

W.L. Gore & Associates

The Best Place to Work

An Investigation by Dr Peter Troxler

History

- Founded 1958 - Insulated Wire
- 1961 first plant
- 1965 presence in Germany
- 1967 presence in Scotland: Dunfermline
- 1969 Japan (license)
- 1971 GORE-TEX™
- 1996 : 89 US Patents issued to Gore

Distinctions

- 1984 Gore appears in the US "100 Best Companies to Work For"
- 2002 Gore appears in the UK "100 Best Companies to Work For"
- 2002 Gore is #9 on the list of "Italy's 35 Best Places to Work For"
- 2003 Gore is #26 of the "50 Best Places to Work For" in Germany
- 2004 Gore is #12 on Fortune's "100 Best Companies to Work For"

Distinctions

- 2004 Gore is again among the "50 Best Places to Work For" in Germany
- 2004 Gore is #1 of the "100 Best Companies to Work For" in the UK
- 2004 Gore is "America's Most Innovative Company" (Fast Company Magazine)
- 2005 Gore is #2 on U.S. "100 Best Companies to Work For" list

Why?

- “Our associates are what differentiate Gore as an enterprise and fuel our growth. Their knowledge, expertise, talents, creativity and hard work are what lead to unique, valuable and profitable products. It is for this reason that attracting, growing, energizing and retaining the best talent is critical to our success.”

Chuck Carroll, President W.L.Gore & Associates

Bill Gore - Du Pont

- Bill Gore used to work for Du Pont
 - Rigid chain of command
 - Slow decision making
 - Blocks the flow of ideas
- “To build an organisation where people’s pay and career path are not decided by traditional managers”

Culture

- Fundamental Beliefs
- Core Values
- Practices
- Environment

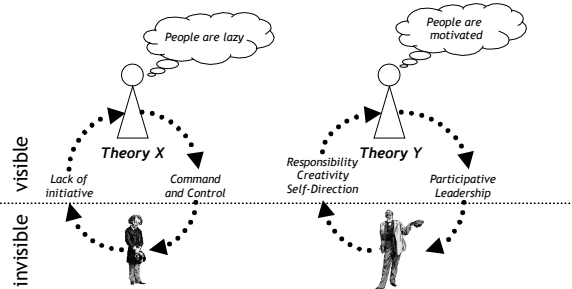
Culture

- Fundamental Beliefs
 - We’re in this for the long term
 - Each individual has potential
 - Know and trust each other
 - We’re all in the same boat

Culture

- Core Values
 - Fairness to each other and everyone with whom we come in contact
 - Freedom to encourage, help, and allow other associates to grow in knowledge, skills, and scope of responsibility
 - Commitment - make and keep
 - Consultation with other associates before undertaking actions that could impact the reputation of the company

Douglas McGregor The Human Side of Enterprise



How?

- Practices
 - Leadership
 - Pay
 - Personnel Development
 - Selection

Leadership

- Leaders may be appointed, but are defined by 'followership'. More often, leaders emerge naturally by demonstrating special knowledge, skill, or experience that advances a business objective.

Pay

- Associates are paid according to their contribution
- The contribution is assessed by their peers & 'customers' and then translated into compensation by a committee
- The mechanism is transparent, the information withing the mechanism are kept secret
- Associate Share Owner Plan
- Economic Value Added

Personnel Development

- Not linked to pay
- Sponsor: "With the guidance of their sponsors (not bosses) and a growing understanding of opportunities and team objectives, associates commit to projects that match their skills. This takes place in an environment that combines freedom with cooperation and autonomy with synergy."

Selection

- "Gore is not for everybody"
- 3-4 visits & interview session
- Integration takes 6-12 months and is allowed to take 6-12 months
- Staff turnover below 5 % over the last 15 years (which includes closing down the Dunfermline plant)

Sources:

- www.gore.com
- BBC Radio 4, 27.07.2004 - Nice Work: Power <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/> search for the "Nice Work" series and the Power programme (27.07.2004)