

Leadership Learning



Knowledge into Action

Edited by Kim Turnbull James
and James Collins



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Also by Kim Turnbull James and James Collins

LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES

Knowledge into Action

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Kim Turnbull James

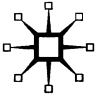
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Kim Turnbull James and James Collins

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Introduction

Kim Turnbull James and James Collins

This book emerges from a conference held at Cranfield School of Management in December 2006. This was the fifth international studying leadership conference held in the UK: this series of conferences was first held at Said Business School and subsequently held at Lancaster, Exeter, Cranfield and Warwick and by 2008 has evolved internationally with the conference held in Auckland. It has from its inception been an important annual meeting both for leadership scholars and practitioners concerned to keep abreast of the latest academic research. From the start the conference attracted people in sufficient numbers to indicate the perceived importance of leadership studies and the desire amid this community to refresh our thinking in a field abundant with leadership theory and leadership development solutions.

The aim of this book, and its companion, *Leadership Perspectives – Knowledge into Action*, is to capture some of the exciting new thinking discussed at the conference and to develop many of the themes emerging from the papers and discussions. In this book we try to capture some of the new departures in leadership learning. The conference theme was Knowledge into Action – how new ideas about leadership would lead to new approaches to leadership practice, leadership learning and development. Taken together these two books will enable readers to refresh their thinking about leadership in a way which will inform their practice whether as researchers or as practitioners and consultants. Even two books cannot cover, nor do justice to, all that was available to conference attendees, or the broad field of leadership and leadership development, but we have

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aimed to pull together papers to represent new trends, creative points of view and insights from research and to commission papers that would elaborate some of the themes emerging at the conference. We do not aim to cover the wide field of leadership studies but to provide new perspectives on this important field of theory and practice.

The primary focus for this book is learning for leadership. This encompasses leadership development programmes, the management of leaders' learning through their work experiences and education for future leaders. Creating a learning event must be predicated on some assumptions about what is to be learned or how the experience can be related to the kind of leadership tasks the learner will undertake. This book explores the new issues emerging in the field of leadership and some of the responses that those tasked with supporting leadership development and managing leadership talent can draw on. It is not a text on learning and teaching but develops emerging themes in leadership development.

Leadership learning cannot be divorced from theories of leadership. In the first chapter of *Leadership Perspectives – Knowledge into Action* we described how one company re-thought its leadership model. The company took into account many perspectives – the current senior team, other companies in the industry, world beating organisations but had not included an academic perspective which they thought would not be practical. This schism between research and practice is problematic because if our theoretical ideas, clarified through research based on observations of many real organisations, are not fed back into practice there can be no application of these ideas to those organisations not taking part in the original study – they are required to re-invent a wheel others have already invented. This same problem applies to leadership learning. If we do not explore the leadership assumptions underpinning our development activity and ask whether they are appropriate, we will be unable to create learning designs which address new leadership problems. Leadership research needs to feed into leadership development in order that organisations can benefit from latest research. However, this is not just at the level of *content* – the presentations or case studies – it is also at the level of philosophy and therefore, design and approach.

Chapter presentations

In this book we cover three elements of leadership learning: new thinking about what leaders need to learn; new thinking about how to deliver programmes and coaching that support leaders' development – and how to evaluate such activities; how to manage leadership talent through the longest leadership learning opportunity available – throughout a career and through experience.

Part I Leadership Learning – Challenges

The opening chapter from Kim Turnbull James and Donna Ladkin underscores much of what follows in the book and can be interpreted as a challenge to leadership development for those in both academia and in the practice communities. The central argument is that leadership development programmes have tended to focus on the traits, behaviours and core competencies of the individual leader; a deficit model of leadership development that centres on a concern that the necessary characteristics are properly developed. However, reflecting on post heroic ideas of leadership – the recognition that leadership is not solely exercised by the charismatic hero labelled the leader, but may be practiced at many levels of the organisation – the authors argue that development interventions need to be designed differently, with a focus beyond the individual capabilities of programme delegates. Turnbull James and Ladkin suggest that an alternative approach should consider three crucial capacities; perceiving, interpreting, connecting. This holistic approach embraces the wider systemic and cultural context in which leadership is connected within the organisation, and between the organisation and external stakeholder groups. Such an approach informs leadership interventions.

However, these more holistic approaches are not without their problems; not least that a perceived lack of structure can leave trainers, participants and the commissioners of programmes uncomfortable both in respect of understanding how these approaches will provide the applicable workplace solutions and that engaging in such a programme can be emotionally and personally challenging. Relating these issues to new ideas emerging in the academic literature, the authors propose that leadership learning professionals should

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engage with these new literatures on leadership to investigate implications for learning and apply these to programme design.

Catherine Bailey and David Butcher's contribution also examines leadership development programmes. Their chapter examines how an 'external perspective' – looking outside the boundaries of an organisation's specific industry – is crucial to organisational change and innovation. Bailey and Butcher argue that although the perceived need for an external perspective is widely recognised, senior executives appear to devote insufficient time to developing the ability to think in this way. They suggest that a lack of clarity about the concept, and how it relates to organisational conditions, confounds attempts to create leadership development approaches that contribute to building the ability for executives to take an external perspective in their strategic leadership decision-making. Drawing on empirical research in public and private sector organisations, the authors set out to provide conceptual clarification, to evaluate development approaches and their benefits and describe implications for the development of business leaders.

In her chapter Jane Trinder examines how leadership development programmes can serve to overcome some of the challenges that hinder organisational change. The focus of the chapter concerns engagement and how this concept is crucial to successful change. Trinder firstly explores the literature to explain the notion of engagement and then draws on the findings of an empirical study to identify the leadership capabilities that enable engagement and overcome the barriers that leaders encounter as they take others on a journey of organisational change. In addition the specific findings that are relevant to the particular context of the study, the chapter provides an example of the use of action learning through collaborative inquiry – in which the researcher acts as co-inquirer together with the real actors who are engaged with the problem, to explore and describe how to overcome that problem – in this case barriers to organisational change.

Part II Leadership Development and Delivery

The first section of this part of the book examines what can be described as 'off line learning'. By this we mean exploring the less traditional approaches to leadership development. These perspec-

tives place lesser importance on developing 'essential' core competencies and skills – the approach that has been the mainstay of much leadership development over the last four decades.

The chapter presented by Alan George and Donna Ladkin describes how arts-based approaches to learning and development have recently gained popularity on a small number of programmes; indeed the aesthetics approach has spawned an international conference and journal. In their chapter the authors put themselves in the position of leadership development practitioners and consider how an art and aesthetics approach can bring new insights to understanding organisational life, and how incorporating these ideas can contribute to leadership development. Firstly describing the 'expressive aesthetic' – the presentational methods drawn from any of the familiar arts forms such as, music, dance, theatre, and fine art – George and Ladkin describe how development programmes may incorporate these approaches in some part of the programme or the programme as a whole. Leadership development practitioners tend to decide the extent that they adopt these approaches with reference to the group's needs and experience, and their confidence and security to engage in these methods. The second and crucial element, the 'intrinsic aesthetic' are those cognitions and emotions that develop from the reflection and dialogue that follows experience. For George and Ladkin this approach to leadership development, in which practitioners are attentive, open and emotionally aware, will help the individuals with whom they work to grow and attend to their own aesthetic perceptions.

Exploring the role of coaching as an intervention, Judith Bell and Clare Huffington take a psychodynamic approach to leadership learning and development. The authors describe how concerns such as sensitivity to organisational dynamics and self awareness are crucial to leadership tasks, and how a systems psychodynamic approach to coaching can facilitate leadership development that moves beyond the concern for a set of requisite skills and competencies. Describing the role of leader as both coach and facilitator the authors suggest that a systems psychodynamic approach to executive coaching can be employed as a model for leadership itself. Firstly describing the systems dynamics approach Bell and Huffington then draw on their experience in the field to provide examples of the approach in action. Here they describe how this model of development can support leaders in a variety of challenges such as taking up or making a transition to a new

leadership role, effective working across the globe and managing a change project.

The psychodynamic approach is also the theme of the chapter contributed by Jon Chapman and Pete Mann. The focus of this chapter is on the role of personal and interpersonal dynamics in conceptions of leadership. The authors examine the current understanding of the nature of leadership, and question some of the preconceptions about how leadership development is best achieved. Like many of the authors contributing to this book they question whether the dominance placed on individual personality, traits or behaviours offers much to explain good leadership and the means to develop good leaders. Drawing on ideas expressed in experiential psychology Chapman and Mann explore the concepts of 'presence' and being 'in the moment' as features of learning and of leading. To illustrate this, the authors reflect on personal experience as part of a group of leadership development practitioners adopting and adapting to a new experiential, psychodynamic technique.

A second theme in this part of the book is that of design and evaluation. In their chapter Richard Kwiatkowski and his colleagues examine what might be described as a more conventional approach to leadership development; the MBA. Reflecting on their experience of undertaking an in-depth examination of the programme Kwiatkowski *et al.* describe the challenges of jointly agreeing, and putting into place, a redesigned curriculum that takes account of the many challenges of leadership education expressed by both the business community and academics that may (perhaps loosely) be labelled as associated with the 'critical management' or 'critical pedagogy' approaches to learning. Exploring these challenges the authors consider questions such as whether the MBA prepares students for a real management roles and whether this approach to leadership development is 'critical' enough for contemporary management practice? For Kwiatkowski *et al.* the MBA is neither a means for learning a set of 'must have' competencies nor an arena for exploring detached and abstract ideals. In redesigning the programme those involved have brought together a set of stakeholders and informants that have ensured that the balance of the programme is a dynamic interchange in which the next generation of leaders are exposed to rigorous theory, critical debate, personal development and skill enhancement – this is done in an environment which exposes students to real contexts with

real consequences. The authors argue that this approach, which differs from that offered on many other MBA programmes, does not favour either practical skills or critical theory but works within a framework in which the tensions between these approaches are understood. This ensures that the MBA is both individually and societally relevant and helps future leaders to understand their own path to leadership, and to confidently start (or continue) their journey.

The theme of programme design and the MBA is continued in the chapter presented by Deirdre Anderson, Susan Vinnicombe and Val Singh. Examining leadership development from a gendered perspective the chapter brings together many of the issues surrounding the lack of women in senior business roles and the nature of women's careers. Drawing on their experience of developing and delivering programmes that attend to this topic, Anderson, Vinnicombe and Singh consider how courses that are directed at women only can provide a forum for discussion of both the issue as a whole and the more individual concerns that are particularly salient to participants.

Their case study points to the importance that women place on a learning environment and culture where they can share their experiences and develop relationships in an open and listening setting where authenticity and values are respected. However, the case study also points to a paradox about leadership development for women; on the one hand women at this stage of their career are positive about the opportunity to participate in this kind of programme, but on the other they appear to later deny workplace gender discrimination and reject ideas of being considered differently. Rather, they want to engage in leadership like men. More experienced women do however recognise that by working together provides the support and encouragement that can inspire each other to attain the most senior leadership positions.

Although conventional or prescribed approaches to leadership development programmes are the reference point of James Collins and David Denyer's chapter on programme evaluation, their perspective can equally apply to some of the 'off line' leadership development approaches described above. In this chapter Collins and Denyer firstly examine how evaluation of development programmes has been debated over the last five decades. They suggest that evaluation practice has changed little since chain-of-events models of evaluation were introduced in the 1950s. However, even these approaches are not

carried out to their full potential – most evaluation studies do no more than collect end of programme ‘happy sheets’; if they do go further the focus is on attempting to prove value. The authors suggest an alternative approach which focuses on four crucial factors; context, intervention, mechanisms and outcomes. If evaluations are to lead to learning and improving practice, a shift is needed from an over-reliance on the analysis of participant’s reactions and one-off measures of results to those that take account of context and process as well as outcome.

Part III Leadership Learning – Managing Talent

Like many areas of leadership development the topic of talent management is frequently presented in ways that offer a typical ‘seven steps’ approach to success. Rejecting this approach, Eddie Blass, Ann Knights and Angelita Orbea offer a critical perspective of good practice. The chapter considers the processes of talent management with regard to the developing the future leaders of an organisation by reference to an number of empirical case studies and in doing so looks beyond the traditional concerns of HRM, leadership development initiatives or succession planning to include strategy, organisational culture and change management. For Blass, Knights and Orbea it is the culture of the organisation that is the most crucial influence on the approaches to talent management that drive HR practice, for employees have choice, and they are more likely to choose to work where the organisation’s culture is aligned to personal goals and values.

The final chapter, which also examines talent management, considers the topic from a global leadership perspective. In this chapter Noeleen Doherty critically reviews the role of expatriation in the development of global leaders, from both individual and organisational perspectives. Reflecting on the widely held view that expatriate experience provides the international knowledge and experience crucial to successful global corporations, Doherty suggests that this approach is considered the principal method of development for leadership in the global context. However, in the chapter she questions whether evidence for such an approach supports this method of leadership development. Doherty argues that the approach assumes that that the right people have been selected for this kind

of experiential development. She also reflects on lack of evidence about how individuals fare while on assignment and whether the approach has beneficial organisational outcomes. The evidence also suggests that there is a lack of opportunity for some personnel returning from expatriate assignments to put their new found learning and skills into practice. This leads the author to question the utility of expatriation as a talent development conduit for organisations. However, although evidence of effectiveness is incomplete or ambiguous, organisations continue to employ the overseas assignment approach to global leadership development. One area that might assist organisations is managing repatriation. Doherty suggests that the management of repatriation, both short and longer-term career outcomes, is crucial for both the individual and the organisation to capture the benefits that come about through this form of leadership development.

This book aims to help the reader gain ideas about how to rethink leadership learning by aligning leadership theory and leadership development. As ideas about leadership evolve, our approaches to developing deliberate learning opportunities must match these ideas – otherwise we will see a divorce between knowledge and practice. The book also aims to ensure this gap can be bridged, offering both a theoretical perspective and practical examples.

Part I

Leadership Learning – Challenges

1

Meeting the Challenge of Leading in the 21st Century: Beyond the 'Deficit Model' of Leadership Development

Kim Turnbull James and Donna Ladkin

If the importance now afforded 'leadership' rather than 'management' reflects more than a fad in the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, to what might that shift be attributed? Furthermore, as leadership developers concerned with how best to enable leaders to fulfil their roles effectively, how should such a shift be influencing our own practice? This chapter sets out, if not to answer these questions definitively, then to map some of the theoretical and practical territory which informs them. In so doing, we suggest characteristics of leadership development interventions which might complement approaches which have been more typically used but which might not so readily address the needs of those taking up leadership roles in these demanding and complex times.

The literature recognises the increasing degree of complexity, interdependency and ambiguity within which organisations operate (Wheatley, 1999; Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2001). Organisations experience a range of demands from the environment, including the introduction of new technologies, the threat of mergers and acquisitions, pressures for more efficiency and effectiveness and exposure to the media where mistakes can be publicly dissected. Whereas dominant models of leadership focus primarily on changing the impact of the leader on their team members or on others they personally meet or communicate with, in the current context the emerging challenge for leaders is to ensure large systems can respond effectively to an increasing array of internal, as well as external, stakeholders.

Our review of current leadership development offerings reveals preoccupations with certain kinds of activities and outcomes. Firstly, many programmes are predicated on the idea of developing individual leader characteristics and behaviours (Day, 2001). We would expect there to be a continued call for such programmes because this is one essential plank in an overall strategy for developing people for leadership roles. Secondly, we note that improving such programmes tends to centre on making the programmes better in terms of delivery. This may mean improving the exercises and material, or getting better teaching or facilitation delivery skills or re-designing the structure – modular, additional one to one coaching, action learning sets, and so on. However, in learning terminology this represents single loop learning.

An alternative approach to improving leadership development interventions would be to investigate the assumptions underpinning the programme. By this we do not mean checking that the programme aims and objectives are correct or examining the evaluation sheets for clues for improvement. Instead, we propose that leadership learning professionals should engage with new literature on leadership to investigate its implications for learning. For example, given the call for more shared and collaborative leadership, it might be questioned as to whether as a collective practice leadership is best developed by sending individuals on high profile leadership development programmes, or would it be better enabled through intact teams undergoing more tailored, context-based interventions together? We investigate this notion further by exploring some of the contemporary theories which are informing our understanding of leadership, and to consider their implications for leadership development interventions.

How dominant ideas about leadership inform leadership development activity

The dominant approach to leadership development has evolved from the pre-eminence given to the idea of 'leader' in the leadership literature and in popular thinking. Although the notion of leader behaviours and characteristics evolved over the 20th century, the notion of leadership is still popularly equated to a 'leader' positioned formally at the top of an organisation or one of its parts. This is despite the widespread recognition that leaders exist throughout organisations.

The importance of leadership as embodied in an individual great leader dominated early research and was based in the practical need for War Office Selection Boards to select leaders from classes of men who would not have been considered for leadership roles. This is usually referred to as the Great Man (sic) approach to leadership (Stogdill, 1948). The continued attraction of this idea despite its apparent shortcomings may have links to our archetypal notions of leadership, and may speak to the psychological need for a 'hero' who will solve difficult problems (Khuruna, 2003).

As leadership theory evolved in the post war era, it continued to focus on the individual leader although the need for leaders to flex their behaviours according to situational variables (most usually as embodied by followers) was incorporated into theory (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958; Fiedler, 1967; Hersey and Blanchard, 1988). Transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) and implicit leadership theory continue in this tradition – and even the development of the ideas of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970) authentic leadership (Avolio, Gardner and Walumbwa, 2005) and responsible leadership (Szekely and Knirsch, 2005) address leadership from the perspective of the individual as leader.

Leadership development as 'fixing' personal 'deficits'

The equating of leadership and leader has enabled leadership development to focus on the deficits an individual has in leadership terms and creating learning opportunities for the leader to correct these deficits. Thus learning centres on personal competences, leader behaviour, leadership style, the need to exercise personal insight about personality, personal motives, cognitive preferences, and so on. The deficit is assessed against some normative notion of what a good leader does – for example against a set of competencies. Programmes designed with this focus enable the leader to understand how they approach their leadership task and what impact this has on their followers. Situational leadership (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988) or MBTI (Briggs Myers and Briggs, 1995) are perennially useful for this as they enable leaders to see positive aspects of their personal preferences but also recognise that others may have different styles requiring them to flex their approach. Likewise, transformational leadership frameworks (Bass, 1985) enable leaders to get feedback without staff having to

confront their leader, whereas some programmes enable learners to get much more direct feedback through experiential exercises.

There are limitations to the 'deficit' approach to leadership learning. Focusing on fixing problem areas or adding new pre-determined competences may stifle some of the traditions of a 'good education' because of the focus on specific learning objectives and the need for immediate application. For instance, whereas education has traditionally focused on learning to think, and to understand principles which can be applied in many situations, the demand for perceived 'relevance' may squeeze out such aspects of a leadership programme aiming to achieve these broader educational outcomes (Raelin, 2007).

Another limitation of this deficit approach to leader development is that even when the programme contains feedback from staff or an action plan, the development activity is largely a-contextual. This is even though material may seem to be relevant, for instance, when case studies from the same industry, or reference to companies in similar situations of growth, decline, or threat to markets are incorporated. Even so, the programme's content is based on knowledge assumed to be relevant to the participants and is often presented in a lively, learner-friendly way designed to enable participants to get to grips with the pre-determined content. Deviations are not welcome – slippages are 'made up' and handouts on missed bits given out, even when the digression is more appropriate to the learners' needs.

It is interesting to note that in our experience leadership development practitioners can often be resistant to the notion they are presenting a programme in this mode. They often stress that they are highly flexible and will digress from the script. They want to meet learners' needs. But they are often delivering a programme for which tutors are booked long before the learners arrive, they are meeting a client need or advertised aims for the programme. We are not arguing against this approach as it is an important part of many leaders' development over their work lifetime. However if we could be clearer about the fact that this type of development is predicated on a model of individual leadership requiring leaders to make good their personal deficits and to a pre-determined set of learning objectives requiring a learner friendly approach to delivery, then it would be easier to distinguish this from alternatives. These alternatives may have a different take on the notion of leadership, of relevance to context, and they may have a

different learning philosophy. We begin to explore this alternative territory in the following section.

Emerging theories of leadership and how this impacts leadership learning

As we moved into the latter part of the 20th century and into the 21st we can see new threads running through the research on leadership. In the introductory chapter to *Leadership Perspectives: Knowledge into Action* (2008) Turnbull James and Collins identified three trends in contemporary theorisation about leadership: leadership as contextual; leadership as relational across systems and new constructions of leadership. These are not entirely conceptually separate but may form the basis of some useful distinctions.

Leadership as a contextualised activity has been a growing interest and may have a number of sub-themes. The idea is that leadership is not the same activity *wherever* it is exercised. In other words, there does not exist one set of competences that can always be effectively transferred from one context to another. Thus operational leadership differs from team leadership or strategic leadership; leading in a geographically dispersed team may be different from leadership within a locality; leading in a global organisation may have particular requirements. Additionally the type of organisation in which leadership is being enacted is important: can leadership be transferred from the private to public sector? Is leading in a university setting different from leading in the construction industry or manufacturing?

Essential to the notion of context (compared with situational flexibility discussed in the previous section) is the idea that leadership tasks and activities need to be constructed bottom-up from an understanding and interpretation of the strategic demands and cultural issues the leader faces in the particular role they take up in the organisation. Understanding how to create an impact depends on grasping, interpreting and conveying the essential elements of the strategy in a way that is tailored to the people who are engaged in its implementation. This is not a generic notion of good leadership style (although interpersonal skills are required) but the leader's ability to relate to the various groups and people involved in such a way that they can work together in the system to create the change or improvements needed.

This leads to the second emergent theme, the relational dimension of leadership. Leadership has often been discussed in relation to followers but this notion of follower is often about the leader's ability to influence a person in a positive way, such as to increase motivation or create a relationship where the follower feels empowered to produce their own ideas. The onus is on the leader to create a climate where the follower can blossom.

However a different view of the relational aspects of leadership is emerging in which leadership is seen to be operating within a political system. This view recognises that leadership has to be exercised across many different organisation boundaries and works to influence groups with very different perspectives and agendas. In this way leadership can be seen to operate within a network of mutually influencing and influenced relationships. These relationships bear the psychological expectations and hopes of the organisation staff and exist across the formal organisation structure. Maintaining these and being able to live with the complexity they foster while undertaking the leadership tasks of the individual's role is hard and emotionally taxing. Another complicating factor is that many leadership roles are exercised beyond the organisation boundary in cross organisation teams, with government officials, regulatory bodies, suppliers and contractors. Relations are not only the face-to-face/email-to-email relationships in which leaders engage but also the people and groups that form an important part of their leadership territory, whether or not they have personal relationships. How we take up leadership roles can be influenced by how we imagine distant leaders' values, behaviours and expectations to be-so although I do not know the CEO personally my leadership behaviour can be impacted by my ideas about her. The concepts of 'organisation in the mind' and 'institution in the mind' (Armstrong, 1997) are constructs which relate to the experiences, tasks and roles people have in organisations, which are impacted by people's hopes, dreams and ideals. These relations form a system in which leadership is enacted.

Leaders may need to be decisive and have clear views about the way forward but they can succeed only to the extent that their agenda becomes the organisation's agenda, and to the extent that their organisation can influence others that impinge upon it. Even knowing which organisation you are leading becomes hard when your staff include contract workers, off-shoring and outsourced functions. Whereas a formal appointment as a team leader comes with a clear statement

of authority, in these complex relationships that form the essence of the new leadership role, becoming authorised – accepted as a leader – may be more challenging. What is the leader's authority to act or take decisions or even turn up at crucial meetings when the informal rather than formal organisation plays such an important part in leadership? Leaders need to operate with the whole organisation in mind rather than just that under their own jurisdiction, without overstepping – or understepping – their authority.

Finally Turnbull James and Collins introduced the idea of new constructions of leadership emerging from the literature. These new constructions relate closely to the relational and context dimensions of leadership outlined above. For example the idea of 'leadership at all levels' requires a re-thinking of leadership away from individualistic notions towards shared (Raelin, 2003), collaborative (Drath, 2001) and distributed (Gronn, 2002) leadership concepts. Leaders may find themselves with collective responsibilities where no one leader can dominate because each brings part of the system to the table-all parts must successfully work in unison for the organisation as a whole to be successful. For example, a hospital cannot be regarded as successful if it has the best heart surgery but insufficient intensive care beds or rampant MRSA and a poor emergency service.

Leaders may find themselves sharing power in such organisations; in fact senior teams may find constitutionally that no single individual can exercise power without the consent of the others (one client likened her role in such an organisation to the three horse drawn Russian sled, the Troika). The notion of distributed leadership is itself complex-does it mean more people have real power and authority or is it a euphemism for expecting people to take more responsibility and initiative, often without the requisite authority? How can an organisation be held together without suffering from centrifugal destruction if everyone is truly a leader and is involved in choices about direction or methods for implementing a strategy? The distribution of leadership is potentially painful with more people experiencing the discomfort of being above the parapet and finding their work requires them to be personally present rather than just turning up and 'doing their job'.

The notion of post heroic leadership (Fletcher, 2003) suggests that we understand leadership as exercised by many not just a few who are identified as the leaders. This means people need to understand

the relations which are the stage for their own leadership behaviour, they need to think about who, how and where leadership in the organisation is exercised and how they can support and be supported by other leaders, they need to grasp the political dimension of leadership (in the sense of understanding the plurality of organisations rather than politicking), they need to understand how to interpret strategy in relation to their own part of the organisation and they need to do this in the company of others who share the leadership of the organisation. Together they need to work at enabling change in the whole organisation.

These emerging concepts of leadership therefore suggest that leadership learning must address broader concerns than those addressed by the deficit model of leadership development. We need different philosophies of learning and new designs to address these learning needs. The next section of the chapter considers the characteristics of leadership development interventions which would address these emerging trends.

Beyond the deficit model of leadership development

We've made the case that much of leadership development is currently still framed as 'topping up' potential leaders with skills, capabilities or a style they somehow lack. Based on an understanding of leadership as a capacity of individuals, it sells a generic form of leadership which is appropriate regardless of context. This approach tends to encourage programme participants to examine themselves closely, and to assess their leadership capabilities in relation to psychometric profiles and other normative and abstract measures.

If, however, leadership itself is theorised differently, perhaps leadership development interventions need similarly to be designed differently. By conceptualising leadership as a function of the interplay of individual agency with organisation culture, structure, and the wider socio-historic moment, it becomes clear that leadership development interventions themselves need to orient themselves beyond the individual capabilities of programme delegates.

Rather than focusing on 'fixing' individual's deficiencies, we suggest that effective leadership development in the contemporary context needs to foster three critical capacities:

- Perceiving: the capacity for the leader to 'notice what they notice', both about themselves and about the wider environment of which they are a part;
- Interpreting: the capacity for leaders to accurately read the political, historical, and cultural context of which they are a part, and to frame their actions from within this deep understanding;
- Connecting: the capacity for leaders to work as translators across organisational discourses and agendas, to encourage dialogue within the organisation, as well as between the organisation and external stakeholder groups.

A fundamental aspect of our argument is that rather than developing 'idealised', generic capabilities, leadership development needs to encourage leaders to understand and respond to their particular contexts, and enact the skills and capabilities that are required for THAT particular moment in time. For instance, whereas traditional leadership theory suggest that leaders need 'vision', we would ask-in the particular situation in which a leader finds herself, what is the nature of the 'vision' that needs to be communicated? Is it a revolutionary vision because the organisation is in dire straits or is just starting up? Or is it a vision for holding a particular quality, for incrementally adjusting to marketplace signals about how the organisation is being perceived?

We now turn to discuss each of these in turn, before considering the practical ways in which these purposes might be addressed by leadership development interventions.

Perceiving

One of the key differences between the leadership development model of the past and what we are suggesting here is in terms of what is seen as important for the leader *to* perceive. Whereas in the deficit model the leader is encouraged to attend to him or herself, their style, shortcomings, in a vacuum, we suggest that instead, their gaze needs to turn outwards, to the organisation and its context.

Instead of developing the generic skills of 'vision' or 'motivation', we are suggesting there needs to be more focus on encouraging the leader to perceive their own environment and what is important within it. Rather than attending primarily to their own capabilities

and limitations, they are encouraged to turn their gaze outward to see what the organisation is like, what its context is, and what it needs in order to thrive.

Not only does the leader need to hone their skill at perceiving the internal organisational world, but they also need actively to perceive the external world in which the organisation is embedded. This requires the courage to seek out potential threats on the horizon as well as those signals which suggest the organisation is doing well.

One of the difficulties with perception is that it always begins from an invisible frame – it is virtually impossible to perceive the viewpoint from which we frame our perceptual world. It is very common to repeat certain perceptual habits, to look to certain sources for information and to neglect or ignore others. Therefore, a key skill of perceiving well is in ‘noticing what you notice’, and working hard to stretch beyond one’s habitual perceptual patterns.

Perceiving in this way also enables the leader to make judgements about what is important in their particular organisational context. Instead of thinking that being ‘decisive’ is a characteristic of leaders, and therefore I need to make decisions, I can take a more nuanced view about what decisions need to be taken, and by whom. It is only through perceiving what is going on ‘out there’ that the leader can make judgements about what is needed at a given point in time. But such judgement also depends on another important aspect, that is, ‘interpretation’.

Interpreting

In order to decide what action needs to be taken, and how to take it, the leader must be constantly interpreting. Interpreting, like perceiving, is something we do habitually. For instance, we might regularly interpret someone’s scowling face as evidence that they are not happy with the way a meeting is going, rather than considering the possibility that they are working under stress.

Interpreting is about ‘making sense’ of what is going on in the organisation. If perceiving is about opening ourselves up to the myriad data surrounding us, interpreting is about the sense we make of that data. They are two distinct processes, but they also tend to influence one another. For instance, if we interpret our boss’s behaviour as

bullying, we tend to then perceive behaviours which reinforce this interpretation.

One key aspect which the leader needs to interpret consciously is the political domain within which they work. As indicated earlier in the chapter, a key trend in contemporary leadership theory recognises the relational, and thus political dimension of leading. Leaders need to be sensitive to the multiple voices which speak throughout their organisations, and be aware of how they interpret the many different stories which are told about any given situation. In socially constructed organisational worlds, conclusions which can be reached on the basis of 'truth' are relatively scarce. An important interpretive skill here is to understand that organisational stories are themselves interpretations, and need to be interrogated in terms of whose interests they serve, why they have gained organisational prominence, and the part the individual leader plays in either sustaining a particular narrative, or re-writing it.

Depending on the interpretation a leader makes of a given situation, the third key purpose we will introduce here comes into play, and that is of 'connecting'.

Connecting

In contemporary organisations, accomplishing anything often requires the buy-in of disparate groups, over which the individual leader might have limited power or authority. Helping to interpret meanings between different professional discourses as well as enable others to hear the value base from which their colleagues speak becomes a key leadership task. One CEO of a public sector organisation noted that the demands of connecting people and translating between groups meant that she felt she wasn't operating so much at the top of an apex, as in the middle of a hub of different relationships, which she helped to facilitate.

Building connections with and between different organisational agendas, value bases, and bodies of expertise becomes a critical leadership activity in such an arena. 'Connecting' requires leaders to consider issues such as:

- Who needs to get involved in this decision?
- Who has expertise that is required to get things done?

- What are the different agendas which might affect people's ability (or willingness) to speak with one another and how can these be overcome?
- What is the common purpose which unites our activities?

This last point is probably the most important of all, and also speaks to the necessity of the leader to be able to articulate that purpose in a way which connects with the aspirations and identities of those they endeavour to lead.

We suggest that together; perceiving, interpreting and connecting provide an orientation which is vital for the enactment of effective leadership in our times. Of course, the three interact with and influence one another. Deciding who needs to be involved in a decision or project depends on the leader's ability both to perceive and to interpret what is going on in the organisation effectively. We hope that distinguishing them might aid in making choices about which needs to take precedence at particular times.

Throughout, we have assumed the primacy of the organisation and its needs in guiding leadership activity. This might be seen as a naïve assumption, we all know leaders who seem to act primarily for the satisfaction of their own psychological needs (in fact, it would be inaccurate to suggest that leaders should not care for their own psychological needs when acting in organisations). However, the point we want to make here is that rather than being focused primarily on themselves, in order to rise to the challenge of leading effectively in our times, leaders need to attend to the organisation's needs within its particular moment in history and context.

This calls for a corresponding shift in leadership development approaches, away from the aim of 'fixing' the individual leader him or herself, to encouraging the leader to examine closely and inquire into the needs of the organisation. Through encouraging the development of perceiving, interpreting and connecting capabilities, such interventions would enable participants to work with curiosity, openness, and inquiry in the systems they are trying to influence.

We turn now to consider some of the characteristics of leadership development interventions which might address these purposes.

Enabling leadership capability for the 21st century

We suggest that leadership development interventions which might encourage perceptual acuity, increased attention to interpretation, and enhanced ability to connect would embody certain learning philosophies. We explore three key design principles here:

- Attention to the whole person development, rather than ‘add-on’ skills enhancement;
- Focus on the individual leader working within a particular context, rather than the attainment of generic capabilities;
- A view which sees leadership primarily as an intervention into a system’s dynamic.

Below we briefly consider the types of leadership development activities which highlight each of these principles.

‘Whole person’ development

Attention to the ‘whole person’ can be seen in programmes which bring psychological depth to their understanding of how the leadership role is constructed and enacted. Such approaches are particularly helpful in enabling individuals to identify the habits of perception and interpretation which inhibit them from effective action. For instance, a person may be well versed in understanding how to delegate work, why he or she should delegate work, and how to do it in such a way that the subordinate can pick up the work successfully, but still fail to delegate effectively. Rather than suggesting such an individual attends yet another skills-based programme about effective delegation, the inability to do so might be explored as a response to an interpretation of their need to achieve perfection in order to be seen as an effective leader. In cases such as these, development approaches which seek to develop people in an holistic way may be more effective.

A key component of such interventions is their focus on reflective processes. They often introduce a focus for reflection which might be in some way innovative, or a process which allows the individual to see themselves or the situation from a different perspective. Here,

we consider two such approaches: arts-based methods, and methods which incorporate psycho-dynamic processes.

- Arts-based methods

There has been a recent upsurge in leadership development programmes which incorporate arts-based methods, for instance using Shakespeare's plays to illustrate key leadership dilemmas, or inviting programme participants to create leadership masks which in some way represent their authentic leadership selves (Mockler, 2002). Although to date there has been little empirical work done evaluating the outcomes of such approaches, it seems their growth may at least be in part due to a desire to create methods which are more holistically based, and which draw from emotional and intuitive types of intelligences to inform leadership practice.

Taylor and Ladkin (2008) suggest that these types of processes foster a distinctive kind of reflective activity in those that undertake them. For instance, when a course delegate actually creates a collage which represents themselves as leaders, they can reflect both on the feelings that occur in the fleeting moments of creating the artefact, and on the finished product. Often the finished product can act as a focus for reflection long after its initial creation, and people can continue to learn from it because of its embodied and enduring form.

Additionally, because art-based methods so readily engage both perceiving and interpreting capacities, they directly feed these capabilities.

- Depth methods – focus on psychological processes

A second holistic approach explicitly draws on and works with psychological or unconscious processes. Interventions may be informed by more traditional Freudian psychological understandings of the role of the ego, superego and id, Jungian theories of cognitive preferences or Gestalt-based approaches. The unifying feature of these bodies of knowledge is their assumption that long-lasting behavioural change cannot be achieved without exploration of the fundamental assumptions, preferences and beliefs which impact on behaviour. A variety of leadership development interventions draw from these including mind/body-based psychological models such as bioenergetics (Cotter,

1996), programmes based in Gestalt theory (Clarkson, 1989) or the popular 'neuro-linguistic programming' (NLP) (McDermott and Jago, 2001).

Approaches which take clients' context seriously

Given the emphasis we have placed on recognising leadership as a situated practice, a second critical characteristic of leadership development interventions which might enable leaders to take up their roles is their focus on context. We highlight five types of interventions which focus on context by their very nature, but other more broadly based designs might usefully incorporate a more context focused content and activities.

- The rise of the executive coach

The 'executive coach' industry has flourished over the last decade, and one reason for its popularity is its inherently client-centred orientation (Gray, 2006). The coach often sits beside the client in the client's workplace, and responds to the very specific and particular nature of the issues with which they are working. While acting as an 'outsider' who can bring a fresh pair of eyes and set of questions to a given situation, the executive coach can learn a great deal about the particular situation, characters and constraints which impact the client, and thus can make specific observations and suggestions.

Additionally, in most executive coaching contracts, the client chooses the issues she or he wants to work on, and learning is co-constructed through an ongoing dialogue. Ultimately, it is the client who decides whether the intervention is useful or not, and they also often determine when the relationship will end.

Although the vast amount of executive coaching which is now undertaken happens separately from formal leadership development programmes, one-to-one coaching is becoming a more regular feature of such programmes.

- Systems psychodynamic approach

An appreciation of the dynamics of the organisation as a system shifts the emphasis from individual deficit to an awareness of the

system as a whole, providing a different frame of reference for leaders. Through experiential learning in which participants are invited to become aware of these dynamics, participants acquire a map that includes the idea that leadership roles are taken up in a context that exerts influence on the leader just as much as they influence the context.

This approach demands attention to the unconscious dynamics in the group or organisation. As Neumann and Hirschhorn (1999) point out 'sources of energy and motivation frequently are inaccessible to the conscious mind of those people involved even though behaviour and emotions are being affected'. Once people are aware of these sources of energy they can recognise them and take them into account when intervening in their organisation. The Group Relations tradition is one of the best known educational designs for learning about these organisational dynamics (Miller, 1989; Gould, Stapley and Stein, 2004).

- Customised leadership development programmes

A third approach which recognises the importance of context in its design is customising leadership development programmes. Rather than 'pulling a standard leadership development programme off the shelf', providers creating customised interventions aimed to create learning experiences with specific organisational aims and aspirations at their core. Working in a tailored way often involves undertaking organisational diagnostics, working with intact organisational teams and including an action learning aspect within the programme's design (Conger, 1993). Such interventions often demand skilled facilitation to work with 'what is present in the room', rather than dealing with abstract theories and ideas.

Because customised programmes work with live issues, the actual ways in which organisational members perceive, interpret and connect can readily be explored and appraised; in particular interpretations can be 'checked out' with colleagues, and new connections can be forged. The approach should be distinguished from simply transferring the traditional leadership programme into an in-company context. It does not simply require some tailored cases, action learning sets or projects added to existing formats, but rather, customised programmes need to focus on how leaders take up their

roles. Leaders need to reflect on how they identify the aim of the system they belong to; how they relate their own desire to that aim; how to take ownership of the aim as a member of the system and how to choose the action and personal behaviour which, from their position, best contributes to achieving the system's aim (Newton, Long and Sievers, 2006, p. 49).

New ideas about leadership such as collaborative leadership correspondingly need to encourage an appreciation of the systemic nature of organisations, and aim to assist leaders in identifying together the edges which might afford most leverage for action. Here we suggest two approaches which are sympathetic to this end, collaborative and co-operative inquiry processes (Reason and Rowan, 1981; Heron, 1996) and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1982).

- Collaborative and co-operative inquiry processes

Collaborative and co-operative inquiry processes are participatory research methods through which groups of people inquire together into live organisational issues. The hallmarks of these methods include a shared commitment to finding new ways of dealing with current dilemmas on the part of all the individuals involved, a process of discovery through taking action, either individually or collectively and then discussing the consequences of that action before deciding what to do next through shared reflection. Such groups can either be self-facilitated or convened by someone external to the organisation.

These kinds of groups, in which people from across an organisation or from the same part of the organisation come together to address issues of common concern, can foster dialogue and serve as a place where individuals can inquire into their own perceptions and interpretations with others. By doing so, organisational as well as individual learning can be enhanced and strengthened.

- Appreciative inquiry approaches

Popularised by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1982), appreciative inquiry is a consulting or facilitation approach which helps organisational members to identify those aspects of their organisation or work group which are operating well, and encourage them to flourish. Rather than

focusing on 'What's the problem?' such approaches take the question 'What's going well here?' as a starting point for development. The four stages of appreciative inquiry include spending time in formulating and organisational vision-but this is a vision which is co-created by the community at large, rather than being the dream of the formal leader alone. In such an approach the leader's role becomes one of actively enabling that dream to take shape through interacting with and forging critical connections between organisational members with the requisite knowledge, skills, and relationships to make it happen. In such a scenario, individual 'leading' is transformed into collective 'leadership'.

Challenges

Leadership development programmes which involve the 'whole person', focus on context and encourage a more open-ended 'intervention' style of leadership are process, rather than content, driven and are thus inherently more open-ended in their definable outcomes than more content-based programmes. Consequently, they can pose challenges for leadership developers as well as for participants undertaking them. Here we consider some of the key points of resistance which these methods can spark.

Firstly, as mentioned above, these kinds of interventions are not organised around pre-determined content or directed towards prescribed outcomes. Instead, content, as well as any specific mode of working evolves as participants engage with the questions and concerns of central focus for them. Such learning is by its nature open-ended and emergent. Outcomes which are unknown and necessarily 'woolly' can seem unhelpful within current organisational climates in which 'quick fixes' are sought and people need to know what they are getting for their money or their time. This speaks to a larger organisational and cultural environment prevalent within the 21st century Western world in which activities must be 'purposeful' from their outset and goals need to be defined in terms of their monetary value.

Given this prevalent goal-oriented culture, selling open-ended emergent processes into organisations can be very difficult (even when everyone knows this is the kind of approach which is needed). A degree of trust must be built between the leadership development

provider and the client as a first step in experimenting with these types of learning interventions.

Following on from the difficulties posed by the prevalent measurement oriented business cultures in which so many of us operate, desired outcomes from leadership development programmes are often of the 'quick-fix' variety, in which delegates acquire skills and capabilities and are instantly able to apply them within their organisational context. However, the learning outcomes of more depth-oriented approaches tend to foster a more slow-burning developmental process, in which a shift of perspective or habitual way of framing reality can lead to more incremental (but nonetheless significant) change. This is a process which happens over months and years, rather than days and weeks.

Finally, the kind of learning intervention we are advocating here can be uncomfortable for individuals undergoing them. Challenging deeply ingrained levels of psychological experience can be threatening to one's very identity. For every person who finds such an experience 'life altering', another can block any potential learning. Of course this is even more likely to happen when adult learners are required to attend courses, rather than having the choice to attend or not.

These are but some of the factors which influence both providers' and leadership development consumers in their choices about how to develop leaders. Lest anyone think this is a straw argument, we would advise caution! Those providing and contracting for leadership programmes are in a vulnerable position; these programmes 'must go well'. Tried and tested can feel safer than novel and experimental. From the participant's point of view, most people love to learn about themselves, and the 'deficit model' does offer the hope of being able to 'fix' at least one part of the complex leadership equation: oneself!

More and more, the leadership literature frames 'leaderful activity' as that which aims to influence systems of inter-relating people, relationships, agendas, and knowledge bases. We are suggesting that by focusing on perceiving, interpreting, and connecting, leaders might be better equipped to intervene effectively in these multi-levelled and multi-voiced organisational realities. In this way, learning how to intervene effectively becomes a key focus of leadership learning.

We are not suggesting that all that has been written about leadership as 'providing direction', 'influencing others' and 'making decisions' needs to be discarded. However, all such leadership enactments occur within particular and unique contexts. In order to provide a vision for the organisation that stands any chance of being realised, the leader needs to understand where the organisation has been, what it is in the present, and a good deal about the inter-organisational milieu in which it operates. Intervening effectively requires leaders to enact skills of dialogue, inquiry, and sensitivity to the emerging consequences in order to have the impact to which they aspire.

Perhaps it is unsurprising that as one goes around the best management development centres in companies and in business schools, leadership development programmes have a very similar content and feel. At the same time organisations are trail blazing new ways of learning, for example new technology creates enormous potential for both formal networked learning and more informal sharing of perceptions and experiences both inter and intra-organisationally. Less tutor-led learning and more project based real time learning has changed the nature of executive education. In order to leverage cutting edge thinking, it is important that the learning and teaching element is dovetailed closely to up-to-date leadership theory. If programmes are to offer learning which makes significant impact on leaders' ability to influence the organisations in which they operate, perhaps leadership developers themselves must rise to the challenge of becoming meta-learners about leadership learning.

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2

External Perspective – An Under-Utilised Strategic Leadership Capability

Catherine Bailey and David Butcher

An external perspective is a critical but under-developed strategic and business leadership capability. Competing effectively in the today's business conditions relies on a high level of customer and supply chain knowledge, and on best practice operational delivery, learnt directly from experience or vicariously from competitors. Yet increased competition and shortening product and service life mean sustained advantage can only be gained by leapfrogging competitors through changing the rules of the industry's competitive game. Successful businesses exploit 'industry breakpoints' to create value and wealth in a different way by challenging received wisdom, and looking outside their industry to source innovation (Hamel, 2000a). Developing an 'external perspective' therefore becomes both an organisational and individual strategic leadership capability.

However, while the perceived strategic need for an external perspective (EP) is widespread, even senior executives apparently devote insufficient time to developing it. Anecdotal evidence suggests several practices are used to develop an external perspective capability, including benchmarking, networking, and executive development. However, there is limited empirical evidence of associated benefits.

This chapter presents the theoretical argument and results of a two-stage survey of senior executive experience in 13 public and private sector organisations. It explores the perceived value of an external perspective, examining practice and impact of various approaches to its development. The empirical findings reveal widespread perceived value associated with an external perspective, diverse practices in developing it, and differing benefits. The findings

also demonstrate substantial lack of clarity about the concept of external perspective, thereby confounding attempts to establish the most productive development approaches.

Changing demands on business strategy formulation

In the uncertain conditions that lead to common strategic responses, organisational isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and industry convergence (Porter, 1998), achieving sustained success requires radical, revolutionary strategies that arise from debunking orthodoxy, defining competency and exploiting discontinuity (Hamel, 2000b).

Occasional dramatic competitive repositioning calls for strategy-making processes which are continuous and fundamentally creative (Pettigrew and Whipp, 1991; Dickson, Farris and Verbeke, 2001), which challenge the inevitability of industry conditions, and which potentially require new assets and capabilities (Kim and Mauborgne, 1999). This shift emphasises innovative, divergent strategic thinking rather than conventional planning processes (Graetz, 2002). It also challenges the convention of top-down strategy creation with its associated protection of prevailing beliefs and frames of reference, collective myopia and selective attention (Sparrow, 1999), instead favouring a more inclusive process which engages diverse constituents from different organisational vantage points (Strebel, 1995).

Changing organisational capabilities

The ability to learn faster than others, becoming a 'competitive learning organisation' (Dimitriades, 2005) and to develop the 'dynamic capabilities' necessary to provide a competitive edge (see Zahra, Sapienza and Davidsson, 2006), is now argued to be the only source of sustained competitive advantage (Hosley, Lau, Levy and Tan, 1994).

The capability to detect and exploit discontinuities between economic realities or between expectations and results (Drucker, 1998) is therefore key to strategic innovation. But innovation also depends on developing an organisational culture that nurtures innovative ideas and individual capability, which is not typically associated with top-down management (see Waldershee and Sheather, 1996,

cited in Smith, 1998). A truly innovative culture generates innovation at all levels (O'Reilly, 1997) by employing managerial practices which make failure acceptable, value nonconformity, train employees to challenge, reward innovation, and encourage movement around the organisation (Horibe, 2001).

The wealth generating potential of entrepreneurial activity in Silicon valley, the fragmentation of corporate structures and the desire to recreate the long lost momentum of organisational youth signal the rise in corporate entrepreneurship (Ireland, Kuratko and Morris, 2006). Organisations thus need to be able to create conditions for corporate renewal, encouraging the development of new ideas, activities and attitudes (Taylor, 2001).

Conventional knowledge management activity with an internal, operational knowledge focus has typically delivered incremental and limited benefits (Davenport and Prusak, 1998) but has been insufficient to create the new wealth of revolutionary strategy. Knowledge management capability is now being linked directly with organisational 'dynamic capability' (Prieto and Easterby-Smith, 2006). Commentators emphasise the need for knowledge management to be linked to value creation and have an external focus (Zack, 1999), and for organisations to have the ability to access and integrate initially 'alien' ideas from other industries. Drew (1999) usefully characterises this shift from 'what we know we know' (such as benchmarking activities), 'what we don't know we know' (for example, surfacing tacit knowledge), and 'what we know we don't know' (R and D processes) to 'what we don't know we don't know' (discovering key risks, exposures, and opportunities). Pursuit of this 'Type 4' knowledge is a critical organisational capability as it alone promises the revelation of unsuspected new technologies, substitute products and new competitors.

Individual capability

Research surfaces some critical individual capabilities associated with revolutionary strategy-making:

- Being able to challenge prevalent mental models (Sparrow, 1999).
- Information search and cognitive complexity (Cockerill and Schroder, 1993).

- Embracing dissent of 'rebels' and 'mavericks' and connecting with change at the edge by tapping into the intelligence of the organisational outliers (Bechtold, 1997).
- Environmental scanning (Hambrick, 1982; Garg, Walters and Priem, 2003).
- Building holistic organisational and environmental understanding (Bonn, 2001).
- Looking outside industry conventions for the potential to rewrite the industry rules, or for unconventional options or to develop a 'perspective' on internal views (Hamel, 1996).

Achieving this *external perspective* allows assumptions and preconceptions to be challenged and is an apparently critical individual strategic capability which involves both 'looking outward and forward' to develop insight about an industry (Hamel and Prahalad, 1995). In looking outward, the purpose is 'distance taking' to enable reflection on internal functioning within the specific industrial, environment and societal context so as to prompt creativity and innovation. Developing the ability to 'look forward' enables insights into technology, demographic, and lifestyle trends occurring across organisations which are vital in detecting new competitive space (Hamel, 2000b).

External perspective (EP) development approaches

Approaches to developing an EP focus on either EP processes, EP interactions or EP capability development. Process focussed approaches engage individuals in targeting and gathering external information of direct organisational relevance. Interaction focused approaches involve exposing the individual to situations where interaction and information will be externally focused (for example, networking activity). Capability focused approaches develop the appreciation of the value of and the skills to scan, understand, translate and use diverse external information (for example, open executive development programmes). These three common approaches illustrate the differences.

Benchmarking

Despite the wide use of benchmarking best practice, controversy surrounds the benefits and hinges on the difference between bench-

marking to improve operational capability and the path breaking that confers strategic advantage. Industry best practice can only lead to 'playing catch-up' and the strategic convergence which is encouraged destroys profit margins (Dervitsiotis, 2000). However, some types of methodology (Jarrar and Zairi, 2001), lead to innovation rather than imitation outcomes, and systems-wide organisational benchmarking (Prasnikar, Debeljak and Ahcan, 2005) promises greater potential as an effective EP development approach.

Networking

Essential to 'looking outward' is the ability to forge and maintain external networks with customers, suppliers, and competitors, and to transcend industry, culture and political boundaries. While the link between networking and different forms of innovation has yet to be established, we know external networks enable information sharing and new learning, inter-organisational relationship development, new managerial perspectives, access to resources, new markets, and technologies (Gulati, Nohria and Zaheer, 2000), pooling complementary skills, and safeguarding property rights (Pittaway, Robertson, Munir, Denyer and Neely, 2004). Recent developments have tracked the value of networking in Industry Peer Networks (IPN), bringing together non-competing organisations across industries (Sgourev and Zuckerman, 2006).

However, the current networking literature lacks concrete guidance, tending either towards dispensing folk wisdom and handy hints or network structural analyses that lack usability (Anand and Conger, 2007), and current research provides little guidance on targeting and benefits of specific networking activity.

Open programmes

It is increasingly recognised that management development can play a strategic role in organisational transformation by stimulating diversity (Coulson-Thomas, 2001). Recent research into innovative practice highlights the potential of open programmes that draw delegates from across industries to broaden horizons, and to provide the necessary level of organisational and personal awareness to challenge mindsets. It also reveals the extent to which the promise remains unfulfilled (Butcher, Bailey and Clarke, 2001).

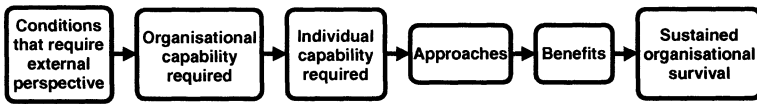


Figure 2.1 External perspective and sustained competitive survival

Current literature is virtually silent on the differential use of such approaches for EP development and the particular organisational and individual benefits associated with each. If an external perspective is a crucial strategic capability, then it is essential that there is greater clarity about the efficacy and value of development approaches.

To summarise the conceptual argument (see Figure 2.1), today's conditions call for revolutionary strategies that change the relevant strategic questions and emphasise dynamic strategic thinking to breach organisational and industry mindsets. This requires a key organisational and individual capability – an external perspective. Developing this capability through activities (process, interaction or capability development) ultimately sustain organisation survival.

Support for this causal model is predominantly conceptual, normative and fragmented. While the overall argument may be compelling, conceptual clarification of the components and their relationship is required. Empirical research needs to establish whether critical capabilities are being employed, or whether appropriate approaches to EP development are being exploited.

Empirical studies

Two large-scale surveys of UK based senior managers from 13 corporate and MNC organisations explored the EP concept, its components and their relationships.¹ A subsequent replication survey² involving 296 senior managers attending executive development programmes was conducted in 2006–2007.

In stage one, 300 senior managers completed an 18 item questionnaire designed to establish:

1. The perceived value of an EP in different organisational and industry circumstances.

2. How managers conceptualise EP.
3. Approaches to developing an EP and their perceived effectiveness.

In stage two, 217 managers completed a 44 item questionnaire to determine current practice, particularly:

1. The prevalence of an EP in their organisation, and their perceptions of its relative value.
2. The extent to which EP development approaches were utilised, their benefits, and the organisational support for developing an EP.

The replication survey of 296 managers focussed on EP development approach utilisation.

Stage one results

Importance and relationship to organisation and industry conditions

There was overwhelming agreement on the importance of an EP in achieving organisational objectives (94 per cent) and organisational goals (68 per cent). Quoting 'fierce competition', 'lack of industry stability' and 'close service or supply relationships', 90 per cent of respondents saw EP as more important in their industry than in others. But as most managers saw their industry conditions as difficult and there were different views within the same industry, we can conclude that while the connection between external conditions and perceived need is overwhelming, the relationship between specific conditions and need for an EP is as yet unclear.

Managers' concept of an external perspective

Table 2.1 summarises the knowledge, behaviour and impact managers attributed to individuals having a good external perspective.

An 83 per cent response rate associating a good external perspective with broad, holistic, realistic and lateral knowledge, favours 'looking outward' over the 'looking forward' aspect of EP strategic capability. Behavioural attributes reveal a focus on openness to, quality of and mix of ideas. High EP individuals deliver business benefits by having better contextual understanding, more, and more innovative ideas, greater realism and confidence to change. Though

Table 2.1 Attributes of managers with a high level of external perspective

What characterises their knowledge and understanding:	How they behave:	What they achieve:	How they make a difference to decisions and actions:
Broader and holistic (41.4%)	Think differently (23.4%)	Better business performance (26.1%)	Contextual understanding (24.3%)
Realistic (21.9%)	More open-minded (21.7%)	Better, more innovative decisions, solutions (22.3%)	Greater innovation to decisions/solutions (16.4%)
Lateral (20.1%)	Challenge more (15.7%)	and opportunities (10.7%)	Identification of more opportunities (13.2%)
Futuristic (10.3%)	Generate more ideas and are more visionary (15.1%)	Organisational change (13.1%)	Greater realism, balance (10.6%) and focus (1.8%)
	Demonstrate confident leadership (11.5%)	Better strategy (9.6%)	Confidence to challenge (6.3%) and take risks (4.4%)
	More interested in change (4.7%)	Personal credibility and standing (8.6%)	
	Network with others (2.7%)		

* % indicates the percentage of responses within each category

supportive of the theory this shows an EP to be associated with a wide range of organisationally enabling attributes and behaviours.

Preferred EP development approaches

Managers' perceptions of EP development approaches revealed five valued activities ranked in the following order:

1. Diverse experience was regarded as considerably more important than any other approach, although was widely defined.
2. Benchmarking. Consistent with emerging thinking, 'within industry' and 'outside industry' benchmarking was seen to lead to different outcomes.
3. Reading, research and study.
4. Networking/external events. Equal preference was shown for within and outside industry networking.
5. Open general management programmes. This low ranking is surprising as such development has the unique potential to develop an EP capability.

Conclusions arising from stage one

1. The discrepancy between apparent industry-specific differences in EP need, yet near unanimous industry wide recognition of its critical value, suggests that the link between industry conditions and the EP concept requires further clarification.
2. An external perspective was found overwhelmingly important in delivering a range of organisational benefits.
3. Associated EP attributes clearly indicated alternative thinking.
4. An external perspective is developed through five approaches, where activities that provided an 'outside industry' experience were seen to lead to significant organisational change and development.

Stage two findings

Respondents were asked about the relative value of an EP, the extent of its organisational importance, current levels of EP, their personal and organisational experience of approaches to EP development, and the impact of and support for these. In the replication study

296 senior managers completed the questionnaire about their EP development activity. In each aspect of activity level the results for the stage two managers and the replication study managers were virtually identical. From this we conclude that the picture of EP activity and development remains stable.

EP importance, levels and value

Confirming stage one, 97 per cent of respondents saw an EP as widely important, important for managers at all levels (44 per cent), and increasingly important with managerial seniority (53 per cent). However, 80 per cent believed there to be insufficient EP capability in their organisations and 96 per cent thought that less than half of their senior colleagues had a well developed EP.

Compared to other important managerial attributes, having an EP is seen as more important than: IT literacy, understanding marketing, knowledge of strategy models, and project management capability. It is equally as valued with technical expertise, but less important than: commercial awareness, influencing skills and financial acumen. Clearly EP is seen as distinct but ranking fourth does not fit with the emerging findings on perceived importance. If this reflects lack of appreciation of the strategic significance of an EP and is indicative of a wider population, then it is unsurprising that managers experience a lack of EP amongst their peers and lack of investment in EP development.

Approaches to developing an EP and their potential

Respondents were asked about their involvement in the five EP development approaches, and their perceptions of how easy they found it to engage in each.

1) Diverse experience

Diverse experience positively correlated with EP assessments. Working in different industry sectors, functions, organisations, countries and cultures, and extra-organisational responsibilities were cited as valuable sources of EP development by the majority (59.4 per cent). While lack of financial support, time and opportunity were common barriers to development, the key limitation was the organisation's conventional career path thinking.

2) Reading, research and study

Time spent reading, researching and studying correlates with EP level. Over half the respondents read, research or study material not directly related to day-to-day management, but infrequently. For 33.2 per cent it is less than a quarter of a day/week and for another 43.3 per cent less than half a day per week. Of the 60.4 per cent claiming to be regular readers, only 25 per cent read a management publication and only 30 per cent read broader business/economic publications. This pattern reveals a within-function and industry tendency and suggests substantial scope for more effective EP development through guided reading. The finding that less than half these senior managers had used the internet to research within the previous month, and then only for 'specialist information', reflects a limited outward or forward focus.

3) Networking/external events

Managers having a well-developed EP spent more time, attended more events, and had more contacts outside their organisation than their peers. They spent up to 20 per cent of their time on internal networking but like their peers, most spent less than 10 per cent of their time on external networking. Attendance at external events had a national rather than local or international focus. And although business conferences were the most popular event, 35.4 per cent claimed infrequent or no attendance. Together these findings suggest limited use of external events for networking. A substantial number of managers (36 per cent) found networking difficult in practice because of lack of time, difficulty in locating good contacts and in developing a relationship.

4) Benchmarking

Higher EP levels are positively associated with time spent on benchmarking, with 70 per cent of respondents spending up to half a day a week on informal benchmarking with customer, supplier, and competitor organisation visits. More than half had been active in examining competitor performance in the previous three months. Formal 'best practice' studies were less frequent. Only 30 per cent had instigated a 'within industry' and 12 per cent an 'outside industry' study during the previous three months. This confirms an 'own industry' focus and suggests either lack of appreciation of the

benefits of different types of benchmarking, or lack of understanding of the significance of 'outside industry' information.

5) Open management development programmes

Open management development programme experience was positively correlated with high levels of external perspective. With 19 per cent attending once every year, 30 per cent once every two years, 24 per cent every five years and 24 per cent less frequently, respondents reported a significantly wide range. Managers estimated their pattern to be typical of others in their organisations, and cited the difficulties here as lack of time, 'choosing a suitable programme' 'undervaluing of the activity by the organisation' and 'organisational bias towards internal programmes'.

In summary, senior managers tend to adopt an internal and 'within industry' focus in their EP activities, underlining the gap between espoused activity and reality. Each of the approaches has considerable scope for outside industry activity and therefore currently represent underutilised opportunities to improve managerial EP.

EP development approaches and benefits

Stage one identified seven main organisational benefits that derive from an EP: achievement of business objectives; more innovative decisions; more innovative solutions; better business opportunities; specific organisational changes; better business strategy; enhanced personal credibility and standing. In stage two respondents indicated where they had personal experience of each approach, leading directly to one of the seven main benefits.

The easiest route for managers to identify a direct organisational benefit was diversity of experience, with the most difficult being attendance on an open general management programme. And despite the time, managerial attention, and ease of benchmarking, the type and percentage of benefits cited supported the earlier finding that only specific forms of benchmarking are likely to yield strategically relevant outcomes.

EP development activities most frequently delivered 'better or more innovative solutions' and the 'achievement of a business objective', while the least frequently cited benefits were 'more or better business opportunities' and 'specific organisational changes'.

Together, these findings suggest an operational focus (solutions to problems and meeting organisational targets) rather than a strategic focus to benefits.

In sum, managers appreciate the very real organisational and personal benefits to be gained from a well-developed external perspective. Certain practices are believed to develop it, but clear activity-benefit linkages are difficult to establish, which is perhaps made the more difficult by the variation within approaches.

Organisational support for EP development

Respondents identified factors in their experience that encouraged EP development approaches. These fell into seven industry and organisational cultural aspects. Table 2.2 shows the percentage of responses that cited a particular factor supporting each EP development approach.

The high percentage of negative or missing citations immediately reveals significant lack of organisational support for EP development. 'Reading, research and study' and 'open management programmes' are least supported and therefore probably hold the greatest potential for enhanced EP value. Benchmarking, on the other hand, enjoys organisational support through being embedded in 'policy', 'culture, and 'performance criteria' as well as through resources and opportunities.

Most approaches are most likely to be supported through 'practical facilitation' in the form of availability and access to resources and opportunity. Coupled with the consistent, but low level of management support, it becomes apparent that individuals are left to identify and take advantage of opportunities themselves.

'Positive development planning' plays a variable role in development approaches. Open management programmes and 'diverse experience' seem to benefit specifically from this. The low number of references to 'policy', 'culture' and 'performance criteria' as facilitators of EP development signals lack of serious organisational attention to an apparently critical and highly valued strategic capability.

The findings thus indicate that support for EP development is mainly passive and informal. The powerful facilitators, such as organisational policy, performance measures and culture are under-developed. Development planning could be better utilised to promote benchmarking, networking and reading of strategic value, as

Table 2.2 Features that encourage the approach to developing an external perspective

	Nature of organisation or industry	Development planning and course	Managerial behaviour/ encouragement	Practical facilitation/ support	Policy	Culture	Performance/ competence criteria	Negative or None	Missing or Other
Diverse Experience	7.8%	20.9%	3.5%	41.3%	0%	0%	4.8%	13.5%	8.3%
Reading, Research and Study	0%	10.0%	7.1%	22.9%	2.9%	3.3%	5.8%	30.0%	18.0%
Networking	6.0%	5.6%	9.4%	25.3%	1.7%	3.0%	3.9%	17.6%	27.5%
Bench-marking	4.0%	0.4%	5.3%	17.7%	13.3%	9.7%	12.4%	11.5%	25.7%
Open Programmes	1.2%	29.7%	7.6%	25.0%	2.9%	2.9%	6.4%	23.8%	0.6%
% of Total support citations/cultural aspect	3.9%	12.4%	6.5%	26.5%	4.2%	3.8%	6.6%	19.2%	16.8%

well as the more conventional focus of programmes and diversity of experience. There is substantial scope for improving organisational support.

Research conclusions

These empirical studies reveal a major gap between theory and practice in the development of EP as a critical strategic leadership capability. Theoretically, the recipe for competitive survival requires managers at all levels to venture out with entrepreneurial spirit to bring in thinking from beyond the industry, generating wealth-creating knowledge in the form of new to the world or new to the market innovations. Yet even among senior managers who advocate an EP the pattern of their activity falls short of theoretical prescription and what they espouse. Activity patterns reveal limited attendance at outside-industry events, a reluctance to network widely, little generic outside-industry benchmarking activity, a focus on within-industry reading, and technical and industry specific formal information search. As these individuals are well placed to influence strategy and an EP capability in others, it is unlikely that greater outside-industry EP activity is occurring at other levels in their businesses.

With few exceptions, the EP benefits sought and gained in practice were predominantly incremental operational improvements rather than changes to strategy or positioning. This suggests lack of ambition, failure to understand or operationalise the concept, or that there are conflicting and overlapping activities and benefits to be gained. If managers are to achieve the broad range of strategic and operational benefits of an EP then they need a means of distinguishing these aims and gains. They may then be in a better position to embrace the 'emergence age' mindset, synthesising radical innovation and traditional management to search out a competitive space for future effectiveness, whilst attending to current efficiency to stay in the game.

Senior managers associate sustained competitive advantage with the need for an EP, but organisational support is embryonic at best. Activities with the potential for outside-industry knowledge generation, experience and contact may even be actively prevented or discouraged. Passive rather than active organisational support is

inconsistent with the avowed criticality of this strategic capability. So why is it that fervent advocacy by senior managers does not translate into organisational support for EP development? One possibility is what Kuczmarski (1996) identifies as CEO denial syndrome, suggesting that creating conditions for others to develop an EP calls for leaders who themselves have an external and futuristic perspective, and who therefore willingly nurture irreverence as an investment in long-term survival. Perhaps these are few and far between. In addition, senior managers may lack clarity about which organisational conditions will support external perspective development activities, and thus which activities to support.

Defining and developing an external perspective – a suggested model

An external perspective, broadly applied, appears to mean building knowledge of the world outside a contextual boundary (functional, organisational, industry) as a source of comparative practice, logic and ideas. Significant organisational and personal gains are to be made from broadening horizons, challenging dominant mindsets, and questioning the assumptions within any given contextual boundary, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the abilities required, choice of approach, and potential benefits to be gained are different depending on the boundary. Indeed, in stage one, we found contextual understanding to be a significant factor through which those with an external perspective effectively influence decisions and actions. We conclude that clarity will emerge about abilities, approaches and related organisational benefits by distinguishing between different levels of 'external perspective'. The empirical studies allow us to offer a differentiated view of level-related development activity and level-related outcomes. These are set out in Table 2.3.

While prominent commentators draw attention to the strategic significance of an extra-industry perspective, in reality organisational practice focuses on developing business and industry perspectives. Important though these are, they are unlikely to deliver the strategic advantages promised by the 'outward and forward' thinking of an extra-industry perspective.

Table 2.3 External perspective levels, development approaches and benefits – a model

Perspective level	Approaches to development	Benefits
Business Perspective: Looking beyond the functional boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross functional moves • Cross functional activity and networks • Developing general management knowledge • Developing organisational knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better quality operational decision-making • Enhancing functional contribution • Enhancing core competence • Enhancing strategic contribution potential at all levels
Industry Perspective Looking beyond the organisational boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross company career moves • Industry forums and networks • Developing industry/market knowledge • Benchmarking processes/competitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New to organisation ideas • Enhanced performance through increased efficiency • Competitive awareness • Maintaining competitiveness
Extra-Industry Perspective: Looking beyond the industry boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross industry career moves/secondments • Developing business and economic environment knowledge (e.g. reading widely, external development programs) • Benchmarking 'world class' performance • Cross industry forums and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New to industry ideas • Innovative solutions to old industry problems • New strategic directions • Sustained competitive advantage

As it is difficult to see how an extra-industry perspective could be used well without also having an industry and a business perspective, or how ideas generated from an industry perspective can be used well without a business perspective, the relationship between

perspectives might be conceived as 'nested capabilities'. This distinction would explain the apparently contradictory results in the capability rankings reported here. Although an EP is viewed as both critically important and widely lacking, it ranks behind commercial awareness, influencing skills and financial acumen, capabilities more associated with having an industry perspective (in the first case) and a business perspective (in the second two), but all of which are assumed by an extra-industry perspective. These layers are also consistent with our finding that the top two rated components of diverse experience are exposure to different organisational functions (business level), positions in different organisations (industry level), and that half of the high external perspective sample had experience in different industry sectors (extra-industry level).

An EP capability might therefore be best thought of as a set of distinct and defined organisational practices relating to each level, for example, internal versus competitor versus generic benchmarking or organisational versus industry versus cross industry networking. The clarification of business and industry level capability requirements, together with the necessary development and support requirements will be of considerable assistance to internal and external development decision-making.

However, it is in supporting an extra-industry perspective development that the significant challenges will appear for both senior managers and internal and external management development practitioners. If the development of an extra-industry perspective is to become a strategic capability, then senior managers will themselves need to develop that level of external perspective.

This model is tentative, and needs further empirical support. It however serves to provide a clarifying framework for a tangle of findings in an area that has critical business leadership significance, is highly valued but under-developed. In practice, to achieve the strategic benefits associated with an extra-industry perspective may require a higher level of cognitive, organisational and political skill than required for an industry or business perspective. Clearly the extra-industry perspective poses very different cognitive challenges which many will inevitably find difficult. The cognitive capabilities required are partially indicated by the work of Cockerill and Schroder (1993) and Sparrow (1999). Moreover, whilst the business and industry level perspectives follow naturally from good contemporary modelling

of strategy-making and practice (for example, competitor benchmarking), the extra-industry perspective does not. Rather, it is far more consistent with anticipating emerging conditions, bringing about broad positioning, and dealing strategically with what then happens.

The findings demonstrate the significance of individual capability as key to developing an EP. This is evident in the high value attributed to diverse experience, the importance of role modelling, high levels of EP correlated with individual activity levels in virtually every approach to developing it, the impact of contextual understanding, and its embodiment in specific individual attributes. This invokes questions about how to identify people with an EP capability potential, how best to develop it in individuals, and which organisation conditions best support it. The findings provide empirical support for others who have questioned the extent to which current management development offerings stimulate enough external, radical, strategic, diverse thinking (Butcher *et al.*, 2001; Coulson-Thomas, 2001). The analysis of organisational support for EP development approaches demonstrates the substantial untapped potential in each, indicating a clear need for an enhanced contribution from management development planning and management developers. These findings demonstrate the considerable untapped and unrealised potential to develop EP as a much needed and valued strategic and business leadership capability. These opportunities would appear to challenge current management development thinking and practice, yet this will need to be the starting point if the project of creating an EP capability is essentially a developmental one.

Notes

- 1 Full details of methodology are available in Butcher, Bailey, Meldrum and Bristow (2003).
- 2 Bailey, C. and Burr, J. (2008) Developing an External Perspective: Patterns of Activity in Senior Managers. Cranfield School of Management Research Report.

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3

A Leader's Journey to Engage

Jane Trinder

Despite the focus of contemporary leadership and change theory on the need for transformational leaders as visionary inspirers of change, many change initiatives still fail to deliver. Instead, they often increase cynicism and frustration. The focus of this chapter is following the journey of four people developing the capabilities to engage others in change activity. This chapter brings together an overview of the literature and an empirical study.

The context

Change is both a goal and a challenge to organisational life. The rapid and unpredictable changes faced by business today have increased the pace and complexity of change (Lewin and Regine, 2000). It is argued that to handle change effectively we need more leaders, and to move to distributing leadership in organisations (Conger and Xin, 2000; Keene, 2000). A critical issue faced by those leading change is to handle the additional activity and stress it adds to organisational life, which often causes difficulties in motivating people. An outcome of the change activity is that many people will tend towards ambivalence or resistance to a change situation (Schein, 1985). This emotional reaction to change, has been linked to feelings such as uncertainty, and insecurity (Mack, Nelson and Quick, 1998; Jimmieson, Terry and Callan, 2004), causing stress and anxiety leading to lower productivity, lower job satisfaction, and low morale (Mack *et al.*, 1998; Judge *et al.*, 1999). Arguably the job of a leader in a change context, is to engage people by creating an

environment which motivates people to achieve the goals of the organisation.

Evidence suggests that business performance and staff satisfaction improve when staff are engaged (Gallup survey Oct 2006), and that financial performance improves (IRS Nov 2007). An increasing number of surveys carried out in organisations have found that a large number of employees are not actively engaged in their organisation. For example an IBIS survey (2006) identified out of 1425 UK employees interviewed, 25 per cent were actively disengaged, with only 13 per cent claiming they were fully engaged with their company. The key focus of this chapter is to identify what are the leadership capabilities that enable engagement and what helps and hinders leaders as they attempt to take others on a journey of organisational change.

The chapter firstly explores the definitions of engagement and its importance to organisations, followed by a review of the literature to understand what capabilities are required to engage. There follows a review of the journey of four people seeking to engage people in a change agenda, looking at what helped and hindered them.

What is engagement?

Engagement started to become an area for research in the early 1990s, which has become part of the organisational vocabulary over the last ten years, based primarily on research from the business and consultancy sectors. Engagement is a construct with no single definition, although the roots of it come from research on job satisfaction, commitment and involvement, with links to motivational theory.

One question is how do we know if we are engaged? The feeling of engagement has been described as when 'people ... do not notice the passage of time – their hearts and minds are involved... It is sustained connection and undivided concentration' (Haudan and MacLean, 2002). Other researchers have related the experience of engagement to being in the 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1982), mindfulness (Langer, 1989), intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975), and being present (Kahn, 1992). It describes the sense of being deeply involved and focused on an activity, project, goal and or people so that you are motivated to achieve or complete the event no matter what.

To locate the capabilities of engagement it is helpful to understand definitions from different perspectives. A business focused view of engagement is 'the degree to which individuals are personally committed to helping an organisation by doing a better job than required to hold the job' (Kowalski, 2002). This perspective tends to emphasise setting a vision, planning and using tools such as performance management, combining thinking from the strategic, project and change management literature. Solutions to enable engagement vary from prescriptive process solutions, to more constructivist notions that centre on relationships, and communication. Research by Kotter (1995) explored why change efforts fail, and found problems occur in setting, communicating vision, planning, and building relationships with those involved in the change activity.

A sociological based definition is 'a social process, considered or accidental, by which leaders and employees become personally implicated in the performance of their own team in the context of contribution to wider organisational change, strategy, transformation, operational movement or day to day performance' (Smythe, 2007). This perspective places emphasis on the relational perspective, where individuals' identities become wrapped up in the change process, requiring the leader to pay attention to issues such as team dynamics, participative decision-making, culture and climate (Anderson and Zhu, 2002; Kowalski, 2002).

Finally a psychological definition is provided by Kahn (1990) who expressed engagement as 'the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive and emotional), and active, full role performances'. This perspective emphasises identity and motivation of individuals in relation to their decision as to whether to engage in change activity, the degree to which they remain present during change, and highlights the role of the leader to support people in finding a reason to remain engaged.

Engagement is a multi-faceted construct, requiring attention to process, relationships and personal identity. The next question is, what are the capabilities a leader might need to have or develop in order to effectively engage others? The term capability refers to the knowledge, skill, ability or personal characteristics associated with a desirable role performance within a particular purpose and context.

What are the capabilities associated with engagement?

A business/sociological view of engagement typified by Axelrod (2002), focuses on the capabilities associated with creating collaborative communities, of democracy in decision-making, creating a participative environment, underpinned by core capabilities such as listening. The argument is that people need to be involved in organisational strategy and direction so that they acquire a sense of ownership and commitment to it. This view places emphasis on the process and social element of the what, how, and why of change and engaging people rather than the individual's capabilities, or the psychological view. The implicit assumption is that capabilities such as emotional intelligence, listening, dialogue already exist to put vision, strategy, and plans together. This view is critical in that it provides some of the knowledge of processes such as stakeholder management, adopting collaborative/participative mechanisms in meetings, that enable engagement, and provides a framework in which more personal capabilities can then be directed. It is tempting to trivialise the importance of process as something easily learnt, but research from Kotter (1995) and discussion with those managing these processes would say that often the governance aspect of process management is lacking.

The sociological view of engagement suggests that the role of leaders is key and is 'not to create a great change management plan but to engage people in your business so they can think and act differently about it' (Haudan and MacLean, 2002). The focus for the leaders is that they then need to be able to help groups think and act differently around a new shared vision, if change is to become sustainable throughout the organisation rather than purely relying on 'the leader'. To think and act differently requires personal as well as organisational change, which people often resist (Schein, 1985). Resistance often occurs when leaders have not understood or challenged insensitively the culture of the organisation. Culture is made up of the values and beliefs of people and is the collective way in which the people in the organisation tend to behave i.e. 'the way of life in the organisation' (Hatch, 1997). Certain leadership styles i.e. coaching, affiliative, democratic and authoritative, were found by the Hay Group to be more effective than coercive and pacesetter ones at setting an organisational climate that fosters engagement

(Anderson and Zhu, 2002). These styles are underpinned by meta capabilities such as emotional intelligence which has been positively linked with work commitment (Abraham, 1999), job satisfaction, and research on successful leaders (Goleman, 1998; Kellest, Humphrey and Sleeth, 2002). Emotional intelligence has been defined as the 'the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thoughts, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth' (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). The theory is based on developing four key areas; self-awareness, self-management, interpersonal relationships and relationship management. This concept underpins capabilities needed to collaborate and manage increased participation in change efforts that are described in the more business orientated literature. However, beneath the need for emotional intelligence lies more fundamental capabilities.

The psychological definition has focused on authenticity as being the extent to which a person feels and acts in a way that is congruent with whatever they are doing, or is able to 'walk their talk' (Hodgkinson, 1991). In a change situation this is about the leader acting in a way congruent with the intent of the change and their notion of their role and identify within that change. Kahn described the capabilities associated with authenticity as being present with others in terms of thoughts, feelings, belief and actions. He found four capabilities associated with presence; attentiveness, connectivity and integration of aspects of identity and focus. Attentiveness is being open to others (Gibb, 1961) and not being disabled by anxiety (Kahn, 1992). Connectivity is about establishing empathy and a collaborative spirit. Integrating aspects of the self relies on emotional intelligence, and requires someone to be aware of different aspects of themselves, to resolve internal contradictions so they can be present. The fourth aspect of focus is about using the above capabilities to converse with others until the aspect that they are engaged with is brought to an appropriate conclusion. To focus requires putting aside personal assumptions, roles and fully understanding and supporting the position of the other, whilst helping them to challenge their view of the world and how to move forward. Having presence has been seen as key to core capabilities such as handling diversity (Toffler, 1986), and having difficult conversations (Smith and Berg, 1987). In the context of change, presence is about having

the capability to enable people to generate ideas, question the status quo, have the difficult conversations and bring their whole self into the change effort (Weisbord, 1987).

Underpinning all the above capabilities is that of dialogue. There are a number of ways we can converse with others using debate, discussion and dialogue (Bohm, 1996). These different forms of conversation have different intentions and potential outcomes. The difference between dialogue and other forms in a change context is the intention to reach a conclusion based on a deep understanding of different views that enable a way forward that the majority can buy into. Torbert (1991) argues that leaders need to enable employees to challenge convention and change the way things are done through dialogue with this intent in mind. Argyris (1990) discusses model I and II theories in use, and that whilst model II theories are required for the change and learning agenda and often intellectually understood are often not acted on. Capabilities associated with dialogue are documented in various sources (Argyris, 1990; Torbert, 1991; Heron, 1996), and include basic capabilities such as listening, rapport building as well as more sophisticated capabilities such as openness, bracketing, non-attachment. It is possible to conclude that the development of emotional intelligence would be a key for becoming present and enabling a dialogue that surfaces a different way of thinking about the change agenda. It is also possible to conclude that as Argyris found the model I theories are predominant in organisations, which limit learning and change, and are rarely focused on by development programs.

The inquiry process

The research involved four people who had attended a three year leadership programme that focused on change, emotional intelligence and strategy and which used action learning aimed at embedding learning. I had been involved in the last year of this programme in a facilitator capacity, and the four participants all wanted to be involved in the research to develop their effectiveness as leaders in change situations. My role in terms of the research was that of co-inquirer (Heron, 1996), although as in other situations I also took on role of facilitator as required. Three of these people formed one action learning group alongside others who were not a direct part of

this research, and one person worked in a collaborative inquiry mode with the researcher. Collaborative inquiry (CI) is part of the action research family which seeks to focus people on a process that enables them to focus on a change in their real life, taking them through a number of learning cycles. CI is a dialogue approach influenced by people such as Socrates, Plato, Hegel, Marx. It gives an equal voice to the person/people who are the focus of the research including the researcher, and 'democratizes the knowledge process, and process of social change' (Kakabadse, Kakabadse and Kalu, 2007), focusing on participative and dialogic inquiry (Reason, 1988). It provides a high level methodology and principles that is then added to in detail by the people participating in the research.

From the start of the project initial engagement from the four people was very high; it was seen as a new challenge, the chance to make something happen and a chance to learn and develop in a safe environment. Some of the participants were more noticeably confident about their ability to impact change, albeit from the researcher's perspective they also were less aware of the potential issues. They were more certain there was a right way of doing change, and were task rather than people orientated.

Getting started on the journey

The confidence and focus of participants varied at the start of the journey. It became obvious right at the outset there were fundamentally two different models of change which appeared to influence what actions and behaviours they associated with how to engage others.

An individual's understanding of what is meant by 'change'

The first view of change held by the three working together was a linear and step by step approach popularised by Lewin (1947/1951) who conceptualised change as three stages of unfreezing, changing and refreezing a change. The fourth participant saw it as a more emergent and dynamic process (Mabey and Mayon-White, 1993; Dawson, 1994). Research by Goffman (1961), and Kahn (1990) suggest the psychological aspect of engagement aligns with the dynamic view of change. People move on a continuum of engagement to

disengagement as a regulator in managing a stress, workload and energy (Kahn, 1990).

The linear view of change appeared to encourage a view that once someone is engaged that's it, and no more effort was required. It fitted with a project management orientation favoured by the culture of the organisation, which encouraged a quick process to get to point of what they were going to do and how to do it. Once a plan was in place the prevailing attitude was 'I am going to persuade or tell everyone else why this is a good idea and they will get it'. This is in keeping with findings by Quinn and Snyder (1998) that many people's implicit theory on change leads to two propositions, use rational persuasion, and if they don't comply, then coerce.

Quinn and Snyder (1998) proposed an Advanced Change Theory (ACT), which has aspects of the three approaches to engagement. It has a constructivist base, encouraging a participative, dialogic approach to change with an emergent rather than linear change perspective. The fourth person had a bias towards this view of change. He spent time at the outset of the research and change process concerned with his role as leader and working out how to influence and facilitate change. The reality was that it took him longer to commit to leading the change but the thought process to get there was at a fundamental level in terms of thinking through issues of identity, beliefs and motivation.

The motivation for leading change

The motivation for engaging with the project varied across the group of three 'this will be good for my career', 'I want to make a difference' and 'I want to develop my leadership capability'. At face value some of these statements were more about the organisational good than self interest or a mix. As the inquiry developed different motivations were observed. For some who felt insecure about changes in their area it became obvious that aspects of being safe in their job, being able to hold on to it, or ensuring it remained untouched by change in the organisation were of paramount concern. There was also an element of wanting to be seen to support the organisation's agenda, in other words belong and fit in. The other motivation was a want to achieve, to be challenged and learn something.

The decision to engage

The start of the engagement process was focused on by Kahn (1990) who found that what drove the choice to engage, was concerns of safety, availability and meaningfulness. This he linked to Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs, for example safety is lower in the hierarchy and he found the level of engagement will be lower if we simply engage to be safe than if we engage for reasons of self actualisation. Safety is a particular concern in a change situation which triggers resistance in many individuals who if feel threatened are less likely to engage willingly, or feel a sense of ownership. Availability concerns the time and resource to dedicate to the activity and or people in question, and again a key issue with change as often change is on top of the day job. As can be seen from the initial reasons for engagement various aspects of Maslow's hierarchy were in evidence i.e. safety, affiliation, esteem and knowing and understanding from the three participants.

Person four had a different motivation for being involved. His attitude was more reflective with overt questions he brought to the inquiry about 'why the change was meaningful to him and others' and 'how to get other people on board using more of a collaborative and people focused style than was typical in the organisation'. A question reiterated frequently in the early months of research was 'What motivates you to go on this journey?' It prompted a variety of responses far more specific and individualistic than those in the other group.

His response also covered a variety of levels in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, from esteem, to learning, to aspects of self actualisation.

The change agenda begins for group of three

As the change agenda progressed the group of three identified a need to understand more about change, leadership and emotional intelligence. They requested mini input sessions using a variety of tools which were introduced to the group as they evolved the capability to engage with each other.

All identified the need to become more emotionally intelligent without being that specific about what that really meant. Various

psychometrics and models of an individual were used to help them to identify potential strengths and weaknesses in implementing change and to demonstrate increased emotional intelligence within the group. Action learning (Revan, 1982) enables learning as a team as well as focus on task and task content. A basic assumption was that evidence of better engagement skills would first be seen in the learning group before going broader into the organisation.

The fourth participant had a similar focus on the emotional intelligence aspect for similar reasons, but they were both more specific about what they needed and had a well defined sense of their strength and weaknesses. Their focus was on inquiring about their beliefs, values, rationale with regard to the change agenda. There was less reliance on models and more reflection on their behaviour in various situations which they used to inquire on how effectively they were engaging others in change.

A key difference started to emerge after the first few inquiry sessions in terms of both the capability to be present, and capability to engage in dialogue rather than debate between the participants. At the start of the action learning sessions the group of three tended to engage in action learning in more surface sense. The focus was on understanding communication and decision-making patterns, who needed time to reflect, who tended to want to just get on with things. During these sessions a variety of different models and tools were used to stimulate exploration of the individuals sense of self and others views of them, conversations became increasingly more personal, had the potential for deep inquiry, and exposing fears and vulnerabilities that could make conversations potentially difficult. Within the group of three dialogue at this level was not something they experienced in the work situation, nor for many of them in a personal setting either. The tendency was to opt for debate, and to defend and propose ideas or thoughts, or to avoid offering them at all; this is in line with the findings of Argyris (1990). They found it difficult to pick up on, and use as information, underlying feelings, nor did they seek to clarify beliefs and assumptions. Rather than exploring the train of thought of a speaker, often their internal dialogue or their own views were imposed so that conversation bounced around rather than exploring issues in depth. This in turn impacted the capability to connect and empathise. The net result

was the capability to focus and persevere with dialogue limited. As the development activity evolved the capability to have a dialogue increased in terms of people becoming more present and authentic, with facilitation of the group moving from purely the researcher, to being shared by the group. Inquiry took place at more depth with greater personal risks being taken in being prepared to reveal more of their own thoughts and trusting the dialogue process to elicit shared agreement.

This was again different for the fourth person, who did have the slightly different situation in building more of a one-to-one relationship with the researcher/co-inquirer. However, from the start of the relationship it moved from debate in the first session to deep inquiry that encompassed both individuals, and which involved a deep exploration of values, beliefs, motivation, and intentions. This level of dialogue enabled the researcher to almost immediately sit in the role of co-inquirer and work with the full methodology of collaborative inquiry. For both inquirers the issue of connectivity in the dialogue was key, as the level of intimacy of the dialogue required both to develop increased empathy, and capability to sit with discomfort. Also for both it brought up issues of identity in terms of how they related in terms of role and in coming to terms with aspects of themselves that were previously not so obvious.

At this point in the inquiry process the sentence completion test (SCT) by Loevinger (1976), Cook-Greuter (1999) was introduced. It gives a view of the person from a maturity point of view and explains differences not easily explained by personality preference tests also used during the inquiry. The key prompt was the differing capability between individuals to have a dialogue.

Adult maturation

Adult development theorists argue that there are a number of development stages, with development being uni-directional, each stage of development allowing new modes of being, reflected in adapting mental models and behaviour (Cook-Greuter, 1999). Each stage is progressive as cognitive and interpersonal capabilities unfold, enabling an individual to handle increasing complexity, and integrating an understanding of the self and others (Loevinger, 1976; Kegan, 1982; 1994; Torbert, 1991; Alexander, Heaton and Chandler,

1994). Those in the higher stages of development known as post conventional are also capable of;

- Reflectivity, and as a habit explore and evaluate their own and others habits and mental models.
- Sitting with the complexity of change, in context, and working with 'what is'.
- Being less ego centric and more focused on others and more global issues.
- Becoming more present.

Drath (1990) found that Kegan's typology of stages explains the phenomenon of managers at lower levels of development who 'have a sincere commitment to be participative and empower their subordinates, yet cannot follow through on their commitment'. Kahn suggested few adults reached the maturity and associated capabilities to engage others at deeper levels. This idea has also been put forward by Maslow, as well as those looking at transformational leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Fisher, Rooke and Torbert 2003). The implication is that developing the capability to engage is part of the adult maturation process, that it also embodies the development of the more fundamental capabilities that underpin engagement.

In terms of the group of three participants one was in his late 40s, and profiling in transition between conventional and post-conventional stage of development. Participant two was mid 30s, profiling as just post-conventional. Participant three was late 30s, profiling as conventional and participant four was early 40s, profiling as post conventional. The maturity profile of the participants fitted with both their differing capabilities for dialogue, degree of self awareness, and models of change and leadership. In terms of the inquiry it supported a greater understanding in the group of why people held different perspectives and their preparedness to take on different ideas. The key focus was learning to work at the level someone was at and help them grow from that point, rather than focus purely on the intellectual side and expect people to simply make the leap on that basis. For example, the person with the conventional profile responded to more conventional targets and goals and would only try to dialogue when a very definite benefit was established by him so he could see the point,

unlike the others who all to some extent had a more internalised focus.

End of observed journey

As the action learning meetings progressed issues of authenticity became more important, i.e. walking the talk. It became increasingly obvious that the same language could mean different things to different members of the group. This highlighted an issue about how to align people with different needs in the group around one change agenda, and their rationale for participating in the project. It re-opened the question of 'why am I engaging in this change'. The inquiry process underlined that this point was often reached in change projects in organisational life, and if the organisational focus was perceived as shifting or they were not rewarded for it, they would then disengage sub-consciously.

The inquiry, having exposed different motivations and approaches, raised a conflict issue in the group of three that became difficult to reconcile. At this point there was a swing on the engagement continuum towards disengagement (Kahn, 1992) which was more noticeable for the least mature members of the group. The inquiry vocalised a choice and a questioning of motivation, which for some of the group enabled a deeper connection to be made to the inquiry process. Those that had engaged at a level where self actualisation and learning issues became more important than fitting in with the perceived right way of leading change in the organisation were most likely to want to stay with the inquiry process.

The fourth person saw through the inquiry process and was successful in engaging his group in a dialogue to help the group as a whole transform their attitude towards the business. He successfully grew the business and managed to engage senior management in a vision that offered much wider and more profitable opportunities for the business.

Conclusions from the inquiry group

One outcome for all the four people involved is they felt their capability to have real dialogue, and to be present had increased but they found it difficult to work with those, particularly in senior

positions, who demonstrated little capability to engage. Those who had a lower maturity score developed their capability to be present and hold dialogue but not at the same speed nor capability level. All developed towards a more balanced people and task approach to change but still were more about managing change than leading.

For all participants the capability to dialogue, and emotional intelligence was perceived as having a positive improvement from group feedback and from observation made by those outside the group. In all cases they reported that they had increased the choices they had as to how to engage within the organisation.

In retrospect it was the two most mature members of the group that had the most success in leading change in their business. Importantly it was having a balance between the process of and people aspects of change where they consciously planned and set up time to create a dialogue with key people, discussing both process and more personal aspects of the change.

All participants felt they were prone to disengage at times given the difficulty of working in a context that was not based on dialogue, nor consciously thought about aspects of engagement. Having support elsewhere in the organisation and as part of the group became a key aspect in maintaining the energy to engage others.

From this study there was evidence to suggest that the journey to engage others in change in part was pre-determined by the level of maturity of the participant. Different levels of engagement would appear to align with different levels of maturity and give a potential framework for understanding what the development potential of an individual maybe in a given period of time. Lack of senior role models able to engage others, and conventional cultures espousing model I theories, linear/project management views of change, emphasis on task rather than people all hinder engagement capability. The capability to engage others can be developed, using approaches that emphasise dialogue and are personally meaningful to participants, but requires sufficient support and time for it to embed.

Further research is now underway to understand what engagement looks like at different levels of maturity to support awareness building of those leading change. The aim is to enable individuals in organisations to lead change more effectively and to provide leaders with tools that will help them audit the business's and their own readiness for change.

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Part II

Leadership Development and Delivery

4

The Aesthetics of Leadership Development

Alan George and Donna Ladkin

Over the last ten years there has been an upsurge in the use of arts-based approaches within leadership development (Mockler, 2002; Darso, 2004). For instance, in the UK, the director and actor Richard Olivier has championed the reading and dramatisation of Shakespeare plays as a mode of leadership development (Olivier, 2002), the Banff Centre for Leadership in Alberta Canada regularly incorporates mask-making, poetry and dance in its 'Leadership Lab' and the Bled School of Management in Slovenia runs an innovative programme in which participants on leadership development programmes conduct an orchestra as a way of gaining a new perspective on teamworking. Theoretical development in this area is also on the rise, heralded by an International Arts of Organisation and Management conference held biennially since 2002 as well as the introduction of the journal *Aesthesis*, which encourages discourse amongst academics and practitioners forging innovative theory in the intersection between organisation and art.

These developments point to a growing acknowledgement of the part the arts can play in both bringing new insights to our understanding of organisational life, and in contributing to the development of leaders and managers. Participants on leadership development programmes may no longer be shocked to find themselves painting or playing with modelling clay or even conducting musical ensembles as part of formal development processes they undertake.

This chapter considers the notion of the 'aesthetic' and how it is, or could be used within leadership development. The shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines 'aesthetics' as 'the science of conditions of

sensuous perception'. We include in our use of the term *the aesthetic*, sensory perceptions of the world and the thoughts and feelings that spring from them. In their review of organisational aesthetics, Taylor and Hansen (2005) adopt a similar description:

Broadly, aesthetics is concerned with knowledge that is created from our sensory experiences. It also includes how our thoughts and feelings around them inform our cognitions (Taylor and Hansen, 2005, p. 1212).

We begin by examining leadership development programmes which overtly incorporate aesthetic media in their designs. In these interventions, arts-based activities such as theatre, music, or the creation of artistic artefacts play a focal role in the intervention itself, and are representative of activities we will call the 'expressive' aesthetic.

The chapter moves on from these overtly aesthetic activities to consider a more subtle approach to understanding the function of the aesthetic within leadership development. This is fuelled by an appreciation of the 'intrinsic aesthetic' which inherently unfolds as part of any leadership development intervention (or any encounter, for that matter!). We suggest that the intrinsic aesthetic is always available to leadership development professionals, whether or not they have formal arts-based training. Furthermore, we propose that attending to the intrinsic aesthetic of an evolving intervention can enhance practitioners' sensitivity to its potentialities. If the practitioner is able to work flexibly, we propose that it can also lead to qualitatively more engaged and potentially deep interventions. The chapter concludes by suggesting ways in which leadership development practitioners might develop their own awareness of and ability to respond to the intrinsic aesthetic of the programmes in which they are involved. First, however, we consider the overt use of arts-based methods, and the potential drivers which contribute to their impact.

The expressive aesthetic: using arts-based methods within leadership development

By using the term 'expressive' aesthetic, we mean approaches which incorporate readily identified artistic practices, such as theatre,

music, fine art, dance, or other art forms. Particular leadership development interventions might be wholly based on such forms, such as the previously mentioned work that Richard Olivier undertakes with *Henry V* and *King Lear*, or a more general intervention might include an overt form in part of its content (such as the inclusion of a day spent with the violinist, Miha Pogacnik, on Bled's leadership development programme). Either way, including these art forms poses the question, 'What do those who design these interventions hope participants will glean from their involvement with 'expressive' aesthetic approaches?'

In their paper Taylor and Ladkin (2009) begin to address this question by identifying four processes which they theorise underpin most interventions utilising overtly aesthetic approaches. These are:

- *Skills transfer*: here the suggestion is that skills which are used in arts-based endeavours can be transferred back into organisational settings. For instance, by practising some of the sensitivities an improvisatory jazz artists needs to have in order to 'jam' with their ensemble, the leader can likewise exercise greater sensitivity to the energy and possibilities of the team they lead.
- *Projective technique*: this process underpins those interventions which require participants to create, choose, or consider an artefact which in some way represents an aspect of themselves, or a vision for themselves or their organisation. By 'objectifying' the feelings or vision in an externally created form, such as a mask, or a collage, or a sculpture, the participant can more consciously reflect on the meaning and implications for how they might move forward.
- *Illustration of essence*: this process suggests that arts-based methods can enable participants to apprehend the 'essence' of a concept, situation, or tacit knowledge in a particularly arresting and enduring way. For instance, by exploring the leadership dilemmas faced by *Henry V*, participants can reflect on the nature of power, relationships, and intractable difficulties in a way which goes beyond traditional case methods.
- *Making*: this final process incorporates all those interventions which require the participant to create an artefact of some sort, be it a painting, a collage, a dance or a poem. The making can

occur individually or as a group. Taylor and Ladkin suggest that the power of 'making' rests in its ability to foster a deeper experience of personal connection and presence, which can lead to an experience of wholeness and healing for organisational leaders who so often experience their lives as fragmented and dislocated.

Taylor and Ladkin point out that these processes do not necessarily act in isolation from one another, and often an arts-based intervention will include activities which incorporated more than one. For instance, by constructing a leadership mask, as participants on Banff's 'Leadership Lab' are invited to do, the participant experiences both 'making' (selecting the shape and size of the mask, choosing symbols with which to decorate it, selecting its colour and overall appearance) and also using the mask as a projective tool for examining in a more conscious way the meanings behind symbols chosen.

This model begins to point to some of the benefits of the expressive aesthetic in leadership development. Such activities provide a means for a certain kind of reflective activity untouched by other techniques, whether this takes place in the midst of 'making' or after an artefact is complete when its creator stands back to consider what it 'means'. The kinds of understandings which can result from considering the essence of an artefact work below the rational level of awareness, accessing emotional depths which can inform practice at a tacit level. Finally, participants often find using arts-based practices fun, which in itself can enhance learning opportunities.

To date there has been little empirical work undertaken to evaluate the outcomes of such interventions, although anecdotal evidence suggests participants can often experience them as powerful and memorable experiences. Particularly, there is a need for further research which would explore how lessons learned within these types of interventions are put into practice back in the workplace. However, there are other reasons why expressive aesthetic forms may be problematic within leadership development arena.

The first is the resistance that might be generated from participants who are convinced that in order to participate in such activities, they must have expertise and talent. Encouraging people who have been told all of their lives that they have no musical ability to improvise in a jazz ensemble, or convincing those who have never

stepped onto a stage that there is merit in their reading from *King Lear*, can be a time-consuming and energy draining hurdle to overcome before learning can even begin.

Secondly, such interventions often require specialist artistic input, thus placing them 'out of bounds' for many leadership development practitioners. The theatre work which incorporates Shakespeare is run by the actor/director Richard Olivier, and the improvisatory jazz work would require the expertise of jazz musicians. Contact between organisational leaders and these artists can be exciting and new ideas can spark between the two, but 'artists' can also be perceived as operating within reified and somehow 'unreal' worlds which have little to do with the manager/leaders' day job.

Thirdly, there is the concern that such interventions can be seen to be 'tacked' on, rather than intrinsic to the leaders' own experience. In his work exploring the use of the expressive aesthetic within developmental interventions, George (2007) found that:

When, where, with whom and how expressive activities work is contextual – for them, for me, on that day, in that moment. In facilitating activities I have to play within this context, by improvising the best match between the moment and the purpose. There are no formulae which will guarantee replicable outcomes from expressive activities.

Their use in itself is a form of aesthetic process and depends on the attunement and skill of the facilitator and the energy and creativity of the group coming together... (p. 198).

Given these issues, we ask whether or not there is a way in which those engaged in leadership development interventions might incorporate the sensibilities of aesthetic engagement in more organic and integrated ways into their own practices. Can development of aesthetic sensitivity and sensibility help leadership developers engaged in more traditional approaches bring added depth to their work? This is the territory we explore in the following section of the chapter.

The intrinsic aesthetic

The previous section of this chapter presented an overview of expressive approaches to leadership development and outlined some of the

benefits and challenges of using them. However to view the aesthetic of practice solely in terms of the introduction of expressive activities is to ignore the wider implications of taking an aesthetic stance. Our focus therefore shifts to the 'intrinsic' aesthetic of learning relationships, which brings life and energy to the group. We aim to show how deepening recognition of this aspect of leadership development may enrich learning.

Earlier the 'aesthetic' was defined as 'the feelings and cognitions that derive from perception and the range of ways in which they find representation'. Now in talking of the 'intrinsic' aesthetic the emphasis falls on the *perceptions* end of the aesthetic spectrum, rather than the end concerned with the presentational ways in which they are expressed. Perceptions spring spontaneously from experience and find representation in reflection and dialogue. They are experienced continuously as a consequence of our phenomenological participation in the world and influence how we engage and act.

To illustrate this concept of the intrinsic aesthetic, cast your mind back to the last occasion you were a participant in an event, maybe at a conference. What surfaces as you revisit it in your mind? You may find yourself remembering the physical ambience of the room, its layout and furnishings, its location within an institution or its immediate environment. Bachelard (1958) reminds us of the imaginative potency of the space we inhabit, which he sees as being grounded in our birth home.

The significance of such memories to our argument is to act as a reminder of how inextricably the perception of an event is linked with its physical setting and the feelings it raised for you as you acted in it. In this way, meeting places themselves create an aesthetic ethos, which exercises a subtle but significant influence on what happens within that space. Leadership developers may reflect on their own practice of arranging tables and chairs in such a way to foster certain kinds of interactions, and some go further in instigating ways to make a room feel more like a group's 'own space'.

In recollecting a recent event, it is likely that what also comes to mind is the quality of thinking and dialogue that was possible through the unfolding relational dynamic of the session. Your recollections will be redolent with the 'flavour' of dialogue, the rise and fall of creative energy you experienced. They will also be 'peopled' in the sense that close observation of others as they talk or listen

becomes inseparable from the words they say. Equally you may be able to re-enter into the experience of voicing your own contribution to a discussion, replaying in your mind the flow of improvised meaning-making you were engaged in. You may also recover something of the feelings of elation, fear or timeliness of that moment.

In re-running such recollective 'tapes' we make judgements about ourselves and others. These may contribute to a 'the ladder of inference' (Argyris, 1990), a process whereby observations are seen to transmute through the ascending rungs of assumptions, conclusions and beliefs, which then become a springboard for further action. The use here of the metaphor of a recording tape, also points up a connection between this intrinsic aesthetic re-processing and parallel experiences we have as we view films, drama or read stories. Where such artworks relate to us we are similarly moved to reflect on the paradoxes, tensions and resolutions that they enact.

Why focus on the intrinsic aesthetic in practice?

One principal reason for focusing on the intrinsic aesthetic in the practice of leadership development is because in so doing alternative and significant ways of knowing are given greater recognition. Reason and Heron (1997) draw attention in their extended epistemology to four main ways of knowing – the experiential, the presentational, the propositional and the practical. The emphasis in many academic courses has traditionally focused on propositional knowing as embodied in theories and models derived from rational insights.

Attending to the experiential and presentational dimensions of learning within leadership development extends the boundaries of what is regarded as worthy of reflective inquiry. It legitimises sharing and reflecting on individual and group experiences in relational encounters. Furthermore, it recognises the inseparability of feelings and reasonings (Fineman, 2000) in all leadership transactions. By recognising that what we feel, as well as what we think, shapes our beliefs, the emotional and sensuous colour of our experience becomes legitimate data to include in decision-making and other leadership enactments.

Moreover, as has been noted (Argyris and Schon, 1974), understanding more about the relationship between espoused theories, derived from propositional learning, and theories-in-use, developed

and drawn on in actual practice, calls for sustained reflection. Reflection on action through dialogue which includes impressions, feelings and perceptions, as well as rational 'facts' can in this way help participants to become clearer about what informs their patterns of leadership. Participants' own capacity to work with these processes in their daily practice may be seen as an important constituent of their success as leaders. Failure to notice and respond to the subtleties of dialogue and drama that make up corporate life leaves the leader short on essential decision-making data. If development is to parallel daily life and offer something of practical relevance, a heightened awareness of the intrinsic aesthetic may be considered an important route to achieving this. In order to elaborate on how attention to the intrinsic aesthetic might inform practice, we now focus on a particular aspect which is often apparent within leadership development interventions, that of play.

The role of play within leadership development interventions

In our experience in facilitating leadership development activities we often notice how group interactions share a tendency, along with expressive activities such as jazz and theatre, towards playful improvisation. Shaw (2002) picks up on this theme when she writes:

I am suggesting that we could approach the work of organisational change as improvisational ensemble work of a narrative, conversational nature, a serious form of play or drama with an evolving number of scenes and episodes in which we all create our parts with one another (Shaw, 2002, p. 28).

Building on this notion of serious play, we now briefly draw on elements of play theory to cast further light on the intrinsic aesthetic of development events. Caillois (1958) describes four fundamental types or 'anthropological dispositions' of play: *Alea*, *Agon*, *Ilinx* and *Mimesis*. To summarise them very briefly, *Agon*, or contest, forms the basis for all competitive team and individual games. *Alea*, or chance, is found in many games, including gambling. *Ilinx*, or carnival, occurs in revelry or Bacchanals. *Mimesis* encompasses all play where people assume roles and behave in imitation of others, including drama.

Caillois suggests that play is defined by certain conditions. Firstly, play is not 'the real thing'; importantly, it shadows or mirrors a par-

allel reality. One familiar example would be found in the use of case studies or simulations in leadership development, where despite the competitive vigour (Agon) that may be generated, participants know that their decisions are taken in a 'playground' and are not necessarily for implementation in a real organisation. Such games also often feature chance elements, or joker cards (Alea). Aleatory play invokes feelings of random good luck or irrational injustice. Paradoxically, although it makes sense to strive for 'realism' in the detail of such work, it is its playful quality which engages the imagination of participants. Our experience suggests that activities which fire the imagination and recreate sensory and dramatic engagement in participants may offer the potential for greater integration into practice. Because they are fun and last longer in the memory, they can serve as important touchstones for reference and reflection long after the actual engagement has passed.

Another condition of play is that it requires some form of boundary and rule-setting. If rules are broken, players are perceived to be spoil sports. Working in complex and multi-voiced organisations, leaders may often be inhibited from 'playing' because of the personal risks and uncertainties caused by insecure or changing rules. In so doing they may stifle their own creativity and that of others. In the reflective dialogue of development sessions, boundaries and rules can be established collaboratively, to create a safe playground in which people can experiment with alternative strategies and more profound reflexive learning. Although sometimes these boundaries may need to be set formally in discussion with the group, the writing up of formulaic 'ground rules' is not always necessary; indeed it may be perceived as a somewhat token piece of 'legislation'. More often working rules evolve and can be authenticated by the stance of practitioner and others in the dialogues that ensue.

Interpreting what happens during a leadership development intervention through the lens of 'play' can bring new insights to the undercurrents of group dynamics and provide novel explanations for 'What is going on here?' as a programme unfolds. For instance, rather than only seeing a programme as a progression of different inputs, it could also be viewed as a sustained improvisational inquiry into what it means to act as a good leader. From this perspective, mimesis can be seen to be at work not just in conscious 'acting' in activities such as role plays or simulations, but also more broadly as participants 'try

out' the differences in opinions and approaches that they sense in others. Mimesis raises questions about 'Where do I fit in here?' 'Who am I dependent on?' and 'How do I have to be in order to retain my autonomy?' as participants experiment with new leadership identities and behaviours. The essential question posed by much development work, that is, 'What sort of leader do I want to become?' has strong mimetic qualities.

Considering the energy of a group through the lens of the intrinsic aesthetic can bring new understandings to the inevitable ebbs and flows of the way a group works together. For example, the llinx or revelry of group sessions may spring from a visceral expression of group cohesion and often seems to follow a period of agonistic struggle and tension. Laughter is a marker of perceived ironies and sudden insights into discontinuities between, for example, the public and the private, or intention and outcomes.

Similarly 'Alea' can be seen to be in operation in the chance connections and interactions which occur as a programme unfolds. As experienced in serendipitous moments, Alea often provides a marker in dynamic transitions within encounters. George (2007) draws attention to the potency of such moments. In his practice journal (Diagram 1) he notes an experience of this whilst facilitating a management development residential for a group of lawyers.

Being attentive to these moments, and finding appropriate ways of pointing them out to the group can model ways of living more closely with the unexpected and working with paradox.

Another important dimension of the intrinsic aesthetic in groups is 'the poetic' which is closely interwoven with play. We note briefly that the group's capacity to construct its own poetic imagery and imaginatively explore experience through language, action and visual media, can be legitimised and encouraged through the modelling and framing the developer offers in their own facilitative approaches. At a simple level noticing the sensuous sources of some of the metaphors people find themselves voicing, may render more explicit their feelings and assumptions about leadership. To take some common examples, 'rolling out', 'leveraging up' or 'taking forward', may be heard as belonging to heroic and proactive leadership styles which evoke powerful physical effort against the odds; this awareness might provide an opening to some useful dialogue on the costs and benefits of being a heroic leader. We now move to consider more closely how leadership development professionals might work with these ideas in practice.

Journal	Commentary
<p>'In preparing the ground floor hotel conference room before the first participants arrived, I had adjusted the Venetian blinds, to let maximum light in, but also to obscure as much as possible of the kitchen delivery area and car park outside.</p> <p>On Day Two after the coffee break the room visibly darkened and there was a noise of a lorry parking. I rotated the blind a bit and looked up. The view was obliterated by a lorry side with the word, 'SUN-LIGHT' emblazoned across it, with a token yellow sun and a wavy blue landscape.</p> <p>Maybe the DARKNESS lorry came after dusk, but I wasn't there to see it.'</p>	<p>I notice on re-reading this item my aversion to the anaesthetic of conference venues, so thoroughly 'concierged', and drained of all personality – a room for all occasions.</p> <p>The aesthetic of place is not static but changes in a systemic way with the flow of activity in and around the event. The delightful serendipity in the arrival of the 'Sunshine Lorry' formed a playful interaction with what was emanating from the place. The brief intervention that it made produced spontaneous laughter. The Alea of it falling into our shared consciousness was pleasurable. In some light way my own noticing of it and my permissive response to it was in line with that of the group, as we acknowledged the irony of its coming. In that sense it added some further definition to how we saw each other; it confirmed that we were people who would share playfulness together. It became part of the shared aesthetic of our working together.</p>

Diagram 1

How can leadership developers work more consciously with the intrinsic aesthetic?

The case has been made for attending to the intrinsic aesthetic as a means of bringing a distinctive interpretation to what unfolds as participants in leadership development programmes work together. In whatever happens, whether in the form of action learning dialogue or exercises based on music, drawing, model-making and so on, intrinsic aesthetic processes of play and improvisation are at work. Working more consciously with this dimension requires a particular kind of attentiveness, which we suggest is actually very much aligned with the kinds of sensibilities leadership developers must already practise to engage effectively with groups. In other

words, skilled leadership developers are probably already attending unconsciously, if not consciously to the quality of a group's energy, the tone of interactions, the feelings that are readily expressed. Here we are making explicit this important source of data and offering practices which might enhance developers' conscious awareness of this dimension.

While making these suggestions, we also note that it would be presumptuous to offer prescriptions for working in this way, since the intrinsic aesthetic is generated collaboratively between each practitioner and their particular group. Different people, for example, work with a bias towards one or other of the four types of play. Their confidence and past experience of facilitation act further to shape the encounter. However, there are some pointers which we have found useful in reflecting on our own practice, which we now share.

Working explicitly with reflexivity

We would like to suggest that the developer's own capacity to attend to the intrinsic aesthetic of the group will be evident to and influential on participants. A key way in which this capacity is demonstrated is through explicitly creating reflective space in which the play and poetics of the group can be recognised and shared. This kind of reflexive inquiry (Reason and Heron, 1997; Marshall, 2001) can be encouraged in a number of ways, but here we offer two possibilities.

The first is to encourage reflective journaling, which unlike impromptu telling of anecdotes requires a greater level of critical engagement on the part of the writer. Although journal writing is a subjective process, it calls for a level of selectivity in the writing (van Maanen, 1988), particularly if it is agreed from the start that this is work to be shared with others in the group. Other more playful forms of writing as inquiry may help overcome initial resistance in a group (Wilkinson, 1998). These might include warm-up exercises such as writing the first line of your autobiography, or creating a haiku about a team meeting.

If the act of writing in this way still seems too great a challenge, oral storytelling can be structured to achieve considerable focus and imaginative richness, through devices like 'story circles' (Denver, 2006). Participants sit in a group of five or six and are invited to tell a story on, for example, 'the moment when you

discovered something important about your leadership'. Stories must be based on actual events and not a mini-lecture. They are restricted to three minutes and people may 'pass' if nothing comes to mind on the first or second rounds. Emphasis is placed on the listening as well as the telling; stories should be as spontaneous and unplanned as possible. Often stories are told with freshness and energy; they may feature critical moments from which the teller can derive learning in subsequent dialogue. People entering into this level of reflective inquiry will need tutor and peer feedback and support, if they are to make meaningful self discoveries about their leadership.

Additionally, the kind of reflexivity which is helpful in exploring the intrinsic aesthetic of an encounter includes the noticing and articulation of 'online' feelings and assumptions which arise as a programme unfolds. Modelling this reflexivity by sharing reactions with the group may encourage participants to engage in this kind of communication not just while the intervention is occurring, but also back in their workplaces.

As well as these specific actions developers can take, we would like to suggest a particular orientation which we believe aids in fostering an appreciation of the intrinsic aesthetic; an openness to play and playfulness.

Being more attuned to the potential for play in interventions

Practitioners and participants alike are caught up in various forms of play as sessions develop. In so doing they are creating an intrinsic aesthetic ethos which influences what happens and what may be learnt from it. Interventions may be thought of as aesthetic encounters through which we share representations of our different experiences. Sometimes the gap is large and we struggle to make these connections. Sometimes the spark of humour and creativity leaps across the gap and relationships are changed in subtle ways.

Focusing workshop learning on the way participants represent their experience as leaders, developers can help build the group's critical awareness of the assumptions and constructs they bring to the task of leading. Through intrinsic processes of improvisation and play, the group is better placed to re-imagine alternative scenarios which confront the grotesque as well as the beautiful aesthetic of organisational life (Strati, 1999).

Finally, we'd like to suggest that leaders are constantly navigating voyages across changing seas. Development interventions inevitably catch some of their backwash, and finding ways of representing the struggles of leading organisations can both nourish and 'lighten the load' for leaders facing some-times intractable difficulties. And this leads to our final reflection; that the intrinsic aesthetic is not always comfortable, or easy to hold.

It's not all about noticing the fun and the beautiful

It is important also to acknowledge that inquiry into the intrinsic aesthetic should not be thought of as some utopian quest for beauty. Strati (1999) sees a connection between organisational artefacts and theories of social conflict, by pointing out that they:

... do not constitute an imaginary terrain of peace, love and harmony. On the contrary I have repeatedly stressed that they are subject to social conflict in organisations, to the violence of corporate cultures, to the power of the dominant coalitions in organisational life (Strati, 1999, p. 75).

Taylor and Hansen (2005) suggest that in an organisation, the stage of engaging with the other-than-beautiful aesthetic may be a necessary step towards change.

The idea of having more beauty in organisations is intuitively appealing, but the aesthetic category of the grotesque may be the key to personal and organisational transformation (Taylor and Hansen, 2005, p. 1216).

Perhaps attending to the grotesque, the ugly, the disquieting that is going on both within a leadership development intervention, and more generally in the organisations in which we work poses the greatest challenge as well as the greatest potential for learning; this will inevitably mean engaging more explicitly with the intrinsic aesthetic.

Conclusion

In these brief descriptions of writing and storytelling activities we complete the circle and return to the expressive end of the aesthetic

spectrum which was where this chapter began. The writing may become poetry or fiction (Winter, Buck and Sobiechowska, 1999), storytelling may lead to dramatic improvisation (Taylor, 2000) improvisation may lead to music and so on. How far a leadership development practitioner chooses to go in these directions will need to be decided with respect for the group's needs and experience, as well as the confidence and security felt by the leadership developer.

However, when it comes to the intrinsic aesthetic of the learning process, the developer has no choice but to live in it and be part of it. A first step to engaging with this rich territory we suggest is for those designing and facilitating leadership development interventions to be more open to the gifts of their own sensory and emotional awareness. This includes being attentive to the multi-layers of meaning that any situation enfolds, noticing what catches you from the corner of your eye, attending to what snags your heart, what catches in your throat – recognising that mood and energy hold vital data and taking time to inquire into them, rather than dismissing them.

We each bring our own particular skills and experience in reading and responding to this work. When we do this explicitly with the people and groups with whom we are working, we inevitably help them grow in their own capacity to attend to, and make explicit, their own aesthetic perceptions. Working with experiential and presentational knowing complements and enlivens the propositional knowing of theories and models. Our aspiration is that the fruition of this extended epistemology in practice is in the action of more contactful relational, and generative organisational leadership.

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5

Coaching for Leadership Development: A Systems Psychodynamic Approach

Judith Bell and Clare Huffington

Leaders are often chosen because of their vision for the future of the organisation or their particular expertise, not necessarily because of skills in leading and managing people. They may not at first be aware of the singularity of the role or the need for responsibility for the system as a whole. However it soon impinges on all leaders that vision and technical knowledge is not enough. Without an appreciation of how to engage people in their vision from both within and outside the organisation, it will not be deliverable. This chapter considers a developmental intervention – a systems psychodynamic model of coaching for leadership – to help leaders become self aware in their leadership role and to become sensitive to the organisational dynamics that can influence and interfere with the leadership task. This chapter will outline a systems psychodynamic approach to leadership and then explore how the approach can be used in the coaching context and then consider its implications for and application to leadership development.

A systems psychodynamic approach to executive coaching is proposed as a model for leadership itself. This approach is different to other approaches to coaching in that it requires a psychological availability in the coach and the leader, as well as the need for a reflective space in order to uncover the ‘layers of meaning’ (Pooley, 2004) against which challenges and problems of leadership can be understood. If the leader has the opportunity to internalise this process they themselves may become ‘coach to the organisation’. A distinction is made between the leader as coach to the organisation and the manager as coach to the individuals in the organisation.

Examples of the approach in action will be described with leaders facing different challenges.

General principles of a systems psychodynamic approach

A systems psychodynamic approach relies on three principal frames of applied thinking and research. First, there is psychoanalytic practice as a method of tracing connections between conscious and unconscious mental processes and their significance for individual behaviour and development. Second, there is the extension of this practice to the study of group dynamics, called group relations (Bion, 1961). Third, there is systems thinking, which includes the open systems approach (Miller and Rice, 1967; Obholzer and Roberts, 1994) and the systems perspective developed by practitioners in family therapy and others (Bateson, 1973; Campbell, Draper and Huffington, 1991). These variously overlapping frameworks constitute the systems psychodynamic approach, sometimes called the 'Tavistock approach'. This conceptual framework faces considerable challenge due to the enormous changes in the external context around organisations which have fundamentally changed both the way they relate internally and how they engage with the environment.

A systems psychodynamic view of leadership

Organisations now inhabit radically different and shifting environments. They need to be able to be much more agile and have a sharper focus because of increased competition. There is a shift away from traditional command and control hierarchies towards greater flexibility. Decision-making is more likely to take place closer to the point of contact with the client or consumer in order that it is better tailored to his or her needs. This has been called distributed leadership or leadership at all levels (Kouzes and Posner, 2003; Pearce and Conger, 2005). Lateral relationships between people, groups, organisations and systems now have more primacy than the vertical relationships of the traditional hierarchy, calling upon different skills in leadership and management. Leadership needs to be a negotiated role, much more about people development, encouraging creativity and influencing others at the same time as offering a single inspiring vision to integrate and contain elements of leadership distrib-

uted to others (Huffington, James and Armstrong, 2004). There is a need for a real focus on people in the organisation, both those inside the organisation as employees and those outside as customers or clients.

Leadership and followership

Implicit in the description of leadership as a negotiated role in relation to the organisation in its environment is the idea that leadership is also negotiated with followers. As Anton Obholzer (2004, p. 33) points out; 'Without followership, there could be no leadership except, perhaps, of a delusional sort. What is more, for the organisation to be creative, it requires followership to be an active process of participation in the life of the common venture'.

Because leadership is essentially about the management of change, both internal and external to the organisation, there is an inherent tension between leaders who are pushing for change and followers who may often resist it.

A distinction is made between the use of power and authority in bringing about change. Power is seen as belonging to the individual in terms of personality or position and authority is seen as belonging to a role (Miller and Rice, 1967). The effective leader needs both; a fully authorised leader without resources will not be able to achieve the goals of the organisation any more than a leader with a powerful personality can be effective without being authorised by the senior team and employees of the organisation.

The leader needs to be able to work at resistance to change by attempting to understand the anxieties that it represents and seeking to address these in a constructive way so as to release energy for the creativity that will be needed in the changed organisation.

Leadership and management

With this approach, there is a distinction made between leadership and management; leadership being about creating and developing a vision of the future of the organisation and engaging with followers so that they buy into it and allow the leaders to take risks on their behalf (Hirschhorn, 1997). Leadership is thus about vision and about people. Management is about creating the organisation necessary to

deliver the vision; the people in their roles, the tasks, the processes, the structure. Contained within these descriptions is an underlying distinction between enterprise and organisation; enterprise meaning endeavour or carrier of organisational identity or primary spirit or practice. Organisation means the concrete framing of the enterprise (Armstrong, 1997). For example, one way of describing the enterprise of a school is that it is to create a learning environment, but the organisation built to deliver this could take many forms; from a traditional school building to teaching students in their own homes, offering counselling to parents, arranging exchanges to other countries etc. The leader needs to be able to work in the reflective and imaginative space between enterprise and organisation and engage in a constant internal debate about fitness for purpose. This can be a discussion for the senior team as well but is perhaps uniquely the responsibility of the leader who has the whole system in view.

In practice, leaders are also managers and managers are also leaders. Thinking specifically about the role of management, it is important that managers are able to be in touch with staff, to be alert to how they take up their role. Executive coaching for senior managers enables them to become a coach to the staff of the organisation.

The 'organisation-in-the-mind'

This term, originated by Pierre Turquet (1974) and developed by David Armstrong and colleagues at the Grubb Institute, refers to the emotional construct of the organisation in the minds of people both inside and outside it. Another way of thinking about it in psychoanalytic terms is as organisational countertransference. Armstrong (1997) describes it as emotional experience connected to the primary process of the organisation. So, for example, for a leader in an investment bank, the primary emotional experience might include fear, greed and excitement connected to gambling with high stakes. For the headteacher of a school, the primary emotional experience might be one of vulnerability, competition and rivalry connected to the teaching and learning process. In the systems psychodynamic approach, the experience of the organisation-in-the-mind is something the leader needs to understand, acknowledge, manage and, where possible, exploit its creative potential; rather than it being

something to be avoided or denied or treated as a side issue. There are ways in which the leader can help the organisation to harness the emotions connected with its primary process in constructive and creative ways rather than in destructive and dysfunctional ways. For example, understanding how the behaviour of students in school affects the dynamics of the organisation as a whole and the decision-making of the senior team can be very helpful to the head teacher in how to handle the future development of the school. The case studies which follow will illustrate further examples of working with leaders in coaching using the organisation-in-the-mind.

Case study one: Peter

Peter worked for a large technology organisation as global head of the legal function in the business. This was a new role as the company had recently developed worldwide offices. It was also a strange role in that, although it was an important one, he had no direct reports yet he had to lead hundreds of lawyers employed by the organisation and scattered across six regions of the world and in many different countries. When Peter began working with a coach, his main difficulty was the amount of travelling he was doing and also the lack of any sense of personal effectiveness in his role.

It turned out that Peter thought that the best way to do his job was to see as many people as possible across the globe so as to gather as much information as possible so that he could hold all this knowledge together at the centre. He was frustrated because he could never get enough information; he was not influencing local decision-making and his strategic plan was not being followed. This led to further self-defeating travelling as Peter struggled to get in control of the legal function. Personally, Peter was a somewhat introverted perfectionist who did not easily share his thinking nor did he ask others to share theirs. His was the mindset of a lawyer as he approached the task of leading the legal function.

The first area of work with Peter was to explore with him his 'organisation-in-the-mind' and his ideas about the organisation-in-the-mind of the lawyers he was seeking to engage in his leadership. It turned out that the struggle to get information which preoccupied Peter was central to the struggle the whole organisation had as this technology company became global and faced competition on a

much bigger scale. They dealt in information technology and the fantasy appeared to be that omniscience would help them win against their rivals in global markets. Peter's function, the legal function, felt to him as if it was a way of controlling the uncertainty about having enough information to win. There seemed to be a wide and stretching gap between the enterprise, of becoming the premier technology company in their field in the world and their way of organising this on a global scale. Peter's struggles appeared to represent some of the tension this was creating in everyone.

The coach initiated a 360 degree feedback interview process in which the lawyers around the globe described some of their problems and ways in which they needed help both locally and from Peter. This is a standard coaching tool, but approached in systems psychodynamic terms, it was aimed to explore not only information about Peter personally and how he was leading, but also information about the system and how other people viewed the organisational tensions and how they could be managed. Thus this was an attempt to verify Peter's organisation-in-the-mind by checking it against others' organisations-in-the-mind.

The respondents to the feedback wanted different things; one said he wanted Peter to stay for a week at a time and really solve some in-depth long standing difficulties; another said she wanted Peter to meet the new recruits to the team; another said he wanted Peter to travel with him to some of the minor factories to see some of the legal issues at close hand. They did not understand Peter's role and found it frustrating that he just dropped in and out on them. They tended to steer around him and not include him in their thinking as they did not understand how or if he could help them. Peter had not realised how far he was falling short of their expectations and how much he needed to change his behaviour and communication style.

The feedback data challenged Peter to define his leadership role in quite a different way. Whereas his 'leadership-in-the-mind' had been about being a strategist in the head office relating hierarchically to the rest of the world, his lawyers actually needed him as a facilitator and external consultant working collaboratively with them. He needed to contract with the legal function differently in various locations in order to meet their needs.

Over the next year, he began on this differentiated contracting and negotiating work. His travel schedule was quite different in that

he spent much longer periods in each location. Peter organised a weekly teleconference for exchange of information about the legal function for any lawyers who wanted to join and was pleased that many of them did join in every week. He also organised a global conference on the latest legal issues and good practice to bring everyone together. He began to develop a sense of job satisfaction and personal effectiveness from being able to offer real help and value to the organisation. He was also much more knowledgeable about what was going on.

Peter also began to shift his view of both his own leadership and the leadership others were giving from the centre of the newly global organisation. He realised that the new enterprise required him and others to distribute themselves as leaders to different parts of the world in different, more differentiated, ways. It was more about supporting local leadership than actually doing it himself. This meant that gathering more information centrally made no sense as a leadership priority because it was meaningless outside its original context. This was quite a challenge to Peter personally as it meant giving up control in order to exercise real leadership, whereas his previous model had been to exercise more control in order to feel like the leader he had in mind. Both Peter and others at the centre of the organisation began to develop a much more complex view of both the enterprise and the organisation it needed to make it effective.

Coaching for leadership – the current context

The question of how to improve the performance of an organisation is fundamentally a question of how to improve the performance of the individuals within it. Therefore the challenge is one of how to create conditions in which those in leadership roles can address this task most successfully. Working lives have changed fundamentally both in terms of how people work and what they hope to get from it. We bring more of ourselves to our work, expect more of ourselves and have more expected of us (Hirschhorn, 1997). Life is very tough for senior leaders and their length of tenure is getting shorter. Leaders are increasingly isolated and at worst remote and cut off from the workforce. Leaders and potential leaders now expect more from their employees and vice versa. Those companies that are most sought after by the brightest graduates are the ones that will pay

attention to the specific needs of the individual in developing capability for leadership and facilitate development not just in work based skills but also their personal capacities.

Whilst some variation of what we now term executive coaching has always been practiced in the form of mentoring, supervision, consultation and personal development, contemporary coaching practice takes this to another level and introduces a coach who has a perspective external to the workplace. A coach is a critical friend who will support, challenge, ask difficult questions and make leaders think. An industry has grown up around it¹ and coaching has become an intervention of choice in leadership development. There is evidence that this trend is slowing as companies demand a return on what can be a considerable investment but currently coaches of many different persuasions provide one-to-one support to leaders in organisations in every sector. There is great variation in what counts as executive coaching and in the present climate regulation, training and supervision are high priorities in the profession (see, for example, Brunning, 2006). The varieties of executive coaching range from the practically focussed, for example guided learning from an expert in the field (mentoring) and goal orientated learning to approaches which have broader developmental aims often having a basis in a particular therapeutic orientation.

In their comparison of approaches to executive coaching, Roberts and Jarrett (2006) identify two dimensions along which approaches to executive coaching can be distinguished. They are; the primary *aim* of the coaching which may be focussed on either external (behavioural) change or internal change (insight) and the primary *focus* of the coaching which may be individual or organisational.

It will be apparent that insight and behavioural change are not mutually exclusive any more than would be attention to the individual and attention to the organisation. The dimensions refer to the *primary* aim and *primary* focus of the work; in the case of the primary aim this may reflect a belief about whether behavioural change is thought to follow insight or vice versa. A systems psychodynamic approach to coaching, is insight based and organisationally focussed. That is, it aims to bring about change – including behavioural, goal directed change by helping the client to develop insight into their behaviour, motivation and emotion and to surface what may not at first be within their conscious awareness. The context is always of the

person in their role in the organisation. With the benefit of insight, individuals may then approach their role and its task and the attendant relationships more successfully. Arguably, however, it is the attention given to the organisation to which the client belongs, called elsewhere the 'third party in the wings' (Huffington, 2006) that is the most significant aspect of a systems psychodynamic approach. Engagement with the organisation as a primary focus may mean engagement with the psychological reality that the client brings – the 'organisation-in-the-mind' of the client and the coach or engagement directly with the organisation itself in the form of 360 degree feedback, meetings with other key players and/or team or organisational based interventions.

Systems psychodynamic coaching

In a systems psychodynamic approach to coaching, the emphasis is on how leaders find and take up a leadership role in the specific context of the organisation in question. How does the particular 'organisation-in-the-mind' influence their leadership and the relationships within it? Unique to the approach are two related elements: attunement to the emotional state of the leader and attunement to the emotional state of the organisation through the use of the coach's own experience in the coaching session. The coach and coachee are working with emotional intelligence, looking for the blocks and blind spots that prevent leaders from managing the reality of their organisations; that create distortions and impede development. Leadership is about vision but also about people and consequently the importance of relationships cannot be underestimated – how a leader inspires people to his or her vision depends to a very large extent on the quality and effectiveness of relationships in the organisation. Despite (or perhaps because of), technological developments that allow communication with others faster, more directly and more personally than ever before, relationships in the workplace are often felt to be unsatisfactory and are frequently identified as impediments to progress. This is the case even though the rate of change in organisations requires more people to be involved in decision-making on the vision and strategy of the organisation as it evolves day to day.

Thus people have more power in and over organisations both as decision-makers and consumers. Leadership thus appears to be more

rooted than it used to be in the person element of the person-role-system model of looking at the way an individual negotiates his or her position in the organisation (Miller and Rice, 1967). Leadership now seems to be more about personal qualities, values and oneness between the person as an individual and as a role holder. It is important to be visible and to be seen to connect to the people and activities of the organisation. This seems more important in the context of the absence of traditional organisational boundaries so as to compensate for the sense of depersonalisation experienced by members of organisations today. Cooper and Dartington (2004), quoting Castells (2000) on the theme of identity in organisations say;

Identity is becoming the main... source of meaning... People increasingly organise their meaning not around what they do but on the basis of what they are or believe they are (p. 132).

What goes on between people in an organisation – explicitly and in ways that are more hidden, impacts significantly on its success. For leadership development to be effective, it must allow leaders some opportunity to understand their working relationships and how they contribute to them. Executive coaching can provide this very powerfully if coaches are able to use directly their own experience of their relationship with their client in the work. In systems psychodynamic coaching, the coach uses his or her own experience as data to understand the client and to understand what is happening inside the organisation. This means attending to the feelings evoked in them by the client (their countertransference). This can be viewed as a sophisticated use of emotional intelligence. Countertransference refers to the use of the felt experience of the coach as information about difficult feelings that the client may not be able to hold in conscious awareness – their blind spots. Such feelings may typically be projected² into the coach by the client and a sensitive coach, attuned to the client and to themselves will be alert to this and may be able to give back the projections, allowing the client to become aware of the complexity of their feelings and manage them for themselves. In becoming attuned to the client in this way, the coach is also able to be alert to reflections of the organisational dynamic in the material the client brings and in the way

that the client presents themselves for the work. An example of this is given below.

Case study two: Kirsten

Kirsten was head of operations for a successful health food company which provided coaching for its leadership team. She came to her first coaching session late and apologetic about her lack of preparation (although none had been requested). The coach was aware both of a desire to protect Kirsten from too many demands and of taking control in structuring the session far more than was usual. The issue that Kirsten brought was of how to motivate two senior managers recently promoted to heads of a division following a re-organisation. In describing the wider context, Kirsten mentioned that she had been promoted into her role as the company had grown in a rather organic way, without applying for a post. The coach in attending to her own experience hypothesised that Kirsten perhaps disowned her own competence in leadership and projected it into others (data: the coach herself feeling a need to take charge) in a company that was perhaps rather ambivalent about leadership (data: the way in which Kirsten had been promoted, perhaps also expressed in Kirsten's lateness). Subsequent discussion of the wider context revealed a situation where the original company values (high quality, ethical, local enterprise) were being challenged by its growth and penetration into international markets. An ambivalence in the organisation as a whole that was holding back development could then be worked with in meetings with Kirsten, both at an organisational and individual level.

The interrelatedness of these ideas has been developed by colleagues at the Grubb Institute (e.g. Bazalgette and Reed, 2006). The role a leader takes up in an organisation can be thought of as the way in which they manage themselves in relation to the *task* they are required to carry out, the *system* in which they work and the *context* in which their organisation exists. A leader must find their role in order to take authentic action on behalf of the organisation. How they do this depends on:

1. The person – what they bring (knowledge, expertise, desire, their particular 'organisation-in-the-mind').

2. The system in which they work, the experience of which brings purpose to the enterprise.
3. The context in which this exists, global, political, environmental etc. which influences the resources available and may constrain or promote the enterprise.

All of these elements influence how a leader will take up their role. Their impact may not initially be apparent but may be uncovered in the coaching by paying attention to all levels of experience. The coach must be alert to reflections of the organisation's system or context in what is being communicated, which means paying attention to their experience in the coaching. The following case example illustrates how the coach can use his or her own counter-transference to deepen the coachee's understanding of themselves, their working relations and the organisation as a whole.

Case study three: Matthew

Matthew came for coaching as he took up a major leadership role with a new company that produced dairy goods. Coaching was his initiative, he said he wanted to make a good start and think through this new beginning. Matthew was in his 40s, with a very successful career to date, having had a senior board position with global responsibilities in his previous company. He speaks six languages and is very accomplished. He was head-hunted for this new position with a company of some 300 employees, now publicly owned but previously a family business, which was recovering from a turbulent period in which there had been considerable uncertainty about its survival. His coach described him as charming, engaging and acknowledged feeling somewhat wrong-footed and nervous, experiencing something (as she described it) 'between an interview and a first date'.

Matthew identified the challenge of the job to come – moving it from a 'small-town business' (his words) to major international player. He anticipated resistance to this, the majority of the employees lived close by and a large contingent of staff were bussed to work every day. The company had a paternal attitude to its workforce which Matthew saw as outmoded. He spoke straightforwardly but not boastfully about the challenges of his previous role and his

achievements. This was a man seemingly full of confidence and open to the next challenge. The coach felt that she had been lucky to work with him.

This reaction of the coach is worth consideration. She was experienced and not usually given to self doubt with clients. She may have been personally in awe of this impressive man or her experience may give a clue about something important. In simple terms, perhaps Matthew had a similar impact on others that he worked with; if so how did this affect his relationship with them? In a more dynamic way the coach had a hunch that Matthew might be letting her know rather directly by the process of projection that anxiety, uncertainty, and the possibility of being 'wrong' were not feelings that he himself could easily tolerate. The coach was acting as a container (Bion, 1961) for Matthew's projected anxieties and using her own feelings (countertransference) to understand her client's experience (Pooley, 2004).

In an early coaching session Matthew came with a series of photographs of his executive team and of key people in his company which he arranged as an organisational chart and went through one by one, already having had some thoughts about who would be likely candidates to move on. He was keen to appoint as many of his own people as possible. The coach explored this. Matthew said he needed loyalty and felt this was less likely to come from existing staff. He was particularly bothered by the Operations Director, Ian, who had gone to a football match rather than commit to an evening meeting. Matthew found fault with the majority of his executive team and seemed to have little appetite for getting to know them individually; he said he would prefer a clean slate. The coach noticed that she didn't have much of a sense from Matthew of the actual work involved in production and distribution and when she commented on this Matthew's response was vague. She wondered if Matthew wasn't much interested in the 'product', he agreed that he was more interested in the mechanics of running the business rather than having a passion for the product. This seemed food for thought. There was a lack of engagement with the whole enterprise or feeling for relationships within the team.

He said he knew that he could turn this company around – he had no doubt about that. Here was a decisive, confident CEO, a new broom sweeping clean but something seemed to be being missed.

Matthew's tendency was to use a lot of jargon that gave the impression of knowledge but was actually confusing. It was difficult to ask for clarification. The coach hypothesised that maybe confusion could not easily be tolerated? Any possibility of uncertainty was quashed. This is important since not being allowed to make mistakes stifles creativity and results in a culture in which the main imperative is to please the CEO. This is not necessarily in the service of the organisation. Reflecting this back to Matthew allowed him to consider this need for clarity and certainty as a characteristic element of his personality, which had indeed served him well in areas of his life but he could see that this might also impede development and impact on relationships.

When Matthew decided to get rid of Ian, the Operations Director, his coach felt she saw a very different side to him, quite ruthless and determined and even cruel. He spoke mockingly of this man's attempts to introduce some more efficient business practices that were not taken on board by his managers, he lacked authority and commitment to the company and 'had to go'. There were two other senior members of staff that he felt similarly about. The coach reflected this back and wondered if his staff might see him as someone to be feared. He did not agree with this. He said he was very fair and acting in the interests of the business. It was a 'no-brainer' that Ian had to go. His change of temperament was quite fearsome and his manner towards the coach was abrupt and uncompromising. She felt that she too was being judged and found wanting.

Matthew seemed to be revealing an organisation-in-the-mind of a bullying nature. In reality, it was quite a bruised company which, after losing the previous leader, its parent figure, had been subject to some harsh practices and asset stripping in the period before Matthew's arrival. As the coach came to understand her experience with her client, this helped them both to get to grips with the culture of bullying. Matthew was shocked at the use of the word bullying, which resonated personally. He had avoided bullying at school by being the best at everything and making others envy him. He knew that his previous company had a bullying culture and he had prided himself on managing his part of it differently. His strategy there as he said, was to 'rise above it'. This no longer seemed to work and he had become a bully. As a result of the coaching, Matthew very simply took Ian out for dinner and discovered that he had a more complex and capable

Operations Director than he had thought. Any future changes could now be considered by looking at the reality of the situation and not a skewed or partial perspective.

In technical terms, what seemed to be happening here was that Matthew was projecting his feelings of uselessness (which are very difficult for him to tolerate personally) into others (the coach and Ian) who then feel or become 'useless'. Matthew then behaved towards them as if they really were useless. By speaking to this experience, the coach was able to hand back to Matthew these projections enabling him to have a more complete picture of his staff.

The leader as coach to the organisation

A systems psychodynamic approach to coaching for leadership involves working with emotional intelligence and uncovering what might be 'under the surface' and not yet within the leader's awareness about himself or herself, the working group and the whole organisation. Coaching can be a powerful organisational intervention if the intelligence from coaching several people in the organisation can be combined and shared with those in leadership roles. This is not a 'reporting back' on the outcome of individual coaching but a means of adding together the combined experiences (the various organisations-in-the-mind) to further understanding of the psychological life of the organisation. An example of this arose when several coaches working with senior leaders in a large multinational manufacturing company shared their experience that senior women (and some men) were seemingly lacking confidence to put themselves forward for promotion. The company had an exemplary record of promoting opportunity and this reluctance to aim higher did not seem to be a conventional 'glass ceiling'. The common factor that emerged from the coaching was an organisation-in-the-mind that equated business success (and progression) with something like 'exceptional brilliance' or 'better than the best' and a corresponding anxiety for some about reaching this and staying there.

Even more effective is the possibility that the leader can become coach to the organisation. That is if, through the coaching, the leader can develop the capacity to be attuned to the organisation, to be aware of his or her own 'organisation-in-the-mind' as well as that

of reports and colleagues and to be able to work with these reflections as an important part of the leadership role. This requires self awareness and openness to psychological data as modelled by the coach, as well as a deliberate setting aside of time to work on it. It may require a shift in practice – building in opportunities for gathering the useful data, perhaps more informal occasions to take the emotional temperature of the organisation, so that this reflective space can become shared and institutionalised.

Summary

Leaders need to be in touch with themselves and their organisation. They need to understand the state of mind of the organisation and the people within it. A systems psychodynamic approach to coaching can equip leaders with the personal capacity to understand the anxieties in the organisation and to understand their own responses thus fostering greater authenticity in relationships. It can help leaders to be in touch with their 'organisation-in-the-mind' and with their own emotional responses to their work and the people they work with, to use this as evidence in understanding the emotional life of their organisation. This is not an easy task. Leaders have to be prepared to acknowledge and work with their emotional response to their role and relationships to understand themselves and their organisations. There is resistance and often a wish that the work stays above the surface. But when coaches themselves are able to be sensitive to emotional data and create a safe and containing coaching environment, leaders can take risks and allow themselves to work with their authentic responses. In turn leaders may internalise this capacity for containment and so may manage the responses of their staff more helpfully and less reactively.

With a systems psychodynamic approach leaders can learn to recognise systemic issues for themselves. They may start by wishing to 'fix' troublesome individuals but come to know why such individuals may be behaving in difficult ways and what they may be expressing on behalf of the system. They learn to read the behaviour of others as an indication of an organisational issue rather than necessarily an individual one. All in all this allows for a more measured, reflective approach in which communication is clearer and relationships are more productive.

Notes

- 1 An internet search with the words 'executive coaching' produces almost seven million websites.
- 2 The term projection in this context, refers to an unconscious process where difficult feelings are not experienced but are split off from conscious awareness and projected into others who may experience them as though they were their own. For example it is not unusual when with a group of teenagers to feel awkward, unsure of oneself, even as an adult. This may be a communication from the young people about anxieties *they themselves* may have but may not be able to bear and therefore split off and project into others. Understanding it as such can allow for a helpful response.

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6

Leadership Presence: Character Development as the Choreography of Body-Mind

Jon Chapman and Pete Mann

Most men can withstand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

So said Abraham Lincoln drawing on his character at a time then of unprecedented global complexity, institutional discontinuity and socio-economic transition. In this chapter we explore the impact of current thinking about the development of character on leadership development. We look at the role of personal and interpersonal dynamics in notions of leadership, and the way in which our current understanding of the nature of leadership is calling into question some preconceptions about how leadership development is best achieved. In particular we focus on the conjunction of ideas in experiential psychology and leadership thinking around notions of presence and being 'in the moment' as both ways of learning and of leading. This is explored through the perspective of a group of leadership development consultants ('practitioners') in the UK using an experiential, psychodynamic technique not used before in UK organisations. Some of them, trained previously in other psychotherapeutic schools, were especially challenged to adapt their existing skills to the new 'psychomotor' approach (Mann, 2005). Finally, we examine the implications of this new perspective for the concept of leadership itself, for the practice of leadership development in organisations and for the selection and evaluation of those engaged in the development of leaders.

Perhaps the modern obsession with leadership grows out of our perception of living through relentless change. Does feeling unsure about the future, though, seem to take our focus backward – has, for

example, traditional leadership-authority declined? Does a yearning for the 'good old days' also account for increased interest in how leadership was exercised then? Witness all the books on men (usually) leading other men (usually) against manmade (usually) endeavours: war (Kaltman, 1998; Cohen, Axelrod and Steinbrenner, 1999; Kurke, 2004); survival (Perkins, Holtman, Kessler and McCarthy, 2000; Morrell, Capparell and Shackleton, 2001; Uldrich, 2004); and political fallout and comeback (Covey, 1999; Axelrod, 2000; Gilbert, 2004). Indeed, it is hard to find a major popular historical leader who has not been the focal point of recent research. What would Churchill, Gandhi and Lincoln – ever succinct – have remarked of this explosion of published interest in the leader's role...?

But in explaining present uncertainty by recovering past certitude, we often find the story constructed tells as much of continuity as of change (*cf.*, Wilber, 1996; Bayly, 2004; Wright, 2004). In this chapter, as we explore whether leaders can be helped to fulfil their uncertain roles in organisations, we find ourselves also looking backwards, discovering the original to balance with the familiar to construct the novel. In particular, we find ourselves taken beneath the surface of leadership performance to the deeper influence on character of the psychological past on the professional present. So just as balancing continuity and change is one of the challenges of leaders, blending the new and the old remains a challenge of leadership development practitioners.

Character and its development

Two thousand or so years ago Sun Tzu, writing from an ancient tradition, spoke of the character failings that can beset a leader:

There are five character flaws which are dangerous for a general: if he is reckless, his men can be killed. If he is cowardly, his army can be captured. If he is short-tempered, he will react in anger. If he is self-important, he can be deceived. If he is attached to his men, he will hesitate at a critical moment.... These five flaws cause generals to fail and armies to die. Consider them well (Krause, 2003).

If, as Sun Tzu and Lincoln attest, leadership is a test of character, what then determines it? The 'Great Man on the Horse' theory of

leadership, reinforced by the recent historical leadership biographies alluded to above, implies we either have it or we don't: leadership is a genetic lottery. An alternative to leaders' 'nature' pre-defining their character is the other illustrious tradition of their 'nurture' developing it:

We are characters, ignorant of ourselves, and have often to be thrown back onto our proper way by hard blows from without. When finally we have learned, however, we shall have gained what the world calls character – which is to say, 'earned' character. And this, in short, is neither more nor less than the fullest possible knowledge of its own individuality (Schopenhauer, 1844).

So the living-of-a-life, in the equally popular tradition emphasising nurture, becomes the foundation of character. It emerges in the 20th century in the work of Carl Jung on individuation (Storr, 1998). Until lately in management literature, however, organisational leadership has been studied largely through its surface-appearances (personality trait/behaviour/context), the mix hedging on which are essential to performance (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999; Hersey and Blanchard, 2001).

A "non-essentialist" view has more recently emphasised the "indeterminacy" of the above as predictors for leadership success (Grint, 2000): sometimes a leader's style succeeds, sometimes it doesn't. Replacing the Holy Grail of personality and context, then, as predictors of leadership-success in corporate functions from organisational learning to career management to team development is a notion of leadership as *presence* and *improvised performance*, based upon the accumulated experience from a life lived. Present and past fuse into a role to be played onstage, under pressure, script changing from moment to moment. The metaphor of 'on-stage' performance is apt, as it implies offstage preparation, heralded entrance from the wings, and improvised production 'on the moment': a leadership 'event' (Grint, 2005). Recent management research into leaders' systemic behaviour also links performance with relationship. Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner underscore in leadership for successful business change (2002) the importance of relationship. Along with meaning and power, it is one of the key factors for leaders successfully embodying trust and establishing connection with those around them.

This act of the performing leader can in turn be viewed from multiple perspectives. One angle is clearly the traditional focus on the leader's relationship with organisational context, the business environment – what kind of leader is the context requiring? In this model, the leader 'fits' the context: 'cometh the hour, cometh the man'. In May 1940 when the 64-year-old Winston Churchill finally achieved his life's ambition and was appointed Prime Minister during the crisis of the Battle of France, both he and many of his colleagues accepted that there was only one man who could fill the job. As the monarch George V recorded at the time,

Then I knew that there was only one person I could send for to form a Government who had the confidence of the country, and that was Winston. I asked Chamberlain his advice and he told me Winston was the man to send for (Best, 2002, p. 165).

And Churchill himself was not shy about encouraging this notion: "I felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial" (Best, 2002, p. 165).

Then there may be an everyday angle, akin to a dance with someone actually on the floor, in the present which is moving to real-time rhythm corresponding to the leader's relationship with others in the here-and-now. How the leader responds in the moment, when faced with the unexpected, can have a critical impact on the outcome. From this perspective, the context is fluid, ever-changing, and interdependent. The war diaries of Winston Churchill's Chief of Imperial General Staff, Alan Brooke, minutely detail the impact of his relationship with his boss, Churchill, during the five years that they worked together. The orderly strategic thinker Brooke desperately longed for peace and a return to his quiet country life; the Prime Minister meanwhile was wholly caught up in the excitement of a life under constant change and threat (Alanbrooke, 2001).

Finally there will be another angle through a psychodynamic filter depicting a similar set of steps but this time artistically set to music by the personal past as a partner. Seen from this perspective, the context relates to past experience, often unconsciously replayed in the present when provoked by a particular context of events. Much has been written about Churchill's ambition driven by the

spectacular implosion of his father Randolph's own political career at a time when the premiership was within his grasp. The extent to which the son was driven by the desire to impress his distant and critical father is shown by the occasion when, having dropped an expensive watch given to him by his father into a stream at Sandhurst, he hired a fire engine and pumped the stream dry to recover it (Holmes, 2005).

If conventional and more recent assumptions like those above about the cultivation of character are valid, what do they imply for the purpose and focus of executive education? When leaders set out keen to strengthen their leadership capacity, what elements of 'character development' like those above should influence their facilitators in designing their leadership training? How might therapeutically orientated coaches, subscribing to theory that one's inner life is manifested outwardly in public performance, influence the capacity of a leader to hold uncertainty, feel decisive and remain contactable – all at the same time? Our curiosity in these questions has been piqued with the introduction at the millennium into Britain of an American psychotherapeutic system quickly adapted by local practitioners in leadership development work (Mann and Chapman, in press).

The emergence of Pesso-Boyden System Psychomotor (PBSP) as a leadership development tool

One way forward derives from the tradition of experiential psychodynamic therapy, which combines processes that work experientially in the moment with a deep understanding of personal and interpersonal psychology. The past 50 years has seen the emergence of a rich variety of schools and practice, including Gestalt, Transactional Analysis (TA), Neural Linguistic Programming (NLP), and Bioenergetics. Both Gestalt and TA were developed by charismatic psychoanalysts (Fritz Perls and Eric Berne respectively) in the 1950s, grew out of established psychotherapeutic roots and became established methods of psychotherapy in their own right before branching out into the world of organisations and leadership. NLP emerged from new scientific insights into the functioning of the brain in the 1970s and migrated quickly into an organisational and personal development context.

Bioenergetics was developed from the work of Wilhelm Reich by Alexander Lowen in the United States in the 1960s. Like Gestalt and TA as established schools of body-mind psychotherapy, it also spawned its own organisational variant through the work of Sandy Cotter and colleagues at the Cranfield School of Management (Cotter, 1996). Cotter's approach was explicitly developed as a technique for understanding and improving the quality of interpersonal relationships and team-working between managers in organisations. It is based on the concept of personal history creating energetic patterns of behaviour in the body and mind, and thereby influencing the quality of relationship in the present.

Another school of experiential psychotherapy now used as a leadership development tool by Cotter and colleagues – and one with an explicit link with the arts – is Pesso-Boyden System Psychomotor (PBSP). An acknowledged 'power therapy' (Scarf, 2004), PBSP was first developed 50 years ago by Albert Pesso and Diane Boyden from their work at Emerson College in Boston developing the talent of young dancers to move expressively (Pesso, 1969; 1973). Pesso and Boyden identified early on the potential application to psychotherapy of using expressive movement to explore inner psychic blocks and conditions. By the 1980s PBSP was established in the United States and by the 1990s in continental Europe as an effective therapy system (Pesso and Crandell, 1991) when it came to the attention of a group of leadership development practitioners in the UK. PBSP offered a set of analytical tools and developmental processes – precise techniques combined with rich imaginal movements – which went deeper and – practitioners felt – quicker into significant personal change.

A leadership development practitioner from the first UK group trained in PBSP describes it to us in this way:

One of the ways PBSP has matured what I do by giving it a greater complexity is that it really *emphasises* choice. So it doesn't ask me to let go of my past history or denounce it. It helps me see it as it was. But equally it doesn't leave me stuck with my past history.

It helps me [*the client*] create vividly and experientially a new neuronal pathway in my brain, so that I now have an alternative and a choice. But what I've become aware of is that I just don't

have an alternative to my history. But the history *and* the alternative [*both*] become a choice (Practitioner 1).

Training in PBSP involves undertaking therapy in PBSP, so the above practitioner – like all the informants cited in this chapter – speaks from ‘receiving’ the impact of PBSP as well as ‘offering’ it. Another practitioner put it this way:

Pesso goes deeper – a more systemic change. It [*the difference*] feels like they are different orders of change. The behavioural skills level can also affect perception and can be profound, but with Pesso it feels like a deeper order of work.

How is it deeper? They draw deeper into themselves. It accesses something in the history which they hadn’t consciously remembered that gets accessed through the Pesso work and then gets healed. It certainly is accessing stuff they normally wouldn’t discuss at work (Practitioner 6).

The Pesso-Boyden system is based on a twin focus, one inner and one outer to the individual. The internal focus is on the nature of consciousness, and how knowledge is brought to mind; the external focus is how we are driven to seek satisfaction by interaction with and accommodation by others. The inner and the outer encompass both the past and the present. Overarching this is the powerful humanistic belief that what drives us as individuals through life is a desire to become ‘who we truly are.’ So mistakes and mismatches in life are thus driven by unconscious coping, seeking to compensate for sub-optimal formative experience. PBSP is also an integrative psychology. The practitioner works with the client at the levels of the physio-sensory (what is going on in the body), the imagino-emotional (the images and feelings associated with experience), and the cognitive (conscious thoughts).

The intuition of the UK leadership development practitioners at the Praxis Centre at Cranfield was a clear connection between current thinking on leadership experience – its improvisational/interactive/experiential/performance bases – and PBSP methodology for emotional healing. PBSP offered scope for intensive work in the present with the full range of human faculties, internally and interactively, whilst at the same time addressing learned habits from the

past. So the British 'stage of leadership' was set from 2000 to be explored on the new – to UK – developmental stage of PBSP.

The PBSP 'Structure' as a choreography of personal development

PBSP seeks to work simultaneously with the client's past and present, with their body (sensations, impulses and feeling-states in the present) and their mind (attitudes, remembered history and behaviour patterns from the past). The system funnels awareness and insight through an activated 'pilot state' so the client can experience a developmental process deeply felt 'limbically' and cognitively appreciated 'neocortically.' A PBSP session, called a 'Structure,' lasts an hour, proceeding from present into past and back to present, and from old to new. A Structure classically is held within a group (likely to be labelled personal development) with group members available to take on 'accommodating' roles in a client's Structure. Structures can also be held one-to-one (probably called coaching in the organisation). This chapter is accounting for organisational applications of PBSP not offered remedially to unsuccessful employees, but for essentially robust, high-performing managers with positive attitudes towards their own and others' personal development.

At the outset of a PBSP Structure, the practitioner establishes the True Scene with the client, who may have arrived with a specific issue or simply begun with no particular thing in mind. (See **Annexe 1** for the building blocks and stages that make up a PBSP Structure.) In helping the client to 'unpack' their centre of truth, the practitioner will use specific techniques and devices to create a working alliance by identifying, naming and placing in the room representations of client energy, be it reference to places, people, objects and voices. The concrete and abstract constituent elements in the architecture of the interior of the client's mind are thus externalised in the room.

The practitioner's task here is helping the client monitor their current state on the 'stage of the here and now' – sensations, impulses, emotions – and relate these to learned patterns inherited from past experience as seen through the 'screen of the client's mind's eye'. These learned patterns comprise attitudes: historical experiences internalised as judgements ('You ought to do better'); injunctions distilled from the past; and images and repertoires nested as 'survival

strategies' ('When at risk, don't get close to people'). In this sense the practitioner's role is to choreograph the movements of the client's psyche into an expression aligned towards realisation of something new and positive. Understanding the nature and interrelationship between these 'stages' and 'screens' is an essential part of raising the client's present awareness, and provides a powerful link with notions of presence and authenticity identified in the arena of leadership development.

Maybe for the first time ever, a client may feel fully seen and understood – a condition achieved by being 'witnessed':

... there is a look in their eye and they suddenly seem seen through the witness. It's on their faces and in their eyes, like a heat-seeking missile has suddenly locked onto its target. ... I have worked as a therapist for many years but I have not had the experience of the way they 'lock on' with witnessing. It is different to transference. If I had to guess at what they are saying to themselves it would be something like, 'My god, she REALLY understands what I'm saying' ... that they have been made aware of something that even they didn't know before (Practitioner 6).

The next phase in the Structure, the Historical Scene, is where the roots of the behaviour patterns highlighted in the True Scene are identified. Depending upon the type of contracting undertaken at the outset, this may be explored fully, or left to the individual to make the historical connection on the practitioner's prompting to maintain confidentiality – and then possibly developed later in a private one-to-one session. Always the practitioner's focus is moving toward the third stage, the Antidote, where new alternative memories are created through the enactment of fresh, helpful and restorative experiences.

I think the main contribution of PBSP is knowing how to get the information that is in the body, and knowing how to make a platform where the organisation of their mind is and their personality is visible, and then to make a new symbolic history... (Pesso, 2007).

Simple catharsis – the expression of feelings associated with negative experiences – is regarded as unhelpful, even potentially harmful, because it is insufficient. In PBSP the practitioner is always

scanning for opportunities to identify Antidotes (signifying a shift into the third phase of a Structure): here, the practitioner 'symbolically reverses' in the mind's body and the mind's eye what historically was 'not enough' (deficits) or 'too much' (trauma, abuse) by scripting alternative satisfying outcomes interactively portrayed by group members in defined accommodating roles.

Symbolic representations play an important role in PBSP's understanding of the developing self – they provide a bridge between the concrete physio-sensory experiences of the individual in specific time and place (being carried in the mother's arms, for example) and the ability of the individual to conjure up their own sense of belonging wherever and whenever they find the need later in life. In this sense such representations might be seen to mirror the capacity of leaders in adult life to create and hold symbolic meanings around leadership and the organisation (Chapman and Logan, 2005).

In the Antidote phase new memories are experientially created for the client. These new memories do not replace old 'real' memories but sit alongside them, reducing their grip on the client's attitudinal and behavioural choices. Because PBSP operates at multiple levels simultaneously, it engages bodily unconscious behaviour and conscious decision-making of the Pilot at the same time. The client does not surrender conscious decision-making capacity; the facilitator's objective in fact is to strengthen that capacity by maintaining contact with the client's Pilot at all times (thus the apparent incongruity in Structures when, with a client experiencing high emotions, the facilitator can check rationally whether a proposed next step 'fits'). High performing leaders require antidoted memories of who they truly are, not implicit memories of unconscious projections of themselves. Otherwise, others will be invited unconsciously to project their own unresolved authority issues onto the leadership role.

The final stage of the Structure is where the New Perspective is built. Having imagined and had interactively anchored through accommodating role figures the difference which the antidote could have made, the client engages their pilot to place the experience of the alternative in the context of current life or work issues. This lays the basis to identify practical changes in new behaviour.

Now [with PBSP], this produces an openness but is also creative.
So by catharsis you 'weed the ground,' with the hope that the

new organic wisdom will flower. What the Pesso [system] adds is a creative element: you not only weed with the trust that something more wholesome will grow, you actually plant some seeds, you put something in – wiring up the circuits [via the Antidote]. So there is an inner architecture of structure for a new meaning in life that is in the emotions and in the body as well as in the cognitive conceptual system (Practitioner 4).

What this journey through the experience of leaders with PBSP tells us is that even with the highest performers there is a detritus of historical baggage which can, under certain circumstances, impede their continued development. These are the minor deficits, surfeits and traumas which have contributed to creating an individual's world view. Pesso is fond of saying, 'We see the world through the lens of the past'. The notion that their childhood might hold deep resonance for their current way of being in the world, for their actual leadership practice, for their sense of purpose and for the expression of their business or personal values in life is often novel to business executives. The same practitioner above finds an 'organic' change of attitude from her clients' PBSP work in Structures. It appears to open up a...

Category in the mind of something non-material and spiritual and a category of meaning in life. A lot of people in corporate life that I talk to ask, 'What am I doing this for? What am I doing this for, making it possible for others to spend money?' They translate that to their work. But meaning in life is how to interact with people: what impact do my thoughts and my actions have on people and on my environment around me? It's not so much you do, do, do it; it's *how* you do it (Practitioner 4).

If PBSP is opening up leaders to question the purpose and philosophy behind leading, is it shifting the focus of leadership development into another realm of learning?

Leadership as an aesthetic act of presence

PBSP Structures appear, then, to model for the client the art of being in the moment, sensing with their Pilot state their own condition

and that of those around them. A Structure seems to enable them to re-learn how they can respond authentically to those conditions.

... the core of the performance is authenticity. *Not* faking it. But the key requirement is *being authentic*. Pessio-Boyden work [originally] was all about helping dancers be more *true*, to express emotion. To have a higher impact. That is an important part of what we help leaders to do ... (Practitioner 3).

So authentic presence in aesthetic performance is a theme that emerges from this work, reminiscent of Kouzes and Posner (2002): 'If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message. You can't believe in the messenger if you don't know what the messenger believes'. Authenticity connotes transaction between people, returning us to the image of the leader on centre stage in step with more than just their single partner.

This capacity to develop deep sensing of one's authenticity and of the available interactions with others is identified as a critical element in recent writing on systems theory and organisational change:

We've come to believe that the core capacity needed to access the field of the future is presence. We first thought of presence as being fully conscious and aware in the present moment. Then we began to appreciate presence as deep listening, of being open beyond one's preconceptions and historical ways of making sense. We came to see the importance of letting go of old identities and the need to control and, as Salk says, making choices to serve the evolution of life (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski and Flowers, 2005).

Halpern and Lubar (2004) identify four elements to presence. Ability to ...

- improvise and deal with the unexpected in the moment
- build relationships through empathic communication
- express feelings appropriately and congruently in terms of content and feeling
- consciously reflect personal values in decision-making and action.

The methods proposed by Halpern and Lubar for developing such abilities are psychodynamic and experiential. They require both

introspection and expression, utilising techniques taken from theatre and the arts, from visualisation to improvisation to storytelling.

Ladkin and Taylor (2007) make a connection between these skills of presence sharpened through artistic training methods and the development of authenticity. Their model of authenticity combines the three lenses of context, relationship and inner personal life: a leader's authenticity is dependent upon the relevance of his or her message to the goals of the organisation (context), upon the perception of that message by followers (relationship), and upon its congruence with the leader's own life history (inner life) – all performed in the moment. The development of authenticity is about *being* as much as doing, requiring practice and feedback from mentors, coaches and leadership developers in order to hone the performance aesthetically for the leadership stage.

PBSP, with its pedigree from the expressive arts, combines presencing techniques with an inbuilt, intrinsic appreciation of future possibility via the Antidote. It thereby offers a bridge into this new world of aesthetic presence where leaders identify and channel energetic flows as well as command and control inert resources.

Practitioner 3's comment above highlights an important aspect of PBSP – its elegance.

The challenge for the practitioner is to track the progress of the client through his or her inner maps, in real time, at several levels simultaneously:

- At a cognitive level, to be thinking about possible strategies and tactics for helping the client as the Structure unfolds
- At a limbic level, to be empathising and feeding back information about the client's emotional state, monitoring the practitioner's own internal emotional state for resonance and evidence of transference
- Symbolically, to be identifying archetypal images that hold powerful meanings for the client
- And at a physio-sensory level, to be monitoring the client's physical state for evidence of sensations and impulses that are indications of a desire for some form of shape/counter-shape interaction.

The demands upon the practitioner therefore are high – to be present in all these domains, to place his or her cognitive, limbic, symbolic and physical awareness at the service of the client's

present state, and to be free to range backward and forward in time to build, with client consent, on material referred to and anticipated. No wonder this work can seem more like an art form than a social science. No wonder, given Pessó's long and rich background in choreography, that he identifies an 'appreciation of the aesthetic' as a critical component on PBSP practitioner-competence (Pessó, 2007). In this sense we find the appropriate meeting of two aesthetics: the art of leadership-as-performance and the art of coaching-as-choreography.

An important part of the aesthetic of PBSP, then is the therapist's capacity to create and hold a ritual space in which the symbolic work of the structure can take place, a space operating simultaneously on a number of levels – in the here-and-now staging in the room, in the mind's eye of the client (what the client is seeing from their recalled memory), and on the energetic surface of the client's body (the 'motoric' in 'psycho-motor') – among others. Pessó recently described it like this to one of us:

How is it possible that what we do in 50 minutes can possibly offset what we do in 50 years? That has something to do with the quality of the experience and the latest research is talking a great deal about resonance, about how people get in touch with the depth of themselves and resonate with the therapist, and that has to do with presence, that the person feels seen. I am talking about the state of a person when they are in a Structure, and that has to do with creating a ritual aspect where it becomes a safe space and it is not just simply a social here-and-now.

It has to be a very safe protective space because people go into an altered state. They are not in a hypnotic state but in an altered state of openness and I think that in that altered state the impact of the 'now' is far more powerful and it feels like 'This is really true', and then it is at a place where it has more possibility of effective change in the long-term.

This has a lot to do with the training process. It's an aesthetic thing and an artistic thing. I think it takes an artistic, aesthetic, spiritual, ritual holder, so it has something of the quality of being in and making a sacred space. I don't want to say that the person is a shaman, but it is similar to a religious ceremony where you make a rite, r-i-t-e (which is interesting to compare to 'r-i-g-h-t' or

justice), and when you make it 'right' it is now 'This has become fact', like a marriage rite: 'Now you are truly this'.

The role of the therapist is teacher, therapist, stage manager, stage director, choreographer and a little bit the holder of the ritual. I think it is all of those things; it is complicated, because they have got to see the theatre, for example, noticing which way the figure is looking, what's the height – that is the dance-part, the choreographer – to see the power of minute shifts on the theatrical dramatic level. And, also, at what stage do you teach and clarify something? There are so many different skills (Pesso, 2007).

If leadership, then, is about presence in the moment and if its practice and development are about *being* as much as about *doing*, then aesthetics offers a framework for identifying the qualities of both experiences: those to do with the experiential practice of leadership and those to do with the experiential development of that practice. Strati (2000) sees presence as essentially a sensory-motor experience, inevitably involving an aesthetic sensibility or 'feeling through physical perception'. The aesthetic includes responses to the words/behaviours/images/identities/artefacts/symbols/metaphors/ physical spaces that comprise the experience of interacting with the organisation.

If the above hold validity, they present a serious challenge for anyone concerned with developing leaders: what is the appropriate route for the development of improvised presence? Is there a relationship between aesthetics in leadership-development activities and actual aesthetic-leadership in organisations? Can such learning be done in the classroom, and what skills are needed to facilitate such learning? What kinds of demands are made upon those tasked with developing those skills as practitioner coaches and leadership facilitators? Where do the expressive arts sit alongside the behavioural sciences as a source of such skills? Our chapter has prompted some responses to these kinds of queries. Perhaps it has prodded some further curiosity too ...

Leadership development as transformative learning – for leaders and their developers

Woodward and Funk (2004) identify meaning making – hermeneutics – as one of the challenges of both leadership and leadership development in an increasingly ambiguous and uncertain world.

Embodied, sensory 'gut knowing' becomes the primary means of achieving meaning in such contexts, in contrast to traditional 'head knowing' that characterises orthodox leadership programmes. The process of acquiring meaning is therefore an integrative one: body, mind and spirit all become engaged in a unitary act of bringing meaning into conscious awareness where emotional insight rationally re-evaluated is anchored inspirationally for future behavioural use.

In concluding our chapter, we wonder whether there are three stages on which the issue of a holistic mind-body, psycho-motor perspective on leadership and its development can be viewed:

1. The Stage of Leadership: our understanding of what leadership is and how it works. Here we encounter the intertwined notions of presence and aesthetics as core aspects of leadership effectiveness.
2. The Stage of Leadership Development: our understanding of what interventions most effectively and economically facilitate transformation of leaders to fit more closely with their understanding of themselves and their context. On this stage we see the impact of aesthetic and presencing processes in bringing awareness and motivation for change to the individual leader.
3. The Stage of the Leadership Developer: our understanding of the qualities and skills required to facilitate the kind of leadership development we believe is needed. On this last stage we encounter the challenge of developing an aesthetic understanding of the development process itself, and the need to develop in the developer a deep understanding of what might be described as the technology of presence and symbolic learning.

If a plausible hierarchy, do these three stages encourage those planning leadership development interventions to re-consider the following:

- What are the aesthetics of our organisation, and how do we see them being manifested in our leadership?
- What assumptions do we make about these qualities, and what stories do we tell in the organisation about their origins?
- What is our desired end-state, and what does that say about the quality of leadership we will need?

- Does our leadership development programme allow enough time and space for reflective and experiential work?
- How is continued personal development supported in the leadership development process?
- Are our facilitators experienced and capable and confident enough to work with individuals and groups at the required depth and range in a respectful, elegant and adept manner?
- Do our facilitators have a sufficient understanding of the organisation's aesthetic, and is it compatible with their own?

This chapter has implied the power of the symbolic and the creation of a safe ritual space for exploring it experientially cannot be ignored in contemporary leadership development. Aesthetic appreciation – the reflective and experiential authenticity of the facilitator – becomes a primary factor in evaluating the capacity of those leading such interventions in the classroom. With its profoundly interactive view of the psychological processes connecting emotional healing and professional growth, Pesso-Boyden System Psychomotor (PBSP) takes this integrative impetus onto a new plane. Its use by a small cadre of leadership development practitioners in the UK trained in PBSP has been accounted for in this chapter. Is PBSP developing that element of leadership performance that helps make leaders truly authentic, making their good into something better – releasing, in Abraham Lincoln's words, 'the better angels of our nature'?

Annexe 1 Sequence of a Structure

At Outset:

Creation of possibility sphere/contracting with client

Focus on client's Centre of Truth:

- A. Present experiences in the 'here and now'
 - i) Sensations in the body indicating energy
 - ii) Impulses in the body driving actions
 - iii) Emotions indicating needs
- B. Embedded experiences from the past 'there and then'
 - iv) Attitudes underlying injunctive or judging voices
 - v) Historical memories of events and interactions
 - vi) Patterns of behaviour producing 'survival strategies' for life

Four Stages within Structure:

1. Development of client's True Scene (present/old)
2. Exploration of client's Historical Scene (past/old)
3. Client Antidote (past/new)
4. Creation of New Perspective (present/new)

Consistent with work of a therapeutic nature, ground rules in PBSP are clarified and agreed at the outset, for example, anonymity and confidentiality (especially sensitive in personal work in organisational settings) and the ways in which group members take on non-improvisational roles (receiving precise instructions from practitioner via client).

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7

Can the MBA Develop Leadership?: 'Academic Reflection' vs 'Practical Training'

Richard Kwiatkowski, Joe Jaina, Mary Creagh, Veronica Hope-Hailey, Simon Knox, Lance Moir, D.R. Myddelton and Chris van der Hoven

This chapter examines whether the MBA can truly develop leadership. This question crystallises some of the current critiques of the MBA; practical critiques on the one hand about the relevance of the MBA – does it actually prepare students for real management roles? – and, on the other, critiques of the MBA's academic rigour – for instance is it 'critical' enough of contemporary management practice?

Our work provides pointers for an MBA design approach that will include a dynamic and ever-changing interplay between three very different elements: academic education; individual development and finally of experience, whereby there is synergistic exploitation of the elements, and thus an MBA created where the outcomes transcend the inputs. The MBA needs to change if it is to address the different sets of critics who argue it is 'ivory tower learning' rather than something practical, and those who view it as an 'essentially applied management training' rather than a rigorous academic degree based on an educational philosophy. This means uncovering and challenging the educational assumptions of the faculty, institutions and means of delivering these programmes rather than offering curriculum updates.

Critique of the MBA

It is hardly news that there is a tension between the 'academic' and the 'practical' in the contemporary MBA, perhaps best exemplified by loud demands for critical thinking at one pole and equally strident calls for the development of specific employment skills at the other – with

much recent debate in the academic community concerning the purpose and value of the MBA (Haksever and Muragishi, 1998; Kretovics, 1999; Pfeffer and Fong, 2002; 2003; Connolly, 2003) and in the wider press (The Economist, 2003; Saumaraz Smith, 2004) and on the part of various 'think tanks' (e.g. Critical Eye, 2003). It is apparent that the MBA as a qualification has a totemic aspect, which encapsulates some key debates in contemporary educational thinking.

To simplify and summarise, the two most prevalent concerns seem to be that either the MBA has become educationally redundant, that certain managerial assumptions are unquestioningly being adopted (Sturdy and Gabriel, 2000) or, conversely that the 'academic has taken hold' and practically the MBA has become largely irreverent (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2004). This gown vs. town argument is not new, but seems to have acquired a renewed intensity in the business school arena. The corollary of these positions is on the one hand that the introduction of a more critical curriculum is essential to re-establishing the qualifications' academic worth (Hagen, Miller and Johnson, 2003); or alternatively that the MBA needs to be made more relevant to students, and more particularly, in its ultimate value to the employers of those students (Paton, 2001; Armstrong, 2003).

Thus, in either formulation, those providing MBA courses are said to be presently selling flawed goods; the goods are flawed because they are not fit for purpose; but the goods and their purpose are seen very differently, and very different world views inform those perceptions, and some of that is at present not articulated (Stiles, 2004).

On the one hand, we have an academic perspective, whose fundamental tenets involve extending understanding, questioning the status quo, and seeking to expose, examine and challenge underlying assumptions. The more extreme proponents of this view therefore suggest that the 'problem' with the MBA is that it (and by extension its teachers, researchers and students), lack awareness of the underlying reality of the accepted contemporary business zeitgeist. The argument, crudely put, is that the MBA as currently taught is embedded within a positivist capitalist paradigm, with students on MBA courses being provided with post hoc cause and effect ideas and models to explain why certain things happened within a particular, business related, domain. The understanding in the classroom of that

domain is based on a deterministic and highly instrumental curriculum, and delivered within a milieu that itself reflects that position (Lewis, 1995).

What is central to this formulation, then, is that in organisations and management asymmetry of power exists, and that this is implicit and thus often ignored. This position might be characterised as a view that the MBA is flawed because it is not delivering on its intellectual potential, and that the very process and context of delivery mitigates against that understanding, a position that we might label 'intellectual dearth'. (Of course this argument extends to management research *per se*, for example see Pfeffer and Fong, 2002.) Thus the failure is partly in the lack of realisation that the 'goods' being produced by the university or business school are not employees, but rather thinking and critique; and partly that insight and thought may be lacking in those responsible for delivering these programmes, or if they are present, then structural reasons mitigate against their expression and transmission. The recent interchange of views between Clegg, Kornberger and Rhodes (2004) and Sturdy, Clark, Fincham and Handley (2004) indicate that the brief sketch in this chapter may be somewhat of a caricature but is found within current debates in leading journals.

Conversely, there is another critique of the MBA based primarily on practical relevance: the MBA is seen as a catalyst for people whose potency, agency and employability – and presumably their capacity for leadership – is enhanced by the MBA (Critical Eye, 2003, p. 8). Tied in with this, Gibbs and Morris (2001) suggest that within this paradigm 'learning [is] used as a means to another role within society'. Further, some writers are clearly of the view that MBA must 'deliver practical business benefits' (Paton, 2001) and that a lack of effective educational institutions available in the UK to disseminate 'practical knowledge' is having an adverse impact on competitiveness (Porter and Ketels, 2003, p. 39).

There is another view, however; in somewhat scathingly describing the dominant model of MBA teaching as actually being akin to staff development, Currie and Knights (2003) note 'the notion of relevance that students describe is one of skills and knowledge valued by employing organisations; that is, a managerialist notion of relevance' and Sturges, Simpson and Altman (2003) suggest 'Not only can an MBA contribute to increased pay, status and promotion,

it can also enhance career opportunities in a broader sense through giving individuals greater career clarity, increased confidence and higher perceived credibility'. Once again the notion of an enhanced, perhaps leadership position is implied – though we should note that the concept of employability has been shown to be problematic (Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2003), and MBA careers are by no means homogenous (Sturges, 1999; Sturges *et al.*, 2003) though, of course one could equally point to studies that indicate that what is most valued in MBA programmes, from a marketing perspective, is 'real world' relevance and 'career placement' (Chapman, 1998). Clearly from the employability perspective, students expect a career that involves taking up leadership positions on completion of the programme and the development of leadership capability is therefore an important selling feature.

Both sides of the academic vs. practical debate agree that the MBA is not fulfilling its promise: and to some extent both sides are correct in their criticisms – within their own paradigms. Whereas academic passions may be an element driving this debate about the MBA, other practical issues are also involved: this debate assumed some urgency a few years ago because MBA numbers were in decline worldwide (Critical Eye, 2003, p. 13), though to some extent, amongst the top schools, this trend has currently – 2008 – reversed. There is an anxiety that the promise of the MBA seems not to have been fulfilled (Blass and Weight, 2005), and that its future is unclear.

The MBA itself is totemic and acts as a lightning rod for many differences within and between business schools – including the essential identity and strategy adopted. Thus some business schools identify themselves as social science research led institutions in which their academic role is to contribute through the study of a particular part of society (organisations) and whose students come to learn about social science within a focus on this context. Others constitute themselves as schools of management with the aim of improving management practice through the development and application of the social/management sciences. So, on the one hand organisations are the topic of empirical study which contributes to social knowledge and on the other they are the arena for enhancement and a milieu within which social knowledge can be applied.

With these tensions between underlying business school objectives in mind the idea of leadership development in the MBA can be

seen to be central to organisational identity and not just an issue of curriculum content or a technical question. The academic – practical tension does not just relate to the MBA but reflects the broader organisational confusion around the context in which the MBA is delivered; namely the role and purpose of the business school.

We shall now use as a case study a situation where a management school has sought to actively address the paradoxes outlined here; we shall briefly describe the design process, and how the creation of a third system element allowed the designers to actively bring the tension in these other two positions into play in a positive way to benefit their programme. From this we shall go on to consider how an analogous process is possible for other institutions, who will, inevitably need to develop their own unique, tailored and customised solutions.

Re-designing the MBA to enhance academic rigour, relevance and develop leadership potential

Cranfield is unusual in that it is an English university that is entirely post-graduate and post-experience based. It is atypical for the UK in that the majority of its income comes from non-governmental sources. The MBA or its precursors have been running in the School of Management for over 40 years, making it one of the longest running MBA programmes in Europe. The students on the MBA are deliberately selected to regarding significant managerial or professional responsibility; the average age is 32 with a range of 25–56. The students on the part time executive programme are typically in employment, and often sponsored by their employer. The full time programme, which runs for a year, consists largely of self funding students. Whilst five years ago 70 per cent of the students on the full time programme came from the UK the position has now reversed, with 65 per cent being non UK in origin. The selection criteria include a GMAT (the average score is 650), significant practical managerial experience and a criterion based interview.

The Cranfield School of Management strategy states quite clearly that its aim is to improve the practice of management, appropriately for a university, it also states ‘everything we do is underpinned by research’. Thus its position is unashamedly practical but it seeks to achieve relevance through rigorous questioning, research and world

class scholarship. The re-design of the MBA had to acknowledge the criticisms outlined above, held within the wider community in which it operates, and within the clearly stated strategy and identity of Cranfield – a School of Management, not a School of Business!

Against this background Cranfield employed a full-time researcher to gather a range of qualitative and quantitative data; this involved surveying former and current students, employers and other stakeholders, and, not least, faculty. A design team with several hundred years of teaching experience between them and a range of professional backgrounds was assembled. Various aspects of the school and the MBA were examined over a six-month period, and as part of the design process the team undertook depth interviews with a wide variety of informants. (Using a purposive sample process – for example the chairman of a major headhunting firm, the director of a global selection consultancy, the head of a futurology institute, the head of senior management development in a major high tech firm, a commissioner of the civil service, non execs of several FTSE 100 companies, the director of the strategic defence leadership centre, current directors of various MBA programmes etc.)

The question for the design team was how to satisfy both those that argued for a more academic approach and those who urge practicality as a key criterion. Three design elements were identified from this research.

Academic knowledge

There is an obvious need for academic input on an MBA programme; knowledge that is rigorous, questioning and applicable in the outside world. This directly feeds into the ‘academic’ side of the debate. Considering contemporary work on Lifelong Learning (Smith, 2001), the development of adult cognition (Halpern, 2004) and the paramount need for people to be able to learn continuously in an ever more complex world, the notion of ‘thinking as a skill’ (Johnson-Laird, 1982) is essential in our view. However we conceptualise it, either simply, or, after Sternberg (1999) as triarchic, and consisting of analytical, practical and creative ‘types’ of intelligence, the idea of not accepting things at face value, of challenging assumptions, of recognising the influence of history and culture on action, of imagining and exploring potentially disruptive alternatives, and of being

sceptical about claims of 'truth' or 'the only way' is also a key part of critical thinking (Brookfield, 1987, cited in Alvesson and Deetz, 2000) and an essential skill for anyone aspiring to a leadership role. However, for us, as well as being 'critical' and questioning this material needs to be pragmatic – meaning that it needs to be managerially applicable in the real world (see Kandola, 2000).

Many MBA programmes ostensibly provide this but in reality what often happens is that content resembling '100 O levels' as one informant, a Professor at a UK business school suggested. Of course many academics believe that their subject should really have more time or greater centrality. But the inclusion of ever more content may simply be a way of dealing with staff anxiety (Hogan and Kwiatkowski, 1998); and, in part, this anxiety may be about the nature of the MBA, and the tension present, coupled with more recent anxieties about prestige, numbers and livelihoods.

Individual development

The second facet of the formulation concerns individual development, which firmly falls into the 'practical' domain. A good financial case has been made that the people dimension seems to confer the greatest competitive advantage across a range of industries (CIPD, 2003; Porter and Ketels, 2003). Further, it is becoming increasingly clear that, particularly at senior levels in organisations, it is the *person* of leaders in organisations that is a crucial factor in success (e.g. Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002; Ashkanasy, Hartel and Daus, 2002; Sturdy, 2004). This second facet encompasses who people are, how they react, their character, temperament, personality and what has been termed their emotional intelligence; it only obliquely references their abstract knowledge. To be a good leader, across a range of contexts, it is necessary to step beyond the logical to include the complex world of people and emotions (Goleman, 1998a; 1998b; Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002) and to be able to bring something of oneself to an encounter (Spinelli and Marshall, 2001, p. 158). This aspect of the use of the person is linked, in our minds, to notions of integrity (Stevens, 2001, p. 98). Starting with self awareness, perhaps the fundamental aspect of development in the managerial context (Church, 1997), we need to be able to systematically, sensitively and appropriately allow significant personal development to take place.

This second element of our MBA, is concerned with extending self awareness and consequent behaviour change (e.g. Langer, 1989; Boyatzis, Stubbs and Taylor, 2002). We feel that this needs to be undertaken with open and explicit cooperative enquiry, rather than assuming 'one size fits all', or making the assumption that immediate employability is the only consideration. Driven by league tables some universities act as though 'graduates in jobs' is the key indicator of educational success – this is a limited view. Whilst on an individual level the reason for doing an MBA may be to deliberately enhance ones employability, and accelerate ones progress to a significant leadership position it is debateable, as our informants told us, how much true development was taking place on some MBA programmes; rather, bureaucratically ticking skills based boxes was often taking place to satisfy QAA and other regulatory regimes (e.g. QAA, 2002) and, as one industry source commented, if becoming a leader and ultimately attaining 'director level' was the avowed aim of many on MBA programmes, relatively simple competencies, such as 'presentation skills' were unlikely to be the *sine qua non*, or a sufficient condition in attaining this goal.

We are also aware that development needs to be sensitive to people and contexts, for example the company sponsored student with an extended family to support, or someone on a scholarship, is likely to have a very different view of their development needs to a burnt out, wealthy, former city trader, or a civil service 'fast stream' high flyer. Other characteristics, such as gender, culture, class, race, country of origin, political system, access to resources, and so forth are facts in the world, and also present in the student population. It is thus important that western notions of development are not imposed unthinkingly with little understanding of, or respect for, personal history, or cultural milieu (Mellahi, 2000). Having said that, some students explicitly want a western take on management, and, equally we need to be aware of that. In either case ideas concerning the form and legitimacy of 'personal' development may be questioned. Addressing this tension in an institutionally unique way is, we believe, necessary.

Experience

The third aspect of our model encompasses a notion that we have termed 'experience' (though we recognise that this is not a fully

accurate term). This refers to both faculty and students. If we begin with mature and experienced professionals as our students, as we do at Cranfield, then we are, we believe, able to engage in a much more rich and complex learning and development process.

First, our students are able to utilise their experience and bring it to bear in an interactive classroom environment – particularly if we engage them using tools such as simulations and case studies, as well as providing opportunities to undertake self-reflected learning.

Second, they can learn from each other; indeed, many of them will be experts. It is our contention that, rather than fill the time with endless lectures delivering ever more content, shaped by the interests of staff and influenced by external bodies (e.g. QAA, EQUIS, AMBA, ASSCB) that a significant proportion of the time needs to be spent making the students own experience available to them and others. For the staff this does involve uncertainty, and perhaps giving up some power and control; but we believe that the pedagogical and androgogical evidence suggests that it will ultimately yield significant results (Hogan and Kwiatkowski, 1998; Gibbs and Morris, 2001). If we actually use their experience, the faculty and the business school, as well as the wider academic community, will be able to deliberately learn. We have sitting in our classroom innumerable live ‘cases’ that can be used to illustrate, examine or test our hypotheses, models, theories, and insights. A simple positivist view might be that this experience is subjective, and that properly researched ‘cases’ from major business schools are better – but the methodological debate has moved far beyond such a belief (Symon and Cassell, 1998, pp. 1–7). Bringing all this into the classroom validates the importance of that lived experience, and those insights, but more than that enhances learning, for example through reflexive engagement (Kwiatkowski, Harris, Kakabadse and Mapes, 2001).

Third, it works by seeking to maximise the two-way process involved in bringing the lived experiences of the students into the institution and providing other, experiences via the institution that will be memorable, critical and developmental. This does mean, of course, that a business school taking on such a position will need to confidently arrange real-world experiences – going far beyond that offered by the traditional masters level project, thesis, or dissertation, and indeed beyond those foreign visits which have been

described as 'academic tourism'. In our formulation, these complex and inherently ambiguous experiences have to actively engage and utilise the experience of the students, *and* the staff.

As well as making demands of students, and requiring certain characteristics of them – which implies a rigorous selection process – this model also requires certain characteristics of the faculty and staff involved. The academic staff involved need to have real world experience as participants and practitioners (for instance accountants, managers, psychologists etc.) rather than purely observers available to them, and to have indulged in critical reflection (Schon, 1983) – and further be able to demonstrate through the use of themselves in the learning engagement how it is possible to be in the world yet not necessarily of it. An 'academic' distance may actually be temporarily helpful here. As already implied faculty will also need to bring something of themselves to these encounters, therefore considerations of maturity and emotional intelligence apply (Goleman, 1998a). This is a challenge to any institution, because, necessarily, the supply of such faculty is scarce, as is an institutional environment where this anxiety provoking quasi experimental process, involving as it does the co creation of lived and living knowledge can safely happen. It involves trusting the process and trusting the faculty and students. It is much easier, and safer, to have faculty who research but do not practice, or practice but do not research; in the one case an academic understanding of the debates around leadership can easily be achieved with little development, in the other a series of uncoordinated training experiences easily created with little critical reflection. As we have seen these are the very positions we are trying to 'mark down' in relation to the synthesis we propose.

Design principles

We believe that through the dynamic interchange that becomes possible in this 'magical crucible' the overall student experience, now honed by their exposure to rigorous theory, critical debate, personal development and skill enhancement can be reintroduce and reapplied, using new experiences, within the MBA, but, crucially, utilising real contexts, with real consequences. Once again, this process addresses the notions of the practical and the critical, and,

because it embraces both, it enhances both; significantly it does so through a deliberately created third element rather than forcing one competing notion into the ontological mould of the other.

To take that a little further; in adopting a critical realist stance (see Fleetwood, 2005) the academic, in our view, must at some point be translated into action. People emerging from the qualification need to be able to see, to be and to act with awareness; based on a raft of knowledge and skill; their leadership capability necessarily needs to be brought forward into the concrete world and applied.

The MBA is actually neither a pure arena for the detached consideration of abstract ideals, nor a training ground for dyed in the wool capitalists, but it can be greater than either, and deliberately bring out these opposing forces, and in combining them with a third, can create an enduring, but dynamically creative solution to our local context, through allowing leadership capability to flourish. For academic faculty it can also, helpfully contribute locally to what has been termed the 'scholarship of teaching' (Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin and Prosser, 2000).

The development of leadership potential in MBA students

Of course, as well as developing their leadership potential MBA students also learn academically and practically, about finance, strategy, marketing, economics, HR, OB, logistics, quantitative methods, modelling, innovation and so forth. However, within the formulation of our three facets; academic, individual development and experience, the application of these takes on the world, each with their own traditions, research and understanding is crucial to enhancing development and employability. It is the synthesis of all this knowledge, and all these occurrences mediated by the deliberate and conscious use of personal and professional experience, held in dynamic tension by a skilled faculty that allows development to take place. The faculty create a boundary within which this sometimes confusing, difficult, challenging and liberating work can be done. Whilst the boundary can be flexible it must be safe; it cannot break lest the contents spill out in an incomprehensible mess; and this anxiety – that of chaos – must be contained. Having had this experience, facilitated, for example, by a structured and assessed organisational behaviour and personal development programme

including structured use of psychometrics, a professional assessment centre, structured feedback, self other appraisal, co coaching, dynamic team recording, reflective practice, enhanced self awareness, change management, facilitation, negotiation and a number of innovations designed to bolster this process across a variety of thematic areas – not *note bene* ‘subjects’ – the student is able to access the synergy that has been implicit but untapped.

As has been stated elsewhere (Turnbull James, Bowman and Kwiatkowski, 2008) the development of leadership capacity cannot simply be assumed through exposure to theories. The MBA design described allows individuals to use new knowledge, to apply that in a safe environment and relate it to lived contexts – both remembered and newly created and experienced. Crucially this is a core that runs through the whole programme and involves students in becoming active co-creators of their learning – thus no two MBA years are the same for students or, interestingly enough, for faculty. Cross disciplinary input into all the themes is a prerequisite for inclusion in the MBA. The result, we believe, is a real possibility for students to emerge from the programme with a rigorous academic qualification *and* to have the practical wisdom associated with taking on leadership in the future.

Conclusions

The MBA is totemic in so far that it brings the debate about the nature and purpose of management education into sharp relief. Its ubiquity has led to concerns about its future, and extended to a fragmentation in the ‘offering’; through purposefully addressing some of the paradoxes we have come to a position at Cranfield where none of these positions need nor, hopefully, could be said to apply. This is not a ‘holier than thou’ perspective – but rather a design that seeks to create the MBA that we believe best serves our students in our context.

The analogous process to the one carried out at Cranfield could be (and indeed has now been) replicated at other institutions – the key point here is that the solution needs to fit with the philosophy and real *raison d’être* of those institutions. Our design suits our collective position on leadership, our culture and philosophy, and we offer it here as a case study in what can happen, if the will to examine

strengths and weaknesses, barriers and enablers, unique strengths and traditions, expertise and aspiration exists, and to show it is possible to build a coherent programme as a result. This MBA is a local solution depending on local factors and expertise; and a particular type of faculty and student. It does require effort to maintain – the academic and the practical are strong poles; a Scylla and Charybdis; however effort is required to steer between them, one cannot drift.

Thus leadership development is not just about personal style, insight and awareness but also about being able to debate, critique, apply principles to particular dilemmas, manage organisational politics and so forth and the re-design of our MBA offers more opportunities for such learning. However this is not simply through almost hypothetical case studies (though we do use case studies) or 'edutainment' lectures (though we certainly hope to engage students as active participants) or artificial team work (though we do demand full participation in learning teams, with real consequences) but rather through a coherent learning design which is 'more than the sum of its parts' and which delivers our vision of what it is to be a leader – a complex and ambiguous process that necessarily combines the academic with the practical, that is personally and societally relevant and important, and which results in a synergy that allows the MBA to fulfil its promise, and participants to understand their own path to leadership, and to confidently take the first steps.

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8

Women Only Leadership Development: A Conundrum

Deirdre Anderson, Susan Vinnicombe and Val Singh

In its only concession to affirmative action, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 made a provision for women only training programmes. In 1986 British Telecommunications led the way in the corporate world by introducing a two-week residential programme with Cranfield School of Management for women managers facing the glass ceiling. The programme ran three times a year for 13 years. Today most major organisations committed to diversity have a women's management programme in their training portfolio. In the 90s Cranfield pioneered two public programmes for women managers – a leadership programme and a management development one. In only the last few years have other major business schools, like Harvard, Insead and IMD, followed suit by introducing programmes for women managers/leaders. The availability of so many programmes, however, has not dampened the debate on whether women need women only management development. In this chapter we review the lack of women in leadership, and the challenges faced by women on MBA programmes. We then look at the nature of women's careers and women's development. We argue the case for women only development and conclude with a case study of a programme we ran for our cohort of female MBA students in 2007.

Women's position in the workplace

Women now make up more than half of the paid workforce in the UK, yet the debate widens as to why a much greater proportion of women are still not reaching the highest positions in their fields.

In the final 'Sex and Power' index published by the Equal Opportunities Commission before it became part of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), the Commission queried the number of 'missing women' in business, politics, media, and the public and voluntary sectors. The missing women figures are calculated from the number of women required to bring each percentage to 50 per cent and findings indicated nearly 6,000 women missing from more than 33,000 positions considered to have power or influence in Britain. These included Members of Parliament, local authority council leaders, executive and non-executive directors in FTSE 100 companies, chief executives of media companies in the FTSE 350, directors of major museums and galleries, public appointments, head teachers of secondary schools, college principals, university vice chancellors, and trade union general secretaries (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007).

A more thorough analysis of the progress of women in FTSE 100 companies reveals that although the number of directorships held by women has increased to an all time high of 123 in 2007, the number of female executive directorships has actually fallen to 13, the lowest in numerical terms since 2001 (Sealy, Singh and Vinnicombe, 2007). Overall the number of FTSE 100 companies with female directorships has risen from 57 in 2001 to 76 in 2007 and there are now 35 companies with multiple women directors (Sealy *et al.*, 2007). Whilst these findings are encouraging, the question remains regarding what can be done to continue, and accelerate, the progression of women into senior positions. Individual women may choose to acquire additional qualifications.

MBA – designed by men and for men

Although it is recognised that girls perform better in single-sex schools, there is resistance to the need for single-sex teaching at postgraduate and executive development levels. The Master in Business Administration is an internationally recognised qualification and is often thought of as a key stepping stone to a senior management position (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). In addition to being a post graduate qualification, courses which are accredited through the Association of MBAs are also 'post experience' with the need for several years work experience before undertaking the programme.

The gender ratio of MBAs still reflects Schein and Davidson's (1993) suggestion 'think manager, think male' with men continuing to outnumber women on MBA courses internationally. Current UK figures in some of the UK's leading business schools indicate that female intake ranges from 19 per cent to 33 per cent of the total (Cambridge, 33 per cent; Cranfield, 22 per cent; LBS, 23 per cent; Manchester, 19 per cent; Oxford, 24 per cent; Warwick, 32 per cent).

Sinclair's (1995, 1997) study of women's experiences of the MBA in Australian, UK and US business schools found that the MBA was built on masculine understandings of managerial identity, what managers should do and how they should learn. Sinclair reported a lack of awareness among men that the experiences of women and other minority groups is any different to their own, as part of the dominant male majority. Males were not only prevalent as students, but also as faculty members and leading role-players in case studies used on the programme, a finding reflected in other research studies (Sinclair, 1995; 1997; Smith, 1997, Catalyst, 2000).

Sinclair's study further revealed that the emphasis on teamwork within the learning structure of the MBA resulted in women often finding themselves as the 'token woman'. As the sole woman within a learning team, they experienced subtle forms of discrimination as they struggled to make their voice heard in team discussions and were frequently expected to take the subordinate role carrying out the more clerical and secretarial tasks. Women reported learning through the collaborative shared experiences, where they were able to trust their colleagues and relinquish the need for power. This was in contrast to mastering (the emphasis on knowing through the mastery of) analytical techniques which was favoured by the males. Similarly, the women looked inwards for learning, in terms of connecting with personal experiences, while their male peers looked outwards at benchmarks and best practices (Sinclair, 1995, 1997).

A more recent study (Doorbar, 2005) which included women MBA students from European business schools, as well as those from Australia, the UK and the US found mixed views on the impact of the gender imbalance. Some thought that there should be more women on the courses, whereas others were happy with the existing ratio. Findings regarding the inherent hegemonic masculinity of the MBA programme with regard to interactions between tutors and

students, course content and student experiences of learning reflected those of Sinclair a decade earlier.

Kelan and Dunkley Jones (2007) found evidence of a denial of gender discrimination when interviewing both female and male MBA students, with both men and women downplaying the importance of gender. Women acknowledged the need to do business like a man; not wanting to associate strongly with the Women in Business group, for instance, as this would not assist in the adoption of the masculine approach needed for success. The need for women to keep a low profile, to be seen as 'ordinary students' was part of the experience of avoiding the identification with a 'disadvantaged' group (women) whilst simultaneously denying the existence of such a disadvantage. In this way women actually collude in conformity to the status quo of the male-dominated organisation through gender blindness, or turning a blind eye to their own personal experience of gender discrimination (Brenner, Godwin, Bilimoria, O'Neil and Piderit, 2006). Such behaviour can also be described as stereotype threat (Steele and Aronson, 1994) or the concern about being seen to act in a way which would be interpreted by others as stereotypical behaviour.

Nature of women's careers

Careers are an area of research which has, until recently, been dominated by exploration of male experiences of the traditional linear model, which does not fit with the majority of women's lives. One such example is the tournament model (Rosenbaum, 1989) which suggests that promotion decisions within an organisation are similar to tournaments, where selections are made at each stage, with winners of each round then competing against each other for entry to the next level. Once an individual has 'lost' a competition, or been passed over for promotion by a certain age, they are stigmatised as a non-winner, and so future opportunities are limited. Women's careers, with interruptions for family reasons, do not allow for the unbroken continuation of service which is necessary to maintain one's place in the 'tournament'. Even a short maternity break can be interpreted as demonstrating lack of availability and commitment. Major efforts are then needed to regain entry to the tournament, perhaps by studying for an MBA or by changing employer.

Yet a managerial career no longer necessitates a hierarchical progression within one organisation and instead, there is the 'protean' or 'boundaryless' career (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall and Moss, 1998) which is self-directed and involves employment changes which may include interruptions. However, empirical research found that the impact of such an employment gap may persist for many years, particularly gaps in early career having an immediate adverse effect on income, which is never regained (Reitman and Schneer, 2005) thus providing support for the tournament model.

Personal conceptions of career success differ for men and for women, when considering a range of internal, intangible, and external criteria (Sturges, 1999) whereas career success in organisations has tended to emphasise hierarchical position and pay. In her study, Sturges found that only men were in the 'climber' category, describing success largely in terms of external criteria, being very goal-oriented and linking success to hierarchical advancement and salary. Women dominated the 'expert' and 'self-realisers' categories; experts placed more emphasis on internal criteria such as personal view of competency, and intangible criteria such as personal recognition, while self-realisers focused predominantly on internal criteria such as personal fulfilment. No women referred to external criteria and very few men described internal criteria as part of their personal conception of career success. These differences have implications for how women act as managers, and how their development needs differ from those of male managers.

Organisational cultures are still geared more towards the development of men than of women. Because of the scarcity of women at senior levels, women have to grow and develop without the benefit of female role models, in a culture which often favours traditional male lifestyles (Ruderman and Ohlott, 2004). Women leaders make different choices to men with regard to both their personal and business roles, and organisations offering support for women's basic expectations about development will enable the retention of senior women. Ruderman and Ohlott (2004) suggest that support from organisations is needed in five areas:

- Allow women to act authentically, aligning behaviours needed on a daily basis with their value systems;
- Encourage women to make connections, building networks and developing relationships;

- Authorise women to act powerfully, rewarding them at the same level as men, and allowing them to manage their own careers;
- Foster feelings of wholeness, establishing clear priorities and setting boundaries in their work lives;
- Enable women to gain self-understanding, providing them with feedback and recognition.

Such an approach recognises that people have different motivations and values at different stages of their careers, and that these tend to vary by gender as well as age.

The kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005) addresses the issue of changing motivations over time, focusing on the 'fit' of work and family. This model offers an explanation for the large numbers of middle management women who leave corporate life. Women talk about opportunities and possibilities as well as the blocks experienced in creating their own path which provide challenge and allow specific needs to be met. Women face three career issues which have to be addressed as they shape their career; authenticity, balance and challenge.

- **Authenticity** refers to the ability to remain 'true to themselves', to engage in activities which reflect their values.
- The issue of **balance** is described as the appropriate positioning of any career decision with regard to wider issues in their lives.
- The search for sufficient **challenge** in any particular career option.

The kaleidoscope is used as a metaphor to illustrate the career shifts which occur as women combine these issues during the life-span with varying emphases for best fit, in the same way that a kaleidoscope presents a different pattern as the pieces move and are reflected in the three mirrors. So in the early career stage, women are often concerned with challenge and achievement of goals, as they establish themselves in their career. Balance and authenticity are relevant, but remain in the background. In mid-career, which is the time when professional women tend to have children, the issue of balance comes to the fore as women face the often conflicting demands of work and family, which may be resolved by compromise. Hewlett in her book 'Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping talented women on the road to success' (2007) specifically addresses

the issues related to women taking time off their career to be based at home. As women are freed from such demands, in the late career stage, they are better able to make career choices which fit with their value systems.

Thus attention has been drawn to the need to consider women's careers in the context of their whole lives, recognising the challenges and stresses, choices and constraints which affect women's lives uniquely. Women experience balance, connectedness, interdependence, achievement and motivation in ways which encompass both their career and their relationships with family and friends (Gilligan, 1982). This is very different from the way in which the majority of men identify with their careers and their employers.

Gendered development

These differences in the approach to career are not surprising when considered alongside the gendered upbringing which results in women and men arriving in organisations with a differently constructed sense of self. These gendered identity patterns are then reinforced by organisational practices in male dominated environments. Chodorow (1978) points out that women are largely responsible for the care of children in their very early years, and this is experienced differently by boys and girls. The development of masculinity involves the sense of separation from the mother, whereas feminine identity involves a greater sense of attachment, relating and connecting to others. Girls thus grow up to value closeness to others and are more likely to be anxious in situations where independence is called for. Thus Chodorow argues that feminine and masculine personality develops differently and women and men are preoccupied with different issues. Different relational needs and capacities in men and women are reflected in the roles enacted in adulthood, including the managerial role.

Women only management training

One response to the different developmental paths of men and women is to consider women-only development. The focus in the 1970s was on identifying and remedying perceived 'deficiencies' such as lack of ambition and assertiveness (Gray, 1994), inadvertently adding credence to the view that women were less able to hold

management positions than men. In contrast, programmes in the 1980s examined and built upon those very differences which have been nurtured since childhood, providing the opportunity of reflecting and reinterpreting their managerial experiences exclusively with other women. This avoided the abrogation of their female self (Tanton, 1992); women often disregard their differences, values and preferences when finding themselves in the minority, in order to make themselves like their male peers. In the 1990s and on into the 21st century, organisations tackled gender issues as women became the first of the many under-represented groups to reach senior positions, previously the territory of white males. Thus the concern for gender shifted to diversity management, as organisations responded to other equity concerns stemming from differences in race, ethnicity, sexual identity and religions (Ely and Meyerson, 1999). Differences came to be valued along with the benefits of heterogeneity in management teams.

Women only management training can bring benefits such as increased self-esteem and confidence, facilitation of networking, increased knowledge, and a basis for the development of wider organisational initiatives to support the changes necessary to enable more women to progress to senior positions (Anderson, 2004). External development programmes, in particular, can improve individual potential for advancement, and the opportunity on women-only programmes to hear how other women dealt with issues such as work-life balance, politics and promotion were considered valuable, and topics which were likely to receive less focus on mixed-gender programmes (Valerio, 2006).

Women only leadership training as part of an MBA

It may be helpful to review these issues through a case study in a leading British business school (Cranfield School of Management). As a result of a direct request from a group of women MBA students in the 2006/2007 cohort, a two-day workshop, *Women as Leaders*, was offered as an additional event to all the women students, with 80 per cent choosing to attend. The workshop was designed to address the following objectives:

- exploring the differences between male and female leadership
- clarifying personal definitions of career success

- increasing understanding of ways to become more proactive in advancing one's own career
- developing practical strategies for personal and/or career development
- sharing best practices of coping with gendered cultures

All MBA students at Cranfield are allocated to one of three streams to attend lectures and allocated to learning sets in groups of about eight for the duration of the MBA. Consequently, it was the first time these women had all come together as one group. The emphasis on the two-day programme was locating career within the whole life experience. Perhaps most importantly, the event allowed the support and friendship between students to be strengthened through the discussions and sharing of experiences which took place. This process began immediately with the individual introductions; the women commented on how much they gained from listening to the rich introductions from each participant, acknowledging surprise that this should be the case, given that the event was eight months into the MBA and that they supposedly knew each other. The programme thus achieved its objective of establishing an open learning environment with an intimate and positive culture, allowing acknowledgement and deep reflection of individual experiences, which contrasted sharply with the more usual fast-paced and competitive environment of the MBA. This sharing of experiences continued throughout the two-days. As one woman explained:

Prior to this programme I would have easily said that I knew most people quite well, but our conversations during the break-out sessions made me realise that we have been remiss in getting to know each other.

The women found themselves able to discuss and explore some of the challenges they had faced as women in male-dominated organisations. Within the non-threatening environment of the workshop, there was no requirement to maintain status, or concern that admitting difficulties would be interpreted as weakness or failure. Instead, they acknowledged 'the importance of sharing burdens with people who actually understand your challenges and feelings'.

As this workshop was an optional addition to the main MBA course, there was no assessment of learning required. This encouraged the women to be open and honest in their contributions. This contrasted with the more usual MBA teaching sessions in which students are required to provide the 'right answers'.

When asked for written feedback some months later, subsequent to the completion of the MBA, and once again back at work, the participants expressed great appreciation for having been given the opportunity to participate in the programme, describing it as a 'wonderful event' and a 'life-changing experience' which had a 'huge impact', 'the best two-days of my MBA'.

I learnt so much about myself and how to conduct myself as a woman in the work place, with superiors, peers and reportees (*sic*).

The event provided an affirmation of the sometimes different skills and personal qualities which women can bring to a leadership role, and which can often be overlooked in the male-dominated MBA classroom. One woman described her own work experience:

All my bosses have been female, and I have the most terrible working experience. Most women (in my national culture) believe that to make it to the top you have to be like the men. This has made it impossible to have mentors and role models.

This recognition of the way women leaders can sometimes collude within the masculine culture was a common theme.

(The course) made me see women in leadership with different eyes. (The tutors) talked to us not as "victims" but as "owners of our own destiny" and at times even as "perpetrators"! Women can be perpetrators as much as victims in the gender divide! They can make life difficult for themselves and inflict discrimination to other women as much as men do.

Thus the women reflected on their own behaviours and how that may have contributed to the prevailing attitudes within their organisations, allowing them to make choices about their future and

'develop strategies to overcome the unique challenges that women face in reaching the top'.

Authenticity emerged as a key factor for the women as they planned their future careers, taking into account the importance of identifying and working to maintain their own values whilst simultaneously pursuing the achievement of their goals with regard to progression.

The seminar inspired me to delve further into the gender difference in the workplace and to try to the best of my ability to learn to translate and adapt whilst staying true to my values and ambitions. It also inspired me to want to contribute to the Diversity and Inclusion initiative in my organisation and to lobby my global CEO on the matter.

So it was not just about values relating to oneself, but also sharing the learning and making a difference within the organisation to benefit many women, and being instrumental in adapting the culture of the organisation. Similarly, another talked about wanting to develop in herself and others the 'essential skills ... of how to progress into senior roles without losing our identity as women'. As well as authenticity, this also relates to the sense of wholeness (Ruderman and Ohlott, 2004), as the women seek to integrate their ambition with their desire to foster relationships and make connections within the workplace. The importance of networks and the development of relationships was paramount for one woman as she supported others in her organisational role:

I have been careful to support and develop the women that I am managing, telling them about networking, career development, talking up their achievements, asking for what they want.

Conclusions

This chapter addresses the lack of women in leadership positions. It opens by looking at how the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 provided for affirmative action in the field of training. As a result many organisations established a women's management development programme as part of their portfolio of training programmes.

Interestingly Cranfield pioneered two women's leadership programmes as open programmes in the 90s and recently other major business schools have followed suit. One might conclude that women's leadership programmes are now well established, yet young women today increasingly feel ambivalent about associating with them. At the same time the percentage of women on the male dominated MBA programmes in the UK (like elsewhere) fail to increase.

We argue that the nature of women's careers which are often not linear and frequently disrupted at various stages along with women's rather different personal definitions of career success mean that women engage with their careers rather differently to men and this needs to be reflected in development programmes. Women's upbringing and the role careers play in women's lives also fundamentally impact the ways in which women often take up leadership roles.

Here lies the conundrum. There are many reasons why women only leadership programmes make sense. Women are overwhelmingly positive when participating in a women only programme, yet many young women shun the experience of such programmes for fear of being stigmatised by their participation. Women, particularly the younger ones, are increasingly denying gender discrimination at work. They do not want to be treated separately. Rather, they want to do leadership like and with the men. It is the more experienced women managers/professionals who recognise that they do need to understand how organisations impact women's careers and how women themselves, by working together can support, encourage and inspire one another to reach for the top.

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9

Leadership Learning and Development: A Framework for Evaluation

James Collins and David Denyer

This chapter promotes the effective evaluation of leadership learning and development interventions. An evaluation is the 'systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs in order to make judgements about the program, to improve program effectiveness, and/or to inform decisions about future programming' (Patton, 1997, p. 23). It is a fundamental step in the learning and development process. Evaluation should not be confused with assessment, which typically involves the measurement of how an individual learner performed on a learning task. In contrast, evaluation aims to improve (formative) or prove the worth and efficacy (summative) of programmes (Scriven, 1991). Many commentators have celebrated the importance of evaluation describing it as the 'backbone of the learning and change process' (Pym, 1968) since it 'provides information for action' (Weiss, 1972, p. 318). Companies, professional management associations, business schools and consultants assume that leadership development interventions will result in improved leadership (Collins and Holton, 2004, p. 218). However, on the whole organisations do not properly evaluate the impact of leadership learning and development – they fail to budget for it financially, make time available for a proper evaluation or employ the most effective evaluation practices. Thomson (2004) describes this as the 'evaluation lament'.

Education, training, or development takes many forms and there are a large number of bodies or organisations that sponsor, finance support or deliver learning and development initiatives. This can

include a full range of managerial leadership development interventions categorised as formal training, feedback, developmental relationships and on the job experiences (Collins and Holton, 2004). This means that evaluation has different meanings for different people; it is a topic, and skill, that can be applied to any of a multitude of areas that might loosely be labelled as learning, education, training or development. In this chapter we consider the subject from the perspective of executive development and learning. So, although what we describe here may be relevant to the wider context, we are principally concerned with evaluation with reference to the kinds of leadership development programmes offered by business schools and associated programmes that primarily concern leadership and learning.

The chapter aims to provide guidance to all those responsible for commissioning, providing or evaluating leadership learning and development. Firstly, we discuss the purpose of evaluation by introducing a classification developed by Easterby-Smith (1986). Secondly, we explore common constraints and opportunities to evaluation outlining the factors that influence the choice of evaluation strategy. Thirdly, we critically appraise the Kirkpatrick (1959, 1976, 1998) model, which has become the dominant approach used to evaluate leadership learning and development programmes. Finally, we argue that evaluations that aim to prove the efficacy of programmes are often limited because they fail to account for differences in context. Drawing on the work of Pawson and Tilley (1997), we argue that for evaluations to facilitate learning and improve practice they need to explore why, with whom and in what circumstances programmes generate change.

The purpose of evaluation

Hesseling (1966) states that before evaluation takes place the answer to two fundamental questions need to be found; evaluation for whom and evaluation of whom? We would seek to add a further crucial question; evaluation of what? We consider these three questions are essentially a quest to understand the purpose of an evaluation. When we are asked how we 'do' evaluation our, perhaps somewhat unhelpful, reply is that is not possible to provide a general 'take on evaluation' without a thorough examination or discussion

about purpose and objectives. Perhaps asking, of evaluation, the Why, What, Who, How and When, questions that we are taught at school is a good starting place. Some simple, but important, key issues need to be addressed:

- What are the aim/objectives of this evaluation?
- What is being evaluated?
- Why is this important?
- For whose benefit is the evaluation?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- How will the evaluation be undertaken?

We view evaluation of leadership learning and development as a research endeavour which aims to robustly seek evidence to address these fundamental questions. Would we be asked the question 'how do you do research?' without first being advised of the fundamental objectives of what it is that the research aims to discover? In other words the research design follows the research question – and the same has to be said for evaluation. Burgoyne and Singh (1977) comment that those asking for evaluation ill-define the terms of what and who is being evaluated and for what purpose. Without the kind of crucial information described above, how is it possible to properly consider evaluation design, method and resources?

Easterby-Smith (1986) offers four principal purposes of evaluation: Proving, Improving, Learning and Controlling. Easterby-Smith suggests that an evaluation study cannot usefully serve more than one purpose. Each of these purposes is discussed below.

Many evaluations attempt to *prove* the worth or value of a programme; in other words, finding evidence that the benefits outweigh the costs. Key internal stakeholders such as Human Resource Directors or Learning and Development professionals often need to demonstrate value for money to their board. Also external learning and development providers want to prove the value of their interventions and use this information in their marketing materials. The typical issues are a concern for whether training resulted in improved relevant knowledge or learning, did this transfer to the wider context, to what extent has this been integrated into an individual's work role, and was the training cost effective? There are challenges to proving value or return on investment. Firstly, from

an economic point of view, proving value is extremely difficult. For example, what factors should be included in the calculation? Should this require statistical evidence; hard numbers or facts such as the retention rates of participants, improved staff satisfaction scores, evidence that participants have advanced through promotion, and improved company financial performance? Secondly, how is learning of new skills or behaviour proved? Can new knowledge or skills be measured, and how can transfer of learning into the wider organisational context be assessed? This may require subjective evidence which is not always trusted or deemed to be valid.

Formative evaluations may aim to *improve* or revise the programme (Cronbach, 1963; Hamblin, 1974). For example, management development professionals might alter or revise an ongoing programme in light of information gleaned from an evaluation. Here it is feedback mechanisms that are crucial; how the findings of the evaluation result in formative action that improves the future effectiveness of the development programme. The notion of evaluation for the purpose of improving is consistent with the view that the principal purpose should be to look forward and inform action; answering the question what should happen next? (e.g. Weiss, 1972; Hamblin, 1974).

Easterby-Smith describes how evaluation in itself contributes to the *learning* process. When engaged in evaluation studies participants often reflect on how they have taken the learning from the programme and applied this in their workplace – this reflection may include talking about the barriers and facilitators to applying the learning and it is during the evaluation that participants learn how they have applied their learning. A good example of this is coaching accreditation programmes that require candidates to reflect upon their practice and provide evidence of their personal development. In this respect evaluation as a process can in itself be cathartic and contribute to learning. This is not to be confused with a more traditional view of evaluating – what was learnt on the programme; this is captured in the ‘proving’ purpose of evaluation.

Evaluations can also be used as a means of *control* by establishing whether or not agreed standards have been accomplished. While this is relevant to both public and private sectors, examples can particularly be found in the evaluation of targets in public services. For example, although many public bodies are arms-length from government that are required to reach targets set by central govern-

ment. This permits central policy makers to monitor these organisations for compliance and regulate their resources.

There are a large number of individuals who have an interest in an evaluation study and each can perceive the aims of development and of evaluation in different ways. At the organisational level the stakeholder interests include both the organisation benefiting from training and that contracted to provide a programme. At the individual level in addition to the participant, his or her co-workers may be stakeholders, as are the decision-makers who signed and agreed to pay for the programme. In the training organisation there are programme consultants and designers and those that deliver or teach sessions. In our experience it is frequently the case that the interests of the different stakeholders are missing during evaluation. The crucial issue is that each of the stakeholders holds a common view about not only the purpose of the development programme but also of the evaluation, and how the findings will be acted upon.

The controlling aspect of evaluation serves to remind us of the inherently political nature of evaluation. This is an aspect that has been particularly explored by Weiss (1973, 1993) who identifies three principal political factors. Firstly, as described above, evaluation frequently examines political programmes and policies. Secondly, the environment in which evaluators are reporting findings may be distinctly political. In this context we would include the concerns of stakeholders involved in the decision-making process – what has influenced them to consider it as important at this time (do they ‘permit’ evaluation only when they are comfortable that some benefit is likely to be reported – otherwise their original decisions may well be questioned). Is evaluation part of a greater strategy around organisational change? Thirdly, evaluation is in itself inherently political. There are a multitude of implicit assumptions about the programme, including design, delivery and the original objectives, which carry taken for granted legitimacy. The message that the evaluation report carries is bounded by these assumptions about the objectives of training.

Evaluating leadership learning and development: opportunities and constraints

Tannenbaum and Woods (1992) suggest that there are a number of factors that influence the choice of evaluation strategy. They state

that evaluations will be affected by the likelihood or feasibility of changing the programme. If there is little possibility of changing the programme then there is little point in investing in a comprehensive evaluation. If the programme is strategically important for the organisation then a more thorough evaluation may be warranted. Similarly, a more rigorous evaluation is more likely if the potential impact of erroneous conclusions is high. The size of the leadership development programme will also guide the evaluation strategy. Programmes involving large numbers of participants and a high level of resources may require more in-depth evaluations. The nature of the programme will also affect the evaluation strategy as it is easier to evaluate practical and mechanical skills than leadership skills. Many leadership development programmes aspire to vague learning objectives. For example,

... a program goal may aim to improve participants' ability to adapt to a changing competitive landscape. But exactly how you measure 'ability to adapt to a changing competitive landscape' may be far less clear (Craig and Hannum, 2006, p. 25).

In our experience, leadership development initiatives are often implemented without a clearly stated set of objectives or outcomes. In such cases, different stakeholders may have different ideas about what the program is assumed to achieve because the purpose is open to interpretation.

Evaluations are usually demanding in terms of resources and expertise. Some organisations simply do not have the capabilities to design and conduct a detailed evaluation study. Leadership development programmes are often costly and evaluations may be regarded as an additional cost rather than an investment. Evaluation is frequently an 'add on'. That it is not properly considered or discussed at the outset and the costs not included and the original budget leads to questions of whether it is justified to spend more on this additional task. Burgoyne, Hirsh and Williams (2004) suggest 10 per cent of the training budget should be set aside for this purpose; many would think that this is rather a large sum, but according to these authors evaluation should provide data that can improve efficiency and effectiveness and thus more than pay for itself.

Tannenbaum and Woods (1992) argue that evaluations need to fit with the timeframes of decisions about leadership learning and

development. If evaluations coincide with major decisions or the production of important documents (e.g. the HR strategy) they may receive higher priority. Ultimately, an organisation's culture will also have an effect on the evaluation strategy. Some organisations will have an orientation towards evaluation and the use of evidence to inform decisions whereas others place more emphasis on intuition and immediate action (Tannenbaum and Woods, 1992).

Kirkpatrick: the predominant evaluation approach

Over the last 50 years, the Kirkpatrick (1959, 1976, 1998) model has been the predominant approach in training evaluation. If one was to engage in a conversation about training evaluation with colleagues or clients in the academic or business communities, it is highly likely that Kirkpatrick will be the name that will first come to mind. The Kirkpatrick model proposes four levels of training effectiveness: Reaction; Learning; Behaviour and Results. Each of these facets is discussed below.

This *reaction* level captures participants' immediate response to the training programme and facilities. Frequently this is collected quantitatively through 'happy sheets' and less frequently through a form of exit interview. Collecting reactions provides immediate feedback, requires little time, learners feel that they have contributed to improving the programme and the approach is usually tolerated. However, it is rare that the views of other stakeholders – such as the designers and/or the deliverers of programmes are sought in this process.

The purpose of the *learning* level is to capture what knowledge, skill and understanding participants have gained from the programme. This is frequently achieved through the application of some kind of pre and post assessment tests, at the level of the participant, usually using quantitative measures such as questionnaires. Such questionnaires would normally be designed in such a way that they measure the themes that are central to the objectives of the programme (such as skills or competencies). A simple comparison of pre and post training scores provides evidence of increased or improved knowledge, in other words, learning.

Of importance at the *behaviour* level is whether or not the learning taken from the programme is being applied at the workplace.

Evaluating the application of learning may include quantitative measures, however qualitative methods such as interviews and observation are frequently perceived as relevant. These methods can capture rich examples from programme participants, and a wider scope such as peers and colleagues, of how learning has been used. However, Kirkpatrick failed to develop methodologies for systematic observation of behaviours (Goldstein, 1980). Some of the challenges here are to explore the less tangible aspects of learning, and how this extends beyond the individual. Issues such as whether learning has transferred to colleagues and to the wider organisation, has there been any organisational change, the extent that workplace cultures may be influenced by participants' new learning, and the sustainability of new learning are difficult to establish or verify.

The *results* level assess whether or not key business objectives (as described in the original design) have been met. The results evaluation explores the effect on the business or environment by the learner. As noted by Conger and Benjamin (1999, p. xii),

Leadership development is 'no longer focused on the individual learner but increasingly in shaping the worldviews and behaviours of cohorts of managers and, even transforming entire organizations'.

Therefore, evaluation results need to take into account the impact of an intervention at the level of individuals, groups and systems (Collins and Holton, 2004). Evaluating results at an individual level may be possible and can be integrated into normal management systems and reporting. However, measuring the results of learning and development across an entire organisation is very much more challenging, not least because of the external factors that affect organisational and business performance, which obscure the actual impact of the intervention.

The results level of analysis also raises a concern for 'value', perhaps reflecting the need to demonstrate value for money, particularly in public sector spending. Figures vary enormously, but a report published by Research and Markets in 2004 estimates the expenditure on training in the UK private sector at £18.1bn with at least a further £11.5bn spent by government and the public sector. As such, a fifth level, return on investment (ROI) is often added to

the Kirkpatrick model (e.g. Phillips, 1997). The Phillips approach calculates a monetary ROI by identifying the total financial benefit an organisation gains from a learning program and then subtract from that the total costs incurred in developing, producing and delivering that program. Isolating, measuring and converting to a monetary value all the benefits and costs of a learning programme is a key challenge in this approach. Others argue that a fifth level extension to the Kirkpatrick model should also encompass the wider social/societal impacts of learning and development programme (Kaufman, Keller and Watkins, 1996).

A key issue with the Kirkpatrick model is that learning and development is regarded as a chain of events (Burgoyne and Singh, 1977). Alliger and Janak (1989, pp. 331–332), for example, argue that the Kirkpatrick model,

... provides a vocabulary and rough taxonomy for criteria. At the same time, Kirkpatrick's model, through its easily adopted vocabulary and a number of (often implicit) assumptions, can tend to misunderstandings and overgeneralisations.

The Kirkpatrick model is underpinned by three assumptions: each succeeding level is alleged to be more informative than the last, each level is caused by the previous level and each succeeding level is correlated with the previous level. However, Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennett, Traver and Shotland (1997), using meta-analytic techniques, have challenged all of these assumptions.

A number of authors have discussed the need for more sophisticated models of evaluation (e.g. Smith, 1981; Alliger and Janak, 1989; Kaufman and Keller, 1994; Holton, 1996; Swanson and Holton, 1999) and a number of alternative approaches have been developed. Many of these, however, are adaptations of the Kirkpatrick model. Hamblin (1974), for example calls for evaluations to consider reactions, learning, job behaviour, organisational effect and ultimate value.

Systems approaches to evaluation: the critical role of context

Many leadership learning development programmes assume that the competences for effective performance can be determined and the gaps can be filled by the developmental interventions. This

'deficit model' is underpinned by a model of causation that regards the programme as an external force that can be applied to people to generate desired outcomes. This is akin to a medical model whereby a given dosage is administered to a sick population. Pre-intervention and post-intervention measures supposedly determine the efficacy of the programme. This form of evaluation may tell us that on average there was a positive (or negative) result but it fails to address crucial questions such as: why does the same intervention work with one organisation and not with another? Why do some people respond to the programme whilst others do not?

As a response to this challenge, a number of novel evaluation approaches have been developed. CIRO and CIPP approaches are both systems models that take into account the crucial role of context. The CIRO (Context, Input, Reaction, Outcome) model considers how needs are identified, learning objectives are established, and the organisational context as well as reaction and outcomes of the programme (Warr, Bird and Rackham, 1970). The CIPP approach (Stufflebeam, 1989) is a decision-focused approach to evaluation which focuses on the target audience and the needs to be met (context), the available resources and possible alternative interventions (inputs), how well the programme was implemented (process) and the results obtained (product).

Pawson and Tilley (1997) have proposed a realist evaluation approach for the evaluation of policy programmes that addresses specifically why interventions work and in which contexts. For Pawson and Tilley,

We need to know why and in what circumstances, programmes affect potential subjects before we can begin to say if they work (1994, p. 292).

Denyer, Tranfield and Ernst van Aken (2008) build on the work of Pawson and Tilley (1997) by proposing the CIMO logic (Context, Intervention, Mechanism, Outcome). To understand outcomes (O) it is important to focus on certain hypotheses about Mechanisms (M) through which an Intervention (I) seeks to bring about change, as well as recognising the contextual conditions (C).

Mechanisms are crucial because they help to explain why interventions lead to outcomes. For example a leadership learning and

development intervention does not just work, the intervention might increase the obligation for people to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in light of commitments and expected outcomes – it is accountability (mechanism) that generates change. The intervention provides participants with the opportunity to change but whether or not the transformation actually occurs is dependent on the context – the individuals involved, interpersonal relationships, institutional setting and wider infrastructural system (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

Doing realist evaluations of leadership learning and development

There is a general expectation within organisations that leadership development will work. It will lead to positive outcomes in terms of knowledge, expertise and system results at the individual, team or group, or organisational level (Collins and Holton, 2004). Whether or not the outcomes are achieved are dependent on the assessment of learning needs, the design of the intervention, its implementation, the nature of the circumstances and the characteristics of the learners. Leadership development programmes contain embedded assumption about how and why they work. We argue that rather than solely trying to measure results, evaluations may yield more meaningful data by testing these implicit hypotheses.

A realist, or CIMO, evaluation begins with the identification and definition as accurately as possible, the context (participants and circumstances), the intervention (all aspects of the programme design and implementation), the likely mechanisms (explicit or implicitly hypotheses and pedagogical theory) and the anticipated outcomes (positive and negative). This phase of the evaluation should be done during the conception of the programme. It is crucial to ascertain the perspectives of all stakeholders including the learners, programme designers, subject matter experts, the client sponsors, the client HR department since they may have very different views of how and why a programme might/might not work and may also provide insights into the context of the intervention and their anticipated outcomes. It is important to consider that different stakeholder groups may have very different ideas about what they consider convincing evidence. Existing literature could also play a significant role

in this phase by providing theories of why the intervention might work in the specified context. Over time it would also be possible to incorporate information gleaned from past evaluations of comparable programmes. The aim is to produce a 'specified set of mechanisms and their required contexts which would enable predictions to be made about outcome patterns, though these would, of course, be *ceteris paribus*' (Pawson and Tilley, 1994, p. 304).

A host of mechanisms may be at play in a leadership learning and development programme. For example, a leadership development programme might work because it enables learners to gain personal insight about themselves and understand differences between people enabling them to enhance their interpersonal relationships at work. It might work because the programme initiates visioning and improved goal setting leading to collective task insight within an executive team. A greater understanding of conflict resolution techniques might be reckoned to reduce disagreements and improve negotiation. It might work by countering a prevailing organisational culture of authoritarian leadership leading to increased empowerment and delegation. A focus on attribution and blame might lead to participants taking greater responsibility for their actions. It might work simply by giving participants space and time away from their work roles to think through important decisions or improve the social relationships between members of a management team. Undoubtedly a range of other mechanisms could be the 'engines for change' (Pawson and Tilley, 1994, p. 298) and could explain why a leadership development programme works in some contexts and perhaps not in others.

In addition to the underlying mechanisms, it is also important to take into account the context of the programme. Learners clearly differ by age, gender, ethnicity, educational background and other demographic attributes as well as other factors such as tenure in an organisation, previous experience and role. A leadership development programme will only work if the contextual conditions and the participants are favourable. When evaluations demonstrate either objective or subjective data that indicates either a very limited effect or a very large effect from an intervention it raises the question – what is it about the individual or the circumstance that led to this result? When evaluations reveal that effects were low or high for a group of participants it raises the question – are there similar-

ities amongst participants or their context that could explain this result?

For example, if we consider a one week open (available to participants from different organisations) leadership development programme whose focus is on shared and distributed leadership, several contextual conditions may effect the efficacy of the programme. Here we suggest a sample of the many possible hypothesis: there may already be high levels of shared and distributed leadership in participant's organisations; alternative courses attended by participants may have espoused credible alternative models of leadership, the culture of participant's organisations may be opposed to a shared/distributed model of leadership, participants may not perform a leadership role that enables them to change, there may be a lack of stability caused by employee rotation which may hamper efforts to sustain change. The key issue here is that neither happy sheets nor pre-intervention/post-intervention tests are effective evaluation designs for exploring these hypotheses.

In terms of methods of data collection, the CIMO approach is pluralistic. A mixed-method approach may be necessary to provide data on contexts, interventions, mechanisms and outcomes. In addition, the validity of results can be strengthened by using more than one method to study the same programme though a process of triangulation. Collecting stories or examples of specific changes and the barriers to and facilitators of those changes can be accomplished through interviews or focus groups. This type of information is often very useful in presenting examples that 'speak' to stakeholders and can provide meaningful insights about why a programme accomplished its objectives or why not.

Once the likely generative mechanisms and contextual variables have been identified, the reviewer interrogates available evidence to find out whether and where these mechanisms are appropriate. If the programme is small or a pilot every participants could become a 'case study' 'to test, revise and refine the preliminary theory' (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p. 74). In large programmes it will be necessary to take a sample from the population. The sample could be random or the evaluators may wish to focus on the extreme cases. Many evaluations, by reducing measures of effect to a mean score for all participants, fail to learn valuable lessons from the extreme cases. Participants who report substantial change or those who

report that the programme led to no change may actually provide more meaningful data in a CIMO evaluation.

Regardless of sampling strategy, data gathered from each participant is described and discussed in terms of its contribution to the emerging theory,

... the reviewer's basic task is to sift through the mixed fortunes of a programme attempting to discover those contexts (C+) that have produced solid and successful outcomes (O) from those contexts (C) that induce failure (O-) (Pawson, 2002, p. 345).

None of the information gleaned from any individual participant will disclose how a programme works. The product of the evaluation would be a revised model based upon a synthesis designed to explain for whom, in what circumstances, in what respect and why, certain causes or interventions produce outcomes (Pawson, 2002). The objective is to produce a model that will be helpful in implementing and targeting such programmes and, above all, in creating realistic expectations about what can be achieved. For a learning and development provider or a client organisation that runs a large number of programmes, CIMO evaluations could provide a basis for a 'progressive research programme where we move from crudely articulated and partially evaluated models toward more fully articulated and more thoroughly tested ones' (Pawson and Tilley, 1994, p. 304).

Conclusion

Leadership development interventions are pervasive yet research and experience indicates that organisations are spending little time evaluating the effectiveness of their interventions and, as yet, there are few clear signs that evaluations have a noticeable impact in the world of practice. The growing recognition within firms of the need to maximise return on investment, requires that new methodologies are developed evaluating programmes systematically and using the findings to facilitate learning and improve the design and delivery of leadership learning and development programmes and enhance their impact.

The Kirkpatrick model still dominates the evaluation of leadership learning and development and the majority of evaluations employ

happy sheets to ascertain participant's immediate reactions to programmes, and pre-intervention/post-interventions tests to demonstrate changes in learning and behaviour. Very few studies attempt to provide clear evidence that leadership development has led to measurable results.

Organisations are fuzzy, ambiguous, complex socially constructed systems (Denyer *et al.*, 2008). As such, understanding the impact of a leadership development programme cannot be well understood from measuring reactions, learning, behaviour and results. If evaluations are to lead to learning and improvement of practice, we need to shift the focus of evaluations from a preoccupation with addressing the extent to which interventions lead to outcomes (I-O logic) to take into account how interventions stimulate mechanisms in contexts to generate change (CIMO logic).

The central challenge of evaluation of leadership learning and development programmes lies in devising and exploring hypotheses about why programmes work, for whom and in which circumstances. The findings from a series of evaluations using the CIMO framework might lead to the development of a cumulative knowledge base that has the potential to inform the design of leadership learning and development for learning and improvements in practice.

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Part III

Leadership Learning – Managing Talent

10

Developing Future Leaders: The Contribution of Talent Management

Eddie Blass, Ann Knights and Angelita Orbea

Talent management is more than human resource management, leadership development initiatives or succession planning. It is the collective approach to recruiting, retaining and developing talent within the organisation for its future benefit, and extends beyond the domains listed above to include strategy, organisational culture, and change management. While much has been written in the form of 'how to do' and '10 steps to talent management', the picture emerging is more complex than that. Drawing on a series of in-depth case studies into the talent management processes of seven complex, multinational organisations, this chapter looks at some of the key issues that seem to underpin talent management processes in organisations and questions whether they are actually achieving what they intend. Key dimensions emerged from the case studies which required decisions to be made with regard to the organisations development approach, assessment, and implementation plans. While organisations make their decisions for a normative outcome, a number of critical questions arise which underpin the whole field of talent management. For example, is talent management just another fad which will not actually improve business results? Is talent management just a rebranding of traditional HR management practices? Is talent management entirely ethical? Are current talent management practices actually demotivating for some? How are talent management practices taking into account the wider knowledge base around psychology at work? This chapter questions whether, at the end of the day, talented people will manage themselves, because that is part of what being talented is about, and the fittest will

survive. Hence talent management for organisations should be about creating the organisational environment and culture in which the competence and ways of working needed for future success can flourish.

Talent management is being identified as the key theme driving strategic HRM throughout organisations. The Institute of Management and Administration's HR critical issues survey for 2006 identified talent management as the top issue for 75 per cent of respondents (Sandler, 2006). Foster (2005) claims that organisations are finally waking up to the reality that they are about to suffer a massive knowledge loss due to the looming retirement of the baby boomers, as between 40 and 70 per cent of all senior executives will become eligible for retirement in the next five years at most major corporations (Gandossy and Kao, 2004). Couple this with the dwindling numbers of the younger generations, and there is the potential for organisations to get worried about a talent shortage in the not so distant future.

Part of the concern stemming from this demographic shift is the result of the changing the nature of the psychological contract, such that workers are more able to pick and choose between employers based on issues such as work life balance, diversity policy, and the extent to which they will have a voice (Berger, 2004a). The highly educated professional employee is less a malleable resource for the company and more a mobile investor of his or her own intellectual, social and emotional capitals. As such employees are 'volunteers' for organisations, who view themselves not as assets, but as investors in their organisations (Gratton and Ghoshal, 2003).

This is quite a shift from where we were two decades ago when we witnessed massive down-sizing of organisations, redundancies and the removal of layers of management as organisations endeavoured to increase their efficiency. Then we saw the psychological contract being renegotiated away from the idea of job security and a mutual employment relationship, to one where the individual had to maintain their employability and effectively manage their CV in an effort to develop a career for themselves. Having liberated employees from the chains that bound them to their organisations', employers are now in a position where they may want to reverse the trend. Yet having suffered such a painful 'liberation', are employees willing to be put back in chains? The labour market

of the future is likely to favour the employee in the employment relationship. Understanding and effectively managing the psychological contract will help organisations thrive, but there needs to be clear agreement on the contributions that the workers will make to the organisation and vice versa (Rousseau, 2004). Promises about careers, development and how talent is managed will be more rather than less important in the future.

Perspectives on talent management

As a concept in itself, talent management is actually quite difficult to define. A review of the case studies carried out by the authors, plus those carried out in other research (such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development [CIPD] (Tansley, 2006)) suggests that it can be viewed from a number of perspectives, all of which give a different interpretation to the same activities within different organisations. The implications of each perspective on the development of the future leader could be quite stark. Table 10.1 summarises how the five different perspectives are operationalised differently through HR practices.

Firstly, there is the process perspective which proposes that talent management includes all processes needed to optimise people within an organisation (see, for example, Farley, 2005). This perspective would put all the systems in place to enable a talented individual to carve out their career and succeed in their chosen organisation. Provided they meet the competency requirements and performance requirements that the process requires, they will move forwards. McKinsey's propose the idea of a 'talent market' where individuals are expected to find the best opportunities for themselves within the organisation and the process perspective could be one way of achieving this (Bryan, Joyce and Weiss, 2006). By using an IT support system to open up non-price-based competition across a range of candidates and job alternatives, any behaviour indicative of a silo mentality would show itself when it would previously have remained hidden.

Next is the cultural perspective that believes talent management is a mindset (Creelman, 2004), and that you must believe that talent is needed for success (Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod, 2001). Here the opportunities are greatest for the entrepreneurial as individuals are

Table 10.1 Differences in operationalisation of HRM according to talent management perspective

Perspective	Driver	Recruitment and Selection	Retention	Reward	Succession Planning	Development Approach
Process	Use people management processes to optimise development and deployment of talent.	Competence based, consistent approach.	Attention paid to processes such as work life balance (WLB) and intrinsic and extrinsic factors that make people feel they belong.	Calculated according to performance review and some element of potential.	Routine review process based on performance review cycle.	Personal development plans (PDP) and development reviews as part of performance management. Maybe some individual interventions.
Cultural	Belief that talent is the most critical factor for success.	Look for raw talent. Allow introductions from in-house.	Allow people the freedom to demonstrate their talent, and to succeed and fail.	Flexible package according to individual needs.	Develop in-house if possible, if not look outside.	Individuals negotiate their own development paths. Coaching and mentoring are standard.
Competitive	Keep talent away from the competition.	Pay the best so you attract the best. Poach the best from the competition.	Good people like to work with good people. Aim to be employer of choice.	Offer more than the competition. If people leave it won't be for a better reward package.	Geared towards retention – letting people know what their target jobs are.	Both planned and opportunistic approaches adopted. Mentors used to build loyalty.

Table 10.1 Differences in operationalisation of HRM according to talent management perspective – *continued*

Perspective	Driver	Recruitment and Selection	Retention	Reward	Succession Planning	Development Approach
Developmental	Accelerate the development of high potentials.	Ideally only recruit at entry point and then develop.	Clear development paths and schemes to lock high potentials into career paths.	Increments based on development as well as performance.	Identified groups are being developed for each level of the organisation.	Both planned and opportunistic. Focused on development into key roles.
HR Planning	Ensure right people in the right jobs at the right time.	Target areas of shortage across the company. Numbers and quotas approach.	Turnover expected, monitored and accounted for in plans.	Clear salary scales and structures.	Detailed in-house mappings for individuals.	Planned in cycles according to business needs.

encouraged to demonstrate their talent and abilities. There are not the rules and processes to be adhered to for promotions that occur in the process perspective. In organisations playing by these rules, talents have all the rope they need to either hang themselves or prove their competence and worth. This is perhaps the least structured approach to talent management and suits the mavericks in the workplace.

Thirdly there is the competitive perspective which pertains that talent management is about identifying talented people, finding out what they want, and giving it to them – because if not, your competitors will (Woodruffe, 2003). This is where most of the large consultancy businesses or PR/advertising businesses are at. In industries such as PR, where intellectual property is everything and accounts move when people do, finding a way to keep the best talent is everything (Bannister, 2005). This approach appeals to those who seek to maximise personal wealth, or those who have chosen to work within industry where rewards are centred as the greatest measure of one's achievement.

Next is the developmental perspective that proposes talent management is about accelerated development paths for the highest potential employees (Wilcox, 2005). Here the organisation wants to 'lock in' employees by targeting recruitment at entry level to the organisation and then developing and promoting from within to maximise opportunities for high potentials. This perspective is the closest we have to reverting to the 'old psychological contract' of a job for life where your employer looks after your career.

Finally there is the more general HR planning perspective which claims talent management is about having the right people matched to the right jobs at the right time, and doing the right things (Mucha, 2004). This is generally supported by a very sophisticated IT system which maps out various different scenario options and future possibilities as people are moved round the company like a game of chess.

Drawing on the results of seven in-depth case studies into complex, multinational organisations, this chapter will take a critical perspective on some of the elements of talent management system, questioning whether or not talent management is indeed contributing to the development of future leaders, or whether it is actually hindering the process. The case study organisations requested anonymity and hence

cannot be named or identified in this paper. Several key themes emerged from the case studies as critical in their talent management processes. These were defining talent in terms of how talent is identified; developing high potential in comparison to developing everyone else in the organisation; the issue of transparency – that is whether or not you let people know they are considered talent; and challenging some of the underpinning assumptions that organisations hold about high potentials and their future in the organisation. The issue of diversity is also discussed. In this chapter, the concept of talent is used to refer to ‘high potentials’ although we do appreciate that there may be other groups identified as ‘talent’ in organisations in addition, such as those with a particular skill in short supply. Whether talent management becomes an inclusive or exclusive process in the organisation is the question underlying all other considerations.

Defining talent

Regardless of the perspective taken, the fundamental question of what is and what is not considered to be talent needs to be addressed. Tansley *et al.* (2006) claim that ‘talent management requires HR professionals and their clients to understand how they define talent, who they regard as ‘the talented’ and what their typical background might be. It also requires thinking about whether such recruits should be seen as particularly gifted.’ If talents are considered to be ‘gifted’, then how many people are we talking about in an organisation? Berger (2004b) argues that only the top 3–5 per cent are what he calls the ‘superkeepers’. Chowdhury (2002) describes talented individuals as the spirits of an enterprise, being temperamental, creative, rule breakers and change initiators. Using that definition, we doubt any organisation would want more than 3–5 per cent of their workforce to be ‘talents’!

The case study organisations ranged from one extreme to the other. Two organisations considered everyone to be talent as part of their egalitarian culture that did not want to deny anyone opportunities afforded to others. This said, they did then recognise that some were more talented than others – but anyone could put themselves forward to be considered and developed, and everybody basically went through some of the same talent identification processes.

This is one of the fundamental debates around talent management – the extent to which it is inclusive or exclusive. Take an exclusive approach and there is a danger that elitist tendencies will simply ensure that future leaders are in the mould of the current leaders; take an inclusive approach and there is the danger that nobody will believe that you are doing anything different, which could be a big turn-off to the ambitious, greedy and more goal-driven members of the organisation. Given that most organisations employing talent management systems operate within capitalist national cultures, the meritocratic, capitalist ideal is bound to hold some appeal, so would an ‘inclusive of all’ approach to talent management be likely to succeed at motivating and retaining the ‘more talented’ amongst the group? Bryan *et al.* (2006) believe that a talent marketplace is not for all employees. ‘The majority of those at most companies are workers in the traditional sense: individuals who have skills that are largely interchangeable and can be managed adequately through line supervision’ (Bryan *et al.*, 2006, p. 3). Hence they advocate a more exclusive approach.

Transparency

The second big question facing all organisations is whether or not to tell people that they are considered to be talented. If the organisation takes the inclusive view and holds that everyone is talent, then it is safe to tell everyone, but if only a small group are recognised as talent, is it really beneficial to tell them? The 2005 What’s Working Survey conducted by Mercer Human Resource Consulting found that 50 per cent of employees who thought that their organisations could not meet their long-term career objectives were thinking of leaving, while this number more than halved for employees who felt that their organisations could. Similarly, being given good opportunities for continuous learning reduced the number thinking of leaving from 57 per cent to 32 per cent (Mercer HR, 2005). This suggests telling your talents that they are considered to be talent could be advantageous. However, it does not all seem to be about opportunities. A Gallup study of 80,000 managers concluded that the greatest drivers of employee engagement and retention are intangible, mostly related to the way a manager treats their employees (Branham, 2005). So if you tell an employee they are considered talented, they

may be more likely to stay as they feel they will be treated better by their manager, and have more opportunities if they stay than if they leave.

Not having a transparent talent management system could also seem a little subversive. It means that an organisation is scheming a persons career and future without taking into consideration the response of the individual to their plans – as they don't know what they are. Also, there are some people who might be offering extra discretionary effort in their work in the false belief that they are considered talent, while others are not in the false belief that they are not considered talent. Tice and Wallace (2003) discuss the concept of the reflected self as people coming to see themselves as they believe others see them. The person observes how others view them and then incorporate those views into their self-concept, to the extent that people actively attempt to create desired impressions or appraisals of themselves in the minds of the social audience. Could a lack of transparency in a talent management system impact negatively on the reflected self resulting in less confident 'talent' under-achieving?

In the case study organisations, most tended towards a lack of transparency with one being completely opaque and secretive. The majority told the individuals concerned that they were considered talent but this was then generally held as a secret amongst those that needed to know rather than broadcast more widely. Only one organisation was fairly public about where people stood in a public domain. For the others, the culture of the organisation was the justification for secrecy; not wanting to upset the applecart by introducing a ranking system into an egalitarian culture, or it not being in the culture of the organisation to consider that anyone isn't talent. Conger and Fulmer (2003) argue that succession planning systems have traditionally been shrouded in secrecy in an attempt to avoid sapping the motivation of those who aren't on the fast track, based on the idea that if you don't know where you stand you will continue to strive to climb the ladder. However, given that the employee contract is now based on performance rather than loyalty or seniority, they argue that now people will contribute more if they know what rung they are on. Note that this is not simply a process question, but a cultural one. Indeed, in the case study organisations, the culture led to the processes by which transparency did or did not occur.

Developing high potentials

Whether the focus is on individual competence or organisational competence, developing competence within the organisation does seem to be key to creating a talent management system. Berger (2004c) argues that an organisation should develop a list of its core competencies and assessment tools for measuring them; develop training and development solutions to support these core competencies; assess everyone against them and forecast potential; and finally prepare action plans to ensure that the core competencies are covered. Redford (2005) believes the focus should be on the competencies rather than the future leaders *per se*, in an effort to find people who can do the jobs brilliantly, while Romans (2005) redesigned his entire organisation using the human capital pipeline systems thinking model, based entirely on a system of role competencies rather than individual competencies. A consequence of this could be that it separates the competence from the individual and dehumanises the workplace, such that employees (be they talented or not) are merely fulfilling roles rather than engaging in their work. This may suffice if an organisation is looking for talented automatons, but that is counter to the populist message.

In order to be sustainable, rather than a simple one hit activity, talent management needs an organisational commitment to continuous professional development (Clarke, 2001). This will be visible through the range of development experiences offered within the organisation, moving away from the traditional classroom training based model, to include stringing together a range of meaningful experiences to build character. These could include coaching, issue development meetings, job rotation, interim and emergency assignments, task force assignments, extracurricular activities and so forth (Krewson, 2004). Phillips and Phillips (2004) argue that corporate universities can help by linking learning and strategy, and preparing employees for future challenges.

Ken Tucker of the Gallup organisation sees most organisations focussing on individual's weaknesses rather than their strengths. Development plans are then drawn up to address these weaknesses, rather than people being paired with others with opposite strengths and weaknesses to work in teams (Digeorgio, 2004). He argues that while you may prevent failure by focussing on weaknesses, focussing

on strengths leads to world class success, and people feel good about themselves, and hence they find new ways of using their strengths for the organisation's benefit. Having a focus on strengths means the organisation is focussing on existing capabilities rather than capabilities in need of further development. Goodman (2000) also believes that institutions now need to be organising so as to bring out the talent and capabilities existing within their organisations, to encourage people to take initiative, and to give them a chance to show what they can do, and a scope within which to grow. He sees this as a shift from management to managing, the nuance of which shifts the emphasis from a controlling development stance to an empowering development perspective.

Much of the talent management process is centred in the development of the individuals' concerned. In order for them to progress through the organisation to fulfil their organisation's ambitions, they need to have a range of learning and development experiences to shape them and prepare them for their roles. The first issue here is where the focus of the organisation's development activities lies. Do they focus on addressing weaknesses that individuals and the organisation have, or do they focus on building on the strengths that are demonstrated to enhance them further? In one of our case study organisations, they tried to play to people's strengths allowing them to become experts in their job role and quite specialist. Another organisation had three definitions of talented individuals: leadership talent, expertise talent and entrepreneurial talent. This again allows individuals to focus on their area of strength rather than having to be a great leader or specialist. Most organisations, however, tend to set development objectives that focus the individual on their 'areas for improvement' or weaknesses rather than playing to individual strengths in order to make employees 'better' all-rounders.

Questions also arise as to what 'development path' the organisation should map out for those identified as talent. One option is to have an 'accelerated path' whereby a talented individual follows the same career path as everyone else only quicker, while at the other end we have a 'differentiated bespoke' career path that is drawn up to meet their specific circumstances. Graduate recruitment programmes are to some extent an example of the accelerated path, while the more bespoke paths were found in the case study

organisation that was going through a process of rapid growth. To some extent, talented individuals are likely to be self-directed learners (Tice and Wallace, 2003). They will be highly motivated to learn and continually stretching themselves as they find this a positive rather than negative experience. Indeed, this may be the way to sort the talent from the rest – do not provide any formal training and see how the individuals use informal mechanisms to develop themselves!

Care needs to be taken with the development path. An unintended consequence of an accelerated talent development path could be the arrested moral development of the talented individuals that are developed. Glover *et al.* (1997) found that the amount of work experience an individual had correlated with levels of ethical behaviour, such that the more experienced an individual is, the more ethical their behaviour is likely to be. Ford and Richardson (1994) found that seniority within the company hierarchy seems to lower the levels of ethical decision-making, such that the more senior within the organisation a person becomes, the less ethical their decisions become. Taking these two findings in parallel suggests that some talent management ideas might actually lead to the development of less ethical leaders in the future. If an organisation has an accelerated talent management system which results in people being fast-tracked through the ranks of promotions, they could actually be raising their seniority levels while reducing the amount of experience they have at each level, and thus contributing to a downward trend in ethical considerations and decision-making on both fronts.

Challenging assumptions about high potentials

There are a number of implicit assumptions in talent management systems that start with the assumption that talented individuals actually want to be managed, and extend to include the assumption that talented individuals can actually be managed. Tansley *et al.* (2006) recognise that employees values and work preference can be of great importance. While talent may be defined as a complex amalgam of an employees' skills, knowledge, cognitive ability and potential, if the employee is not motivated to achieve, does not have ambition, or is happy simply to come to work and do a good job because they see their work as their work and nothing more,

then it won't matter how much you treat them as talent, they will not change their behaviour, nor will they meet your expectations. Hence any investment in such individuals as potential talents is not likely to result in the benefits anticipated. This adds weight to the need for transparency.

With regard to whether or not talented individuals can actually be managed, Casse (1994) argues that the definition of human beings merely as resources is obsolete, demeaning and out of line with our sociological evolution. Many corporations fail to understand that the men and women who work for them need to be appreciated and valued for who they are, else they lose their trust in their company's executives. Casse argues that HRM as a term is alien in Europe, ethically wrong and ineffective, and that moving from an HRM approach to talent management concept involves three key leadership challenges: knowing what talent is available; using this talent effectively; and developing this talent further. Effectively using talent then requires three particular leadership traits: a positive and encouraging outlook based on the principle that 'your success is my success'; the ability to delegate and empower; and a strong imagination that will enrich each team member's job (as well as the leader's own). The application of Casse's ideas above basically puts the leadership of the talent management system with the individuals who are in it, allowing them to determine their future rather than have it determined for them in the more organisation driven approaches. Hence the point about HRM being ethically wrong. Is it unethical for others in an organisation to determine whether or not an individual is talented, usually based on relatively suspect criteria?

Managing diversity within a talent management system

For some organisations it is not just a question of being able to manage everyone who might be considered talent, but rather of being able to manage a defined group, for example, talented women in particular. In Fortune 500, female executives are leaving at twice the rate of men due to frustration with their work environment, i.e. they are out of sync with the corporate culture, and see little opportunity of advancement (Dickinson Shephard and Betof, 2004). In line with this, 77 per cent of new businesses are being opened by women, and a 2002 Leaders Edge research study of 100 high-level women leavers

revealed reasons for leaving were culture, communication (lack of) and career development. Flexibility and life/family balance were also raised. Changes employers could have made to keep them were inclusion, flexible environment, feedback and career planning. They felt underutilised.

This gender differential could be more fundamental than simply being a communication issue. Gilligan's cognitive-developmental theory of morality proposes that in addition to the universal moral principle of justice there is a second universal moral principle, the principle of caring. Caring is defined as a morality of responsibility and relationships, a sensitivity to the needs of persons. As the individual develops, they progress from concern for survival (caring for self) to concern for goodness (caring for others) to concern for truth (caring for self and others). Gilligan sees men as desiring separation, a goal compatible with the principle of justice, while women reflect a desire for attachment, a goal compatible with the principle of caring (Gilligan, 1982). This fundamental difference to moral reasoning could underpin the communication, culture and empowerment issues that senior-level women encounter in the workplace (for those familiar with Myers-Briggs typology, it would be like being the lone ESFJ in a world of ENTJ's).

Women and minorities face greater challenges in organisational entry and in moving up the organisational ranks because white male managers continue to control the bulk of the power in organisations and largely determine a company's hiring, compensation and performance evaluation practices (Ng and Burke, 2005). In addition, gender and ethnic stereotyping contributes to the lack of acceptance of women and minorities as authoritative figures, and a lack of similar others makes it difficult for them to network effectively. Affirmative action programmes, however, only served to make women and minorities feel stigmatized (Ng and Burke, 2005).

In all our case study organisations, diversity management was espoused as being important, but only one organisation actually went as far as monitoring it, while another actually used diversity criteria as a selection process for development programs within the previously selected talent pool. There is a great danger with talent management that people will nominate others as talent who they find easy to work with, are like they are, remind them of what they were like in their former days, and so forth. Ensuring that the talent

pool is selected to include a diverse group can be problematic for some organisations, particularly those who have homogenous senior management team as a starting point. Such organisations need to look at what it is about their culture and environment that leads to such a limited profile of people succeeding, and make changes to their ways of working if they want a wider talent pool to succeed in the future.

Care needs to be taken so that those members of the talent pool who represent diversity in the organisation do not feel they have been selected purely on the basis of the nature of their difference. Preferential selection procedures, whether they are misperceived or real, give rise to assumptions of incompetence, regardless of the basis of discrimination (Heilman and Alcott, 2001). People who are targeted to benefit from affirmative action efforts may in fact be tainted by them, as it is perceived that they have been in need of special assistance to succeed. What people think another expects of them is likely to influence their behaviour. The expectations influence self-efficacy judgements causing the individual to feel that they are actually deficient in the relevant skill or talent rather than proficient or talented in it.

Conclusions: what is the contribution of talent management to the development of future leaders?

While talent management systems may be established with the best of intentions for both the organisation and the individual, the actual achievement of the benefits intended may be more difficult than anticipated to achieve. The history of the organisation, its culture and the sensitive nature of some work environments can lead organisations to including everyone in the talent pool. While this may appeal to the more egalitarian amongst the workforce, the lack of segmentation results in the talent management system being little more than an enhanced performance management process. Hence the talent management system is a rebrand of the traditional HRM practices.

If an organisation does take a more exclusive approach and does segment a talent pool, they then face the question of transparency. High transparency might disenfranchise those who are excluded from the talent pool while over-boosting the egos of those who are,

or it might put the talent under such pressure that they fail to perform well as they fear whether or not they can continue to meet expectations. The issue also arises as to whether or not they actually want to meet these expectations. People go through phases in their lives when different elements of their life take on different levels of importance, and talents may prefer to have the option of stepping off the ladder every so often to focus their energy on family, perhaps, or other pursuits.

Developing employees identified as talented can also be difficult. Push them too far too quickly and there is the danger that they will over-focus on the organisations needs at the expense of wider moral and ethical principles, but leave them unsupported and undeveloped and they are likely to leave.

To some extent, the need for talent management systems is an organisation-made issue. Organisations response to business process re-engineering, total quality management (TQM) and the down-sizing that dominated the previous decade has now resulted in the realisation that they actually do need good people, and having wiped out layers of managers, they perhaps don't have the pool of people ready for senior positions that they once had. Having taken job security and development opportunities away from individuals, and putting career management and employability firmly on the individual's agenda, organisations are now trying to reverse this trend by enticing individuals back to the idea of loyalty to one organisation, and they want more say in their careers.

Ultimately, it is the culture of the organisation that will impact on the perspective taken on talent management, and the perspective taken will drive the HRM practices. Individuals are likely to choose, in the longer-term, to work for organisations whose culture is more closely aligned to their personal values and life goals. All seven case studies carried out in this research were very different in their approaches to talent management, even though some took the same perspective on talent. The perspectives outlined in Table 10.1 will underpin the way in which organisations determine their future. If they identify their practices as being in one area, but their desire is to be in another, then more widespread changes are necessary than a sophisticated computer package allowing the senior leaders to play chess with people's careers. The key to talent management is creating an environment in which people can flourish.

The Darwinian Principle of the survival of those most fit for the environment which they inhabit seems relevant here. It would serve organisations well to look broadly at all aspects of organisational life to understand what it takes to thrive and grow within them. A talent management process which is congruent with an environment that nurtures the desired competence and ways of working might usefully accentuate this growth. Taking the Darwinian principle of 'survival of the fittest', the dinosaurs were the talents of their era but became extinct as the environment changed. If organisations feel they need to develop a new species of employee and get rid of the dinosaurs, the answer is to change the environment.

The extent to which talent management contributes to the development of future leaders is therefore determined by the extent to which the environment created is representative of the future of the organisation. This could lead to a catch 22 in that the talent management system will help to create and establish the environment, and the environment will help to shape and embed the talent management system.

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11

Developing Global Leaders: Expatriation in the Talent Management Equation

Noeleen Doherty

What makes a great global leader? The concept of leadership is neither simple nor static and the global business context adds a layer of complexity to the leadership development and talent management equation. Currently high performing global leaders need to be individuals of sound character who have the potential to develop distinctive competencies such as a global perspective, cultural sensitivity and self-knowledge in addition to the broad foundation of skills and knowledge vital to operating across different contexts (Brownell, 2006).

Contemporary views support the notion that the expatriate experience is the laboratory in which an individual can learn, practice, develop and ultimately master global leadership (Mendenhall, 2006, p. 425). Indeed for individuals the expatriation experience is rated as the single most influential leadership development experience that executives embark on (Gregersen, Morrison and Black, 1998). For global businesses, international knowledge and experience has been positioned as a valuable, unique and hard to imitate resource that differentiates global competitors (Carpenter, Sanders and Gregersen, 2001). Welch (2003) suggested that this is a strategic role fulfilled by expatriates. Yet, the extent to which the use of expatriation achieves the development and application of global leadership competencies is open to debate (Dickmann, Doherty and Mills, 2005; Doherty and Dickmann, 2007). This chapter critically reviews the practice of expatriation as a talent development conduit for global leaders. The chapter provides an insight into the current context of global leadership and critically reviews the role of expatriation in

the development of global leaders, from both individual and organisational perspectives.

Verifying the need for global leaders

One significant factor in the success of any business is the quality of its management and leadership. The development of global leaders has been hailed as essential to the survival and prosperity of companies in the global business context, as recent research has highlighted the importance of human capital in developing and sustaining competitive advantage (Guthrie, 2001). Now, there is an established view that the internationalisation of business and work has led to an increasing need for managers with global competence (Oddou and Mendenhall, 1991; Gregersen *et al.*, 1998; Evans, Pucik and Barsoux, 2002). It is argued that to meet the challenge of the global environment companies need employees with the capability to deal with an array of complex variables including diverse cultural contexts, a range of competitive environments, the ability to facilitate control and co-ordination and the capability to leverage innovation across geographical boundaries (Sparrow, Brewster and Harris, 2004). Therefore, there has been considerable discussion about the development of an international/global mindset as an important source of competitive advantage for multi-national corporations (MNCs) (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1997; Bonache, Brewster and Suutari, 2001).

In addition, it has been suggested that the success of global businesses has been attributed to the quality of managerial talent available within the company (Scullion and Starkey, 2000). This has led to an increased focus on resourcing internationally experienced talent from within the internal labour market of MNCs. These factors have contributed to the deployment of strategic recipes in international human resource management that are inspiring a strong focus on practices such as talent management, employer branding and the development of global leadership through international assignments [IA] (Brewster, Sparrow and Harris, 2005).

The economic imperative for the use of expatriation has gained some empirical support in the US context. Focusing on top level management at the parent firm level, research has suggested that the more an MNC internationalises, the more likely it is that top man-

agement will have significant international experience. In particular, it has been suggested that international assignment experience at the top of the organisation can make a bottom line difference, since top management capability characterises competitive advantage in being rare, valuable and hard to imitate. It is assumed that such internationally seasoned people represent firm specific, tacit knowledge that contributes to higher firm performance. This provides companies with expatriate populations the edge over other MNCs, which do not have internationally experienced managers (Carpenter, Sanders and Gregersen, 2000; Gregersen, Morrison and Mendenhall, 2000).

For example, some work has established a link between CEO international assignment experience and firm performance. Carpenter *et al.* (2001) suggested that since international experience creates firm specific resources it is particularly important in the top management team and CEO positions. They found that CEO international assignment experience showed a positive and consistent relationship with both accounting and market measures of firm performance (return on assets and total stock market returns). However, the authors did highlight that there is a relatively small pool of internationally seasoned executives who can move into these roles and organisations continue to face problems of retention (Lazarova and Caligiuri, 2001), a point that will be rehearsed further later.

Strategies, policies and practices based on the assumption that international experience is beneficial to both company and employee, the so called dynamic dual dependency between organisation and individual alluded to by Larsen (2004) actively endeavor to develop future global leaders, through the use of international assignments often populated by those identified as high potential. Organisations offer the expatriation experience often as a conduit to the development of individual competencies in the preparation of future global leaders, thus expatriation becomes a central feature of many global organisation's talent management strategies and becomes a hook for the career development of talented individual managers within the company.

The skills of global leadership

Global leaders are required to perform a wide ranging variety of tasks and a number of studies have attempted to identify the characteristics,

skills, knowledge and abilities required of a competent, successful global leader (Gregersen *et al.*, 1998; Caligiuri, 2006; Mendenhall, 2006). There is a general consensus that global leaders need to have a core of certain characteristics as well as a set of context specific abilities. Successful global leaders need to have cultural and international business knowledge and intercultural and foreign language skills. Also, they need to have organising ability, visioning, business expertise and ability in building and maintaining relationships. The cognitive abilities to deal with complexity and the interpretation of behaviours across multiple cultural contexts are important. Personal characteristics which underlie the ability to successfully achieve global leadership tasks include exhibiting character, managing uncertainty, demonstrating savvy, commitment, maturity and inquisitiveness (Mendenhall, 2006).

Recently this range of skills has been extended to include the creation and assimilation of knowledge inside the organisation. Particularly within MNCs in the international context, knowledge management is increasingly recognised as a valuable skill and expatriates are considered important mechanisms of knowledge transfer (Bonache and Brewster, 2001; Bonache and Zárraga-Oberty, 2008). This may now be one of the main reasons for sending people on assignments (Bossard and Peterson, 2005). The relentlessly competitive environment of global business is currently pressurising companies and the individuals within them to meet the challenge of competition by developing and deploying knowledge in novel and innovative ways. Technical competencies but increasingly softer skills, such as an ability to tune into cultural cues, are now considered key capabilities underpinning success in the global context (Earley and Ang, 2003). A key role of the global leader is to act as a bridge for relationships across geographical boundaries and social capital is viewed as essential to the ability of global leaders to facilitating their role as boundary spanners (Harvey and Novicevic, 2004). Thus, the repertoire of skills required of the global leader is fairly extensive, growing and emerging with the changing demands of the global environment.

Expatriation as global leadership development

To meet the demand for globally competent leaders companies have a choice. They can buy in these skills or they can develop them

from within. This decision is not straightforward however, since it is now established that the skills of a global leader are dependent on both personality factors and cognitive ability and some of the edge acquired from global leadership skills and abilities are firm specific, tacit knowledge.

Where organisations chose the 'make' over the 'buy' option, commonly four strategies are used to develop competent global leaders. These include foreign travel, the establishment of teams comprising individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, training and transfers. Previous research has established that the competencies required for success as an expatriate overlap conceptually with many (but not all) global leadership competencies (Mendenhall, 2001). Oddou, Mendenhall and Ritchie (2000) indicated that the type of mindset transformation required of those who are to be global leaders can only be achieved by combining training programmes with real life experiences. Cross-cultural situations such as the expatriate assignment require individuals to rehearse the skills such as the social and political skills essential to the crafting of global leadership (Harvey and Novicevic, 2004). Oddou *et al.* (2000, p. 160) suggested that the expatriate assignment "*requires-almost forces*" the expatriate to become accustomed to the foreign environment, the business milieu and new ways of thinking and behaving. Intensive cultural experiences such as rotational programmes with the express purpose of developing global leadership skills have been found to help individuals develop an appreciation of different cultures, values and an understanding of doing business in different cultural contexts (Caligiuri, 2006). Thus, expatriate assignments appear to provide the ideal environment with considerable inherent potential for this kind of development.

The organisational goals in expatriation have been identified as management development, control and co-ordination, skills gap filling and knowledge transfer (Edstrom and Galbraith, 1977; Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1997; Bossard and Peterson, 2005). Although specific expatriate assignments may be explicitly business driven, there is often either explicitly or implicitly a developmental impetus driving expatriation (Dowling, Welch and Schuler, 1999; Dickmann, Doherty and Johnson, 2006). Therefore, the developmental aspect is a central precept of expatriation and it has been used traditionally as a mechanism to build the leaders of the future.

Expatriates are only one population of employees who undertake global leadership activities however they do attract a substantial amount of investment from business and considerable attention from the research community. The use of expatriation as a developmental tool is expensive as there are high financial costs associated, in particular with traditional long-term expatriation. This has prompted a search for alternatives to the traditional long-term expatriation stint (Tahvanainen, Welch and Worm, 2005) and as cautioned by Caligiuri (2006) there are many risks in achieving the potential return on the investment made. However, despite the expense many companies continue to invest heavily in this strategy, with growing demands for more international assignees (Harris, Brewster and Sparrow, 2003). An international management cadre is frequently positioned as a key group within the organisations talent development strategy and developing this talent of global leadership from within requires companies to be able to identify and invest heavily in people who are capable and willing to undertake an expatriation experience (Stahl, Miller and Tung, 2002).

A critical view of talent management

While talent management had been positioned as of strategic importance, Lewis and Heckman (2006) suggested that there is a lack of clarity about the definition, scope and goals of talent management. Rather it is a vague mixture of processes including recruitment, selection, development and career management to generate talent pools which possess a variety of essential skills that are geared to provide competitive advantage. According to Lewis and Heckman (2006) there are few valid management processes for the identification of talent and little reported literature on the processes for closing the feedback loop to decision makers regarding the validity of their approaches. There appears to be little evidence to suggest that organisations are co-ordinated, efficient or effective in their attempts to manage talent. These issues are echoed by writers in the international human resource management field where it has been suggested that although there is a fundamental need to proactively identify, develop and strategically deploy high performing people and manage the talent pipeline, in practice there are still many gaps between policy and practice (Sparrow, 2007).

Therefore, a key issue for organisations is achieving synergy in the approach to talent development and management. If, as many organisations position it, expatriation fulfils not only a business role but also a developmental role and potentially grooms individuals for senior positions within the organisation then the outcomes of the experience both individual and organisational are fundamental to realising such benefits. However, from what we know about the way in which expatriation is managed and experienced the equation does not seem to balance and some have challenged the fundamental assumption of mutual benefit (Welch, 2003).

The career conundrum

We know that within career management, individual and organisational needs are not always in total harmony (Thomas, Lazarova and Inkson, 2005). This appears to be equally so for the expatriation experience (Stroh, Gregersen and Black, 1998; Suutari and Brewster, 2004). Yan, Zhu and Hall (2002) addressed the issue of alignment in organisational and individual expectations of an international assignment and proposed that these included individual and organisational benefits across short and long-term time perspectives. Success criteria for the individual incorporated task performance, learning, job satisfaction, development, promotion and future assignments. For the organisation, benefits covered the achievement of organisational tasks and objectives, retention and utilisation of repatriates and their skills and the transfer of expertise. This has stimulated a call for a greater understanding of the mechanisms employed by organisations to develop individuals and the integration of career management with both strategic planning and individual career aspirations. It has also highlighted that there are a number of variables to balance in the equation of developing global leaders and managing talent development.

The first factor concerns the organisational approach to managing expatriation. Since this is an expensive option for the development of global leadership talent, survey data (GMAC, 2006) showed that companies required a clear statement of the assignment objective and a cost benefit analysis (70 per cent and 52 per cent respectively of participating companies stated that these were prerequisites to deploying individuals on an international assignment). However,

only 37 per cent compared estimated and actual costs and as few as 14 per cent measured the return on investment (ROI) for expatriate activities. Part of the problem for gauging ROI may rest on the fact that companies lack the ability to track individuals following assignment as few have the metrics and processes to do this (McNulty and Tharenou, 2004; Dickmann et al., 2006).

An added feature is that of the current dynamics of the business environment which means that there are few companies able or willing to give guarantees of employment in general (Baruch, 2006) and this appears equally true for expatriate populations (Tung, 1998, Dickmann et al., 2005). Among US repatriates research indicated that only about a quarter were promoted while about a fifth faced downward career mobility (Derr and Oddou, 1991; Oddou and Mendenhall, 1991). Things appear to be more positive in the European context with reports of about 68 per cent of repatriates indicating a positive change in their organisational status (Peltonen, 1999). Dickmann et al. (2005) found that although few repatriates were guaranteed a right of passage home around a third of these were promoted. However, the journey is not always a smooth one and although some individuals do return and remain within their employing company, recent in-depth research revealed that repatriates could experience a sometimes painful, shaky return, a "career wobble" in the short run, often precipitated by the lack of a defined role to return to (Doherty, Dickmann and Brewster, 2006). This lack of a defined role can lead to uncertainty, potential downshifting where repatriates are placed in temporary or project type roles and may therefore result in less rapid career progression and advancement than anticipated. These issues can lead to unmet expectations certainly in the short-term, and can create disillusionment and disaffection among repatriates as evidenced by considerable research (Pickard, 1999; Bolino and Feldman, 2000; Dowling and Welch, 2004).

It is perhaps no surprise then that, given that expatriates themselves have stated that the career outcomes of an international assignment experience, in particular the opportunity for personal, professional and leadership skills development and are highly valued (Dickmann et al., 2008) and have been shown to fundamentally impact on performance and commitment (Stahl and Cerdin, 2004), the potential risk of uncertain career continuity and progres-

sion following an international assignment may be a major barrier to individuals committing to this type of development opportunity. These factors may also go some way towards explaining the high levels of turnover and attrition among repatriates reported in the literature (Stroh, Black, Mendenhall and Gregersen, 2005). Various estimates have been quoted with recent figures putting attrition at 21 per cent while still on assignment, with another 23 per cent leaving within one year of return (GMAC, 2005). According to research by Dickmann, Doherty and Johnson (2006) which studied companies with substantial expatriate populations, 15 per cent of repatriates leave within 12 months of completing an IA and compared to colleagues who have not been on an IA, twice as many repatriates leave. If those who exit were seen as future leaders of the organisation this is a significant loss to the company and since these executive's international experience is often very attractive to business rivals, attrition to the competition could represent a major loss of expensively developed talent.

A fundamental test of the utility of a developmental intervention is the achievement of behavioural change; however, for the expatriation experience there appears to be a lack of assessment of this aspect. Companies have tended to focus on attrition as a check on the loss of potential. The potential for an expatriation experience to deliver the talent pipeline needs of top management with global leadership experience relies to a great extent on the selection of these individuals to go on assignment. Among the case companies studied by Dickmann *et al.* (2006) on average 32 per cent of new expatriates were rated as being in the top performance category of the company. However, this ranged widely between 79 per cent and 1.5 per cent of new expatriates being rated as top performers. Performance both on and following an IA also is a key indicator of the impact on the individual and potentially the organisations ability to make use of the acquired skills. Dickmann, *et al.* (2006) found that while performance on assignment generally increased, performance increase on repatriation was lower, with a substantial variance in performance on repatriation.

Another proxy measure of behavioural change can be gauged from the promotion of repatriates, yet few companies have the facility to track the progress of their repatriates. Some evidence of the global talent pipeline in action was reported by Dickmann *et al.* (2006) who found that within companies which collated the relevant data, the

level of expatriate experience at the main board or similar executive level was on average 24 per cent, with about one in five senior managers having expatriate experience, indicating that for some organisations the talent pipeline can deliver.

However, overall the evidence would suggest a disconnect between the strategic impetus to develop global skills and global leaders of the future through expatriation and the actual outcomes of this exercise. Although expatriation appears to be well placed to deliver global expertise and act as training ground for future leaders, there appear to be many issues in the implementation and management of the expatriation experience that raise questions about its utility in truly meeting the demands of global leadership development.

Balancing the equation

The rationale is clear that the development of global leadership skills is considered fundamental to the success of companies competing in the global context. Expatriation is used as one of the key mechanisms for achieving the development of an individual's global leadership competencies. However, on close inspection there are a number of issues in the expatriation experience that renders this mechanism for development questionable. Engaging the right audience is an important first step in being able to use the expatriation experience as truly developmental. Not only does this require valid and reliable mechanisms for selecting high potential, high performers but these individuals need to have the right profile of personal and cognitive skills to be able to benefit from such an intensive experience. But selection is only the first step.

As yet we know little about how individuals fare while on assignment and what little evidence there is about organisational level outcomes, is patchy. Part of this problem is centred on the lack of integration of the rationale and purpose of the assignment with data about performance while in the foreign location or organisational level outcomes. Certainly, many individuals who embark on an expatriation have reported favourable consequences at a personal and professional level, where expectations have been met on the developmental promise of the experience both for personal development and career progression. However, many individuals do not have an entirely positive experience, particularly on repatriation.

The management of repatriation, especially managing the short and longer-term career outcomes in the repatriation process is key to reaping the benefits of the developmental potential of an IA for both to the individual and the organisation. However, what evidence we have would suggest that the management of career outcomes is somewhat hit and miss, even for individuals who are the seed-corn for the senior and top management echelons of the company. Global leaders, honed through expatriation can only reap the rewards personally if there are opportunities to make use of their acquired skills. Yet at the organisational level there is still much focus on the attrition of experienced repatriates and the companies which lose these individuals also lose the pool of talent so expensively developed.

Coupled with what appears to be a lack of competent and co-ordinated talent management these issues question the utility of expatriation as a talent development conduit for organisations. The traditional model of expatriation still endures within many MNCs but there is a proliferation of different forms of international working. However these new permutations appear to be cost driven rather than having any foundation in rigorous research which supports their validity as developmental. The western-centric nature of the rationale for expatriation as a developmental tool also is challenged with the growth of new and developing economies. Strategic options for resourcing extend to include not only parent country but also third country nationals and a growing impetus to employ locals, creating considerable challenges for the model of talent development through expatriation.

The talent management equation for developing global leaders through expatriation is therefore not a simple one. For practitioners the available evidence for the use of expatriation as a developmental tool for global leaders is incomplete and often ambiguous and they are still posed with the perennial dilemma of trying to match individual with organisational needs.

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