

**crf**

CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

L I S B O N

# **BUILDING AND SUSTAINING HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS**

## **– LEARNING FROM ANALOGIES**

10<sup>th</sup> CRF International Conference || 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018, Lisbon  
Conference Retrospective



# BUILDING AND SUSTAINING HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

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# INTRODUCTION

**The rapidly evolving technological, political, economic, and social challenges of today's commercial environment mean that organisations must adapt and renew teams on an ongoing basis in order to build and sustain high performance. Successful organisations will be those that are willing to radically change and/or constantly evolve their teams as conditions change.**

Over three days in Lisbon, our 375 international delegates gathered to examine how analogies can act as an aid to **identify, prioritise and deliver strategy and operational excellence** leading to **high-performing teams**. Our speakers focussed on team building, team working and team performance as **crucial components of corporate success**, looking at issues not from the usual management teaching or HR perspectives, but in the context of **team successes in other areas, such as sports, music, and the military**. They challenged the idea that there are major differences in team objectives, strategies, and execution across fields by **illustrating close parallels** in the way teams are assembled, led and modified to achieve success across ventures and activities.

Our conference was **highly interactive and participative** – we watched sports clips, discussed, debated, questioned, challenged, collaborated, reflected, networked and celebrated. We **encountered new ideas**, and **drew new insights and conclusions**. Some of us even conducted an orchestra!

We hope this retrospective serves as a reminder of the time we spent together, and as a cue to **apply learning points to your own organisational challenges**. For those who were unable to join us, we hope this retrospective will encourage you to sign up for our next conference, 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Barcelona!



# PRE-CONFERENCE MASTERCLASSES



## FOSTERING ENERGY AND CREATIVITY IN HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS THROUGH DIVERSITY

In an increasingly complex world, teams are expected to be ready for disruption, to work at a high pace, and to be willing to innovate. Working as a high-performing team in this context requires energy and creativity. Diversity among team members potentially fosters team success; however, the team's awareness is key in understanding differences to seize development opportunities and leverage strengths.

In this masterclass participants discussed the techniques and conditions that help diverse teams foster innovation and increase energy, both important criteria for becoming a high-performing team. They learned how to define the perfect conditions and create the ideal environment for a team to be creative and have the right amount of energy.

Participants discussed how to increase team awareness using personality profiles and behavioural preferences as an entry point. They explored how defining the team's differences and complementarities raises team awareness and encourages the team to embrace and build upon diversity.

The masterclass addressed questions on how to fully engage all team members and have them contribute to team success. It further stressed the importance of raising team awareness to be able to leverage the competencies of individuals in order to form a high-performing team.



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## THE POWER OF MINDSET – LOOKING BEYOND HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

JCA Global's masterclass looked at how high-performing teams achieve outstanding results in all walks of life. Using the lens of Emotional Intelligence, JCA Global led delegates in an exploration of what makes the difference between good and great teams. During the highly-experiential workshop, delegates were put into teams and looked at the psychological dimensions of high-performing teams, focussing on the mindset required to truly collaborate.

A bike building team challenge showed how high achieving teams are those which demonstrate core ingredients of trust, openness and team mindset. Delegates left the session with:

- a concept of what high-performing teams look like
- knowledge of the attitudes, feelings and behaviours required for a high-performing team mindset
- an understanding of the JCA Global model for Team Emotional Intelligence.



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## BUILDING AND SUSTAINING HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAMS

KPMG's masterclass explored how to drive performance in a changing team environment, how to practically sustain this high performance, and the increased use of robotics and AI and how this can impact trust within teams.

Drawing on the knowledge and specialisms of the wider KPMG People Consulting team, the presenters shared the themes which are most likely to impact on sustaining high performance in the future, both as an enabler to performance and a potential threat.

Key takeaways from the class included:

- identifying the main drivers for team performance today
- how changes in team working have affected performance over time
- internal and external factors affecting team performance in the future.



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# PRE-CONFERENCE MASTERCLASSES



## WORLD CLASS TEAMWORK 'ON THE FLY'

The nature of the teams we work in has changed significantly. Aligned with our business environment, teams have become increasingly fast changing, globalised and virtual. While Lane4 research shows the core ingredients of high-performance teamwork have remained the same, this new environment does influence the way these ingredients play out in practice. It has shifted what's most important to focus on when looking at team development.

Lane4's masterclass explored how to swiftly achieve high performance in temporary teams. A laser shooting experience, co-facilitated with Olympic Modern Pentathlete Kate French, was used to bring the challenges of temporary teamwork to life.

Following the laser run activity, Lane4 drew on research insights from both aviation and medical teams to offer some top tips on how to build world class teamwork 'on the fly', namely:

- speak human to human
- create a personality shorthand
- establish collective responsibility.



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## MASTERCLASS: MONEYBALL – HOW TO APPLY DATA SCIENCE TO YOUR TALENT

Mercer's masterclass focused on translating the analytical methods behind the sabermetric revolution in baseball to talent management.

Powerful sabermetric measures like Wins Above Replacement (WAR) gauge the true contribution of players to team success by adjusting absolute performance measures for environmental factors such as other team members, the opposition, or dimensions of the home field. These statistical adjustments create apples-to-apples comparisons of performance. Sabermetrics is also concerned with factors that can be used to predict performance. What is it about a player that explains their superior performance? What do you focus on to select the right player and develop and motivate that player to perform?

How does this apply to talent management? We can use sabermetric-type measures to identify top contributing leaders and employees, and then ask what makes them so? Are they more likely to perform well if they are homegrown or brought in from the outside? Does their performance vary significantly based on the characteristics of those with whom they work? These are important questions and advanced workforce analytics can help answer them in hard, quantitative ways.

Participants in this interactive session contributed to a collective exercise to think through the individual, group and environmental factors that have the greatest influence on performance measures. Participants then offered tangible, testable hypotheses about these relationships. The masterclass closed with a discussion of how advanced analytical methods can be used to test these hypotheses and to identify the most significant drivers of employee performance and contribution.



### Mercer contact:

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## DESIGN AND MONITOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAMS: THE DATA-DRIVEN WAY

Data is now the world's most valuable resource. Named the 'oil of the digital era' by *The Economist*, the abundance of data is fundamentally changing the nature of business as we know it. In this masterclass, OrgVue by Concentra shared how organisations can harness data to build and monitor high-performance teams.

During the session, attendees participated in interactive exercises which demonstrated how organisations can align on business objectives and strategy as well as identify the cost of teams against the work they deliver. Attendees also took part in exercises to enable effective role design and the detection of duplication/fragmented processes across multiple teams, highlighting potential areas for improvement.

The masterclass offered insight into how to:

- define team roles that align to the delivery of corporate objectives
- understand the true cost of teams based on the work they do
- place the right people in teams based on competencies
- highlight conflict, duplication in teams and across the organisation
- improve agility by calling out fragmented, unnecessary and bureaucratic processes
- identify which teams are fragile, over-stretched or over-specialised
- spot opportunities to rework roles and teams to improve performance.



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# PRE-CONFERENCE MASTERCLASSES



## TOTAL PERFORMANCE: HOW THE BEST TEAMS CAN GET THE EDGE

Creating high-performing teams is not a new topic and organisations are paying serious attention to physical energy management, resilience, health and wellbeing to ensure their teams achieve optimal performance. This masterclass from RHR shared how their *Total Performance* model helps organisations successfully improve and sustain performance over long periods of time.

As the rate of change accelerates and the challenges for leaders become ever more demanding so topics such as energy management and resilience have come to the fore. A key segment of the class highlighted a review of the latest research, which makes it clear that taking a holistic view of individual and team total performance is now key if organisations want to avoid executive burnout and other potential consequences of suboptimal business leadership.

Paying attention to building energy quality and capacity can bring significant positive impact to the performance of leaders in business, leading both to improvement in business results and the quality of their own and their colleagues' lives too!

The masterclass also covered a review of RHR's *Total Performance* model for Senior Team effectiveness, and a live case study that followed the turnaround of the Levi Strauss company under the leadership of Chip Bergh.

RHR played a key role in helping Chip and his senior leaders manage a significant turnaround in the brand's fortunes. RHR helped the team to build an ambitious leadership agenda and to lead and drive operational culture change with some impressive results.

The leadership challenge they faced was significant – a battle with many fronts, including to reduce cost, drive operational efficiencies, reconnect with the consumer, refresh the brand and develop new channels and markets. The masterclass covered the leadership journey that Chip and his team embarked upon with RHR's support, unpacking the interventions and pivotal moments that helped their client unlock their collective talent and energy to return the business to growth and profitability.



*"I particularly liked the Levi's case study. It brought the framework to life and grounded the ideas in the realities organisations and leaders face as they are transforming their businesses."*

**ROB FIELD, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, APS**

*"I really liked the idea of the power of small wins in building creativity or innovation in teams and the need for different thinking styles, as per Edward de Bono's coloured hats."*

**KEIGHLY DROY-WHELAN, HR DIRECTOR, WHOLESALE & VENTURES, BT**

*"It really resonated with me as our business is on a similar journey. It helped confirm we are focusing on the right things and also identify where we need to focus next."*

**DAVID PREST, SENIOR HR BUSINESS PARTNER, ALLIED IRISH BANK**

*"Working in the creative industry, I appreciated the need to understand team profiles and preferences – we need a good mix to avoid 'group think'."*

**DARREN CAMPBELL, HR DIRECTOR, ITV STUDIOS INTERNATIONAL, ITV**

*"Excellent masterclass format! Clarifying a conceptual model for managing high-performance teams through such a practical and fun task was surprising. Being exposed to the team's pressure, focus, and engagement (emotion) that we apply in a wide range of situations and understanding how context and "multiple distractions" affects team's achievements was very impressive to experience. Great learning experience; it kept everyone entertained!"*

**INÊS COUTO, HR TECHNICIAN, GALP ENERGIA**



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# LEARNING FROM ANALOGIES



**CONFERENCE CHAIR:**  
**PROFESSOR INA TOEGEL**  
IMD BUSINESS SCHOOL

Watch an interview with **Professor Ina Toegel** filmed during the CRF conference in Lisbon [here](#).



#CRFLisbon hearing about the three key components to success in high-performance sport: talent, systems and culture - & powerful messages how we in HR enabling the organisational context & culture @C\_R\_Forum  
**Julie Welch (@juliewelch2)**

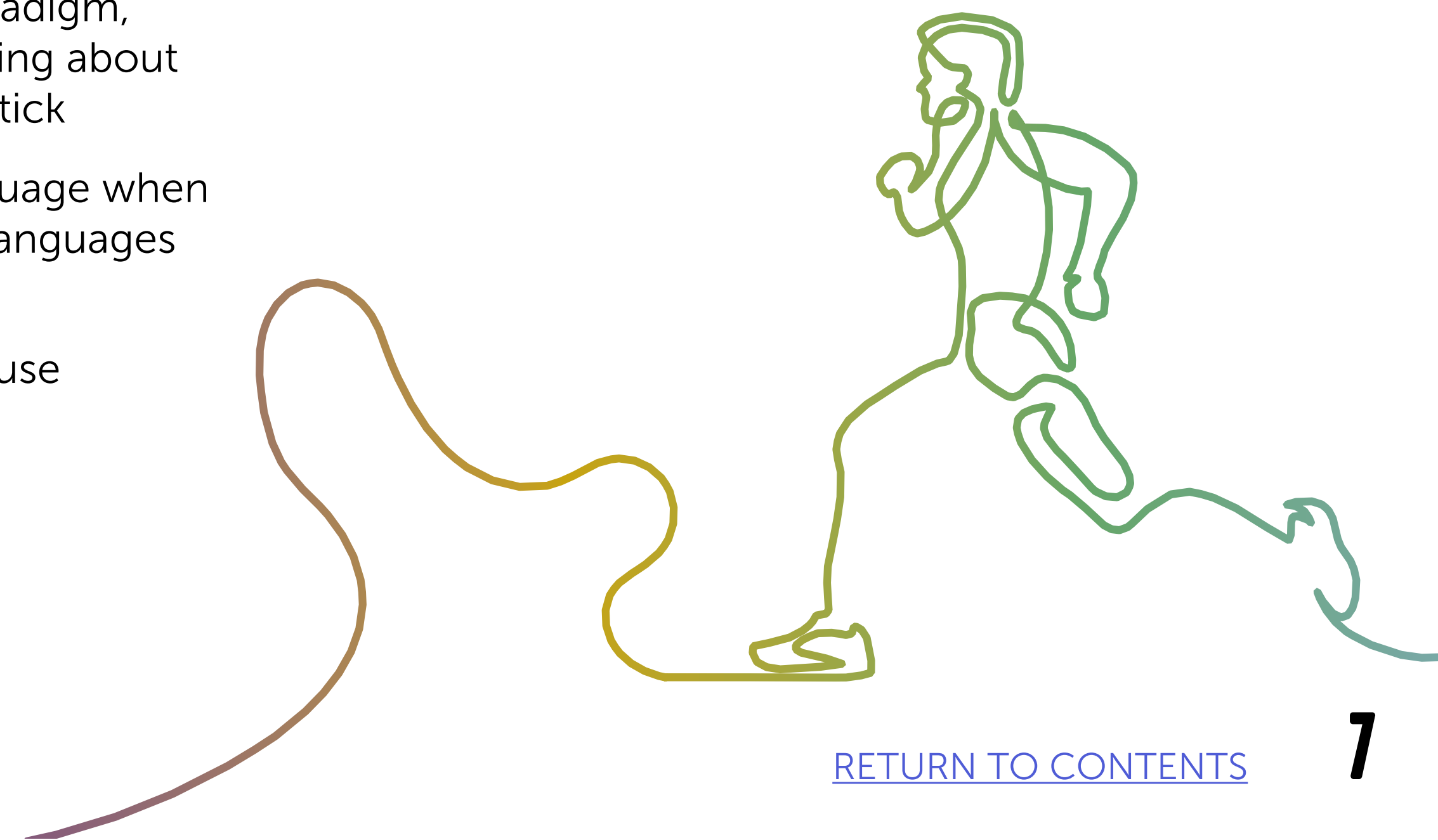
#CRFLisbon key lesson don't focus only on your high performers the majority of people by definition are average the challenge is to help them be the best they can be  
**Nick Holley (@Nick\_Holley)**

Ina, our chairperson, facilitated and **drew together insights** from all the sessions at the conference. She began by setting our conference objectives – to **explore new ideas, to reflect upon and apply our new knowledge, to meet people, and to have fun.**

With these objectives identified, Ina set the stage by asking us to keep a few questions in mind over the days of the conference. **How do we build high-performance teams?** How are they different from other teams? How do they sustain themselves? **What can we learn from sports, music, and the military about building and sustaining high-performance teams?**

We kicked things off by exploring as a group **why learning from analogies is important.** Some of the answers we came up with include:

- analogies tell stories and we human beings love and learn through stories; thus analogies are a powerful learning tool
- people are more open to stories; when we hear them we are less likely to dismiss the information they contain
- analogies lift us out of our usual paradigm, giving us a memorable way of thinking about things and helping those things to stick
- analogies can offer a common language when people are communicating across languages and cultures
- imagine if you were not allowed to use analogies!





# THE POWER OF ANALOGIES



**NICK HOLLEY**  
CRF LEARNING

Watch an interview with **Nick Holley** filmed during the CRF conference in Lisbon [here](#).



Definition of culture is what you are doing when nobody is watching by @Nick\_Holley #CRFLisbon #HR #Culture

Marjo Kuosmanen (@MarjoKuosmanen)

languages are limiting communication, analogies are easily understood no matter what is your native language #CRFLisbon #HR #HRTribe

Marjo Kuosmanen (@MarjoKuosmanen)

@Nick\_Holley @C\_R\_Forum. In work & life its not just enough to have talented people... creating #culture and context where people can #perform is key #CRFLisbon

Sally Brand (@SallyeBrand)

What is an analogy? Nick defined it as a **cognitive process of transferring information or meaning from a particular subject (the analog or source) to another (the target)**. In his presentation, he used sporting analogies to illustrate the importance of context to building high-performing teams.

Nick introduced a **four-box matrix** that plots talent context against capability (you can see the matrix and learn more about it in CRF's 2010 report, [Configuring HR for Tomorrow's Challenges](#)).

He illustrated the box with sporting analogies.

- Iceland's football team occupies the top left-hand corner – average players in an incredible environment. Though a low-ranked football team, Iceland's huge **investment in building a great context** (high investment in coaching and **infrastructure**, a powerful commitment to community) has **allowed its players to succeed** beyond all expectations.
- The English football team, on the other hand (prior to the 2018 World Cup), occupied the bottom right-hand corner of the grid – great players in a stultified environment.
- In 2014, World Cup winners Germany clearly occupied the top right-hand corner of the grid – great players performing in an excellent context. However, by the time of the 2018 World Cup, the German football team had sunk to the bottom right-hand corner – great players in a poor environment. The lesson of Germany is to **avoid hubris and complacency** – great teams cannot rest on their laurels.
- Finally, Nick used New Zealand's All Blacks rugby team to illustrate the top right-hand corner of the grid – great players in a great environment. The All Blacks are one of the most successful

sporting teams of all time, and they are virtually unbeatable. In other words, the **combination of high talent and a great context is highly conducive to exceptional team performance**.

But most people are, in fact, average. Therefore, it is **imperative that HR focus on creating the right context** so that average people can be the best that they can possibly be. Comparing England to Iceland (Iceland knocked England out of the Euro 2016 tournament), we can see that even **above-average talent will fail in a poor environment**, while average players can excel if and when they are in an environment that makes the most of their capabilities.

While building high-performing teams is about more than just having talented people, **organisations rarely focus enough on helping average people to be their best by building a great environment**, comprised of the leadership, systems, structures, and culture that encourage average people to perform well. Nick's challenge to HR is to recognise that it should be more than a 'people function' – **HR is more powerful acting as a people and organisation function**. Nick concluded by asking delegates to answer the questions so what, and now what? What have we learned, and what are we going to do differently now?





# HIGH PERFORMANCE CULTURE IN ELITE SPORT



**DOMINIC MAHONY**  
LANE4



**AMY WALTERS**  
LANE4

Watch an interview with both **Dominic Mahony** and **Amy Walters** filmed during the CRF conference in Lisbon [here](#).



GB's Olympic performance and levels of funding since the founding of UK Sport in 1997 - shows the importance of \*sustained\* investment in developing a high-performance team. #CRFLisbon

**Stewart Hardie (@shardie15)**

Culture can't be a nice to have "after dinner mint"; it needs to be considered, rigorous & constantly embedded @Lane4Group #CRFLisbon

**Sally Brand (@SallyeBrand)**

Dominic and Amy talked us through their recent research project exploring what a **sustainable, winning culture** looks like in the context of Olympic level sport. Crucially, they shared not only their findings from the report but their **methodology** — how they went about tackling the intangible beast of culture.

They defined culture as '**the values, beliefs and environments that shape people's experience within an organisation**', and described how culture exists on three levels.

1. Culture as articulated – the culture explicitly stated or aimed for
2. Culture as experienced – the day-to-day life (e.g. language, rituals, stories, unwritten rules, heroes, jokes, grumbles around the coffee machine)
3. Deep culture – the taken for granted assumptions, beliefs and values

To answer the research question 'what does a sustainable winning culture look like in elite sport?', Amy outlined how 19 focus groups captured all the **best practice knowledge and expertise already in the system**. In total, 140 people (including athletes, coaches and performance directors) from over 30 different sports contributed to the research.

Amy described how a key challenge in the project was to identify the common cultural experiences when each sport was so culturally distinct. They didn't want to 'grey-out' all the precious subcultures but sought to **find the overarching principles** that applied to elite sport generally.

To find what was common, she explained how they used a critical incident technique, asking participants to **create a list of the critical moments** 'where culture shows up or gets tested in elite sport'. Participants then discussed specific moments in more detail, creating a rich picture of 'what good looks like', 'what suboptimal looks like' and what support was needed to ensure people's experience at those times is the best it can be.

Having shared some insights into a few of the critical moments identified by those in elite sport (namely: managing mavericks, changes in leadership, performance reviews and training camps), Dominic went on to **challenge us to reflect on the key moments where culture shows up or gets tested in our own organisations**. He concluded the session by urging us to identify these key moments and discover what an ideal culture looks like in our own contexts.

We left the session with a **clearer understanding** of what the term "culture" refers to, a **framework** to work with and a **process** for capturing rich cultural insight that can inform our strategy.





# IS TALENT OVERRATED?



**DR. TOMAS  
CHAMORRO-PREMUZIC**  
UCL & COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Watch an interview with **Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic** filmed during the CRF conference in Lisbon [here](#).



In a word, no. Tomas illustrated that talent, contrary to being overrated, is **vital to organisational success**. Individual talent has collective return on investment – the star performers in any system contribute a disproportionate amount to collective success. So while it is good to have a culture that works for everyone, including the average people who make up most of an organisation, **creating the conditions that let your star talent thrive is key to getting disproportionate returns**. This is even more true the higher you go in an organisation, because the gap between average and high talent increases as the complexity of jobs does.

Tomas used football analogies to illustrate the interplay between talent and context. Footballer **Lionel Messi** is an exceptional talent, but compare his performance for his club, Barcelona, to that for his country, Argentina. He is the **same person**, yet **two very different players for his teams**. At Barcelona, the team attitude and context allow his talent to thrive; on the Argentine team, he and his teammates negatively reinforce each other's performance. Like Messi at Barcelona is Croatian footballer Luka Modric. Modric is an exceptional talent, and the Croatian national football team created a culture that allowed his talents to thrive. Thus we can see that **both identifying star talent and creating the cultural conditions** in which star talent can thrive are **critical to team and organisational success**. Individual talent in a bad culture will not function; equally, no high-performance team lacks star talent.

However, there are some limitations to applying sports analogies to businesses. Performance in many occupations is not as measurable as it is in sports, there are large differences in the passion, motivation, training, and discipline of elite

sportspeople as compared to professionals, the rules of the game are not as clear outside sports, and selection onto elite sports teams is very strict – people are strongly preselected on the basis of their actual, easily demonstrated and measured talent in sports.

But these difficulties do not mean organisations should give up trying to predict talent. They mean that **organisations need to put in place a good, data-driven system that reliably and objectively differentiates between people's capabilities**. Talent is always an inference, and as vividly demonstrated by Tomas, we cannot rely on self-nomination. Using data will help organisations to **improve prediction of outcomes**. To learn more about predictive talent identification tools, see CRF's 2018 report [Resourcing – How HR's Core Competence Is Evolving](#), co-authored by Tomas and CRF's Research Director Gillian Pillans.

Tomas closed his session with a discussion of organisations' tendency to downplay talent. Why do organisations do this?

- Inequality is difficult to acknowledge, particularly when we are trying to perpetuate it. Pretending that talent doesn't matter conveys an illusion of fairness.
- It's more work (and costs more) to quantify talent and people's contribution to the organisation.
- Talent prediction feels too deterministic.

Is talent overrated? What do talented people have in common? Outstanding achievements and extraordinary ability says @drtcp #CRFLisbon #talent

**Kirsi Nuotto (@KNuotto)**

Talent needs a positive system to thrive. Even finding Messi is not enough! #CRFLisbon @C\_R\_Forum @SDWorxUKI

**Linda Campbell (@LJCampbell83)**

Too many orgs spend too much on L&D & too little on talent identification & acquisition...a shift in mindset will increase ROI @drtcp #CRFLisbon

**Sally Brand (@SallyeBrand)**



# VARIETY, HARMONY, PASSION: THE ORCHESTRATED INTERPLAY OF A HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAM



**PROFESSOR GERNOT SCHULZ**  
CONDUCTOR & MUSICIAN

High-performance teams & lessons from music: perception of others is the most important basis for any high-performing team. When blocked, team performance goes down. Conductor Gernot Schulz #CRFLisbon #leadershipmatters

**Kirsi Nuotto (@KNuotto)**

What we can learn from orchestra? Perfect roles, sync and balance combined with energy. Qualities of a HiPo team #CRFLisbon #HR #HiPo #passion

**Marjo Kuosmanen (@MarjoKuosmanen)**



In Gernot's highly-interactive session, delegates were tasked with **understanding how an orchestra achieves its incredibly delicate, precise, and exceptional interaction**, and to consider whether orchestras have anything to teach us about high-performance teams.

In an orchestra, there is **individual high performance**. Musicians start learning their instruments early in life and practice intensively for many years (musicians are like elite sportspeople in this way). Musicians audition in front of, and are chosen by, the orchestra. If the orchestra is comprised of such high-quality individuals, would we expect that there will be any problems with their interaction?

Gernot vividly demonstrated how we **cannot assume that high-quality teamwork will just happen**. Talent is necessary, but insufficient for great performance. Musicians must also have a perfect understanding of their own and others' roles (this is developed through rehearsals) so that they can perfectly balance their interaction. **Good interaction grows out of perception** – musicians must be highly perceptive to the changing needs of their environment in order to build and sustain excellent performance. Perception is always dependent upon where you are placed, and generally, if stress increases, perception decreases.

At the same time, **leadership must do its part**. The conductor's (team leader's) core responsibility is to inspire dedication and passion from his or her musicians (team members). The leadership position is also a special place of perception because the leader must keep in mind all the different points of perception among the team

members, and must **unify perceptions into a coherent, meaningful whole**. An actively perceptive leader is always giving feedback to his or her team members (the orchestra has a high feedback culture). Very often in high-performance teams, one member (such as a soloist in an orchestra) has a special task to perform. This also puts demands on leadership, which must be adaptable, giving the **right attention and support to the right team member(s) at the right time**.

Ultimately, the orchestra works not because of the know-how of its musicians, but because of the **know-why**. Musicians know how to play; they need to know why they are playing. It is this **focus on the shared mission that activates high performers**.

Gernot closed his session by challenging delegates to consider...

- What are the parallels between the workings of an orchestra and our work environments?
- What is the orchestra's 'strategy' and purpose? How do they decide what to do and how to deliver it?
- How do they give high performance, create a working environment which brings out the best in people i.e. greater than the sum of all parts? How do they come together? Under what conditions do they work?
- How do they gain individual fulfilment and create good music?
- What does the orchestra do better than us; what do we do better than them? What can be learned by comparing and contrasting organisations with the orchestra?



# VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY



**PAULA MARQUES**  
PORTO BUSINESS SCHOOL

During the Age of Discovery (approximately the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century), the very small and very poor nation of Portugal managed to gain **immense power and influence** and to **change the world** as we know it today. Paula discussed the **four factors** that were key to Portugal's phenomenal success. These were that the Portuguese had a **clear picture of their future as a nation**, that they were **willing to embrace uncertainty** and the unknown, that they were **great learners** and willing to experiment, and that they **created vital intersections**.

- **Having a clear picture.** The Portuguese had a clear vision of their future as a nation: they wanted to be the world's 'number one' in spices (pepper, cinnamon, and sugar). Why spices? Because during this era, spices were used to camouflage bad flavours and odours and were also used in medicinal remedies. Those who controlled spices during this time controlled the world. This clear picture of the future, which might be better understood as an obsession, served as motivation to the Portuguese to go abroad (the spices were in Asia). In other words, the Portuguese had a **strategic vision**. Those who lack such visions ultimately disappear.

- **Embracing uncertainty and the unknown.** The known route to Asia (via Turkey) was lethal. The Portuguese, so poor and few in number, faced certain death if they took this known path. So they chose uncertainty, and took the risk of charting an unknown route to Asia via the Atlantic Ocean. It is against the natural way of being human to take such a big risk; it requires **great courage and daring** to go into the unknown in this manner. Yet it was key to Portugal's success.

- **Being great learners and willing to experiment.** The Portuguese were great learners who were **open to experimentation**. They operated in the fashion of a think tank; they were **people thinking together about how to survive**. This approach to learning was so helpful because we are social beings – we learn together. During the Age of Discovery, connected intelligence was only achievable if people were physically together, working across disciplines to reach their shared goal. While technology offers new collaborative possibilities, it is important to remember how critical sharing physical space still is to fostering cross-disciplinary thinking.

- **Creating vital intersections.** The Portuguese **linked things that apparently had little to do with each other**, but in fact made sense. This is a uniquely human capability, to make these kinds of linkages. Creating these vital intersections, and then using them to innovate, is tough. Our brains like patterns, which allow us to conserve energy. Yet making these unconventional linkages is part of what makes us thrive.

The story of Portugal's success during the Age of Discovery is a **story of obsession and necessity**. The Portuguese had a clear vision and it was critical to their survival as a nation that they achieve it. The nation's story shows us that being small and poor is not always and simply a curse; it can help you develop certain competencies too.

Finally, one of the key lessons of Portugal's story is that its biggest discovery was not the new lands, foods, or peoples they found on their voyage of discovery, but rather the **discovery of themselves** – the ability to learn, and to see things with different eyes.

Pepper, cinnamon and ginger – Portugal wanted to become number one in food conservation 600 years ago. Obsession to discover the unknown led to crossing of the Atlantic ocean. #history #CRFLisbon #courage #experimentation #learning

**Kirsi Nuotto (@KNuotto)**

Lessons from the Portuguese history on how to succeed in #business... Have a thirst for #learning, create new & unexpected links & connections (innovate!) & come together as humans #PaulaMarques #CRFLisbon

**Sally Brand (@SallyeBrand)**





# THE BUSINESS OF EXCELLENCE



**DR. STEPHEN BUNGAY**  
ASHRIDGE  
STRATEGIC  
MANAGEMENT  
CENTRE



**JUSTIN HUGHES**  
FORMER RED  
ARROWS PILOT

Watch an interview with **Dr. Stephen Bungay** filmed during the CRF conference in Lisbon [here](#).



@C\_R\_Forum #CRFLisbon – Reflecting from The Red Arrows case regarding learning. True learning organisation requires open and honest Feedback Looks facilitating fast learning. And a culture of trust where mistakes are shared without blaming but with accountability.

Sari Ek-Petroff (@SariEkP)

“The Red Arrows are a high-performing team where, every year, the three most experienced members leave and three rookies join”. How would most organisations handle that? #crflisbon#CRFLisbon

Stewart Hardie (@shardie15)

Stephen and Justin explored the **drivers of high performance** through the lens of a military fighter pilot, extracting some lessons from the Red Arrows, the UK RAF’s aerobatic display team. Every year the Red Arrows loses the most experienced third of its members and replaces them with new pilots. Despite this, they deliver perfect performances every season. How do they do it?

As in business, in the Red Arrows’ operational environment, some variables are beyond control and **perfection is not attainable** – yet **consistent high performance is**. Stephen and Justin discussed the key principles underpinning the Red Arrows’, and other high-performing teams’, success.

- **Selecting the right people.** The Red Arrows’ selection process consists of an interview, a flying test, and intensive socialising. It is not an overly complicated process; the goal is to have candidates do the job while also **examining their attitude**. Pilots’ core technical skills must be over a certain standard, but a pilot who meets those standards and is a great team player will be preferable to a pilot with exceptional skill and a poor attitude. The latter pilot will only drag the team down. Like the Red Arrows, **organisations must strike the right balance between skills and attitudes when forming high-performance teams**. But this is role-dependent; not every role requires great teamwork and it is equally important to recognise when skill is more important than attitude.
- **Creating an environment that builds capability and enables delivery.** Alignment of purpose, principles and procedures is critical to setting teams up for successful decision-making and delivery in high-pressure environments. Alignment must occur between each individual and the organisation, but also between pairs of individuals themselves. Organisations are often tempted to force alignment through control; while control has its place, so does

autonomy. The **key challenge for organisations is to balance autonomy and control**. Generally, the more changeable the context (such as that in which the Red Arrows operate), the more autonomy is required. But the good news for organisations is that the more alignment you have around goals (what you are doing and why), the more autonomy you can grant over operational control (how things are done).

- **Continuous improvement through a discipline of learning.** The ability to quickly capture and apply learning from experience is a key driver of high performance in teams. Teams must **learn quickly** from their experiences and **have feedback loops that capture, measure, and share learning**. The Red Arrows capture and share learning through an intensive debriefing process. Without debriefing or a similar process for capturing learning, teams are bound to make the same mistakes. The value of debriefing processes such as the Red Arrows’ is to shorten the time during which teams learn to avoid repeating mistakes. Objectivity is crucial to debriefing; leaders must be able to see what really happened in order to capture the right lessons.
- **The glue: leadership.** Leadership is the glue that holds together the other elements of high-performing teams. But what is leadership and why would anybody follow you? The **critical differentiators in leadership are leading** (motivating people to achieve objectives), **managing** (organising resources to achieve objectives), and **directing** (an intellectual exercise that sets strategy). These aspects of leadership are equally important, but it is very difficult to find a single individual who is good at all three. The experience of the Red Arrows demonstrates that people’s opinion of someone as a leader is formed while watching how that leader performs under stress, in a difficult situation or facing a dilemma.





# PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Throughout the sessions and in a panel discussion hosted by Ina Toegel, speakers were posed some interesting questions. Here are a few that reflect key themes of the conference.

**Are there any examples of organisations that truly model talent in data-driven ways?** Yes. Amazon, Shell, and Coca-Cola are just a few of the many organisations that pay attention to data and are good at ignoring fads in selection and assessment.

**We assume that we can simply buy the exceptional talent we need, but will such talent shine in any organisation?** Most people are average with regard to their level of talent; very few are talented at many things. Those with exceptional talent tend to have that talent for one, or perhaps two, things. And those who can express that talent optimally in any organisation they go to are anomalies. Therefore, it is better to select for people who are smart (they will be fast learners), nice (they will be good at collaborating) and hard-working (they will be motivated). These are the people that are likely to thrive in most organisations.

**We spend a lot of time talking about the role of active leadership; applying this to orchestras, what about successful leaderless orchestras? Can leadership and creativity be a collective phenomenon or do we always need to be led?** In situations such as leaderless orchestras, it is not the case that there is no leadership. Rather, leadership is delegated in these situations. Someone handles the technical aspects of leadership; someone else inspires meaning among the team. Neither chaos nor anarchy reigns.

**(Asked of the orchestra/team) How did it feel for the orchestra to be led by a different leader?** It is always a pleasure to have a conductor like Gernot, who is flexible, kind, and passionate about the work. It can be very difficult as a musician to work with a different kind of approach and it's hard to be together artistically if the musicians are being led by a poor conductor (although they must, and will, get through the task nonetheless). Orchestras can sometimes play through without a good leader; if leadership is weak, somebody else will take it over.

**(Asked of the conductor) What do you do as a leader to connect so quickly with a new team?** Authenticity is key. The team/orchestra knows immediately if you are being false or pretending. Nonverbal communication, especially body language, signals your authenticity (or lack thereof). Leadership is naked.

**Are there any women in the Red Arrows? If not, why not?** Not now, but there has been in the past. This is in part because the military is still male-dominated, and career breaks for maternity or caregiving work against women. Although the military is working to improve this, the pool of female fighter pilots is statistically very small, and cultural change in the military has been slow.

**Regarding debriefing and admitting mistakes. How do you manage accusations (annoyance) when the same mistakes are repeated?** Teams progress at the pace of the weakest link, but in the Red Arrows this is generally ok because of the strength of the selection process (which ensures that the weakest link is not that weak). It is important to distinguish whether repeated mistakes are issues of skill or psychology, so that you can respond appropriately. Particularly in situations where safety is paramount, such as the Red Arrows,





# PANEL DISCUSSIONS

you must also understand when to forgive and help mistake-makers and when to sacrifice them to ensure the safety of the team. Generally, it is important to be fair and consistent in your approach and to accept that sometimes good people make honest mistakes.

**How have the Red Arrows changed over past 30 years?** They have become more inclusive and a flatter organisation; it is a more enjoyable working environment now.

**How do you think about personality on teams and how do you select for high performance?** Personality, which is the sum of one's behaviours, is very important. The key is to focus on how smart, nice, and driven a person is; if you rigorously select for these traits you will usually be ok. It is critical to minimise relying on human intuition; HR should learn to distrust their instincts. Relying on data is key. When selecting a data-driven assessment instrument, key considerations are the instrument's accuracy, price, time/user experience, and ethics. 'Cultural fit' is a euphemism for unconscious bias.

**Assuming we are ok at identifying talent, it is still hard to predict how talented team members will interact. What can the orchestra tell us about the interaction of different personalities on a team?** Orchestras spend a lot of time on assessment; there is the audition, which is all about skill, but equally important is the subsequent time spent with the orchestra (team), who have the final vote as to whether or not to accept a new member. This intensive assessment allows the orchestra time to assess team interaction. While there is room for eccentric personalities in an orchestra, they must still ultimately align with the other players and the conductor.

**Is there an ideal personality profile for a given job?** The universal predictors, which account for about 70% of performance in a given job, are ability, people skills/likability, and motivation. The other 30% are factors that are specific to context and/or role.

**Nobody has mentioned the word attitude. Doesn't that influence behaviours hugely?** All panellists agree that attitude is hugely important.



# OVERALL CONFERENCE TAKEAWAYS

Everyone will have their own, but here is a selection of ours.

1. Teams cannot succeed without some star talent.
2. Equally, star talent cannot perform in a negative team environment.
3. Most people are average; but average players can still perform well if they are in a great environment. Build that environment for your average players.
4. Some things may be measurable, but some things are difficult to predict, like interaction. How much do we measure vs. rely on intuition?

5. It is critical to be honest on a team; this is down to self-awareness.
6. Teams need role models. Does the team have a role model to show behaviours that will allow the team to shine?
7. Teams that are self-aware perform much better than those that lack such awareness.
8. When we talk about talent, we must answer the question: Talented at... what?
9. How does talent interact on a team, and how can we facilitate positive interactions?

10. Context and space are critical – we must leave space for talent to develop on a team.
11. Definitions of a high-performance team vary. Our delegates offered the following: a team that is greater than the sum of its parts; a team on which there is diversity of thought; a team that shares a common purpose; a team that exceeds expectations; a team that plays to their strengths; a team that is accountable for each other's work.

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# ATTENDEE EXPERIENCES



*"This was my first CRF international conference and I was impressed by the quality of the speakers. It also provided a great opportunity to network with other HR-professionals."*

**JOHANNA BOLIN TINGVALL, GLOBAL HEAD OF L&D, SPOTIFY**

*"As always, a useful and energising two days. It's so stimulating to step back and hear from leading thinkers, with varied deeply thought-provoking perspectives, while mixing with a cross section of HR colleagues. I've definitely walked away with several specific ideas that our business will benefit from over the next year."*

**SIMON LINARES, HR DIRECTOR, DIRECT LINE GROUP**

*"I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. It was immensely thought-provoking for me personally and for the wider opportunity I have to enable my organisation's leaders to reach perfection in the art/discipline of leadership. I picked up some new approaches and ideas, and got reacquainted with some tried and tested models which can be forgotten in the reality and pace of life."*

**IRENE MCDERMOTT BROWN, GROUP HR DIRECTOR, M&G PRUDENTIAL**

*"Thanks for a highly informative two days. Lots to think about, both for my organisation and for me as a leader, director and manager. However, I'd like to set you a challenge for Barcelona. Can we have a conference where the main speakers are not all male, the supporting roles are not led by women, and the anecdotes are not all about men from sporting and military worlds?"*

**HAZEL BOYLE, HR DIRECTOR & DIRECTOR OF RESOURCING, M&G PRUDENTIAL**

#### RESPONSE FROM CRF:

*"Thanks Hazel, and yes we do need to try harder. We understand that sporting and military analogies are not everyone's cup of tea. It's a perennial challenge to design an event that suits everyone. As we put together our programme of speakers and events, we know we need to reflect better the diversity of our audience and wider society. We have to deliver both high quality events and broad representation, but these two objectives can be difficult to reconcile. Sadly, there is no short term or easy fix. However, the more people raise the issue and pose the challenge as you have done, the more we will change people's thinking."*



Watch two attendee interviews [here](#) and [here](#).



# PHOTO MONTAGE





# FURTHER RESOURCES AND READING

## Masterclass Resources

IMD Lisbon Conference Masterclass slides available [here](#).

JCA Global Lisbon Conference Masterclass slides available [here](#).

KPMG Lisbon Conference Masterclass slides available [here](#).

Lane4 Lisbon Conference Masterclass slides available [here](#).

Mercer Lisbon Conference Masterclass slides available [here](#).

OrgVue by Concentra Lisbon Conference Masterclass slides available [here](#).

RHR International Lisbon Conference Masterclass slides available [here](#).

## Professor Ina Toegel

Ina Toegel Lisbon Conference video available [here](#).

## Nick Holley

Andrew Lambert. 2010. *Configuring HR for Tomorrow's Challenges*. CRF ([https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/configuring-hr-for-tomorrows-challenges/?filter\\_interest%5B%5D=&filter\\_type%5B%5D=&filter\\_search=configuring%20HR&filter\\_event%5B%5D=](https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/configuring-hr-for-tomorrows-challenges/?filter_interest%5B%5D=&filter_type%5B%5D=&filter_search=configuring%20HR&filter_event%5B%5D=))

Nick Holley Lisbon Conference slides available [here](#).

Nick Holley Lisbon Conference video available [here](#).

## Dominic Mahony and Amy Walters

Amy Walters, Zara Whysall, and Matt Furness. 2015. *The Art of Culture Change*. Lane4 (<https://www.lane4performance.com/insight/whitepaper/the-art-of-culture-change/>).

Dominic Mahony and Amy Walters Lisbon Conference slides available [here](#).

Dominic Mahony and Amy Walters Lisbon Conference video available [here](#).

## Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic

Gillian Pillans, Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic. 2018. *Resourcing – Core Competence is Evolving*. CRF. (<https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/resourcing-how-hrs-core-competence-is-evolving/>)

Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic. 2017. *Our Delusions About Talent*. Harvard Business Review (<https://hbr.org/ideacast/2017/04/our-delusions-about-talent.html>).

Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic. 2016. *Four Things You Probably Didn't Know About High Potential Employees*. Forbes (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomaspremuzic/2016/10/19/four-things-you-probably-didnt-know-about-high-potential-employees/#161e94b23977>).

Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic. 2016. *Talent Matters Even More Than People Think*. Harvard Business Review (<https://hbr.org/2016/10/talent-matters-even-more-than-people-think>).

Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic. 2016. *What Science Tells Us About Leadership Potential*. Harvard Business Review (<https://hbr.org/2016/09/what-science-tells-us-about-leadership-potential>).

Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic Lisbon Conference slides available [here](#).

Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic Lisbon Conference video available [here](#).

## Dr. Stephen Bungay and Justin Hughes

Stephen Bungay's insights available [here](#).

Justin Hughes' (Mission Excellence) insights available [here](#).

Stephen Bungay. 2014. *High Performance Teamwork: A Day with the Reds*. (<http://www.stephenbungay.com/news/97398/High-Performance-Team-Work/>).

Stephen Bungay. 2011. *The Art of Action: How Leaders Close the Gaps between Plans, Actions, and Results*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Stephen Bungay. 2011. *The Executive's Trinity: Management, Leadership – and Command*. The Ashridge Journal ([http://tools.ashridge.org.uk/website/IC.nsf/wFARATT/Perspectives%20-%20Stephen%20Bungay/\\$file/PerspectivesStephenBungay.pdf](http://tools.ashridge.org.uk/website/IC.nsf/wFARATT/Perspectives%20-%20Stephen%20Bungay/$file/PerspectivesStephenBungay.pdf)).

Amy Cruickshank and Justin Hughes. 2017. *Reflectonomics: Learning to Win*. Mission Excellence (<http://www.missionexcellence.com/white-paper/reflectonomics-learning-win>).

Justin Hughes. 2016. *The Business of Excellence: Building High-performance Teams and Organisations*. London: Bloomsbury Business.

Stephen Bungay and Justin Hughes Lisbon Conference slides available [here](#).

Stephen Bungay Lisbon Conference video available [here](#).

## Attendee Experience Videos

Available [here](#) and [here](#).



## Speed, Productivity and Agility – Essentials for tomorrow's disruptive business environment

11<sup>th</sup> CRF International Conference || 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019, Barcelona



Anyone who has previously attended CRF's annual International Conference will know that we reach out to an inquisitive and interactive senior level audience of broad thinkers who are interested in the way in which businesses operate and the challenges they face. Barcelona will be no different, with a fusion of world-class content and innovative presentations.

Led by an expert panel of speakers, the conference will address the fundamentals of speed, productivity and agility and how they can help us shape our responses to change in our organisational environments. The line-up includes:

- Sarah Green Carmichael, Harvard Business Review
- Amy Kates, Kates Kesler Organization Consulting
- Gerry Ledford, Center for Effective Organizations
- Joseph Perfetti, Executive Speaker and Consultant
- Martin Reeves, BCG
- Professor John Weeks, Author

What will differentiate the successful organisations of tomorrow and how should they be preparing to get a head start? The conference will address this question from a number of perspectives, and will challenge delegates to be radical and imaginative in developing strategies to execute the personal and organisational transformations essential for business continuity.

### WHY ATTEND?

Book your place at the conference and benefit from:

- the latest insights and learnings regarding how to build agile organisations and equip people with the capabilities for business success in a disruptive business environment
- practical recommendations derived from engaging speakers and peer-to-peer discussions
- a unique blend of learning, sharing and relationship building among the 400+ senior level attendees
- a day of formal and informal networking, where you can build valuable and meaningful connections within the HR field and explore how other businesses' are dealing with the same challenges you are facing.

### REGISTRATION

The conference is aimed at senior HR practitioners and business leaders currently working within corporate and private organisations.

CRF members qualify for two places as part of their annual membership. Attendance for non-members costs £1,500 + VAT (excluding flights and accommodation).

To book your place at this unique event please contact the CRF events team at [events@crforum.co.uk](mailto:events@crforum.co.uk) or +44 (0) 20 3457 2640.

### DATE

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018

### VENUE

Hotel Sofia Plaça de Pius XII, 4, 08028 Barcelona, Spain

*"Fantastic event, thought provoking speakers, great networking, the only event I insist is in my calendar every year!"*

**CAROLINE FANNING, VP HR EUROPE, AVANADE**

*"I look forward to the annual CRF Conference as it's one of the few HR events that combines a strong agenda with a great group of attendees – this makes it easy to put in the diary."*

**MARK WELLS, GROUP HR DIRECTOR, EXPERIAN UK**

*"As in previous years, CRF's Conference delivered energy, impact, insight and ideas. CRF's sixth sense for the right topic at the right time is what makes the conference unique. It left me full of excitement for what impact high-performing teams in a high-performing culture can deliver for our businesses."*

**JAMES HARTLEY, MANAGING DIRECTOR, REGIONAL HEAD HR EMEA, SWISS RE**

*"This was the most stimulating, thought provoking and useful conference that I have attended in the last 10 years!"*

**GORDON HEADLEY, HR DIRECTOR, OCS GROUP**





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CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

L I S B O N

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