



CUTTINGS...

Number 135 June 2018

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Welcome to Cuttings edition number 135.

This time a couple of recent blogs have caught my eye - one on applying the principles of real teams developed by Jon Katzenbach and the other on the differing approaches to customer service (and the different results) in Asian and Western companies.

Some light, early summer reading and reflection!!
Enjoy

Geof Cox

In this edition

Unlocking the potential of diverse teams - applying the principles of 'real teams' first proposed by Jon Katzenbach.

Customer experiences - what are Asian companies more successful?

GDPR - a short advisory on the database for this newsletter and your information

Plus details of **2018 Public Courses, Book Sales, and Snippets** to further provoke your thinking and reflection

Unlocking the Potential of Diverse Teams

Reid Carpenter and Marvin Mendoza work as part of PwC's people and organisation practice and co-authored a recent blog in strategy+business on this subject.

It is clear from research that diversity and inclusion are important attributes for high-performing businesses. But operating a diverse organisation has a major challenge: communication is more difficult due to variance in language, cultural expectations, values, and assumptions. As a result, people may take longer to come to a conclusion or make decisions, problem solving is more complex and tedious, and people may shy away from speaking up and engaging fully.

So, how do we encourage people to reveal diversity by bringing their whole selves and identities to work? And how do we equip them to work well together? The answer - according to the authors - lies in applying the 'real team' principles first defined in Jon Katzenbach's book *The Wisdom of Teams*. The criteria he expounds have a significant role in creating an environment that celebrates diversity and fosters inclusion:

A common purpose. The fundamental question for the team's existence: "What is the one thing this and only this team can accomplish together?". Conversations on this question will create opportunities to direct team members' focus toward their shared work and goals. Without a common purpose there is no collaborative effort and no acceptance of the need for the diverse membership.

Complementary skills. How do the members use the diversity of thought and experience and their complementary skills to solve a problem. Successful real teams chose members for their relevant skills, not for their positions in a hierarchy — so, the right mix of technical/functional expertise, as well as

Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations...

"People take different roads seeking fulfilment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost."

HH Dalai Lama

"I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions."

Stephen Covey

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty"

Sir Winston Churchill

"You only begin to understand culture when you try to change it"

Ed Schein

"Dear optimist, pessimist, and realist - while you guys were busy arguing about the glass of wine, I drank it! Sincerely, the opportunist!"

Lori Greiner

"I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow."

Woodrow Wilson

problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills. Each member brings a distinctive set of ideas to the table, especially where the wider system is represented and the greater the diversity.

Shared leadership. When team members are selected based on their complementary skills for a specific purpose, leadership can shift from one member of the team to another, depending on the situation. This 'eval team' feature automatically encourages diversity and inclusion as the team members utilise their diverse backgrounds and skills to focus on the range of issues faced by the team.

Shared performance goals and mutual accountability. Committing to both shared performance goals and mutual accountability means that every team member owns responsibility for the success or failure of the team, encourages emotional commitment by each team member, and motivates every individual to participate fully. In a team with mutual accountability, everyone shares the responsibility to make sure the best ideas are heard. If one part of a team feels more ownership of the team's potential success or failure, they may also feel that it is acceptable to silence contrasting or controversial ideas. Knowing that everyone will fail together, without singular blame, can also encourage team members with unique ideas to feel safe to voice them. So when organisations shifts its leaders' performance metrics from individual performance goals to a heavier weighting on shared goals, they experienced a much higher level of collaboration and become more effective.

So project kickoff discussion should focus on the common purpose and then on developing a social contract to utilise the full diversity of experience, background, ability and knowledge of the team members in order to operate as a real team. Only then should the kickoff move to task discussion and action, which will then be carried out in an environment of shared goals and accountability. In my experience, as well as that of the authors, the first two conversations are sadly lacking in most kickoffs.

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[Click here](#) to read the complete blog in strategy+business

New Directions offer workshops and consultancy on project and team management. For more information [Click here](#)

Customer Experiences

A customer experience survey conducted by Capgemini found that, overall, 75% of companies perceived themselves to be customer-centric, but when consumers were asked, only 30% agreed. Perhaps not totally surprising as we often think we are better than we are in practice. But when you look into the country detail, the results then start to raise alarm if you are in the UK where 92% of companies felt good about their focus on customers whilst a only 15% of customers agreed that they were.

Contrast that with the results for Asia-Pacific which showed the reverse - with companies awarding themselves 63% for customer-centricity whilst their customers were much more positive with 79% feeling they were put first.

There is a definite culture difference here. As a generalisation, Asian companies tend to be more concerned by their long-term reputation than their short-term results. This leads to a degree of humility and a feeling that although they strive to do the right thing for customers they can always do better. For instance Japanese companies have an almost religious connection to 'Kaizen' or 'change

"Inexperience is an asset. Embrace it."
Wendy Kopp

"A ship is safe in the harbour, but that is not why it was built."
Admiral Grace Hopper

"When I am abroad, I always make it a rule to never criticise or attack the government of my own country. I make up for lost time when I come home"
Sir Winston Churchill

"When I see something not being done right, my first reaction isn't to go fix it. It's to say, we're building a team here. And we're going to do great stuff for the next decade, not just for the next year, and so what do I need to do to help so the person that's screwing up learns versus how do I fix the problem."
Steve Jobs

"An entrepreneur is someone who jumps off a cliff and builds a plane on the way down."
Reid Hoffman

"The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority"
Ken Blanchard

"Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the success"
Unknown

GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation

If you are living in Europe, your inbox will have been glowing red-hot with emails from companies who are holding your details on their databases and are scared of the heavy fines that could be levied through the EU on misuse of personal data under the new General Data Protection Regulation. In the light of the recent stories coming from the social media giants and others who have allowed the (mis)use of personal data, the need for regulation is not surprising, and is probably long overdue.

I have taken the opportunity to update my own policies so that they are in

for the better' - the daily pursuit of improvement in all aspects of business.

In the UK (and I am sure, other Western countries not included in the research), the focus seems to be more on delivering short term results and shareholder returns which lead companies to miss-sell products (like insurance and mortgages) for short term gain, or increase prices in a monopolistic market (like utilities and railways).

The irony is that doing the right things for customers often leads to better results anyway. 81% of consumers say they would be prepared to pay more for a better customer experience. How much more? 41% said they would be prepared to pay up to 15% more whilst 32% would consider paying up to a 50% premium for enhanced quality.

The take away for business leaders?

- 1) It doesn't matter how much we think we have done to deliver service, unless our customers actually experience it we are fooling ourselves.
- 2) The customer decides what is good, not the supplier.
- 2) Improving the customer experience requires a longer-term view of performance.
- 3) Consumers will reward us with their readiness to pay more for an improved experience, and their willingness to remain loyal to the brand.

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[Click here](#) to read more about the Capgemini research

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Human Competency and Capability Development

A 4 day course in human resource development strategy for the oil and gas sector. Run in partnership with petroEDGE.

Kuala Lumpur [29 October - 1 November](#)

International Oil & Gas Executive Programme

An intensive 5 day workshop in strategic business management, designed specifically for managers in the oil and gas sector. Run in partnership with petroEDGE.

Kuala Lumpur [22-26 October](#)

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Ready-Aim-Fire Problem Solving is priced at **£7.00**

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Cuttings

Cuttings is a bi-monthly collection of ideas and comments published elsewhere which have attracted my attention over the past couple of months. It is designed for readers who are interested in individual, organisation and management development and is free. It has been published continuously for more than 20 years by *New Directions*, 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.

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