

Growing Your Enterprise's Agility by Huw Morris

The report commissioned by the Government from John Kay [<http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-law/docs/k/12-917-kay-review-of-equity-markets-final-report.pdf>] into UK business opened with the statement:

“British business must invest and must develop its capacity for innovation, its brands and reputations, and the skills of its workforce. Only in this way can we create and sustain the competitive advantages in global markets, which are necessary to maintain our prosperity. Through success in world markets British companies will earn the returns on investment which are necessary to pay our pensions and enable us to achieve our long-term financial goals.”

This short paper outlines contributions we can make to developing “the fundamental operational capabilities of the business” that John Kay later refers to – as a basis for more sustainable growth and operational excellence. Our start point is an appreciation that the current business context necessities:

- Increasing agility. A recent study in the journal “Outlook” reported that approximately 50% of the 500+ executives surveyed believe that their enterprises lack the capability to move quickly to exploit market shifts or to serve new customers. Furthermore, they are concerned that their culture does not positively support change. They assess their workforces as insufficiently prepared to adapt to, and manage change, as the enterprise experiences economic uncertainty.
- A continuous focus on enabling more output with less resources. As Jeffrey Joerres, the CEO of Manpower has recently commented “Employers are looking for ways to accelerate their business strategy with fewer people” and technology provides us with an increasing spectrum of tools that can help your people be more productive (<http://www.tlnt.com/2012/11/29/why-you-should-rethink-your-concerns-about-doing-more-with-less/>)
- ‘Stretching’ of employee “engagement” with the risks of attrition of key staff – particularly the higher performers – when the economy improves. The recent Towers Watson Global Workforce Study (<http://www.towerswatson.com/research/7177>) highlighted that “Companies are running 21st Century businesses with 20th – century work-place practices and programs” and that “Retaining employees has more to do with the quality of the work experience overall)
- Increasing amounts of data on customers and corporate performance that we can use to improve our businesses particularly where analytical software (for example www.gooddata.com) is used as part of an Enterprise’s management reporting / monitoring and evaluation process.

Our experience in both line management and consulting roles has convinced us of the value of partnering with enterprises to improve:

- a. Continuous improvement processes
- b. Management of major changes
- c. Development of next generation leaders

We differentiate the approach to evolutionary and major changes in order to promote the development of relevant skills to what are often different groups of staff.



Promoting Continuous Improvement. We offer a one-day workshop for junior managers and team leaders focused on continuously improving the experiences clients (internal as well as external) have of your products and services. The content includes Business Process Management, introductions to Six Sigma and other improvement approaches and practical exercises to help participants prepare to implement improvements in their departments - with our coaching and project management assistance. The emphasis is on using techniques in

ways that focus on customer requirements and promote agility rather than become a potential drag on innovation.

Managing Major Changes. Our one-day workshop that is targeted at Managers, aims to build participants understanding of the challenges involved in managing change effectively. We use the John Kotter 8-Step Change Process to provide attendees with a proven framework and work through a change initiative with a mix of theoretical perspectives and practical exercises. We include a specific focus on monitoring and evaluating change initiatives – not least to help enterprises learn so that subsequent changes are more effectively managed. After the workshop attendees should be more sensitized to the drivers of agility – for example anticipating the need for change by continuously sensing changes in their Market (external or internal – in addition to being better equipped to respond effectively. In particular, they will have a framework for establishing the actions needed in their departments etc. to institutionalize changes to enable services / products to be provided - efficiently, effectively and consistently - as speedily as possible following the change. In addition to helping your people improve their ability to manage change initiatives, our pool of individuals with experience from the large consulting firms can provide you with practical implementation assistance on either a consulting or interim basis.

Development of Next Generation Leaders. We believe that the development of talent within enterprises can be accelerated and engagement improved - while helping organisations grow the capabilities they need to excel in our increasingly competitive, agile business world. We start with two inputs:

1. Your list of potential next generation leaders
2. An Excellence Audit™ that assesses your enterprise against the characteristics of Excellent Companies – as identified by Tom Peters in his 30+ years of studies since In Search of Excellence was published.

We then work with you and your next generation leaders to develop a series of “Action Learning” projects to “close the gaps” between the aspirations identified in the Excellence Audit and your current capabilities.

Next Steps

In conclusion, we believe that our workshops and subsequent coaching, consulting or Interim assistance will enable your people to implement changes more efficiently, effectively and constantly, while our Next Generation Leader programme enhances your overall governance capability. These investments provide a foundation for improving the experience your clients experience from your Enterprise and the engagement of your people and, moreover; address the concerns about workforce capability to manage change highlighted earlier.

We would be delighted to explain these offerings in more detail – either on the telephone or in a face-to-face meeting.

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