CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

APPLYING SOCIAL SCIENCE TO BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

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FOREWORD

Many organisations are focused on behaviour change as they consider the leadership requirements in the new hybrid working environment that is emerging from the pandemic. With remote working, the need for agility, coupled with strong levels of engagement, means that the status quo is not the answer. Getting people to let go of existing ways of operating and embrace new ones can be challenging. Leaders who understand and consider the motivations that people have will help accelerate this behaviour change. There needs to be a motivation to change. There also needs to be self-awareness!

Understanding what behaviour the organisation needs from leaders is essential for effective recruitment and in promoting and developing the right people. The challenge is to shift away from overly charismatic leadership and instead spot talented people who may be more humble; these are the people who can help drive engagement and productivity in those they lead. Those more humble leaders may be hiding in plain sight.

HR leaders should understand the science behind behaviour. They have a key role in creating the right culture and conditions for change within the organisation. Knowing what good looks like and then being able to objectively assess this is essential. Providing effective feedback is also critical. Do leaders fully appreciate the impact they are having on the culture and climate around them? Disruptive, or overly self-oriented, behaviour may be easier to spot than 'laissez-faire' leaders who simply let their teams and others get on with it, avoiding performance discussions, failing to offer feedback and/or failing to provide clear direction. Both disruptive and absentee leadership have negative implications for behaviour change, organisational culture, and performance.

Assessing and measuring motivations and behaviours and providing leaders with clear feedback and development helps drive change. Systems, processes and tools that are connected and utilised effectively add value. Engagement surveys, 360 feedback, reward systems and performance management can help to provide insights and to spot challenges early. This in turn can lead to earlier intervention and support that can help leaders thrive.

This Briefing Paper looks at behaviour change and its obstacles. Change is never easy. Sharing tools, case studies and examples, CRF has taken a practical approach to help enable this.

Rob Field, Learning & Development Director at Advanced People Strategies

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KEY TAKEAWAYS
APPLYING SOCIAL SCIENCE TO BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

1

Change – positive or negative – requires people to go on a journey.

Negative emotions are a normal part of this journey. Give people safe spaces to process change, acknowledge and think about how to compensate for losses, keep communication consistent, clear, and positive, and use tools such as after-action reviews to learn from the experience.

2

Use frameworks to enhance the effectiveness of your behaviour change efforts.

At the structural level, frameworks provide an intellectual underpinning to your work, and keep your change planning clear and consistent. At the practical level, encourage mangers to apply the I.D.E.A. Framework (Identify, Design, Evaluate, Assess) to try out evidence-based solutions for priority areas including combatting groupthink, fostering psychological safety and honing resilient teams.

3

Articulate the destination behaviours.

Focus on having one or two simple messages at a time, that are easy for people to absorb and action. Create milestones and celebrate victories on the way to achieving those one or two changes. Once those goals have been achieved and the new habit or behaviour is established, move on to the next one or two goals.

4

Understand the value of and invest in line managers to enable change.

Line managers have a disproportionate impact on their reports' behaviours, and they cultivate microclimates within the larger organisation culture. Enable them by teaching them how to become experimental and inclusive leaders. Then leverage tipping points and use ambassadors to make their behaviour change contagious.

5

Focus on resilience.

Dispel uncertainty by setting the ground rules for what will happen when negative events happen. Leverage the lessons from individual resilience to build team resilience. Celebrate small wins to introduce novelty and refocus attention to take a pause and process emotions before dealing with negative events.

6

When planning for behaviour change, attend to the structural and the practical.

Change managers tend to take a programmatic approach to behaviour change, but while getting the structure right is necessary, it is not sufficient. To change behaviour, practical support must also be in place to help people practise and bed in new behaviours.

7

Obtain leadership buy-in and commitment early.

Articulate to leaders the commercial benefit of supporting the proposed behaviour change. Explain what will be expected of them. Identify leaders' leadership style (charismatic? humble? absent?), explain how their own behaviours might need to change, and work with them to accomplish this change.

8

Map the current behaviours in the organisation.

How are people currently behaving? Are they aware of their behaviour and its impact? Use tools to validate your picture of current behaviour, and make sure that you have skilled people delivering this feedback.

9

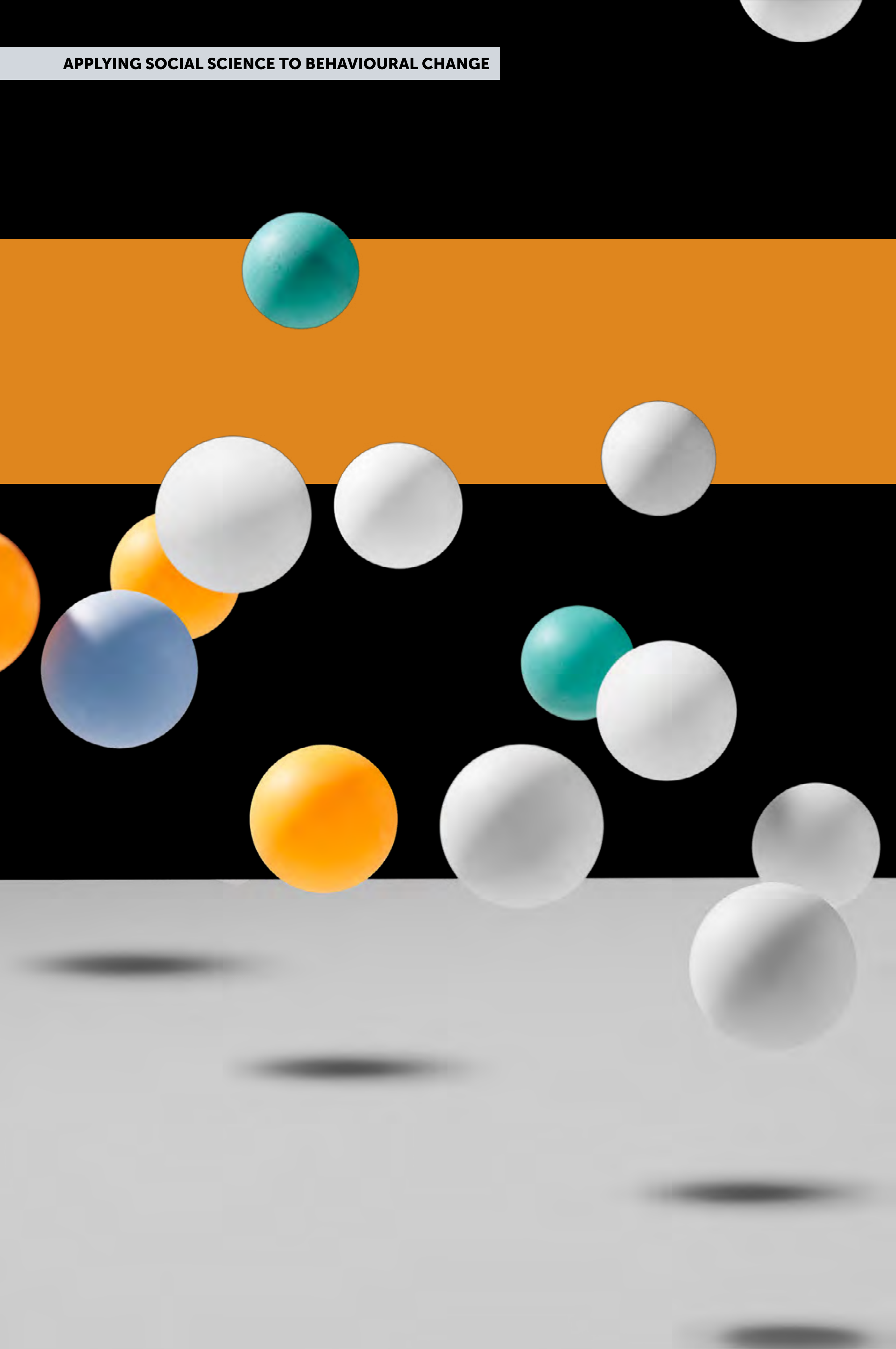
Tailor your behaviour change strategy to people's motivations, and to the nature of the behaviour change barrier that you are facing.

One change strategy does not fit all. Identify an individual's motivations, values, and the weaknesses preventing progress. Then communicate with people in a language that speaks to their motivations and values, and select appropriate scientifically-validated techniques to overcome their specific weaknesses.

10

Evaluate your attempts to change behaviour.

Without an evaluation stage, the changes you make may have zero or backfiring effects. Don't rely solely on large-scale surveys for evaluation. Think about groups as small, mid-level microcultures and evaluate behaviour change at that level.



1.0 THE SOCIAL SCIENCE OF BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

Emerging technologies, new competitors, and external challenges such as the pandemic and its knock-on effects are contributing to a business context in which the rate of change is unprecedented – and existentially threatening.

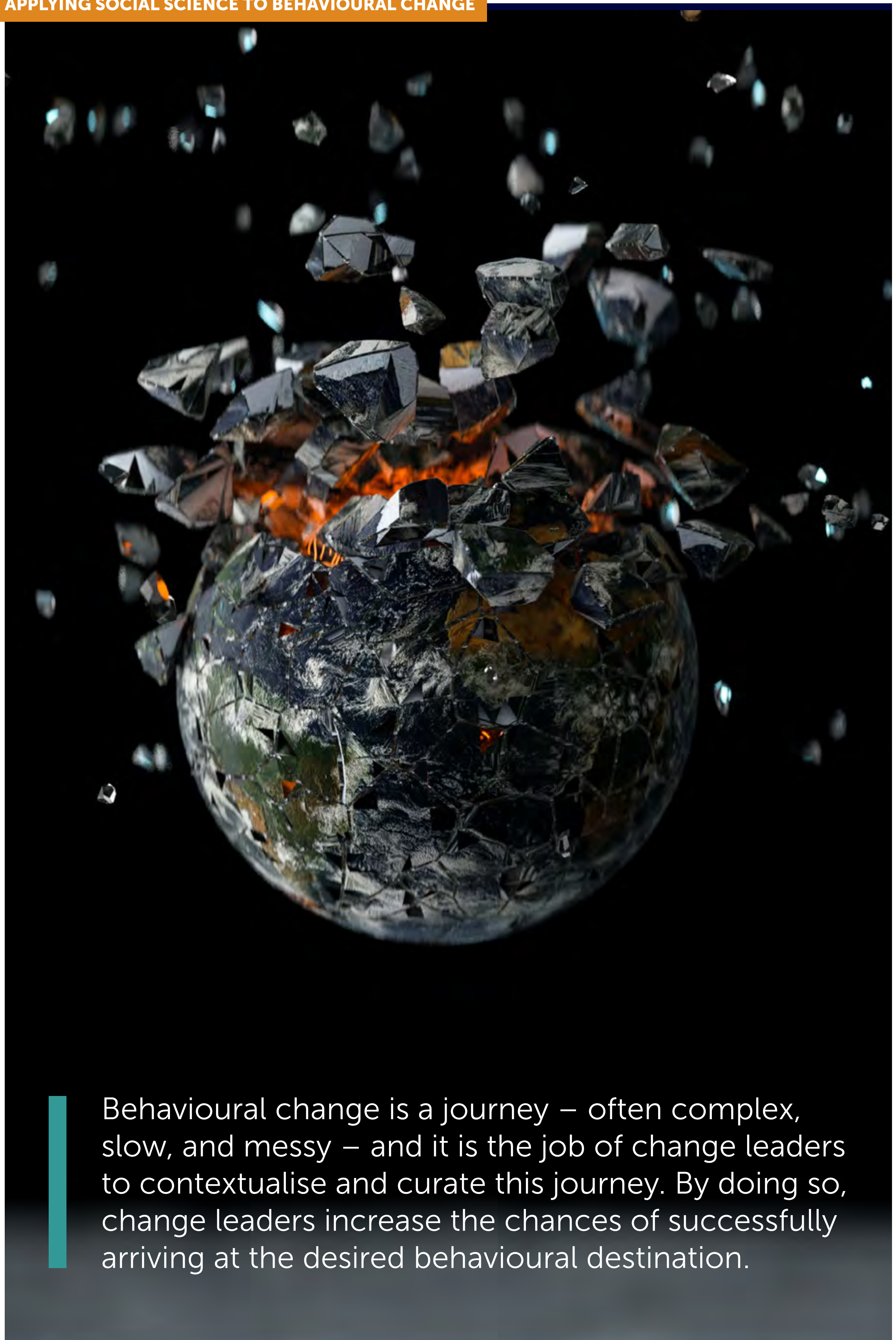
Since 2000, just over half of companies on the Fortune 500 list of the largest companies in the United States have disappeared. What's more, strategy consultant Innosight predicts that 75% of the companies that are currently listed on the S&P 500 stock market index will be replaced within a decade.

What this means is that change is at the core of business strategy for most organisations today. Organisations must keep up with intensifying levels of change in their business context – or die.

Yet decades of research on the impact of change initiatives on business performance shows that the majority of change initiatives fail to meet their objectives. For example, Professor John Kotter of Harvard Business School, one of the leading thinkers in the field of change management, has found that only around 30% of change programmes are successful.

In part, this is because leaders often underestimate just how difficult change is in practice, the high level of effort required to implement change and make it stick in the longer term, and how heavy a toll it can exert on people in the organisation.

Understanding behaviour change and how to achieve it is therefore a key challenge facing organisations and their leaders today.



Behavioural change is a journey – often complex, slow, and messy – and it is the job of change leaders to contextualise and curate this journey. By doing so, change leaders increase the chances of successfully arriving at the desired behavioural destination.

So what is behaviour change?

At the individual level, it is a person doing things differently to how they were done in the past. At the organisational level, in the words of Jonathan Kohn, former Vice President, HR Trading and Supply at Shell, it is "collectively changing habits at the same time. In order to change a community, every individual has to change too."

But how do we get people to do things differently – at all, much less collectively and at the same time?

We do so by articulating the change destination, getting buy-in and participation from senior leaders up front, understanding the attitudes and motivations of people at all levels of the organisation, assessing the barriers to change, and developing a structural and practical plan to execute change. Behavioural change is a journey – often complex, slow, and messy – and it is the job of change leaders to contextualise and curate this journey. By doing so, change leaders increase the chances of successfully arriving at the desired behavioural destination, and in a way that is easier for people and perhaps somewhat quicker than it might otherwise have been.

In this Briefing Paper, we explore many aspects of behavioural change, with a special focus on the insights that social science has to offer for designing and implementing behaviour change efforts.

CHAPTER 1

We look at the reasons organisations might want to change behaviour and review the social scientific literature on behaviour change. Is it possible? How do you do it, in both structural and practical terms? Where do you start?

CHAPTER 2

We share seven case notes of how organisations have approached behavioural change at individual, team, role, and organisational levels. What behaviour needed to change? For what business reasons? How did the organisation implement the change? Did it work? And what lessons were learned?

CHAPTER 3

We share summary notes from CRF's recent two-day workshop, Applying Social Science to Behavioural Change, led by Grace Lordan, Founding Director, The Inclusion Initiative and Associate Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science.

EMAIL

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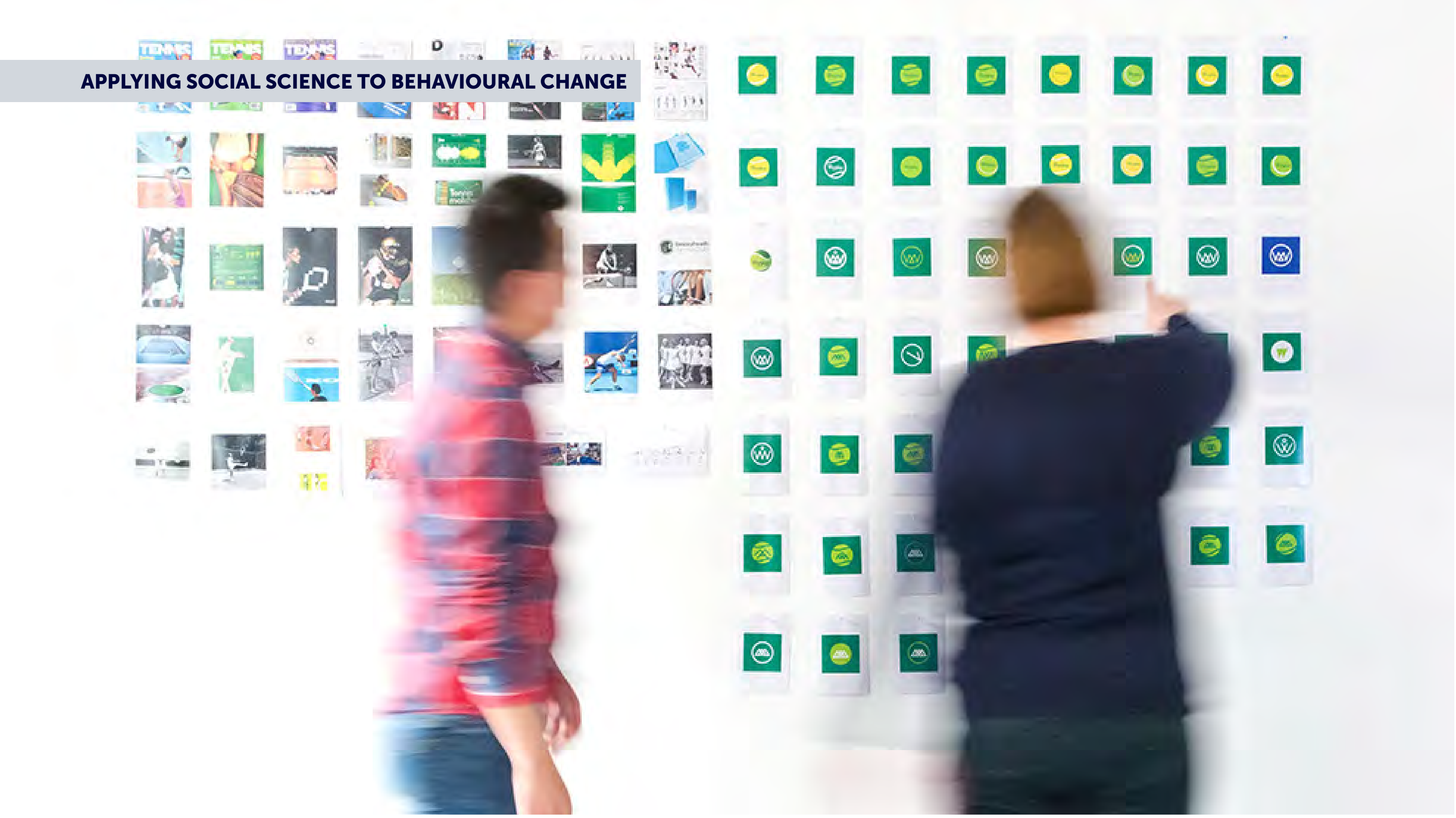

1.1

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BUSINESS REASONS FOR CHANGING PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR?

Social scientific research into behavioural change is perhaps most robust in the realm of public health. A rich body of methodologically rigorous research has investigated how to change people's behaviour around diet, exercise, vaccine take-up, hygiene, and more. A quick search of Google Scholar reveals hundreds of studies over the past two years related to behaviour change during the pandemic alone. This makes intuitive sense – governments have a strong economic and social order interest in maintaining and improving the health of their populations.

But behaviour change is desirable in many contexts for a wide variety of reasons. In the world of organisations, change management is fundamentally about changing the behaviour of people inside the organisation in order to realise one or more organisational goals.

What sorts of behaviours do organisations seek to change, and to further what sorts of organisational goals? The answers may be large or small in scale.

For example, an organisation might want to improve its people's adherence to safety protocols in order to improve health and safety, reduce costs, and/or meet legal requirements. Another organisation might want to change behavioural norms during meetings in order to meet inclusive cultural goals, or to change behaviour around answering emails to enhance wellbeing.

As part of the research for this Briefing Paper, we asked a focus group of CRF members what behaviours their organisation is currently trying to change. The following key themes emerged.

- Many organisations are grappling with behaviour change around new models of hybrid working. It is early days with respect to post-pandemic ways of working, and this is reflected in how organisations are working to establish new norms around expected behaviours, which can then be supported through targeted efforts at behaviour change.
- The behaviour of leaders is a key concern at many organisations. Helping leaders make the shift to being 'learners' not 'experts or 'enablers' not 'knowers', fostering inclusive mindsets to drive psychological safety, and helping leaders to move beyond just the relational aspects of leadership are a few of the changes organisations are trying to enable their leaders to make.
- Some organisations are trying to change people's behaviour around their careers – specifically, shifting away from a more paternalistic model to encourage people to take ownership of their own careers.
- Changing behaviours around collaboration in order to generate revenues and enhance profits is a key focus at some organisations.
- Some organisations, particularly those that have undergone a recent merger or acquisition, are engaged in transformational cultural change.
- At some multinational organisations, the focus of behavioural change efforts is around identifying and embedding more 'international working' behaviours – such as how to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries or how to work remotely across borders.
- Compliance, safety, and customer focus are other areas where companies are seeking to drive behavioural change.

Whatever the business reason and scale of behavioural change needed, change managers will typically find themselves asking two questions: Is it possible? And how?

We explore these two questions in the remainder of this paper.

1.2 IS BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE POSSIBLE?

Is behavioural change possible? The answer, from decades of research, is a resounding 'yes, but'.

Yes, behavioural change is possible, but:

- Change managers must approach behavioural change in both structural and practical terms.
- It can be challenging to sustain over the long term.
- Attitude follows action.

Behavioural change requires structural and practical interventions

Successful behavioural change efforts have two components – structural and practical.

'Structural interventions' refers to the thinking and planning that underlies change efforts. When thinking structurally about change, key questions to ask include:

- Do we have the right team with the right capabilities collaborating to diagnose and solve this particular behavioural change problem? And do we have a structured change methodology, such as Kotter's 8-Step Change Model, in place to provide a process to follow? Both the right team and a structured process are key to successful change efforts.
- Have we identified the underlying assumptions people have about how they think they need to behave, in order to more effectively target our behaviour change efforts?
- Do we have a good theoretical understanding of – and are we planning for – the emotional journey people go on during change?
- Do we understand the issues and are we making plans for behaviour change at multiple layers of interaction – individual, team, organisation?

'Practical interventions' refers to the specific strategies and tools, validated by social scientific research, that can change behaviour over the short or long term. Practical interventions:

- Include covert and overt techniques to change behaviour.
- Are habit-based.
- May address individuals and/or their context.
- Are most effective when the strategy is matched to the barrier – for example, if procrastination is getting in the way of desired behaviours, a commitment device (discussed in Section 1.4) may be your best solution.

Sustaining behavioural change over the long term

Can we really change human behaviour over the long term, or do we have a tendency to backslide in our change efforts? The answer is 'both'.

Historically, much of the research around behaviour change has been experimental – that is, designed to establish a causal relationship between variables. These studies can provide a snapshot of the effectiveness of an intervention, but their findings have often been limited by a lack of follow-up with experimental subjects or a lack of replication. Then too, a large number of studies have been lab-based – run by psychology professors with students as research subjects and thus not representative of the population, limiting their generalisability. But over the past decade, a shift toward more sophisticated research designs – particularly longitudinal-experimental studies that follow up experimental interventions with surveys or other mechanisms at defined intervals – has demonstrated that some behavioural change techniques really do have staying power, months or even years after the intervention. For example, one randomised controlled trial in the field of healthcare, conducted over a period of six months with 46,581 subjects, found that interactive reminders can increase medication adherence over the medium term (the six months of the study).

That said, research also shows that the proportion of a population that sustains its behaviour change may be modest, and that change requires constant vigilance. Change is a chronic problem, not a temporary one. As economist and behavioural change expert Katy Milkman explains in her book *How to Change: The Science of Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*, "Achieving transformative behaviour change is more like treating a chronic disease than curing a rash. You can't just put ointment on and expect it to clear up forever."

Milkman advises that those trying to change behaviour **consistently** rely on the techniques they have learned. You cannot follow them for a month – or even a year – and then drop them.

Attitude follows action

In our discussions for this research, some organisations reported that they are finding it challenging to transfer behavioural expectations into practice. There was debate about which comes first – shifting attitudes to change behaviour, or changing behaviour and then attitude will follow? In other words, does change follow attitude, or does attitude follow change?

This debate stems from the fact that, when we try to change behaviour, it is not typically only at surface level. Whether we are looking to improve collaboration, encourage people to take greater responsibility for their careers, or change ways of working in a post-pandemic landscape, we are asking people not only to behave in a materially different way, but also to make a psychological shift – to value different things or change how they view something. In other words, we are asking people not only to change what they say and do, but how they think.

> Change at both levels – day-to-day actions and the underlying attitudes that can support, or undermine, those actions – is essential to sustaining behavioural change.

But the social scientific research is clear that, in the words of Chip and Dan Heath, authors of *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard,* "people change their minds by first changing their behaviour." Adult learning comes through doing. We try a new behaviour, observe the results, then refine our behaviour. Over time, changed ways of behaving can change how we think. Therefore, rather than just focusing on winning hearts and minds, a more effective approach to behaviour change is to clearly articulate expectations about what people should do, use practical tools to help them do it, and allow them to practise in a safe environment until the new behaviours become automatic. In other words, give people both – communicate a compelling vision (the why), but also help them to practically enact that vision (the how).

With these caveats about the effectiveness of behavioural change in mind, let's turn our attention to the 'how' of behavioural change.

GETTING STARTED WITH BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE: **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Rob Field, Learning & Development Director at Advanced People Strategies, shared several key considerations for approaching behavioural change.

Do you understand the organisation and have clarity about what it wants to achieve?

Before you can start planning and implementing behaviour change, you have to start with a deep understanding of your organisation and what it wants to achieve. What is the strategic business imperative for which behaviour must change? Is it tied to growth, cost savings, employee experience? And how is HR making the case for change? Are you speaking the business's language? Have you engaged senior leaders and obtained their buy-in and commitment to the proposed change?

Are people aware of their own behaviour?

Before people can embark on changing their behaviour, they need to have a good level of self-awareness about their current behaviour. This isn't just about how you see yourself, but about your reputation – how others see you and how you come across.

Has HR put the strategic things in place to help people gain this awareness? Are you using tools such as 360 feedback, performance data, and assessments to triangulate your data and validate what is actually happening? Are insights from those tools up-to-date – if they are out-of-date, you may be asking interesting stuff but not really connecting to your behaviour goals.

Is feedback being given effectively?

Assessing what's going on is one thing, but effectively communicating it to people is another. Are the people giving feedback skilled enough to deliver it in a way that will make a difference? If not, what is your plan for remedying that?

Are strategies in place to support the behaviour change?

Once you've clearly mapped out your change goals, obtained commitment to the change from senior leaders, collected up-to-date data on current behaviours and shared that information with people in an effective way, you can begin to build your strategy for the change. Key things to consider include:

Leadership expectations. Have clear leadership expectations been set? How do you identify and make visible role models? What values does the leadership team have? People's values have a large influence on their behaviour, and top leaders have an outsize influence on culture, so paying attention to values is critical.

Recruitment. How does the organisation recruit? Is there a process in place for considering people's values – what are they, how important are they, how do you assess against them? If you are changing behaviours, you need to recruit for the new behaviours, not the old ones.

Reward. Is reward structured in such a way as to reinforce desired behaviours? Are people rewarded not only for what they do, but for how they do it? A person probably isn't going to have much incentive to change if, for example, they can still earn their maximum bonus while behaving in the old way.

Culture. Field emphasised the importance of leadership's influence on culture. Do you have charismatic, humble, or absentee leaders? Those who are too humble – working with their teams to drive performance and letting others take the lead – may be overlooked, while those who are charismatic – primarily interested in getting themselves to the top – might elicit negative responses from others. Absentee leaders – the 'empty suit' – tend to sneak under the radar. They aren't actively causing problems, but nor are they making a contribution. The problem with absentee leaders is in their impact on people's behaviour – disengagement and the lost value of not developing people's potential. The challenge for change managers is to identify individual leaders' styles early and work with leaders to achieve an effective style, so that they are influencing the culture in a way that supports behaviour change.

Motivation. Behaviour change takes work. To gain people's buy in, you need to consider their motivations. "Everybody is driven by something different," Field said. "Some people are motivated by recognition, some by power. Some people have very commercial motivations, while others have altruistic motivations. You need to adjust your strategy in terms of what's important to people. Use language that matches their motivation and values, so that it resonates with them. What lights that person up?"

Space to experiment. Can the organisation create safe spaces for leaders to try new things? When you try things out 'live', some things will work and some won't. You want to avoid people having a feeling that they are failing, so be sure to create a space of psychological safety in which people can practise their new behaviours.

Accountability. Is there a process in place for giving people regular feedback about how they are doing things? Are there appropriate consequences for those who are behaving in the old way? If people see that others are not being held to account, this can poison your change effort.

1.3

HOW DO I STRUCTURALLY PLAN FOR BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE?

Before you begin to implement specific strategies and tools to encourage behaviour change, it is essential to think through and plan your approach to the change. Have you gathered the right people together to diagnose and solve the problem? Do you understand what needs to change and what kinds of resistance to change you might encounter? How are you going to create a context in which people can practise new behaviours and sustain the change?

Assemble the right team.

When you are planning for behaviour change, it is important to put in place the right team with the right capabilities to diagnose and solve the particular behavioural change problem. If only HR people are planning the change, you probably have not assembled the right team.

As discussed in the Case Note on page 20, when easyJet sought to change manager behaviour as part of its move to hybrid working, the company assembled a change management team comprised of HRBPs, senior sponsors, and colleagues from Facilities, IT, Communications, and Learning and Development. Group People Director Ella Bennett credits this cross-functional collaboration as one of the keys to the change programme's success.

Another organisation offers a cautionary tale, describing how an HR-led effort to change behaviour was impeded by technological issues. The change 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 experience highlighted the importance of coordinating the timing of efforts to change human behaviour with the support processes and systems that enable it.

Assess the problem.

What behaviours does the organisation need? How much of them does it need? What are the motivations and values of individuals? How are they currently behaving? How do they think they need to behave? Are they going to support what the organisation needs? Is resistance to change inevitable?

These are important questions to answer when planning for change, in order to more effectively design a plan or programme for behaviour change. In the interviews, focus group, and reading for this research, the following tools were suggested for assessing behavioural problems.

- Interviews and focus groups are useful tools for surfacing individual and group values and motivations.
- Organisation Culture Inventories can provide insights into behavioural gaps, identifying what's enabling and what's impeding desired behaviours.
- Organisational Network Analysis (ONA) measures and graphs connections and patterns of collaboration between people within an organisation. ONA can be used to identify both behavioural problem spots and behavioural bright spots, and to isolate the impeding and enabling behaviours.
- The Change Equation, developed by Richard Beckhard and Reuben Harris, is a useful tool for assessing the likelihood that a change initiative will meet its objectives. Often, though not always, people resist change. The Change Equation enables change managers to identify and plan for resistance to change, and to work out where resistance to change might outweigh its benefits. For a closer look at the Change Equation, see the Appendix in this report.

Understand the emotions.

Change – even positive change – requires people to go on a psychological journey. What does this journey entail? What emotions do people experience? Are those emotions normal? Do change managers have a good theoretical understanding of – and are they planning for – this journey?

It is essential that people are supported through this journey so that they can move on from the old behaviours and embrace the new ones.

William Bridges' three-stage transition model is a tool for understanding the psychological transition that people typically have to go through as they internalise and come to terms with the details of the new situation the change brings about.

The model gives change managers a framework to work out how to support people as they go through the various stages of the transition. Taking the insights of the model into account increases the chances of reaching the goals of the change programme – and doing so faster and in a more positive way.

The stages of the model include:

1. **The Ending phase.** This is the time when people have to let go of the past and come to terms with their losses. It's about letting go of the old ways and the old identity people had. Heightened and/or negative emotions are normal during this phase. Change managers can support and create space for this grieving process by being clear about who is losing what, openly and empathetically acknowledging those losses, communicating the change destination and its positives, and thinking about ways to compensate for losses.
2. **The Neutral Zone.** This is an in-between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational. It's an uncertain time, which can be uncomfortable. But it can also be a highly productive time when critical psychological realignments can happen, and new patterns of behaviour can begin to develop. Change managers can help guide people through the neutral zone by continuing good communication and creating safe spaces in which colleagues can share their concerns, encouraging experimentation, setting short-term goals and celebrating quick wins, supporting people to form new relationships and build new teams, and considering if and how to use incentives to keep people motivated and engaged.
3. **The New Beginning.** This is the stage where people come out of transition, develop a new identity, experience new energy and discover the new sense of purpose that makes the change begin to work. At this stage, change managers need to help people sustain the change so that they do not revert to old behaviours. They can do this by:
   a. acknowledging and celebrating the gains achieved
   b. rewarding people for their commitment
   c. continuing clear and consistent communication
   d. continuing to support and train people as they develop new skills and behaviours
   e. conducting an after-action review to compare what was achieved with what was expected
   f. considering a reset of objectives to reflect the progress made and align individual and team goals with the organisation's longer-term strategy and objectives.

For a deep dive into the Bridges Transition Model, see William and Susan Bridges' book, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change.*

If you are interested in understanding more about the psychological drivers that cause people to resist change, we would recommend Professor Robert Kegan's work on Immunity to Change. His work explores how deep-rooted assumptions and conflicting commitments – often unconscious – can prevent people changing behaviour and provides a framework for helping people overcome immunity to change.

You can find further details about both resources in the References and Reading List at the end of this paper.

Plan the approach.

Once you have assembled your team, diagnosed your problem(s) and the desired change, and gained a good understanding of the psychological journey the change will entail, you can begin to plan the practical steps that you will take to achieve the desired behaviour change.

> Plans should be made at multiple layers of interaction – for the individual, the team, and the organisation. What do you need to do, and how will you do it?

Some organisations use a broad framework, such as John Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change or McKinsey's Influence Model, to plan their approach. See the Case Note, page 27, for one HR leader's description of how using a framework helps to effect change.

But social science offers a wealth of smaller, very practical tools and strategies, which can operate outside or within these larger frameworks, to help people build behaviour-changing habits on a daily basis. We review these tools and strategies in the next section.

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1.4 WHAT PRACTICAL TOOLS CAN I USE TO ENABLE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE?

How do we help people develop and sustain the new habits that, practised consistently, make for behavioural change?

Social science has identified and validated numerous techniques, including nudges, checklists, defaults, and commitment devices, among others. But how do we know which technique to use, when?

Social scientists and practitioners are clear – the techniques you select to help people change their behaviour will be more effective if they are tailored to whatever weaknesses are impeding progress. Is the problem inherent in the person – a lack of motivation or some other psychological barrier? Or is the problem in the context – does something in the environment make it difficult for people to practise new behaviours?

When deciding *how* to help people build new habits, it is essential to identify what is getting in the way of progress, and design around it.

In the remainder of this section, we will explore social scientific techniques for behaviour change through the lens of some common barriers to change. In other words, what's the obstacle to change, and what's the potential solution?

OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

The context. Context is one of the most important drivers of human behaviour. If something in the environment makes it difficult for people to act in the desired way, you won't have much progress enacting behaviour change.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Nudging

If you find yourself with a 'situation problem' rather than a 'people problem', the technique of nudging might help.

Legal scholar Cass Sunstein and economist Richard Thaler popularised the concept of nudging. The idea is that by changing the context, you can make it easier for people to do the desirable thing.

Perhaps the most famous example of the power of nudging is the 'popcorn experiment'. Actually a series of experiments by Cornell University's Bob Wansink, the popcorn experiment investigated how the size of the container in which food is served influences the amount people consume.

Wansink's hypothesis was that, all other conditions being equal, the larger the container, the more people will eat. He tested this by giving cinema goers different sized cartons of popcorn and seeing how much they consumed. The results were remarkable. People with large buckets of popcorn ate 53% more than those with smaller size tubs.

In a second experiment, Wansink and colleagues examined the effect of plate sizes. At a Chinese buffet restaurant, they found that larger plates influenced people to serve themselves 52% more food, eating 45% more and wasting 135% more as compared to diners using smaller plates.

These insights have been used to nudge people toward a behavioural change. By nudging people to choose smaller buckets or plates, we can help them limit their portion sizes and thus have a better chance at controlling their weight.

Another example of nudging, this time in a business context, is described in CRF's report *Employee Health and Wellbeing – Whose Responsibility Is It?* Businesses might have any number of reasons to want to encourage their people to be physically healthier – reducing private insurance costs, improving productivity, and so on. In the context of an office, it's healthier – and depending on your building's elevators, sometimes more efficient – to take the stairs to an upper-floor office.

But think about the average stairwell in an office building. It's probably pretty drab – badly lit, silent, institutional, often deserted and perhaps even a little bit ominous. Hardly an inviting prospect! But organisations can nudge people to make a healthier choice (taking the stairs as opposed to the elevator) by changing the context – perhaps painting the stairwell in vibrant colours or piping in upbeat music.

One of the most important nudges in the behavioural change toolkit is peer pressure – that is, using the power of social norms to reinforce desired behaviours (see the Case Note on page 24 for an example). People are heavily influenced by norms – the rules or standards of behaviour shared by members of a social group – and this is especially so in ambiguous or unfamiliar contexts. So work with norms. Describe the desired behavioural norms, and increase the visibility of those people who are complying. Peer visibility is powerful – when people feel watched by others, their behaviour often changes. However, take care to harness the power of peer pressure in a positive way – it's a chance to earn praise, not an opportunity for public shaming.

It is also important to consider the timing of your nudges. Research shows that 'fresh starts' – natural or manufactured – are a powerful tool for prompting behavioural changes. To return to our earlier example of nudging people to take the stairs in an office building, this nudge could be timed to coincide with a new year (literal or financial), an office move, even just a Monday as opposed to a Wednesday. The 'blank slate' of a fresh start offers people a sort of psychological 'do-over', because it helps distance them from past failures, mistakes, or just bad habits. See the Case Note on page 20 for a look at how one organisation used the fresh start of the post-pandemic return to work to establish new norms around managerial behaviour.

OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

People don't understand what is expected of them. What do they have to do differently tomorrow, as compared to today?

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Clearly mapping out the path to your change destination

In *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard,* Chip and Dan Heath argue that articulating a high-level vision is necessary, but not sufficient to effectively support behavioural change: "You have to translate ambiguous goals into concrete behaviours that people can follow."

How?

- **By scripting the critical moves.** It's not feasible to script every single move on the path to behavioural change, but it is critical to identify and script those actions that will make the biggest difference. Being explicit about the tangible change in behaviour that's required can make it much easier for people to adopt those behaviours.
- **By reducing ambiguity.** Not only should you describe the desired behaviours in a concrete way, but you should also reduce alternative choices. Decision paralysis is a common psychological phenomenon wherein people, faced with too many choices, become 'paralysed' from taking any action at all.

In CRF's recent research on employee experience, we described how one organisation is working to change managerial behaviour. Change leaders at the organisation felt that there are a huge number of leadership frameworks and theories across industries, but what actions managers should take tends to be missing from these frameworks. The company decided to develop its own simplified leadership framework, focused on six concrete daily actions that managers should try to do consistently in order to develop a great team. The new framework is being rolled out to managers in a series of workshops.

This is a great example of an organisation clearly mapping out the path to a change destination. Ambiguity is reduced by offering managers a new, simplified, company-specific and action-oriented framework, instead of leaving managers to choose one of the array of frameworks 'out there'. The framework itself then scripts the critical moves – the six behaviours you need to do consistently – and these new behavioural expectations are clearly articulated in the workshops.

OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

People lack confidence in their ability to change.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Giving advice

Sometimes people lack the belief that they are capable of change. One potential solution to this problem is to help people build confidence by asking them to give advice to others.

We have a tendency to think that when someone is struggling to meet a goal, we can help by offering them advice. But this can actually further undermine confidence. Lauren Eskreis-Winkler, a psychologist at Northwestern University, has shown that instead, we should ask people who are struggling to give advice. It may seem counterintuitive, but Eskreis-Winkler's research shows that asking people to give advice improves their own outcomes.

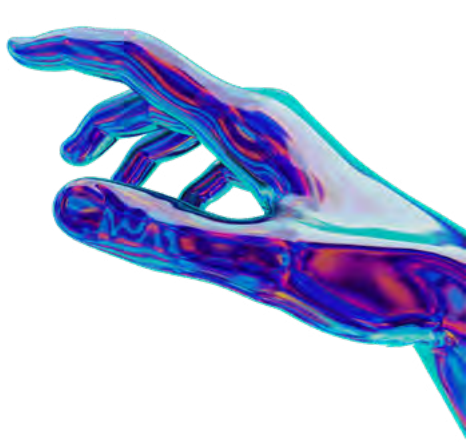
In one study, two thousand high school students were randomly assigned to either a control group or to an experimental condition. The students in the experimental condition group were asked to spend ten minutes writing down study tips for younger students. The study found that the advice-givers got higher grades in maths and in the other subjects they'd most hoped to improve that quarter.

Why does asking people to give advice work?

It boosts confidence by conveying to the person that someone believes in their knowledge and capability.

It prompts introspection – the person giving advice may think of helpful things to tell the other person that they might not have thought of otherwise and that might equally apply to themselves.

It increases buy-in – the act of giving advice can prompt what psychologists call the 'saying is believing effect', wherein people are more likely to believe an action is worthwhile after they themselves have said it.



OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

People often take the path of least resistance (less generously known as 'laziness'). If practising the new behaviour requires more effort, people may be discouraged from doing it.

OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

Forgetfulness. Sometimes people have the best of intentions to change their behaviour, but they can get distracted or forget to practise the new behaviour.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Defaults

A default is the outcome you get if you don't actively choose another option. It takes advantage of human laziness by setting the desired behaviour up as the default.

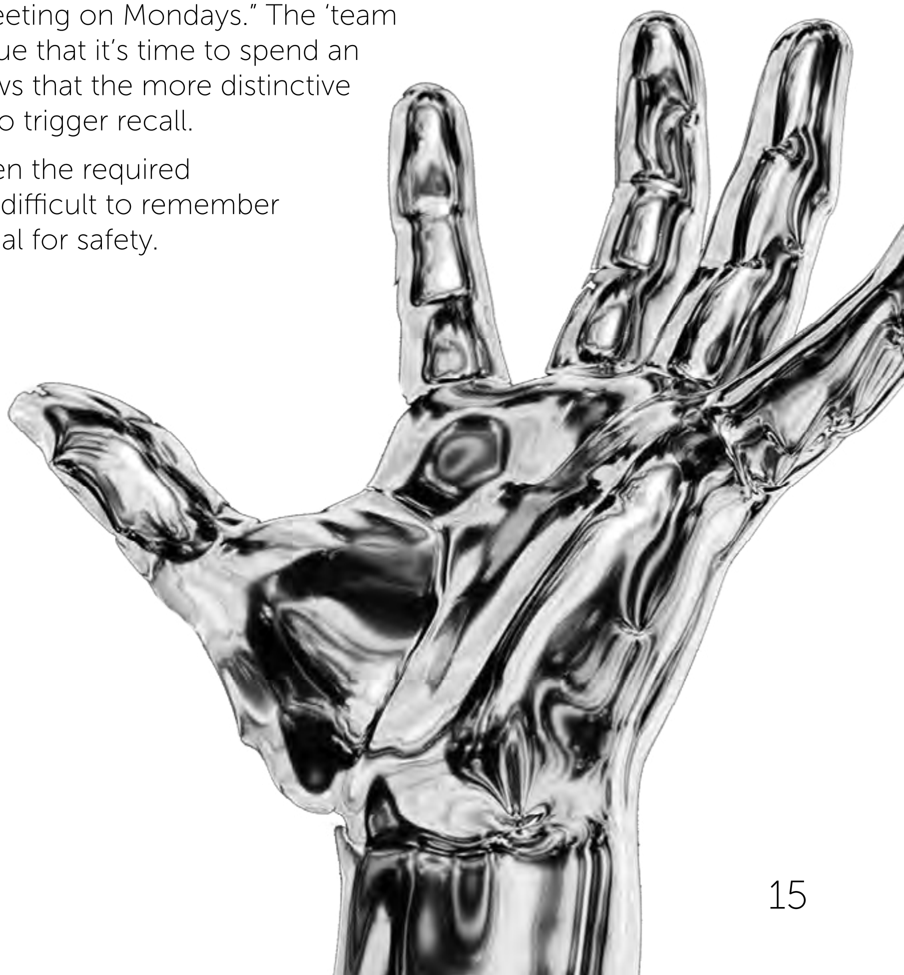
For example, automatically enrolling people into an organ donation scheme when they get their driver's license is a default. Opting in is automatic, hopefully increasing the population of people willing to donate their organs in the event of death. Creating extra steps makes it more likely that only those people who really don't want to participate will opt out, while those people who are happy to donate organs but might not have taken the extra steps to do so are included. In a business context, automatic enrolment into pension plans is an example of a default.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Timely reminders

Timely reminders can help people overcome the natural tendency toward forgetfulness.

- **Cue-based planning** is a technique that follows a simple formula: 'When X happens, I'll do Y.' It helps propel intention into action. For example, instead of saying "I want to devote more time at work to learning", you develop a cue. "I will devote one hour to learning after the team meeting on Mondays." The 'team meeting on Monday' is the cue that it's time to spend an hour learning. Research shows that the more distinctive the cue, the more likely it is to trigger recall.
- **Checklists** are useful for when the required behaviours are complex and difficult to remember easily, or when they are critical for safety.



OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

Bad habits / past failures. Past failures can be demotivating and bad habits can be comfortable. Both can act as a psychological barrier to behaviour change.

OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

Present bias. A psychological phenomenon called ‘present bias’ causes people to prefer what is rewarding in the moment, even if it is much less valuable than the reward they would gain over the long term.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Fresh starts

The power of timing was mentioned earlier in this paper with respect to nudges – tying your nudge to a ‘fresh start’ can enhance its effectiveness.

Fresh starts are so helpful to behaviour change because they give people the sense of a ‘new you’ starting a ‘new chapter’ – this both distances one from past failures and makes behaviour change feel more manageable and attractive. Research shows that creating a sense of a fresh start can be very effective in helping people change everyday habits that are customary and baked into their usual routines.

Fresh starts aren’t just about calendar events, such as birthdays or New Year’s Day. Any meaningful event might offer the sense of a fresh start – starting a new job, moving to a new city, even negative events such as a divorce or a health scare. Think of people who are finally able to quit smoking or change their diet and adopt an exercise routine after a serious brush with poor health. Research shows that the bigger the landmark that the fresh start is tied to, the bigger the effect on behaviour change.

In a business context, we might think of fresh starts as ‘resets’. Research has shown that resets are especially helpful when performance has been poor, but they can have a negative effect on those who have been going from success to success.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Commitment devices

A commitment device is an intervention designed to anticipate temptation (the reward of the moment) and introduce constraints that disrupt a person from giving into it. It is anything that reduces a person’s freedoms in the service of a larger goal. Typically, commitment devices are voluntarily engaged, but have consequences attached to failure.

For example, many pension plans are structured as a commitment device. You voluntarily put money in to serve the goal of saving over the long term for retirement. Many don’t allow you to take money out early, and those that do impose a financial penalty for doing so.

Katy Milkman makes the following points about commitment devices.

They can be ‘hard’ (involving tangible penalties or restrictions) or ‘soft’ (increasing the psychological cost of failure – public pledges are a good example of a soft commitment device).

If penalties are involved, they too can be ‘hard’ (such as the financial penalty for withdrawing money early from a pension plan) or ‘soft’ (announcing goals or deadlines publicly to increase the psychological cost of failure). Restrictions also come in ‘soft’ (eating from a smaller plate) or ‘hard’ (putting money into a locked savings account) varieties.

Research has shown that, in general, the softer the penalty or restriction, the less likely it is to facilitate change. However, people are more willing to adopt softer penalties or restrictions.

Research also shows that asking people to make smaller, more frequent commitments is more effective for changing behaviour than asking them to make larger, less frequent commitments (even if it amounts to the same commitment in the end).

OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

Emotional exhaustion. As discussed earlier in this paper, change – whether positive or negative – elicits a complex, multifaceted journey for most people. The emotional burden of change can be exhausting and ultimately demotivating.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Chip and Dan Heath offer three solutions to the problem of emotional exhaustion.

Shrink the size of the change

Sometimes the changes we ask people to make are quite large. For example, the Case Note on page 22 considers the efforts involved in changing the nature of HR Operations at one company, from transactional to more advisory.

Big changes are a big ask. Change managers can help people overcome the emotional exhaustion related to big and/or long-term change efforts by breaking the change down into incremental steps that can be achieved one goal at a time. Each goal needs to have two characteristics – it needs to be meaningful, and within immediate reach. Meaningful goals that are within immediate reach can set people up to experience a series of small victories, which in turn can help motivate them to stick to the change path.

Storytelling

Storytelling in a powerful tool that can bring the goals of a change effort to life. Stories can help people feel personally connected to outcomes, and thus more motivated. They make the change relevant to the individual, engage the imagination, and spur thinking about obstacles and possibilities. Stories tend to spread quickly, and sharing success stories related to the change effort can help build the momentum that allows the change to continue to progress.

Of course, stories of failure spread equally fast – or even faster – than success stories. For an in-depth exploration of the power of storytelling, see CRF's report, *Storytelling – Getting the Message Across*.

Positive reinforcement

Appreciative inquiry is a technique rooted in positive reinforcement. It is an approach to change that seeks out 'bright spots' – where is success already happening? What are the conditions that have led to that success and how can those conditions be repeated in other parts of the organisation? Are steps being taken to encourage, reward, and reinforce those bright spots?

Positive reinforcement encourages persistence during the long process of behavioural change. It can help people stay motivated in the face of setbacks or mistakes. It doesn't always come easily – research has shown that most people are quicker to criticise than to praise.

Using a structured process such as appreciative inquiry to identify, reinforce, and replicate success can help instil the discipline needed to stay positive, focused, and keep moving forward through a change.

For more information about appreciative inquiry as a technique for supporting behaviour change, we recommend exploring the work of David Cooperrider.

How are people currently behaving? Are they aware of their behaviour and its impact? Use tools to validate your picture of current behaviour, and make sure that you have skilled people delivering this feedback.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

We offer the following recommendations for those working to change behaviours in their organisations.

- **Engage leaders.** Obtain leadership buy-in and commitment early. Articulate to leaders the commercial benefit of supporting the behaviour change. Explain what will be expected of them. Identify how leaders' own behaviours might need to change.
- **Map current behaviours.** How are people currently behaving? Are they aware of their behaviour and its impact? Use tools to validate your picture of current behaviour, and make sure that you have skilled people delivering this feedback.
- **Plan for the emotional journey.** Remember that change – positive or negative – requires people to go on a journey. Negative emotions are a normal part of this journey. Give people safe spaces to process the change, acknowledge and think about how to compensate for losses, keep communication consistent, clear, and positive, and use tools such as after-action reviews to learn from the experience.
- **Understand people's motivations.** One change strategy does not fit all. Identify an individual's motivation and values, and personalise your strategy accordingly. Speak their language when you communicate in order to positively motivate change. Consider using personas to identify and engage potential role models for behaviour change.
- **Articulate the destination behaviours.** Focus on having one or two simple messages at a time, that are easy for people to absorb and action. Create milestones and celebrate victories on the way to achieving those one or two changes. Once those goals have been achieved and the new habit of behaviour is established, move on to the next one or two goals.
- **Use a framework to guide structural planning.** Frameworks provide an intellectual underpinning to your work, and keep your change planning clear and consistent. Frameworks are extremely useful tools for identifying gaps and blind spots in your planning.
- **At the practical level, tailor your behaviour change strategy to the nature of the behaviour change barrier that you are facing.** Don't use an all-purpose strategy that works well on average. Instead, identify the weaknesses preventing progress and then select an appropriate scientifically-validated technique to overcome those weaknesses.

2.0 CASE NOTES

In this chapter, we share seven Case Notes, exploring a variety of behavioural changes at the individual, team, and organisational levels.

Research Participants

Ella Bennett, Group People Director, **easyJet**

Graeme Clark, Group Head of People, **Mott MacDonald**

Yannick Colot, Vice President, Country HR Operations, **Shell**

Liz Douglas, Group Head of HR – Corporate Functions and Inclusion and Diversity, **Anglo American**

Rob Field, Learning & Development Director, **Advanced People Strategies**

Sandra Jackson, Portfolio Business Change Lead, **Defence Science and Technology Laboratory**

Jonathan Kohn, Former Vice President, HR Trading and Supply, **Shell**

USING HYBRID WORKING AS A FRESH START **FOR BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AT EASYJET**

***Ella Bennett,** Group People Director at **easyJet**, shared the story of how the organisation used the post-pandemic return to the office and shift to a hybrid working model as a catalyst to change management behaviour.*

What behaviour did you need to change?

easyJet needed its managers to look at performance in a more holistic way, with an emphasis on understanding how to get the most from individuals. "There are different challenges around managing people remotely, such as being attuned to wellbeing," Bennett explained. "When, where, how do people work best; how do we as managers look after mental health? We used the move to hybrid working to remind managers of their more holistic role and to get them to think about the support they need to be giving to individuals as a manager."

For what business reasons did this behaviour need to change?

"People have been working under extraordinary pressure for a very long time," Bennett explained. "Managers need to do a lot more than they did pre-pandemic to ensure people are able to manage their workloads and their mental health. Much more goes into caring about people's wellbeing now, and coaching individuals to be at their best."

Bennett emphasised the value of using hybrid as a catalyst. "In organisations it is often quite hard to have a point of time where we say 'managers need to improve on this'. But the return to work and shift to hybrid required a behaviour change. We were able to position it as 'these are the steps you need to take to re-enter the workplace after a long period out'."

How did you change the behaviour?

easyJet took a number of clear steps to effect the change.

- *The team conducted a number of role focus groups to understand how people were feeling about returning to the office, things that they missed and how the pandemic had allowed them to adjust, and future ways of working as a business.*
- *Managers attended highly interactive virtual training sessions, where they had the opportunity to ask all of their questions.*
- *The company adapted their materials on an ongoing basis, such as by identifying and addressing themes that arose out of managers' questions.*
- *The training sessions were not about generic management skills. They were organisation-specific, defining the behaviours desired of managers as they relate to this specific event (the post-pandemic return to the office / shift to hybrid), in this specific context (easyJet's offices).*
- *easyJet ensured consistency by requiring every manager to have a dedicated conversation with each of their direct reports about their return to the workplace. The emphasis in these conversations was about the new working environment and how to optimise cross-team working.*
- *easyJet recognised that it would need to regularly review its approach to hybrid working. As a result, the company has now introduced regular pulse checks throughout the business to evaluate the model and get people's feedback on what could be done differently.*

Did it work?

Bennett reported that the change has been very successful. Pulse survey measurements show the strongest engagement the company has seen, and survey feedback around the transition back to work has been very positive. 90% of people were positive about the changes made.

What did you learn?

Bennet described several key learnings from the experience.

- ***For the HR function, OD & Change Management are far more important skills now than ever.** "With workload and other pressures, it is difficult for managers to solve things in and of themselves. There is real value in HR pulling the change together as a proper programme – a piece of change management work, not just an HR initiative. It's been a real lesson in how to drive change. And in fact, I've now restructured my whole approach to the HR strategy for this year to reflect that."*
- ***Cross-functional collaboration is key.** "One of the reasons this change has been so successful is because we ran it cross-functionally. We had people from Facilities, IT, Communications. Our HRBPs were involved, and we had people from L&D to guide on implementation. We also had senior sponsorship from three leaders, and other leaders involved in other ways. That cross-company representation was essential."*
- ***Clarity is critical for successful change management.** "We were really clear about what we were trying to achieve. We had objectives, outputs, a beginning, a middle, and an end."*
- ***Unique situations can be harnessed as a catalyst for behaviour change.** "We took advantage of a particular situation to do something different in a particular way," Bennett explained. The post-pandemic shift to hybrid working provided a unique opportunity that easyJet was able to capitalise on to realise positive change. The change journey was supported with excellent line manager engagement ensuring that senior leaders became role models of the new business approach.*

GETTING THE BIG PICTURE TO **DRIVE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE**

***Graeme Clarke,** Group Head of People at **Mott MacDonald,** shared a story from a different organisation, earlier in his career, about a multifaceted, long-term effort to change one senior leader's behaviour.*

**This story has been anonymised to respect the privacy of the organisation and individual.*

What behaviour did you need to change?

At the organisation, a senior leader's behaviour was disruptive and dysfunctional to the point that it was making other people uncomfortable. Colleagues began to complain offline about the person's behaviour. The disruptive behaviour was sustained over a long time period, and over time more and more people raised the issue. It was a difficult situation to handle sensitively, but the leader needed to change their behaviour to be less volatile with members of the team.

For what business reasons did this behaviour need to change?

The organisation wanted to retain the person whose behaviour was problematic – the person was a senior leader, very good at their job, with a highly valuable skillset. But their behaviour was negatively impacting multiple other people, including junior and support staff, and this impact was sustained over time, posing a risk to broader morale and ways of working.

"The primary effort was to retain this person and attenuate their behaviour so the organisation could benefit from all of the skillset positives while protecting the workplace as a place where it is not appropriate to exercise other issues," Clarke explained.

How did you change the behaviour?

The first approach to changing the leader's behaviour was to connect the individual with an external coach (the coach was also a qualified psychologist and counsellor). This offered the leader a safe place to talk through their issues, which were largely personal in nature.

"The person agreed to work with the coach, which was good. It would have been difficult if they had disagreed," Clarke explained. "The coach was able to help with a lot of the outside-work issues the person was experiencing, but it was not a quick transition. Over the course of about six to eight months, there were positive changes. But, about a year later, at a time of increased pressure and stress, the person started to revert back to their old behaviours, and the complaints from colleagues started again."

It was at this stage that the organisation had to take a different approach.

"At this point we had to take drastic action," Clarke explained. "We removed the person from others to stop the behaviour. They couldn't come to leadership meetings anymore, because we couldn't allow that negative effect on other people to continue. It was a really difficult conversation – one of the most difficult I've ever had with a senior leader – and it was very upsetting to the person, but it really galvanised them to see that this was serious, and to appreciate that there were consequences to their behaviour."

Clarke and the external coach/psychologist worked together for a period of about a month as the coaching continued while the leader was excluded from meetings. The leader was given the full independence and autonomy they said they wanted, but once detached, they were desperate to retain membership of the group. "They really needed the support of the network, but had been using it to take out frustrations unrelated to work. They had a blind spot about their behaviour, not realising the emotional impact it was having on others. When we took the punitive step, the person was a bit embarrassed and realised their behaviour was a fundamental issue, not a peripheral one. It was then that they started to work really hard to change their behaviour."

Did it work?

Yes. Ultimately, the senior leader was able to sustain a positive behavioural change. But the punitive aspect of the approach, while used very reluctantly, was critical.

"You want to break a habit and you think you have, but then you realise you haven't," Clarke explained. "We used a little bit of a carrot, with the coaching, but then had to use a little bit of a stick, with the exclusion. It was the stick that made the difference, but with the safety net of the carrot – the coaching support – there before, during, and after."

What did you learn?

Clarke described several key learnings from the experience.

- ***Anyone can have a behavioural challenge.** "No matter how good you are at your job, no matter how senior or progressive, anyone can have things going on in their life – especially if maybe four of five things coincide – and then the ability to cope is exceeded, and this can impact behaviour."*
- ***Whenever possible, enquire about the bigger picture first.** "If the person lets you, try to do as much exploratory work into the source of the problem as you can. It can be very easy to jump quickly to a punitive solution first, but taking the time to explore the problem – which isn't always easy – doing proper diligence, can help you come up with a better-rounded and more sustainable solution."*
- ***Psychological safety is critical to behavioural change.** "At this organisation, we had done a huge amount of work around wellbeing and safety, that it was ok to talk about the emotions you were feeling. It wasn't an overly macho environment where it would have damaged a person's career prospects to speak up. This strong culture and sense of psychological safety was a key element in the leader being able to open up and let us in, so that we could offer better help."*

TRANSFORMATIVE **BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AT SHELL**

***Yannick Colot**, Vice President, Country HR Operations at **Shell,** shared a story about the transformative behavioural changes in HR Operations that are in progress at the company.*

What behaviours did you need to change?

At Shell, HR Operations was traditionally a very transactional and process-driven function. Over time, business needs evolved as Shell set a target to become a net-zero emissions energy business by 2050, in step with society. As business needs evolved in line with this target, HR services had to evolve too and in 2018, the company began bringing advisory roles into HR Operations. As the nature of HR services changed, a complex behavioural shift was needed. "We needed HR Teams to take more ownership, be more comfortable making decisions, and have more comfort making and learning from mistakes," Colot explained. "The new behaviours require people to contextualise HR advice with an understanding of business / value drivers, and to provide relevant support accordingly."

Colot shared the following summary of the key behaviour shifts required. The old behaviours listed here – a product of the narrow transactional range of services that people had been tasked with before – are to some extent hypothetical. Not everyone practiced the old behaviours, so it was a matter of bringing everyone up to speed with the new behaviours that were needed as the services provided by HR Operations evolved.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE – HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

	FROM	TO
MINDSET SHIFT	Silo Thinking	Ownership and Integration
	Fear of Mistakes	Learner Mindset
	Narrow Frame of Reference	Curiosity and Contextual Understanding
	Process Mindset	Outcome Focus
	One Size Fits All Approach	Meaningful, Differentiated Experiences
	Metrics	Value and Discretion

LEVERS AND ENABLERS

1. Joined-up and Integrated HR Delivery
2. Proactive Employee and Line Manager Support
3. 360-Degree Customer Feedback
4. Capability Development
5. HR Digitalisation

These behaviour shifts are part of a wider Shell mindset and behaviours journey, wherein the organisation is bringing common language across Shell. The behaviour shifts specifically support the development of a Learner Mindset and help the organisation to Maximise its Performance:

	FROM	TO
LEARNER MINDSET	Fear of Mistakes	Learner Mindset
	Narrow Frame of Reference	Curiosity and Contextual Understanding

	FROM	TO
MAXIMISE OUR PERFORMANCE	Process Mindset	Outcomes Focus
	One Size Fits All Approach	Meaningful, Differentiated Experiences
	Silo Thinking	Ownership and Integration
	Metrics	Value and Discretion

For what business reasons did these behaviours need to change?

Business value is the primary objective underlying the need for this behavioural shift. Colot explained, "Under the new HR delivery model, all HR advisory work is now completed virtually through HR Operations. In order to be able to perform and deliver the support and services the business needs to reach its objectives, in order to support the organisation to move ahead in the energy transition, we have to make this shift. It is not optional. It must happen."

TRANSFORMATIVE **BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AT SHELL**

How did you change the behaviours?

"Cultural changes don't happen overnight," Colot emphasised. To effect these behavioural changes, HR Operations took a long-term, multifaceted approach. Key elements of the approach include the following.

- ***Formal trainings.*** *"Formal training is always an element, and was helpful," Colot explained. "Formal training, at the right time, can set standards, help explain some of the concepts, and provide an opportunity to share examples, role play, and give people feedback on how they are doing."*
- ***Bringing all leadership levels together to learn from each other.*** *"One of the biggest shifts was around how leadership is shaping the culture on a day-to-day basis," Colot said. "How do we learn from each other? Both when we have successes but also when there are failures. We've worked to have active sharing at all levels of the organisation, not just the most senior."*
  - *A quarterly forum brings leaders together for an afternoon of discussion and sharing around a dedicated theme. Initially, these forums were face-to-face, which Colot credits with helping build a rapport that served the forums well when they had to move to a virtual environment during the pandemic. Leaders are encouraged to bring authenticity and vulnerability to these conversations.*
  - *Curiosity is encouraged at every opportunity. For example, a Yammer-based 'Asking One More Why' contest challenged advisors to ask one more 'why?' or business-related question when interacting with line managers.*
- ***Promoting a learner mindset by changing the reaction when something goes wrong.*** *Colot described the change: "People were used to having to explain themselves if something went wrong. And too many mistakes could dramatically bring down a person's performance rating. We changed the thinking around this, promoting the message that "it's not about you, it's about learning" to try to relieve people's concerns about it. As chair of the conversations, I tried to make people feel as comfortable as possible, asking questions without judgement, emphasising a learner mindset, focusing on getting all leaders to behave the same way, so that people could trust and openly share why things went wrong. Which in turn often helps uncover deeper, systemic issues. Taking this approach over time really helped change the way people related to making mistakes and helped them to develop a learner mindset. And that learner mindset has had a huge impact on the culture. It's taken off really well." By encouraging people to open up about mistakes as an opportunity to learn, Shell has been able to not only embed a learner mindset, but has simultaneously built and enhanced psychological safety within the organisation.*
- ***Emphasising user-centred thinking.*** *To support the behaviour change from process mindset to outcomes focus, people are encouraged to centre the user in their thinking – to take a moment to put themselves in the shoes of the line manager or employee.*
- ***Changing the way dashboards are used.*** *Instead of using dashboard metrics as just a way to quantify success, people are encouraged to use the dashboard as a way to ask questions to inform operational decisions. The emphasis is on the contextual rather than absolute value.*
- ***Shifting goal setting.*** *This is a transformational ambition. Work is underway to set goals as outcomes rather than a laundry list of activities.*

Did it work?

Colot reports that the behaviour shift is a work in progress. It is a journey, with some pockets of success, but still room for improvement ahead. "Consistency is important, and we've improved a great deal from 2018, but we still have a way to go," Colot said.

One helpful practice, in line with insights offered by the social science of behavioural change, has been leveraging from those areas where things are going well. Colot had success in changing behaviours in his previous regional role in Asia. Now based in the Netherlands in a global role with over 800 staff spread across the world, Colot has structured his leadership team in such a way as to enable people to learn from each other and to repeat some of his interventions from Malaysia. Workstreams bring advisors together from all over the world to work on issues, and a community of practice, again global in reach, enables people to share good practice. This leveraging of the learnings from Asia is helping the organisation develop a more globally consistent approach.

What did you learn?

Colot shared several key learnings from his experience.

- ***Don't try to rush it.*** *"Cultural changes take time. Something that could make lots of sense and be natural to you might be much more difficult for someone more junior in the organisation. They will need time to adapt and proof points to realise they need to shift and how they need to shift."*
- ***Don't underestimate the efforts up-front.*** *"You have to do a lot of work up-front to build trust, authenticity, and to harness the power of vulnerability. Everyone in the organisation needs those things if you want to be able to have difficult – but also really interesting – conversations around human behavioural shifts. It's never easy to change behaviours, but if you're not honest and don't trust each other, conversations will stay on a superficial level. These are prerequisites to be able to move forward with behaviour change."*
- ***Really understand your organisation.*** *"Do you know who can help you at all levels of the organisation? It's really important to have some organisational savviness, to be able to pull on people who can influence others, to recognise and shine a spotlight on where there is progress, to be connected and really observe where change happens in the organisation and to share those stories. You want to extract the good practices and the mistakes, and make them visible, because we learn from visibility. We've used the language of 'mistakes are amazing' to help shift thinking, so that people aren't afraid to make mistakes or afraid to talk about them. This is more challenging in a global role, away from teams, as opposed to being on the floor where you can actually see things happen. It's not always easy, but it's necessary."*

USING CONVERSATIONS, COACHING, AND AUTONOMY TO **CHANGE THE WAY A TEAM WORKS TOGETHER**

For this research, we spoke to an organisational psychologist who works in leadership strategy at a police force. She shared a story about changing the way a team worked together.

What behaviour did you need to change?

The team was comprised of 14 people – eight managers and six colleagues providing administrative support. The differences between these two components of the team were stark. The managers had a high degree of flexibility and autonomy in their work, but managed their admin colleagues in a rigid and paternalistic way. "The admin people had to be physically in the office, they had to work set hours, and the managers would give them tasks in a very parent-child kind of way; meanwhile, the managers could basically do what they liked," the psychologist explained.

The managers complained that the admin part of the team was not performing well and needed improvement. They saw this as a behaviour problem on the part of their admin colleagues – generally, the admin colleagues were seen as difficult and uncooperative.

For what business reasons did this behaviour need to change?

The team members needed to work together more effectively in order to deliver various tasks to the organisation.

How did you change the behaviour?

The psychologist began by observing the team's behaviour. Rather than taking the managers' perceptions for granted, she observed the team's interactions and ways of working together. She found that the behavioural change problem was more complex. It was true that the admin colleagues were doing only the bare minimum required of them, and they would only complete tasks if they were told to do them, and how to do them. But it was equally true that the managers were not particularly good at managing. They were not leading their admin colleagues so much as treating them like children.

The psychologist followed up her observations with 1:1 conversations with every member of the team, in order to get their perspective on what was happening. The managers thought there was nothing at fault with their behaviour. "They thought they were innocent," the psychologist explained. "And they were, in the sense of not being self-aware." From the conversations with the admin colleagues, it became clear that the lack of motivation was a consequence of how they were being treated by the managers.

The psychologist concluded that behaviours needed to change across the team.

1. *Admin colleagues needed to be more proactive, take greater responsibility, and own their team in terms of service delivery.*
2. *Managers needed to demonstrate adult-to-adult rather than parent-child leadership and trust of the admin colleagues' ability to make decisions and to deliver outside of the physical office context.*

The psychologist then set about facilitating the behavioural changes.

- *She conducted coaching conversations with the managers as individuals, to help them diagnose the problems in their own behaviour. The psychologist, as a peer to the managers, was very careful not to tell them the answers, but to facilitate their discovery of the answers.*
- *She then gave the admin colleagues the autonomy, within parameters, to devise a new way of working. "I said, 'we need you to deliver a service, this is what the managers think good looks like; take this information and develop what you think is realistic. Then we'll share that with the managers'," the psychologist said. "The communication was soft but the project parameters were hard. I focused on making sure they had confidence and would hold themselves to account. I also offered a bit of a carrot in that 'if you can prove that you can deliver, then the next step is that we can look at ways of working and potentially greater flexibility'."*

Did it work?

Yes. "It took the admin colleagues a while to take responsibility because childlike behaviour was so ingrained," the psychologist said. "But they did come up with a plan, and it was one that played to their strengths. The admin colleagues – five out of six of them – are very introverted people. They came up with a plan that managers should deliver tasks daily to a central mailbox. The admin colleagues would then have a daily meeting to decide who would take on which tasks. This shift in power gave them the confidence to deliver and built a better connection with the managers."

The admin colleagues' performance improved, and the managers were pleasantly surprised. The admin colleagues were given greater flexibility, including the opportunity to work from home. "There was a domino effect," the psychologist said. "The admin colleagues saw that they got a better work-life balance, and then they reciprocated by giving more to the job. Confidence grew, performance improved, more tasks were taken on. Since the change, four of the six colleagues have had promotions, one of which was a double promotion. One of the mangers has been promoted as well."

What did you learn?

The psychologist shared several key learnings from her experience.

- ***Behaviour change is challenging, and some people are not shiftable.*** *"I'm stubborn and a perfectionist; I wanted everyone to change their behaviour. But not everyone will do so, so there has to be some acceptance of that fact."*
- ***Behaviour change is in large part about releasing a person's potential.*** *"When you facilitate behaviour change, you are helping a person release their potential, which often leads to more behaviour change."*
- ***Peer pressure can be a powerful tool for behavioural change.*** *"Many organisations rely on putting people through a programme to change their behaviour, but so much is in watching what other people are doing. Among the admin colleagues, one person was initially still a delinquent, but the other five established new norms around behaviour and that peer pressure brought the delinquent on board."*
- ***It's critical to help people understand each other's perspectives, and tools/frameworks can help with this.*** *"People need to be able to think about their own behaviour, how they come across, how it might affect others. They need to understand their differences, and the different strengths and skills they can bring to the table. In this situation, I used a tool called Clarity 40 to facilitate this understanding. It's an exercise that helps de-personalise a situation, so that people can be more open to exchange and understanding."*

USING PERSONAS TO SHIFT MINDSETS AND DRIVE **BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AT THE DEFENCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY**

__Sandra Jackson,__ Portfolio Business Change Lead at the UK's __Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl),__ shared a story about using personas to support behavioural change.

What behaviour did you need to change?

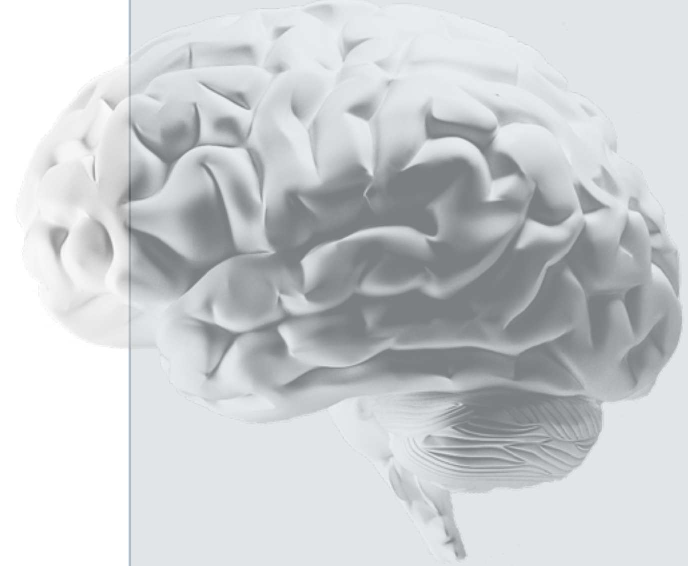
While the UK government's move towards smarter working has been in progress for years, the pandemic accelerated this work. "It's the biggest driver for change that we've ever had," explained Jackson. "However, there is an ongoing challenge to change deep-rooted mindsets as we take steps away from COVID-19 restrictions."

Dstl now grapples with the challenge of connecting people to work together from onsite and offsite locations. During the last two years people have become very used to working in groups through video conferencing remotely; however the hybrid approach that connects remote workers effectively with onsite activity is a much greater challenge. While working to identify what the future hybrid way of working will really look like and how it will work, an initial challenge is that some leaders are very attached to older, office-based ways of working. "Some members of leadership teams feel a need to see people physically, to have that in-person communication and to see them working, which is a very hard-wired personal behavioural need," Jackson said. "There is a belief that you're not getting the same level of performance if you don't have that physical presence. But our spaces aren't designed for everyone to be there physically. So we are breaking it down to get an understanding of what needs to happen to change mindsets."

For what business reasons did this behaviour need to change?

Dstl needs to better understand where and how people need to work in order to facilitate hybrid communication and collaboration with people increasingly working from a variety of locations.

Two-thirds of Dstl's workforce is comprised of scientists, analysts, and engineers working in laboratories, in the field, or on other projects covering twenty-two different capabilities, including biotechnology and cyber information. The other one-third are staff that enable this work, such as colleagues in HR, estates and commercial. "The strength in numbers of scientist and engineers means we have more people who declare themselves as neurodiverse than many other organisations. People can be slower in accepting changes, and our approach to change management has to include activity to support diverse employee and role communities to make necessary changes," Jackson said.



How did you change the behaviour?

Inspired by work done at Nationwide Building Society during the pandemic, Jackson introduced personas as a tool – both to help senior leaders challenge their own mindsets, and to gain a deep understanding of Dstl's community of people.

"We have built up eight personas based on roles that people are doing. These are a foundation that we will progress. For these eight personas, we are mapping out – what do these people's days look like? What are they doing? Where are they likely to spend their days as part of that role? What are their attitudes and motivations? What equipment do they need? How do they communicate?"

To build the personas, time has been spent with people at all levels of the organisation – different ages, different career levels – exploring each diverse community's needs to arrive at a sense of what an average day looks like. Each persona's networking has also been mapped.

"We want to be able to understand and to tell a story about the person in that situation and what motivates them," Jackson said. "Do they really need to be on site? Often, yes, because they are spending time with specialised systems. But how much time do they have to spend on a specialised system? Is it all day? No, usually not. That is a myth that we have already busted."

Ultimately, developing the personas will serve two purposes.

- *First, the personas will guide decision making around hybrid working. Once the organisation understands what people do on site and how much time they spend doing it (one discovery is that people go on site primarily to talk to others), it can design physical spaces and ways of communicating that facilitate that behaviour, thus driving a culture of collaboration.*
- *Second, the personas are a tool for bringing to life the emotional and practical experiences of different 'types' in the organisation, which is already facilitating senior leaders' understanding of the needs in future ways of working. In other words, the personas are a tool that are helping shift leaders' mindsets.*

Once the persona structure is fully in place, Jackson's aim is to have a real employee be the 'face' for each persona. "We want to have a face for each persona, and invite everyone on the journey to follow their progression. In this way, they can be talking to their community of people who do similar roles, instead of it being a central team talking about them, to them."

USING PERSONAS TO SHIFT MINDSETS AND DRIVE **BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AT THE DEFENCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY**

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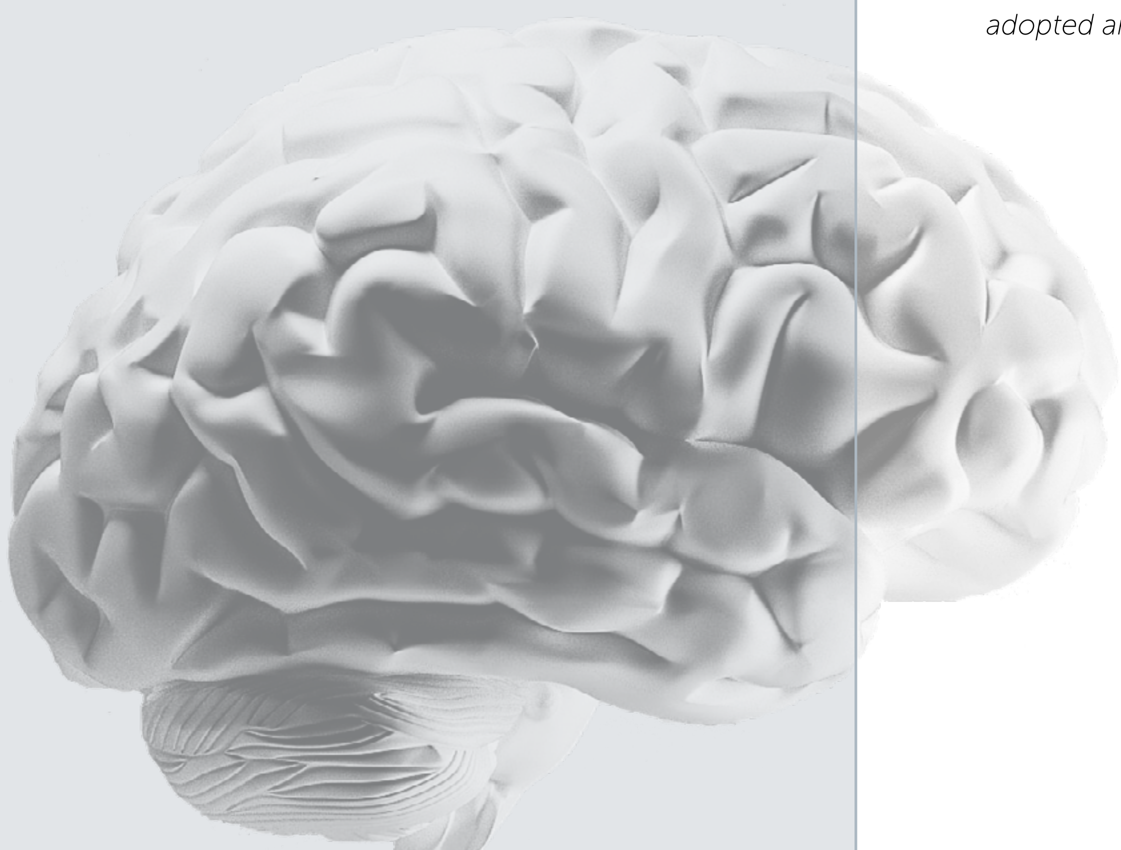


Did it work?

The behavioural change journey at Dstl is still in progress, but early indications are positive and some key lessons have already been learned (see below).

What did you learn?

Jackson shared two positive learnings from the journey thus far.

- ***Good communication is essential to forging connections with people and deepening your understanding of them.*** *"We actually have had two future ways of working projects. But when we did a survey in May 2021 to assess people's perceptions and to find out what they wanted post-pandemic, we had a very interesting result. Of our science and technology people – two-thirds of the organisation – only 30% replied to the survey. But of the people working in enabling roles – one-third of the organisation – 70% replied. What this told us is that our science and technology people don't necessarily perceive that we are talking to them. This incentivised us to go out and talk to them, to take a deeper dive. The bland communication we had done before hadn't connected with this portion of our workforce, and yet the hybrid future is extremely relevant to them. And we have learned that people are really valuing the effort that is being put into understanding them."*
- ***Getting senior leaders to buy-in from the very start is a critical enabler.*** *"When we kicked off, senior leaders hadn't been engaged first. When we went to them with initial findings, the feedback was that it didn't resonate. So then we stepped back, re-assessed, and did a pilot. In the pilot, we included one of the senior leaders, who was recommended by their division senior management team. We interviewed the leader so that they would know what we are doing and become engaged, so that ultimately, we will have buy-in and our findings will be adopted and used. Getting senior leaders involved early to avoid disengagement was a quick lesson learned."*

'COLLECTIVELY CHANGING HABITS AT THE SAME TIME' **BUILDING A CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE AT SHELL**

Jonathan Kohn, *former Vice President, HR Trading and Supply at* ***Shell,*** *shared a story about changing behaviour to drive a culture of compliance.*

What behaviour did you need to change?

Compliance and ethics are important across Shell, but in the trading business external regulations have become greater over the past five to seven years. Compliance with regulations is a license to operate issue.

Shell needs the confidence that the organisation as a whole really understands the compliance dimension of the work it does – that people understand the risks if regulations are shortcut, in terms of impact on brand and the enterprise as a whole.

The behaviour change was thus focused on driving a culture of compliance.

For what business reasons did this behaviour need to change?

There were defensive and business opportunity reasons for the change.

Kohn explained: "In a regulated environment, you are at risk not only of penalties and fines, but also of acquiring a reputation for not following the rules, which can limit your future ability to do business. But you could argue that a strong compliance reputation opens up opportunities for business that might not happen otherwise."

How did you change the behaviour?

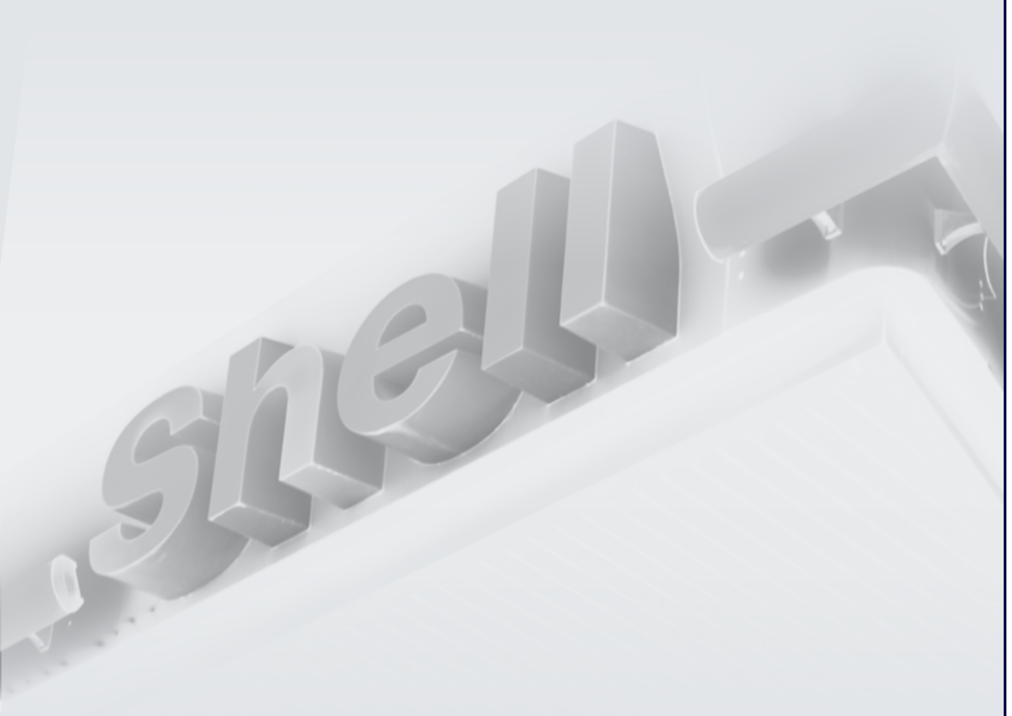
Kohn described several steps on the journey of behavioural change.

- *The starting point was achieving clarity and ownership of what the company was doing, and why, at the executive leadership level. "It's important to ensure commitment to do something before you actually try to do it," Kohn said. "If you don't have clarity and support from the CEO and the top team, your ability to see the change through will be significantly undermined. There will be a risk that the headlines you put out aren't backed up by the top team. And that's hugely risky for enacting behaviour change – to have the top doing something different than what you've said you're supposed to do." Senior leaders have to be clear not only on what is being done and why, but what their role is – what they have to do to show that they really believe in it.*
- *Next, Shell had to ensure that 'what good looks like' was consistently conveyed to the organisation – that people understood what was expected of them and that they had the skills to deliver it. Several actions supported this:*
  - *In Shell's strategic framework, 'Committed to Compliance' was a foundation. The strategic framework was used as a tool to organise the work – meetings, performance goals, and communications across all engagement channels were set up around the framework, which ensured commitment from multiple levels of leadership.*
  - *There was a significant training component, focused on helping people understand what 'committed to compliance' actually means and equipping them with the knowledge and capabilities to follow up.*
  - *An annual 'compliance day' required all teams to have sessions looking at different elements of compliance.*
  - *The 'so what?' was clearly articulated. Kohn explained: "If I don't do this, what impact does it have – on the jobs I get, on my bonus?"*
  - *There was an adjustment to who was in the room for performance discussions. Historically, commercial VPs alone had these discussions; now, colleagues from compliance and legal are included.*
  - *The company took a new approach to gathering feedback from the whole organisation on compliance behaviours. Kohn said: "Instead of HR asking for feedback, we had division leaders write to their people, asking for the feedback and explaining what they wanted and why it was important to them and for their business. We said we were looking for the extremes, not the generic stuff. Who are the role models and champions? Who has done what and why? But also what is going on with the bottom 10%? Because of the way we set this initial request up, we got three times as much information as historically, and the quality of the feedback was more specific and actionable."*
- *Finally, compliance was increasingly used as a significant input into selection decisions – "who are we going to trust with bigger sections of the business? And whose behaviour hasn't changed, and what are the consequences in terms of not getting roles and potentially even getting exited?", Kohn said.*

A framework – in this case McKinsey's Influence Model – was integral to the change effort. McKinsey's model has four quadrants – role modelling, fostering understanding and conviction, developing talent and skills, and reinforcing with formal mechanisms. Kohn used the model to assess the gaps: "Where are the gaps? Why do we feel like we are running hard but not going far? Using a framework or model is really important for that."

'COLLECTIVELY CHANGING HABITS AT THE SAME TIME' **BUILDING A CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE AT SHELL**

> Organisation-wide, people didn't necessarily notice how much had changed. Over time you can make massive sea changes that people just don't notice because behavioural norms have changed. So there is a question around: How do you make the extent of the change visible? And is that just for the leaders to let them know whether it's working, or is there broader value in making everyone aware – measuring progress to accelerate progress?



Did it work?

Yes. Over time, there was a significant shift and the base of the behavioural change grew. Initially driven by the CEO, Vice Presidents and General Managers began to ask more questions and trigger action, and people increasingly understood and began to act in accordance with their personal liability and accountability.

But organisation-wide, people didn't necessarily notice how much had changed. Kohn explained: "Over time you can make massive sea changes that people just don't notice because behavioural norms have changed. So there is a question around: How do you make the extent of the change visible? And is that just for the leaders to let them know whether it's working, or is there broader value in making everyone aware – measuring progress to accelerate progress?"

What did you learn?

Kohn shared several key learnings from his experience.

- ***Have a simple message that is easy to absorb and action.*** *"Don't force an 80-page, legalistic, complicated message onto people and then be upset when they do it wrong. Offer a clear, high level, simple message that people can absorb and act on."*
- ***Focus on one or two changes at a time.*** *"It's quite easy for businesses to come up with a long list of stuff – but then the subtle message being sent is 'we're saying it but it's not really important'. So be careful about your ambitions and how much you want to do at one time. Once you've built a new habit, it happens automatically and you can move on to something else. But if you're not careful and try to change three or four things at once, you will overwhelm people."*
- ***Ensure commitment from the top before going public.*** *"Behaviour change is really difficult and it's easy to get wrong, or to say you will do something and not follow through. So go slow and deep with the top to make sure they understand and are engaged before you make public statements."*
- ***Keep the new behavioural expectations front and centre.*** *"It has to be part of the story all of the time, because other stuff can crowd the change journey out. A change journey is always a learning journey, and it is always likely to go slow, to be messy, to take unexpected turns. So always look for what's happening and why; what's in your power to change and how to get back on track."*
- ***Pay attention to the tone from the middle.*** *"What are you doing to get tone from the middle in addition to tone from the top? You have to take a multilevel approach, because if senior leaders say something but the line manager doesn't care, it's not going to work. You have to enrol help from all three levels of the organisation. If you don't, people will carry on doing what they've done before."*
- ***Use a framework.*** *"Unless you've got an intellectual framework that you're using to drive change, your risk of missing something is huge. It is very pragmatic, practical and common sense, but if you don't have a tool to make sure you are covering all the gaps, it won't work overall. A framework helps ensure you are clear, comprehensive, and consistent."*

PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH ON PAR WITH PHYSICAL HEALTH AT **ANGLO AMERICAN**

***Liz Douglas,** Group Head of HR – Corporate Functions and Inclusion and Diversity at **Anglo American,** shared a story about how the company made a behavioural shift to prioritise mental health and wellbeing as greatly as it already prioritised physical health.*

What behaviour did you need to change?

Prior to the pandemic, it was becoming clear to Anglo American that, while there was a great deal of emphasis on physical health in the organisation – in line with its importance to safety – there was very little emphasis on mental health and wellbeing. Yet mental health is critical, as it impacts physical health and performance at work.

The behaviour change the company wanted to facilitate was destigmatising and elevating the importance of mental health, so that it would be as important to the organisation as physical health.

"This was a huge change," explained Douglas. "Especially for a mining company, where safety is the number one priority, and we often think of that in terms of physical health and safety. But mental health impacts physical safety, and mental health challenges impact so many people – 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime."

For what business reasons did this behaviour need to change?

"People's mental health is impacted by their work environment, the external environment, and their personal circumstances," Douglas said. "A person's mental health, in turn, impacts their ability to deliver what the business requires. We need to proactively manage mental wellbeing to avoid costs – such as sickness absence and safety issues – but also because it promotes our business goal of having a more inclusive environment. People need to be able to talk about mental health, to feel that they are able to raise their hand and ask for support."

How did you change the behaviour?

Anglo American's work began in early 2019, following the publication in the UK of the Stevenson / Farmer Review – Thriving at Work: A Review of Mental Health and Employers. The Stevenson / Farmer Review frames mental health and wellbeing in terms of thriving, struggling, or being ill.

The Review inspired the company's thinking. "What can we do as an organisation to keep people thriving? How do we support them if they start to struggle, either to prevent illness or to help them quickly recover?," Douglas explained.

The company created a mental health framework with five elements: promote mental health awareness and remove any stigma, support colleagues and encourage openness, create and sustain a safe environment, build and maintain a positive workplace, and monitor, review, and improve.

"Of course the pandemic changed things," Douglas said. "It really accelerated the action into the business. The pandemic hit and we said, 'forget the communication around the framework, we have to focus on delivering now'. But then over time we were able to bring back the framework and link our actions to it."

So what actions did the company take to change people's thinking and behaviour around mental health?

- ***Engaging senior leaders.** Senior leaders were engaged early to build commitment and to ensure they had the knowledge to support the change globally.*
- ***Review of HR policies.** A review of HR policies was undertaken to assess whether and how they supported the goals of the behaviour change. What is the policy and process for helping people reintegrate when they return to work after being off for mental health reasons? How will the new behaviours be integrated into the employee lifecycle?*
- ***Training Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs).** The company set a goal of training 5% of all colleagues to be MHFAs, and has an ambition to have at least one MHFA on every shift at every sight. About 750 colleagues have become MHFAs thus far. The MHFAs are trained to recognise the signs of mental ill health, to understands its triggers, and to have the right types of conversations with people at risk and to signpost professional help, as required. MHFAs are recruited voluntarily, although the company does an assessment of each volunteer's suitability, in terms of their behaviour and how they are perceived in the organisation.*
- ***Delivering 'Ted Talks'-style sessions.** The company now offers a huge variety of expert-led sessions on mental health topics such as suicide awareness, fatigue, stress management, understanding mental health for line managers, and many more. Importantly, while sessions are recorded for wider distribution, the recording is stopped each time a session reaches the Q&A portion. This is to allow people a psychologically safe space in which to ask potentially sensitive questions.*
- ***Leveraging the colleague network.** Anglo American had an existing colleague network for those who live with or have family members with disabilities. The company was able to deliver education and communication through the network.*
- ***Offering daily support.** The new behavioural expectations are supported through practises such as distributing a hard copy wellbeing puzzle book and offering all employees, free of charge, access to a mental health wellbeing app.*

Through these activities, Anglo American has articulated and supported the development of entirely new behavioural norms inside the organisation around mental health, which hastened and helped make successful a big cultural change.

But the work isn't done. Douglas explained: "We've done a huge amount of work in two years, but there is so much more to do. Already we are starting to see burnout, PTSD, and resilience issues. People are returning to work without family members and close friends that they had before, there are new premises, nothing is as it was before. Life has changed beyond recognition, and as a business we have to be there to catch our people. So we have to maintain and step up our support to ensure that we can help people get through it."

PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH ON PAR WITH PHYSICAL HEALTH AT **ANGLO AMERICAN**

> Different people need different types of resources. Some people want to listen, some want to go to the resources and figure it out for themselves, some want personal contact with a Mental Health First Aider, others really want to help – to be trained in how to understand and what to do differently.
>
> In other words, facilitating behavioural change is also about personalising and targeting your strategy to different kinds of personalities and needs.

Did it work?

Yes.

Anglo American has had success in changing the conversation and practise inside the organisation around mental health, and over time mental health has increasingly extended to include a wider position on psychological safety.

Pulse survey data shows that people are very positive about the changes, and have good knowledge of information and support and where to find it.

The company has put in place many different opportunities for people to get support (see the section above for details), and uptake of these opportunities has been robust.

Anglo American has also won an award from the Business Disability Forum for its approach to mental health and wellbeing.

What did you learn?

Douglas shared a few key learnings from the journey thus far.

- ***A good business case for the change can facilitate buy-in from the top.*** *"Pre-pandemic, a key learning was that if we actually created the business case, explained how it connected to the business, how it impacted people, how it met our values and behaviours and improved physical safety, then we were pushing an open door."*
- ***Different people need different types of resources.*** *"Some people want to listen, some want to go to the resources and figure it out for themselves, some want personal contact with a Mental Health First Aider, others really want to help – to be trained in how to understand and what to do differently." In other words, facilitating behavioural change is also about personalising and targeting your strategy to different kinds of personalities and needs.*
- ***Line managers are important drivers of change, and need to be given proper support to facilitate change.*** *"Once managers were able to recognise the signs of people struggling with their mental wellbeing, and understood what it meant to the ability of individuals to contribute to their team's performance, this really increased empathy and understanding. But to get to that place, managers need to know what to do and how to do it. They need education and the tools to support different situations. There is no one-size-fits-all."*

3.0
POST MEETING NOTES

On 9th and 10th February 2022, CRF members gathered for a two-day immersive workshop, led by **Grace Lordan**, Founding Director of the Inclusion Initiative and Associate Professor at the London School of Economics. The workshop explored the science behind behaviour change and HR's role in creating the conditions for change.

This chapter summarises Grace's key insights from the two days.

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DR GRACE LORDAN is the Founding Director of The Inclusion Initiative and an Associate Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Grace is an economist and her research is focused on quantifying the benefits of inclusion within and across firms, as well as designing interventions that level the playing field for under-represented talent. She is an expert advisor to the UK government sitting on their skills and productivity board, a member of the UK government's BEIS social mobility taskforce and the Women in Finance Charter's advisory board. Her academic writings have been published in top international journals and she has written for *The Financial Times* and *Harvard Business Review*. Grace is a regular speaker and advisor to blue chip finance and technology firms. *Think Big, Take Small Steps and Build the Future You Want* is her first book.

CATCH UP OR RE-WATCH THIS SESSION:
GRACE LORDAN: WHAT IS BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE?

Access Grace's **Recommended Further Reading Resources** here.

WHAT IS **BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE?**

Behavioural science is the study of human behaviour, though it is not a discipline in the sense that psychology, sociology, or anthropology are disciplines. Rather, behavioural science as a field brings in the best insights from across the social scientific disciplines.

Behavioural science:

- Recognises that business is dynamic and context matters.
- Offers generalisable studies that practitioners can apply to their field.
- Asks how we can change what people actually do on a daily basis.

In human behaviour, there is a phenomenon known as the 'say-do gap'. This refers to the tendency of human beings to express the intention to do one thing, but to actually do something else. Studies monitoring human behaviour have found that 70-90% of people behave out of line with their stated intentions. Either the majority of people are lying about their intentions, or they find it really hard to follow through on what they say they want to do.

Behavioural science is concerned with how we can empower people to follow through on their intentions.

To begin, it is important to understand the 'fast brain' and the 'slow brain', and the different cognitive biases that affect human behaviour.

The Fast Brain

Or system 1, is the habit-driven brain. It is very effective at making decisions when it has learned through doing, but it is also subject to cognitive biases. We spend 70-90% of our time in our fast brains.

What sorts of cognitive biases is the fast brain subject to?

- **Loss aversion** – in which the pain from losses is felt much more intensely than the pleasure one gets from gains.
- **Anticipative loss aversion** – in which people haven't actually lost anything, but their rumination on the potential for loss stops them taking action in the first place. For example, not putting oneself forward for promotion because of the risk of failure. Research shows that anticipated loss is experienced more intensely than actual loss. This is because people tend to forget how resilient they are and that they can manage bad experiences.
- **Confirmation bias** – This is the tendency of people to seek out people or information that will confirm their existing beliefs. People or information that provides evidence against one's beliefs are dismissed.
    - Confirmation bias is dangerous for organisations. Consensus-based decision-making is a norm in many organisations. This type of decision-making relies on people in the room coming together to form an agreement. The easiest way to come to agreement is through confirmation bias, which then stifles innovative thinking. Challenging one's beliefs is critical to fostering innovation, and one way to achieve this is by bringing diverse people into the room to give a different lens on the issue.

The Slow Brain

Or system 2, involves slow, deliberative thinking. It is controlled, analytic, and conscious. When learning new behaviours or making high stakes decisions, people need to be in their slow brain – really concentrating and avoiding biases.

But how do you know if you are making a high stakes decision?

- **A high stakes decision** can be thought of as a door that you enter and can't go back. In organisations, high stakes decisions involve things such as who is hired, promoted, the organisation structure, and choices about projects.
- **A lower stakes decision** can be thought of as a door you enter but can reverse back through. In organisations, adapting a new framework is an example of a lower stakes decision.

The challenge for organisations is to decide which types of decisions are single door and which are reversible door, and then to ask employees to trust them with the reversible door decisions. However, you cannot ask for trust in the absence of a good culture, and larger organisations have a natural tendency toward lower trust. Transparency and good communications can help larger organisations build the necessary trust.

So, do we always make great decisions when we slow down and go into system 2 (slow brain) thinking? While system 2 offers the potential for better decision-making, there are still things to be aware of.

- **Beliefs** – no matter how slow we go, we all still have beliefs that can generate bias. The beliefs people hold (not written value statements) are what drive culture in an organisation; it is crucial to surface the beliefs in a room when approaching high stakes decisions.
- **Context** – Stressful environments make system 2 thinking more challenging. Organisations have to create contexts that support the good decision-making that can happen in system 2.
- **Affect** – is another word for emotions. If decision-making is going to involve emotions, attention has to be paid to one's emotional state during system 2 thinking. Are you feeling ok? Are you hungry? (Research shows that hunger can impact decision-making – judges give harsher penalties just before lunch). How intense are people's emotions, and how can that intensity be mitigated?

Now that we have an understanding of the fast and slow brains, cognitive biases, and high and low stakes decisions, let's explore how we can change as individuals, and how we can change the individuals around us.

How can we change as individuals?

A key point about behaviour change at the individual level is that small changes result in big gains. Therefore, the best thing we can do to change the behaviours we engage in when in our habit-driven, autopilot fast brains is to embed really good habits into our lifestyles.

We tend not to pay attention to small habits, as individuals or in our organisations. But they are the key to change.

Though we like to believe we are good at change, most people actually hate it, because of the uncertainty it entails. Uncertainty is very bad for people.

Negative shocks spur big changes in behaviour (think of how people's behaviour changed during the pandemic or how an individual's behaviour might change after a near-death experience). Few of us would want to go through a big shock to spur our behaviour change, so instead breaking down big changes into small habits can be a successful way forward.

How can we change the individuals around us?

Mindspace was the first framework published in the UK that sums up behavioural science's key messages on behaviour change.

MINDSPACE

Messenger	we are heavily influenced by who communicates information
Incentives	we like rewards but more strongly seek to avoid losses
Norms	we are strongly influenced by what others do
Defaults	we go with the flow of pre-set options
Salience	our attention is drawn to what is novel and relevant
Priming	our acts are often influenced by subconscious cues
Affect	our emotional associations can powerfully shape our actions
Commitment	we seek to be consistent with our public promises
Ego	we act in ways that make us feel better about ourselves

These are mechanisms through which we can change the individuals around us. Let's explore each in turn.

Messenger

We are heavily influenced by **who** communicates the message. Types of messengers include celebrities, 'someone like me', authority figures, and weak ties.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change, look at how information spreads in your organisation.

- Who are the people with soft power who can be ambassadors? We tend to choose messengers because we have a 'feeling' about the person – this feeling is hit or miss. Social network analysis can help us make better judgements about who our ambassadors should be. Once identified, send your messages through those people that others actually listen to. Who will people follow? They are the people who can help create change. (And they are not necessarily C-suite leaders).
- Demonstrate to people that it is good for them to behave in the desired way. Have your messengers show what good looks like and signal to others the benefits of adopting the new behaviours; be sure to actually give people the autonomy to behave in the desired way.
- Rely on contagion (behaviours catching on). To accelerate contagion, use ambassadors or weak ties. Keep in mind that people listen to those who are closer to them, regardless of their charisma. Sometimes we over-estimate tone from the top and underestimate peer influence.

Incentives

Everything is relative; when it comes to incentives, reference points really matter. For example, we compare our salaries to those of our peers.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change, remember that:

- People have a strong preference for avoiding losses rather than making a gain of identical value. Therefore, framing an incentive as a potential loss has more impact.
- People seek immediate gratification: we prefer smaller, immediate payments to a larger sum in the future. Keep this principle in mind when designing incentives for behaviour change.
- People adapt back to their mean, so can you intrinsically motivate them to behave in the desired way while keeping it novel? Novelty is important.

Norms

We follow the lead of multiple comparable others. For example, consider when and how you chose to wear a mask during the pandemic. Are you most likely to wear a mask when others are doing the same? This could be norms at work.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change, keep in mind that:

- Social norms do not discriminate between desirable and undesirable behaviours.
- Since social norms influence decision-making, it is important to identify the cohort that is dominant in your organisation, how they are behaving, and how to change their behaviour if is not helpful.

Defaults

Defaults have a big impact on behaviour because they are accepted without any conscious thought.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change:

- Understand why defaults work: people have a status quo bias (and it is easier to follow the status quo when in fast brain), and defaults imply a recommended option that people are likely to be averse to losing.
- Make it easier for people to do the things you want them to do. For example, at Google's King's Cross (London) offices, water (the healthy, desired choice) is available at people's height, but soft drinks (the unhealthy, undesired choice) require stooping to reach. Designing water as the default in this way lowers the cost of people engaging in the desired behaviour, without taking away the choice.

Salience

Our attention is drawn to what is novel and relevant. A good example of this is the use of unconscious bias training as a tool to make the issues of diversity and inclusion salient in an organisation. There is limited research evidence that unconscious bias training actually works, but many organisations have adopted it anyway. Why? Because it is a signal that demonstrates to people that the organisation takes diversity and inclusion seriously. It makes the issue salient, and so can open up space to do other things that will impact behaviour.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change:

- Avoid information overload. Information overloaded environments lead us to filter out information, and the people who get attention are the ones who shout loudest or bring some kind of novelty. Ideally, organisations should share three salient messages at a time (and definitely no more than five). These messages should communicate the actions you want people to take on a daily basis.
- Communications that are simple, easy to understand and relate directly to our personal situation or needs will get our attention. More complex and generic messages tend to be disregarded.
- When we have no past experience of a situation to guide us, we look for an initial anchor on which to base our decision. Thus, anchors are really important in times of uncertainty.

Priming

Our acts are often influenced by subconscious cues, which means that evoking salience can be tricky.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change:

- Identify the priming effects that are salient in your context (sound, air, light, image, ergonomics, and nature can all influence behaviours).
- Use these insights to create spaces that improve productivity and happiness. How are we priming colleagues on a daily basis?

Affect

People often make decisions because of their 'gut instinct' or the visceral feeling they get when considering a decision.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change:

- Think about when and how you use emotive language. Purely emotive language or images can have a significant influence on behaviour, and this can be used positively or negatively to influence behaviour change.
- Consider whether you should or should not be relying on your 'gut feeling' in a given situation. Gut feelings can be useful when making decisions in an area where you have already learned by doing; but in novel situations they can bias our decision-making.

Commitment

People often procrastinate and put off decisions that will benefit them in the long run.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change:

- Get people to make public commitments to a goal. This can improve outcomes because breaking the commitment will result in significant reputational damage.
- Ensure that commitments are action-based. Don't ask people to commit to a philosophical change ('I will support a positive culture'); instead, help them identify and commit to the actions they are going to take to realise the positive culture.

Ego

Human beings tend to have very fragile egos, and thus often act in ways that make them feel better about themselves.

To leverage this mechanism for behaviour change:

- Try to motivate employees by making them feel good about themselves (appeal to their egos). Don't make a value statement and then sit back and wait for people to act; they won't, because value statements don't appeal to individual egos. Instead, connect the value to the individual and their skills – tell them a story about themselves and how crucial their contribution is.
- Rely on line managers, not senior leaders, to tell this story to the individual about his or her unique value.
- Remember that when people's behaviour is in conflict with their goals, it is often the goals that get changed.

CULTURE CHANGE AT **THE ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL**

It is the people within organisations that determine organisational culture, as they make decisions about who to hire, how to organise employees, and what conduct is acceptable. All of these decisions are potentially subject to biases. They also all have a high opportunity cost.

Culture change efforts are often stymied by the fact that change managers tend to think about theory and structure, while neglecting the practical daily actions that drive change forward.

There are three main mechanisms through which culture is changed at the organisational level.

1. **Tone from the Top.** This is often realised through the 'standing ovation model' wherein someone visible does something, the hope being that people throughout the organisation will then herd behind them. Tone from the top tends to be overly focused upon.
2. **Human Resources.** HR tends to use a compliance-based model, using carrots and sticks (quotas, targets, incentives, punishments) to create change. This works to some extent, but there is a limit to how much change can be realised through this model. Often, it is not clear to people that the behaviour change is in their best interests.
3. **Mid-level Management.** Culture change happens via mid-level managers when there is contagion or tipping. Tipping happens when enough managers in an organisation (30-55%) are engaging in the new behaviours to tip over and change behaviour among the broader workforce. The best thing that

managers can do is pay attention to their team, to their voices and perspectives. The benefit of doing so is not just happy workers (organisations tend to overfocus on people feeling happy), but the business gains from the innovation that comes when diverse people are 'critical friends' to each other's ideas. A key managerial skill is the ability to create psychological safety so that people feel they can contribute. When everyone contributes, hidden information that people hold is revealed, often leading to better outcomes.

Of these mechanisms, mid-level managers are critical because they drive 'little c' – the small daily changes that add up to the 'Big C' of cultural change at the organisational level. Thus, organisations would do well to put culture change in the hands of mid-level managers and enable them.

What does the future successful mid-level manager look like? He or she:

- Recognises that an experimental approach is optimal.
- Rejects command and control style in favour of inclusive leadership.
- Has a T model of skills (deep vertical skills in a specialised area as well as broad but not necessarily deep skills in other relevant areas).
- Feels comfortable not being the smartest person in the room.

What does it mean to take an experimental approach to culture change? An experimental approach involves:

- Approaching projects and situations with a scientist's mindset.
- Testing hypotheses and analysing results.
- Experimenting with and refining how you deal with workplace challenges.
- Applying the I.D.E.A. framework.

BUILDING **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**

One aspect of the psychologically safe environment is that it is one in which dissent is embraced. This acceptance of dissent helps people feel that it's safe for them to contribute, leading to better outcomes on average. Furthermore, in multinational teams, psychological safety promotes learning as members are willing to share tacit knowledge and volunteer ideas.

But how do managers foster a sense of psychological safety, both in virtual meetings and more broadly?

Here we share good practices identified by behavioural science.

Fostering Psychological Safety in Virtual Meetings

The hand raise function, the chat feature, breakout rooms, video – there are many new features to contend with in the virtual meeting space. How do we make the best use of these tools, but in a psychologically safe way? We examine each in turn.

Using the hand raise function

- Context matters. To elicit real answers, yes/no polls with hand raised only work in highly psychologically safe environments. Even then, if the question is sensitive, people might still be reluctant to give their real answer.
- Using the anonymous poll feature may be more effective than using the hand raise function when asking yes/no questions. This is because anonymous polls make it easy to express hidden information.
- Anonymous polls, in turn, work best when leaders frame diverse views as an asset – that is, leaders should make it explicit before the poll that the purpose is to capture the diversity of views in the room. This can lay the groundwork for probing the group to discuss why people may see things differently.
- If you receive different answers to anonymous polls than you receive when questions are not posed anonymously, this is an indication that you have a problem with psychological safety.

Using the chat function

- Again, context matters. A benefit of using the chat function is that everyone can contribute at the same time in their own words, as the chat function lowers the threshold for participation.
- However, a high volume or long length of entries into the chat may cause some people to be overlooked. Instituting a 'two-line rule' for brevity can help mitigate this.
- Chats also distract from spoken conversation. There are times when the chat function should be disabled – particularly, when the meeting requires people to actively listen.
- Chats can also be difficult for some team members to follow. For example, dyslexic team members may struggle to keep up with high-volume, rapid, and/or lengthy chats. It's important to think about who is in the room when using the function. One fix is for the leader to verbally summarise the chat.
- At the beginning of the meeting, the leader should lay out the norms and expectations for how chat will be used.

Using breakout rooms

- Six is the ideal number for brainstorming, problem solving, and sharing in small groups. In general, people are more likely to speak in small groups. Therefore, virtual breakouts can be very helpful in allowing people in big meetings to speak more easily.
- Ground rules need to be clear. What is the purpose? Is the conversation off-record or will it be discussed in the larger room? Manage expectations to foster psychological safety.

- Using breakout rooms with a specific task or topic is helpful as it provides a psychologically safe space to test ideas and build new relationships. On re-entry to the larger group, colleagues find it easier to report ideas as they have already tested and shared perspectives in a relatively safer space. Of course, be sure to make it clear that ideas will be shared in the larger space.
- Breakouts work best when they are given ample time, and when there is a facilitator of the breakout room conversation.
- Take care with the composition of groups. Prominent leaders landing in a group may dampen conversation, or clashing personalities can impede conversation.

Using video

- Using video is effective in small groups, but may be less so in larger groups. This is because seeing many faces can be too much visual stimuli and thus distracting. Seeing oneself is also visually distracting. Furthermore, low bandwidth can cause visual disruptions. Using presenter view (one face on centre stage) and disabling self-view can help mitigate some of these issues.
- It's important to be mindful of what things might be going on in someone's personal situation. Don't pressure people to turn the camera on.
- Audio-only is a good option for meetings that require deep listening.

A note on conference calls

Old-fashioned conference calls, where everyone joins by telephone, may seem a thing of the past. Here are a few pointers if you find yourself organising one.

- Conference calls require acute attention to avoid misinterpreting silence as agreement and to explicitly ensure participation. Set ground rules, and ask people to state their name and role before speaking on large calls.
- The absence of non-verbal communication sharpens the need for proactive inquiry.
- Participants often multitask, so leaders must be explicit in requesting full attention.
- Foster psychological safety for those not in the room by making sure the people in the room together can be seen.

Good practice before and after the meeting

There are a few additional things managers can do before and after meetings to bolster psychological safety.

- Consider interacting with participants in advance via anonymous polling or one-on-one interviews. In particular, if the group is working on something sensitive or if there is likely to be conflict in the room, it's useful for the leader to get ideas privately beforehand, and then synthesise those ideas as the meeting begins.
- After a virtual meeting, reach out to talk to participants who were quiet during the session.
- To replicate informal water-cooler moments, managers can use text, phone, email, or 'drop-in hours' to give reinforcing or redirecting feedback. However, research has not yet identified a trusted technique for the replication of water-cooler moments.

Broader Lessons on Psychological Safety

While there is no silver bullet, Grace shared five additional insights from behavioural science for promoting psychological safety more broadly.

- **Develop your EQ (emotional intelligence) as a leader.** It's important for leaders to be inclusive in a mechanical sense (tweaking the way meetings are run, for example) but psychological safety also requires a leader with high emotional intelligence. Can EQ be taught? Yes – it's a bit trickier than teaching maths, but research shows that EQ can be improved.
- **Pay attention to how mistakes are treated within the team.** Are mistakes treated as learning opportunities, or are people punished for making mistakes? And is this consistent – do certain people 'fail up' while others are negatively sanctioned for their mistakes? Uncertainty and unfairness make people feel less psychologically safe, so set expectations around mistakes just as you would around meetings. Let people have their emotional reactions, role model good practice yourself as the leader, and be explicit about what will happen when someone makes a mistake. In this way, you can encourage people to speak up about a mistake in the moment so that it can be figured out together, rather than the person ruminating and hiding the mistake out of fear.
- **Be mindful of how luck is attributed within the team.** Did you know that the attribution of luck contributes to pay gaps? If someone does consistently good work but it is attributed to luck, they tend to be paid less than they are worth. If it is attributed to ability, they tend to be paid more than they are worth. So when completing a post-mortem on outcomes, pay attention to whether you are attributing success or failure to luck or ability. Nothing is more demotivating to a team member than not getting credit for their ideas while simultaneously seeing someone else get rewarded for them.
- **Focus on the communication illusion.** The communication illusion occurs when someone makes a point, but it hasn't been received or understood by others. To overcome the communication illusion in a

team meeting, when someone verbalises a great idea, ask someone else to reiterate it so that you can make sure everyone is on the same page. This encourages active listening, but also, we all hear things differently to others because we all come to conversations with different backgrounds and prejudices. Reiteration can break down cultural or language barriers, making sure everyone is hearing people in the way they want to be heard.

- **Use humour.** Look for ways to create humour, but make sure it doesn't fall flat. Normalise the boundaries around what kind of humour is acceptable and what is not (make sure that a certain group or person isn't always the butt of the joke). A few other things to remember about humour:
    - There is a difference between lightening up in the moment and not taking anything seriously. You want to do the former, not the latter.
    - Two people sharing a joke in the back of the room sets a very different tone to someone bringing humour into the room. You want less of the former, and more of the latter.
    - In some situations, humour can be used to minimise or deflect from a difficult matter. It is the leader's responsibility to watch where humour is being used in the team to conveniently brush aside things people don't want to address, and to surface that.

BUILDING RESILIENCE AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND WITHIN TEAMS

Behavioural science offers lessons for enhancing personal resilience and wellbeing. In this section, we summarise how you can use these lessons both to build personal resilience and to become a more inclusive leader.

What is resilience?

At the individual level, resilience is defined as the ability to 'bounce back' from setbacks, recover from stressful situations, adapt to challenging circumstances, sustain high performance over time, or simply not become ill when faced with challenging situations. It involves being able to cope with major life stressors and tragedies, but also includes the ability to roll with small, everyday punches. It does not include an expectation that people should maintain resilience in the face of toxic environments or people. Higher individual resilience is correlated with better labour market outcomes (promoted quicker, earn more), higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction, better mental health and better social networks and relationships.

Team resilience does not equal the sum of the resilience of its individual members. A team of highly resilient people could be extremely low on team resilience, if their 'resilient individual' nature drives them to look out for their own self-interests at the expense of their team's interests. Therefore, team-level resilience is about helping people become more embedded in the team, not about making them more individualistic.

Team resilience emerges from collaboration. It grows through communicating, coordinating, and cooperating over time. Collaborating well together over ideas (not just social friendliness) and knowing that team members have each other's backs oils the machine of team resilience. Levels of team resilience tend to be higher in psychologically safe environments, so the work managers do to curb groupthink and foster psychological safety will also help them to hone team resilience. Team resilience is correlated with greater productivity and happiness.

How To Build Resilience

Grace shared several strategies for building individual and team resilience.

- **Celebrate small wins**. This is a good way to bring people together. It is akin to gratitude, and high gratitude is correlated with higher resilience. Celebrating small wins also evokes novelty, which is associated with greater resilience and happiness.
- **Refocus your attention.** When something negative happens, don't dwell on it, but distract yourself by refocusing your attention (not everything needs attention in the moment; a point we tend to forget in today's digital world). This is not about repressing negative feelings, which is not a good tactic over the long road. Instead, it's about recognising that you are going to have an emotional reaction, that it's going to pass, that you need to temporarily refocus your attention to help preserve your resilience, and then come back and deal with the issue later.
    - How you choose to refocus your attention is personal; to hone your resilience, you need the self-awareness to understand what works for you. It's useful to have several strategies for refocusing that you can pull out of your toolkit based on time constraints and the level of the challenge.
    - At the team level, set the ground rules for refocusing attention. Acknowledge that negative things are going to happen from time to time within the team, and let the team know in advance what you are going to

do, separately or together, to deal with it when these things happen. Make it clear that it is safe for people to have emotional reactions, and that the team will reconvene to solve the problem later. And then do so!

- **Shift from relative to individual comparisons.** Comparisons matter – and people have a tendency to compare themselves to people in their periphery. Comparing things such as one's position in a hierarchy or one's salary to others in the team can be very negative for resilience and happiness. To mitigate this, try to measure your individual progress rather than your progress against others, and try to move the team away from such comparisons too.
- **Be aware of the fundamental attribution error.** The fundamental attribution error is the tendency for people to under-emphasise situational and environmental explanations for an individual's observed behaviour while over-emphasising dispositional and personality-based explanations (while doing the opposite when explaining their own behaviour).
    - Making this error holds people back because it promotes emotional rancour and is more taxing to our resilience.
    - To avoid the error, stop and ask: was this a one-off? If so, give the person a second chance before confronting them (unless it affects something big like a promotion or pay rise).
    - Just being aware and having ground rules about group behaviour can help both teams and individuals be more resilient. Let people know that things can happen sometimes, but don't need to be repeated. This gives people space to make mistakes (to have a bad day) but lets them know that they can't have a bad day every day. It also reminds us that we shouldn't judge others by first impressions.
- **Take lessons from what resilient individuals do.** Research shows that resilient people have certain habits. They take time to be creative, think and reflect; they unplug sometimes from the digital world; they have gratitude and focus on the things that are going right rather than those that are going wrong; they leverage their fast brain by embedding good habits; some find meditation helpful; they have tight social networks (that is, friends and families they can rely on); they exercise and get enough sleep; they engage in activities that bring them joy; they have established morning and evening routines to manage the expectations of people around them; and they periodically audit how they spend their time to understand which things served their future, served them in the moment, or wasted their time. The trick for team resilience is to figure out if and how you can integrate these good personal habits at the team level.
- **Listen.** The chance of actually listening to the other person when in a conflict is low, so embed the practice of stepping back and actively listening into your team. This is a difficult skill to hone and to monitor – focusing on the communication illusion (see page 36) can help.
- **Take time-outs.** When something negative is happening within the team, don't necessarily address it in the moment. Consider the situation and whether a time-out would be helpful (Time-outs are generally not helpful when high stakes decisions such as hiring are at issue).
- **Remember that not everything is a 'ten'.** In fact, most things that go wrong in the day at work are not a ten, in the sense of not being hugely important. Define what a ten actually looks like before anything happens, so that people are less likely to overreact.
- **Challenge narratives that cast heroes and villains.** Make a committed effort to recast narratives and listen to the other side of the story.
- **Remember that most things aren't about you, and most of the time people are not paying attention to you.** Remembering this can take the pressure off the embarrassment of failure and consequently make people more willing to take healthy risks by putting themselves out there.

HOW RESILIENT ARE YOU? EXERCISE

Grace shared an exercise for taking stock of your individual resilience.

Consider the scenarios listed below. For each one, determine how you would respond:

- *"These things happen."*
- *"I will have regrouped and got over it in a day."*
- *"This would really affect me and stop me in my tracks."*

1. You have an important deadline, and a senior colleague whose input you need is not responding to your emails or calls.
2. In an important meeting a colleague talks over you, and drowns out an important point you want to make.
3. You emerge from your career development meeting feeling patronised and none the wiser about what it will take to get promoted.
4. Your boss makes a mistake and takes it out on you.
5. A colleague misinterprets something you said to them in casual conversation – and, despite you apologising and setting the record straight, continues their false narrative and complains to your boss.

All of the above are things that happen pretty often in organisations. But if they are happening routinely, they must be dealt with. An individual has to be resilient in the moment when something happens, but must also have the resilience to address the issue later (rather than going away and ruminating on it).

A helpful way to think about this is in terms of actions and reactions. You need to react in a resilient way at the moment when something negative happens at work, give yourself space to have your emotions, and then take action to deal with the issue. How do you ensure you react resiliently in the moment? By embedding good habits in your fast brain.

TAKING AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO CULTURE CHANGE: APPLYING THE I.D.E.A FRAMEWORK TO TACKLE GROUPTHINK IN MEETINGS

The I.D.E.A. framework involves Identifying the problem you are trying to solve, Designing a potential intervention to solve it, Evaluating whether the intervention will work, and Assessing whether the intervention needs to be tweaked, abandoned, or pivoted away from.

Grace posed a question to attendees: **As a mid-level manager, how do you know that your team has a positive culture?**

Surveys are often relied on to assess this, but they are problematic for many reasons. First, culture is very difficult to accurately measure. Second, managers tend to focus on the negatives that come out of surveys, and to rationalise any negative feedback.

A more helpful approach is to embed a culture of active listening. An experimental leader understands that inclusive discussions are valuable to the business and the culture. Productive conversations move teams away from an overfocus on shared information, which tend to happen when people are uncomfortable or are afraid to speak up.

In the case study, attendees took on the role of an experimental leader, applying the I.D.E.A. framework to identify groupthink in meetings, design solutions to avoid it, and embed active listening and productive conversations instead.

Identify

How can you quickly tell if groupthink is a problem in your team meetings?

- ***Monitor cascading.*** *To monitor cascading, the manager says very little and watches how the meeting unfolds, observing who speaks first, who speaks next and if they give any new information. Cascading happens when the same people reiterate the same points over and over again. It is a sure sign of groupthink, is bad for business, and should be interrupted.*
- ***Monitor who does not speak.*** *Is an individual or group getting ignored systematically? Why?*
- ***Monitor who speaks too much.*** *The over-extroverted need to be pulled back as much as the introverted need to be drawn out.*
- ***Enlist 'disagree and proceed'.*** *When there is a dissenting voice, the manager makes a note of it and the meeting proceeds. The manager then analyses who is disagreeing and whether there is a pattern of ignoring certain voices; if a pattern emerges, the manager self-corrects.*
- ***Commit to a post-mortem.*** *For any particular major decision, input and luck impact outcomes. A post-mortem is used to figure out whether the outcome – success or failure – was down to the team or to luck.*

Design

So you've identified that groupthink is a problem in your team meetings. What are some potential interventions you can design to avoid it?

- ***Trial and error learning.*** *This involves separating brainstorming from the decision-making process, introducing space for experimentation.*
- ***Improve psychological safety and embrace dissent.*** *For an in-depth look at how to improve psychological safety and embrace dissent, see* *page 35*.
- ***Interrupt cascading.*** *People other than leaders can interrupt cascading; teach your team how to recognise it and empower them to intervene when they spot it happening.*
- ***Use 'tell me something I don't know'.*** *This technique changes the meeting agenda. Instead of focusing on shared information or being anchored by the leader's idea, attendees have the onus placed on them to get creative by sharing something that isn't already known at the meeting.*
- ***Emphasise group success through rewards.*** *If possible, move away from individual incentives, instead tying the team's fate to one another.*
- ***Embrace specialists and divide team labour.*** *Making a group smaller can give people who haven't spoken before permission to speak. Validate people's specialist expertise by sharing what it is.*
- ***Adopt enthusiastic 'devil's advocates'.*** *Empower one or two people to play the role of sanctioned dissenter whose job it is to take the opposing view and ask challenging questions.*
- ***Focus on the risks.*** *Often, when someone voices doubt about an idea, we challenge them to offer a 'better solution'. Instead, when doubts are raised, the team should discuss the costs, benefits, and risks of the doubted idea. When asked about risk, people will lean on their own expertise to answer the question. This is the availability bias, and it can cause people to miss other perspectives. By discussing risks together, you can get a much broader and probably more accurate picture.*
- ***Allow alternative forms of communication.*** *For example, use written response meetings (allow people to write down their ideas first), or call on colleagues randomly (this is a simple way to quieten dominant voices. It can also prevent cascades because it's random whether you will be called upon or not).*

TAKING AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO CULTURE CHANGE: APPLYING THE I.D.E.A FRAMEWORK TO TACKLE GROUPTHINK IN MEETINGS

Evaluate

When we experiment, some things we do create positive change. Others have no impact or even create negative change, so evaluation is needed to ensure we are actually moving things forward and to ensure that we stop doing things that aren't working.

So how will you know if your groupthink intervention worked?

Monitoring how people behave during meetings is key – and relatively easy to do.

In addition to monitoring cascading and who speaks too little / too much, managers can count the number of 'new ideas' that came up in the meeting, count the number of 'go forward' ideas that came up in the meeting, and count the pieces of hidden information (hidden to the manager) that came up in the meeting.

Over the longer run, managers should evaluate whether the small changes they are making are disrupting the status quo. Do so by:

- *Enlisting 'disagree and proceed' and committing to post-mortems. Do you regularly ignore particular colleagues or groups of colleagues?*
- *Recording for each project whether it came in under budget, at budget, or over budget?*
- *Recording for each project whether it came in ahead of schedule, on schedule, or behind schedule?*

The value in recording project cost and time is related to the planning fallacy. It is well-known that most public projects come in over budget and take longer than expected; after so many failures, how is it that this still happens?

It happens because groupthink in a meeting prompts people to always imagine the best-case scenario. This dynamic is exaggerated if there are cliques within the group.

Ask people to estimate up front the time and cost of the project, and then check to see who got it wrong and who got it right. This can be very revealing of group dynamics. One of the most powerful ways to get people to change group dynamics is to show them how they are biased in a way that they cannot deny.

Finally, when evaluating, think about common ways to measure the impact of multiple interventions. If you are intervening in meetings, the outcomes you are measuring should always be the same – for example, the presence of cascading and how many new ideas are generated. You don't want to constantly change the outcome you are measuring because then you can't make comparisons. A common unit of measurement makes it easy to gather information and easy to know if behaviour is trending in the right direction.

Assess

Assessing involves taking a pause. Ask yourself: was it worth it? What level of effect did you expect, and was it obtained? Assessment is about the size of change, not just about whether it is statistically significant.

It is also important to assess whether your team is happy, or languishing and burning out. Ultimately, change needs to be enacted in such a way that the benefits outweigh the costs.

In Summary

The I.D.E.A. framework is a powerful tool for the experimental leader trying to enact behaviour change. It allows managers of all levels to be clear on whether they are creating real change through changing their actions.

Use the framework to Identify and address your organisation's problems. Remember that your context is very specific – figuring out if the problem actually exists in your context, before taking action, is really important. The Design phase is enlivening – there is nothing better than you as the person who understands the context designing the intervention. You might get it wrong, but that's where Evaluation is important. Finally, Assess the success and the size of the change to determine whether and how to proceed.

If managers can get the team meeting right, some other goals of inclusive leadership will fall into place.

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND IMPACT

Rob Field, Learning & Development Director at Advanced People Strategies, led a session exploring leadership styles and how they impact behaviour and organisation culture.

EMAIL
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ROB FIELD works at group level providing multicultural leadership expertise that has influenced Talent Management initiatives and learning focus. He has facilitated C-Suite and Senior Leader development programmes and away-days in various locations around the world. His diverse client programmes range from a Charity Executive Board to one of the world's largest renewable energy businesses. Rob holds a Master's Degree in Strategic Human Resource Management in addition to a Degree in Education, and is a graduate of the CIPD. He is also a certified coach through the Academy of Executive Coaches and the British Psychological Society.

CATCH UP OR RE-WATCH THIS SESSION:
ROB FIELD, APS: LEADERSHIP STYLES AND IMPACT

Rob began by exploring the links between charisma, humility, and leadership.

What is charisma?

It is a compelling attractiveness that can inspire devotion in others. Charismatic people are thought of as bold, mischievous, colourful, and imaginative. But these qualities have a dark side. Too much boldness can lead to arrogance and entitlement. An excessively mischievous person could be manipulative and impulsive. Colourful can also be self-dramatising. And imaginative people can tip over into being impractical and eccentric.

In short, when overplayed, charisma can become narcissism.

Many organisations today think they need charismatic leadership. Rob traces this development to the 1970s, with the rise of activist investors who pushed companies to find CEOs that would generate better financial results. Companies began hiring CEOs who guaranteed better results – and who guarantees better results? Narcissists.

But in the workplace, charismatic leadership can lead to undesirable behaviours when the darker, more narcissistic aspects of charisma are what is required to stand out and get ahead.

What is humility?

It is freedom from pride or arrogance; a quality or state of low-preoccupation. Humble leaders tend to credit the accomplishments of others, but the overly humble leader is at risk of not standing out enough and getting overlooked despite their great qualities.

So which is better for organisations? The charismatic leader that many organisations think they need, or the humble leader?

Research has shown that humble leaders are more effective.

- One study examined two groups of high performers – those who advanced rapidly and those whose teams performed well. There was very little overlap (10%) between the two groups. That is, those who advanced rapidly ('emergent leaders') rarely led teams that actually performed well, while those whose teams performed well ('effective leaders') rarely advanced rapidly. This is because the emergent leaders spent their time networking to advance themselves, while the effective leaders spent their time working with their teams to enhance team performance.
- Another study examined companies with long-term (15 years) mediocre performance, and long-term superior performance. The CEOs of companies with superior performance were humble and competitive — not emergent or charismatic.

Research has demonstrated that, in addition to humility, effective leaders have integrity, competence, good judgement, vision, and are ambitious and competitive – competitive in the sense that they are driven to improve performance.

Rob highlighted the actions that humble leaders take to maximise their effectiveness. Humble leaders:

- Focus on team performance, not their individual performance.
- Channel ambition back into the organisation instead of using it for personal gain.
- Foster a culture of development by encouraging learning and personal development.
- Build a culture of openness, trust, and recognition.

How can leaders develop humility? They can do so by:

- Actively recognising others' achievements.
- Actively working to understand their own limitations.
- Being willing to acknowledge mistakes.
- Asking for and listening to feedback; accepting that their way is not the only way.
- Working to earn the respect of their colleagues rather than assuming they are entitled to it.
- Monitoring their self-promoting behaviours.

There is another type of leadership that can negatively impact organisations – absentee leadership. Absentee leaders have a laissez-faire attitude – they leave people alone to do as they please. While they physically occupy leadership positions, they abdicate the responsibilities and duties assigned to them.

Absentee leaders:

- Show a lack of interest in or involvement with their people or the organisation.
- Make no attempt to motivate their people.
- Delay decision-making.
- Fail to offer direction, feedback, or rewards to their people.

Absentee leaders negatively impact culture, performance, and engagement, but this may initially be less obvious because their leadership is not actively destructive as that of charismatic leaders often is. However, their leadership is not actively positive either, and their active avoidance of any leadership behaviour has a destructive impact, leading to impacts on their people such as:

- Role ambiguity.
- Conflicts with co-workers.
- Bullying.
- A lower safety climate.
- Lower job satisfaction.
- Health complaints.
- Burnout.
- Intention to leave.

Given the decisive impact that these different leadership styles (charismatic, humble, absentee) have on behaviour, culture, and performance, it is imperative that HR is able to identify and measure leaders' values and behaviours

Tools for doing so include personality assessments, engagement data, 360 feedback, analysis of complaints about conflict or bullying, taking a closer look at highly visible employees (why are they visible?), using HR systems for performance management and development planning, and thinking carefully about how reward is structured.

Once a charismatic or absentee leader has been identified, what can HR leaders do to shift and change behaviours and style in the direction of greater humility and effectiveness?

- Think about your recruitment process. Is it fit for purpose? Are you attracting, hiring (and then promoting and rewarding) the wrong qualities to begin with?
- Work to spot the signs and issues early, using tools such as 360 feedback and engagement surveys.
- Provide quality feedback to people.
- Consider development programmes that don't just provide knowledge, but develop skills.
- Consider how to connect to leaders' motivations – are they altruistic? Commercial? Speak their language to enhance the effectiveness of development.

Rob finished his session by offering several key takeaways.

- Humble leaders focus on the team and organisation.
- Charisma destroys engagement while humility creates it.
- Organisations that value charisma often overlook their most effective leaders.
- The next generation of effective leaders may be hidden in plain sight – but they aren't shouting about it; they are too busy working with their teams to drive performance.
- It's easy to identify high performing leaders – they have winning teams.
- It's easy to identify tyrants – they have ineffective teams.
- But it's difficult to identify absentee leaders. They are invisible and not actively making trouble, while their teams learn to do without them. In fact, teams with strong individual contributors will mask the effects of absentee leadership.
- Organisations accumulate absentee leaders over time, and they block the path for others.

SUMMARY OF **Q&A**

Q **What is the impact of hybrid working on the qualities that future successful managers should have?**

A *Hybrid work has an experimental approach. We are still in a learning phase, but we don't want one person to drive the decisions around hybrid work. Pre-pandemic, we were heading toward the T model of skills anyway – rejecting command and control gets to the heart of the changes hybrid working is bringing about. Hybrid working can make people more engaged and people definitely like the 'home' part for work-life balance, but it also increases social distance, so inclusive leadership becomes even more important under these conditions.*

Q **Do we care in business if people are standing up for the right reasons or just following the crowd?**

A *Yes, we care. If you don't see the true value, it will create positive change but it won't get you to a place of internalising that 'these actions are good for me', so you won't get to 100%.*

Q **What happens if you are in an environment where there is a perception that certain people can make mistakes and get away with them, or even be rewarded for them, while others get disproportionately punished?**

A *This is incredibly difficult. Organisations can have inclusive, happy, or toxic cultures. The situation you describe is indicative of a toxic culture – those people getting away with it are creating a toxic environment. If you are a leader in a toxic culture, and want to stay in that organisation, try to create a microculture within your team where you live the change you want to see. It's definitely better for the individual leader to leave the company in such situations, but it's better for the company if they stay and help make the change. Being in that situation is really difficult, but it is possible to create that positive microculture.*

Q **How do you ensure mid-level managers are empowered in a control and command structure?**

A *It's difficult because we want the leaders of the future to come out of command-and-control structures, to become leaders who are much more listening to their teams. For any mid-level manager, you want to move away from monitor and control, towards humble leadership. The reason you want that is because it's really hard to create positive culture change in an environment where employees don't get to show their work through their voice, through executing on opportunities.*

In the command-and-control type structure, it's typically just somebody telling somebody what to do, getting them to execute, and then they move on. So, any kind of air that you can bring in between the command-and-control structure for the mid-level manager and their direct report, that enables the people within their remit to share their ideas, for their ideas to be taken on board and ultimately, for the manager to be seen as the person who's actually doing those actions, is going to allow for cultural change. I'm sympathetic to why the question is being asked, because it's really hard to get mid-level managers to be more collaborative in their management style, when the talk from the top is command and control. But you do see it happening in organisations. It's slower change, but practice inclusive, collaborative leadership in your own team, and create that microculture where we know the talent will actually stay.

Q **Does 'organisation culture' exist, or is it really a sense of microcultures that we're looking to join to a central set of values?**

A *It's a great question because if you've ever studied organisational culture, about 50% of the content is on 'how do we actually measure organisational culture'? You learn fast that it's a very intangible concept.*

Imagine being in an organisation where you as an individual junior employee have just joined the workforce. And you go in and work with a manager who is an inclusive leader, even though the culture is actually toxic. But they're an inclusive leader because they recognise that it's good for business. They want to include your voice because they recognise that it helps them serve customers better, build better products and assess risks better.

That person is doing that job, and other people, when they see that leadership style is working, are likely to take it on. The literature is quite specific about the concept of tipping. If you have a certain type of person within an organisation, committing a certain type of action, you get to a tipping point of around 30-55%, depending on the context, where you get real culture change.

What would that culture change be? And how would you measure it? For me, as a behavioural scientist, I would go into meetings, and I wouldn't see cascading, I wouldn't see people not speaking, I wouldn't see a focus of information. I'd see people contributing, critically evaluating each other's ideas, and embracing dissent in a way that's helpful for the organisation.

Happy teams aren't necessarily productive teams, but I think if you get leadership right, you can have both. You can have psychological safety where your team is happy but they're also really productive. So, is it just aggregating these microcultures? I can absolutely answer, yes. And focusing on those microcultures is not just a great way to create cultural change, but it's also a way you can measure it, see that it's visible, and know that it's working, not just at a very high level, but for the managers themselves.

Q **I've always thought that people through their behaviours influenced themselves as well as their environment. The problem with organisation culture is that sometimes defining what should be acts as an inhibitor that stops the individual further influencing and shaping.**

A *I agree with that. I would love to move away from pillars, frameworks, and value statements that are intangible, and move towards action-based guides that are really clear and not time consuming in the sense that if I'm doing a job, whether it's creating something, building something, serving customers, the guide is not crowding out the main tasks of the job. Rather, it's seen as an enabler to allow me to do those tasks better.*

I think the next step for folks who are on the line for framework culture change is to embed those clear, concise actions. Clear guidelines around meetings and other interactions, around honing resilience – things that we know are important to culture. And we know that most of us would actually adopt those habits once they don't feel too effortful.

Q **Neuroscience tells us we make decisions in our emotional brain, which doesn't have logic, only images. This means that we make split-second decisions based on our sense of safety, which is primitive. Are you going to eat me, stab me, or be my friend? This dynamic is at play in job interviews. And then interviewers layer on rational thinking afterward, rationalising a decision that was made on the basis of perceptions of safety / affinity. Any thoughts?**

A *This is true. But if you bring that knowledge to the fore, two things can happen. Badly motivated people can game the system and use it to get what they want. But for people who want to battle their unconscious bias, surfacing the bias will help. Of course, a great deal of bias is conscious, and 'unconscious bias' is used as an excuse by bad faith operators.*

Q **To my understanding, the issue / importance of organisation culture and leadership behaviours has been continuously discussed over the last two decades. What are the takeaways with the success and failure stories? Especially in the changing context of this pandemic as well as the phenomenon of the Great Resignation?**

A *Three things. First, people will behave in a certain way, good or bad, if they have the opportunity to do so. So it's important to think about default behaviour. Is it easy to behave badly? Is it hard to behave in the desired way?*

Second, environment really matters. In particular, if you have employees who are working in stressful, competitive environments, you're very unlikely to have a good organisational culture. So think about how you might change the environment, or at least bring down the pressure a little bit, in order to create some positive responses for employees.

Third, if we want cultural change within organisations, we really need to make it difficult for employees to post-rationalise bad behaviour. One of the fascinating things in behavioural science is that no matter what I do on a day-to-day basis, it's my ability to post-rationalise what I've just done, to tell myself a story that I took the correct course of action, that is going to be the thing that's most important to whether I sleep that night. And more than that, is going to be the most important determinant of whether or not I do it again.

So, within organisations, to create good cultural change, you need to put in place structures that make that cultural change easy, but also make bad behaviour difficult, and at the same time pay attention to what type of environment employees are working in, particularly with respect to stress.

Q **What are the best practices in bringing in the voice of people to enable culture change?**

A *Using the mid-level manager to enable change, I think one way is to bring out the voices around the table within a meeting. How can we get more people to speak up when they haven't necessarily spoken up? Randomly calling on people, interrupting cascades, asking people to tell you something you don't know. Outside the meeting, try asking people to contribute before the meeting through written responses. It's been shown that in meetings where people fear speaking up, simply getting them to write their points beforehand is a way to prompt new and novel discussions.*

And at a broader level, how can you make sure that all voices in the organisation are heard when you're creating culture change?

That comes back to thinking about groups as small, mid-level microcultures and asking for feedback at that level. We tend to get everybody together in town halls, or ask individuals to respond on surveys. Very rarely do we ask for teams of individuals to respond to something in a group of six to eight. And I say six to eight strategically, because after that, being a collaborating team becomes really difficult.

Six to eight is a place where, assuming some level of psychological safety, most people are going to contribute to the discussion, even if they're feeling shy, even if they're feeling introverted; it's not so large that they're going to tune out. But it's also the team size that mid-level managers tend to have in the UK and in many other countries, so operating at that level is very attractive.

Q **Are there any differences in how different professions react to culture change? Do habits of mind have an impact on how you make culture change happen?**

A *If we look across professions, there's definitely sorting into particular professions based on types of people. Different types of personalities tend to like certain occupations versus others. That means that if you're trying to create organisational change, you have to bear in mind the types of people who are there.*

One of the things you would study, if you came to the London School of Economics and took the corporate decision-making course, is the idea that if we think about cultural change through an economic lens, everything is about costs, benefits and risks. When somebody is choosing to do something good or bad in particular moments, they're always weighing up the cost and benefits of the risk. When we move to the behavioural model, we take into account values. The things you're already bringing into the organisation – your habits, background, beliefs, preferences – will ultimately determine whether or not you go with culture change.

But the interesting thing about behavioural science is that it's shown without a doubt that you can also change your values, your habits of mind, depending on the environment that you're in. This is the concept of mean reversion. Depending on who you are exposed to, you end up going down to the average or up to the average. Of course most of us spend time in rooms with people we feel very comfortable with rather than seeking out rooms where we feel uncomfortable, and where we might actually be learning. From an organisational perspective, what this means is, if you invest in the mid-level manager model that we've been speaking about, and if you get some early adopters and contagion, you'll start creating an environment where peers revert to that new mean of a more inclusive leadership style.

I've seen really big shifts in organisations just by leveraging, firstly, contagion, where you go one by one by one. But also, if you want to speed up the contagion, you leverage ambassadors, or people with soft power within the organisation, to really mimic these traits. Bad leaders in such an environment, if their behaviour isn't being tolerated, will do one of two things. They'll change or they'll leave. The majority of evidence tells us that people will change, even those with habits ingrained from childhood.

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APPENDIX
THE BECKHARD-HARRIS CHANGE EQUATION

One tool you can use to analyse the drivers for and against change is the change equation.

$$\Delta = [D \times V \times F] > C$$

What this means is that change (represented by the Delta sign) happens when the forces in favour of the change (D for Dissatisfaction multiplied by V for Vision multiplied by F for Feasibility) are greater than the Cost of the change (which can be financial but includes other costs such as the political capital you might use up in pushing through a change, or a reduction in performance while new processes are bedding in).

Let's explore each of these elements in turn.

D stands for 'Dissatisfaction'.

What is the level of dissatisfaction with the status quo? Perhaps a major customer has defected to your competitor. Or your last three product launches failed to meet their targets. Or another way of looking at this is there may be a burning platform that's driving the need for change. For example, a major disruption or crisis in your business that's a threat to the business's survival. The need for business continuity during Covid-19 lockdowns is a good example of this. Or in the oil industry when oil prices dipped below $10 per barrel in 2020, forcing oil companies to launch large scale cost reduction programmes.

V stands for 'Vision'.

This is a measure of the desirability of the proposed change or the envisaged end state. What benefits will be achieved by successfully enacting the change? Is the vision sufficiently inspiring and engaging to convey a compelling picture of how things might be better?

F is for 'Feasibility'.

To what degree can the change vision be achieved? How difficult will it be to implement? How much disruption to the business? What's the level of risk in taking this course of action? How long will it take?

C stands for the 'Cost of the change'.

Cost can represent the financial cost of investing in new systems, equipment or machinery or hiring or retraining staff. It can also appear as resistance. For example, an executive might undermine the programme by criticising it in front of colleagues, or refusing to implement a new process in their part of the business. Often, it's this resistance (which is often political in nature) that undermines the success of change programmes, even if there are clear potential business benefits.

So change is successful when Dissatisfaction multiplied by Vision multiplied by Feasibility is greater than the Cost of the change.

One important thing to note about the change equation is that all three elements in the brackets (Dissatisfaction, Vision and Feasibility) must be present to overcome resistance to change in an organisation. If any of the three are at or near zero, the product you achieve by multiplying the three together will also be at or near zero, and the costs of changing will outweigh the benefits of the change. So you might have a fantastic vision of how things might be, but the roll out involves levels of business disruption that make it unfeasible.

The change equation also works at multiple levels. You can use it at the level of the organisation to analyse where you may encounter problems as you implement the change. For example, you may realise that the Vision needs fine tuning, or you may discover that you need to do a better job of articulating why the change is necessary.

As a manager you can use the change equation to work out how committed individual team members are to seeing through the change, and whether you might need to provide additional support to help them through the transition. As a change manager, you can use it as a tool for mapping the stakeholders who are key to the success of the change initiative. The change equation can help you work out for each person, where they may have reservations about the proposed change, or where you might need to make a special effort to make sure they are bought in to the change.

You can also use the change equation at different phases of the programme. At the outset as you define the vision and decide whether to embark on the project in the first place. And as the programme proceeds, you can revisit the change equation to check whether the vision remains as positive as it was at the outset, whether unforeseen risks have arisen that put the programme in jeopardy, or whether resistors have emerged who need to be managed.