



CUTTINGS...

Number 145 February 20120

Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

A new decade!! The pedants will argue that the 2020s don't start until 1 January 2021, and that a decade is just any 10 years, but it's a nice round number - especially in Roman numerals, MMXX, so why not celebrate! And there is an article looking forward with some current trends in HR to be aware of.

Also, continuing a theme in some of the last Cuttings, some more thoughts on remote team working, especially looking at the emotional and interpersonal gaps that exist; and the third article I have found adds to this research by looking at some of our unconscious biases which mean that we often do what we profess not to...

A good 2020 and decade to you all. Enjoy...

Geof Cox

In this edition

How to connect remote teams some ideas to bridge the interpersonal gaps in remote working.

10 pointers to HR strategy in the 2020s a look at some of the current HR trends.

Do you walk the talk? behavioural and neurological research suggests that we all contradict our stated values, without realising.

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

How to Connect Remote Teams

Making the move to a telecommuting job is not easy – a recent article in the PwC magazine *strategy+business* highlights some of the key issues and offers some ideas to mitigate the difficulties.

When people work 100% remotely for the first time, they report missing the sporadic moments of connection that happen in the hallway or cafeteria – the casual human interaction and the accompanying sense of belonging that this brings. Remote workers are connecting with colleagues formally throughout the day, but there was very little unstructured “social” time, and attempted to try to create space for social interaction often fell flat because they seemed forced and unnatural. Conference calls are notoriously painful. With remote working becoming increasingly the norm, most of us are still learning how to communicate effectively in this digital, global, and multicultural world.

Technology can cross physical gaps, but does not address the cultural and interpersonal gaps — differences in cultural habits and communication styles — and often exacerbates them. Teams with high levels of geographic, operational, and cultural differences also report lower levels of trust, innovation, satisfaction, and performance.

Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations...

““When two people are together, they are not two but six. What each one is, what each one thinks he or she is, and what each one thinks the other is.”

António Guterres

“Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.”

Martin Luther

“People work for money but go the extra mile for recognition, praise and rewards.”

Dale Carnegie

“Speak less than you know; have more than you show.”

William Shakespeare

So, how can leaders enable people to work across locations, time zones, and cultures effectively, allowing them to form real teams, collaborate regularly, and feel supported in and fulfilled by their roles? Not easily. The writers suggest trying the following:

Create empathy. Empathy is more difficult to muster when people feel distant from one another, which makes collaborating with your remote colleagues more difficult. Recognising the cultural and interpersonal gaps that make it much more difficult is a start point. Learning about one another is a great way to cultivate empathy. Go beyond the business agenda and share things more personal and social - not as a contrived icebreaker, but as part of natural communications. This activates the parts of your brain that are associated with empathy. The choice of technology can help. Using videoconferencing allows people to see facial cues and humanises colleagues so they aren't simply faraway voices, but individuals.

Be more spontaneous to create those unplanned moments of connection that are missing in the remote world. This has a massive payoff, one recent study showed that individuals who had 15 minutes to socialise with colleagues had a 20 percent increase in performance over their peers who didn't. To stop unnecessary interruptions, it is important to keep your current status up to date so that colleagues know if you are actually available to chat, or in "do not disturb" mode. Being more proactive, a note to people when you are available for a impromptu chat - waiting for a flight, driving to a meeting, on a train... - gives the opportunity for the informal exchange that often happens the office café.

Have some principles for communicating and use the most appropriate tools. If team members are to work together, especially when they're not in the same room, there needs to be a set of agreed-upon guidelines for how they will work and communicate. And the colleagues really do have to commit to spending time talking about how they'll approach the work they will do together rather than diving right in. And the principles need to reflect what is effective the remote environment: from my own experience I know of several remote teams who try to have tele-conferences that last a whole day, because that is what they used to have in their face-to-face mode!

None of these are magic bullets and take time and practice, plus a lot of review and improvement as it won't be right first time. But by making an effort to build empathy with colleagues, create moments of connection, and working hard at the principles and tools, people can bridge the interpersonal gap and improve team performance.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to read the complete article in Strategy+Business by Katherine Dugan and Varun Bhatnagar

New Directions offer workshops on interpersonal skills including remote team working. For more information [Click here](#)

"Any fool can know, the point is to understand"

Albert Einstein

"They know enough who know how to learn."

Henry Adams

"Every age is destined for learning, nor is a person given other goals in learning than in life itself."

Jan Comenius

"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."

T S Eliot

"I have never in my life learned anything from any man who agreed with me."

Dudley Field Malone

"There are no mistakes, no coincidences. All events are blessings given to us to learn from."

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

"Doubt everything. Find your own light."

Buddha

"In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind, there are few."

Suzuki Roshi

"Leadership is a combination of strategy and character. If you must be without one, be without the strategy."

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf

"When we share we only enlarge our capacity for happiness."

Tibetan saying

"We are confronted by insurmountable opportunities."

Pogo

10 Pointers to HR Strategy into the 2020s

At the start of the decade, HRZone chose to highlight what they see as the HR strategy for the 2020s: they see a huge shift taking place towards people-centric strategy, and offer 10 signs of this shift in some current trends:

- 1. Human-centred design / design thinking** Organisations are now paying much more interest in how the people actually behave rather than just asking or assuming what they need. Neuroscience and behavioural economics are increasing in their usefulness to people-first organisation design.
- 2. Employee experience** Process design is shifting from scaling activities towards employees with a focus on employee experience, particularly through the use of personas and journey maps.
- 3. The digital workplace** Unlike most earlier technological requirements, use of the digital workplace is almost completely discretionary which means thinking more about experience design and working with their people to enable higher levels of adoption.
- 4. Workplace design** Whether working virtually or in an office, the physical workspace is important to ensure people have somewhere to connect and collaborate. Understanding and engaging people is becoming more important than the physical items of the workplace.
- 5. Community management** There is a move from individual performance to the performance of groups. So strategy needs to involve these in community management who know how to bring people together, cultivate deep and meaningful relationships and prioritise sharing, learning and co-creating together.
- 6. Agility** More use of horizontal and cross-functional teams, especially through agile ways of working, requires people to take accountability for their own work and to manage this themselves - this will begin to scale up to encompass work across the entire organisation. How?
- 7. Self-organisation** Self-organisation exists as a trend in its own right; the availability of artificial intelligence based self-coaching tools makes it much more feasible for teams and whole organisations to manage their own performance, and these opportunities will only grow.
- 8. Purpose and meaning** The growing importance of meaning, purpose, values and culture is a clear trend where HR has a huge opportunity here to educate its colleagues about how culture can be developed to help shape the way that organisations work.
- 9. Commitment to multiple stakeholders** A widening of the role of the company towards serving the needs of multiple stakeholders provides a new access point to start important conversations about the role of people in business.

Do you walk the talk?

Do you see leaders who see themselves as values-driven, but whose actions contradict their words? Promise to communicate but routinely fail to inform others about important changes? Demand accountability but blame others when something goes wrong? Research suggests that we all do this a lot, and not know about it because of how bias can influence people's actions in ways they don't realise.

Decisions about how to act can be limited by behavioural shortcuts - a huge percentage of human reasoning happens on an unconscious level - we just don't have enough brain processing power to operate in a fully conscious mode. And this applies to when we are making decisions with ethical significance as well as doing routine tasks. So, otherwise 'good' people making small, unconscious, often rushed decisions, will do or say something that doesn't fit who they mean to be — and then move on so quickly they aren't even aware of it. Even consciously, 64 percent of us are prepared to cheat, but just by a little, according to a recent survey.

At an organisational leadership level, it seems that leaders often compartmentalise decisions on different topics, so they don't recognise contradictions. For example, they may launch a reorganisation without stopping to think how their company's stated value of caring might apply to communicating difficult changes. Or they might commit to ambitious corporate goals, but not consider that some functions might be unfairly impacted. Unfortunately, these contradictions are often interpreted as signs of bad faith, which can severely damage trust and credibility for individual leaders and the entire company.

In order to live our stated values, we have to realise that we all have blind spots — individually and as a company — and constantly monitor

10. Humanocracy Gary Hamel's new book title: seeking to link up some of these trends to help organisations do away with bureaucratic management and to develop environments that are fit for people to work in.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to read the full article from HRZone

New Directions offers consultancy on strategic change. For more information [Click here](#)

how our actions, and those of our company, are affecting employees, customers, investors, and the world. In other words, it requires us to continually look with fresh eyes for where there is more work to be done.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to see the full article from strategy+business

New Directions offers workshops on leadership and communication. For more information [Click here](#)

Public Courses in SE Asia

New Directions runs a small number of public training programmes in Kuala Lumpur in association with petroEDGE. Click on the course date for further details.

Human Competency & Capability Development [13-16](#)

[October](#)

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

Moving from Engineer to Manager [19-21 October](#)

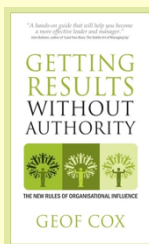
A 3 day programme to help engineers and those from a technical background take the first steps into management.

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.

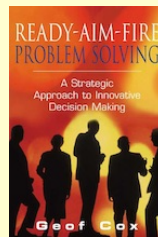
It has been published continuously for more than 20 years by *New Directions*, an international network of consultants and trainers who work together to learn, research, design and provide consulting and training in individual, management, and organisation development.

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