



21st Century Insights

Booklet

The **transition into the 21st century workplace** might not be an easy one for the worker but **CUSW is here to help**. By understanding the world around us and **realizing the value of Industrial democracy**, CUSW can help make the transition smoother.

It is important for every Member to know that they have a role in the workplace and that **Member participation is encouraged** both in the internal operation of the union and in the workplace. It is essential to remember that contributing to the success of the company, you are also **contributing to our own success**.

By having a **clear vision for the future of work**, CUSW can help with this transition and in turn **create a better future our Members**.

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Chapter 1: Creating Innovative Solutions Through Ideas and Participation

Let's begin our journey by going back to the 1990s. That's when CUSW was created. It was also a time of big change – in the form of:

- Globalization: the broad international integration of economic activity and culture;
- Deregulation: the rolling back of government controls;
- Privatization: the transfer of entities from public to private enterprise.

These dramatic events exerted an influence on the Canadian economy. One effect was the flight of capital. As money moved with more ease, Canada felt economic pain. The restructuring that followed was a wakeup call.

We needed to create a modern union for a modern world.

We had to be flexible to respond to new threats and new opportunities. We had to be creative; And we knew we had to innovate.

In 1999 when CUSW was founded, a big step involved writing our Constitution. We wanted to create a union that would respond to the needs of its Members and their families. And, so, we created a model that differed from the traditional union approach - where typically decisions are made at the top and flow down to the Membership. Instead, we adopted a model that encouraged wide participation.

Of course that decision had other effects.

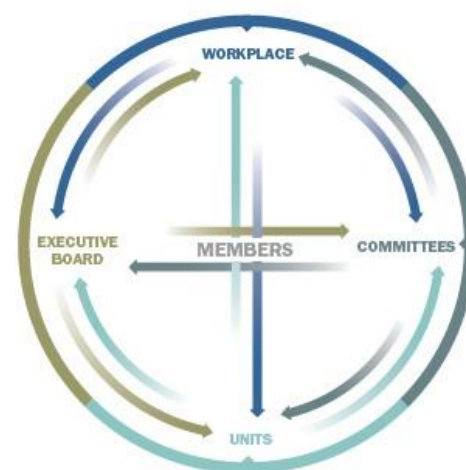
For instance, what role would the President play in a participation-based union? There was no reason for the President to act like “the boss”. The idea of a single central voice speaking from head office didn't fit our model. We wanted ideas to flow in all directions.

Today, they do.

While many other unions still subscribe to a top-down model, our Participation Model takes the form of a circle. Ideas flow from every corner of the union.

What does that mean day-to-day?

Well, take the example of a Workplace Steward,



Union Participation Model

Health and Safety Rep or Unit Executive Member. They help to ensure that all CUSW Members have a voice in proposing solutions to challenges.

It's a funny thing.

But, an idea generated to deal with one issue sometimes provides the answer to another situation. And CUSW Members have no shortage of high-quality ideas.

Let's look at another way we can measure our progress in becoming a 21st Century Union.

It's embodied in the idea of a Knowledge Worker. Creating a union of Knowledge Workers was an idea in 1999. Today it's reality in CUSW. A Knowledge Worker is someone who can see and understand the changes taking place in the world around us. To remain sharp and spot new ideas, Knowledge Workers have to stay on top of events - both inside and outside the union.

That's why CUSW provides Members with a variety of communication channels, such as our YouTube Channel, the Innovation Station and Alliance Learning.

We've come a long way in less than 20 years. As Members of CUSW we made a major shift in the way we think and operate. We changed the way we communicate with each other. And, in so doing, we expanded opportunities to share and profit from everyone's ideas.

Back in the 1990s, you could get by with an attitude of "I'll believe it when I see it". Or, "Show me" for short. That attitude is "old fashioned" today.

The 21st century calls for a different mentality.

If we're going to welcome fresh new ideas and embrace innovation we need to re-arrange a few words. Instead of "I'll believe it when I see it", how about "I'll see it when I believe it." Or, "Just imagine" for short.

Your participation in CUSW is important. Let's imagine together.

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Chapter 2: Member Unions in an Information Economy

How are unions structured? And how do they relate to their Members?

Well, it all depends on who you ask.

Unions have, and need to be, transitioning to new ways of thinking and operating. The Canadian Union of Skilled Workers is a 21st Century, Member-led union. To understand this model, we need to have a picture of what came before us.

So, let's look at what makes CUSW different from others.

CUSW is a Member-led union. It's different from the top-down style of most other unions. I'm sure you're wondering, "Why did we take this particular path?" In 1999, we decided to build our union for the way people and companies work today and are likely to work in the future...*Not* how they worked in the past!

CUSW is a modern union, designed for modern times. And, yet, one of the big influences on our development occurred in the 17th century.

Now, that's a long way back in time.

The 17th century marked an exciting pivot-point in history. Until then, people had few opportunities and little encouragement to exchange ideas. The beginning of the 17th century marked the beginning of "the Enlightenment" – and an explosion of knowledge. As knowledge spread through society, it changed people's lives for the better.

Something else has changed since the 17th century: the means of production.

Back then, artisans created and sold products. Glassblowers, leather workers, blacksmiths, watchmakers, weavers. They were skilled craftsmen. And many of them were entrepreneurs. But, as people harnessed water and then steam in the late 19th century, the industrial revolution got underway. Factories rose up. As they did, artisans closed their workshops. And their children went to work on production lines instead. Unlike the artisans, factory workers developed a far more distant relationship with the goods that they produce. To employers, labour was one more element to price into the cost of production. The same as the copper, iron ore or cotton processed in the factories.

Workers became just another commodity.

By the early 20th century, workers had banded together in unions. They did this to negotiate their market value and to protect themselves from the ills of the workplace. But, the workers

were still too tied to their machines to run the unions themselves. So, the unions developed as separate institutions, in parallel to the factories. As a result, the first unions represented specific organizations or occupational groups.

And that's the way things stayed for a long time.

Unions caught on throughout the western world. In the United States, union Membership hit a high point in the late 1940s. By then, 48 percent of U.S. workers belonged to a union. Then *more* upheaval. New manufacturing practices, wider trade and other major changes began to sweep through the world. And union Membership began a long slide.

By 2010, Union Membership in the United States had dropped to only 10 percent.

Of course, another wave of change occurred at the start of the 21st century. About this time, we saw the beginning of the Information Age. Digital technology sparked another explosion of knowledge. A new kind of worker began to emerge in this environment – one far more connected to the type of work they perform.

The Knowledge Worker.

A Knowledge Worker is a skilled person who is always learning and applying new knowledge. As a result, employers view them as an asset, not as a liability, or even worse, a commodity. The emergence of the Knowledge Worker, called for a new kind of union.

CUSW is that kind of union.

Granted, as Members of a union, we are still involved negotiating pay, benefits and workplace conditions with the employer. But, CUSW also focuses on increasing the ways its Members can contribute to success in the workplace and beyond. We believe that a Knowledge Worker is someone who participates in the operation of their workplace; And who acts as a leader in the workplace and in the community.

In the 17th century a great explosion of ideas and sharing sparked the Enlightenment. The people of the time acted on opportunities to change their world for the better. It's up to us to come together to make the most of our opportunities to do the same in the Information Age.

Take a moment to think about these questions:

Do you think unions can contribute to positive change? And, if so, what role could you play?

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Chapter 3: The Need For Change Never Changes

In medieval times, people pooled their skills in guilds. The Trade Union, by contrast, is a legal structure created for modern times. As the guilds did, unions today not only support their Members, they contribute to a stronger society.

But they also face a strong challenge to this important role.

Let's go back to Medieval times for a moment. That's when merchants and tradesmen began working together to leverage their success. By codifying their social values, they benefited more than just themselves. The guild Members helped create civil society. And, in so doing, they strengthened their communities. Civil society develops when citizens make and follow rules designed to achieve a common good. Today, modern unions continue to contribute to civil society.

But, not everyone agrees that rules and regulations are necessary in the marketplace.

In the 18th century, a philosopher and economist named Adam Smith proposed a new theory. He called it the "Invisible Hand of the Market." The Law of Supply and Demand should drive the economy, he argued. Under this law, the market would determine what people produced and the price for their work. Other laws or rules to regulate the market wouldn't be necessary. In the same way, Smith reasoned supply and demand would also apply to the people who produced goods and services. As a result there would no longer be a need to balance the relationship between work and the people who performed it. Adam Smith's ideas might work in a perfect world. But, real life events reveal the flaws in his theory.

Take Canada during the late 19th century for example.

Many immigrants of this time found jobs in the mining industry. The corporations that controlled the mines offered low wages in return for long hours of work. Mine conditions were poor and the risk of injury or death was high. Workers fought back, clashing with police as they tried to balance the working relationship.

Over time, civil society took root.

Many of the rules and regulations still in place today date back to these struggles. But, Adam Smith's theory of the "Invisible Hand of the Market" still has supporters. They regard unions as restrictions on economic growth. They urge workers to join them in embracing free market capitalism. Federal and Provincial governments have also called for an end to the rules and regulations that created workplace balance. As workers, we know better than to let those hard-fought victories slip away. And we should never forget why workers fought for rules and

regulations during the 19th and 20th centuries. They were a response to unscrupulous behaviour by employers.

Unions made a major contribution to building civil society during the 20th century.

It's up to us to continue that quest in the 21st century. But even 21st Century unions need to change to continue building civil society. As workers, we can contribute in two ways:

- By sharing our knowledge and skills with our colleagues; and
- By helping create safe and productive workplaces.

Charles Darwin challenged the science of his day when he described the evolution of species. He said "It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change." A big part of being a Knowledge Worker is being open to change.

Let's embrace it.

Here is a something for you to ponder about.

Unions made great strides during the 20th century. But, they failed to make major progress in one important area: the right to negotiate workplace activities. How is CUSW addressing that failure and why is it important to us as Members?

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Chapter 4: Employment Law and the Right to Voice

At the end of the 20th Century, a change in Canada’s laws redefined the relationship between the employer and employees.

What does that mean to you as a union Member?

On one hand, it gives you a voice in the workplace. On the other hand, it gives you a new responsibility — to make your voice heard.

Now, let's consider these two questions:

- How employment law cleared the way for unions to move in a new direction;
- And how that move has made an impact on your rights and responsibilities.

In 1999, CUSW’s founders aimed to build a union for the 21st century. To do that they set three ambitious goals:

1. The Members of CUSW would determine the direction of the organization;
2. The organization would serve as a path to jobs; and
3. CUSW would enable its Members to have a voice in the day-to-day operations of the workplace.

In the old economy, workers conceded control of the workplace to employers. We accepted the idea that “management has the right to manage”. Workers, whether union or non-union, threw their efforts into:

- Fighting over wages and conditions;
- Forcing employers to provide safe, healthy workplaces; and
- Getting a fair share of the profits earned through their labour.

Meanwhile, employers strove to maintain control over the bargaining power of the workforce. The result was a battle for the “hearts and minds of the workforce”. Employers tried to convince workers there was no need for a union. And unions battled back, arguing they offered the path to better wages and conditions.

But, something good came out of that conflict.

The labour disputes of the 20th century laid the groundwork for a new legal framework called

“Employment Law”. This law recognized the right of workers to bargain collectively and to have a voice in the workplace. Now, when workers recognize a union to represent them in their employment relationship, they gain legal rights that do not exist in a non-union workplace. Employment Law differs from Common Law in ways that are not well understood. Where there is no recognized union, the “*Master and Servant Act*” contained within Common Law, governs the employment relationship between the employer and worker. Under this law, the worker takes direction from the employer. The employer retains the uncontested right to define the employment relationship, which means the employer has the right to:

- Hire and fire;
- Set conditions for health and safety; and
- Set employee compensation in accordance with legal standards.

Can the employee challenge these actions?

Yes. But only one way: by going to court. Employment Law redefines the employment relationship. For example: it limits the employer’s uncontested rights. Another major difference happens when employees form a union. They receive a legal voice in the employment relationship. This voice gives workers a say about the issues that impact them in the workplace: including the right to negotiate how they participate in, and contribute to work activities. Union Members can exercise their voice through collective bargaining or by sitting on workplace committees. In the 20th century, unions failed to make much progress on exercising the right to voice.

But from its beginning, CUSW emphasized participation.

Our union has also worked to achieve governance goals at the Committee and Unit levels. Now it’s time to take the same approach in the workplace. The New Economy provides more opportunity than ever for union Members to have a say in how work is organized. By exercising your “voice” you can contribute to the success of your employer and raise your own satisfaction. As a union Member, you have the knowledge and the right to voice. You are no longer a servant.

So, step up to the responsibility. Make your voice heard in the workplace. Think about what are some of the challenges and solutions to increasing the Member voice in the workplace?

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Chapter 5: Employment Law and Elections

Members of the Canadian Union of Skilled Workers are encouraged to vote in union elections. There's nothing unusual about that. Most unions do the same.

But, something else about CUSW *is* a little unusual. Members are responsible for *managing* the elections too.

Why are CUSW Members involved to that degree? And how do you benefit? Employment Law was enacted to give workers a sense of worth and freedom, and the right to contribute to the workplace.

But how do those ideas translate into action?

CUSW Members believe that a good first step is to be involved in all aspects of elections throughout the year. If you've been a CUSW Member for a while, you may have voted in an election. You may have even helped run an election.

CUSW elections follow an open, democratic process.

Once elected, representatives become the legal face of the union. As such, they are expected to act in concert with the values, beliefs and principles outlined in the CUSW Constitution.

Let's turn back the calendar to the 20th century for a moment.

During that time, the legislation that governed employer/employee relationships was called Common Law. Unions of the day came into the workplace to define the relationship between the employer and workers. Workers paid dues and the union provided representatives to manage their relationship with the employer.

This approach led to an "us" and "them" mentality.

It also fostered an "informal work culture" that ran in parallel to the employer management system. Workers used this alternative system to drive the change that led to the recognition of unions.

But, times and laws have changed.

In the 21st Century, workers don't have to participate in the workplace through informal means. Under Employment Law, they have another option. They can contribute to the operation of the workplace out in the open. CUSW is building relationships with employers to

ensure Members are involved in day-to-day operations, in a meaningful way.

Our union is also working to overcome another challenge - an entrenched workplace culture that uses rewards and punishment to mold behaviours. Often behaviours that union Members have had *no say in setting*. Granted, it's taking time to achieve results. And there is resistance to change from some, both the union Members and employers. It's important, then, that *every* CUSW Member keep *top of mind* the beliefs, values and principles outlined in our Constitution.

CUSW leaders and representatives aren't the only people with a responsibility to speak up in the workplace.

As a Member, you also have a voice in setting behaviour and expectations. Opportunities to express your voice will increase over time. When they do, remember your goal is to create success for yourself, your fellow Members, and for your employer.

Have you ever taken the time to read your collective agreement? I mean *really* read it?

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Chapter 6: Collective Bargaining: A Hard-Fought Right

The rights you enjoy today as a Union Member took many years of struggle to win. You can find those rights outlined in your Collective Agreement, so it's well worth your time to read it in detail.

Workers fought for more than two Centuries to get employers to recognize their right to organize, bargain collectively and participate in the regulation of the workplace. In a more recent ruling by the Supreme Court, the Justices described the struggle to gain the right to collective bargaining in Canada.

Here is some of what they said:

"...When Parliament first recognized workers' rights, trade unions had no expressed statutory right to negotiate collectively with employers. Employers could simply ignore [workers]. However, workers used the powerful economic weapon of strikes to gradually force employers to recognize unions and to bargain collectively with them."

In 1944, Canada confirmed workers' rights in a law called P.C. 1003. This law *forced* employers to recognize the rights of workers.

"...Governments across Canada recognized the fundamental need for workers to participate in the regulation of their work environment. This legislation confirmed what the labour movement had been fighting for, over centuries, ... the right to collectively bargain with employers."

While P.C. 1003 gave workers the right to bargain collectively, it was also designed to bring harmony to the workplace. The Supreme Court Justices made that fact clear when they wrote:

"P.C. 1003 was a compromise adopted to promote peaceful labour relations. On the one hand, it granted major protections to workers to organize without fear of unfair interference from the employers. And, [it] guaranteed workers the right to bargain collectively in good faith with their employers without having to rely on strikes and other economic weapons. On the other hand, it provided employers with a measure of stability in their relationships with their organized workers, without the spectre of state intervention in the economy."

P.C. 1003 was a major breakthrough for one more reason. It allowed workers the right to come together and form unions for the purpose of collective bargaining *with* their employers.

Canadian society has recognized that right ever since. And, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms

-- passed in 1982 -- made the right *even stronger*.

The Supreme Court emphasized that point when it wrote:

“Collective bargaining, despite early discouragement from the common law, has long been recognized in Canada. Indeed, historically it emerges as the most significant collective activity through which freedom of association is expressed in the labour context. In our opinion, the concept of freedom of association...includes this notion of a procedural right to collective bargaining.”

Today, the rights to join a union, bargain collectively, and participate in the regulation of the workplace are all fundamental elements of Canadian society.

Generations of workers fought for these rights.

As CUSW Members we need to view them both as rights *and* as *responsibilities* to ourselves and to our families. So, get to know your collective agreement, and prepare to add your voice to the ongoing job of creating a better future.

How has the CUSW constitution shaped our union? And how has our chosen way of operating shaped our leadership roles?

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Chapter 7: Dictates Structure, Organization

What element is at the heart of the structure of the Canadian Union of Skilled Workers and the roles of its leaders and Members?

In a word: purpose.

What molds a union? The lessons learned from past struggles certainly have an influence. So, does the environment in which the Union has to operate. The mindset of its Members is another factor. Workers today care about a lot more than work. That's why we designed our union to enable our Members to be involved in a broad set of responsibilities.

Let's put our constitution under a microscope for a moment.

CUSW Members crafted it with much care. We aligned it to reflect our union structure. We made it consistent with the laws of Canada and the provinces. We designed it to be open to changes in the economic, civil and social environments in which we operate. And, we set out three broad objectives that describe how we want to respond to those changes. To meet *legal requirements*, we committed to, among other things: regulate the relations between employers and employees; enter into collective agreements; and promote gender and ethnic equity. Going a step further, we wanted to support *civil society*, so we committed to building and maintaining democratic trade unions, for instance, and encouraging progressive legislation. And, to support *social society*, we committed to provide health, safety and economic benefits to Members and retirees and to work to improve life for all Canadians.

As a Member of CUSW, you have a role to play in helping to turn these goals into action.

In 2012, delegates to the CUSW Convention debated the pro's and con's of the traditional top-down union structure compared with our participation model. Members quickly realized that our Participation Model is the right vehicle for us to be able to realize our goals. Healthy debates have ensued in our workplaces – some Members who come from American-style unions have struggled to understand the roles and responsibilities associated with the CUSW Model. Their pre-determined definition of a union doesn't fit with how we behave and engage with our employers and each other.

Just as our purpose underlies our Constitution, purpose also defines the CUSW organizational structure.

The President and First Vice President are responsible to:

- Ensure that CUSW meets legal our obligations
- Take action to meet the civil and social requirements of the Constitution.
- And serve on the CUSW National Executive Board, or NEB for short.

The NEB oversees the legal operation of the Union and actions taken to achieve CUSW's objectives.

Members contribute to the success of their workplaces by working with employers to help them to improve their business practices. Within the workplace, Members are responsible for the day-to day-activities and elect workplace representatives to fulfill the legal responsibilities required by rules and legislation.

Within each unit, Members take on the coordination of activities to support each other – these include social events as well as organizing training sessions based on common interests.

Members also serve on National Committees where they contribute to the development of policies to benefit all Canadians, including our Members.

Going full circle, the National Executive Board ensures that all of the parts work together to benefit all CUSW Members and their families.

So, you can see from our organization, we're all in this together. And, if everyone understands their role and acts on their responsibilities, we will *make progress* together.

CUSW stands on a foundation of hard fought experiences. But our future will depend on the full participation of every Member today. Members had to work hard to win the right to contribute a portion of their wages to support their union.

Do you know why that achievement was a major breakthrough? And why is it that unions have to prove and defend their financial ability even today?

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Chapter 8: Dues or Investment – Contributing to Building for Tomorrow

As a union Member, you make monthly union contributions. When you see them come off your paycheque, it's easy to think of them as an expense. After all, paying contributions means you end up with less money in your pocket...right?

I look at these contributions in another way: as an investment in our future.

When workers in Canada won the right to fund trade unions, it was a major victory. It's tempting to take that right for granted today. But, it would be dangerous to do that.

Rights aren't carved in stone.

In 1999, CUSW qualified as a trade union. But time and again, we are required to prove ourselves to the Labour Relations Boards. For example, in 2002 we made an application to represent workers at Langley Utilities and as part of that application, once again we needed to prove that we qualified as a trade union. Specifically, we need to show the Labour Board that we had key aspects in place:

- A constitution;
- An elected executive board to oversee CUSW's operations; and the "financial ability" – to meet the responsibilities to our Members.

To understand the importance of achieving and maintaining financial ability, we have to go back a little further in history.

In the early days of unionism in Canada, workers struggled to achieve the right to collectively bargain. Employers had a big advantage. They could use their profits to oppose any worker-driven movements that arose. With fewer resources at their disposal, workers had only one recourse: to strike!

Eventually the courts gave workers the right to collectively bargain.

But the law stated that the workers needed to belong to a trade union in order to do so. Employers had lost the battle over collective bargaining, but they still continued the war against organized labour.

With no access to funds, many unions failed.

In response, workers demanded the right to contribute some of their pay to their unions and in 1946, a Supreme Court Judge gave that right to workers. Judge Ivan Rand reasoned that employees should bear some of the burden of expense for administering the union contract.

Today this is still known as the "Rand Formula". Workers now have the right to contribute funds to their union of choice, to help support the regulation of the relationship between the employer and the workers. In many cases, unions have since built large hierarchical structures with these contributions – ones that often become disconnected from the very people they were created to serve.

In contrast, CUSW designed itself around a participation-based model.

When all Members play a role in their union, they're more likely to understand why contributing financially is a benefit to them. Well-informed Members are also less likely to believe misinformation that is passed along by those who oppose organized labour. The right to contribute to the support of trade unions was a victory for workers.

And it's a *right* that is well worth protecting.

So, you can look at the dues you pay as money out of your pocket. Or, you can look at them as a contribution toward the benefits and opportunities you enjoy as a Member of CUSW. In that light, dues aren't an expense. They're actually an investment in your future.

Some things to consider before the next chapter. What's a union security clause? And how does it protect you?

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Chapter 9: Alignment Provides Protection

It's a point of pride that Members of the Canadian Union of Skilled Workers play a role in running their union. But, it's a practical measure too. Workers' rights are best protected when the interests of a union and its Members are closely aligned.

The CUSW Constitution is our guiding document.

It describes the Union's legal obligations and how we will meet them. The Constitution also sets out the roles that Members need to take on, in order to make the Union work. This design bridges the gap that separates the concept of a union as an institution from that of a union as its Members.

That gap is a *danger zone!*

The tighter we can close it, the more protection we have from challenges to our right to collectively bargain. To understand how serious the threat is, we have to go back in history.

In the 20th century, Canadian law recognized the right to collectively bargain. But the new legislation also set the stage for a division between the interests of a union as a legal entity and its Members. When people focus on that division, they refer to "*the union*" as if it were a third party. They talk about the "*union*" doing this and the "*union*" failing to do that.

It's a *dangerous trap!*

The gap between a union and its Members presents a weak spot. And, employers and other political interests who oppose organized labour can exploit it -- for *their gain*, not ours!

CUSW makes every effort to bridge the gap.

One way is by empowering union reps to bring forward the concerns of Members at every level for discussion and resolution. Another way is by protecting the rights of Members to be part of a union without fear of repercussions from employers. Members do this by negotiating guarantees and writing them into collective agreements.

The guarantees are also known as *Union Security Clauses*.

A Union Security Clause states that an employee *must* join the Union and remain a Member in good standing, when working within a Collective Agreement. We can't let outside forces that oppose the idea of trade unions drive a wedge between CUSW Members. Those tactics won't succeed as long as we believe the Members are the Union and the Union is its Members.

The CUSW Constitution and structure are both designed to welcome and encourage Member participation.

Now, it's up to us, as Members, to do our share. Let's put our collective strength to work for a better future. Participation is a key element of a 21st century union. Every CUSW Member has a role to play in the Union, the workplace and the communities within which we live, work and play.

To be effective we all need to master one important skill? Curious about what that may be?

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Chapter 10: Let's Connect and Change the World

Advances in digital technology have led to dramatic changes in the way people interact. As Members of a modern union, we have access to leading edge digital tools and communication channels. Now, it's up to us to use them to connect with each other and with the wider world. People today have more options than ever to interact with each other and with their environments.

Take the Internet as one example.

It provides us with access to a wealth of information. We can find out the news and weather in mere seconds. We can watch events as they happen: or read diverse opinions about political issues. We can also research issues on our own with the click of a mouse. We don't have to rely nearly as much on professionals and other experts for information or insight.

This search for information is also changing the way we live.

It seems like everyone today owns a smart phone — and maybe a personal computer and tablet as well. We use these devices to pay our bills. We shop online. We watch movies and play games. As our way of living changes, so does the way we relate to one another.

People are social beings. We want to interact.

No wonder platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are so popular. They allow people to meet and exchange or debate ideas online. People are also connecting with each other via technology to turn information into knowledge. For example, they're starting innovation hubs to transform ideas into creative solutions to problems. And they're turning to concepts such as Crowd Sourcing to spur investment.

The digital age was in full swing when CUSW started to take shape as a 21st century union. Our founding Members understood that the need to come together to bargain collectively with employers was as valid a goal as ever. What had to change were the means and methods of achieving that goal. It was time to adopt new ways of thinking and acting to respond to new conditions.

Today, CUSW is a union built on the idea of participation.

Everyone in our union has a role to play as a Member, regardless of their job function and any other positions they may hold. And every Member has access to information and opportunities to discuss shared values and end-goals. But, something else happened when CUSW created our

participation model.

It set the stage for us to communicate in new and more dynamic ways.

As more Members share a sense of the “big picture”, our communication networks expanded. And instead of looking to the President for answers and direction, CUSW Members rely more on each other.

Take Workplace Stewards for example.

In traditional service model unions, they are appointed to their positions, and they report to the Union hierarchy. Under the CUSW participation model, Workplace Stewards are nominated and elected by their peers in the workplace. And they provide support to Members and employers in the implementation of the Collective Agreement. Their duties include collaborating with the employer, with other stewards and with Members who bring forward issues for resolution. At various times, they act as partners, facilitators and even coaches.

CUSW encourages all of its Members to join in the conversation.

We have an amazing array of tools and platforms we can use to communicate, ranging from our Web site and the Innovation Station, to Alliance Learning, our on-line university for Members and even our YouTube Channel with it’s bite-sized videos!

Let’s use *them to the max!* Let’s *connect!*

CUSW is redefining the idea of union “cohesion”. Why are we taking such a bold move? And what does it mean to you?

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Chapter 11: Redefining Cohesion for a New Era

During the 20th century, North American trade unions focused on maintaining solidarity or *cohesion*. But, in the final decades of the century, outside events caused that cohesion to *erode*.

Today, the Canadian Union of Skilled Workers is redefining cohesion for a new era.

Let's travel back in time to a union hall somewhere in North America, round about the year 1990. Back then, workers organized to bargain with employers over wages, hours, fringe benefits, job security and working conditions. To counteract employers, unions often defined themselves by occupation: steel workers, autoworkers and electrical workers, for example.

Workers rallied around the most successful unions. And the biggest ones became known as “big dog” institutions. But, in the last quarter of the 20th century, the world began to shrink.

The economy went *global*.

Governments struck *free trade agreements*, sparking the flight of capital to low-cost countries. And the explosion in *digital media* gave people new ways to communicate and conduct business. Those forces had an effect on the workplace. In the face of this dramatic change, the big dogs lost a lot of their appeal. People began to question the utility of unions. And North American workers abandoned traditional unions — in *droves*.

Well, the world may have changed, but unions were far from dead.

Around the same time, Harvard professor Richard Freeman published a book called *What Do Unions Do?* He argued unions could serve a greater purpose than just battling employers. They were, in his words, “beneficial institutions”. His research showed unions: *improve* the workplace; *increase* productivity; and *reduce* economic inequality; among other things. Freeman also sparked a *rethink* of what a union is and over time, a new definition emerged:

A modern union is a group of workers who join together in an organization to improve their working conditions and help promote the group's common interests. In the 21st century, unions have an opportunity to live up to that definition.

But, the environment in which we operate presents a new challenge.

Building unity based solely on the fight against employers just doesn't make sense — Nor does it make sense to build unity based on the kind of work we do. The definition of cohesion has to recognize that modern union workers have roles to play in both the workplace and in their

communities.

At CUSW, we believe cohesion lies in working with a *common purpose* to meet our needs as *Members* as well as those of our *employer and community partners*.

We don't live in utopia.

There are still many risks in our world. A major one is that workers might focus on their own interests at the expense of the group. That's why we have to be aware of and support the new definition of cohesion. "The tendency of a group to be *in unity* while they work towards a *common goal*."

We are living and working in a time of great transition.

Major shifts are taking place in our *economy*; in the way work is *organized*; and in the way that it's *managed*. A shared sense of cohesion can *unite us* and make it easier for us to *move forward*. We know who we are. We know where we want to go. And, if we work in unity, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

Collaboration is key to positive and productive worker-employer relationships. Yet, the stance of some union Members and employers is still "*us*" *against* "*them*".

How can we, as CUSW Members, *smash* the barriers created by outdated thinking?

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Chapter 12: Conflict Versus Collaboration

The Canadian Union of Skilled Workers was formed to meet the challenges of a new century and a new economy. So it's no surprise that our Constitution and structure differ from those of traditional unions. The founding Members of CUSW envisioned that *every* Member would play a role in the union, the workplace and in the communities in which we live, work and play. They reasoned *Members* would do more to drive organizational change than would the Union's legal framework.

That vision makes CUSW *stand out* as a 21st Century union.

During the 20th century, it was a given that employers and workers had competing interests. As a result, the workplace became a *battleground* for conflict between management's rights and workers' rights. Employers and workers fought over the profits of the enterprise. Employers wanted to maximize the profits and hold onto them.

Workers wanted a fair share for their contribution.

Tensions arose as they competed to divide what they both perceived as scarce resources. Today, the same attitudes still exist in many workplaces. Employers feel vulnerable. To deal with those feelings, they build management structures to defend their power. Workers, on the other hand, complain they have no voice. Nor do they feel they receive a fair share of the profits. So, they look to get greater financial benefits or more leisure time in return for their labour.

That's the environment CUSW workplace reps operate in.

It's not an easy place to be, especially when your fellow Members are counting on you to help create a safe and harmonious workplace. The workplace reps are well briefed about how they contribute to meeting those goals but they also rely heavily on the involvement and support of their fellow CUSW Members. As Members, we can support them best *if* our thinking is as modern as theirs. And, *if* we stand united with them.

Old thinking is the status quo in many workplaces even today.

The beliefs some employers hold about unions are still rooted in the 20th century. Some are even wary of CUSW's collaborative approach. They equate working together for the good of both parties with "letting the fox into the henhouse". Some even prefer a relationship that is based on conflict. That way they can view the workforce as the enemy and avoid engagement. Employers aren't the only ones to hold outdated attitudes. Resistance to change was expected from Members who came to CUSW from old style workplaces and trade unions.

Some did push back as CUSW Members brought new ideas to the workplace – things like working collaboratively *with* the employer and supporting value-added approaches. Some Members demanded that workplace representatives maintain a stance *against* employers. They did so under the belief that cooperating with employers was a sign of weakness. Or, because they couldn't imagine any other way.

The workplace can be a high-pressure environment on a day-to-day basis.

So, it's important that every CUSW Member understand why we need to put new thinking into practice. We're in agreement about our union model based on participation. Each one of us has a defined role. And we have a solid set of values and beliefs to guide us.

Let's use those tools to work in unity towards our common goal.

From the beginning, CUSW set out to become a union of knowledge workers. Why does CUSW make education and training one of our top priorities? And how do Members and Employers benefit?

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Chapter 13: The 20-20 Knowledge Worker

What's a 20-20 worker?

That term describes someone who is informed and aware of the world around them. In the 21st century, becoming a 20-20 worker isn't an option. It's a necessity to succeed in the workplace. From its beginnings, CUSW Members saw the need to ensure access to continuous education and training.

This was a new approach for a trade union.

But, the founders of CUSW believed it was the best way to prepare Members to participate in the new economy. Placing a high value on education and the pursuit of knowledge isn't a new idea. Philosophers made the link between education and freedom as far back as the 18th century. Over time, education and freedom became linked to the principles of democracy. Freedom came to mean freedom to take part in civil society.

The American statesman, Thomas Jefferson, made the point when he wrote: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be." Combining education with personal experience is the root to creating knowledge. Put another way, being a knowledge worker is all about the knowing.

Once again thought leaders arrived at *that* idea a long time ago.

During the Enlightenment, philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote: "We should not substitute books for personal experience because this does not teach us to reason; it teaches us to use other people's reasoning: it teaches us to believe a great deal but never to know anything." And yet, these ideas about knowledge and freedom got very little attention in the 20th century workplace.

Employers told industrial age workers what to do. Workers weren't asked to contribute their knowledge in the workplace. And as a result, we didn't! In fact, many employers in the days of the 20th Century Industrial Complex viewed workers as commodities. The workforce was just another resource that went into the production of goods or provision of services.

Sadly, some of these outdated attitudes still persist today.

Education and democracy are at the root of the public school systems in progressive nations. Educators today try to meet student needs in three domains: home and family, occupational and civic.

CUSW takes a similar approach.

Except, we focus on three *different* domains. The place where we work; the quality of the life we share with our families; and the civil and social society that surrounds us. CUSW encourages Members to contribute their knowledge to building our Union, our workplaces and our communities. The concepts that guide us include: reason, democracy, knowledge, personal experiences and education. We are ready to work with employers and with groups such as the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association and the Aboriginal Skilled Workers' Association. By working as partners, we can define industry needs going forward and ensure that our interests as workers are part of the solutions. To create a future for ourselves, and our families, we need to evolve into 20-20 workers.

Workers who are informed and aware of the world around us.

Let's take advantage of the education and training opportunities we have access to through our on-line university and our Training Trust Fund.

Let's make the 20-20 vision a reality.

CUSW made education and training a priority in its earliest days. Both continuing on, think about this: what steps did we take to lay the groundwork for the development of 20-20 workers? And how can you benefit from the education and training opportunities that are available now?

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Chapter 14: Setting the Stage for the 21st Century Worker

In its early days, the National Executive Board of the Canadian Union of Skilled Workers invited a small group of Members to take on a big challenge. They were asked to envision the knowledge worker for the 21st Century. Turning that vision into reality has taken a lot of effort and resolve. But the potential benefits for CUSW Members makes it all worthwhile.

The year: 1999

The place: Hamilton, Ontario.

The event: A meeting of 20 Members of the newly-formed Canadian Union of Skilled Workers.

The purpose: To come up with a plan to support the development of the knowledge worker for the 21st century.

The result: A clear path for the future of education and training for CUSW Members.

There's an old saying that a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. The first major step on the journey to create a CUSW education and training program was to establish a Training Trust Fund. Through the Trust, employers, governments and government agencies are able to contribute to the fund to help support Member education and training. Around the same time, CUSW also formed a national committee to coordinate the delivery of the education and training to CUSW Members.

Another major step involved creating a vision of a 21st century workforce.

Not just *any* workforce - but one that employers would want to engage with, to build the future for their companies. This was a high priority. CUSW Members believed that the old way of operating no longer applied in the new economy. The days when management would plan work and direct workers to carry it out were ending. In the 21st Century workplace, the skills and knowledge of workers would matter far more than their ability to follow direction.

Workers of value would innovate, not just do rote tasks.

Today, CUSW Members work together to design, fund and build education and training programs to benefit each other. The *Take The Lead* program, for example, gives Members the tools to put together action plans. *Take the Lead* also provides Members with the skills they need in order to effectively take part in both the Union *and* the workplace. And then of course we have our on-line university called Alliance Learning – a truly unique and leading-edge training resource.

The original Training Trust Agreement was based on an understanding that:

- Employers in the 21st Century would have different business interests; and that
- Worker skill sets would vary depending on the employer.

As a result, CUSW Members and employers would need to collaborate to develop customized education and training.

CUSW is now developing bargaining unit-level Education and Training *Participation Agreements* for this purpose. Using the agreements, Members and employers can work together to create Education and Training Plans. These plans reflect the actions the employer is taking to innovate and expand their business. Once workplace skill requirements are identified, they are included in the Education and Training Program.

This means that Members can see and participate in industry trends as they unfold. Members can then access the training they need and want in order to work in a chosen industry.

From its beginnings, CUSW set out to support knowledge workers. The self-directed worker envisioned in Hamilton in 1999 is a reality today. Now, it's up to every CUSW Member to maximize your education and training opportunities for success.

Today, skilled workers are an employer's most important asset. But, what are your important assets as a worker? What do you need to bring to the workplace today?

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Chapter 15: Membership and the Relationship to Work

A trend and a prediction started our union down a less-traveled path in 1999. Traditional trade unions created the trend by turning themselves into employment agencies. Economists, futurists and other thought leaders delivered the prediction. They said big changes were about to rock the world of work.

Let's explore how both of these events still exert an influence today.

CUSW's journey to becoming a 21st Century Union had a modest beginning. The first people to join were Members of a single bargaining unit who voted to leave a large mainstream union. They were casual workers who worked as needed on Ontario Hydro construction projects. Construction unions in North America had a long history of providing casual employees to companies and contractors. Most operated some variation of a Hiring Hall. They also looked after the welfare of their Members -- providing them with benefit plans, retirement programs and training. The model worked well for many years. And it proved to be adaptable as the world of work began to change.

About this time, new ideas about work and workers started to circulate.

The futurist Jeremy Rifkin talked about the revolution in technology and the need for a different kind of labour force. Robert Reich, an academic and former U.S. Secretary of Labour, also looked deep into the future of work. In his best-selling book, *The Work of Nations*, he wrote: "Each nation's primary assets will be its citizens' skills and insights." The Conference Board of Canada joined the discussion from our side of the border. In 1998, the Board predicted "contingent workers" would carry out 25 to 35 percent of the work performed in Canada. The term "contingent workers" covered supplemental workers, temporary workers and contractors. To meet the challenges of the new century, the Board said, societies would have to create skilled, adaptable workers.

So, the changing role of traditional trade unions and the changing world of work helped propel CUSW on its journey to becoming a 21st Century Union.

The construction union framework provided a solid vehicle: while the high octane insights into the future of work provided the fuel. Today, CUSW has become a union of workers that can respond to the opportunities of the 21st century. We represent workers in full time, part time and contingent worker relationships. We represent all workers in our bargaining units, not just traditional trades or specific job functions. We manage our own health benefits, retirement programs and other supports to Members and their families. And we do it in all provinces and territories across Canada and beyond. We can also provide hiring and referral of supplemental

workers and temporary workers. And groups of Members negotiate Collective Agreements and other employment contracts on behalf of their peers.

Our Union stands in contrast to traditional construction unions.

Many of them have chosen to evolve into employment agencies. Today, they still try to control work opportunities by managing monopolies. But, the 20th-century concept of a closed-shop monopoly is outdated. In the 21st century, workers are an employer's most valuable asset. The skills and insights you develop as a CUSW Member are attractive to businesses that want to thrive in the New Economy. Employers are starting to ask us to work as partners. And this trend will only grow.

Are you ready for success in the new world of work? If workers don't join unions, who protects their rights? And how do they get a say in the future of work?

When you join a union, you have legal rights. One of them is the right to participate in the workplace.

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Chapter 16: Continuing the Journey – Building the Path

In the late 20th century, a group of Canadian union Members were feeling the impact of change — in a *big* way. Change in the economy, in their sector, and in their workplace. Even their union was changing, in a way they didn't support.

So, they went looking for an alternative. And the rest, as they say, is history.

American unions started to adopt a business model late in the 20th century. Many of them acted like employment agencies, supplying workers to employers and collecting fees in return. This model eventually failed, for a simple reason: workers lost confidence in the entities that had been created by and for them!

They didn't think the unions provided them with a voice about the future of the workplace. So, they gave up their Memberships — *in droves*.

In 2013, *Time Magazine* reported that union Membership was at a *97-year low*. Only a little more than 11 percent of U.S. workers belonged to a union at that time. In the private sector, union Membership fell to 6.6 percent, down from 35 percent in the 1950s. *Time* also linked the decline in union Membership to rising levels of inequality and the concentration of wealth. Such high levels, the magazine said, last occurred just before the Great Depression.

Clearly, the moment was right for another union model to emerge.

In 1999, the Canadian Union of Skilled Workers was formed as an alternative to unions that left little or no room for Member participation. Labour laws in both Canada and the United States provide a legal framework for workers to make their voices heard.

But, here's the difficulty.

When workers don't support unions, rights that were won — sometimes *at a great cost* — lie *dormant*. *No one* benefits from them.

So, who is responsible for inequality in our society?

Perhaps, workers should look at themselves first, before they assign blame. Workers left unions because they felt they had no voice. But, they were also alienated because they didn't feel *connected* to their unions. It's easy for Members to view business-style unions as third-party service providers. Employers can use that gap to convince workers their union isn't providing them with any benefit.

We can stop this sabotage.

All it takes is *knowing* that our interests are served by working together *with* employers as a recognized body of workers with a voice. That's when we will *truly* have a say in the future of work.

How can we get there?

We can do it by engaging fully as Members of our union. We need to see ourselves *in the fabric* of CUSW. We need to look beyond short-term gain and self-gratification. And we have to question the status quo. A union that adopts a business model just to survive is built on shifting sand. A union built by and for its Members has a much more solid foundation. We know how to do it and we are doing it. We are building a union that responds to our needs. The solution to workplace conflict is to have workers, worker representatives and employers discuss issues of concern while in the workplace.

Would you believe a labour relations expert came to that conclusion more than a century ago?! Why then, did the concept of a “harmony of interests” fail to catch on? And what can we do, as CUSW Members, to take up the challenge today?

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Chapter 17: Harmony of Interests – Bridging the Divide

In the 19th century, violence interfered with relations between workers and employers. In the 20th Century, a Social Contract restored peace before it failed.

What will we see in the 21st-century?

Let's travel back to a street corner in 19th century Canada.

Trouble is brewing.

Striking workers are facing off against their employer's private police forces. In a flash, batons and clubs are flying. Workers and employers clashed often over workplace issues in the 19th century. And the cost to society was steep. Governments struggled to restore stability. Some employers tried to improve the situation. In the U.S., industrialist JD Rockefeller brought together employers and workers to discuss an idea called "harmony of interests". Rockefeller got help from a Canadian labour expert and future Canadian Prime Minister — William Lyon Mackenzie King.

Together, they reached a conclusion.

The way to solve workplace conflict, they believed, was to get elected employee representatives to sit down with managers for discussions on company time.

The year was 1913. More than 100 years later we're still having the same discussion.

In the 20th century, labour relations improved as a result of the shared belief that working together was better than waging war. Workers, employers and government came together in a Social Contract. This arrangement was supposed to ensure everyone would benefit from the success of business.

But, by the end of the 20th Century, the Social Contract was history.

About the same time, workers started to abandon unions en masse. With workers on the outside, the wealth created by the economy flowed to the very wealthy.

Why did the social contract fail?

Professor William Domhoff says the three parties never addressed the issues that divided them. Workers, Domhoff explained, turned to unions to protect them from wage cuts, unsafe working conditions and other threats to their welfare. Business owners don't like unions, he said, because owners need flexibility to stay competitive. So controlling labour costs, which are often

their biggest costs is important. Owners are also used to being in charge. They don't welcome push back from people they view only as employees rather than as breadwinners for families and fellow citizens.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms includes a legal framework that encourages workers and employers to come together. Recent decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada support the idea of workers and employers coming together to address issues. And that workers in Canada have the right to bargain collectively and to participate in the workplace.

We have won the right to voice in the workplace.

Now, we need to focus on the issues that divide workers, employers and government. We have to take responsibility for getting what we need to succeed from the workplace. Business owners need to move past their egos and fears that workers won't share their interests.

CUSW has built a framework to engage in these discussions.

Now, we need to seek out employers who share a belief in the harmony of interests. We can then work to build a better future in the workplace and in society as well.

In the 21st century workers will struggle for the right to participate in the workplace.

What worker and employer mindsets do we have to overcome in order to succeed?

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Chapter 18: Bringing the 21st Century Workplace to Life – Part 1

The popularity of unions has nose-dived in recent years. Members have left in great numbers even as employers continue to resist workers' rights.

Is this really a good time to build a new union?

In a word... yes!

But, it's time for a new concept of what a union can and should be. The union as an institution is in decline in North America. Members have walked away, convinced that unions don't reflect their reality, or meet their needs. Employers have also rejected unions for different reasons. They claim unions interfere with management's right to manage. And they say unions cost them profits.

So, on one side of the divide, you have workers who no longer see the value of participating in unions. On the other side, you have employers who want to discourage participation.

The result?

Companies enjoy greater profits. And workers miss out — both in the workplace and in the marketplace. Over time, we all lose out, as the gap between the rich and poor grows larger. This is the environment in which CUSW is building a 21st-century union.

We're moving ahead despite some big challenges.

Perhaps the most pressing challenge is the right to participate in the workplace. Academics and politicians agree that involving workers in the workplace is a good thing. They even have a term for it: industrial democracy.

Industrial democracy provides a sense of worth, freedom and participation. Those elements contribute to harmony and greater economic success. We also know that industrial democracy improves safety, increases productivity and enhances quality of life at work. Yet, not everyone buys the merits of industrial democracy. Many business owners have yet to recognize that workers are citizens too. Citizens who deserve the same privileges they enjoy when participating in society.

But then again, resistance from employers is nothing new.

The struggle for workers' rights has pitted employer against worker for a hundred years. It won't be easy for them to turn the page.

As workers, we have to embrace the idea that contributing to the employer's success is contributing to our *own success*.

CUSW is bringing a new approach to the workplace that reinforces the idea of industrial democracy. Our Constitution and structure provide for Member participation in the union, the workplace and in our communities. As union Members, we act in concert with a set of standards and beliefs, inside and outside of the workplace. We view our stakeholders as part of the fabric of our union. And we include employers among those stakeholders.

We are ready for a leadership role and we have a right to it.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms affirms the rights of unions to participate in the workplace. And, so does the Supreme Court.

We have a vision of a better future for our Members and our families, and for the future of work. We have cleared a path using the tools of education, skills training and an understanding of the world around us.

We're ready for the transition to the 21st Century workplace.

The roles of both workers and managers will change and expand in the 21st Century workplace.

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Chapter 19: Bringing the 21st Century Workplace to Life – Part 2

The line that separates the responsibilities of managers and workers in the modern workplace is getting blurry. And that trend is expected to increase as both managers and workers take on wider roles.

The future is here. The 21st Century workplace is a reality.

The way work is organized and managed is changing at different rates in different places. But CUSW Members everywhere are well positioned to take on greater challenges. When we set out to build CUSW in 1999, we knew we had to change our thinking about the role of the worker in the modern workplace. We had to move from a reactive to a proactive mindset. And, we had to work together as CUSW Members to set goals and make the transition.

We also had to take into consideration the environment around us.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, management focused on ways to increase productivity and profits. Human resources management emerged as a field to coordinate new systems for getting things done. An American mechanical engineer came up with the *Scientific Management System* to increase efficiency. To follow it, managers broke jobs down into small parts that could be analyzed and controlled. The system made production managers powerful. But workers didn't like it and conflict soon followed.

In the 1970s, new management techniques emerged such as *continuous improvement* initiatives. These systems encouraged managers to *help* people do things, rather than *make* people do things. The model of the 21st Century worker reflects this shift, along with another change - The rise of the Knowledge Worker around the turn of the century. Managers noticed that innovation and productivity increased when knowledge workers contributed ideas. And the level of worker engagement rose too.

So, it was out with the *Scientific Management system* and the negative effects associated with it.

The model of *helping* people do things, rather than *making* them do things, is still current. Underlying that thinking are five management ideas.

First: management is for everyone.

As education levels rise and information technology accelerates, everyone has to have management skills.

Second: management is for learners.

Everyone is a learner in the knowledge economy. The manager's key task then is to promote learning.

Third: management is based on communicating.

People are taking on more responsibility for activities such as decision-making and problem-solving. And that situation makes good communication critical.

Fourth: management is about change.

Managing change has become business as usual. Managers today are change agents whose job it is to guide everyone to *embrace* change.

And fifth: management is broad-based.

The scope of management is growing. Managers, today, need to be expert in diversity, facilitation, organizational development and more. The role of the worker is expanding right alongside the role of the manager.

The same thing is happening within CUSW. If you're elected as a workplace steward, for example, your duties will include similar expert roles that require good interpersonal skills.

Change in the workplace is happening with dizzying speed.

As a CUSW Member, you can be confident that you're well supported to take on your role.

But that's not the end of the challenges. The next one will be to ensure we all have the tools we need to be successful.

The adventure continues... and we are excited for the future of CUSW Members and employers!

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