



## Gudela Grote

*The Revival of the American Dream\_Job Crafting and Independent Careers in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Organizations*

### **Biography**

Gudela Grote has been full Professor of Work and Organizational Psychology at the Department of Management, Technology, and Economics since 2000. Before she was Assistant Professor (since 1992) and Associate Professor (since 1997) at the ETH Zurich. Prof. Grote was born on 4 December 1960 in Wiesbaden, Germany. She studied psychology at the University of Marburg and at the Technical University in Berlin. She was a Ph.D. student from 1984 to 1987 at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, and received her doctorate there with a dissertation on the situational specificity and consistency of achievement motivation. Since 1988 she has continued her research at the ETH Zurich. The main objective of her research is to provide psychologically based concepts and methods for integrative job and organizational design, taking into consideration the changing technological economic and societal demands and opportunities. Application fields for Prof. Grote's research are teamwork and standardization in high-risk systems, management of the psychological contract, career development, effects of new technologies on work processes, and collaborative planning within an between organizations.

### **Summary of the conference**

The work people do strongly influence their quality of life and well-being. While the design of jobs long has been considered a top-down activity performed by experts in organization and human resources, more recently the proactivity of the workers themselves has been stressed. The notion of job crafting calls on employees to design their own jobs according to their abilities, needs and interests. Concepts of career self-management imply that the design of whole careers is each person's own responsibility. The main argument supporting these shifts is the changing nature of work itself. In particular, knowledge work requires people to act more

autonomously in response to higher levels of complexity and uncertainty. Greater autonomy is also to be used to craft jobs that will increase employability and support self-directed career development across organizational and occupational boundaries. However, possible dangers of over-relying on individual agency also need to be addressed. These dangers concern lack of personal or situational resources required for individual proactivity, but also problems evolving from individuals disregarding interdependencies with others in the pursuit of their personal goals. Idiosyncratic deals or "i-deals", for instance, which entail bargaining between individual workers and their employer, may run counter to fulfilling interdependent work tasks or may subvert collective bargaining agreements. Possible means to support individual agency without overcharging individuals or violating collective commitments are seen in consciously managing psychological contracts, that is the reciprocal expectations and offers between employee and employer.