that the mission of their company makes them feel their job is important
- ✓ 27% more likely to report that their opinions seem to count at work
- ✓ 21% more likely to report they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day

While companies often pay significant attention to the loyalty employees feel toward the organization, the best employers recognize that loyalty also exists among employees toward one another. All employees have "leaving moments" when they examine whether to leave or stay at an organization. The best managers in the world observe that the quality and depth of the relationships that employees have with others on the job will be a critical component that affects their decision to stay or to leave.

This item also cuts to the issue of trust between coworkers. When strong loyalty is felt in an employee work group, employees believe that their coworkers will help them during times of stress and challenge. In this day of rapid-fire change, reorganization, mergers and acquisitions, having best friends at work may be the true key to effective change integration and adaptation. While employees who have best friends at work do not report lower levels of stress on the job compared to those who do not have best friends, they do identify significantly higher levels of healthy stress management.

Item 11: "In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress."

We have all had the infamous annual or semi-annual job performance review with our manager. The first two minutes of the review are usually focused on what the manager likes about us and our work, and the remaining 58 minutes are spent on our "areas of opportunity" (the things we are weak at and should improve upon). We usually walk out of this meeting feeling deflated and, while we have a clearer understanding of what we don't do well, we have little understanding of what we do well.

The best managers recognize that this time to discuss the progress and growth of employees is an opportunity to help them understand themselves better and to give them a clear perspective on how their contributions are really making a difference to the organization. This is why the value of quality, individualized feedback is one of the 12 key discoveries.

One of the paradoxes of hiring and retaining talented employees is that they tend to lack an intuitive understanding of how their talents manifest themselves in specific behaviors. They need objective feedback as to how they can focus these talents to become more productive -- feedback managers can provide. Such managers understand that, because talents are innate and natural, it is impossible to not use one's talents. So, instead of trying to change individual employees through centering on their weaknesses, great managers feel compelled to help them gain self-understanding and knowledge about the talents they possess and how they are applied every day at work.

Talent never becomes "talented" until an employee has a role that uses that talent. Great managers are always holding up a mirror to employees and encouraging them to "look in the mirror"-- to know themselves well and to know the roles in which they will most likely succeed. The world's greatest managers can answer some basic questions about every one of their employees. Some of these are:

- ✓ what do employees enjoy the most about their current and previous work experiences
- ✓ what attracted them to come to work for the organization
- ✓ what keeps them there
- ✓ what are employees' strengths, talents, skills and knowledge
- ✓ what are their goals for their current roles
- ✓ how often would they like to meet to discuss their progress
- ✓ are they the kind of people who will tell me how they're feeling or will I have to ask
- ✓ what are their personal goals or commitments
- ✓ what is the best praise and recognition they have ever received
- ✓ what have been the most productive relationships they have had with a mentor or manager and what made them so special

Talent only responds in relationship to another human being. Thus, feedback must be specific to the individual, and must be given in the context of a positive employee-manager relationship. The last words of Item #11 -- "my progress" -- are a significant part of this Item. <u>Employees must walk away from any discussion of their growth with a clearer understanding of who they are, instead of who they are not.</u>

<u>Item 12: "This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow."</u>

The need to learn and grow is a very natural instinct for human beings. Finding more efficient ways to do our jobs is one way we learn and grow. Where there is learning, there is innovation and a breeding ground for a more positive and refreshing perspective toward our perceptions of self and others.

In today's work environment, productivity does not come from working harder; it comes from working "smarter." This is why work environments that reinforce and promote learning are attractive to employees.

We have all worked with people who have stopped learning and growing. They suddenly have all the answers, and become unable or unwilling to see alternative solutions. Their attitude infects both the workplace culture as a whole and their coworkers, individually. It limits the very growth and innovation that creates competitive advantages for today's companies. Why do people become unwilling to learn and grow? Because learning and growing involve risk--the risk of challenging the status quo. Change brings about unfamiliarity, and with unfamiliarity comes insecurity.

Great managers recognize that they face a challenge every day: How do you create a culture that is open to new ideas and allows employees the opportunity to explore possible implications of those ideas without fear of rejection or retribution? Great managers know that, initially, good ideas are not always perfectly thought-out, executable strategies. Good ideas are often abstract, and need discussion so they can be defined and sculpted toward the best possible outcomes. This process takes time and energy; time and energy are limited resources. Nevertheless, the investment of time and energy is imperative to making good ideas useful. For employees, the creation of a culture receptive to new ideas also involves significant belief and trust in their managers and teams.

A company's future is dependent upon the learning and growth of its individual employees who are close to the action. Great managers, employees and teams are never quite satisfied with current ways of doing things. They always feel a slight tension about finding better, more efficient ways to work.

Source: http://www.afpa.com/iww/greatworkplace.htm