



# CUTTINGS...

Number 120 December 2015

Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

Welcome to Cuttings 120 and greetings for the upcoming holiday season - which ever one you are about to celebrate.

To fit in the usual bumper crop of Snippets, three short feature articles this time - one set of thoughts on manning virtual teams; one on dispelling one of the major myths about Millennials or Generation Y; and one taking a lesson from a jazz master on letting people learn and grow by getting out of their way.

I hope you enjoy this collection of recent writings from the business press around the world that has crossed my path in the last couple of months... I am amazed that it has been 25 years since the first edition of Cuttings in October 1990 - there have been a lot of thought provoking ideas in that time - and a lot that have stayed the same!

Best wishes for 2016 and beyond.

*Geof Cox*

## Get out of the way when your people are learning

This Herbie Hancock comment from his new memoir Possibilities is quoted by John Baldoni in a recent newsletter. I have often promoted jazz as an alternative metaphor to the orchestra leader when discussing modern day leadership, so these two stories from the legendary keyboard player resonate with me.

In one story, Hancock - as an up and coming player - got an invitation to audition with Miles Davis at his house. Hancock met the band and Miles played for a few minutes then he threw down his trumpet and went upstairs. And after a few days of doing the same, Davis invited Hancock to record with his band.

Hancock says that he learned years later that Davis's disappearing act was on purpose. Knowing that young musicians could be intimidated by his presence he went upstairs to listen to the playing via his intercom.

Another lesson about Miles Davis was his gift of teaching. He would seldom give musicians a complete answer when they questioned him about something. His strategy was to let the musicians learn by themselves or with the band. Hancock reflects that when you learn

## In this edition

**Get out of the way when your people are learning.** Herbie Hancock's advice to managers following his long career as a jazz great.

**What's the best way to manage a virtual team?** Some thoughts on virtual team working.

**Generation Y play the long game.** It seems they are not as opportunist as they are painted.

The **2016 Public Courses** in Kuala Lumpur and a bumper collection of **Snippets** to provoke your thinking and reflecting over the holiday season.

## Snippets

*A collection of thought provokers and quotations...*

"The most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and to let it come in." *Morrie Schwartz*

"Give me a place to stand, and I shall move the world." *Archimedes*

"Life is the distance between dreams and reality." *Leonid S. Sukhorukov*

"It is the eye which makes the horizon." *Emerson*

"We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now." *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

"Take everything you like seriously, except yourself." *Rudyard Kipling*

something on your own you remember it better.

What managers can learn from these stories is that those new to a team need to be given a certain amount of leeway to show what they can do. If the boss is always hanging around, looking over their shoulder, he or she may undermine the employee's confidence. Or the boss may set themselves up as the hands-on tutor ready, willing and able to answer all questions - and not allow the new team member to learn. "If you want your people to grow and develop sometimes the best thing to do is to back off."

## USEFUL LINKS

**Click here** to go to John Baldoni's website and access his writings

**Click here** to download my article on *Jazz - the new metaphor*

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# What is the Best Way to Manage a Virtual Team?

Virtual teams operate in similar ways to traditional teams, but with one very significant difference – communication. Here, instead of being able to use face-to-face exchanges, they have to rely on technology enabled channels such as telephone, e-mail, text-message, tele- and video-conferencing. Performing well in this kind of situation means that team leaders and members must pay greater attention to a number of factors:

Virtual Team leaders need to:	Virtual Team members need to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have clear work rules and protocols</li><li>• Pay attention to setting and updating individual and team goals</li><li>• Set performance targets and standards</li><li>• Build trust and collaboration opportunities</li><li>• Be emotionally intelligent</li><li>• Be a clear and open communicator</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be self-motivated</li><li>• Take initiative without prompting</li><li>• Be able to work independently</li><li>• Be able to keep working effectively without much external control or structure</li><li>• Be strongly result-oriented</li><li>• Be clear and open communicators</li></ul>

Not every leader is equipped to manage a virtual team. He or she must be good at communicating, fostering trust and building relationships. This is rarely a job for quiet and passive types as most virtual teams need very active leadership to make them feel like a team. Virtual teams need much more coordination effort by the leader.

Not everyone is suited to working virtually. They need to be happy to work well under their own steam, be able to take initiative without being pushed to do so, and be more resourceful to get things done.

"Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together."  
*Vista M. Kelly*

"Love doesn't make the world go 'round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile."  
*Franklin P. Jones*

"You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."  
*Kahlil Gibran*

"Time of stress and difficulty are seasons of opportunity when the seeds of progress are sown."  
*Thomas F. Woodlock*

"Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards."  
*Soren Kierkegaard*

"It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed."  
*Napoleon Hill*

"If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves."  
*Thomas Edison*

"The next best thing to knowing something is to know where to find it."  
*Samuel Johnson*

"If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we are not really living. Growth demands a temporary surrender of security."  
*Gail Sheehy*

"There is no such thing as over-appreciation. The more appreciated an employee feels, the higher their work engagement is likely to be."  
*Charlotte Crisp, University of Johannesburg*

"One can live magnificently in this world if one knows how to work and how to love."  
*Leo Tolstoy*

Virtual teams need more collaboration and coordination - they have to agree overall goals and targets and then work individually to achieve them. Team-members need to know exactly who they will be collaborating with and how.

Even the most high-performing virtual teams can be undermined by poor technology. It is extremely important to think about all the collaborative and coordination-based technology that may be needed and then be sure that everyone has access to it.

But beware! However good the set up, no virtual team can be left in their separate locations for too long. It is critical that you bring the team together in person every so often to allow people to meet in person and deepen relationships.

## USEFUL LINKS

**Click here** to read the full article by Dr. Jon Warner in the blog *Ready to Manage*

New Directions provides consultancy and training in team working, including working in Virtual and remote Teams. **Click here** for more information on our consultancy and training services.

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## Generation Y play the long game

In a recent article, Jennifer J. Deal and Alec Levenson dispel one of the myths of the itinerant millennial - that they jump ship at any opportunity. In fact, they show that they change jobs less frequently than the previous Gen Xers did at the same age.

In their study of 25,000 millennials in 22 countries Deal and Levenson found many are perfectly willing — even eager — to stay in their job. In fact, in all countries (except Singapore), at least 40 percent of millennials see themselves staying at their current organisation for a minimum of nine years. Whilst the same is also true for Gen Xers and the remaining baby boomers, it's an important finding, given Gen Y's reputation for opportunism.

However, when looking further into the statistics, it is clear that loyalty isn't driving them to stay, nor is lack of loyalty driving them to go. Their motivations, instead, are deeply rooted in the economic and social conditions that have shaped their youth and early adulthood. They grew up or entered the workforce during the recession. They saw their friends, colleagues, or parents lose their jobs, or a substantial portion of their retirement savings. Gen Yers are also entering the workforce with huge levels of student loan debt. So, 84% of respondents report being worried about ensuring financial stability, and 56 percent feel stress about paying down their debt.

As a result, many Gen Yers are focused on finding a job that is stable and that pays well enough that they can cover their bills and save. Once they find that, they would prefer to stay put. A different job may be

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do."

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

"The level of consciousness of an organisation cannot exceed the level of consciousness of its leader"

*Frederic Laloux*

"Don't hurry, don't worry. You're only here for a short visit. So be sure to stop and smell the flowers."

*Walter Hagen*

"I always try to believe the best of everybody - it saves so much trouble."

*Rudyard Kipling*

"We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations."

*Charles R Swindoll*

"In daily life we must see that it is not happiness that makes us grateful, but gratefulness that makes us happy."

*David Steindl-Rast*

"Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought."

*Albert Szent-Gyorgyi*

"I take it we are all in complete agreement on the decision here. ... Then I propose we postpone further discussion of this matter until our next meeting to give ourselves time to develop disagreement and perhaps gain some understanding of what the decision is all about."

*General Motors CEO, Alfred P. Sloan Jr. at the end of one board meeting,*

"Education is what survives when what has been learnt has been forgotten."

*BF Skinner*

"Experience is the name everybody gives to their mistakes."

*Oscar Wilde*

more exciting, but that doesn't mean they think it is in their best long-term interest - they believe work-life integration is easier to attain when you stay with one organisation.

Flexibility also matters: Gen Yers have come of age during a time when dual-career couples and single-parent households are common. As a result, they are entering a workforce wanting to manage their work and personal lives so neither suffers. 95% want the option to occasionally work from home or outside the office.

So, Gen Yers don't want to job-hop — but they will if they believe that their current position puts their financial stability at risk, or if their work-life balance is out of balance. In the survey, the Gen Yers who said they wanted to stay were also looking for another job. It's time for company leaders to get to know them, and ensure the organisation is prepared to meet their needs.

### USEFUL LINKS

**Click here** to read the full article in *Strategy+Business*

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"Leaders are often limited by selective perception and seek information that confirms what they wish to believe. Most don't ask tough questions because they filter out signals that don't fit their mental models.

*Paul J.H. Schoemaker & Steven Krupp*

"Education has produced a vast population able to read, but unable to distinguish what is worth reading."

*G M Trevelyn*

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

*Booker T. Washington*

"Get out of the way when your people are learning"

*Herbie Hancock*

## Cuttings

**Cuttings** is free to subscribers, and has been published continuously for more than 25 years by *New Directions Ltd*, an international network of consultants and trainers who work together to learn, research, design and provide consulting and training in individual, management, and organisation development.

New Directions is also a partner in the European consulting organisation *Learning Consortium* who are the providers of one of the leading personal development courses in interpersonal skills, *Focus on Influence*.

### USEFUL LINKS

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[Learning Consortium website](#)

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A 4 day course in strategic human resource management for the oil and gas sector.

**Kuala Lumpur** 18-21 October

### International O&G Executive Programme

An intensive 5 day workshop in strategic management for the Oil and Gas industry.

**Kuala Lumpur** 24-28 October

### USEFUL LINKS

**New Directions consultancy and training services**