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Contents

In this month's review:

Why your Business and Management Information Systems may well be way out of date – even if you have just got it...

Why HR teams are core to an environmentally sustainable business approach

The new leadership - organisation use of self

Product market advantages through research and development (R&D) cooperation with marketing or sales teams

What the most agile coaches do...

What motivates Generation X at work?

What we can learn about adapting to change from Italian farmers

Why some people are negative about new situations

The connection between emotional intelligence and organisational commitment

The difference between management and employee views of risk

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Contents

Table of Contents

Why your Business and Management Information Systems may well be way out of date – even if you have just got it.....	5
Why HR teams are core to an environmentally sustainable business approach	11
The new leadership - organisation use of self	14
Product market advantages through research and development (R&D) cooperation with marketing or sales teams	20
What the most agile coaches do... ..	23
What motivates Generation X at work?.....	27
What we can learn about adapting to change from Italian farmers.....	29
Why some people are negative about new situations.....	35
The connection between emotional intelligence and organisational commitment.....	37
The difference between management and employee views of risk.....	40

Why your Business and Management Information Systems may well be way out of date – even if you have just got it...

Since the 2007/8 global financial crisis, business methods have changed almost out of all recognition. Bureaucratic, top down methods are being left behind as business leaders realise that in order to compete businesses have to move quickly in often unpredictable directions. One example of this has been the British telecommunications company, BT, that ended up buying back mobile provider EE that it had divested only a few years before. This could not have been predicted 18 months previously, especially given that BT is usually seen as a notoriously bureaucratic and slow moving behemoth.

In order for BT to do this it would have



had to make assessments both of its own capacity for a major acquisition, the market forces leading to that, as well as the health of EE. Certainly for its own health and that of the market, BT needed adequate internal and external information and data, or business intelligence. A business intelligence system is needed these days, due to the complexities and number of the data and external information. The current set of business intelligence systems are capable of great flexibility and rapidly

changing information. These Agile Management Business Intelligence Systems have advantages over the previous 'waterfall' systems that couldn't cope with shifting and rapidly changing scenarios.

A new piece of research just published in the journal 'Informing Science: The International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline' (now in its 19th year) describes how researchers found that organisations that shift from traditional business and management information systems known as waterfall systems to agile systems tend to have better results.

Waterfall business and management information systems

A waterfall business or management system is designed to provide a set flow of information at regular intervals. As the system is set and doesn't tend to change, thus the information derived from the system is also set. These systems are based on a sequential process that produces the same type of information at the same intervals (monthly for example). Additionally, they are non-iterative which means that later calculation and understanding and new information cannot change the nature of the information being extracted from the system. The information output is fixed and often won't notice and definitely won't change due to other changes.

Agile business and management information systems

Agile business and management information systems, on the other hand, are designed to spot and respond to change. The cycles of information are shorter and iterative. They respond to feedback and the systems themselves learn. The information they provide will

be about change and how things are improving or not. Additionally they will be providing different information dependent upon what is happening.

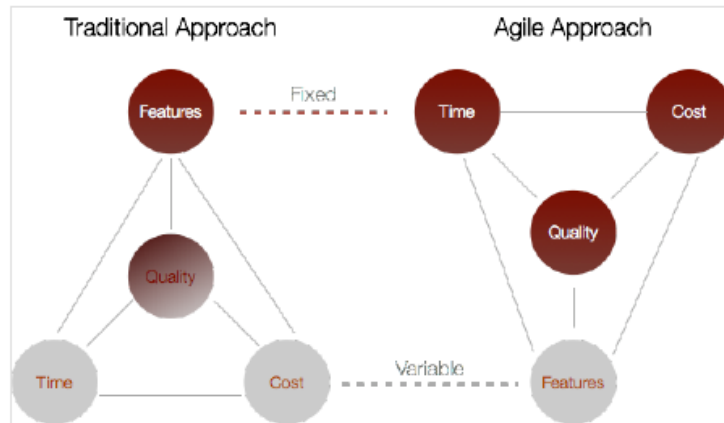
Agile management

The table below shows the benefits of agile systems over the traditional waterfall approach:

Approach	Agile	Waterfall
Emphasis	People	Process
Domain	Unpredictability / Exploratory	Predictable
Documentation	Minimal-only as required	Comprehensive
Quality	Customer centric	Process centric
Process style	Iterative	Linear
Organization	Self-organized	Managed
Upfront planning	Low	High
Perspective toward change	Adaptable	Sustainable
Prioritization of requirements	Based on business value and regularly updated	Fixed in the project plan
Management style	Decentralized	Autocratic
Leadership	Collaborative, Servant Leadership	Command and control
Performance Measurement	Business value	Plan conformity
Return of Investment	Early/throughout project life	End of project life

Agile implementation approaches have the core goal of the project in mind – not the project implementation in itself. The approach is oriented to an unpredictable world, which is far more useful today. Agile businesses' intelligence systems have really turned decision making on its head. You will notice that agile starts from the premise that things will change and that cycles will therefore be shorter.

These systems ask different questions, for example 'how do we use the system?', rather than the waterfall method of 'how do we design the system?' The results in project performance are shown in the diagram below:



Time and cost are brought down in Agile and quality is significantly improved from the outset. Indeed, the focus during projects is incremental and ongoing improvement and change. Rather than broad brush designs, the final thing to emerge are the features and functionality – something that those implementing Agile will only develop as the needs arise as opposed to setting those in the design from the outset.

2. In the Agile approach, changes are taken into account regardless of the stage of the project, whereas in the traditional approach, changes are made only after the final acceptance of the solution concept.

3. The Agile project is divided into parts. Each section is treated as a final distinct product that can be used by the customer and it can deliver return on investment already.

By comparison, the waterfall approach designs the system as a stable entity, working out what the final result should be (the features) should be at the outset rather than having them as an emergent property. The Agile approach on the other hand adds functionality as required.

Business Intelligence

Good business intelligence systems are one of the most sought after software packages, as companies seek to get a better grasp on what is happening within their own organisations and what is happening externally.

Summary

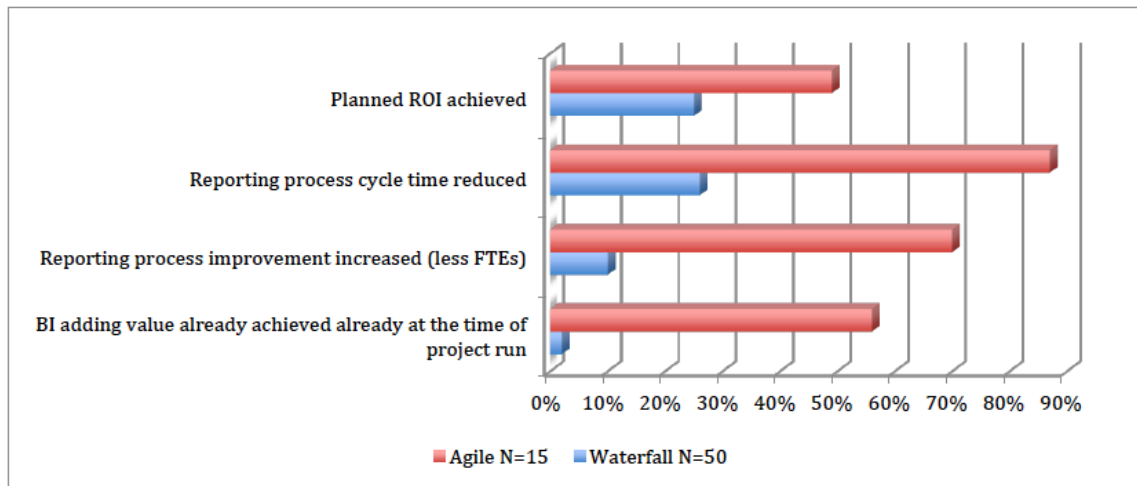
The paper summed up Agile thus:

1. In Agile methodology, cooperation with the customer takes place during the entire project on a regular basis, whereas in the traditional ones it is performed only at selected stages of the project.

The intention is to get the information to management in as close to 'real time' as possible rather than a monthly or biannual report so that decisions and changes can be made in the moment in order to improve competitiveness in a changing world.

The research looked at large companies with somewhere in the region of 47,000 employees between them to compare the outcomes of agile

versus waterfall systems. Figure 3 below shows the comparison of the two approaches:



As can be seen from the chart, agile systems had significantly better outcomes than waterfall systems in each of the areas measured during the study.

value almost as soon as it starts being implemented. The problem is now getting people into the agile mind-set!

Conclusions

One may say colloquially, 'Waterfall is so old – it is pre crash stuff'. Agile however meets the needs of the modern world. It cuts costs, gives close to immediate results and adds

Reference

Kisielnicki, J., & Misiak, A. M. (2016). Effectiveness of agile implementation methods in business intelligence projects from an end-user perspective. *Informing Science: the International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline*, 19, 161-172

Overview

1. Business and Management Information Systems are developing to meet the needs of a world in constant volatility.
2. There are two types of Business and Management Information Systems:
 - a. Waterfall - designed to provide a set flow of information at regular intervals. The system is largely set and tends not to respond to change by providing different data as change happens.
 - b. Agile – designed to spot and react to change and improvements. These systems learn and provide different information as change happens.
3. In these days of rapid change, Agile Business and Management Information Systems significantly out-perform waterfall systems.

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Why HR teams are core to an environmentally sustainable business approach

Organisations around the world are taking an increasing interest in reducing their environmental impact. The most cynical amongst us say this increased interest in corporate environmental sustainability has developed for two reasons: good public relations and the fact that reducing energy use is cheaper in the long term. Ultimately however, humanity needs to reduce its impact on the planet before business becomes an irrelevance.



Once an organisation has an environmental policy, it needs to have action taken at every level so that everyone working for the organisation complies with the policies and ultimately so the organisation isn't just paying lip-service to the very real issues of climate change. For the sake of the planet, the organisation needs to practice what it preaches and for this to happen there needs to direct involvement from Human Resources.

The research

A paper to be published in the journal Human Resource Management by researchers from Australia and China

shows how Human Resources teams have a significant impact on the way that such policies are carried out. It was found that there are four areas HR are core to in making corporate environmental sustainability work. What the researchers found was that 'Green HRM' practices and behaviours:

1. Are positively related to employee workplace in-role green behaviour. This is to say that Human Resources teams espousing the company's green values will have a direct impact on the way that employees think and behave. Organisations where HR didn't take their corporate environmental sustainability seriously also corresponded to low levels of environmental action and concern.
2. Correlate strongly with employee workplace 'extra-role green behaviour'. This means that employees tend to increase their green behaviours beyond those in the job description where HR departments are active in both undertaking their own environmental behaviours and in promoting green thinking and actions as part of their work.
3. Indirectly influences employee

workplace in-role green behaviour through the mediation of what is known as the 'psychological green climate'. What this means is that HR can often set the cultural agenda in terms of thinking and practice across an organisation.

4. Create ethical and environmental interest. The researchers found that, where organisations had HR functions that were active in promoting and displaying green behaviours and thinking, this also tended to reduce costs and have a direct impact on the profitability of the organisation as well. The more employees have an interest in the environmental impact of the company, the better the organisation tends to do.



3 key HR environmental practices

In order for an organisation to really live its environmentally sustainable policies it is essential that Human Resources are involved. The researchers found that there are three key HR activities which make a significant difference:

1. The first suggested by the authors was, "they should design work tasks to meet organizational green policy requirements and consider providing employees with adequate green training and educational opportunities."
2. Secondly, the paper states that "Organizations should properly appraise employee green behaviour, and link this behaviour to promotional opportunities, pay and compensation, for employees to be encouraged and motivated to participate in green activities, and to contribute to green management objectives."
3. Finally, it was also suggested that new applicants for work at a company should be screened for positive green beliefs as a norm. Such attitudes within the organisation can help the company's policies be translated into action with greater force.

Reference

Dumont, J, et al, (2016) Effects of Green HRM Practices on Employee Workplace Behavior: The Role of Psychological Green Climate and Employee Green Values. Human Resources Management Sept 2016

Overview

1. HR are central to making organisational environmental policies work.
2. Organisations where HR display green thinking and behaviour also have the greatest environmental policy compliance.
3. Additionally, organisations that have an actively green HR also correspond with staff going the extra mile, environmentally.
4. HR often sets the 'psychological green climate' or culture within an organisation.
5. High levels of green HR practices correlate with reduced costs and higher profitability.
6. HR should:
 - a. Help to design work to be green.
 - b. Provide green learning & development opportunities.
 - c. Incorporate green practices as part of the review and promotion systems and the setting of environmentally sound management objectives.
 - d. Screen applicants for a positive attitude for environmental issues.



The new leadership - organisation use of self

A new paradigm of leadership is starting to emerge from the post 2008 financial crash world. Traditional concepts are starting to shift and a new world idea of leadership is just starting to emerge. In the journal *Leader to Leader*, Mila Baker, a New York based author and consultant, argues what the new paradigm appears to look like.

Traditional leadership



Traditional leadership in companies prior to the financial crisis of 2008 was a world where people entered a company with a view to one day achieving leadership. They may begin as an intern and be spotted at an early stage as having leadership potential, are perhaps fast tracked up the ranks and find themselves in an executive or board level position before they retire.

This is what is known as the 'corner office' concept, something that is becoming quite rare in modern business structures. The world has changed. The new post 2008 world is where one uses one's self to lead and could end up in a position of leadership from almost any route.

The corner office is a metaphor for the aspirations of generations of leaders where the steps to leadership were well defined and the symbols of leadership, like the corner office, well defined and understood.

The emerging new leadership paradigm appears to be what is becoming known as OUS or organisation use of self.

Experience, outlook and use of self

David Jamieson, professor and director of the St. Thomas University, defines the Use of Self as, "the conscious use of one's whole being in the intentional execution of one's role for effectiveness in whatever the current situation is."

This enables leaders to "model adaptability and mitigate risk through a delicate balance of confidence and humility."

Thus OUS leaders recognise and use the vast range of differences in experiences and skills present throughout an organisation, regardless of formal qualifications and hierarchy. People have different skills and experiences according to their circumstances. Journalism is a classic profession where someone may have no formal qualifications at all when they enter the job yet have the experience and skill to do it far better than a graduate, for example schooled

in journalism but with little life experience. There are journalism lecturers who grew up in council estates and have no qualifications when they started out, yet had connections with crime gang families that ran their estates, who produce far better investigative journalism than many schooled in journalism.

It is the involvement in and pragmatic use of this informal but very powerful network that separates out the new leaders from those more traditional leaders who are restricted, largely by their own mind-sets, to using the more formal and hierarchical 'qualified' resources the system provides.

The idea behind OUS or the organisation use of self is that the new leaders are at their core adaptable, pragmatic and use a mixture of self-confidence to make decisions and act, whilst having the humility to understand they don't know everything and don't have all the answers, drawing on experience and expertise from wherever they find it to solve problems and move forward.

Command and control leadership carries too many risks in this day of change and volatility.

The idea of organisation use of self

The core concept of organisation use of self is that the individual leader uses their whole being, their mind, emotions, intuition, body, everything to move forward. There are three factors in the new leadership paradigm:

The 3 new rules of leadership

The 3 new rules of leadership:

1. Be on purpose at any moment in time, fully focused and present.
2. Express what matters. This includes asking questions and sharing thoughts and emotions.
3. Align ethics. The new leadership is ethical and ethically aligned.



There are two particular strengths the new leaders bring that develop the level of adaptability and breadth required:

1. Resilience and
2. Ego strength

The new leaders are not only emotionally resilient and can bounce back but have core empathy and understanding and can develop resilience and adaptability in others and their organisation.

Secondly they have ego strength which means they have confidence in themselves and others, and humility. They can ask without feeling threatened.



In essence they are hugely pragmatic and don't comply to formal hierarchical thinking and functioning.

The 6 areas of new organisation use of self leadership

Baker found there are six areas of leadership which develop the above attributes:

1. Communicator – The conversations you have with your colleagues will influence the direction of the organisation. She wrote, “Your conversations should embed meaning that allows you to express what matters, allows ideas to emerge, invites and expects diversity, and energizes everyone.”

Baker described an organisation that in the eyes of the leader has no formal hierarchy and treats all employees equitably (not the same, there is a big difference). They use their strengths to help direct their business. This even comes down to how they are contracted and includes practices such as Colleague Letters of Understanding (CLOUs) that describe the role that they will play for the business that plays to their strengths.

2. Decision maker. There is no A or B in business any more. It is almost always a balance of paradox. One example is balancing cost and quality. Not every car company builds supercars. How to build a high quality car at a fair price? Change is something we write a lot about in the Oxford Review and making decisions and remaking them in times of change is vital.

3. **Builder.** Leaders are building the organisation as well as people around them. One stand out quote Baker gives is that of Vineet Nayar, former CEO of HCL Technologies, an information technology company based in India. She describes his communication practice thus: "He says he learned to communicate in extremes by asking himself, 'How do I communicate in a way that destroys hierarchy and says I'm one of you?'"

4. **Designer.** The new organisation leader designs the physical space around effective leadership. They will often lose that 'corner office' themselves and design the physical space around the effective running of the business. Baker wrote, "there are now more opportunities than ever to align the physical environment with your organization culture and to integrate your workspace, work processes, and leadership." We see this with Google and Zappos for example.

5. **Giver and taker.** The leader who disappears into the office all day and can only be seen through his gatekeepers is a thing of the past. The new leader is as much part of the team they lead as the next person. Max De Pree, former CEO of Herman Miller and son of the founder D. J. De Pree, once said: "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last responsibility is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor. That sums up the

progress of an artful leader."

6. As a model of virtuous character. Power plays and authority through hierarchy is a thing of the past. Being patient, humble and honourable is as key as any of the other characteristics described above.

How you act as a leader

As Baker herself concludes "How you



act as a leader determines how you are perceived by others, and how you are perceived by others determines how much trust, cooperation, and respect you receive. Organization use of self raises the level of your conscious awareness of self-behavior and its impact on others."

Reference

Baker, M. N. (2016). Organization use of self: a new symbol of leadership. *Leader to Leader*, 2016(81), 47-52.

Overview

1. A new paradigm of leadership is emerging .
2. Based on what is being termed the **Organisation Use of Self** which is:
 - a. The conscious use of one's *whole being* in the intentional execution of one's role for effectiveness in whatever the current situation is.
3. 3 new rules of leadership:
 - a. Be on purpose at any moment in time, fully focused and present.
 - b. Express what matters. This includes asking questions and sharing thoughts and emotions.
 - c. Align ethics. The new leadership is ethical and ethically aligned.
4. 2 Strengths of the new leadership paradigm:
 - a. Emotional resilience
 - b. Ego strength
5. 6 Roles of the new leader:
 - a. Communicator
 - b. Decision maker
 - c. Builder
 - d. Designer
 - e. Giver and taker
 - f. Ethical and virtuous

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Product market advantages through research and development (R&D) cooperation with marketing or sales teams

A new study has been published looking the effectiveness of R&D and marketing cooperation as compared to R&D and sales cooperation for new-product development under different market and organisational circumstances in business-to-business settings.

The study, conducted by four universities in Germany, found that in business to business sales, new product development could have between a 12 to 18% advantage in the marketplace if the product R&D function works with the sales or the marketing function in the run up to the products launch.



Up to now, previous research has mainly looked at the R&D function working with the sales and marketing teams as if these often very separate roles in an organisation were one unit. However, these functions have quite different roles and perspectives that need to be taken into account. Often work between these functions can be expensive and not properly focused.

The researchers looked at what the sales and the marketing functions do and how they could bring added advantage from working with the R&D team. What they found was that the

advantage of R&D collaboration with either the sales or the marketing function is dependent on the strategies the organisation is following.

Sales teams and R&D

The sales team's role is to sell the company's product and work with customers to achieve good outcomes for both the company and the customer.

The sales team is usually working with the customer most of the time. Sales isn't a one-way thing either – relationships are formed and intelligence is gathered about the customer and frequently about rivals and the market conditions as well.

The researchers found that since the sales team knows what is happening on the ground, they usually have a very good idea as to what is happening in the market. Where there is turbulence, the sales team can feed back to the research and development function as to exactly what is needed by their customers. This can feed back into product development.

The researchers found that, "Results from a series of simulations on the basis of our model, show that, for example, industrial firms relying on

R&D–sales cooperation gain a relative new-product advantage 17% higher than firms who do not leverage sales and R&D cooperation.”

This rises to an 18% improvement in sales where the company has a differentiation strategy in place and the sales and R&D people work together. In essence a differentiation strategy is where a firm aims to develop and market unique products for different customer segments.

Therefore, if a company follows a differentiation strategy focusing on value creation for the customer, R&D requires precise information on customer wishes and needs, which sales, if they keep in touch with their customer, should know.

Marketing and R&D

The marketing function can often have little or no direct customer contact, but rather focuses on trends in the marketplace. Marketing functions often have a medium to long term strategic view, where the sales team tends to live in the present. As such where there is high market turbulence the marketing team will often not have much luck in helping plan for a new product.

Where cost leadership is the company's strategy for a product then cooperation between the marketing and research and development teams

could yield a 12% advantage in the marketplace. Cost leadership describes a way to establish a competitive advantage by achieving the lowest cost of operation in the industry.



Conclusions - horses for courses

As shown above, the advantage of sales or marketing collaboration with the R&D function largely depends on the strategies being followed by the organisation. Having said that, organisations that do not have healthy collaboration between the sales, marketing and R&D functions are likely to be at a competitive disadvantage.

Reference

Homburg, C., Alavi, S., Rajab, T. & Wieseke, J., The Contingent Roles of R&D-Sales versus R&D-Marketing Cooperation in New Product Development of Business-to-Business Firms, International Journal of Research in Marketing (2016), doi: [10.1016/j.ijresmar.2016.05.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2016.05.008)

Overview

1. The level of cooperation and collaboration between the sales and R&D and the marketing and R&D functions often denotes the potential competitive advantage the organisation has.
2. Significant increases in sales can result from closer cooperation particularly when:
 - a. Sales and R&D cooperate when the organisation is using a differentiation strategy and
 - b. Marketing and R&D cooperate when the organisation is using a cost leadership strategy.



What the most agile coaches do...

A new study just published in the American Psychological Association's Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research shows that coaches who

- a. know at least four different psychological coaching models
- b. can hold all of these models in their minds as they coach and
- c. are able to apply them appropriately to their clients

tend to have better coaching outcomes for their clients than coaches who operate from one or two (or even no) psychological models. This ability is known as model agility and, as this study shows, significantly enhances the results of the coaches.

In effect coaches that use a system for analysing their coachee's position through four or more models of psychological enquiry show much greater agility and ability to meet the needs of their client than those that don't. This model agility, or parallel lines of thought and analysis, helps the client to arrive at the best solutions, especially in complex problem scenarios.

In developing this understanding of model agility the researchers, based at Harvard Medical School, used the adage that 'if you only have a hammer, everything looks like a nail'. Where coaches are only using one school of thought or model to help someone with a complex issue, the coach is significantly more likely to force the

client down their 'line of understanding'. What this means is that the coach's understanding of the situation will be limited and restricted by the lack of model agility.



The 4 model bases of coaching agility

What the researchers found was that coaches who had a grounding in:

- a. cognitive behavioural,
- b. psychoanalytic,
- c. positive psychological and
- d. adult development psychology

tended to provide significantly better, more flexible and adaptable outcomes for their clients. Whilst there are a large number of other models that could be used by coaches, the researchers found that these four schools of thought distinguish themselves primarily because they sometimes clash and therefore provide

paradoxes. It is this set of paradoxes, that provides and develops the level of agility required in the coach.

Cognitive behavioural coaching

Cognitive behavioural coaching stems from cognitive behavioural therapy. Using the acronym SPACE (social context, physiology, action, cognition, and emotion), the authors found that in "...coaching based on cognitive behavior the focus is to step back in order to re-evaluate the interactions of the SPACE factors to help the coachee appreciate how these influence one's inner and interpersonal experience."



In coaching someone through a cognitive behavioural lens, the authors posed the questions

- a. Is "... (the coach) able to have a repertoire of choices in how to process information or do they default to one way of thinking?
- b. Can they also truly appreciate how others think and take that into account when making key decisions?"

One of the aspects of this model is that usefully, it looks at the person as a

data processing 'machine' and whether it is processing the data correctly. Are all the lines of code being used or are a few lines being missed in the thought process? In effect the aim of cognitive behavioural coaching is to expose biases in thinking and therefore behaviour and correct them.

Psychoanalytic coaching

Where cognitive behavioural thought looks at the effectiveness of the data processing of the individual, the psychoanalytical approach looks at the person in the context of their past. Are they traumatised by a past experience and is this leading to errant decision making?

The authors found that, "The coach might explore how patterns in the present could be tapping into experiences of the past." In parallel to the cognitive behavioural approach, a coach will be exploring whether historical experiences are, in part at least, causing cognitive behavioural problems?

Positive psychological coaching

The positive psychological coaching approach is about reminding the coachee of their positive attributes, realistically and without overstating the situation. The coach using this model will design interventions around identifying and building positive emotions, strengths, access to flow states and a sense of meaning. In doing this the coach aims to 'unpack

the positive' with the same specificity and rigour that one unpacks dysfunctional behaviour and events.

As opposed to asking what is wrong about the coachee's thinking and perception, or what their antecedents might be, as per the previous two models, the coach will ask:

- a. What is right?
- b. What is working?
- c. What strengths and positive emotions can be brought to the issues in hand?
- d. How can these be developed and built upon?

Adult developmental coaching

The fourth model the researchers focused on is the adult developmental coaching approach. This assumes that, as we develop into adulthood and maturity, we go through a range of stages according to our inward perceptions. For example, we will view ourselves and situations differently when we are 40 to the way we did when we were 20 and 20 to 16.

The basis to this approach is the belief that all adults have the potential to grow through and into the stages of mental and emotional maturity of adult development. Each of these stages describe a person's

- a. outlook,
- b. sense of themselves,
- c. stage of self-awareness,
- d. ability to take other people's perspective (known as de-centring),
- e. empathise,
- f. belief systems

- g. assumptions they make
- h. meanings that they make of the world around them and
- i. ability to deconstruct the influences on their thinking, behaviour and perceptions.



Additionally, coaches who understand adult developmental coaching are also sensitive and aware of how the coachee is perceiving them and how this may be affecting the intervention and outcome.

Conclusions

The researchers found that model agility not only leads to better coaching outcomes but also fosters and develops more agile approaches from the coachee. Further the researchers discovered that model agility is particularly suited to the complex problems most executive coaches face.

Reference

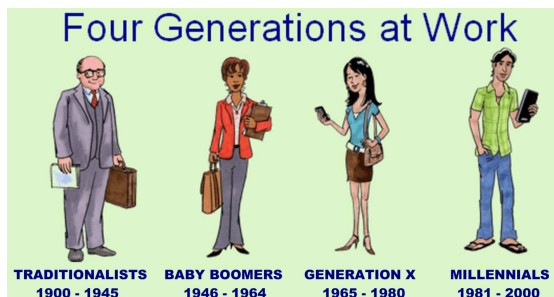
Kauffman C, Hodgetts, WH "Model agility: Coaching effectiveness and four perspectives on a case study" (2016) Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research 2016, Vol. 68, No. 2, 157–176

Overview

1. The clients of coaches who have 'model agility' have better outcomes than clients with other coaches.
2. Model agility means the ability to operate through and consciously choose from at least four different coaching approaches and to deal with their paradoxes.
3. The four most useful approaches are:
 - a. cognitive behavioural,
 - b. psychoanalytical,
 - c. positive psychological, and
 - d. adult developmental coaching.
4. Coaches who have model agility also develop more agile responses from their clients and are particularly suited to coaching with complex problems and situations.

What motivates Generation X at work?

Generation X is a demographic cohort that grew up in the 1970s and 80s and in many cases were just graduating from university when the 'Digital Age' started to mature. In the 80s and 90s generation X were stereotyped as being disaffected, in a large part because many of their parents both worked and they often had to look after themselves as teenagers. Coming into middle age, Generation X now forms a large proportion of executive level management, gaining seniority as the Baby Boomers before them now start to retire. Interestingly Gen X are now described as the 'settled and happy' generation having taken the early fruits of the boom of the Digital Age.



So, what motivates Generation Xers at work? Do they expect everything to be fed to them on a silver platter? A paper that looked at 300 men and women from this generation and has come to some interesting conclusions.

Organisational commitment

The paper looked at five aspects of the workplace and assessed what motivates Generation X to remain with an organisation for a long time? Human capital is usually the most important part of any organisation. The researchers found that there are five

main areas which denotes motivation for Generation X:

1. Compensation
2. Knowledge sharing
3. Autonomy
4. Learning
5. Justice

The 5 main Gen X Motivators

1. **Compensation.** This has the strongest association with organisational commitment among the Generation X staff surveyed. While not everyone loves their job, if it funds a comfortable lifestyle then they will remain. The ideology of the teen Gen X has largely been replaced.
2. **Knowledge sharing.** The paper argued that, "organisational competitive and capability depends on the effectiveness of transforming the knowledge of the organisation. People will share their knowledge if they find that the information is beneficial to an organisation." There is also a social status and power gained from being the one sharing or disseminating the information. It is worth noting the connection here with the rise of sharing knowledge/videos/pictures/news etc. via social media for social affiliation and social power reasons. This has been found to

be a particular motivator for this generation.

3. **Task orientation and autonomy.** The less supervision and more autonomy someone is given the greater their willingness to do the task. This imbues trust from the organisation to the employee. Task orientation for Gen X is very much tied to autonomy as a motivator.
4. **Learning.** Development opportunities are another factor that is seen to be important by Generation X. The paper referred to this as viewing training and development as 'upgrading themselves to encounter the challenges' they find in the workplace and is a considerable motivator.
5. **Justice.** Organisational justice is seen as being almost as important a motivator for Gen X as compensation is. Getting

their due, being treated fairly and sensing that the organisation treats them fairly is an important motivator. Further it was found that this generation are also motivated to protest or leave if they sense others aren't being treated fairly.

Conclusions

This study is generally in line with other previous research looking at the maturation of this generation. It is interesting watching the changes in this generation as it ages and develops. It is also important from an organisational point of view to understand the shifting motivations of the generations as they move through the workforce.

Reference

Cheak, CS, et al (2016) An Empirical Study on Factors Affecting Organisational Commitment among Generation X. *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences* 209 (2016) 167-174

Overview

1. Generation X – (born in the 70s and 80s) are maturing and gaining senior positions in organisations.
2. There are largely 5 motivators for Gen X in the workforce
 - a. Compensation – money is a focus.
 - b. Knowledge Sharing – knowledge is power and status.
 - c. Autonomy – they want to be trusted. Task focus and commitment is based on the level of autonomy they have.
 - d. Learning. They want opportunities for learning, development and progression.
 - e. Justice. Fairness is the second most powerful motivation for Gen X. Fairness for themselves and others.

What we can learn about adapting to change from Italian farmers

Learning is a circular process in that our perceptions shape how we identify and notice knowledge and knowledge shapes our perceptions. Humans adapt to the environment through the process of learning in which we are constantly making interpretations and giving our own personal and individual meaning to information we receive through our senses. Our decisions and actions are based on our perceptions and the meanings we ascribe to them.

A fascinating study by a team of researchers from seven different universities across Vietnam, Italy and Malaysia looked at how farmers in Italy were perceiving climate and environmental change and how these perceptions inform their decisions. The results of this study have implications for human learning in any context.



The case of climate change is interesting because it is showing quite clearly, the mechanisms by which we humans learn and adapt to change over relatively short periods of time. When placed in an organisational context this understanding is really useful.

Previous research has shown that how an individual perceives something is the main motivator for action or inaction. It has also been found that our perceptions alter and are in turn altered by our:

1. Interests
2. Experience and memories
3. Understanding of historical events
4. Knowledge
5. Emotions
6. Attitudes and
7. Beliefs

In effect we don't see, hear or sense reality, we perceive or infer it based on a complex interaction between all seven of the above attributes.

2 types of perceptual learning

There are considered to be two types of perceptual learning:

1. Learning to perceive, and
2. Perceiving to learn

The first concept is simple in that we learn to become more accurate in our perceptions about the world from feedback. This process starts with simply just noticing something that we hadn't noticed before, right through to changing and altering the meaning we give to the thing being perceived. Take for example the need for change. There will be a point at which someone simply just notices that things are not as they were before. This may just be a small thing like a change in someone else's attitude or behaviour, or that

there are fewer customers at the moment. At first we may just put this down to random variation or look for other explanations. As the thing that we noticed starts to form a pattern, like a continued drop in customers or a continued drop in rainfall over a period of time we start to realise there is a pattern; we start to notice the change. As we notice more we learn to perceive more and our perceptions become more finely tuned with practice.

However, the second concept, perceiving to learn, is a little more complex in that as we change our perceptions, the meanings of things alter and we start to have new realisations and understandings as a direct result of the perceptual change. In other words, our changes in perception leads to new learning. We become aware of more data about the change and have more experience of it, resulting in our perceptions starting to change about the nature and consequences of the change and the impact it will have. As this happens the meanings we give to the change alters and we start to have realisations (learning) as a result of that shift in perception.

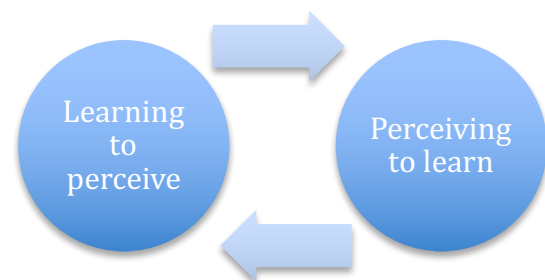


What this is saying in essence is that knowledge informs our learning and our learning informs the knowledge and how we perceive it. As this occurs we become better and better at noticing and discriminating between

the different stimuli or signals. This means that we can extract new and more defined knowledge from the situation as we learn to perceive and learn how to think about the situation from the perceiving to learn process.

As the researchers point out “People are better able to perceptually identify unclear or quickly presented stimuli when they had been previously exposed to them.”

Each of these processes (learning to perceive and perceiving to learn) inform each other.



This is known as perceptual learning and it is vital in the process of adapting to change, whether it be farmers adapting to climate change in Italy or employees adapting to organisational change or even organisations adapting to market changes.

The researchers point out that there are two stages involved in adapting to change:

1. Perceptual learning and
2. The actual adapting to the change called the adaptive response.

Adapting comprises experimentation or research, practising, experience, knowledge and perception building.

Dwindle exercise of change adaption



The researchers found that in reality adapting to change is what they call a dwindle exercise. This means that people tend to primarily learn cognitively in that they know a lot but understand less, practise (take new action) even less, and transform to be robust and resilient under the new conditions even less. It's a bit like pouring a bucket of water down stairs. The top step gets really wet and the bottom step only gets a bit of the water.

This understanding alone is important for organisational change situations.

Findings

What the researchers found with the farmers who were experiencing climate change was that the uncertain and non-linear or volatile nature of the climate change caused the farmers the most problem. What this meant was that the farmers tended to stay focused on microsystem changes, in that they just focused on their farm and reacted to daily weather reports, as opposed to looking at wider system patterns and support.

Additionally, the farmers tended to focus on the attributes of climate change they could most easily and most directly perceive. In this case they more readily noticed (perceived) the increase in temperatures as opposed to a reduction in rainfall until this latter indicator became a drought. The farmers could feel the summers getting hotter on their skin, but rain fall and wind patterns are harder to detect directly. Even data on these attributes didn't change the impact the farmers' direct perceptions had on their decisions. In other words direct experience and perception trumps remote and more abstract data when it comes to adapting to change.

Reference

Nguyen, Thi Phuoc Lai, et al.
"Perceiving to learn or learning to perceive? Understanding farmers' perceptions and adaptation to climate uncertainties." *Agricultural Systems* 143 (2016): 205-216.

Adapting to Change Findings:

1. Learning to perceive and perceiving to learn are vital in the process of adapting to change and is a learning process.
2. There are two processes involved in adapting to change
 - a. Perceptual learning and
 - b. The adaptive response (experimentation, practising, experience, knowledge and perception building)
3. There is a hierarchy or dwindle effect of learning to adapt to change. In order, people:
 - a. Have a lot of 'knowledge'
 - b. Understand less
 - c. Take action even less
 - d. and
 - e. Change or adapt robustly even less
4. People pay more attention and give greater weight to direct experiences than to abstract data when making decisions about adapting to change.
5. If the change is variable and non-simple, people withdraw to a narrower focus and shorter time frames.

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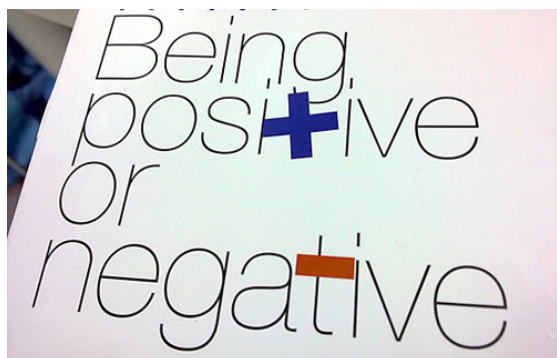


Why some people are negative about new situations

Some people seem to have a natural tendency to interpret new situations negatively. Known as negative interpretation bias or just an interpretation bias, scientists have found in the past that such people:

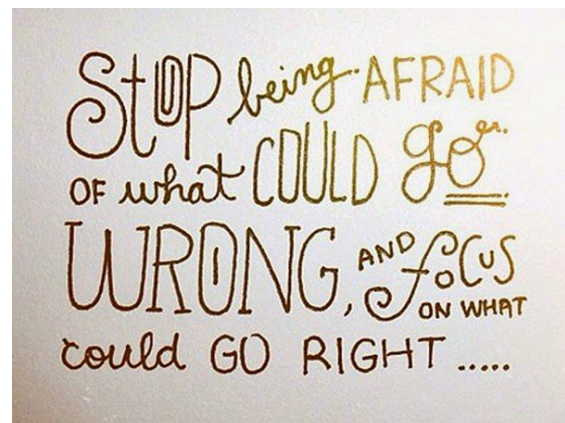
- a) Tend to suffer from anxiety more than normal and
- b) Perceive threat even in situations that are innocuous and have no explicit threat present.

Previous research has found that it is this perception of threat, even where there is none, that leads many individuals to become anxious and develop anxiety disorders. Indeed, interpretation bias is now considered to be a major contributing factor for what is known as anxiety sensitivity. Previously, researchers found that if someone with interpretation bias is given a vague or ambiguous situation to deal with they will inevitably choose a negative and usually a polarised negative explanation or outcome for that situation. In other words they will catastrophise and assume the worst, even if the situation is neutral or even positive.



It has also been found that interpretation bias is largely responsible for risk averse behaviours and decision making, particularly in times of change. Because change usually entails some form of uncertainty, this allows the individual with interpretation bias to move into a negative analysis and understanding of the situation and assume an adverse outcome.

This particular study wanted to find out what the relationship is between interpretation bias and intolerance of uncertainty. Intolerance of uncertainty is seen as a dispositional characteristic of an individual that assumes that anything uncertain or ambiguous will be negative. In other words, it is an often unconscious belief that uncertainty is in itself a problem.



Intolerance of uncertainty has been strongly associated with a whole range of social anxieties, depression, PTSD, panic disorder and OCD for example.

This study is the first to really look at the connections between intolerance of uncertainty and interpretation bias in any rigorous way.

Findings

1. Firstly they found that people with higher levels of intolerance of uncertainty were significantly more likely to determine that an ambiguous or uncertain situation was a threat than people with lower levels of intolerance of uncertainty.
2. Secondly they discovered that people with higher levels of intolerance of uncertainty tended also to have a negative interpretation bias.

It appears that an individual's intolerance of uncertainty may drive their negative interpretation bias.

The authors conclude by saying that focusing on the intolerance of uncertainty in individuals, as opposed to their anxiety about the situation, is likely to provide outcomes, particularly in times of change.

Reference

Oglesby, Mary E., et al. (2016)
"Interpretation bias for uncertain threat: A replication and extension." Journal of behavior therapy and experimental psychiatry 51: 35-42.

Overview

1. Interpretation bias, a cognitive bias, leads people to assume the worst about situations or that the situation is threatening.
2. Intolerance of uncertainty on the other hand is the assumption that uncertain or ambiguous situations are likely to be negative and have a negative outcome.
3. The research found that interpretation bias and intolerance of uncertainty are closely related.
4. That an individual's intolerance of uncertainty may drive their negative interpretation.
5. That help people deal with change, helping them deal with their intolerance of uncertainty is likely to be more beneficial than focusing on their negative interpretation or anxiety.

The connection between emotional intelligence and organisational commitment

An interesting study from the University of Jammu in India looked at the connections between emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, work-life balance and organisational commitment.

What the research was particularly interested in was what factors promote high levels of organisational commitment, even in low paid employment situations.



Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment in short is the level of positive connection an individual has with an organisation, the organisations goals, mission and outlook. Higher levels of organisational commitment are associated with higher levels of intention to stay with the organisation and the individual's loyalty to the organisation.

Not all important jobs pay well. One of the questions employees have to ask themselves is What are the things that are important to me? Nurses in the NHS are classic examples where a high quality talent pool is needed in terms of ability and intelligence but the pay is considered to be fairly low. Additionally, it is often more stressful than many alternative career paths that pay considerably more.

Pay obviously is not the sole means of drawing in and retaining a high quality workforce. What is it then that makes

people stick at their jobs in low paid and stressful occupations?

Emotional intelligence

This research shows how emotional intelligence can lead to organisational commitment. The researcher found that "emotional intelligence can be conceptualised as collateral for developing organisational commitment within organisations. Employees with high emotional intelligence i.e. employees who find it easy to manage and control their emotions (emotion regulation), construct meaningful relationships with their co-workers and feel satisfied with their job, also tend to perform well at work".



The ease with which employees can control their emotions particularly when they are under stress and pressure is important. Being able to 'switch off' is difficult for many people, yet what this research found was that having this ability leads to better levels of psychological wellbeing. Singh argued, "emotionally intelligent employees undergo lower levels of job stress and higher levels of psychological well-being. Management of emotions is important for health and psychological adaptation."

Psychological wellbeing

This research shows that emotional intelligence and emotion regulation and resilience are key for enhanced psychological wellbeing particularly in low paid, stressful jobs. It is these two traits, emotional intelligence/resilience and psychological wellbeing that correlate with better levels of work-life balance and consequently significantly better organisational commitment outcomes, such as reduced employee turnover intentions for example.



The converse is that lower levels of emotional intelligence and emotion regulation ability leads to lower levels of psychological well-being and worse work-life balance outcomes. This in turn can lead to higher levels of intention to leave and lower levels of organisational commitment. Interestingly the research found that “Even though some employees have high emotional intelligence, their commitment toward an organisation is likely to suffer if they do not have psychological well-being.” In other words, high levels of emotional intelligence on its own does not necessarily and automatically lead to higher levels of emotional well-being. It transpired that work-life balance is an intervening variable here.

Work-life balance

The term work-life balance has been around for quite some time, yet no ideal proportion or formula has ever been found.

Singh suggested, “Work-life balance is achieved when employees experience being engaged and satisfied in carrying out the manifold functions with which they recognize themselves. Work-life balance is an initiative that assists employees to bring a sense of balance and experiencing accomplishment and fulfilment in work and the person’s private domains.”

Conclusions

The issue here is that all three elements need to be in place to promote organisational commitment: Enough emotional intelligence/resilience to carry out the role and deal with the job based issues, a healthy level of psychological wellbeing and a healthy work-life balance. Even then these on their own do not guarantee organisational commitment. They do however make it significantly more likely.

The researcher concerned concluded that, “emotional intelligence leads to organisational commitment through the partial mediation of psychological well-being.”

Reference

Singh, T (2016) Relating Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Commitment Through Moderated Mediation of Psychological Wellbeing and Work-life Balance. Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities (ISSN 0975-2935) Special Issue, Vol. VIII, No. 2, 2016.

Overview

Organisational commitment is increased if individuals have higher levels of:

1. Emotional intelligence
2. Emotion regulation ability
3. A reasonable level of psychological well-being and a reasonable work-life balance.



The difference between management and employee views of risk

Most workplaces have an element of risk associated to them. These span from the risks involved in commuting to the workplace, through postural problems and repetitive strain injury from working in an office environment, right up to the direct physical and mental risks associated such work as being in the emergency services, the military, deep sea diving and work on oil platforms, for example.



A study just published looked at the difference between employers' and employees' perceptions of risk.

This research is interesting because it highlights a perceptual difference or gap between managers and employees.

The study looked first at an oil company and the different perceptions of risk of commuting by helicopter to oil platforms between management and employees. The research followed a helicopter crash where 17 people died and one survived and the subsequent inquiry.

Gaps in perception

What the researchers found was that the employees tended to perceive the

risk of flying more closely to that of the official inquiry than the management did. They also understood the shortcomings of the equipment and the potential consequences better than the managers, who tended to suffer from a cognitive bias negating the risk. This is consistent with previous studies.

As the researchers state "a perception can only really be described by the perceiver rather than some 'quantitative' measure of risk that managers tend to use to weigh up the potential for a problem". The researchers found that there is often a considerable tension between safety, production or productivity, cost and profit which imposes an unconscious bias for most managers.



So what has this got to do with other work environments?

The point this study is making is that managers and workers are usually analysing the risks from very different perspectives. Managers tend to try to measure and quantify the risks to inform their decisions. The problem is

that they are often not aware that in doing so there can be a built in bias towards production, productivity and cost reduction which negates the true risks. Further the research found that the actual workers are often more attuned to the actual risks involved and that risk management needs to be a conversation with the employees, as opposed to a wholly management or Human Resources activity.

Good management should always listen and where the issues raised are

valid from the employees' perspective, pay heed as they are the ones who are doing the job...

Reference

Hart, SM "Comparing labour and management risk perceptions of offshore helicopter safety: Gaps, shifts and worker Participation" (2016)
Economic and Industrial Democracy

1–31

Overview

1. Managers and employees tend to have different perceptions of risk
2. Managers' perceptions of risk tend to be unconsciously skewed or biased by production, productivity and cost considerations
3. Employees' perceptions of risk tend to more closely describe the actual risk
4. Risk management needs to be a joint effort between managers and employees



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