

Views of the 21st Century Organization

Elizabeth A. Smith, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The shape, structure, and functions of organizations that exist and survive in the 21st century will be very different from today's traditional organizations. Some organizations will be boundaryless. Other organizations will be virtual. However, most organizations will be flat and have a centralized core containing all the central operations and services necessary to do business. Many organizations will develop creative ways to adapt to a changing customer base and adjust to the turbulent economic environment.

Work will be done any time, any place, and anywhere. People will be considered a very valuable resource. They will be appropriately recognized and rewarded for their unique contributions to the organization. Intrinsic motivation and self-motivated creativity will be key variables in attracting and retaining a capable, dedicated, loyal workforce.

Better ways to transform data and information into useful knowledge will be developed. Knowledge workers will play prime roles in the massive effort to collect, sort, store, retrieve, disseminate, and transform information into useful knowledge that can be used or sold in the marketplace.

Linking databases within and beyond the organization will encourage cross-disciplinary communication. The need to communicate face-to-face in order to exchange ideas and information will continue to grow. The best way to convey the culture and true knowledge of the organization will be through honest, open, two-way communication.

Learners will have more control over the selection of training and professional development activities. They will have a wide variety of educational content and media from which to select exactly what they want to learn. They will also decide how much they need to learn in order to remain competent on the job. Additional effort will be directed to reduce the gap between what is taught in educational institutions and what employees really need to perform their jobs in an effective, timely manner.

It is predicted that personal and organizational change will be accepted as an inevitable way of life—an opportunity to stimulate innovation and develop new perspectives for maximizing contact with people within and outside the organization.

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Dr. Elizabeth Smith is the Founder and Executive Director of Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety, 6300 West Loop South, Suite 288, Bellaire, TX 77401.
easmith@comofcom.com