

Technology and Workplace Inefficiency

Aligned to the introduction of new technologies into the workplace is the general point of view that there would be an improvement in the efficient delivery of services in both the public and private sector. The constant cries of poor and tardy delivery of services has led to customer frustration. Some have argued that a slowdown in doing business has been attributed the effective use of the technologies.

The argument cannot be faulted that the introduction of new technologies in the workplace is important to improvements in the quality of service provided. There is however an error to proceed on this premise without recognizing the importance attached to having appropriate systems and mechanisms in place that will support the efficient application and use of the technologies. It is a serious misgiving on the part of those who share the view that technology as a stand-alone will revolutionize the workplace, without giving regard to and having an appreciation of the fact that technology cannot work effectively and efficiently without being complimented by the human resource. Even where the workplace is fully automated, it is difficult to understand how the system would work at both the back and front ends without the involvement of some human resource to build out, service and maintain the technology and its systems, and to respond to the challenges, queries, complaints and questions which customers may have.

The jury remains out on whether technology can ever replace the need for the service of human beings. In the workplace, technology for all intents and purposes, is supposed to improve the delivery of service, the customer service experience and reduce the time lost in conducting business. From a management perspective, technology helps in keeping the business fully organized. This is evident from the results in the building, delegating, reviewing, and completing the assigned tasks. Employers and managers can therefore easily supervise workplace activities that help in keeping everything on track. This leads to the conclusion that technology is meant to be complimentary in driving the output and efficiency of workers in meeting the expectations and demands of the enterprise and the market place.

The application and use of technology as a management tool is particularly important, as it can allow for easy access or real time access to information and data that can contribute to spontaneous decision making. As a management tool, technology should be embraced, given that its greatest impact is in both communication and manufacturing. The bottom-line is that technology has exponentially increased the rate of production and speed at which business occurs. This basically suggests that technology in the workplace has helped workers become more efficient than ever before.

Employers and management personnel who have a real interest in ensuring there is a higher level of efficiency in their business operations, should have no reservations in undertaking to introduce the appropriate technologies which can drive the business in remaining competitive, reliable and productive. Where upon the success of a business is always the ultimate goal, employers should not lose sight of the fact that the achievement of this ultimate goal is dependent on systems which they have in place. If these are complexed, not well define and without the appropriate mechanisms to drive them, then the possibility is likely that chaos, confusion and ultimately frustration will eventuate.

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Employers and management should be conscious of the need to ensure that members of staff are adequately trained in the use of the technology. A recognition of this is reflected by a clear understanding that training in the use of technologies is integral to improving efficiencies, productivity and overall business performance.

It is understandable that the introduction of new technology and the subsequent training of staff comes at a cost. This simple fact can sometimes lead to the compromising of the intended improved efficiency, as there is no commitment to ensuring that the required level of training is offered. The cost benefits become an important element, from the point of view of what the business stands to gain by improving its efficiencies. The automating processes is known to save your staff time, but what is most important is finding the correct technology to drive communication across the business, including the connectivity of staff at different levels of the operations. The consequential positive impact could be improved employee engagement and staff motivation.