

## Neal Herrick, *Joint Management and Employee Participation*

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En guise de conclusion, quelques pistes de réflexion peuvent être dégagées de cette lecture:

- Autant les capitalistes exploités (extrême droite) que les marxistes (extrême gauche) sont opposés au partenariat.
- Pour les marxistes, les expériences de démocratie industrielle à l'européenne ne constituent que des tentatives très imparfaites par rapport à leur rêve idyllique d'égalité sociale totale entre tous les membres de la société et l'abolition absolue de l'économie de marché.
- D'autres possibilités restent à considérer pour éviter le processus d'accumulation des moyens de production par une petite minorité de détenteurs de capitaux; une formule consistant en un partage relativement égalitaire entre les capitalistes (1/3), les employés (1/3) et l'État (1/3) via la Caisse de dépôt par exemple, ici au Québec.
- Dans une conjoncture mondiale, où les grands systèmes économiques sont remis en question, ce sont les nouvelles nécessités émergentes qui forceront l'ingéniosité et la recherche de modes alternatifs concernant l'ajustement optimal du couple capital-travail.

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**Joint Management and Employee Participation**, by Neal HERRICK, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1990, 429 p., ISBN 1-55542-238-1.

Neal Herrick presents a well developed model for worker participation in unionized work places. Herrick believes that unionized settings provide employees the best opportunities to influence day-to-day working conditions and work practices. Having worker participation included in labor contracts is expected to ensure that both union and management will support a participative system.

In Part One of this book, Herrick presents his comprehensive model for jointly managed organizations, which does not yet exist in North America. Jointly managed efforts are expected to be union driven, extending the bargaining process from top officials down to the working level and involve virtually all employees in collective bargaining. The mechanisms for extending bargaining throughout the plant or company is termed a "parallel organization".

This parallel organization functions through three kinds of teams; action teams, planning teams, and autonomous work teams. Action teams bear some resemblance to steering committees in quality of working life or quality circle programs, drawing representatives from both union and management. The action teams set up and co-ordinate planning (problem-solving) teams. The action and planning teams together identify problems and develop rules, policies, work methods, etc., to solve these problems. According to Herrick, jointly managed efforts are found mostly at the top level of organizations. Work level teams, such as autonomous work teams, now serve only the aims of management.

Herrick presents four basic design principles: "wholeness", "representation", "self-design", and "adaptation" by which the parallel organizations function effectively in extended bargaining. Wholeness means extended bargaining must include not only labor and management, but all interest groups (eg. administrative staff, engineers) in the plant or company. Representatives who take part in the teams or parallel organization are accountable to their constituencies. The participants in parallel organizations do much to design or create their own work system. Finally, except in greenfield sites, the rest of the organization, such as training and personnel policies, must be modified to accommodate the parallel organization.

Herrick's proposals can be criticized as impractical and unrealistic. Herrick presents four examples: the Cadillac assembly plant in Detroit-Hamtramck, the Shell chemical plant in Sarnia, Ontario, the Saturn assembly plant in Tennessee, and the Pima County government in Arizona. None of these organizations fully meet his principles of design even though all but the governmental unit of Pima County are greenfield sites. If it is difficult to establish his model in a greenfield site, consider all the added problems of trying to impose a complicated system of committees in an established work site.

Traditional or bureaucratic organizations which exert control from the top down are also becoming impractical because they do not mobilize the best efforts of people in the organization. Much of Herrick's book is given over to very effective criticism of current practices, such as leadership, training and remuneration, which are not well suited to employee participation. Not only do these practices need to be changed, but so does much of the thinking that has led to such practices.

In the final portion of the book Herrick describes what labor and management must do to create a system of joint management. Labor must bargain for joint management and participative practices that would improve the situation of the employees as well as that of the company. Management must also change its current practices such as concern for management rights which prevent establishing effective organizations.

This book can be helpful to both labor and management by challenging current practices and narrow thinking which do not advance the interests of the company, union or the employees. The book can stimulate new ideas and new efforts at collaboration between union and management. Greater collaboration, either inside or outside the labor contract, is necessary in order for organizations to be competitive and offer a satisfactory quality of work life.

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**Profession: consultant**, par Robert LESCARBEAU, Maurice PAYETTE et Yves ST-ARNAUD, Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1990, 341 p., ISBN 2-7606-1539 (PUM) et ISBN 2-7384-0862-1 (L'Harmattan)

Il s'agit d'une réédition d'un ouvrage écrit par les mêmes auteurs intitulé: **Devenir consultant: un instrument autogéré de formation**. On se souvient que ce premier ouvrage se présentait sous deux tomes: un premier faisant état du modèle d'intervention proposé par les auteurs et un recueil de cas incluant un corrigé; un deuxième contenant les instruments développés par ces mêmes auteurs et supportant l'utilisation du modèle. Le fait de se promener continuellement d'un tome à l'autre créait un inconvénient majeur tant au plan de la lecture que de l'utilisation du manuel, puisqu'il s'agissait bel et bien alors d'un manuel.

Les auteurs ont ici saisi l'occasion d'insérer dans un seul volume la partie théorique, quelques dialogues commentés et les principaux instruments utilisés au cours d'une intervention auprès d'un groupe, d'une organisation ou d'une communauté. L'ouvrage devient alors d'une lecture plus facile, retenant l'attention du lecteur en lui permettant de trouver en un même endroit l'ensemble de l'information que les auteurs veulent ainsi véhiculer.

L'ouvrage comporte trois parties: une première où le modèle d'intervention proposé est bien décrit et expliqué, avec à l'appui un cas servant d'exemple, d'illustration ou d'exercice;