

Use Simple Rules to Avoid Bottlenecks

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Organizations that enable employees to feel respected as individuals, as professionals, and as members of a team, also trust them to fully develop the potential of their skills, talents, and creativity.

Jody Thompson and Cail Ressler, devised ROWE (Results Only Work Environment), a human resources strategy in which employees are paid for results rather than the number of hours worked. It is important to understand that ROWE does not mean flex time, working from home, remote work, or telework. In ROWE, each person is 100% accountable and autonomous to perform their job. They are required to produce measurable results. This requires a shift in mindset and practice from manager to results coach, with an emphasis on what is truly relevant in managing performance. (<https://www.gorowe.com/>)

With the radically changing nature of work, workplaces have no choice but to adapt to produce impactful results. ROWE cultures do not exist everywhere. It is a culture that is created through training. Managers and employees in every organization may not be clear about measurable goals and expectations. They may not feel empowered to make decisions or to alert their superiors to problematic situations. Yet, every organization faces unprecedented demands and unexpected disruptions in a rapidly changing workplace. How can workers achieve the right balance? What do managers need to understand – as well as practice – for their organizations to survive and to thrive?

Remote work, remote and complex teams, flexible work options and compulsory work-from-home arrangements are realities of today's workplace. However, they have not changed the way leaders manage workforce performance, nor their entrenched expectations of impactful results. **Management itself can create a bottleneck in the process when it does not adapt to new realities.** To thrive, organizations must stay sensitive to external realities. They have to experiment and take calculated risks, generate small wins and learn from mistakes, as well as create a climate of trust and promote a strong sense of teamwork. Managers must master these skills in the physical as well as the virtual work environment.



*"I can't remember—do I work at home
or do I live at work?"*

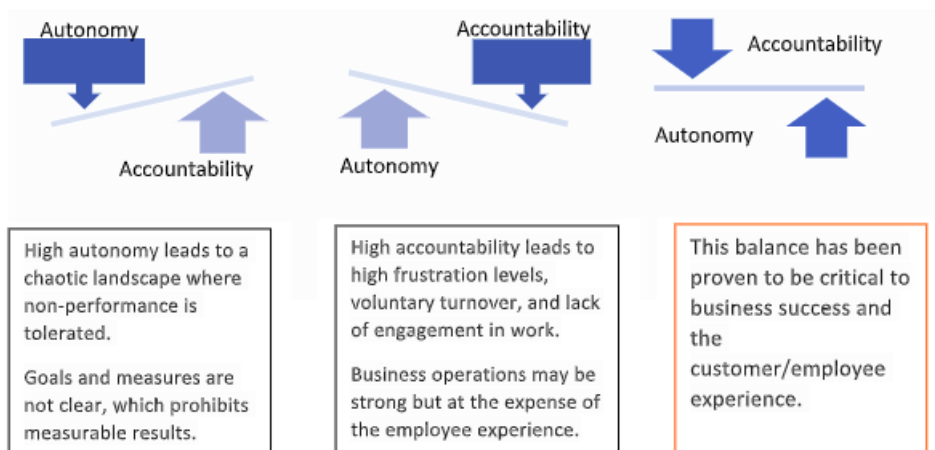
The new reality of work.

Remote working is the new reality. While many workers value flexible work environments, external situations are now compelling people to work remotely, regardless of preference. When COVID-19 imposed work-from-home, numerous people found that “reaching out to colleagues through zoom is different from sitting in a room and having a face to face meeting. It was difficult to adjust.” While some people happily adapted and were very productive, others struggled.

Supporting the remote workforce with both hardware and software is necessary, but not sufficient unless it is coupled with emotionally intelligent firmware. It is a shift in philosophy, and a fundamental change in the way the workforce functions.

To succeed in this rapidly changing and uncertain environment, a shift in mindset is required. An adaptive and flexible mindset and personality are needed to not only survive, but to excel in a virtual world. A high degree of emotional intelligence with a coaching mindset builds trust through empathy. A clearly defined purpose is needed to foster the team’s ability to change and to be able to get things done. Such a shift of mindset enables organizations to be resilient and to create a new organizational culture.

Autonomy frees employees from external control and influence. It empowers them. Accountability instills responsibility to accept both failures and success. The balance between accountability and autonomy is critical to business success, positive employee engagement and effective mobilization.



Autonomy/Accountability Infographic

While the ROWE process is useful, new approaches are needed to embrace the radically changing nature of work through emerging paradigms.

- Mutual trust is the cornerstone; and it is built with transparency, integrity, acceptance, and respect.
- Communication is vital to ensure effective and timely feedback.
- To drive actions to improve results, the attention of the workers, managers must learn to focus their own attention with a high degree of emotional intelligence
- While results remain the main drivers of organizations, systems must be in place to conserve self-control and ethical behaviour in achieving those

It is paramount that leaders empower their workforce through a system of beliefs, ideas, values, and habits enabling autonomy, accountability, trust, and focus avoiding the managerial bottlenecks that impede progress. Research indicates that there is a strong correlation between this type of corporate culture and success.

