

Leadership summit 2020

Management... WTAF?!

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Zoom chat

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13:14:30 From Sarah Gordon - Satarla: Please pose questions, ideas, comments either here in chat or in the Q&A. We will be monitoring both.

13:27:13 From Sarah Gordon - Satarla: Question: Phil - Brilliant, thought inspiring talk, thank you. Can you comment on where "diversity" comes into all of this? Is Care as you frame it a key to taking diversity seriously?

13:31:51 From Niall: does caring ... true caring mean treating people in different ways... which leads to the call of being "unfair". Which is something organizations find difficult to do.

13:33:37 From Manick, Kamini (STFC, RAL, ISIS) to All panellists: How can this be done in large organisations? Schemes and programmes are sometimes rolled out in order to reach a larger number of people. It's not always practical for the CEO to reach every member of the organisation directly.

13:34:07 From x to All panellists: Does application of "best practices" make insincere (and ineffective) operationalisation more likely? Going through the motions...

13:34:37 From x to All panellists: Nigel, any tips on caring for arseholes? I don't mean cream recommendations. I have mistaken an arsehole for someone reaching out for help

13:44:36 From Nigel Girling: Responses to some of the questions above: We need to learn that equality and fairness exist in tension. We've often ignored the '...of opportunity' bit of Equal opps... Cassandra will have things to say about this, as will Carolyn
In larger organisations it can't be down to a CEO or Board...but they are symbolic and role models. We need a cohort of leaders at every level who have the intention and ability to carry the culture through and keep re-establishing it with good intent

13:45:49 From Nigel Girling: As for A-holes... we need to stop rewarding those behaviours with bonuses and promotion! Our EQ is critical and can be developed...spot them and take appropriate action to suppress, spotlight, avoid or whatever we need to do

13:47:27 From Phil James to All panellists: Juliette - super presentation, love the challenge to leader personality as a driver: why do you think it is, then, that we're so seduced by personality as the mystical ingredient to great leadership - book shelves crammed with leaders' biographies and extensive use of personality diagnostics in appointing people to leadership positions?

13:52:51 From Phil James to Niall and all panellists: Thanks Niall - "does true caring mean treating people in different ways .. which leads to the call of being "unfair"? - I think it can mean that, yes, but you're right to identify that in organisations, the overwhelming concern is to interpret 'being fair' as 'treating people the same'. For me, there's no silver bullet or ethical principle that we can apply as a sort of general rule. We can, however, recognise that fairness, difference, consistency, and sameness are 'in tension' with one another and I think that means negotiating particular responses in particular contexts with particular people - making ethical choices guides by the consequences of our actions in particular circumstances and not simply applying a 'golden rule'. It's tricky, isn't it, this leadership stuff!

13:53:06 From Sarah Gordon - Satarla: Juliette - would you suggest that personality assessments inject division into a team where it doesn't need to be?

13:56:15 From Phil James to Manick, Kamini (STFC, RAL, ISIS) and all panellists: Thanks for your question, "How can this be done in large organisations? Schemes and programmes are sometimes rolled out in order to reach a larger number of people. It's not always practical for the CEO to reach every member of the organisation directly" - I agree that it's impractical for 'the leader/the CEO' to get round everyone in a large organisation. Which raises the question why we focus so much on the CEO. From my experience, what you do as a CEO matters, as you're in the spotlight, but as a CEO, you're human and actually spend most of your time having conversations with just a few people. So, there are other people in the picture here, not just the "CEO". Time for us to think about "leadership" and not just "the leader". I'd also say that I'm not anti-programmes, but I think they are inadequate on their own to promote a culture of care.

13:58:46 From Phil James to x and all panellists: Thanks Jo "Does application of "best practices" make insincere (and ineffective) operationalisation more likely? Going through the motions ..." - I think it can, yes. But, I'm not totally against best practice, only against blind, unthinking acceptance of models and approaches on the basis that they work 'over there' so they ought to work 'over here'. So, for me, context is key and our ability to engage in conversation will protect us from a white-wash approach to management based on best practice.

14:00:32 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: Hi Sarah - yes absolutely - if you Google "Criticisms of [insert name of personality tool here]" you will see absolutely this challenge that organisations have found - which is deeply ironic!

14:06:33 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: Hi Phil - I think there are two major reasons why personality prevails as such a popular approach to thinking about/selecting/developing leadership is because 1) the companies who sell them have huge marketing machines and are all-too-ready to "adapt" them to the latest thing (see Prof Rob Briner on LinkedIn or Twitter for some excellent critiques) 2) like with everything in life, we would love to believe there is a silver bullet. What do you think?

14:08:11 From Phil James to All panellists: Tsk ' look at me! Great stuff KEVIN - great call to action on engaging leadership. What do engaging leadership behaviours look like in ordinary, concrete terms?

14:09:50 From x to All panellists: I agree Juliette, though I also think that its seen as more trustworthy, more measurable, than the performance record of candidates

14:11:01 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: Hi "Jo" I agree. If they could just go a bit further...

14:15:37 From kevin hard: I love the debate between equity and fairness. I think fairness wins as equity implies treating people the same. Fairness is about guiding principles and having the discretion to make decisions based on ethics, morals etc.

14:21:23 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: @Kevin - agreed

14:26:42 From kevin hard: Love the concept of 'creating' wellbeing and resilience being able to 'bend' under pressure and not just about picking ourselves back up. The forestry commission now don't stake trees as they find they grow stronger if they're allowed to 'bend' in the wind.

14:29:03 From x to All panelists: Leadership is a management skill

14:30:00 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: Hi - is that a deliberately provocative statement? :)

14:31:27 From Phil James to x and all panellists: Hi Gordon, I think we're seduced into thinking that leadership is a management skill. Maybe a view of leadership as something that happens between people - as an ensemble act and not a solo performance - might help us think differently about what's going on around us and the problems we're facing. What do you think?

14:31:27 From Kevin Hard: In good organisations yes but many 'managers' are promoted due to their technical skills and don't have the soft skills needed. I think research shows that about 25% will do well, 25% will flounder and 50% will muddle though as they won't get support or training in soft skills or engaging leadership.

14:32:22 From Kevin Hard: And some of course won't have the Emotional intelligence or Engaging leadership behaviours to be a leader.

14:32:25 From Phil James to All panellists: I agree with Kevin. And we get conversations like: "she's a good manager, but is she a good POEOPLE manager?" For me management = people...

14:33:11 From x to All panellists: Hi Juliette - maybe - I am provoking a reaction perhaps. And I think that we spend a lot of time thinking of leaders and managers as separate beasts and as we know leaders exist at every level in every walk of life. Manager is much more of a job title; leadership is a mind set

14:36:08 From x to All panellists: I like the idea of leadership as an ensemble act - not a solo performance. I think it IS a management skill and that not every manager has it. But I also agree that leadership is not something I do alone.

14:36:37 From Phil James to x and all panellists: Great - love that.

14:38:15 From Nigel Girling: Good point... my distinction between L & M is that it is about intention rather than job title... managing something or leading something are actions any of us can demonstrate...anyone who is a manager needs to lead too...perhaps the skill lies in recognising which intent is required at any moment?

14:39:31 From Niall: are we putting too much onus/ pressure on our leaders to be all knowing/caring and not reflecting on the role of everyone else in the organization to play a part? @Phil I think you touched on this as the "leadership ensemble" ...

14:41:20 From x to All panellists: I like that distinction, Nigel. And I wonder whether part of the challenge is we seem them as two distinct things and therefore I have to decide which intention I have - whereas it's all leadership essentially.

14:42:11 From Kevin Hard: Absolutely Niall - its about embracing others and using their skills (which you should be aware of) to enhance your teams knowledge in solving issues. It makes people feel valued to be a part of the solution. It also starts to drive a purpose within the team.

14:43:18 From x to All panellists: One thing I learnt many years ago, which I try to practise, is 'always ask twice' i.e.. when you ask someone how they're doing, ask again so they know you really want to hear. It has served me well

14:43:23 From Gordon Borer to All panellists: Niall - spot on - the challenge for so many is t be seen to be in control, to be right, to BE the leader.

14:44:08 From x to All panellists: I think that is a very key point, I think too often leaders can try to do it all alone and not really understand or learn that leaning on colleagues for help and support in

leadership does not show weakness that they cannot do it but that they are pulling on the strength of working together

14:45:54 From Kevin Hard: Spot on x. I would say it's actually 'beyond Fluid Intelligence' utilising 'others' skills and knowledge

14:50:20 From Niall: a good quote here by Margaret Kuhlow Dir WWF "our own health is inextricably linked to nature" and COVID has made this acutely clear.

14:50:27 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: in my opinion an effective leader has a sufficient level of "managerial" or "professional" skills to do their role - that is an important hygiene factor to be respected and effective in getting the job done. However what makes them leaders is that they enact their competencies in an engaging way - which includes all the things that colleagues' have talked about such as consultation with employees, inviting their contributions, developing leaders around them, etc. What do you think?

14:52:34 From Dharmesh: Juliette - agree. I heard somewhere that great leaders have great "management" skills. It's then for the leader to make the "magic" happen so to speak. Would you agree?

14:54:52 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: Yes - the "magic" is where they harness the potential of everyone else too

14:55:20 From Nigel Girling: Agreed Jules!

14:59:37 From Kevin Hard: Love the opportunity of where this sustainable investment debate might go in terms of new employees needing a sense of purpose so they can align with the organisation.

15:07:39 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: Really important points there from Sarah - applies to all sectors!

15:09:06 From William Pedder: Elephants = in the too hard box?

15:09:31 From Phil James to William Pedder and all panellists: Hi William! Yes - like that.

15:09:47 From Nigel Girling: Unacknowledged Risks have brought down so many organisations... Woolworths, Courts, Debenhams and nearly M&S. Sainsbury and several others... wilful blindness can be very dangerous!

15:11:24 From Juliette Alban-Metcalf: Absolutely - and so many organisations have a governance culture which means that the messenger typically gets shot - so how do we change that?

15:14:43 From Kevin Hard: As Sarah says - it's about asking the workforce if we can 'do' it. That's about engaging with the workforce and true empowerment where the front line can make decisions based on information, not instruction (from managers)

15:16:01 From Phil James: Great description by Sarah of the problems with trying to implement Values in particular context and why Values are not enough to guide ethical action.

15:17:09 From Kevin Hard: And whose values are they in the first place? SMT? organisation as a whole?

15:17:22 From Phil James: ...which I guess is a bit like "Treat people how you want to be treated - The Golden Rule". Tune in at 1540 for Cassandra Andrews!

15:17:28 From Juliette Alban-Metcalfe: Or the Challenger Disaster, or Mid Staffs...

15:17:36 From Juliette Alban-Metcalfe: So many "Black Swans"

15:18:40 From Cassandra Andrews - Global Motivator: Indeed Phil!! It's complete boll.....

15:19:36 From Phil James: Agree with Sarah - some problems are not for solving, but for finding our way into, which might mean we reveal further problems, or more questions and puzzles we weren't expecting.

15:21:06 From Niall: @phil - treat people comment - in the Netflix book 'no rules rules' - they realized that using personal options as a benchmark doesn't work E.g. spend companies' money like you'd spend your own was changed to spend money in the best interests of the company.

15:21:32 From Niall: opinions

15:22:58 From Phil James: @Niall - lovely - like it. I don't have that book yet, but I think there are some v interesting insights to be gleaned from Netflix, so thank you!

15:27:12 From Sarah Gordon: Re. Using risk management to ask the organisation if we can do it = wow it is such a good tool through which to get everyone working as a team. Tapping into the excitement that is felt by actually being asked your opinion or if you can advise on something...

15:27:57 From kevin hard: Absolutely- back to feeling valued and valuable :-)

15:30:34 From Sarah Gordon: Further to what Anthony is saying = absolutely agree. "Watermeloning" = Risks that are really red appearing as green

15:33:35 From x to All panellists: Presumably one of the reasons this happens is because there is a blame culture in the organisation - so a red light is assumed to be my fault

15:34:03 From Sarah Gordon: I totally agree.

15:34:21 From Sarah Gordon: Also one of the reasons why people don't raise risks because they think they will get in trouble OR have to do a bucket load of paperwork

15:36:23 From Phil James to All panellists: Q for Anthony - alongside the hardware of governance (policies, procedures, checks, balances) - Boards are groups of people with habits, beliefs, fears and potentially conflicting intentions - might taking a more 'human' view of the Board help with the effectiveness of governance, rather than thinking of it as a compliance activity imposed from above?

15:37:32 From Niall: @sarah - I liked your point on making things simpler as it feels like the avalanche of policies & regulations have led to soo much time being taken by trying to keep up leaving little time for debate on the important stuff. as a pension trustee I'm drowning in it!

15:39:26 From Phil James: Love the way Anthony is reminding us of the 'dynamics' as well as the 'mechanics' of governance.

15:39:30 From Sarah Gordon: @Niall - it might be me being a simple person, but I always find it easier to translate between different people if the mechanism (e.g. risk process) is simple. Risk management shouldn't be a barrier, it should be an enabler. At the end of the day, risk is actually very simple. The problem is that we have all invented complex processes to force others to think like ourselves rather than remembering that we need to try and see risks from other perspectives.

15:39:41 From Kevin Hard: I call that becoming system obsessed. Most organisations can't get beyond compliance as they keep putting in more rules and regs, just in case. That stops us getting to the next level which is about being people focussed.

15:39:51 From Paul Pritchard: Q for Anthony - what role might NEDs play in promoting a wider perspective?

15:42:07 From Niall: Carillion

15:42:25 From Sarah Gordon: Poor tarmac - wasn't them :-)

15:42:49 From Sarah Gordon: I agree Kev = hiding behind compliance rather than owning the decisions you make and actions you take.

15:50:18 From Anthony Taylor: Indeed - NEDs are of great value to bring alternative views... long-standing Boards can become quite isolated from alternative views. Similarly the 'target's given to Board members should include some of the so-called softer side of leadership as we have been discussing today.

15:54:18 From Ann Stow: Should all boards have a devil's advocate function, maybe someone without board experience?

15:54:58 From Ann Stow: ... all growth motivators, maybe I need more balance

15:55:15 From Phil James to All panellists: Q for Cassandra - one of the critiques of diagnostics like Motivational Maps is that they can ignore power relationships - in plain English, people just giving you the answers that they think you want to hear, or staying away from answers that they feel are risky. How can a caring leader watch out for that and get a balanced view?

15:55:41 From Nigel Girling: @Ann Stow - I think so. I've often argued that any high-performing team needs a 'freak' who thinks differently and says things that divert, disrupt or upset the status quo.... but with positive intentions!

15:55:42 From Sarah Gordon: Hi Ann - good point. Often the Chief Risk Officer should be this person - saying "what if" etc. BUT unfortunately many organisations only use them as compliance box tickers...

15:56:29 From Kevin Hard: Ann - maybe a non execs job? I once told a chairman his vision was a mirage. Nobody on the board dare say it but once it was out there, we had a great discussion and led to some leadership work for us

15:56:59 From Ann Stow: ...@Nigel Girling, I've been wondering how I could contribute / name my skills, 'freak' wasn't one I had considered :-)

15:57:18 From Anthony Taylor: This could be seen as an 'employees representative' which are occasionally in place - but one would need to be a 'stong' person to avoid being intimidated or as part of the NED role as well

15:57:52 From Sarah Gordon: Do you think it is possible for an employee to fulfil this function - ie do they have too much to lose?

15:58:46 From Kevin Hard: Depends on the culture to a great extent.

15:58:55 From Anthony Taylor: Rather what I was implying - however in unionised organisations they are more prevalent, and are provided with appropriate coaching

15:59:56 From Ann Stow: I think that you have to be sure of how and what you're challenging - then you can provide positive disruption with the room... Maybe starting with 'what motivates you to be on the Board'.

16:00:27 From Anthony Taylor: Alternatively there could be an employee group which reports to the Board - however we would need the leaders to listen and act

16:00:39 From Phil James: I think tools like motivational maps can help people find their way into conversations that they might find too difficult. But, to me, they're a conversation starter, not a statement of fact - what does everyone else think?

16:00:52 From Kevin Hard: And do something about it if possible. If not, let them know why!

16:02:48 From Cassandra Andrews - Global Motivator: Absolutely Phil.... they make the invisible, visible and are a great way to start a conversation that may be difficult...

16:05:36 From Niall: @ Phil - aka the fellowship of the ring had multiple leaders / characters

16:06:39 From Phil James: @Niall - I love it!

16:07:22 From Sarah Gordon: @Niall - hahaha, yes



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