So what is 21ˢᵗ century management?

David Broadhead – Partners in Management Ltd, Huddersfield

Intrapreneurship and the need for Corporate and Social Entrepreneurs

If the 19th century was the century of industrialisation then the 20th century was, without doubt, the century of management. But then what was the guiding premise that underpinned the social, technological and economic advances and successes of this most amazing period of human history? More importantly though is how inappropriate it might be as we embrace this new 21st century knowledge worker, information rich age.

To answer this I believe we have to return to the principles of Frederick Taylor and his theories of Scientific Management. Here, the guiding premise was the separation of the worker from the control of the work itself through the introduction of a separate administrative managerial entity. This overcame the previous numerous productivity limitations that the skilled craft worker generated. It then became the manager's role to determine, organise, supervise and reward the worker and their productivity, leading ultimately to the ongoing debate and belief that the management process is about planning, leading, organising and controlling the output of others.

But as we now live and work in the digital 21st century information age, are these older principles still appropriate? Can we effectively lead and manage complex, inter-connected knowledge worker organisations using only manual worker 20th century command and control principles and mental models? In a world where well educated individuals now want to determine, organise and supervise their own outcomes, activities and productivity, might we need a new managerial mind-set to match?

Given also the ecological and economic challenges facing society, we also now need entrepreneurial skills too to drive private sector economic growth but also lead innovation and change in our public services, particularly now through social enterprises where appropriate.

Are these skills wholly appropriate and deployable in larger, traditional organisations though? Corporate and social entrepreneurs, working within existing larger organisations, have to overcome significant other constraints. They have to understand, adapt and overcome existing structures, cultures, processes, political agendas, plus often utilise assigned resources as opposed to 'starting from scratch'. These are skills that pure entrepreneurs might not have, hence the need for, 'Intrapreneurs'.

What must be considered though is that a successful intrapreneur embodies all the skill sets of an entrepreneur, manager and leader to deliver sustainable innovation, as per my model of Corporate/Social Entrepreneurship shown here.

So having identified the need for intrapreneurship in our organisations, what might be the significant guiding building blocks we can follow as we establish a new premise of 21ˢᵗ century management?

The Corporate/Social Entrepreneur
Intrapreneurs need additional skills and attitudes

Opportunity Orientation / External Focus

Entrepreneur
• Has belief
• Delivers ideas
• Disrupts convention and the 'status-quo'

Intrapreneur
• Has pupils
• Delivers innovation
• Combines vision with action

Intrapreneurs have to deal with internal corporate issues like history, cultures, structures, resource allocations, politics and general inertia

Self Reward / Recognition

Group Reward / Recognition

Manager / Supervisor
• Has employees
• Delivers results
• Maintains the 'status-quo'

Leader
• Has followers
• Delivers change
• Experiments and learns from mistakes

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Process Orientation / Internal Focus

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Might it also be possible to put these in some sort of structured order too, to determine a progression route towards achievement?

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The 5 Facets of 21st Century Management

1. ### The ability to question and learn

   Individuals and organisations will have to develop the ability to want to learn in a triple level/loop way if they are to successfully manage stakeholders and orchestrate their expectations.

   First and second loop learning is focussed primarily on efficiency and effectiveness and will no longer be sufficient. The search for purpose and meaning, the third loop, with regards to who organisations are and why they exist, will be pre-requisite.

   Those individuals and organisations that have been driven by target setting agendas will be the ones that suffer here, as they are the ones that have been limited most in developing organisational learning. For them the most basic form of single-loop learning has probably been restricted, as once the target result has been demonstrated there is no incentive to improve the process of 'how' it has been achieved. By its very nature then the external setting of targets prevents an organisation from moving to a second level of learning whereby it begins to explore exactly 'what' it is trying to achieve and to analyse itself systemically.

   Is it any wonder then that our UK based, huge conglomerate public sector organisations are facing such immense internal challenges when faced now with third level learning issues of identity and purpose, when potentially they have never mastered the issues internally of first level learning? This is where I believe the new social enterprise organisations can be successful as for them the issues of identity and purpose plus external engagement have to be resolved before anything else. How successful they are at it though will be another matter entirely.

2. ### Change in style – from commander to coach

   The old principles of command and control might have been appropriate when supervisors and managers were promoted on the basis of being the best at, or knowing the most about, the process or business unit they were involved in. Now, however, we live in a highly complex, uncertain and networked world where highly educated, knowledgeable specialists want to organise themselves to achieve meaningful outcomes with appropriate deserved rewards.

   The traditional external motivators of survival, reward and punishment are not as powerful as they once were with the key themes now of mastery, purpose and autonomy being sought by ever increasing numbers of professional knowledge workers.

   This new world where the individuals, and the subsequently created teams, know more about the task, technology, stakeholders, environment and opportunities than the people managing them, requires a whole new cultural approach to be developed.

   Empowerment and engagement from the bottom up rather than controlling from the top down are the new approaches needed, which will require an enormous change in style for many managers. This will mean moving from a 'talking down to' towards a 'discussion and facilitation' approach focussed on enabling others to achieve things rather than directing.

   This is where true adult-adult leadership and coaching skills will be paramount.

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3. Build new communities and tribes

Multi-agency/partnership working is becoming essential in the public and third sectors and is a perfect example of how specialist individuals/teams have to be brought together to achieve desired outcomes and work in an ad-hock way outside conventional, pre-arranged structures. The private sector too has some fantastic examples of how the supply chain works together to achieve challenging projects on time and budget.

But rather than physically construct these organisations in a 'hard-wired' way they need to be 'soft wired' and allowed to advance naturally through the mutual agreement of vision and objectives, the availability of appropriate empowering leadership, then the building of trust, support and resilience to allow the development of appropriate relationships and cultures to take place.

Again rather than this being a top-down approach, it needs to emerge from a local hands-on team perspective, possibly by clustering around process flow not function. Unfortunately this will take time, perseverance and a few unwanted trips down blind alleys. What can be guaranteed though is that none of this can happen whilst organisations constantly restructure and change from the top-down, especially if externally enforced.

4. Adopt appropriate structures, systems and technology

Structures and systems have traditionally been the starting point for organisational change, but in this new specialised knowledge world, traditional organisational boundaries become blurred and along with them so do spans of authority and control.

Once we have evolved our appropriate new communities, we can begin to build and reinforce them with appropriate support structures where necessary but more importantly provide them with appropriate systems, procedures and technology that facilitate their purpose, not impede or prevent them.

This does not mean stifling innovation though. Fantastic operational improvements are there to be had and we must primarily support with technology not just focus on the technology itself – after all the most successful innovations combine the old with the new e.g. eBay – auction sales and the internet.

5. Innovate continuously and sustainably

This is ultimately the culmination of all the preceding stages. It's not something that can be forced but should be a natural evolutionary process and should build relentlessly. An intelligent, creative, empowered and engaged workforce in touch with its environment and stakeholders should be innovating continuously by challenging and exploring what they do, how they can improve, what went wrong and why, the assumptions they have about what they are trying to achieve and then ultimately satisfying the needs and expectations of stakeholders.

If this is evident we can be assured that true triple loop learning is taking place - which takes us nicely back to the first facet!

If not, maybe the organisation hasn't truly embraced the concepts of 21st century management and its associated philosophy of *intrapreneurship*. If it hasn't, then how we might we begin to develop this through external intervention?

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Developing Intrapreneurs: Our Corporate and Social Entrepreneurs

The guiding objective of our CMI and ILM accredited management and development programmes is to develop intrapreneurial attitudes and skills. To do so we have designed and delivered a suitable open programme targeted at professional knowledge workers and managers/leaders from all sectors.
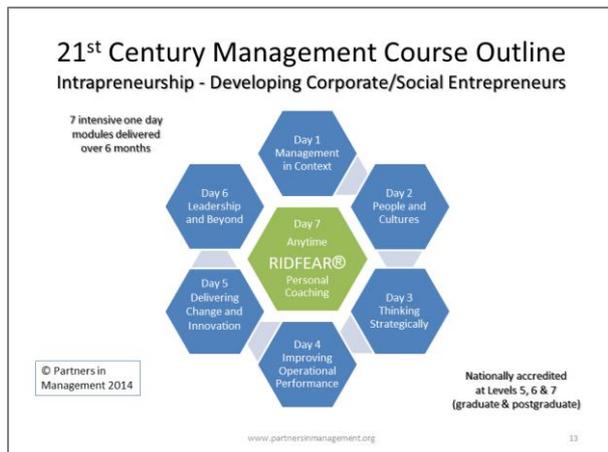
Feedback from our various corporate clients and individual students had indicated that they desired short, intensive low cost developmental programmes with the option of a qualification. This too would not be an extensive, extended qualification but more likely a Certificate rather than Extended Diploma or University Masters. Key considerations being cost, time and general work pressures. We also chose to deliver the same programme content in one joint programme across levels 5, 6 or 7 with the assessment and support offered being the defining differences for those working at different levels.

Our general programme delivery model has always been about using action-learning principles where adults can talk about their issues and experiences in a small, supportive group of up to 12 people. This key feature has always been positively received by participants and is a powerful development tool. We combine this with ensuring there are participants from across all sectors whenever possible, thereby enhancing the support and learning opportunities for all.

Another key issue was the desire to attend sessions that fitted into hectic working lives but with time for reflection and study. The timing of sessions delivered one day per month over a six month period has worked well in this way for participants. These sessions are challenging and thought provoking but supported with traditional delivery type materials but also on-line materials like CMI's Management Direct and TED Talks etc.

We began delivering the programme in early 2010 and have now refined it to its current condensed format. In 2013 we have run three cohorts with support from a local authority which has taken 50% of the places available. Their managers have benefitted tremendously from this experience and gained much from the mixed sector representation. Likewise the private sector representatives have appreciated much more the challenges faced by the public sector and have offered much advice and support. It has been exciting to see since that local government managers have or are applying to develop their service areas into social enterprises as a result.

For 2014 we are hopeful of obtaining funding for more private sector participants and to encourage greater participation from the NHS, an area woefully underrepresented in our groups recently.

One final point worth mentioning is the fact that consistently we see a gender split on our programmes with between 70 / 80% being female.

In the 21st century it would certainly appear to be women who are most willing to learn and develop!

David Broadhead MA DMS BSc FCMI & CMI Ambassador - david@partnersinmanagement.co.uk

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