

THE KNOWLEDGE WORKER & THE FUTURE SKILL DEMANDS OF THE US WORKFORCE

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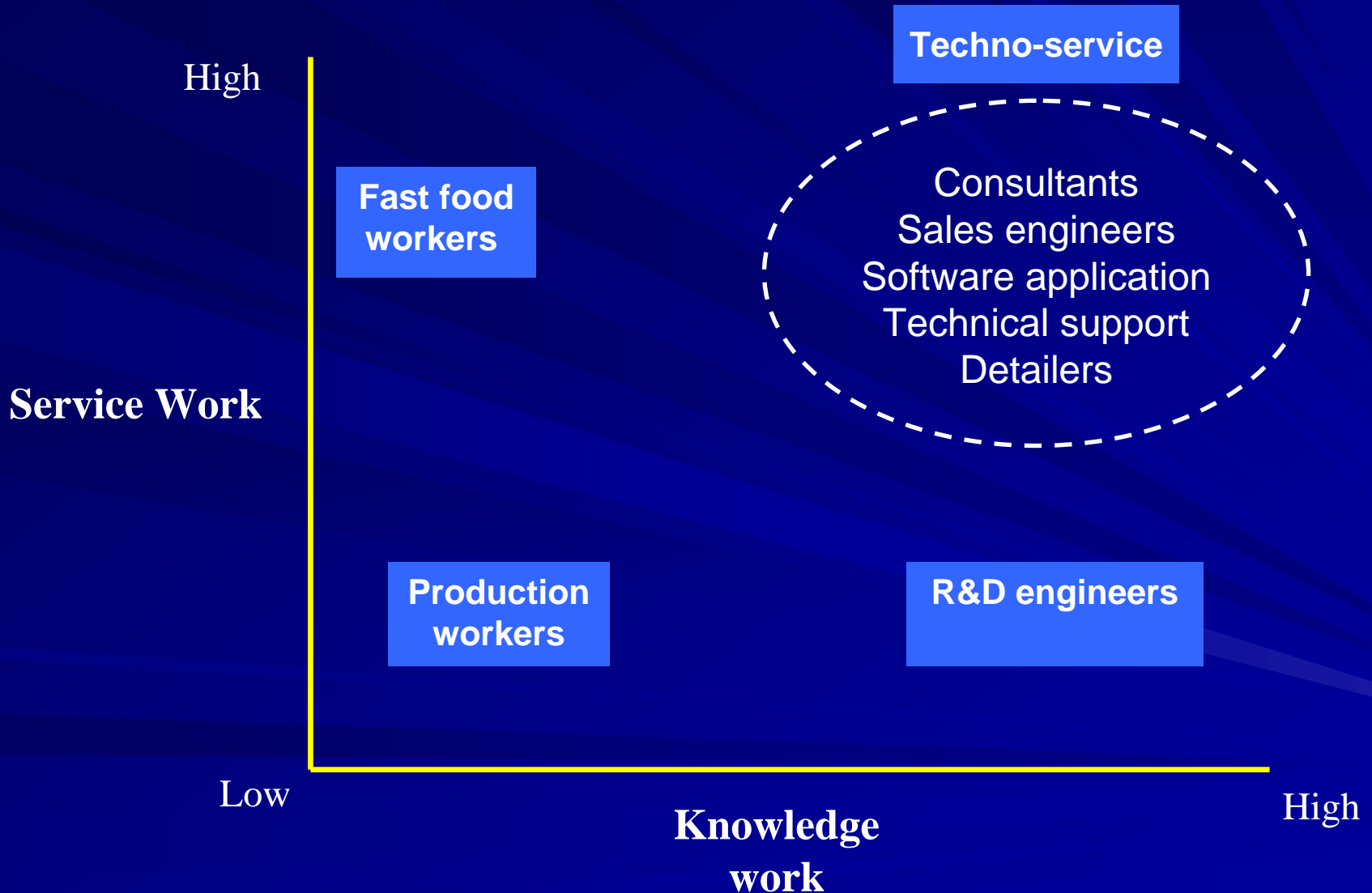
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Knowledge work in the sociology of work practice

- **What types of knowledge are important in knowledge work?**
- **How is knowledge stored?**
- **What is done with knowledge?**
- **How are knowledge workers coordinated and controlled?**

Figure 2: Occupational Typology Based on Service & Knowledge Elements



Selling Technology

- Ethnographic study of technical sales
- Focus on real-time computing
- A comparative design (emergent and standard technology)
- Interviews and observations at trade shows

Main Theoretical Implications

- Blurring of boundaries separating design, production and sales
- Rise of a highly skilled sales sector
- Blurring of cultural distinctions between social and technical skills
- The emergence of new forms of sales networks and new control mechanisms

Blurring of Boundaries Separating Design, Production and Sales

- Technical experts who were buffered from market exigencies, today serve as front-line workers
- Clients are allowed to influence the design process
- Shift of emphasis from design and manufacturing to sales

Blurring of Cultural Distinctions between Service and Technical Skills

- Sales engineers combine knowledge and service work in their daily practice
- Social and interactive skills are intertwined with technical skills
- In daily practice, a distinction between social and technical skills has little analytic value

Implications for Educational Programs

- Teaching interactive social skills and a service orientation
- Creating technological dialogues and teaching technical-interview skills
- Integrating customization processes
- Preparing engineers for shifting career patterns
- Enhancing ties within the professional community and across educational institutions
- Improving exposure to global engineering education
- Strengthening managerial skills of global customization projects