



CUTTINGS

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CUTTINGS HALF CENTURY REVIEW

On the occasion of the fiftieth edition of Cuttings, I have gone back to 1990 when the first edition went out (to a much smaller circulation) and looked at the lead articles that have featured. As you know, my source material is hardly ever my own creation or 'advertorial' for my consultancy, but gleaned from what has appeared in the press and magazines over the previous three or so months. So I was surprised to find quite a consistency in the themes over the fourteen years. (But perhaps that is just my bias showing through which makes it an advertorial by default ☺).

Participative processes seem to be a key theme: way back in 1990 I was talking about teams and Total Quality Management; In 2003 I was talking about Appreciative Inquiry and large group participation processes.

In between I have highlighted performance management, coaching, leadership and the learning organisation – all processes that have their success based on focusing on releasing the immense potential of the people in organisations.

Here are some of the highlights – both my favourites and ones that you have also commented on:

Inplacement or Outplacement

Cuttings 9 in September 1993 was written during a period of organisation downsizing, and challenged organisations to put the same effort to developing the careers of people inside organisations as they did for those they were making redundant – probably the first real contribution to the career development of its managers. Would it not be better for companies (and for the economy) to have an 'inplacement' service that helps managers whilst they can still add value to the company?

Then in Cuttings 14, 18 months later, I added the comments and work of David Noer and Cary Cooper on **Survivor Sickness** – look after the people who stay after the downsizing.

Does your organisation flock?

Cuttings 29 in December 1998 brought in the ideas of ex-Shell executive Arie de Geus on The Living Company and the story of the Blue Tit and Robin. Years ago in Britain milk was delivered to the door in open bottles, and both Blue Tits and Robins soon discovered an easy source of food in the cream on the top. Then in the 1930s, dairies started to put aluminium foil caps on the bottles, and the Blue Tits and Robins were foiled in their attempts to get at the cream.

However, fairly soon, some isolated Robins and Blue Tits discovered that they could peck through the foil to get at the cream. Within 20 years, the total Blue Tit population had learned how to peck through the bottle caps and drink the cream, but only isolated individual Robins could perform the task.

The answer for this lay in the social habits of the two species. Robins are fiercely territorial whilst Blue Tits are very social. So they are able to pass on the new skills to each other, whilst Robins do not. And the application to organisations is obvious.

Developing the flocking spirit could involve Large Group Interventions – yet another theme in Cuttings which reported on the biggest 'Town Hall' meeting in New York involving 5000 people, as well as the outcomes of our own Open Space conferences.

Closing down can be inspiring!

The Millennium year of 2000 saw great things happen at C&A stores in the UK despite it being their final year of operation following a closure announcement from its Dutch owners. MD Neil McCausland offered his 5000 staff a choice: be de-motivated and angry, or try out new strategies to achieve success in the final months.

The chances of taking these attitudes into job interviews was very high, so it was a better option for them personally to adopt a positive strategy.

He promised help in finding new jobs. He told the store managers to tear up the rule book. No longer would they have to follow corporate guidelines, they could run their stores individually, just focusing on making profit. A monthly bonus for managers and staff based on that store's success replaced previous Europe-wide payments.

The result for C&A in the UK was a 50% increase in turnover, with the added irony that trucks had to be brought in from the group's European operations to help with distribution!

The Gallup Q12

The Gallup work on workplace engagement was first reported in June 1998 (Cuttings 27) and then again featured in Cuttings 40 on September 2001. This is a major piece of work by the Gallup organisation that makes solid links between employee satisfaction and organisation success: workplaces that had the top scores in Q12 were 50% more likely to have lower turnover, 56% more likely to have high customer loyalty, and 27% more likely to have higher profitability

The Gallup 12 Questions that determine whether people are engaged at work:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the right materials and equipment that I need in order to do my job right?
3. Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. Have I received praise or recognition for doing work in the last seven days?
5. Does my supervisor seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone who encourages my development?
7. Do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission of my company make me feel my job is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. Has someone talked to me about progress in the past six months?
12. Have I had opportunities to learn and grow in the past year.

That's a few highlights from the past editions – remember you can download past editions from the website: www.newdirections.uk.com

Thanks for your support and feedback

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Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations ...

- ✂ "Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the co operation of many minds. I may be given credit for having blazed the trail but when I look at the subsequent developments, I feel the credit is due to others rather than to myself." *Alexander Graham Bell*
- ✂ "People have to feel needed. Frequently, we just offer a job and 'perks.' We don't always offer people a purpose. When people feel there is a purpose and that they're needed, there's not much else to do except let them do the work." *Maya Angelou*
- ✂ Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it." *Goethe*
- ✂ "Climbing is not about conquering the rock; it is about conquering yourself." *Jim Collins*
- ✂ "Peoples minds are like parachutes - they only function when they are open!" *Leanne Hastie*
- ✂ "I am always ready to learn, but I do not always like being taught." *Winston Churchill*
- ✂ "Learning is suddenly understanding something you've understood all your life - but in a new way." *Dorris Lessing*
- ✂ "Your senior team is, for better or for worse, the organisation's model of what a high performing team is." *Howard Gutman*
- ✂ "Projects are the power of human invention harnessed to circumvent our tragically limited ability to predict the future." *Laurent Bossavit*
- ✂ "A member of the staff thought she was doing very well during her probationary period because the reports on her work came back from the Quality Assurance Department marked NOTFAIL. It wasn't until her three month performance review that she learned that NOTFAIL is short for 'notification of failure.'" *A Dilbert Individual tale*
- ✂ "Never do today that which will become someone else's responsibility tomorrow." *David Brent (The Office)*
- ✂ "Do not announce a deadline until you know it can be done by then." *Sir Andrew Turnbull, The Cabinet Office*
- ✂ "I wanted to change the world. But I have found that the only thing one can be sure of changing is oneself." *Aldous Huxley*
- ✂ "The greatest danger is to fall in love with your first really significant idea and then spend your career defending it." *Margaret Mead*

A View on Ageing

Do you realise that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about ageing that you think in fractions. "How old are you?" "I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty-six and a half.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. "How old are you?" "I'm gonna be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16! And then...you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony: YOU BECOME...

But then you turn 30. Makes you sound like bad milk. He TURNED; we had to throw him out.! There's no fun now. It's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50... and your dreams are gone. But wait!!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would!

So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE it to 60. You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday! You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime.

And it doesn't end there.. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; "I was JUST 92." Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctor worry about them.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about whatever Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is not, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't! take guilt trips. Take a trip anywhere, but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

Attributed to American comedian George Carlin - I can't authenticate that, but it's good anyway

2004 Public Programmes

The First European Summit on Wholehearted Customer Management™ with a keynote from Frederick Reichheld – founder of Bain & Company's Loyalty Practice, case studies from Ferrari, ANZ Bank and Debenhams, and an Open Space forum.

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Information and booking:

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www.wholeheartedcustomer.com

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Oisterwijk, Netherlands: 5-8 October

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Learning Consortium

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Information and booking:

Frost & Sullivan +44 (0)20 7915 7878

www.training.frost.com

Or for any of these events you can call me direct (contact numbers below).

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