



The Truth About Middle Managers: Who They Are, How They Work, Why They Matter

By Paul Osterman

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"Middle management" is a term associated with relentless downsizing, corporate drudgery, and career dead-ends. Bashed by management gurus, dismissed by social scientists, and painted as victims by the media, middle managers seem permanently relegated to the sidelines of corporate power.

But is this popular picture accurate? Are middle managers really no longer valued by today's performance-driven organizations?

The truth is surprising. MIT management scholar Paul Osterman has analyzed over thirty years' worth of employment data, interviewed a wide sample of managers, and uncovered a very different picture of middle managers today. Not only have their numbers increased dramatically, but middle managers are wealthier, more productive, more autonomous--and they gain real pleasure from their day-to-day work.

But there's another side to the story: while managers have maintained their commitment to their tasks and to their colleagues, they are increasingly cynical and distant from their organizations. They are confused about their future and how to manage their careers. This comes at a time when the value of middle management is much greater than ever before. Organizations must rethink their understanding of this vital workforce segment--now.

Understand the issues for yourself with The Truth About Middle Managers' refreshing and counter-intuitive look at what's really going on.

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Review

"Mr. Osterman shows how profoundly the work life of the middle manager has changed in the past couple of decades." --WSJ.com

"The Truth About Middle Managers, offers some illuminating insights about managers' value...The result is that The Truth About Middle Managers doubles as a scholarly work and an oral history of today's Organization Man." --BusinessWeek

About the Author

Paul Osterman is Professor of Human Resources and Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management, where he recently also served as Deputy Dean. He has published nine books and numerous journal articles on organizational change, economic development, and public policy.

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