

# Management Development

**Carrie Foster**

**Abstract:** Management development is more than a set of workshops or a bit of coaching provided over a 12-month period. It is a holistic approach to the way an organization is managed from the bottom upward; it is a philosophy of management practice and a culture of support and development, which extends beyond a program, existing in the manager's day-to-day milieu. Management development enables an organization to answer the question "Is what we are doing in managing the organization having the impact we want it to, and more importantly is it aligned to our core purpose?" A well-designed management development program can contribute to the effectiveness of the management team's ability to direct the activities of the organization and create an environment for sustainable performance to be achieved.

This article explores management development from four key dimensions:

The ability to articulate vision  
Creating a shared understanding  
Clarity of thought within chaos  
Agility to collaborate to bring about rapid change

**Keywords:** Action Learning Sets, Agility, Communication, Empowerment, Management Development, Management Education, Purpose, Sustainability, T-Groups, Vision

## INTRODUCTION

In a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment, management is a key differentiator between success and failure to an organization. Poor management of resources within the business can destroy even the most recognized brands. Good management can take a business that is failing and turn its fortunes around to celebrated acclaim. Even where good leaders exist within the organization, a systemic failure of management to get behind an organizational project can result in disaster. Making sure managers are up to the task is essential.

There is a significant body of literature and research focused on the difference between a leader and a manager



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with the definitions giving varying descriptions based on the theme that leaders provide a vision and direction and managers are involved in the planning, implementation, and allocation of resources.

The issue with this formal separation is how the organization has managers who lead, and leaders who also manage. “Fortunately, nothing about being a good manager prevents somebody from being a good leader, and nothing about being a good leader prevents somebody from being a good manager. Indeed, the behaviors that go along with being a good manager and being a good leader are typically quite complementary” (Lawler III, 2008: 198). The difference between leaders or managers is not so much in what the individual concerned does, planning or directing, but rather in whom the individual *is*. For the purposes of this article the term manager will be used to refer to anyone who is in a managerial or leadership position.

## **MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT**

Management development is big business. With national spending on training running into the billions in the US and UK, there's plenty of money to go around and most of that money is destined for developing managers and senior leadership teams. Recent research reports that 96% of businesses see management skills as a priority area (Overton and Dixon, 2016) with most organizations planning to “focus on equipping line managers to improve staff performance, changing/enhancing the organizational culture and improving the skills of existing leaders to think in a more strategic and future focused way” (CIPD, 2015: 4). With high levels of investment it would be reasonable to expect managers to be highly trained and highly capable. But bad leadership alone costs the UK economy £39 billion a year, and is one of the primary reasons why over half of employees are looking for a new job, which adds a recruitment cost of at least £4.13 billion to British businesses (Haughton, 2016).

The problem, therefore is less about willingness to invest in training and development and more to do with the effectiveness of the management development being delivered. Likert (1959) suggested that “there seems to be widespread and increasing dissatisfaction with current methods,” an observation that is as relevant today as it was then. The main issue of course is that each individual manager is different, and has different development needs, which may not be met by a blanket management development program. Also learners very often can't practice what they have learned back in the workplace because the organizational environment, culture or managers who have not been on the program are barriers to applying the learning.

Management Development is more than a set of workshops or a bit of coaching provided over a 12-month period. It is a holistic approach to the way an organization is managed from the bottom upwards; it is a philosophy of management practice and a culture of support and development, which extends beyond a program, existing in the manager's day-to-day milieu.

As such the purpose of this article is not primarily focused on the development of management skills but is instead concerned with four key dimensions:

1. The ability to articulate vision
2. Creating a shared understanding
3. Clarity of thought within chaos
4. Agility to collaborate to bring about rapid change

## **DIMENSION 1—ARTICULATING VISION**

Whether a manager is in a senior leadership position, a middle manager or a team leader in their first management role, the ability to articulate vision to their line reports, the wider employee population and key stakeholders is an essential quality. In part it is the skill of communicating in a way, which captures both the attention and the heart of the listener. However, equally

important is the ability to engage, captivate, and energize disparate individuals to followership. This followership must be maintained on the journey toward the vision being realized, which may be months or even years into the future.

In most organizations, vision belongs with the team that sits at the top of the organizational structure on the organization chart. Articulating vision utilizes the human relations approach to management, where the informal organizational structure is recognized as the key to unlocking the motivation of employees. How managers behave is essential to the vitalization of the vision within the organization. This goes beyond a mission statement diktat and provides the reason for the organization to exist to focus on purposeful endeavor in the organization's day-to-day activities. Strategic management and planning focuses the management teams on how to deliver on an organization's strategy but fails to satisfy the complex needs influencing individual behavior at work. Helping individual employees to understand and connect with the group both in terms of their immediate team and the wider organization are essential in delivering organizational performance.

### Communication

If employees can parrot the organizational mission, this is no more than an indication of efficient communication from the top to the bottom of the organization. There is a difference between knowing information and an employee understanding how their role contributes to the organization's purpose. What is expected of Me, is more than the employee grasping their task responsibilities, it is understanding the what, how, and why of everything that they do, their whole reason for being employed by the organization and, if managed correctly, wanting to do everything they can to be part of the achievement of the vision. This is the culmination of effective articulation of vision.

Effective communication between managers and their line reports is not about creating glossy communiqué or staged communication events. Instead, effective communication is far simpler requiring regular dialogue between employee and manager in regard to the tripartite of information needed for performance:

1. **What:** An agreement between the manager and employee about what needs to be done in regard to priority actions and goals including what will be done by when and what next. Also, what support is required in regard to access to required resources or managerial support to break down barriers or open doors to enable the What to be done.
2. **How:** Process, procedure, policy, and progress reports, how the employee intends the What to be achieved, specifically identifying any issues or concerns the employee has operationally that the manager may not be aware of.
3. **Why:** Binds the What and How to the vision. Why is the reason the What is important to the achievement of organizational goals and sometimes why How the What will be achieved must be done in a specific way.

Dialogue by its very nature is a two-way conversation. It may occur in team meetings, or in formal structured communication events. But more often than not, communication is the regular everyday conversation between line manager and subordinate. It is finding out what happened at the weekend, catching up on how the kid's first day in school went or discussing the progress of a report they are writing. Today managers have any number of technologies available to them to communicate but the quality of communication within organizations is probably worse than at any time in human history despite our ability to communicate over any distance, including outer space. The overreliance in organizational settings on email missives to

communicate means that most individuals within an organization have more information than they can possibly make sense of or digest. But access to information is not the same as understanding, nor is the provision of information the same as building relationships. The crux of articulating a vision is relationship. Relationship is about connection and that connection to and between individuals within the organization enables the employee to identify with the vision of the organization. Dialogic communication therefore bridges the gap between the things that the employee does on a day-to-day basis and the vision.

### Likert Modified Theory of Management

According to Likert (1958), organizational performance is influenced by its system of management. In his research in human behavior within organizations, Likert (1956) identified four systems or styles of management:

1. **Exploitative-authoritative:** Decision-making is reserved for the senior levels of leadership within the organization, with no attempt at teamwork and communication is limited to threats.
2. **Benevolent-authoritative:** Based on a master-servant relationship between management and employees, this management style uses reward as a system of motivation and there is minimal teamwork and communication.
3. **Consultative:** Although managers partly trust subordinates, using both reward and involvement to foster motivation, teamwork, and communication is limited. However, in this style of management employees are given an increased level of responsibility for achieving goals set.
4. **Participative-group:** A managerial style based upon trust and confidence where goals are mutually agreed and rewards are based on collectively determined goals. This system of management produces a collective sense of responsibility for achieving organizational objectives,

collaborative teamwork, and open communication.

According to his Modified Theory of Management, Likert (1956) asserted that if organizational effectiveness is going to be achieved, then the best system of management is Participative-group. This assertion has links to theories relating to group dynamics and organization development and focuses on the development of soft management skills to enable managers to build trust and communication. To support managers to develop a participative group style of management, the following development recommendations are made:

- Managers should be encouraged to recognize that employees have their own needs and values and must be valued, with managers taking responsibility for nurturing employee self-worth within the organizational setting. This includes an understanding of what methods can be used to build high levels of mutual trust and drive loyalty.
- Management techniques must focus on principles linked to developing intrinsic motivation such as inclusion and empowerment as opposed to a system of reward and threat. This would include incorporating tools, which support managers in developing a relaxed and mutually supportive working relationship.
- Managers need to be helped to develop highly effective groups, both within teams and cross-functionally to support the commitment to achieving the organization's objective. This includes the development of skills and techniques to foster proactive and positive interaction between group members.
- Providing opportunities for managers to learn how to develop mutual respect and supportive relationships within each group, establishing group norms, values, and goals will enable managers to perform as a bridging function enabling the goals of the different groups to which they

belong to work harmoniously in pursuit of the organization's goals.

### **Development Solutions**

Helping managers to develop their ability to articulate vision therefore requires managers to practice the behaviors associated with dialogic communication. There are two key tools at the disposal of management development: Action Learning Sets and Appreciative Inquiry, which in addition to teaching the skills of good conversation, helps managers to see the positive benefits of such practices and supports the behavioral shifts required for modeling of good management practice to take place back in the organizational environment.

#### **Action Learning Sets**

Action Learning Sets (ALS) involve managers working in structured small groups, which fosters learning from sharing experience in the workplace and then encourages set members to act on their learning. Active membership of an ALS helps managers learn from what they do in their current practice, and make improvements as a result of their learning.

#### **How It Works**

Each set consists of between 6 and 12 members, each of whom having volunteered. Sets can continue indefinitely but from a development intervention perspective members should commit to meet once every four to six weeks over a 12-month period to focus and reflect on defined practical issues. It is recommended that each session last a minimum of 3 hours, although a full day allows more to be achieved. At the first ALS meetings, members will agree on ground rules regarding how the set will be run during their program of learning. Using the theme, Communication of Vision, set members will each have an opportunity to present a challenge associated with the theme that they are facing in their day job.

It is recommended that for inexperienced groups an independent facilitator

is used to support set members as they work on the presented problem through supportive, but probing, questioning. An ALS is not a help forum where the presenter gives their problem and the other set members provide advice. It is about members supporting the presenter to find their own solution to the problem. The ALS is a form of group discussion, which encourages members to reflect upon the problem and analyze possible solutions. It may therefore be helpful to provide some training to set members on asking facilitative questions. The very practice of which enhances dialogue back in the workplace.

#### **The Benefits of ALS**

The focus of an ALS is to support managers in learning from experience and putting that learning into action immediately. As such ALS offers the potential for applied learning that is relevant to real-time issues within the workplace. In addition, the ALS will improve communication between set members, developing a climate of openness, which in turn builds relationships across the organization itself. The introduction of cross-functional ALS will support the breakdown of silos and aid in removing communication barriers between teams.

The use of the ALS means that set members will learn about how to articulate vision within their own team, and have an opportunity to learn from what other people are doing within the organization as well as put that learning into practice. Also, the set members will be able to develop key communication skills such as asking open questions, listening for meaning, and reflecting on issues in order to adapt their management practice.

#### **Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a change method developed by Cooperider and Srivastva (1987) to help groups generate new ideas through a form of positive inquiry. AI helps managers to discover and

recognize the best of people and the organization through a systematic and cooperative exploration of past and present strengths, successes, and potential. It is an approach to management development, which can lead to organizational learning and creativity. The purpose of AI in management development is to strengthen the managers' capacity to capture, prepare, and strengthen positivity within the organization by utilizing the positive potential of imagination and innovation. The aim is for the managers to create an imagined future for managerial communication within the organization.

#### **How It Works**

AI is fundamentally aimed at a whole organization intervention, within a management development context therefore the attendance of the full managerial cohort is an ideal that should be aimed to be achieved. Smaller AI interventions, whether in teams, functions, or departments, can be used, but in regard to Articulating Vision have reduced effectiveness. An AI intervention uses dialogue to help manager's focus on what the organization is doing right in regard to the current reality and develops a frame for creating an imagined future. In a similar way to how the vision for the organization should be created, a determination of how that vision is to be articulated is also required.

#### **The Benefits of AI**

The energy created from an AI intervention provides momentum to modeling dialogue and the communication behavior, which are required for managers to articulate the vision to their line reports. The managerial teams begin to focus on organizational strengths, which can be mobilized to achieve organizational goals. The resulting solutions delivered by the organization have the opportunity of fully engaging all managers within the organization providing managerial alignment.

#### **Summary**

- The ability to articulate vision to their line reports, the wider employee population and key stakeholders is an essential managerial quality.
- Articulating vision utilizes the human relations approach to management.
- How managers behave is essential to the vitalization of the vision within the organization.
- Effective communication requires regular dialogue between employee and manager in regard to the tripartite needed for performance: What, How, and Why.
- Dialogic communication therefore bridges the gap between the things that the employee does on a day-to-day basis and the vision.
- If organizational effectiveness is to be achieved, it requires a managerial style based upon trust and confidence where goals are mutually agreed and rewards are based on collectively determined goals.
- Helping managers to develop their ability to articulate vision therefore requires managers to practice the behaviors associated with dialogic communication.

#### **DIMENSION 2—CREATING UNDERSTANDING**

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One outcome of a successful management development program is the promotion of sustainable organizational processes and practices through the development of a methodology and methods of approaching the organizational resources sensitively. Managers need to develop an understanding of their responsibility to others within the organization through a form of organization husbandry that highlights the ultimate consequences of poor decision-making, inappropriate behavior, and poor-quality interaction with others can be catastrophic, if not for themselves then for others. Organizational Husbandry is defined as “the care, cultivation and management of resources.”

For many employees, care and cultivation is entirely separate from management

in most organizations, whether they are private, public, or not for profit. Ask most employees and they can regale a tale of torrid experiences at the hands of a bad manager. It could be argued that care and cultivation are probably the last concepts associated with management. Management is about dealing with and controlling people and resources, how that is achieved and the attitude, which surrounds the concept of management, is generally wedded to ideas concerning efficiency and effectiveness. Empathy and understanding is low down on the agenda and compassion for an individual's potential is only a consideration in regard to the recruitment strategies and if employee performance is poor.

Creating Understanding between management and employees needs husbandry. It does not occur by constructing yet another excel spread sheet and deciding where costs can be cut and extra profit can be made. Nor does it occur by putting in systems and processes or developing a new employee handbook. Creating understanding comes from a holistic approach to caring about how the organizational environment impacts on people and a caring pursuit of the cultivation and management of the human resources available to the organization.

Articulating Vision, as explored under Dimension 1, supports Organization Husbandry because clarity regarding the vision for the organization creates the impetus for the development of the processes and practices, which drive the organization forward. However, Creating Understanding enables the management team to understand the consequences of decisions made and impact of managerial behavior on individual performance. It should be noted that Creating Understanding is also a two-way personal relationship process, with managers Creating Understanding about individual employees, and employees Creating Understanding about individual managers.

### **Lewin's Field Theory**

Developed by Lewin (1951), field theory is a social science approach, which explores the social environment of an organization, whereby actions that happen within the organization have a reciprocal relationship with individual action. Interactive coexistence between the individual and the organization creates a dynamic field, which impacts upon individual self-awareness just as individual action impacts upon the self-awareness of other people within the organizational environment. There is a mutual interdependence between the individual and the organization, and employee behavior is a result of both personal characteristics and the social situation in which the individual lives.

Management Development interventions can positively change elements in the social and organizational environment by exposing managers to new personal experiences using particular types of psychological forces. As an individual develops, the changes in their self-awareness and behavior will contribute to changes in the social and organizational environment. Therefore, according to field theory, management development will only be successful if the organization as a whole has been considered. Those facilitating management development interventions also need to be aware that an intervention in one part of the organization will affect another part of the organization as a consequence of introducing management development into the organization. The force created by the introduction of a management development intervention will affect other organizational elements as energy is transferred into other areas of the business.

To support managers' interaction with the social environment and create positive change energy within the organizational management itself, the following development recommendations are made:

- Align the goals of a management development intervention with the wider organizational goals to ensure that there is alignment between the intervention outcomes and the directional forces within the organization.
- Ensure that the intervention design is holistic. Build into the design of the management development intervention the exploration of environmental issues such as office space, technology or system breakdowns. By analyzing management behavior from a holistic perspective, it is possible to create change in strategy, structure, process, or policy as an output.
- Remember that the management development intervention does not occur in a vacuum and employee behavior is a product of both person and their environment.
- Be selective in choosing the facilitators or trainers used since they too will be interacting with individuals and the organization's environment, their presence and behavior causes a disturbance in the field. Make sure the facilitator involvement has a positive impact.
- Support management development by taking advantage of the force in the organization keeping in mind how even small changes in one area can have a ripple effect that will move management processes forward positively in other areas. By focusing on small changes it is possible to help make the learning sticky.
- Utilize networking and cross-functional working between individuals from all parts of the organization as part of a management development program to create a disturbance in the force throughout the organization.
- When planning the evaluation measures for the management development program, make sure that the focus is on the organization as a whole to monitor unexpected changes as a result of the interaction between individual and environment. Since it is not possible to measure the

field itself, evaluation is only made possible by measuring the outcomes of the intervention.

### **Development Solutions**

Supporting managers to create understanding within the organization requires that managers are taught techniques relating to group learning. The introduction of T-Group has the dual benefit of up-skilling managers while also providing a real-time opportunity for understanding to be created. This will in turn provide legacy benefits of both managers and teams versed in the use of T-Groups and the output of the T-Groups they have participated in.

#### **T-Group**

Lewin (1951) developed an experiential learning approach to management development based upon the premise that behavior is a function of an individual's experience and the environment. He proposed that learning takes place when ideas are tested through observation and analysis of an experience, the examination of feedback and reflection on action leading to reinforced learned behavior or the creation of new ideas. Lewin's work at the Tavistock institute led to the development of T-groups or training groups, which is an influential group learning technique. T-groups enable participants to learn about interpersonal relationships or communication skills through observing how the group interacts, providing feedback and opportunities for reflection.

#### **How It Works**

Working in facilitated small group sessions of between 8 and 15 participants who are encouraged to discuss their reaction, with an emphasis on sharing emotions, to the action and statements made by the other group members. For this reason highly trained facilitators are required to lead a T-Group. Although T-groups don't have an explicit structure, it is recommended for

management development that the group is focused on the immediate interaction and group dynamic and sharing their experiences. A platform for constructive feedback can be developed, as participants are encouraged to give and receive feedback during the facilitated session. In addition the facilitator can use problem-solving and role-play techniques in order to support participants as they discern the group dynamics at play as well as developing self-awareness. Following the group sessions, participants are provided with an opportunity to learn about theories relating to group dynamics and given time to reflect on what happened in the T-group and support in sense-making from the experience.

### **The Benefits of T-Groups**

With its focus on process rather than content and communication of feelings rather than communication of information, attention is given to group behavior and the whole person, which increases understanding of difficulties, concerns, and hopes of group members. A key benefit of the T-Group is the encouragement of self-disclosure of their emotional reaction and openness within the group, which supports the development of trust, acceptance, and understanding. T-groups also provide an opportunity for self-reflection highlighting individual intentions, feelings and so on. Participants have the opportunity to receive feedback on their personal impact on other group members, which will increase their self-knowledge of how they contribute to the group dynamic. T-group members become part of a group, which is learning, improving, and achieving together with experiencing a sense of release or breakthrough.

### **Summary**

- Managers need to develop an understanding of their responsibility to others within the organization through a form of organization husbandry

- Creating understanding comes from a holistic approach to caring about how the organizational environment impacts on people and a caring pursuit of the cultivation and management of the human resources available to the organization.
- Creating Understanding enables the management team to understand the consequences of decisions made and impact of managerial behavior on individual performance.
- Management Development interventions can positively change elements in the social and organizational environment by exposing managers to new personal experiences.

### **DIMENSION 3—CLARITY WITHIN CHAOS**

An organization must develop the capability to continually move the way it operates, to shift toward the favorable wind like a ship changing its sail. This involves developing the creative capability to continually innovate organizational operations to shift toward favorable and sustainable performance as the result of changes taking place in the external environment and more importantly being able to proactively manage changes rather than react to changes thrust upon the organization.

The organization's vision provides the focus for and inspiration for creative thinking and innovation throughout organizational operations as the managers and individual employees pursue opportunities to succeed in achieving the purpose of the organization. An essential source of competitive advantage, creativity is highly prized in organizations where the development of useful knowledge and ideas is the result of the contributions of individuals throughout the organization. Creativity is a collaborative process, and involves corridor conversations and employees bouncing ideas of each other in the coffee bar. Creativity therefore requires the enabling of informal networks and flexibility to allow individuals to

identify and solve problems and unearth new opportunities.

The managerial capability to successfully achieve clarity of thought within the chaos is not just about ensuring that managers have the skills or knowledge to make the change; or that leadership has the motivation and ability to communicate the change required but that the link to the vision of the organization is made and the understanding of the requirement to adapt is at a meaningful level encouraging individuals to choose to engage with the change needed.

### **Complexity Theory**

Complexity theory provides a perspective with which it is possible to analyze and understand the operation of an organization, providing insight into ways in which a management development intervention should be structured in order to deliver the learning that managers require for the organization to become effective. It originated in mathematics and natural sciences, and is used in the development of algorithms in computer science. However, complexity theory helps us to explain how order and structure can emerge from an apparently chaotic organizational environment and systems.

Complexity Theory challenges the notion that change can be a linear process, instead proposing that the dynamism created by the chaotic organizational environment means that it is not possible to manage change, instead managers need to develop agility to support the organization through its change journey. In an unpredictable system managers must have the ability to support individuals as they adapt, promote resilience in employees as they surf the edge of chaos, encourage self-management, and create an environment that avoids liminalities. The focus is on developing an ability to learn, flex, adapt, and change to avoid stagnation and manage the innate desire for stability.

Management development therefore needs to highlight the notion that organizations are complex adaptive systems and the fact that managers must respond to the chaos created by the external and internal environmental factors by self-organizing and continuously re-inventing and innovating within the organizational space.

To support managers in developing the agility and adaptability to manage the chaos created by the complex system, the following recommendations are made.

- Reframe change from something that can be managed to something that can be influenced and supported.
- Open connections between different parts of the organization to support the development of feedback loops, which will allow managers to self-organize, adapt, and create a positive environment for change.
- Make time to examine the shifting organizational system, improving flows of information to prevent the organization from falling into chaos.
- Offer tools and techniques, which promote diversity of thinking and improve managers' agility in examining shifting organizational and personal mental models.
- Build communities of practice to encourage creativity, self-organization, experimentation, and the development of new operational configurations.
- Model activities focused on achieving the organization's vision, which promote learning, self-expression, personal growth, adaptability, flexibility, and change.
- Provide forums that encourage openness, diversity of thinking, new ideation, and the stimulus for innovative approaches to existing and new challenges and opportunities faced by the organization.
- Build connections, and help individuals navigate organizational politics by creating opportunities for individuals to collaborate across functional boundaries.
- Redesign the organizational structure to remove an overreliance of hierarchical

control-based arrangements in favor of decentralized forms based on multifaceted, flexible team-based working.

### **Development Solutions**

To support managers in getting clarity in the chaos, the management development approach needs to be twofold. In the first instance managers need to obtain knowledge and broaden their understanding of the organizational context in order to have a foundational comprehension upon which they can make sense of what is happening both within the organization and in the external environment. Having been educated in ideas about different approaches to strategy and business, managers are then in a position to make sense of their own organization's present position and innovate in regard to possible futures. Small and large group activity can provide a forum for creative thinking and sense-making.

### **Management Education and Skills Training**

Management Education has in recent years fallen out of favor and is rarely linked with creative thinking. This can be attributed to a failure of MBAs to become capable managers and the expenses associated with sending a single individual on an executive education program, which can easily top £10,000. However, making sense of complexity requires that managers are given access to knowledge, which helps them to develop their thinking about the way they manage, how they should manage, and their role as managers. Often management theories and academia is seen as separate from the real world but management theory is developed through research in real organizations. One advantage academics have over managers is that they have the time to research what is happening within organizations and think about their findings to come to some conclusions. The issue is that very often

these theories are written and shared with other academics and not with the very people they can help—the managers and organizations. Also, it is sometimes very difficult for non-academics to decipher the pretentious academic language used in academic papers. Furthermore, the focus of much academic literature is on explaining the theory rather than providing a method to operationalize it. That said, Lewin (1951) probably summed it up best when he said, “There is nothing so practical as a theory.” Making sense of complexity requires familiarity with different ideas about management responses and the ability to think critically and make recommendations for action. Critical thinking is an essential component of creativity when seeking to find a way forward through the chaos wrought by internal and external environmental changes. Stokes et al. (2016: 204) explained, “criticality in this context is a vital constituent enabling the imaginative, innovative impulse to be located socially . . . The practice is an irritant to the otherwise unquestioned working practices and assumptions.” Therefore it is recommended that a mixture of education and training to bridge the gap between knowledge and practical skills development be offered to managers at different points within their career.

#### **First Time Managers**

First time team leaders should be given access to a Level 3 to Level 5 Foundation in Business and Management, something along the lines of a Foundation Degree (HNC Level), which can be topped up to a BA if the individual wishes to progress. This should be offered alongside management skills training, whether in-house or externally provided, in: Personal Impact, Prioritization, Performance Management, Effective Listening, Giving Feedback, Presentation Skills, Delegation, and setting SMART objectives.

### **Middle Managers**

For those who have progressed to a middle management position, it is recommended that they study a BA in Business and Management, with a financial module to help them get to grips with business finances and budgeting. Depending on the job role, it may be at this point in an individual's career that the manager chooses to specialize. For example, Project managers may choose a Prince course, which has general management modules, Human Resource managers could study CIPD L5, Operations managers a qualification, which specializes in operations management and Sales managers, a sales management qualification. This education would be supplemented with some soft skills training. But at this level the focus would be on Assertiveness, Coaching Skills for Managers, Motivating for Performance, Managing Virtual Teams, Influencing Skills, Change Management and Managing Your Impact. It is also recommended that a mentoring scheme be introduced for middle managers so they have access to someone in senior management, who can share what they have learned from their own experience, supports them.

### **Senior Managers**

For those who have progressed into more senior roles, or have been identified as future leaders—a Postgraduate Diploma is essential. Despite the belief that such qualifications are outmoded, a good provider will make sure it helps develop critical thinking skills that are essential to support managers transition from a task-based management approach to strategic thinking. Once again there is an opportunity for individuals to specialize such as a higher level Prince qualification for project managers, or an MA in Human Resource Management. Again, management education should be supplemented with management skills training such as; Strategic Thinking, Mental Toughness, Managing for Sustainable Performance, Talent Management, Succession Planning, and Managing

Remote Teams. It is also recommended that a coaching program is introduced to support managers working through real-time workplace challenges and opportunities.

### **Benefits of Management Education and Training in Management Development**

Management Education and Training can contribute a huge amount to a managers' ability to gain clarity in the chaos. Management theories and models provide a framework, which can be used by managers to make sense of what is happening in their own organization. It provides a common language, which can be used to explain and make judgments about the present context and possible options for the future. Knowledge provides the basis from which innovation and creativity can be developed. This knowledge can be supported with the development of practical skills that can be used to enhance what the manager knows with the skills to operationalize what they have learned in theory, which in turn develops new ways of working, behavior change, and performance outcomes.

### **Social Constructionism**

Social constructionism is a strand of sociology introduced by Mead (1934) and Berger and Luckman (1966), which seeks to explain how interaction between people constructs social phenomena and institutions, and make traditions.

Social constructionism aims to uncover how perceived reality in organizations is the result of the way in which employees, teams, and functions within the organization interact with each other and participate in their self-created groups. This socially constructed reality provides the foundation for what is known as organizational culture and traditions associated with the way we do things around here. The focus isn't on what reality is, but rather how the organizational players perceive reality, through the exchange of ideas, language use, and beliefs that in turn becomes the recognized concrete reality of the organization.

The meaning individuals derive from their actions and experiences within the organization is developed through the interplay and assimilation of ideas with other people within a social situation. The significance of this theory to management development is that organizational truth is based on social experiences and individual attitudes relating to what has happened in the past, interpretations about possible futures, and the present reality. These attitudes are influenced by socially constructed ideas relating to self-concept, impressions of others, and the assumptions regarding the organization. Management Development can decode and disseminate these ideas by listening to the stories and narratives within the system. Perceptions of reality regarding the organization's future prospects can be positively challenged and changed by focusing on positive and modified alternatives through conversation.

To support managers in reconstructing their perception of reality, the following development recommendations are made:

- Challenge negative language, declarations about absolute truth and conventions adhered to by managers in describing their truth. Remind managers that reality is not real, but is a social construction.
- Provide a collective sense-making space in which individuals can interact, create meaning and respond to a co-created reality upon which they can take action for what they imagine.
- Keep the focus on the best of what is, using techniques such as the Wall of Pride, to positively frame the past.
- Positively frame subjects, topics, and questions of inquiry, ensuring that the focus is on the best of the past and present to help managers work out what is the most advantageous future for the organization and themselves.
- Support managers in developing relationships through interaction and discussion at the beginning of the development journey so they can collectively identify the

organization's positive core from which forward progression can be made.

- Use dialogic development processes, which are holistic, highly inclusive, participatory, and collaborative.
- Introduce development methods, which use creativity such as storyboarding, gamestorming, imagery, and poetry.
- Help managers to appreciate the organization as a system that doesn't need to be fixed instead help them to affirm the past and present in order to construct a positive projection of the future.
- Develop the managers' ability to ask questions, by providing the space to practice asking the type of questions that can be used to influence the employees and the organization in significant ways.

### **Pre-Text-Based Drama**

Management development interventions using Pre-Text-Based Drama utilizes a social constructionist approach to support participants in jointly constructing meaning with others based upon reflecting on a pre-text storyline, and the use of conversation and storytelling. The reflection on the pre-text is used to help people begin to ask questions and drive discussion about what is happening in the organizational environment, providing the catalyst for innovation and creativity in relation to work practices and possible responses to environmental forces. The use of drama enriches language use and reveals cultural insights. Drama can present memorable language contexts while placing its use in realistic social and physical context increasing the likelihood of the adoption of particular phrases or concepts helping to reconstruct the organization's reality.

### **How It Works**

It is possible to use Pre-Text-Based Drama interventions with small or large groups, within management teams or cross-functionally. The key is to find a text or storyline, which resonates with the current challenges that the organization is facing. This may

be contemporary or historical plays, film scripts, or even movie clips. The aim is to choose a text that will inspire oral communication and enrich thinking and expression regarding the organizational situation. Additional drama techniques, such as games, role-plays, improvisation, and high-level drama activities can be utilized to stir the imagination, and stimulate discussion. By providing pre-reading, the managers will arrive at the workshop sensitized to new language and concepts assimilating them into prior knowledge and experience. Pictures, prompt questions, and inviting managers to bring their own relevant memorabilia can all be used to prepare the managers prior to the intervention.

### **Acting Out Stories**

Begin the activity by asking managers to visualize the context in which the drama play takes place, this could involve drawing a map of the city, or creating a model of the room in which the scene takes place. Provide the managers with a simple frame, such as roles, situation, focus for participants to work from, including which character's perspective is being used to observe the world that is being created. Ask managers to choose which character they would primarily like to work with by providing short descriptions of key characters. Before starting acting out stories, let the group decide which scenes are of interest. The group will then re-enact these scenes.

Following the re-enactment, facilitate the group to generate ideas about what happens next based on what if scenarios to support the construction of the next scene, ask the managers to strengthen the language, and utilize the text from the original play as appropriate. As the discussion progresses, it is possible to interpose the group's recognized reality of the drama with the everyday reality within the organization, which goes unnoticed. Help the managers to explore what is happening in the organization by making comparisons

between the imaginary world and the real world. Expand this exploration to include the qualities that managers require to notice issues and take action.

### **Hot Seating**

A method, which can be used to support managers in developing their questioning skills, is that of hot seating. In this activity, managers are provided with a character and are questioned by the group about their background, behavior, and motivation. Managers can adopt a character individually, or in large groups, characters may be given to pairs or to small groups. Hot Seating works by asking the character to sit in a chair in front of the group that is seated in a semicircle around the Hot Seat. The facilitator guides the group to ask constructive questions. This activity can be debriefed by explaining how asking questions is important in sense-making within the organizational environment.

### **Manager in Role**

Simply put, the manager assumes a role in relation to the group. This may be as a leader, a peer, or an employee—whatever is useful in the development of the organization. This is particularly useful where conflict or siloed working exists creating a perceived separation between different groups. By embodying a different role, the Manager in Role is able to think critically about why certain situations have arisen, providing a perspective, which may be ignored in their usual role. By asking questions of the manager in role, and the Manager in Role asking questions of the group, an alternative reality can emerge, which increases understanding.

Manager in Role does not require preparation or a skilled actor. Instead Manager in Role simply relies on someone adopting a different character's perspective with which to communicate. It may help if the Manager in Role is provided with costumes or props to help them embody the character.

### **Storytelling**

Storytelling is one of the most widely used and simplest forms of creative development activity. Facilitators provide managers with time to think about a story they wish to share from their experience. This could encompass identifying key images associated with a particular theme, important moments on a timeline, or a forum in which to tell a story on a particular subject in their own words. Incorporate some form of visual imagery, either in terms of drawing or downloaded images, to mark out key moments within the story. Techniques include storyboarding, story maps, or choosing from stock pictures can aid this process. Teaching managers how to create maximum engagement with the audience by using their voice differently, such as words or sound effects; exaggerating facial expression and bodily gestures; mime; elaboration; and exaggeration can further enhance storytelling activities.

### **Benefits of Drama in Management Development**

Drama can aid managers in achieving clarity in chaos in several ways. It can help managers see reality from a different perspective by focusing on developing and challenging their use of language in an enjoyable learning environment. It supports managers in linking their learned language to the context of their own experience while enriching the managers cultural experience and language through an encounter, which reveals new insights into the organizational culture and context. The learning process itself is fully immersive as the participants are empowered to express themselves through characterization. The creative process itself is transformative, as abstract concepts can be made real through personal reaction and interaction both with the text and with other participants. Drama overcomes many of the limitations of workshop spaces, by helping participants feel less self-conscious and able to vocalize their ideas about the present and future of

the organization through the safety of acting out a scene or embodying a different character. Finally the learning is memorable and as such has a much greater impact, creating, reinforcing, and complementing behavioral change and group action plans.

### **Summary**

- Managers need to develop the creative capability to continually innovate organizational operations to shift toward favorable and sustainable performance.
- Complexity theory provides a perspective, with which it is possible to analyze and understand the operation of an organization.
- Making sense of complexity requires that managers are given access to knowledge, which helps them to develop their thinking about the way they manage, how they should manage, and their role as managers.
- It is recommended that a mixture of education and training is offered, to bridge the gap between knowledge and practical skills development, to managers at different points within their career.
- Social constructionism seeks to explain how interaction between people constructs social phenomena, institutions, and makes traditions.
- Drama supports participants in jointly constructing meaning with others based upon reflecting on a pre-text storyline, and the use of conversation and storytelling.

### **DIMENSION 4—AGILITY TO COLLABORATE**

In a traditional organization settings informal groups will arise on the basis of social needs of the employees within the organization. These groups are influential and develop their own leadership and hierarchy. To enable collaborative efforts to work, and managers to adapt effectively to change and the challenge presented by internal and external influences, management development can be utilized to create a networked internal architecture within the organization. Managers can learn how to be the bridge within the organizational system to support the

establishment of relationships between individuals and groups. Agility can only be achieved if the structure and design of an organization is capable of coping with changes in the internal and external environment while still providing stability to manage the organizational activities, therefore organization design should be part of a management development program to introduce flexibility and agility in an organization's structure.

Management development requires leaders and employees to work together to create an environment, which will encourage and facilitate individuals, teams, and functions in building relationships and enable employees to collaborate in order to collectively help the organization pursue its purpose and strategy. By tapping into the collective talent gathered from around the networked organization, it is possible to expand the talent pool from pockets of outstanding performance to a successful sharing of expertise, knowledge, skill, and experience.

Traditionally associated with the term soft skills, relational skills development is more than a half-day workshop on personal impact. Managers need to know how to build relationships and have conversations within the organization and externally. Instead of it being focused on classroom training, relational skills must be practiced and developed over the lifetime of a managers' career.

Vision provides the glue by which individuals connect and group together, it provides the focus for relationship building and collaboration between individuals, teams, and functions collectively helping the organization pursue its purpose. The Agility to Collaborate taps into the collective knowledge and skills gathered from around the networked organization, making it possible to expand from pockets of performance to an organization-wide sharing of expertise, knowledge, skill, and experience. Agility to Collaborate therefore enables the vision to become meaningful, shared throughout

the organization, and translated into organizational activities.

### Empowerment and Participation

Empowerment relates to a subjective sense by the individual that they can make decisions and have the power to take the initiative when required. Participation is a related topic, which focuses on information sharing and the exchange of knowledge.

Empowerment and participation first rose to prominence in 1930s Hawthorne studies and its links to management development were first highlighted by Lewin et al.'s (1939) experimental research, which identified three leadership styles:

- **Autocratic:** No consultation made in decision-making process
- **Democratic:** Leader involves others in the decision-making process reaching consensus through a facilitated process
- **Laissez-Faire:** People left to make their own decisions, with little involvement by leaders.

The research completed by Lewin et al. (1939) determined that a Democratic style of leadership was the most effective and motivating, avoiding an employee revolution against autocracy while ensuring their was coherence in the work done, which was often lost in laissez-faire styles. Subsequent research has continued to support the notion employee involvement and empowerment provides for the individual need for control and achievement, resulting in higher levels of motivation.

Kirkman and Rosen (1997, 1999) argued that empowerment at a team level are driven by a shared belief in team autonomy, competence, and meaningfulness. However, team empowerment differs from individual empowerment because individual members may experience a different level of personal empowerment versus a shared belief and experience within the team.

Locke and Schweiger (1979) and Locke et al. (1997) explored the closely related

concept of team participation, which suggests that allowing employees to be involved in decision-making processes motivates employees and encourages the promotion of decision quality and outcomes. Team Participation is also associated with notions such as perceived fairness, the nature of tasks and the contribution of employee knowledge in relation to performance and motivation outcomes.

To support the management development of participative decision-making and empowerment the following development recommendations are made:

- Managers' need to recognize that interdependency exists between individual team members, which requires team members to work together in order to accomplish their goals and function as a whole.
  - Positively develop individual self-awareness to improve self-esteem resulting in feelings of psychological empowerment.
  - Enabling individuals to be proactive through coaching can help develop motivational attributes and increase the quality of leader-employee relationships.
  - Allocate resources to assist with reflective and critical decision-making enabling managers to learn and implement the practices to develop quality relationships between the manager, their line reports, and peers.
  - Develop leadership behaviors and social support structures while taking notice of the social influence exerted by the organizational climate.
  - Work with explicit cycles of action and reflection to assist managers in developing empowering leadership behaviors, which provide team members with the help they need to set their own goals, and enhances the teams' sense of control and autonomy. This will result in increasing the team members' expectations regarding team outcomes.
  - Make use of organizational design including structure and processes, to encourage information sharing and strengthen team accountability.
- Guide managers to learn about the ways they have made decisions in the past by encouraging reflection on their first-hand experience of decision-making in different contexts, so they can recognize effective and ineffective scenarios.

### **Development Solutions**

A strengths-based approach provides the managers with an opportunity to understand what each team member can contribute to the manager's Agility to Collaborate in order to bring about rapid change. Creating an organizational environment that invites open communication, feedback, and collaboration will focus attention on the organizational purpose and strategic priorities promoting a collaborative culture. Development solutions are focused on both developing the environment to make collaboration possible, and developing managers' understanding of participatory decision-making.

### **Organization Design**

Organization Design is composed of both hard and soft factors. Hard factors include the organization's structure, systems, processes, and decision-making hierarchy. Soft factors incorporate how people relate to each other, how problems are solved, and how information flows throughout the business. Organization design is focused on creating organizational effectiveness through establishing a framework using these elements to support the change in an organization's culture and behaviors.

### **How It Works**

The best known framework for organization design is the Star Model offered by Galbraith (Kates and Galbraith, 2007), which connects the design process to the organization's strategy, structure, processes, people, and rewards. From a management development perspective, the most effective way to undertake organizational redesign is to involve employees from all organizational levels. This presents an opportunity for

management and employees to navigate gaps in understanding different aspects of the organization. Prior to work starting on the design, individuals who will be working on the organization design project should be trained in the principles of organization design and coached to develop their strategic thinking. Several work groups can be established and provided with clear parameters in which to independently produce a proposed design for the organization. Work groups will be asked to review the current design, identifying what is working and what is not working in regard to the organization achieving its strategic objectives. Following the review the work group will be asked to turn their attention to a new design for the organization, taking into account the requirement for flexibility and agility as the strategic objective milestones are achieved in the future. The purpose of this process is for the workgroup to find an answer to the question: what organization design is required to be successful? Once all proposals have been submitted, a separate work group of senior leaders produce a draft design on the basis of the submitted proposals. This is then shared with the workgroups who iteratively review and refine the final design.

#### **Benefits of Organization Design**

The key benefit of collaborative organization design is that it draws upon the collective knowledge within the organization to understand how the organization system is currently operating in practice and what design would be most appropriate to respond to the context of the wider organizational environment. It ensures that all possible responses are considered in light of the environmental challenges, areas of development are identified, and operations that are no longer contributing to the strategic goals of the organization are recognized. Most importantly, collaborative organization design develops agency within the business to ensure that any design changes are comprehensive, understood, accepted,

and adopted with little resistance or fear, which generally results from top-down restructures.

#### **Workplace–Community Collaboration**

Workplace–Community collaboration is a formal recognition by the organization that managers do not operate in a vacuum but instead are part of a wider environment of connections and networks, which contribute to their professional development and well-being. The extent to which coordination is facilitated will depend upon time and resource available and the assumed benefit of such an intervention.

#### **How It Works**

Management development using Workplace–Community collaboration involves the holistic coordination of the supported collaborative needs of the manager in regard to work, family, and community. The result of such coordination is the mobilization of support from professional bodies, community organizations, management information sources, knowledge depositories, material resources, and decision-making resources. The provision of these external resources can be provided as they are required and in a manner that complements the manager's strengths and goals. Promoting workplace–community interactions leads to proactive learning interactions and relationship building, promoting positive management development for all managers.

#### **Benefits of Workplace–Community Collaboration**

The key benefit of Workplace–Community collaboration is that it provides the basis for innovation and creativity in the workplace, while developing a platform for well-being and wider support for managers in role. Linking managers to communities, which can provide new ways of working, emerging practices and updated knowledge, benefits the organization in regard to keeping in touch with trends and possible opportunities and challenges. At the same

time managers are given a window on the world, which prevents them from wallowing in a professional silo. They are able to recognize that the challenges that they face are shared with other like-minded professionals and are able to develop informed responses based on the mobilization of community knowledge.

### **Participatory Decision-Making Interventions**

Participatory Decision-Making is a process used in management development interventions designed to generate dialogue with participants about the consequences and effects of actions on those affected, and the impact on the wider organization environment. Advocates for participatory decision-making focus on creating an environment that engages everyone who has a stake to have equal status in making decisions about a particular issue. Its critical importance is that each participant's voice is heard and valued within an environment where power and responsibility are equally shared.

#### **How It Works**

Participatory decision-making works with explicit cycles of action and reflection to move participants through change processes giving time and space for feelings and opinions about the issue and its outcomes to be explored. Workshops can be designed using a number of techniques such as World Café, Open Space Technology, and Game Storming to develop formal and informal conversations to track the impact of decisions on those affected by it. Groups can use these interventions to determine what support is needed and who needs to be involved in the decision-making process.

#### **Benefits of Participatory Decision-Making Interventions**

The result of participatory decision-making is that participants are able to draw comfort and have confidence in the change process

and the decision outcomes because individuals are connected to a decision where different perspectives of all participants have been examined and explored. In addition to the evaluation of what inputs are required into the decision being made, it is also possible to determine the implementation capacity required from each stakeholder. Resources such as financial, economic, technical, physical, and time can all be evaluated in relation to each stakeholder group. Difficulties and constraints can therefore be considered so that decision-making brings in options for contingency and resources required to achieve strategy. Alternative implementation options can also be generated as stakeholders analyze the resource requirements prior to a decision being made.

### **People Skills Development— The Manager's Tool Kit**

Management skills training have been the mainstay of management development in many organizations; however, predominately the focus on managerialism results in the application of managerial techniques to run operations for example: setting key performance indicators; monitoring; goals-setting; reward management; budgetary responsibility; planning and organizing. People skills are often referred to as soft skills and managers should be upskilled to manage people. These skills are relational rather than operational and focus on skills such as: building trust and respect, emotional intelligence, feedback, conflict management, and listening.

#### **How It Works**

Developing a Manager's tool kit for people skills as an ongoing management development suite can be offered in a number of different ways; this includes a library of Management Books or links to useful Online Resources, 1-2-1 or Team Coaching, Reflective Practice, Mentoring, Communities of Practice, Workplace Shadowing, Seminars, and Conferences. The focus of

this offering is on the personal development needs of the manager, and on building self-awareness, mindfulness, and skills in relation to people.

### **Benefits of People Skills Development**

People skills are something that can be learned, and offering a suite of development opportunities will provide an ongoing tool kit for managers to access in order that they can establish effective workplace relationships in which collaboration can take place.

### **Summary**

- Managers can learn how to be the bridge within the organizational system to support the establishment of relationships between individuals and groups.
- Encourage and facilitate individuals; teams, and functions in building relationships enabling employees to collaborate in order to collectively help the organization pursue its purpose and strategy.
- Agility can only be achieved if the structure and design of an organization is capable of coping with changes in the internal and external environment while still providing stability to manage the organizational activities.
- Empowerment relates to a subjective sense by the individual that they can make decisions and have the power to take the initiative when required.
- Participation focuses on information sharing and the exchange of knowledge.
- Creating an organizational environment that invites open communication, feedback and collaboration promotes a collaborative culture.
- Organization design is focused creating organizational effectiveness, establishing a framework using structure, systems, processes, and decision-making hierarchy to support change in an organization's culture and behaviors.
- Managers do not operate in a vacuum but instead are part of a wider environment of connections and networks, which

contribute to their professional development and well-being.

- Workplace-Community collaboration involves the holistic coordination of the supported collaborative needs of the manager in regard to work, family, and community.
- Participatory Decision-Making is a process designed to generate dialogue with participants about the consequences and effects of actions on those affected and the wider environment.
- People skills are relational rather than operational and focus on skills such as: building trust and respect, emotional intelligence, feedback, conflict management, and listening.

### **CONCLUSION**

Irrespective of the organization, it is the conversion of a number of inputs and outputs through organizational activity, which is influenced by internal and external environmental factors. It is essential that managers analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of activities that are taking place to ensure they are having the impact they should be having, and that the time and resource committed is delivering added value and transforming organizational performance. Organizations love processes. It makes things easy to replicate, efficiencies can be gained and economies of scale and forecasting is possible. The problem is organizations cannot build processes that equip managers with the flexibility they need to articulate vision, create a shared understanding, provide clarity of thought, and develop the agility to collaborate. Organizations the world over, have recognized that managers need to be developed to respond effectively to the rapidly changing environment in which organizations operate.

However, the reliance on technology to communicate and conduct business has meant that there is a corporate forgetfulness that relationships are the key to human endeavor. The methods offered in this article seek to reestablish dialogue

and relationship at the center of management development, creating an environment whereby a culture of support and people-led management practices reaches into the day-to-day management climate. Learning is immediately applied to real-time issues, and organizational opportunities and challenges are tackled as part of the development program.

Management development enables an organization to answer the question: Is what we are doing in managing the organization having the impact we want it to and, more importantly, is it aligned to our core purpose? A well-designed management development programs can contribute to the effectiveness of the management team's ability to direct the activities of the organization and create an environment for sustainable performance to be achieved. Continuing development interventions should highlight areas where managers need to change direction or redirect focus on an area of resource allocation to improve the impact that activities have on the achievement of organizational purpose.

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