



Engaging all the Generations in our Workforce

By Karen Frost

We currently have four generations of people in our workforce. This has always been the case, but the needs and aspirations of each generation differ significantly, and with development of both technology and learning over the past 20 years the traditional hierarchical structure to our businesses has changed considerably. It is now common practice to have managers managing individuals older than they are and with more experience. So what does this mean for us and how do we engage everyone?

In our last issue of Voice, Simon Hollington reviewed an interesting book entitled The "What's In It For Me" Workforce. In the book the four different generations are defined as:

The Matures

The Matures are those members of our workforce who feel they have made the sacrifices to get where they are, who are comfortable with hierarchy and are influenced by the traditional military model. They expect to be in one job for the majority of their working life and respect that success means promotion and this is the order of things.

Inside this edition

Engaging all the Generations in our Workforce -

Karen Frost takes a closer look at the needs and aspirations of the 4 different generations found in today's workplace. What does this mean for us as leaders and how do we engage them all?

How to Motivate your High Potentials -

Karen Frost explores VBL's learning over recent months in the most successful ways to coach and mentor the High Potentials in your business.

Values Based Leadership – In this article, John Frost looks at how to retain your people in tough times.

Playing your cards - Simon Hollington looks at how it's not the cards you're dealt, but how you deal with the cards you're dealt, that makes all the difference.

Coaching the Leader in "interesting" Times – In this article Values Based Leader Associate, Linda John looks at how in today's climate, leaders can become beacons of strength and guidance for their staff.

On the Couch – Karen Frost answers the question posed by the UK Sales Director of a multi-national food manufacturing company on how to keep a 'Star Performer' who has been made an offer by another company.

Final Thoughts – 4 inspirational quotes by Gandhi.

The Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomers still retain the idea that hierarchy is the norm and they are comfortable with it. They hold high ethical values such as working for the family and being part of a team.



Generation X

Generation X are those members of our workforce who were the first generation where both their parents were likely to have worked. They tend to have loyalty to people rather than the organisation. They are more comfortable with change and regard success more in terms of lifestyle than getting that next promotion.

New Millenials

I would prefer to use the term Generation Y to describe this set of people in our workforces. They are our first generation that have grown up with technology around them from an early age. Everything is personalised to them, their mobile phone, their iPod and their learning. They are great networkers with a highly developed set of values that they can express. They work to fund their hobbies, not to get promotion.

To better understand the implications of these generations, and as a Baby Boomer myself, I talked to a Generation Y – Rachael Briggs, Transformation Manager for Balfour Beatty WorkPlace. Rachael is regarded as a Future Leader for BBW and is currently undertaking a one year leadership development programme designed and delivered by Values Based Leadership. This is what Rachael said...

As a member of Generation Y, work plays a very large role in my life, but probably for different reasons than my parents who still regularly work 60 hour weeks. I am not overly concerned with job security or having a 'job for life' as I do not want to be doing the same thing now as in another thirty years. Whilst I appreciate my company, I do not expect to be working with them forever.

Whilst salary and benefits are important to me they are not the whole picture of what I am looking for from an employer. I want to be allowed the freedom to express my opinions and ideas and be given the responsibility to see these ideas through to fruition. I also want to be able to work in a style that suits me, i.e. not in an office 9 - 5. I will work long hours with enthusiasm when necessary on a project or task that excites and challenges me, but I don't work long hours for the sake of it or to impress my employer.

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My development is very important to me and I want to work with a company that will help me achieve my potential. I like fast moving change and don't want to be stuck in a 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' culture where my ideas won't be valued. I am ambitious and driven to succeed and I do not see age as a barrier to that success or advancement. Overall, in my opinion there is much more to work satisfaction than the pay cheque at the end of every month. I want to be a part of my company's success and be valued for the contribution I have played in that..

So, I would like to pose a couple of questions to you. Do you understand the different drivers inherent in the four groups in your people? They are all different and therefore they need to be led in different ways. So how will you go about engaging them all?

Reference:
'MOTIVATING THE "What's In It For Me?" WORKFORCE' BY Cam Marston
Published: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, New Jersey (2007)

How do you motivate your High Potentials at a time when you have limited opportunities for them?

By Karen Frost

I have been asked to run a workshop on coaching High Potentials at The Training & Development Summit 11th – 12th May, Radisson SAS Hotel, London Stansted Airport. See www.forumevents.co.uk for more information. This workshop will be a culmination of VBL's learning over recent months. We have focused our thinking around what it really means to work with High Potentials at this time so they can continue to retain their motivation and engagement.

My previous article highlights the significant generational differences in our workforce; it seems that the majority of coaching we do with High Potentials is with the Generations X and Y. I believe we understand the needs of these High Potentials and appreciate that their motivators are very different to the generations before them.

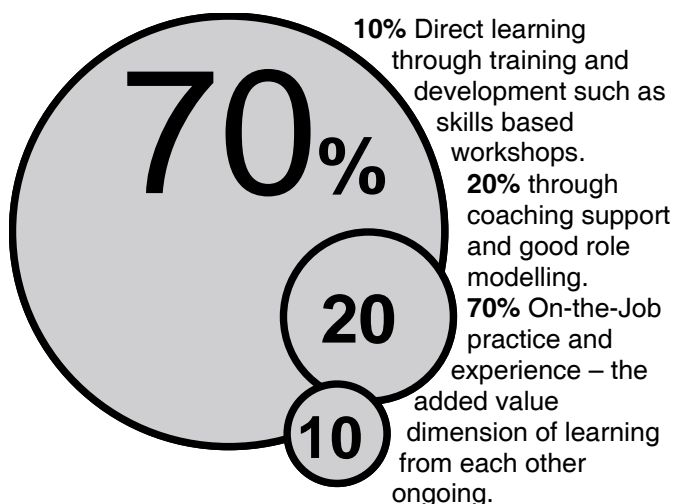
Coaching suits Generations X & Y because it is a personalised way for them to learn; they can stay on their agenda and realise their own objectives. The fact that each coaching session is confidential helps to create that individualised feel.

Alongside the coaching work we do with High Potentials, we have developed two complimentary approaches that support the individuals but can also get the other generations involved as well.

The first is Sponsored Coaching. A High Potential works with a coach on their development and learning. The coach could be either internal or external to the business. In addition to a coach, the HP has a Sponsor

who could be their line manager, a member of the HR department or a mentor from a different part of the business. The Sponsor is there to help set the objectives for coaching at the initial stages of the process and to offer support and challenge going forward. What is interesting about this arrangement is that the Sponsor starts to learn about the work being done with the HP and gets the opportunity to better understand the needs of the HP.

The second is to raise your High Potentials awareness around the concept of 70, 20, 10. Originally this concept was developed by the Centre for Creative Leadership.



At VBL we have taken this approach and developed it to support the leadership development of HPs. In a couple of businesses we do coaching and mentoring development work with Senior Managers. This is in the form of coaching workshops and reflects the 10% input.

Our Senior Managers with enhanced coaching skills then coach one or possibly two High Potentials. We continue to support the Senior Managers as they in turn coach the HP; all the time role modelling good coaching skills and reflecting the 20% input.

The 70% comes with the holistic approach this arrangement generates. The HPs are being coached and receive individual attention. The Senior Managers gain coaching skills which they can practice with their HP partner. Senior Managers happily take these skills into their other roles as leaders of people. The final added value is that you have the generations working together to better understand each other and appreciate each others needs. A 'win win' situation.

If you would like a full copy of the presentation Karen is giving to the Training & Development Summit please email:

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Values Based Leadership – Retaining Your People in Tough Times

By John Frost

I recently re-watched the film Gandhi. As those of you who have seen the film will know, it traces the life and time the great leader. It reminded me that what is most impressive about Gandhi as a leader is that his values never wavered irrespective of the circumstances in which he found himself. He would not compromise on his fundamental beliefs and principles in the face of the most hostile and aggressive opposition. He stayed true to himself. And yet he also had the humility to understand when he made mistakes and learnt from those mistakes. His words and behaviours, the inspiring way in which he expressed his values, had a significant impact on those around him and have left a leadership legacy long after his life has ended. It seems to me that today, there is still much that we as leaders can learn from the way that Gandhi led himself and those around him, both friend and foe.

Of the many questions that we are asked at VBL, one that occurs time and again is, how do we keep our talented people in tough economic times? The conversation often continues along the lines of “we know that we are going to have to make some tough decisions and we don’t want to send out the wrong signal as we want to ensure that we retain these people in the company so that our business can grow when the economic situation improves.”

I think that the first thing to say is that this is not just a question to ask about ‘talented’ people however your business defines them. It is about all the people in your business. And the ability to retain these people has everything to do with the way that you personally lead them through tough times – the authenticity of your leadership. What they will remember is the feeling they got from being led by you at this time. What will keep them is whether or not that feeling wins their hearts and minds.

The most powerful and authentic leadership is values based leadership as Gandhi demonstrated. Your values are the bedrock on which you build your leadership legacy. And the most powerful demonstration of your values is that they guide your actions through good times and bad. I read a blog today about values based leadership by Jeff Balin who works out of Vancouver in Canada. Jeff states quite rightly that “values based action is recession proof and positions one very strongly when external circumstances improve again.” When you are leading in line with your values irrespective of external pressures, this is incredibly energy giving to you and others around you. And what will be remembered is how you were able to handle yourself under pressure and that your values were rock solid at that time.

Conversely, when you are acting outside your values or acting against them what does it do to your self respect and sense of authenticity? What is the impact on your energy and the energy of those around you? Is this the leadership legacy that you want to leave? In times like

these it is perhaps more important than ever to ask these questions of yourself.

I heard of a wonderful example of values based leadership recently in a construction company that was encouraged to make payments to certain important people to “sweeten” the deal on a road building project. The company has a strong set of values and as a result they refused to make the payments. Interestingly enough, they won the tender and more work following this. As Gandhi also said, “A “no” uttered from the deepest conviction is better than a “yes” merely uttered to please, or worse, to avoid trouble.”

When I work with companies who aspire to develop a values based approach to leadership in their business, I always start by asking them if they understand what it means to lead using values and if they are up for that challenge. This is not the soft and fluffy stuff of leadership. Values based leadership is one of the hardest challenges that you can take on as a leader. And the reason that so many values statements are confined to the mouse mat or forgotten as last years corporate initiative rather than getting into the real essence and culture of the business, is because the leadership has not followed through with the courage, persistence and integrity that is required to lead in a values based way.

Retaining people is a key issue for all businesses in good times and bad. There is now plenty of evidence to suggest that more and more people choose the company that they want to work for rather than the company choosing the people. That will not change, irrespective of economic factors. So why would people choose you, as a leader, a team and a company? And why would they choose to stay with you? My suggestion is that this is more likely to happen if, like Gandhi, your values are what continue to define you as a leader in good times and in bad.

Playing Your Cards

By Simon Hollington



Listening recently to Simon Weston, I was struck by his positive attitude. It is admittedly twenty-seven years since he was thrust into the ‘limelight’ when as a young Welsh Guardsman who was badly burnt when Sir Galahad was bombed during the Falklands conflict, but nonetheless, his irrepressible approach remains inspiring. Sadly Weston Spirit, the charity he founded to help disadvantaged children in inner cities has folded – another victim of the credit crunch – but he is now actively involved in the Star and Garter homes for ex-service personnel. In the question and answer session after his presentation, he said several times that his attitude was “it’s not the cards you’re dealt, but how you deal with the cards you’re dealt”. His attitude has much to commend in these difficult times.

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Of course we are interested in the impact of the G20 discussions – too early to what the effect of those will be at the moment - and Alistair Darling's budget of two weeks ago, but very few of us will have had any influence on it. As I write, there have been the usual and expected opposition jibes and complaints about the budget but unless there is a Commons Revolt that suddenly appears out of the blue (there was after all a defeat for the Government last week over Ghurkha rights of settlement in UK), we just have to accept it. How we deal with those changes will mark us out as leaders. Our role is to understand the impact of those changes on our business, identify with our teams the opportunities and challenges that come with those changes, and to communicate any resultant actions in a positive way – without of course being naively optimistic.

So as leaders, our psychological state is of vital importance. If we cannot get ourselves in the right place internally, it will quickly become apparent externally. An easy way to ensure we are in the right place is to listen to ourselves. If our internal voice is marked by resentment (they shouldn't have done this) or resignation (there's nothing I can do about this) then it will quickly become apparent in our external behaviour and we are actively disempowering ourselves – and our teams. What we need to do is to accept 'What is...is' (to quote the Dalai Lama) and then look for opportunities. That is where personal and business growth will come from and, to quote Simon Weston, we'll be dealing with the cards we're dealt!

Coaching the Leader in interesting times

By Linda John

Some element of the media would have us believe that we are in the midst of total economic meltdown. An interesting time to be a leader . . .



For many leaders this is just the latest challenge in what has been a long period in which they are expected to produce more from less. Management gets 'de-layered' targets get set at ever more demanding levels, and the penalties for failure can be harsh. Yet, we need leaders to be beacons of strength and guidance for their staff. The 'talent wars' are being fought to attract and keep the brightest staff, and leaders are expected to create great working environments for people to grow and develop.

There are huge challenges to leaders that lie underneath the more obvious performance imperatives. Some of these challenges can be best expressed as paradoxes. Leaders are expected to manage many tensions – here are just a few:

- Drive performance ever harder whilst creating a nurturing, developmental environment

- Develop emotional intelligence whilst feeling harassed and in some cases even bullied by their own bosses and organisations
- Espouse 'work/life balance' but be expected to be on constant duty call themselves
- Develop ethical organisational practices at the same time as fight for survival in what is a dog-eat-dog environment

Model the qualities of calm, confident focus and purpose whilst being subject to the pressures of the economic reality themselves

These tensions and others are some of the symptoms of a leadership climate that has recently been hit by a wider social, moral and ethical malaise. Leaders are human after all, and suffer under the pressure. Diminishing physical and emotional health all too often manifests itself, and our hearts and souls cry out for succour, meaning and fulfillment. Under this pressure, many leaders are running scared – confused, demoralised and anxious.

By grasping for easy answers, keeping our heads in the sand, or by reaching out in panic to grab our share of the diminishing economic pie, we are weakening ourselves at the core of our being. Fear eats the soul. Working ever harder just exhausts us. Our families grow more distant. We become dispirited and disappointed: this was not the script we had written for ourselves.

The broadly liberal world of coaching is experiencing an intense tightening of pressure to demonstrate measurable ROI. But it is important that this is not achieved at the cost of staying on the client's agenda irrespective of economic necessity. Coaching that focuses on the whole person rather than on 'productive behaviour' is fundamental in these difficult times.

Coaching needs to offer more to the leader than ever before, not run with the forces of fear. Our leaders need, more than ever, to feel emotionally connected, intellectually confident, ethically directed and physically well in order to lead effectively. We need healthy organisations that can build a better social fabric. Organisations are built by people, and organisations can only be 'whole' (in the sense of being aligned, congruent and focused) when the people who lead them are 'whole' themselves. These leaders need to be operating from a place of health, optimism and purpose.

So the question is, how can leaders survive and then thrive under the current conditions in order to provide the ethical, focused and bold leadership we need in our organisations and wider society? Coaching can be a very important part of the answer, but now more than ever it needs to be coaching that addresses the whole person. Leaders need physical health, emotional resilience, intellectual conviction and a spiritual purpose. Coaching that addresses each of these dimensions of self will produce sustainable, grounded, robust support for the people we charge with the responsibility of leading through these turbulent times.

On the Couch

with Karen Frost

I am the UK Sales Director for a large multinational food manufacturing business. My 'star' sales person and manager of one of my teams came to me last week saying that they had been offered a sales manager's role at a UK based food retailer. I really could do without my 'star' leaving at this time and although we have offered a financial incentive for them to stay, this does not seem to be the key driver for them so they are seriously considering accepting the offer. What do I do?

There is a feeling that people are staying put at the moment, but what has interested me over recent months is that businesses have to either retain or headhunt very good people at the moment. This sales manager clearly is not motivated by money, so there is a need to find out what does motivate them and quickly!

From experience people leave or seriously consider leaving businesses because they are not getting their emotional needs met, particularly with the younger generations in our workforce (see earlier article on coaching high potentials and the Generation Y and Generation X people). The possible steps you could take:

Normally senior people have a reasonable notice period, for example 3 months, so this gives you time to review their emotional needs and if possible to meet them. Sometimes you can't and have to accept the situation, let them go in a way that means you learn from this experience by giving them a full and frank exit interview.

In this notice period use an external coach for a few



quick coaching sessions to enable your 'star' to talk through their needs. This confidential and cost effective approach will give them the opportunity to make sure they are making the right decision. Provided you have briefed your coach well, they will encourage your 'star' to talk to the business in a more logical and informed way about their needs.

Once you and your 'star' know where the disconnect is, then you can do something about it, provided of course it is not outside company policy. Treat this as a learning opportunity. If the need is met, then your 'star' will re-engage with the business and most likely so will others. To give you a direct example, I worked with a client a little while ago who had a values disconnect with their employers with what they saw as the lack of development in the environmental strategy of the business. Their motivation was low as a result and they were seriously looking for new employment. A few coaching sessions identified the real issue and as a result the future environmental strategy was explained in detail to my client. They were also asked to get involved with the shaping of the future environmental strategy and subsequently felt they were able to stay.

If you work out the costs of recruitment, the loss in performance with the changeover of staffing and the general disruption to the team, acting now can save significant costs and will be worth the time and energy. There is also an added bonus, you will learn a lot from the process as well.



Final Thoughts

"An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching"

"A man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes."

"There is more to life than just increasing its speed"

"Be the change that you want to see in the world."

All quotes are by Gandhi