In nims when do managers

Barbara Bean-Mellinger Management More articles for you Not all animals are created equal. If you have to work with animals, I would recommend working with sea lions, which are lovely and trainable creatures, says co-director Mark Levin. Spud and Friday, two Sea World Australia sea lions, shared the role of Selkie -- and arrived on set already able to kiss, greet and embrace. But because the marine couple had no previous film experience, they had to get used to the cameras, lights and crew and feel comfortable with Abigail Breslin. Coaches Katie Brock, who worked at Babe: Pig in the City, and John Medlin had breslin and fed them fish every day before filming began. She really trained them well. In fact, he became very involved in training, says producer Paula Mazur. Breslin, who has two dogs, two cats and a turtle and wants to be a vet if the performance doesn't work, joined the 400-pound sea lions. They approach you and kiss you, he says. Sea lions drove the schedule and making the film in a very substantial way, Levin notes. They were not allowed to be anywhere, but in the studio. They were not allowed to go to the beach for fear that they would break for freedom. This needed an animatronic stand-in for scenes on the beach. Using Friday as a model, animatronic supervisor John Cox carved out a facsimile covered in skin and oil, for a wet look. He also created animatronic sea turtles, making research trips to Sea World to observe, measure and photograph specimens. Similar stand-ins were required for a scene in which nim slingshots several lizards in the air, but the bearded dragon playing his companion, Fred, was real -- in multiples. Five different reptiles played the part. They are kept in a kind of igloo ice chest to stay cool, and as their body temperature warms up, then they become more ornery and become less fun to have around. The lizard would always perch on Abby's shoulder, but then, when it warmed up, it would crawl on top of her head, and we always had to pull it out and carry a cold lizard. Getting the lizards to react was an exercise in patience. If you keep the camera on the lizard long enough and put enough bugs in front of it, it will turn its head, Levin explains. Co-director Jennifer Flackett supplied sounds that gave Fred a voice. But make him dance? Forget it. We had asked the coaches what tricks sea lions could do, and we wrote these things in the film, like the dance scene, Levin says. But getting the lizards dancing was something we did with computers. Interacting with the bearded dragons spooked Breslin in the admits, but then I overcame it. One of the dragons, Goblet, laid a dozen eggs while shooting. The first was called Nim -- and the second, second, Product Manager. Ex-Farfetch, Skyscanner. Working on something new. One of the most important aspects of building large product organizations is to design a system where builders thrive. A group of well-organized, ambitious but humble, intelligent people is an unstoppable force. For managers, this means hiring and enhancing direct reports so that they fulfil their aspirations and channels their strengths in the direction of a better product, but also of construction teams that are able to discover this product that changes the course of the company, which probably still do not know it must exist. So what distinguishes great managers? Read on to find out. Empowerment vs InspirationGood managers empower their teams to achieve their goals. Great managers inspire their teams to go beyond their self-imposed restrictions. Listening vs EmpathizingG managers hear more than they talk. Great managers understand, resonate, empathize and are vulnerable to their own opportunities for improvement. Transparency vs CommunicationGood managers are transparent, sincere and clear. Great managers change people's careers by showing them what is possible through great communication. Construction systems that build productsGood managers structure processes and practices that do the job smoothly. Great manager structure systems that build products, where people feel empowered by boundaries and can use them to discover 10x improvements to the current product. Security and meaningGood managers make people feel safe and productive. Great managers make people feel sense, purpose and dynamization to come to work. Turning the impact into forceGood managers are concerned about their direct reports on a personal level. Great managers have a deep level of empathy for everyone around them and create lasting bonds from potential conflicts. Elaboration of strategic narrativeGood managers can talk comfortably about macro strategy and minute execution details. The great managers elaborate a compelling narrative, where direct reports are encouraged to participate actively. His entry restructures the talks decisively. The composite value of manager good relationships regularly check-in with their teams and direct reports and have a list of things that are obstacles and pains that are working through right now. The big managers ensure the value of these composite sessions over time maintaining a long-term record of what has worked, what has not and what continues to rise despite our best efforts. Specific managers and actionable InsightsGood help their people overcome and improve their jobs. Great managers are specific about how people can improve, and analyze the problem through the goal of personal challenges, stories and goals. Join Hacker Noon Create your free account to unlock your custom reading experience. In Brazil, where paternalism and the fiefdom of the family business are still I am president of a manufacturing company that treats its 800 employees as responsible adults. Most of them, including factory workers, set up their own working hours. All have access to the company's books. The vast majority vote on many important corporate decisions. Everyone gets paid for the month, regardless of job description, and more than 150 of our managers set their own salaries and bonuses. This may seem like an unconventional way to run a business, but it seems to work. Nearing the financial meltst in 1980, Semco is now one of Brazil's fastest growing companies, with a profit margin in 1988 of 10% on sales of $37 million. Our five factories produce a range of sophisticated products, including marine pumps, digital scanners, commercial dishwashers, truck filters and mixing equipment for everything from bubble gum to rocket fuel. Our customers include Alcoa, Saab and General Motors. We have built several biscuit factories for Nabisco, Nestlé and United Biscuits. Our multinational competitors include AMF, Worthington Industries, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Carrier. Management associations, trade unions and the press have repeatedly appointed us the best company in Brazil to work with. In fact, we no longer advertise jobs. Word of mouth generates up to 300 applications for each available position. Among the top five managers —we call them directors—are a former human resources director at Ford Brazil, a 15-year veteran Chrysler executive, and a man who quit his job as chairman of a larger company to come to Semco. When I joined the company in 1980, 27 years after my father founded it, Semco had about 100 employees, manufactured hydraulic pumps for ships, generated about $4 million in revenue, and teetered on the brink of catastrophe. Throughout 1981 and 1982, we ran from bank to bank in search of loans, and fought persistent and well-founded rumors that the company was in danger of going under. We often stay through the nightly reading archives and search for the desk drawers of veteran executives to get clues about long-time contracts indeed privately and privately forgotten. Most external managers and directors agreed on two immediate needs: professionalize and diversify. In fact, both measures had been discussed for years, but had never progressed beyond wishful thinking. For two years, holding out on our fingers, we sought licenses to manufacture products from other companies in Brazil. We traveled constantly. I remember one day being in Oslo for breakfast, New York for lunch, Cincinnati for dinner, and San Francisco at night. The obstacles were great. Our company did not have an international reputation, and so did our country. Brazil's political eccentricities and draconian business regulations spooked many companies. However, good luck and a relentless programme of beating the corporate bushes in continents finally paid off. By 1982, we had signed seven licensing agreements. Our marine division –once the whole company- fell to 60% of total sales. In addition, managers and managers were all professionals uns connected to the family. With Semco back on his feet, we entered an acquisitions phase that cost millions of dollars in expenses and millions more in losses over the next two or three years. All this growth was financed by banks at interest rates, usually 30% above the rate of inflation, which ranged from 40% to 900% annually. There was no long-term money in Brazil at the time, so all these loans had maximum conditions of 90 days. We didn't get a penny from the government or incentive agencies either, and we never paid a penny in graft or bribes. How did we do it and survive? Hard work, of course. And good luck, fundamental to all business success. But the most important thing, I think, were the drastic changes we made in our management concept. Without these changes, not even hard work and good luck could have pulled us through. Semco has three fundamental values on which we base about 30 management programs. These values –democracy, distribution of profits and information- work in a complicated circle, with each dependent on the other two. If we removed one, the others wouldn't make sense. Our corporate structure, employee freedoms, union relations, factory size limitations, all are products of our commitment to these principles. It is never easy to transplant management programs from one company to another. In South America, it is axiomatic that our structure and style cannot be duplicated. Semco is too small, too old, too far away, too young, too old, or too hateful. We can also be too specialized. We manufacture cellular manufacturing of technologically sophisticated products, and we work at the high end in quality and price. So our critics may be right. Perhaps nothing we've done can be a plan for anyone else. However, in an industrial world whose methods show obvious signs of exhaustion, the merit of sharing the experience is to encourage experimentation and plant the seeds of conceptual change. So what. Participatory hot air The first of Semco's three values is democracy, or employee involvement. Clearly, workers who control their working conditions will be happier than workers who do not. Just as clearly, there is no contest between the company that buys the chilling fulfillment of its workforce and the company that enjoys the entrepreneurial participation of its employees. But about 90% of the time, participatory management is hot air. Not that intentions aren't good. It's just that implementing employee engagement is so complex, so difficult, and, no wonder, so frustrating that it's easier to talk than to do. We have found four major obstacles to management: size, hierarchy, lack of motivation and ignorance. In an immense production unit, people feel tiny, nameless, and unable to exert influence over the way work is done or on the ultimate benefit done. This feeling of helplessness is underlined by managers who, jealous of their power and prerogatives, refuse to let subordinates make decisions for themselves — sometimes even going to the bathroom. But even if size and hierarchy can be exceeded, why should workers care about the company's productivity and profits? On the other hand, even if you can get them to worry, how can they tell you when they are doing the right thing? As Antony Jay pointed out in the 1950s at Corporation Man, humans were not designed to work in large groups. Until recently, our ancestors were hunters and gatherers. For more than five million years, they refined their ability to work in groups of no more than a dozen people. Then comes the industrial revolution, and suddenly workers are trying to function efficiently in factories that employ hundreds and even thousands. Organizing these hundreds into teams of about ten members each can help some, but there is still a limit to how many small teams can work well together. At Semco, we found the most effective production unit made up of about 150 people. The exact number is open to argument, but it is clear that several thousand people in a facility make individual participation an illusion. When we made the decision to keep our units small, we immediately focused on a facility that had more than 300 people. The unit manufactured commercial food service equipment - cutters, scales, meat grinders, mixers - and used an MRP II system connected to an IBM mainframe with dozens of terminals throughout the plant. Paperwork often took two days to make its way from one end of the factory to the other. Excess inventories, late delivery and quality problems were common. We had tested several worker participation programs, quality circles, Kanban systems and motivational schemes, all of which got off to great starts, but lost their momentum in a matter of months. Everything was too damn big and complex; there were too many managers in too many layers holding too many meetings. So we decided to break the facility into three separate floors. To begin with, we kept all three in the same building, but we separated everything we could: entrances, dock reception, inventories, phones, as well as certain auxiliary functions such as personnel, management information systems and internal controls. We also scrapped the mainframe in favour of three pc-based independents. The first effect of the breakup was rising costs due to the doubling of effort and the loss of economies of scale. Unfortunately, the balance sheets have been consolidated into items such as these as liabilities, all with figures for dollars attached, and there is nothing to to list on the asset side, but aerial things like augmented involvement and a sense of belonging. However, long-term results exceeded our expectations. Within a year, sales doubled; inventories fell from 136 days to 46; we unveiled eight new products that had stopped in R&D for two years; and overall quality improved to the point where a rejection rate of one-third of federally inspected scales dropped to less than 1%. Increasing productivity allows us to reduce the workforce by 32% through incentives for retirement and attrition. I don't claim that size reduction only achieved all this, only that size reduction is essential to putting employees in touch with each other so they can coordinate their work. The kind of distance we want to remove comes from having too many people in one place, but it also comes from having a pyramid hierarchy. Pyramids and Circles The organizational pyramid is the cause of much corporate evil because the tip is too far from the base. Pyramids emphasize power, promote insecurity, distort communications, hobble interaction, and make it very difficult for people planning and people running to move in the same direction. So Semco designed an organizational circle. Its biggest advantage is to reduce management levels to three - a corporate level and two operational levels in manufacturing units. It consists of three concentric circles. A small central circle contains the five people who make up the company's movements. These are the counselors I mentioned earlier. I'm one of them, and except for a couple of legal documents that call me president, counselor is the only title I use. A second, larger circle contains the heads of the eight divisions— we call them partners. Finally, a huge third circle has all the other employees. Most of them are the people we call associates; they do research, design, sales and job manufacturing and have no one to report them on a regular basis. But some of them are the permanent and temporary team and task leaders we call coordinators. We have counselors, partners, coordinators and associates. These are four titles and three layers of management. The linchpins of the system are the coordinators, a group that includes all the previous so-called foreanch, supervisor, manager, chief or chief. The only people who report to the coordinators are associates. No coordinator informs another coordinator— this characteristic of the system is what guarantees the reduction of the layers of management. Like anyone else, we value leadership, but it's not the only thing we value. In marine pumps, for example, we have an application engineer who can look at the design of a ship and then In a particular bomb and say: This bomb will fail if you take this thing north of the Arctic Circle. He makes a lot more money than the person who manages his unit. We can change manager, but this guy knows what kind of bomb will work in the Arctic, and that's worth more. Associates typically make higher salaries than coordinators and partners, and can increase their condition and compensation without entering the management line. The managers and the status and money they enjoy –in a word, hierarchy- are the single biggest obstacle to participatory management. We had to get managers out of the way of democratic decision-making, and our circular system does pretty well. But let's go further. We do not contract or promote people until they have been interviewed and accepted by all their future subordinates. Twice a year, subordinates evaluate managers. Also twice a year, all members of the company anonymously fill out a questionnaire about the credibility of the company and senior management competence. Among other things, we asked our employees what it would take to make them quit or go on strike. We insist on making important decisions in a collegiate way, and certain decisions are made by voting throughout the company. Several years ago, for example, we needed a larger plant for our marine division, which makes bombs, compressors and ship propellers. Real estate agents searched for months and found nothing. So we asked employees for help, and during the first weekend they found three factories for sale, all of them nearby. We closed the store for a day, amassed everyone on buses, and went out to inspect the three buildings. Then the workers voted—and chose a plant that counselors really didn't want. It was an interesting situation, which tested our commitment to participatory management. The building is opposite a Caterpillar plant that is one of brazil's most hit factories. With two tough unions, we weren't expecting front row seats for every labor dispute that came. But we accepted the employees' decision because we believe that in the long term, letting people participate in decisions that affect their lives will have a positive effect on employee motivation and morale. We bought the building and moved in. The workers designed the design of a flexible manufacturing system, and hired one of Brazil's 100 most important artists to paint all of this, inside and outside, including machinery. This plant really belongs to its employees. I feel like a guest every time I get in. I don't care. The division's productivity, in dollars per year per employee, has gone from $14,200 in 1984 —the year we moved— to $37,500 in 1988, and by 1989 the target is $50,000. During the same period, market share went from 54% to 62%. Employees also called me the option on acquiring a I'm still sure we should have bought it. But they felt we weren't ready to digest it, and I lost the vote. In a case like this, the credibility of our management system is in The involvement of employees must be real even when it makes management uncomfortable. Anyway, what is the future of an acquisition if the people who have to operate it do not think it is feasible? Hiring adults We also have other ways to combat hierarchy. Most of our programs are based on the notion of giving employees control over their own lives. In one word, we lem adults, and then treat them as adults. Think about it. Outside the factory, workers are men and women who elect governments, serve in the military, lead community projects, raise and educate families, and make decisions every day about the future. Friends ask for his advice. The vendors court them. Children and grandchildren seek them out for their wisdom and experience. But by the time they enter the factory, the company transforms them into teenagers. They must wear badges and name tags, arrive at a certain time, be in line to hit the clock or eat their lunch, get permission to go to the bathroom, give long explanations whenever they arrive five minutes late, and follow the instructions without asking many questions. One of my first moves when I took control of Semco was to abolish the rules, manuals, rules and regulations. Everyone knows that you can't run a big organization without regulations, but everyone also knows that most regulations are poppycock. They rarely solve problems. On the contrary, there is usually some dark corner of the rule book that justifies the worst silhouette people may think of. Common sense is a riskier tactic because it requires personal responsibility. It is also true that common sense requires only a hint of civil disobedience whenever someone draws attention to something that doesn't work. We had to release the Thoreaus and Tom Sorrows into the factory and recognize that civil disobedience was not an early sign of revolution, but a clear hint of common sense at work. So we replaced all nitpicking rules with common sense rule and put our employees in the demanding position of using their own judgment. We don't have a dress code, for example. The idea that personal appearance is important in a job –any job- is baloney. We've all heard that marketers, receptionists and service representatives are the company's calling cards, but in fact how completely silly it is. A company that needs business suits to prove its seriousness probably has no more meaningful evidence. And which customer has ever cancelled an order because the receptionist was wearing jeans instead of a dress? Women and men look better when they feel good. IBM is not a big company because its vendors dress to the special standard that Thomas established. It is a great company that also happens to have this peculiarity. We also dismissed the company's complex rules on travel expenses: what kind of accommodation people were entitled to, whether we would pay for one entry, either a free call home meant five minutes or ten. I used to spend a lot of time discussing things like that. Now we base everything on common sense. Some people are staying in four-star hotels and some live as Spartans. Some people spend $200 a day, while others go through $125. Or so I guess. Nobody checks the expenses, so there's no way to know. The point is, we don't care. If we can't trust people with our money and their judgment, we're confident that as hell we shouldn't send them abroad to do business on our behalf. We're done with security searches, storage padlocks and audits of veteran employees' small money accounts. Not that we do not pursue a genuinely criminal violation of our trust. We only refuse to humiliate 97% of the workforce for getting our hands on the occasional thief or two-bit embezzler. We encourage —we practically insist— to the labour rotation every two or five years to avoid boredom. We hope to provide job security, and for people over 50 or who have been with the company for more than three years, dismissal procedures are very complicated. On the more experimental side, we have a program for entry-level management apprentices called Lost in Space, whereby we employ a couple of people each year who have no job description at all. A godfather looks after them, and for a year they can do what they like, as long as they try at least 12 different areas or units. By the same logic that governs our other employee programs, we have also removed the time clocks. People come and go according to their own schedules – even on the factory floor. I admit that this idea is difficult to swallow; most manufacturers are not ready for the factory plant flextime. But our reasoning was simple. First, we use cell manufacturing systems. In our food processing equipment plant, for example, one cell makes only cutters, another makes scales, another makes mixers, and so on. Each cell is independent, so the products –and their problems- are segregated from each other. Second, we assumed that all of our employees were trusted adults. We couldn't believe they would come to work day after day and sit on their hands because no one else was there. Very soon, we thought, they would start coordinating their working hours with their coworkers. And that's exactly what happened, just more. For example, a man wanted to start at 7 .m., but since the forklift operator didn't arrive until 8, he couldn't get his parts. So a general discussion arose, and the upswing was that now knows how to operate a forklift. In fact, most people can now do various jobs. The union has never objected because the initiative came from the workers themselves. It was his idea. On the other hand, people on the factory floor set the timetable, and if they say this month they will build 48 commercial dishwashers, then we can go play play because 48 is what they will build. In one case, a group decided to make 220 meat cutters. By the end of the month, it had finished the cutters as scheduled, except that even after repeated phone calls, the provider had not yet produced the engines. So two employees went and talked to the supplier and got delivery at the end of that day, the 31st. Then they stayed up all night, the whole workforce, and finished the lot at 4:45 the next morning. When we introduced flexible schedules, we decided to hold regular follow-up meetings to track problems and decide how to deal with abuse and production disruptions. That was years ago, and we haven't held the first meeting yet. Hunting down the woolly mammoth What makes our people behave this way? As Antony Jay points out, corporate man is a very recent animal. In Semco we try to respect the hunter who dominated the first 99.9% of the history of our species. If you had to kill a mammoth or do it without dinner, there was no time to draw up an organizational chart, assign tasks or delegate authority. Basically, the person who saw the mammoth from further away was the Official Sighter, the one who ran faster was the Head Runner, who threw the most accurate spear was the Great Marksman, and the person he most respected and listened to was the Chief. Distributing small cards to produce an appearance of order would have been a waste of time. It still is. There are two things that all managers have in common: the 24-hour day and the annoying need to sleep. Without sleep, 24 hours could be enough. With him, there's no way to do it all. After years of trying to venity sleep and the temptation to relax, I tried an approach suggested by my doctor, who put it this way: Slow down or kiss you goodbye. Impressed by these images, I learned how to manage my time and cut my workload to less than 24 hours. The first step is to overcome five myths: 1. The results are proportional to the efforts. The Brazilian flag expresses this myth in a slightly different way. Order and progress, he says. Of course, I should say, Order or Progress, since the two never go together. 2. The amount of work is more important than quality. Psychologically, this myth may contain water. The executive who puts in many hours can always say, Well, I wasn't promoted, but you can see how unfair it is. Everyone knows that at 8:00 .m and that my own children can't see me without an appointment. 3. The current restructuring requires more hours of work temporarily. We think of ourselves as corks in a mountain stream towards Lake Placid. But the lake ahead is Loch Ness. The current temporary emergency is in Permanent. Stop being a cork. 4. No one else can do it right. The truth is that you are replaceable, as everyone will discover a week of your funeral. 5. This problem is urgent. Come on, come on. The real difference between important and urgent is the difference between reflection and panic. These are the myths. The second step is to master my eight cures: 1. Set an hour to leave the office and obey blindly. If you normally go home at 7:00, start leaving at 6:00. If you take home work on weekends, give yourself a month or two to end this pernicious practice. 2. Take half a day, maybe even a whole Saturday, to rummage through this mountain of paper in your office and put it in three piles. Stack A: Priority elements that require your personal attention and represent matters of indisputable importance. If you put more than four or five documents in this category and you're not currently the president of your country, start over. Stack B: Items that need your personal attention, but not immediately. This battery is very tempting; everything fits. But don't fall into the trap: Load these things into your subordinates, using the 70% test to help you do it. Ask yourself: Is there anyone on my staff who can do this task at least 70% as well as I can? Yes? Then farm them out. Whether his subordinates are overworked or not should weigh in on his decision. Remember, controlling your time is an exercise in selfishness. Pile C: Items that fall under the dubious rubric a good idea to look at. One of the most serious executive fallacies is that you need to read a little of everything to stay knowledgeable. If you limit the number of newspapers, magazines, and internal communications you read regularly, I'll have more time to do what's important, such as thinking. And remember to keep your reading time; information is a perishable commodity. 3. In dealing with stack A, they always start with the hardest or the most time consuming. It also helps to have a folder for things that need to be done before you go home that day and make a list of things that just can't be undone for more than a few days or a week. Everything else is just everything else. 4. Buy another garbage paper basket. I know you already have one. But if you invited me to go through this stack of papers on your desk, I could fill both in at a price. To help you decide what to launch and what to save, ask yourself the question asked by the legendary Alfred P. Sloan, Jr.: What's the worst thing that can happen if I throw it? If you don't shake, sweat, or faint when you think about the consequences, you mention it. This second garbage basket is a critical investment, although you'll never be able to fill both on a regular basis. Keep it anyway. It has a symbolic value. He babysits his basket and act like a high school every time he wonders why he bought it. Ask yourself a question from Sloan about every lunch and meeting invitation. Don't be shy. And the practice of these three three Thanks, but I can't fit into it. I can't go, but I think X can. (If you think someone should.) I'm sorry I couldn't do it, but let me know what happened. Transform meetings into phone calls or quick conversations in the room. When you hold a meeting in your office, sit on the edge of your desk, or when you want to finish the discussion, get up from behind your desk and say, OK, then, that's settled. These tricks are rude but almost foolproof. 6. Give yourself time to think. Spend half a day every week outside your office. Bring your work home, or try working elsewhere: a conference room in another office, a public library, an airport waiting room, anywhere you can concentrate, and the further away from your office the better. The point is that a cool environment can do wonders for productivity. Just make sure you bring a healthy dose of discipline, especially if you're working at home. 7. Over the phone, my handy but subversive advice is: Don't return calls. Or rather, return calls only to the people you want to talk to. The others will call back. Better yet, they will write, and you can spend ten seconds with your letter and then give it to high school. Two helper bits of telephone advice: Ask attendees to take detailed messages. Ask them as long as they say you can't take the call right now. (Depending on who it is, attendees can always commit to see if it can't be interrupted.) 8. Close the door. I know you have an open door policy, but don't be so literal. What I'm saying is, put ten people together, not appoint a leader, and you can be sure that one will come out. So will a sighting, a runner, and anything else the group needs. We form the groups, but they find their own leaders. This is not a lack of structure, this is just a lack of structure imposed from above. But going back to that mammoth, why were all the members of the group so eager to do their share of the job —see, run, throw, side when someone else could do better? Because they all have to eat the thing once it was killed and cooked. What mattered were the results, not the status. Corporate profit is mammoth meat today. And while there is a widespread view that profit sharing is some kind of socialist infection, it seems to me that few motivational tools are more capitalist. Everyone agrees that profits should belong to those who risk their capital, that entrepreneurial behaviour deserves reward, that wealth creation must enrich the creator. Well, depending on how you define capital and risk, all these truisms can apply employees and shareholders. However, many benefit sharing programs are failures, and we believe we know why. The exchange of benefits will not motivate employees if they see it as another management trick, if the it makes it difficult to see how your own work is related to profits and understand how these benefits are divided. In semco's case, each division has an independent profit-sharing program. Twice a year, we calculate 23% of the after-tax profit on each divisional income tax return and give a check to three employees who have been chosen by workers in their division. These three invest the money until unity can come together and decide - by a simple majority of votes - what they want to do with it. In most units, this has turned out to be an equal distribution. If a unit has 150 workers, the total is divided into 150 and delivered. It's so simple. The guy who sweeps the floor gets as much as the split mate. One division chose to use the money as a fund to lend for housebuilding. It was a fairly close vote, and workers may change their minds next year. Meanwhile, some of them have already received loans and started building houses. In any case, employees do what they want with money. Counselors are left out of it. Semco's experience has convinced me that profit sharing has an excellent opportunity to work when it crowns an extensive employee participation program, when the profit sharing criteria are so clear and simple that the less gifted employee can understand them, and perhaps most importantly, when employees have monthly access to the company's vital statistics : costs, over general expenses, sales, payroll, taxes, profits. Transparency Many things contribute to a successful profit-sharing program: low employee turnover, competitive salary, absence of paternalism, refusal to give consolation prizes when profits are down, frequent profit distribution (quarterly or half-yearly), and plenty of opportunities for employees to question management decisions that affect future profits. But nothing matters more than these vital statistics – short, frank, frequent reports on how the company is doing. Total transparency. No hocus-pocus, no hanky-panky, no simplifications. On the contrary, all Semco employees attend classes to learn how to read and understand the numbers, and it is one of their unions that teaches the course. Each month, each employee gets a balance sheet, an analysis of profits and losses, and a cash flow statement for their division. Reports contain around 70 line items (more, by the way, than we use to run the company, but we don't want anyone to think we're withholding information). Many of our executives were alarmed by the decision to share monthly financial results with all employees. They were afraid that workers would like to know everything, such as we pay executives. When we held the first big meeting to discuss these financial reports with factory committees and metal workers union leaders, the first question we got was: How much do division managers do We told them. They've gassed. Since then, factory workers have called them maharaja. But so what? If executives are embarrassed by their salaries, that probably means they're not earning them. Confidential payrolls are for those who can't look themselves in the mirror and say with conviction: I live in a capitalist system that pays on a geometric scale. I spent years at school, I have years of experience, I am capable and dedicated and intelligent. I deserve what I get. I think the courage to show the real numbers will always have positive long-term consequences. On the other hand, we can show only the numbers that we bother to gather, and there aren't as many as before. In my opinion, only the big numbers matter. But Semco's accounting keeps telling me that since the only way to get the big numbers is to add up the small ones, producing a budget or report that includes every little detail wouldn't require any additional effort. This is an expensive and difficult to eradicate fallacy. A few years ago, the American president of Allis-Chalmers made a visit to Semco. At the end of his factory tour, he leafed through our monthly reports and budgets. At that time, we had our numbers ready on the fifth working day of each month in superorganized folders, and it was those full numbers! On page 67, graph 112.6, for example, you could see how much coffee Light Manufacturing III workers had consumed the previous month. The man said he was surprised to find this efficiency in a Brazilian company. In fact, he was so impressed that he asked his Brazilian subsidiary, an organization many times our size, to install a similar system there. For months, we walked around like peacocks, telling anyone who cared to hear that our budget system was state-of-the-art and that the president of a Large American Company had ordered his people to copy it. But soon we started to realize two things. First, our expenses were always too high, and they never went down because the accounting department was full of overpaid employees who did nothing but compile them. Second, there were so many damn numbers inside the folder that almost none of our managers read them. In fact, we knew less about the company then, with all this information, than now without it. Today we have a simple accounting system that provides limited but relevant information that we can understand and act quickly. We have reduced 400 cost centres to 50. We have beheaded hundreds of classifications and dozens of accounting lines. Finally, we can see the company through the fog. (As for Allis-Chalmers, I don't know if he ever adopted our old system in all its terrible but I hope not. A few years later, it began to suffer serious financial difficulties and eventually lost so much market share and money that it broke and sold. Odiaria Odiaria I think it was our fault.) In preparing budgets, we believe that the flexibility to change the budget on an ongoing basis is far more important than the detailed consistency of the initial numbers. We also believe in the importance of comparing expectations with results. Of course, we compare monthly reports with your budget. But let's go one step further. At the end of the month, the coordinators of each area make guesses about unit bills, profit margins and expenses. When official numbers come out a few days later, senior managers compare them to guesses to judge how well coordinators understand their areas. What matters in both budgets and reports is that the numbers are few and important and that people treat them with something approaching passion. The three monthly reports, with their 70 line articles, tell us how to run the company, tell our managers how well they know their units, and tell our employees if there will be a benefit. Everyone works on the basis of the same information, and everyone expects their appearance with what I would call fervent curiosity. Employers began hiring hourly workers during the industrial revolution. His reasons were simple and rapturous. Let's say you ran out of cotton wireless at 11:30 in the morning. If I paid people an hour, I could stop the looms, send everyone home, and pay only for hours really worked. You couldn't do such a thing today. The law probably wouldn't let you. Unions certainly wouldn't let you. Her own interest would argue strongly against her. However, the system lives on. The distinction between wage earners and wage earners is vivid, but not well, almost universal, but perfectly silly. The new employee who lives at home and doesn't know how to boil an egg starts on a monthly wage, but the main delay operator who has been with the company 38 years and is a master sergeant on the Army reserve is still paid by the hour. At Semco we have eliminated the segmentation and specialization of Frederick Winslow Taylor's work. We ended the wage analyst's hundred years of loneliness. We got away with hourly pay and now give everyone a monthly salary. We set wages like this: Many of our people belong to unions, and negotiate their wages collectively. Everyone else's salary implies an element of self-determination. Once or twice a year, we go from wage market surveys and pass them. We tell people, Find out where you are in this thing. You know what you're doing; you know what everyone else in the company does; you know what your friends do in other companies; you know what you need; you know what's fair. Come back on Monday and tell us what to pay for. When people ask too little, we give it to them. By and find out and ask for more. When they ask too much, we give them this too— at least for the first first Then, if we don't feel they're worth the money, we sit down with them and say, Look, you make x amount of money, and we don't think you're making x amount of contribution. So either we find something else for you to do, or we no longer have work for you. But with half a dozen exceptions, our people have always called wages that we could live with. We do something similar with titles. Directors are directors, and the partners are partners; these titles are always the same. But with the coordinators, it's not that easy. Job titles still mean too much to many people. So we tell the coordinators to constitute their own titles. They know what signals they need to send in and out of the company. If they want Hiring Manager, that's fine. And if they want Grand Panjandrum of Imperial Supplies that's fine too. And that's all there is to it. Participation gives people control of their work, profit sharing gives them a reason to do better, information tells them what is working and what is not. Let them do what the hell they want, so we don't have systems or functions of staff or analysts or anything like that. What we have are people who either sell or do, and there's nothing in between. Is there a marketing department? Not in your life. Marketing is everyone's problem. Everyone knows the price of the products. Everyone knows the cost. Everyone has the monthly statement that says exactly what each of them does, how much bronze it's costing us, how many overtime we've paid for, all of it. And employees know that 23% of profit after tax is theirs. We are very, very rigorous about numbers. We want them on the fourth day of the month so we can get them back on the fifth. And because we are so strict with financial controls, we can be extremely lax about everything else. Employees can paint the walls any color they like. They can come to work whenever they decide. They can wear any clothes that make them comfortable. They can do whatever they want. It is up to them to see the connection between productivity and profits and to act on it. of this.

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