

Henley Forum Conference 2015

Session summaries – Day 1

Working out loud: leading the collective intelligently

Euan Semple, public speaker, consultant and author of *Organisations Don't Tweet, People Do*

More people than ever are active on social platforms, either at work or at home. There is an increasing maturity in their use; there is less sharing of pictures of cats and more people using the tools to work things out and increase their understanding of things that matter. During the Scottish referendum, Facebook reported 10 million references to the topic.

Leadership is moving online: we see opinion-formers, from politicians to celebrities, taking to social platforms, cutting out the media middlemen, and talking directly to followers. With the advent of enterprise social platforms we are likely to see this trend moving inside our organisations and it will affect not just communications professionals but managers as well.

These platforms thrive on thoughtful exchange in a practice that is becoming known as 'working out loud'. This involves sharing ideas and perspectives in new ways, allowing us to work things out together or cast our nets for support even wider. Increasingly, personal profile and influence depends on mastering this.

In his keynote, Euan Semple will explore the opportunities and challenges of 'working out loud' and offer practical advice for how to get better at it.

When push comes to shove, with a nudge: where are the limits of organisational influence?

Dr Guy Champniss, Henley Centre for Customer Management

Behavioural science and its application to economics has delivered a raft of techniques that allow organisations to nudge employees, customers and even suppliers towards desired behaviours, be these collaboration, volunteering or simply putting rubbish in the bin. But if we look a little deeper, such techniques are far more reliant on the social context than we realise, and can quickly reach a tipping point where it all becomes too manipulative, with grave consequences. Dr Champniss will explore the importance of social context and share latest research on what happens when we, as managers, inadvertently cross the line.

New economics, new enterprise: where are the new leaders?

Dr Dominic Swords, Visiting Professor of Business Economics, Henley Business School

Which emerging macro-economic trends represent a call to action for knowledge organisations and their leadership? Dr Swords will talk us through these current and future trends and examine how they affect all organisations, and knowledge organisations in particular. He will then address the crucial questions of how organisations need to change and develop in order to thrive in the face of fluctuations and what the role of the knowledge leader in orchestrating the change will be.

The reputation economy: rethinking leadership and conceptions of value in a digital society

Dr Alessandro Gandini, Lecturer, Middlesex University and Research Fellow on the EU project P2Pvalue

The rise of digital technologies is changing the traits and practices that connote leadership in and across organisations. This is increasingly centred on the notion of reputation as a relevant factor for building trust and fostering productivity across network-based forms of value production, which leverage on social relations as an investment with expected return. Knowledge professionals and practitioners are being exposed to a 24/7 professional life conducted through and across different sorts of social media, with a managerial attitude towards practices of self-branding and PR, often working at a distance, and experimenting with new models of work and different conceptions of value. In this ecosystem, network forms of organisation, made of densely connected and continuously renegotiated arrangements are emerging in a 'freelance economy' where 'independent professionals' with an entrepreneurial spirit are the new, up-and-coming socio-economic protagonists. This intervention will challenge these issues in the broader perspective of the transformation of society after the crisis.

Report on the 2014 Forum Project – engaging with social business

Professor Jane McKenzie and **Dr Christine van Winkelen**, Henley Forum for Organisational Learning and Knowledge Strategies

During the year, various member organisations have been implementing social technologies to stimulate change. This session will outline the intentions, actions and lessons they have learned from the implementation of their social business strategies, so that others may gain from their experience.

Go where the energy is: building collective momentum for change from the middle out

Dr Bonnie Cheuk, Global Head of Knowledge and Collaboration, Euroclear

Changing the culture of an organisation and making business more social cannot be driven solely from the top down, or it will flounder through lack of interest or meet strong resistance. Equally it is too costly and risky to put in place social technologies and allow their use to be driven from the bottom up without any sensible link to the business strategy. Anyone contemplating harnessing the collective intelligence of the organisation is faced with a dilemma of where to start. Dr Cheuk will share her extensive experience of resolving this tension, leading the process of change in a way that actively engages people in meaningful activities that are aligned with strategic intent.

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Session summaries – Day 2

The resiliently agile organisation: reframing mindsets, skillsets, relationships and routines

Dr Linda Holbeche, Honorary Visiting Professor HRM and OD, Cass Business School

In today's complex times, competitive advantage is often thought to go to those organisations that are agile, innovative and customer driven. Yet organisational agility is often synonymous with cost-cutting, restructurings and consolidations, which can result in organisational change-weariness and loss of trust. Similarly, the skills and styles of management and leadership may not have kept pace with the demands of a fast-paced environment. In this session, Dr Holbeche will explore what a resilient approach to agility involves, and will reveal the mindsets, skillsets, relationships and routines required to produce a more equitable and sustainably successful way of operating in a dynamic context.

Navigating complexity: the knowledge connections that defined the hunt for the Higgs Boson

Professor Bertrand Nicquevert, Project Co-ordinator, CERN

Professor Nicquevert will share with us the story of the ATLAS project, one of the world's most high profile projects, that worked despite the need to work across national and cultural boundaries and with a myriad of different specialisms and functions. He will reveal how knowledge domains collided and met to create new learnings and some practical wisdom, and will explore the important questions to be asked when seeking to successfully collaborate across boundaries.

Report on the 2014 Forum Project – improving the uptake of lessons learned

Professor Jane McKenzie and **Dr Vaughan Michell**, Henley Business School

Over the past year, various member organisations have been examining the reasons why lessons learned in one context often do not translate into organisational learning. Professor McKenzie and Dr Michell will share the findings of the project and offer practical suggestions and guidance for improving the application of lessons learned in one context to other projects and other parts of the organisation. They will explore how different mechanisms for the diffusion of the lessons may help improve uptake.

Knowing it all? Can there be wisdom in hubris and the addiction to power

Dr Dimitrios Spyridonidis, Henley Centre for Engaging Leadership

Leadership requires the presence of followers – the people you're leading. The very nature of that relationship confers authority, responsibility, status and ultimately power upon a leader. Of course, we cannot ignore power derived from position, but in reality it is the power that comes from a leader's accumulated knowledge and their ability to influence a group of individuals towards a common goal that differentiates the successful leader from the manager with mere position power. Nevertheless, whatever the source, power can be addictive and the exercise of power, untempered by humility, produces hubris, which is usually seen by followers as both unattractive and risky. Yet in some situations leaders need hubris. Dr Spyridonidis will share some stories of where hubris has positive value, and will explore how it can be complemented and moderated by what the Ancient Greeks called 'phronesis' – practical wisdom.

Report on the 2014 Forum Project – embedding evaluation: using learning cycles to improve communities of practice

Dr Christine van Winkelen, Henley Forum for Organisational Learning and Knowledge Strategies

This project takes forward the learning about participatory approaches to evaluating KM activities from a pilot in 2013, progressing to a specific focus on communities of practice. Current published research and practice examples inform the evaluation process, and the implications of trying out various participatory approaches to evaluation within communities of practice are examined using four case studies.

Harnessing collective intelligence inside and outside the business: a practical approach to creating shared value

Masamichi Takahashi, Researcher, Communications Technology Laboratory, Fuji Xerox

Faced with complex business challenges, Fuji Xerox have been using methods to draw on collective intelligence in the organisation for some time. Following the events at Fukushima, the company was trying to come up with ways to satisfy government requirements for energy saving. Engaging the workforce with this complex problem through the use of world café style activity, they achieved massive savings for the organisation and exceeded government expectations. Opportunities then presented themselves for the business to engage with the wider society and to really make a difference by creating shared value in society. Masamichi Takahashi will talk us through his experiences in working with techniques for harnessing collective intelligence, and the impact this has had on Fuji Xerox in Japan.

What does it take to lead in today's complex context?

Malcolm Higgs, Professor of HR Management and Organisation Behaviour, University of Southampton

It is becoming increasingly clear that we need to think differently about how we view organisations in a complex, knowledge-based context. It is also becoming clear that this shift in thinking requires a change in our models of effective leadership. In this significantly different context we need to consider the leader's role in developing an organisation's capability to deal with continuous, and often disruptive, change.

This session will explore how our thinking about the nature of effective leadership has developed and how relevant current thinking is to the challenges faced by today's organisations. A possible view of the critical leadership practices that are required to develop a sustainable capability to cope with a complex and ever-changing context will be discussed. This view is based on a significant and extensive research project and also draws on practice in organisations.

Relating the story and imagining the impact

Your closing conversations will be facilitated by Dr Christine van Winkelen and Professor Jane McKenzie (Henley Forum for Organisational Learning and Knowledge Strategies). This session is designed to encourage you to reflect on the main messages from the conference, and on the detailed, actionable insights that you can take away from the two days, about how leaders can support the development of smarter business by getting more from collective intelligence.