

## A world without rules

On the cover of a flyer that announces a Seminar, the word 'rules' caught my eye — rule fanatic as I am — and I read the sentence:

Free your organization from more management and rules, get out of the spiral.

I opened the flyer and read on. A Management Guru, Professor in Knowledge Management, a 'Chief Emotions Officer', and a number of experienced customers would teach me how a company can profit from improved productivity and reduced costs, with fewer rules and more craftsmanship.

Wow, I need to know more about this! In my profession I always see organizations that create more rules to improve productivity and reduce costs. So I read on:

Organizations want to control everything. They rather work with laymen that follow the procedures and protocols, than with craftsmen that are able to reason for themselves. Everything is put into formats, procedures, rules, and competence models ...

Exactly, this is what I encounter when I am talking with clients.

..., even people.

No, you can't blame me for that.... But I read on:

Without craftsmanship, measuring performance and expressing performance in numbers is becoming more and more important.

Yes, indeed, even the effects of an improved management of rules has to be measured, and that is far from trivial. I try to imagine a world without rules: *"I enter a bank to apply for a new loan; I have a good chat with the bank employee; he looks deep into my eyes, and my loan application is approved."* In this world without rules I probably have another profession.

And I wonder if this world would be a fair world, respecting equality of rights. Would this world end like the 'state of nature' described by the philosopher Thomas Hobbes: '...a state without civil government, ... in a war of all against all in which life is hardly worth living'? Or will the dream of his counterpart Jean-Jacques Rousseau be realized?

The question 'In what **re**organization do you currently work?' will not surprise anybody. We keep on trying to improve our rules and we should even care much more. Only then we can discover that some rules can be simplified and that fewer rules with higher quality may lead to the same, or even better, results.

But a world without rules.... I cannot imagine.



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