

# BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE ADVISORY SESSION

## POST MEETING NOTES 11 JANUARY 2022

CRF's Carmen von Rohr hosted a Behavioural Change Advisory Session on 11 January to inform the development and focus of her upcoming research project. The informal discussion session brought together members who are interested in/working on behavioural change to share challenges, good practices, and questions.

These notes summarise the discussion.

### WHAT BEHAVIOURS ARE ORGANISATIONS SEEKING TO CHANGE, AND WHY?

- Behaviour change around hybrid working and leadership are two key areas capturing attention at many organisations. With respect to hybrid working, many are still grappling with what the new norms will be, then they can drive changes to support that. With respect to leadership, organisations are variously focusing on helping leaders shift to being learners not experts, enablers not 'knowers', and to moving beyond just the relational aspects of leadership.
- One organisation is doing work to encourage people to take greater ownership of their careers.
- Some organisations are working on big cultural changes post-merger or acquisition.
- One organisation is focusing on changing behaviours around collaboration in order to generate higher revenues and build a more profitable business.
- A focus at some multinational organisations is around identifying and embedding more 'international working' behaviours – such as how to work across cultural boundaries or how to work remotely across borders.
- Compliance, safety, and customer focus are other areas where companies are seeking to drive behaviour change.
- By being inclusive and actively trying to understand diverse perspectives, leaders will create a strong sense of psychological safety within the organisation.

### IS BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE POSSIBLE?

- Yes, but it requires two approaches: structural interventions and practical interventions. Structural interventions ensure that the organisation has the right teams with the right capabilities collaborating to solve a particular problem. Practical interventions can be covert or overt. Covert techniques include addressing behaviour change through nudges or fostering viral change through organisational network analysis. Overt techniques involve being transparent and explicit about how desired behaviours have been identified and cascading them down in the form of recommendations.
- Yes, but it's important first to identify the underlying assumptions people have about how they *think* they need to behave, in order to more effectively target behaviour change efforts.
- The point was made that when planning for behaviour change, the different layers of interaction must be taken into account – behavioural expectations should be articulated at the individual, team, and organisational levels.
- Some organisations are finding it challenging to transfer expectations to practice. There was debate about which comes first – shifting mindsets to change behaviour, or changing behaviour and mindset will follow.

### WHICH STRATEGIES, FRAMEWORKS, AND/OR TOOLS ARE EFFECTIVE AT ENABLING BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE?

- Some organisations are scripting the critical moves: communicating clear expectations of what the new key behaviours should be.
- McKinsey's [Influence Model](#) is one useful framework. Attention has to be given to all four quadrants in the model.
- Some organisations find it effective to consistently negatively sanction old behaviours when they recur.
- There was discussion of the importance of personalising behaviour change strategies. You have to understand your workforce and recognise that one intervention does not fit all. It is important to be able to connect with individuals and their style. One attendee referred to the book, *Tiny Habits* by BJ Fogg, which highlights the importance of recognising that people are motivated by different goalposts.
- The concept of threat and reward.
- Motivational interviewing to strengthen an individual's motivation.

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- At the team level, appreciative inquiry is helpful for identifying bright spots.
- Organisation Culture Inventories are useful for providing insights into behavioural gaps, identifying what's enabling and what's impeding desired behaviours.
- One attendee observed that engaging hearts and minds is critical to behaviour change, and unlocking thinking processes which can often be obstacles.
- Fishbowl coaching exercises.
- Design incentive systems in smart ways.
- Be flexible about revenue-sharing opportunities.
- Use personas to identify and engage potential role models of behaviour change.
- Do a small pilot. Dip a toe in the water and do a small piece of assessment on a few people and provide feedback showing how certain factors can work and add value.
- Use focus groups to define which behaviours are needed.
- Use assessment predictions and link it to 360 through performance data. You can use the results to identify these new behaviours and then practise in a safe environment.
- One organisation looked at manager behaviours through ONA analysis and statistics. They found evidence that management behaviours cascade downwards and were then able to identify some of the behaviours that correlated with more effective managers and teams. If you make certain insights and effective behaviour habits known and visible to the organisation, you can start to see people adopting it, consequently leading to greater impact.

### WHAT EXAMPLES CAN YOU SHARE OF SUCCESSFUL BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE?

- One attendee highlighted the importance of creating a shift in behavioural assumptions by putting people into an environment where they naturally generate diverse viewpoints. The organisation took 35 comparatively privileged and highly educated senior government leaders to villages in India to gain grounded experience. It opened their minds and created a profound impact on how they now lead their departments.
- One organisation, recognising that it is difficult to undo negativity and wanting to raise the profile of technology, carried out an analysis to understand people's voting behaviours around how they score favourability against different items. The survey focused on two or three items around perspectives and experience of technology. The company found that there was only a relatively small group of people who were consistently favourable, and a relatively small group of people who were consistently unfavourable, but a very wide range of people who were 'floating voters'. This exercise helped them identify the group that they wanted to target to shift the needle when it came to favourability.

- Build a value-led organisation with the idea that focusing on intent and value will create the right behaviour. Another organisation encouraged senior people from different functions to talk about what the ideal future culture looks like. Getting people to talk together and understand each other placed a high value on authenticity, integrity, and genuineness.
- Referring to a time of organisational redesign across six countries, one attendee described how their effort at behaviour change was impeded by technological issues. The behaviour being changed involved a devolution of decision-making powers. But in some geographies, the newly empowered decision-makers weren't able to do so because of problems with their technological systems. This created pockets of frustration and put the change effort a step behind. The lesson learned was that it's important to coordinate the timing of efforts to change human behaviour with the support processes and systems that will enable it.

### WHAT QUESTIONS ABOUT BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE ARE YOU LOOKING TO ANSWER?

- How do you set up the grounds for organisations to start taking behaviour seriously? (We had time in the session to begin to answer this question – engaging leaders, speaking to stakeholders in their own language, and developing pilots are good places to start).
- Are leaders listening? Do they see the changes that are required?
- What language is going to appeal to leaders?
- What is the commercial benefit of leaders supporting behavioural change? What is motivating the change on their part?
- What behaviours are needed? How much of them do we need? What's the recipe for getting the right balance?
- What reputation do leaders need to be successful and to engage people in a new way?
- What are the motivations and values of individuals? Is that going to support what the organisation needs?

### crf UPCOMING EVENT



IN-PERSON AND ONLINE WORKSHOP:

[Applying Social Science to Behavioural Change](#)



9-10<sup>th</sup> February, 9.00 GMT, Central London



10<sup>th</sup> February, 14.00 GMT, Online

Register

