Productivity: A Workplace Perspective and Another Award for CPRN

Friday, June 7, 2002 – Productivity measures the value of what we produce in relation to what it costs us to produce it. An economy's productivity is an indication of its robustness and a good indicator of the standard of living it can support.

Productivity is most often assessed at the aggregate or economy-wide level. We talk about the effects of technological change, the computer revolution, workers' rising education levels, and the impact of free trade on economic productivity in general. But the place where these changes take effect is, of course, the workplace. So, the capacity of specific workplaces to embrace productivity-enhancing change is also an important variable.

What is the link between workplace practices and productivity? For example, how does the quality of employment realtionships affect productivity? Or, what role does job design play?

Questions like these drive a new paper from CPRN's Work Network.

In ***Rethinking Productivity From A Workplace Perspective***, Morley Gunderson of the Centre for Industrial Relations at the University of Toronto uses an interdisciplinary approach to focus on two interrelated issues:

1) The impact of workplace practices on various outcomes, especially related to productivity, firm performance, competitiveness and innovation as they affect organizational performance.
2) Barriers to the adoption and diffusion of "best" workplace practices.

Gunderson finds that workplace practices like employee involvement, pay for performance, compressed workweeks and flexitime, work sharing and job sharing, multi-skill training, diversity management and workplace well-being programs have positive effects on employees, which in turn positively affects firm performance, productivity and competitiveness. He also makes recommendations with regard to appropriate policy intervention and further research.

You can access or download a copy of his report by clicking here.

Judith Maxwell Receives Award for Public Service

The Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada has awarded CPRN's President, Judith Maxwell, its Public Service Citation for 2002.

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This prestigious honour is given to “an individual who is neither a public servant nor a Member of Parliament who has made an outstanding contribution to the Public Service or contributed to a better understanding of the Public Service.”

Mrs. Maxwell receives the award in recognition of her roles as a policy advisor, advocate of citizen engagement, supporter of interchange between the public and private sectors, as a tireless pubic speaker on the positive role governments play in the lives of Canadians, as a knowledge broker helping to bridge the worlds of policy research with those of the public service, voluntary sector and private sector, and as an active communicator and disseminator of research results to a wider public.

All of us a CPRN are proud to be her colleagues.

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