

Toward a More Thoughtful Independence Day!

A few weeks ago in **FlexBulletin #69: True Flex – The Quest for Control**, we wrote of the manager and the organization's clear desire for control as flexibility is designed and deployed. It is worth underscoring today – on this uniquely American holiday – the deep-seated need employees have for control in their forms of flexibility.

- The political form of independence described in the **Declaration** is not the same as the desire for personal liberty that undergirds flexibility; but they share common roots
- The solutions outlined in the **Declaration** are not flexible schedules; but they do offer some principles that apply to highly effective forms of flex.
- Last year we applied some of the **Declaration's** general principles to initiative design (see **FlexBulletin #51: Flex and Independence Day.**)
- In this holiday-shortened issue, we apply some of the key Independence concepts to our growing flexible population. First a few words from that seminal, and inspiring document.

Declaration of Independence

Adopted by Congress on July 4, 1776

(The original spelling and capitalization of this partial text have been retained.)

The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security...

KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE DECLARATION suggest ways to design high-control flexibility

Surveys and focus groups did not precede the framing of the **Declaration** – for better or worse. But from the beginning of the republic, and among millions of our citizens, we envision a sturdy independence a desirable goal at the heart of our common life. We admire work that doesn't "tie us down." We marched excitedly from the regimen of elementary school to the far greater freedom of college. And for the last decade technology and a popular movement have begun a great shift in where when and how we work.

THE BEST-KNOWN PRINCIPLES OF THE DECLARATION point to a continuing set of design standards that bring greater flex to flex

- ◆ **All men [people] are created equal** If any principle defines a broad swath of American life, it is the notion of “the same thing for everyone.” The greatest possible flexibility is a function of the greatest possible access, often regardless of form. Once flexibility has established a beachhead, the struggle to extend true equal opportunity is like our long battle for equality.
- ◆ **They are endowed with inalienable rights that include life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness** For decades flexibility initiatives have wrestled with the “problem called entitlement” – perhaps described here as “*the inalienable right to liberty...and the pursuit of happiness.*” Our strong rights tradition encourages a degree of entitlement which is rarely supported in organizations. This will be an area for continuing evolution in the years ahead.
- ◆ **Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed** No principle of the Declaration offers a more striking contrast between our political and business cultures. We expect our governmental leaders to be responsive, and ultimately accountable to us. Many employees expect the same of their business leaders. But in our world of opposite pyramids, business leaders are not expected to consent on these issues. Employees seek this kind of control, but cannot expect it.
- ◆ **When government is destructive of these ends, abolition and new forms are in order** The desire for flexibility has not – and may not ever – reach the level of importance to employees that they will turn to the forms of influence envisioned here. If they do, urgency may lead to steps like demonstrations, sit-ins and a range of social media techniques.
- ◆ **History shows that people are “more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable” than to act** For two decades, the demand for flexibility has greatly exceeded the supply. Millions have survived, but on the whole they have suffered rather than acted. It is likely that employees will tolerate less and insist on more flexibility in the years ahead.

The Phrase “All People are Created Equal” May One Day Apply to Flexibility

Collaborative or Co Scheduling is a comprehensive, innovative approach to flexibility that offers diverse and powerful features for organizations seeking a broader and more robust form of flexibility. As with any new model, it comes with core features and optional elements. Co Scheduling is a customizable approach. If all or part of this system could meet your needs, we would enjoy discussing the possibilities with you.

[Bulletin #68 – Unveiling Co Scheduling – New Flex in Pictures](#)

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