Environmental Factors
Supporting the Spread of Under-Management

The Under-Management Epidemic, by Bruce Tulgan

1. The changes in the workplace that have occurred since the early 1990's go beyond short-term trends and ordinary fluctuations in the labor market. The worldwide business environment has become one of high risk, erratic markets, and unpredictable resource needs.

2. In order to adjust, organizations of all sizes have tried to become more lean and flexible and are trying to get more and better work out of fewer employees.

3. Without credible long-term promises from employers, most employees work anxiously to take care of themselves and their families and try to get what they can from their employers one day at a time.

4. The traditional long-term hierarchical employer-employee bond has become a short-term transactional relationship.

5. Many managers find employee attitudes and behavior to be extremely frustrating, difficult to manage, and downright maddening.

6. Traditional sources of authority are being supplanted by new sources.

   • Seniority, age, rank, and rules are diminishing.
   • Organizational charts are flatter, and layers of management have been removed.
   • Reporting relationships are more temporary. More employees are being managed by short-term project-leaders, instead of "organization-chart" managers.
   • Managers are losing their old fashioned long-term hierarchical power, a form of power that required little effort to exercise once acquired.

7. Increasingly, supervisory managers are the primary points of contact with the organization for most employees.

8. On a daily basis, the supervisory manager defines the work experience for most employees. Employees rely on immediate supervisors more than any other individuals for meeting their basic needs and expectations and for dealing with a whole range of day-to-day issues that arise at work. Handling these hands-on and transactional sources of authority requires a great deal of time, dedication, skill, and interpersonal courage.