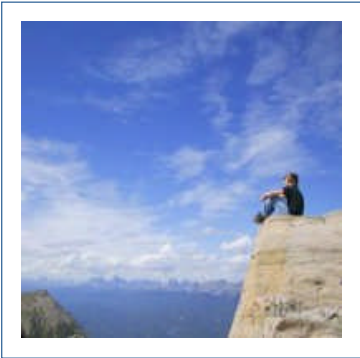




People, Passion, Performance

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Where are you going?

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Purpose Delivers

And that's a fact!

As if built into our DNA, we humans have a need for purpose, a need to believe that we are making a difference. Take that away from us and we become stunted and frustrated. Purpose is the lifeblood of enthusiasm, and without enthusiasm life becomes... well, lifeless.

Jill Garrett is a data fiend. When working for Gallup, she tirelessly gathered and analysed millions of pieces of data that prove beyond all doubt that employee engagement drives performance, and that it is a sense of purpose that fuels engagement.

Add to this the findings of Jonathan Austin, who researches the 'Best Companies To Work For'. Jonathon has brought to light overwhelming evidence that engagement increases radically where employees believe that their business is making a positive difference in the world. He calls this the GSB principle ('giving something back') and argues that if a company ignores this principle **it will lose 72% of its employee engagement**. In the UK, only 14% of the workforce are fully engaged. This clearly suggests leaders need to focus on finding and communicating a compelling sense of purpose.

Let's look at some statements of purpose...

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Cutting Costs without Tears

A one-day workshop.

Many organisations need to cut costs at the moment. The way in which it is done is crucial to morale.

This experiential, fun workshop will show you how to do it creatively and in ways that strengthen your organisation.

Venue: Central London

Date: Thursday 24th Sept 2009

Cost: £199 + VAT

[Please click here to register your interest.](#)

(We will send further details as soon as available.)



Who, or what, are you putting 'on the other side of the fence'?

"The three hardest tasks in the world are neither physical nor intellectual achievements, but moral acts:

- 1) to return love for hate;*
- 2) to include the excluded; and*
- 3) to say 'I was wrong'."*

**Ernst Heinrich
Haeckel**

The Framework for Transformation

Principle 5: The Marginalised

When you are snug in the middle of an organisation, enjoying some measure of power and comfort, you cannot always see when change is needed. It is often those on the margins who first become alert to changing conditions and the need for a new response. When the Titanic went down, the wealthy on the top deck were the last to realize what was going on; cosseted and shielded they found it easy to delude themselves that everything was all right. Those in third class, down in the hold, realized very quickly that something had gone drastically wrong. Similarly, in the world of work, the powerful may perhaps be cocooned against realities but those at the coalface are not.

Companies that enjoy sustainable long-term success will listen to the newest recruit, to the youngest, to the least powerful. Those who, in traditional companies, would be on the margins are brought fully into the heart of the business. Instead of having a few leaders and lots of followers, all are encouraged to take on leadership in one form or another. The work of those on the margins is valued as highly as anyone else. At one successful recruitment company, the odd job man, Greg, does whatever sorting needs to be done, including clearing litter from the car park. He is as highly valued and respected as any member of staff. In speaking to the MD, it was clear to me that he saw Greg as embodying what the company was all about. Greg speaks with an understanding of the vision that only someone who has seen and known the margins can have.

Globally, the richest country in the world was the last to acknowledge the problem of climate change. Protected by its wealth, for a long time it had not experienced the effects of drought and flood in the ways that people in Bangladesh or parts of Africa have understood this new reality. Katrina changed that. But why wait until a catastrophe hits your organisation when those on the margins could have told you how to avoid it?

The marginalised, often the first to experience change, are also the most likely to know how to use scarce resources, and are most experienced in adapting to tough times. They are a tremendous resource within a company. Imagine if all their knowledge, experience, and wisdom were brought into the heart of the organisation.

Transformational companies do just that; they listen to the experience of the marginalised and value each person's contribution as a vital part of the whole. And, furthermore, the MD and FD do not sit in splendid isolation out on their own margin but are in the thick of it with everyone else, working, listening, serving, laughing, learning and sometimes making the tea.

Purpose Delivers

(Continued from page 1)



To decide which way to head in the midst of turbulence it's essential to have a clear purpose!

'If a man does not know to what port he is steering, then no wind is favourable to him.'

~ Seneca

'This is also true for women'

~ Anon

Let's look at some statements of purpose.

- 'Doing more, feeling better, living longer'
– a leading pharmaceutical company
- 'We provide the light, heat and mobility that people want, and it's our responsibility to do that in a way that makes a positive difference in the world'
– a major energy company
- 'To touch and improve customer lives'
– a household name supplying household products

These are purposes that relate to a 'meaningful outside' beyond the confines of the organisation. In explicitly bringing the needs of those we serve into the organisation we shift our mind-set towards serving others. And that is when we can shift from the mediocre into the extraordinary, when we are working to make a real tangible difference in people's lives. Of course cynics will say the purpose statements are just words; but words are powerful and when the words are lived and turned into action they become the energy that drives the organisation.

Many organisations are bogged down at the moment. Despite masses of action and busy-ness there is a sense of stuckness as people face an unsure future. In the maelstrom of change it is easy for companies to lose their sense of purpose. As uncertainty clouds the day, forcing stress levels up, people go into survival mode, one of the least creative states for a human being. Of course the urge to survive is an indisputably powerful driving instinct but it is no substitute for purpose.

In fact the urge to survive sometimes destroys the very factors that will enable the organisation to grow and thrive. Old, tired, uncreative tactics such as headcount reduction will bring far less wealth to a company than a truly embodied purpose which everyone can understand and work for. A narrow focus on fast returns for shareholders will not cut the mustard and, as a purpose, is grossly inadequate to the task of inspiring engagement and performance.

Where the implicit purpose of the company becomes nothing but survival then a haemorrhaging of engagement and performance occurs. We all know this in our bones and now the research corroborates it. Can we afford to run business without a sense of purpose? Can we afford not to communicate and live that purpose?

Look again at this purpose statement: 'Doing more, feeling better, living longer'. That is surely a purpose worth getting up for in the morning. Who wouldn't like to help others to live longer healthy lives, to achieve more of what they long to do, and to feel better in themselves?

As Jill Garrett said this week at the Hugh Kay lecture, "It's time to press the refresh button on purpose."

[Want more details about the research? [Click here](#)]

Purpose: An Exercise

Take a few minutes to think about the purpose of your organisation, which may or may not be explicitly stated. In any case, write down how **you** understand that purpose. Then take 10-15 minutes to write down your answers to the following questions.

Thinking about your day at work yesterday:

- In what ways did your decisions and actions align with the purpose?
- In what ways did your decisions and actions run counter to the purpose?
- What stopped you getting behind the purpose?
- How can you address those blocks?
- How can you help your team members to reconnect with their sense of purpose?
- What will you do today that is right on target in respect of the purpose of your organisation?

If your organisation has no clear purpose, or has one that you are unhappy about, do not despair. There are ways to imbue your work with purpose. [Click here for a free e-booklet to support you with this.](#)

*'Be the change you
want to see in
people.'*

- Mahatma Gandhi

Story: A Cup of Tea

A Japanese Zen master received a university professor who came to enquire about wisdom.

The master served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he could no longer restrain himself. 'It is overfull. No more will go in!'

'Like this cup,' the master said, 'you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you wisdom unless you first empty your cup?'



Is there room in your cup?