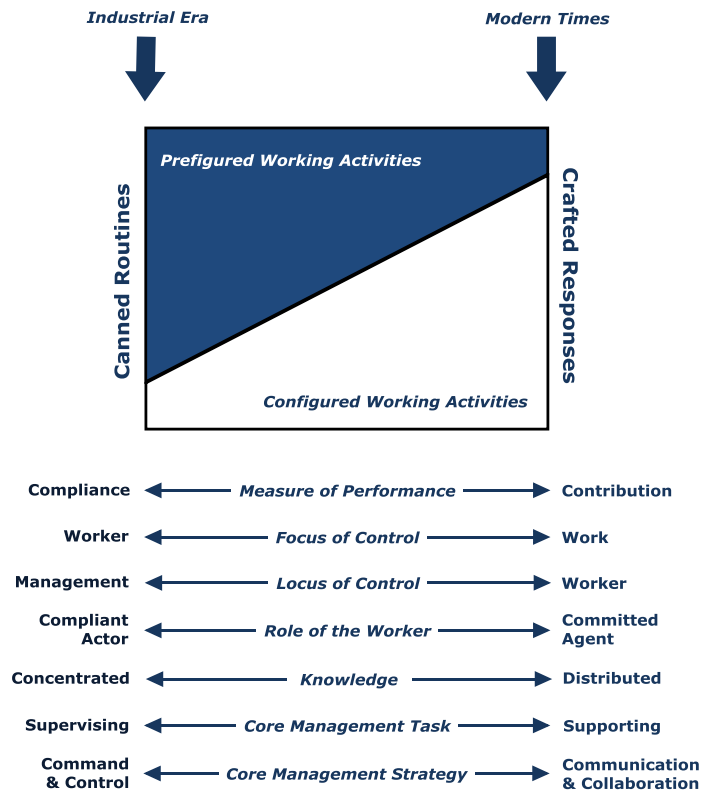


Tools for Knowledge Workers

The Mix of Work



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Everyone’s job is some mix of prefigured or canned routines and responses configured or crafted to fit the circumstances at hand. These two pose very different management challenges. In the industrial era most work consisted of prefigured routines. In modern times the work of many people consists mainly of configured responses. What Peter Drucker called “the shift to knowledge work” was actually a shift from prefigured to configured working activities. The base of work shifted from materials to information. This shifted the locus of interactions from materials to information and people. The nature of those interactions shifted from linear to non-linear. Many of the behaviors of interest shifted from overt to covert and, consequently, the visibility of working activities shifted from high to low. The gist of all this is that many practices admirably suited to managing industrial era work are ineffective and even dysfunctional when applied to modern era work. For more about the shift from prefigured to configured working activities and the implications of that shift click [here](#).

