



A Revolution in the Workplace

Excerpts from recent speeches by Governor Bill Clinton

It's time for a revolution in the American workplace that will radically raise the status of the American worker and tear down the Berlin Wall between labor and management.

It's been years since the U.S could outproduce the rest of the world by treating workers like so many cogs in a machine. We need a whole new organization of work, where workers at the front lines make decisions, not just follow orders, and entire levels of bureaucratic middle management become obsolete. And we need a new style of management, where front-line workers and managers have more responsibility to make decisions that improve quality and increase productivity.

Dynamic, flexible, well-trained workers who cooperate with savvy, sensitive managers to make changes every day are the keys to high growth in manufacturing and in the service sector including government, education, and health care, areas where productivity growth was very weak in the 1980s.

Everyone will have to change, but everyone will get something in return. Workers will gain new prosperity and independence, but they'll have to give up non-productive work rules and rigid job classifications and be more open to change. Managers will reap more profits but will have to manage for the long-run, train all workers, and not treat themselves better than their workers are treated. Corporations will reach new heights in productivity, growth and profitability, but CEOs will have to put the long-term interests of their workers, their customers, and their companies first.

We should restore the link between pay and performance by encouraging companies to provide for employee ownership, profit-sharing for all employees, not just executives. And executives should profit when their companies do. We should all go up or down together. We'll say to America's corporate leaders: No more taking bonuses for yourselves if you don't give bonuses to everybody. And no more golden parachutes if you don't make good severance packages available for your workers.