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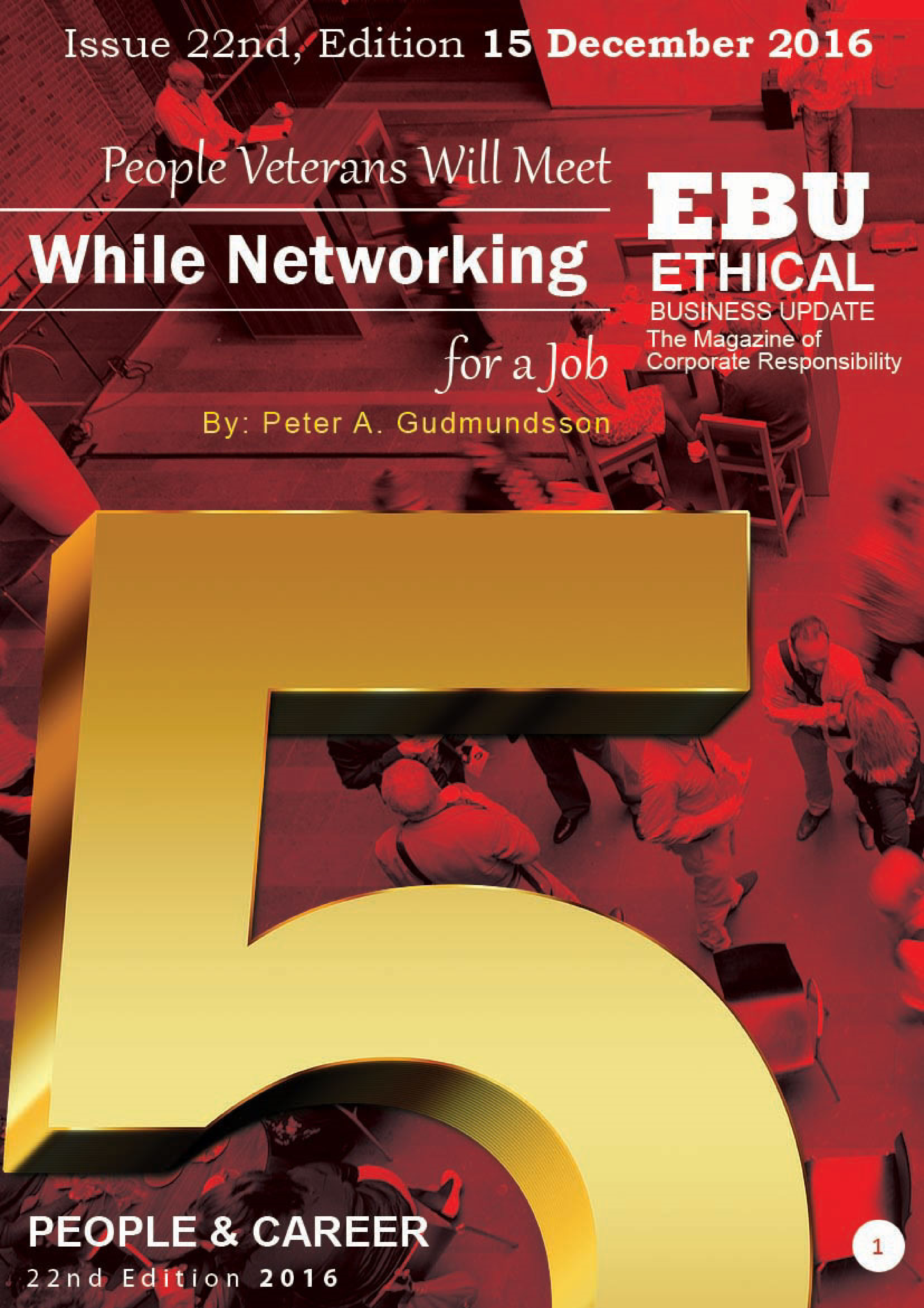

People Veterans Will Meet While Networking for a Job

By: Peter A. Gudmundsson

EBU ETHICAL BUSINESS UPDATE
The Magazine of Corporate Responsibility

PEOPLE & CAREER

Team

EBU
ETHICAL
BUSINESS UPDATE

is an online magazine with a strong heritage in the fields of ethics, governance, corporate responsibility and socially responsible investing.

Now available only on the web, but soon will be published and will be available for monthly subscription.

The mission of Ethical Business Update? Now, as then - is “to promote ethical business practices, to serve that growing community of professionals and individuals striving to work and invest in responsible ways.”

We believe this is not only how to guarantee a future f or all, but makes good business sense.

A lot has changed in the more than two decades, ethics and governance have emerged as front-page news and lead agenda items in corporate board rooms and the halls of Congress.

Good corporate citizenship is now studied, advocated and sometimes practiced. Sustainability has become a goal f or well-meaning small businesses as well as many of the Fortune 500.

Whether that represents real progress is open to debate. The continuing fallout from the recent economic and financial crises is a constant reminder that many systems are not working. There’s plenty to discuss. Ethical Business Update aims to serve as a guide.

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Will Meet While Networking for a Job

By: Peter A. Gudmundsson

It is well-known that networking is the key tactic for any successful job search. Both civilians and veterans will obtain the information, access and referral to other helpful people they need by assiduously following the principles of effective networking. Each person the veteran will encounter along the way will be unique, of course, but experience teaches us that many fall into archetypal categories. Each has its own quirks and characteristics. By learning to spot these behaviors, the successful veteran job seeker will know how to position themselves for maximum personal benefit.

These are the five personalities that one may encounter as a veteran networker.

The Military Wannabe

This man or woman will tell you shortly after meeting them how they "almost" served in the military. Sometimes this claim is accentuated by a reference to a grandfather who served in World War II or Korea or an uncle who fought in Vietnam. It can be amusing to hear, "I was a varsity swimmer in college and almost became a Navy SEAL." Of course, that "almost" experience invariably did not include a visit to a recruiter or any time spent at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado.

These people can be of great service to the veteran job seeker because they will seek to help you as absolution for their non-service. The implied social contract is that you will conversationally accept their "almost service" as close to the real thing in return for their help in forwarding your career. If you can keep a straight face, this is a good trade.

The Old Salt Veteran

This veteran is one who genuinely wants to help because he was once in your shoes. The price of his cooperation is as simple as entertaining his sea stories and his nostalgic tales. The challenge here can be keeping him on task to support your career search after allowing the conversational diversions.

The old salt may want to hear some of your stories and may incredulously ask out-of-date questions like, "Wait, there are women sailors on combatant ships now?" or "What do you mean drill instructors are not supposed to swear in boot camp?" Again, you will have so much in common with this fellow veteran that you should have little trouble advancing your job search if you both stay focused. In this case it is perfectly alright to say something like, "Sir, I am enjoying this conversation and would love to continue it over a beer, but can we get back to discussing how I can break into a marketing job in your industry?"

The Hostile Hippie

Whereas there is generally a tremendous amount of goodwill in our society for veterans and their service, there are still those individuals who are indifferent or hostile towards veterans. Informed by ignorance and bias, these "hostile hippies" may at first present a barrier to your networking efforts. They may object to your service on political, philosophical or even medical fears of post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injuries. You may need to endure tactless questions like, "What could you possibly have done in the military that could help any real business?" or "Did you kill a lot of people in Afghanistan?"

The best way to respond to the hostile hippie is to stay calm, smile a lot and call them on their ignorance. Many of these people will recant when their bias is exposed for what it is, ignorant prejudice. "You might be surprised to learn, ma'am, that my infantry platoon was an amazingly diverse group from a socio-economic, racial and geographic perspective. I learned a lot about managing and motivating when I served as platoon sergeant for the team. That is why I know I will make a great manager." Using words like "diversity" and "management" are calming to some people who want to be hostile to veterans.

The Hard Guy/Bully

This persona is like the evil twin to the military wannabe. The hard guy, who could also be a woman, wants to show how tough he is by belittling your ambition or plan. "So why do you think you can make it in sales at a company like mine?" might be his challenge.

Like any bully, the best way to deal with this person is by sticking up for yourself. Stay courteous and composed but also firm and determined. Sometimes the "hard guy" is just testing you to see if you are worthy of his assistance. If you do your homework, you will exceed this person's low expectations.

The Coach/Mentor

The final type of person you may meet on your journey is the coach or mentor. They want to help you simply because they derive satisfaction from the act. Their ulterior motives are not important. Simply take them at their word and be grateful for the assistance.

The best way you can take advantage of the beneficence of the mentor is to be prepared and follow up on their suggestions. You must have a solid elevator pitch and know exactly what you seek from this relationship. Is it introductions, insight or feedback? In all cases, you need to nurture this relationship and seek to reciprocate where and when you can.

Networking is hard work for the veteran job seeker but it is the surest path to success. Learn to spot these types of people on the way. All can help, but at the end of the day, it is up to you to make each relationship work in support of your career development.

The 100 Person
Project: Crowdsourcing Your Next Career Move

By: Chris Guillebeau

Shenee Howard was a talented brand strategist who was proud of her work. But in 2011, she was also broke and cli¬entless. Unsure of what she was doing wrong, she decided to start talking to people. At first she pursued the usual course of action, asking for advice from people she thought of as mentors.

Then she had a different, better idea.

Instead of talking to experts in hopes of obtaining wis¬dom and advice, Shenee decided to turn the tables and talk to 100 regular people, asking them about their problems, with the goal of using her unique skills to find solutions for them. Using social media and email, she offered unlimited 15-minute strategy sessions by phone to anyone who had questions about branding — for free.

The sessions weren't just a teaser for a paid service; she really wanted to know what people's problems were, in hopes of coming up with ideas for how she could help solve them. As time went by (she did two or more 15-minute calls a day for several months), she gained experience and got better at finding helpful ideas in a short amount of time.

Some of the calls did lead to paid work, with the free clients liking her advice so much that they wanted to delve into a deeper set of problems. But even when the calls didn't end with a direct business connection, they often led to strong relationships. These people became an unofficial advisory committee or sounding board. They even gave her testimonials. They wrote about the project on their blogs. And when Shenee later developed paid products, they be¬came her most loyal customers.

Shenee went from "broke and client-less" to product launch for her first course less than four months after em¬barking on what she called the 100 Person Project. It sold out at a good price, and as she tells the story, "the rest is history" — history in this case meaning that she now earns a good, reliable living and works on her own terms.

Shenee's success story is inspiring, but the greater point is that you can tap into the wisdom of 100 people to help you get closer to figuring out the work you were born to do. The key is to use the experiment not to drum up business but to get feedback on which of your skills and talents are most valued — and maybe even test out how much demand there is for the product or service you think you can offer.

Even if you think you don't know 100 people, once you start counting your Facebook friends and anyone you haven't talked to in a while, I bet you do know at least that many, one way or another. Just as important, the people you know are connected to many other people who can also help you along.

Here's how you can create your own 100 Person Project.

1. List five problems you've been able to solve for someone.

Do this in brainstorm mode, where you don't edit or censor yourself. Ask: "What are the things people come to me for help with? What are the things I know but other people struggle with?"

As I've traveled and met with groups all over the world, I've never stopped being amazed by all the different busi¬ness ideas hatched and new careers created simply by find¬ing ways to be helpful. From the woman who started a specialty blog about cooking brown rice ($100,000+ annual income) to the professional dog walker ($80,000 annual in¬come) and many more, thinking about problems and solu¬tions is critical to finding work you love that people will actually pay you for.

2. Decide on the name of your 15-minute, 100-person session.

If you're going to convince 100 people to get on the phone with you and talk about their challenges and prob¬lems, it helps to have a creative or clever name for your fact-finding project. Even though your session is essentially a coaching call or consultation, don't call it that. Call it something fun! A few interesting names that I heard from Shenee were "Love Intervention," "Power-Up Pow-Wow," and "Clarity Chat." Don't get hung up on these examples, though. If you prefer something more business-like, that's fine. And if you're still trying to iron out the details of what your session is about, don't spend all your time trying to get the perfect name. Always do what feels most authentic to you.

3. Create a short description and an offer for your session.

Shenee's project was successful because it had a clear offer and a defined set of outcomes (provide 15-minute brand strategy sessions to 100 people). As usual, the more specific, the better. One person who Shenee worked with was good with technology and had identified a need among new entrepreneurs who were struggling with all the differ¬ent options for online services. He labeled the 15-minute call a "tech intervention session" and promised to help peo¬ple gain greater understanding of devices and software in a short period of time.

Figure out what skills or services of yours you want to test out, and design the goals and outcomes of your "free trial" accordingly.

4. Create a quick and easy sign-up process, and invite people to sign up.

In addition to name, email address, and phone number (the most important things), it also helps to collect a bit of info from people in advance. What's each person's biggest problem, and what's the biggest thing each person is trying to achieve?

Start with people you trust, and ask them to participate. Once you have a list of people on board, go ahead and schedule the meetings or calls. Chances are you may find all the referrals you need this way. If not, though, don't hes¬itate to send the message around more widely by posting it online or asking more people to share it. This is a valuable service that you're offering for free. If you can reach people with a real problem you know you can solve for them (or at least point them in the right direction), they will want it.

5. Facilitate the calls.

Use your phone, Skype, or whatever service you prefer to call people at the appointed time. Be friendly, but also keep them on topic. You may be tempted to talk more than the 15 minutes, and if it's going well, you can do that — but make sure it's okay with the other person, too.

6. Follow up after the call (critical).

After you finish each session, be sure to send a follow-up note. If you have the other person's permission, you can record the call using free software and give him or her ac¬cess to it. Another option is to send a quick recap of the chat along with your suggested action items. Mostly you just want to say thank you. Remember that these people may become your unofficial advisory board, so it's impor¬tant to nurture the connections.

For best results, repeat 100 times.

●●●

The 100 Person Project helps you to discover what you can offer. Remember, the whole point is learning what you're good at that other people want to pay for. This is hugely important! As Shenee put it:

As you start doing more and more, you'll get faster and you'll start realizing what types of problems you like helping with the most. For example, my Shazam Session started off as an everything business call, and I soon fine-tuned it into a call that was mostly about getting lightning-fast clarity. People would come to me with what they were stuck on and I would help them get unblocked.

No matter what type of work you currently do — whether you're an entrepreneur, a self-employed consul¬tant, or an employee who's looking for a way to bring in extra cash on the side — if you're struggling to figure out what it is that you do well and that others will also pay you for, consider giving the 100 Person Project a try. You now have both the reasons and the tools you need to launch one.

As Trump Signals
Climate Action Pullback, Local Leaders Push Forward

By: Tatiana Schlossberg

As Trump Signals

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The incoming Trump administration appears determined to reverse much of what President Obama has tried to achieve on climate and environment policy.

In position papers, agency questionnaires and the résumés of incoming senior officials, the direction is clear — an about-face from eight years of policies designed to reduce climate-altering emissions and address the effects of a warming planet. The Republican-led Congress appears to welcome many of these changes.

But mayors and governors — many of them in states that supported President-elect Donald J. Trump — say they are equally determined to continue the policies and plans they have already adopted to address climate change and related environmental damage, regardless of what they see from Washington.

“With a federal government that’s hostile to climate action, more and faster climate action work from cities, states and businesses will be required to stay anywhere near on track with our carbon pollution goals,” said Sam Adams, the former mayor of Portland, Ore., and current director of the World Resources Institute United States.

Continue reading the main story

“In many cases, the solutions that help address climate change are what you have to do anyway in a city — transit options so the city doesn’t get gridlocked, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and unlocks a tremendous amount of economic competitiveness because you don’t have thousands of people stalled in traffic,” Mr. Adams added.

In last month’s election, Seattle, Los Angeles and Columbus, Ohio, voted to expand mass transit. Portland, Ore., which many say is the most environmentally minded city in the country, began a new municipal waste program a few years ago, resulting in higher recycling and composting rates, and smaller amounts of trash headed to landfills. Miami Beach is raising roadbeds and building flood walls to hold back the rising seas.

California, led by the Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown, has adopted a cap-and-trade program, which limits carbon dioxide emissions and sets up a market for companies to buy and sell carbon allowances, so companies can meet or come under that carbon dioxide limit. The state has set one of the nation’s most ambitious climate targets — to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Hawaii is planning to use 100 percent renewable energy by 2045.

Governor Brown delivered a fiery defense of his state's environmental policies at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco last week. He scoffed at reports that some Trump transition officials wanted to eliminate the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's system of earth-observing satellites.

"If Trump turns off the satellites," he said, "California will launch its own damn satellite."

Though stymied by alternating bouts of congressional gridlock or fossil-fuel-friendly presidential administrations over the last two decades, cities and states have been able to take substantive action. They have fortified themselves against rising seas, switched to renewable sources of energy, expanded mass transit and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Whatever happens or does not happen in Washington, officials say, these projects will continue.

Leaders in some cities feel that without presidential leadership it will be hard to achieve the swift transition that dealing with climate change requires. Many fear that they will not get federal funds or national policies needed to make it happen.

Still, many mayors and state officials are optimistic about their plans already in motion and those that are scheduled over the next few years.

"We feel really good, and we don't see this election slowing us down," said Eric Garcetti, mayor of Los Angeles. "We're not going to wait for action from the federal government. We're taking action now and securing our values."

While experts caution that there are areas where federal regulations can determine what states and local governments are able to accomplish, they maintain that a climate-skeptical administration could not halt all the momentum generated locally over the last two decades.

China Announces

Major Plan to Combat Pollution, Revive Battered Environment

By: Associated Press Financial Wire

China announced a plan Wednesday to combat widespread pollution and leave a better environment for future generations, citing the need to stave off possible social instability.

The plan, approved by the State Council, or Cabinet, focuses on pollution controls and calls for the country to clean up heavily polluted regions and reverse degradation of water, air and land by 2010.

“The move is aimed at protecting the long-term interests of the Chinese nation and leaving a good living and development space for our offspring,” according to an announcement published in state media.

Among the most urgent problems cited by the official Xinhua News Agency were acid rain, pollution of the soil, organic pollutants, potential risks from nuclear facilities and a decline in biodiversity.

Most major rivers are polluted and acid rain has damaged more than one-third of China’s land area, as well as neighboring countries, the Xinhua report noted.

The government has previously responded to environmental crises largely on a piecemeal basis. The new plan appears to be a broader strategy in keeping with the government’s newly stated emphasis on seeking sustainable development after years of breakneck growth.

“The government does seem to be paying more attention to broad environmental protection issues,” said Zhao Qingxiang, a professor in the Environment Department of Shanghai’s East China University of Science & Technology.

“But what I’m concerned about is how this plan will affect the entire ecological system, which has a long way to go. It’s not just a matter of closing down a few factories.”

Under the plan, regional governments will be asked to set environmental targets and conduct regular evaluations. It also calls for environmental quality to be considered in assessing the performance of local officials until recently judged mainly on their success in promoting economic development.

“Leading officials and other relevant government officials will be punished for making wrong decisions that cause serious environmental accidents and for gravely obstructing environmental law enforcement,” it said.

Government ministries have been ordered to adapt fiscal, tax, pricing, trade and technology policies to the new strategy.

The State Council said the plan was in part prompted by a toxic chemical spill in northeastern China's Songhua River in November that "stunned the nation and sounded an alarm about the country's worsening environment."

The environmental protection minister was dismissed following the disaster, which affected water supplies for millions of people in China and neighboring Russia.

Pollution, often linked to official corruption and incompetence, has sparked a series of sometimes violent confrontations between authorities and rural residents.

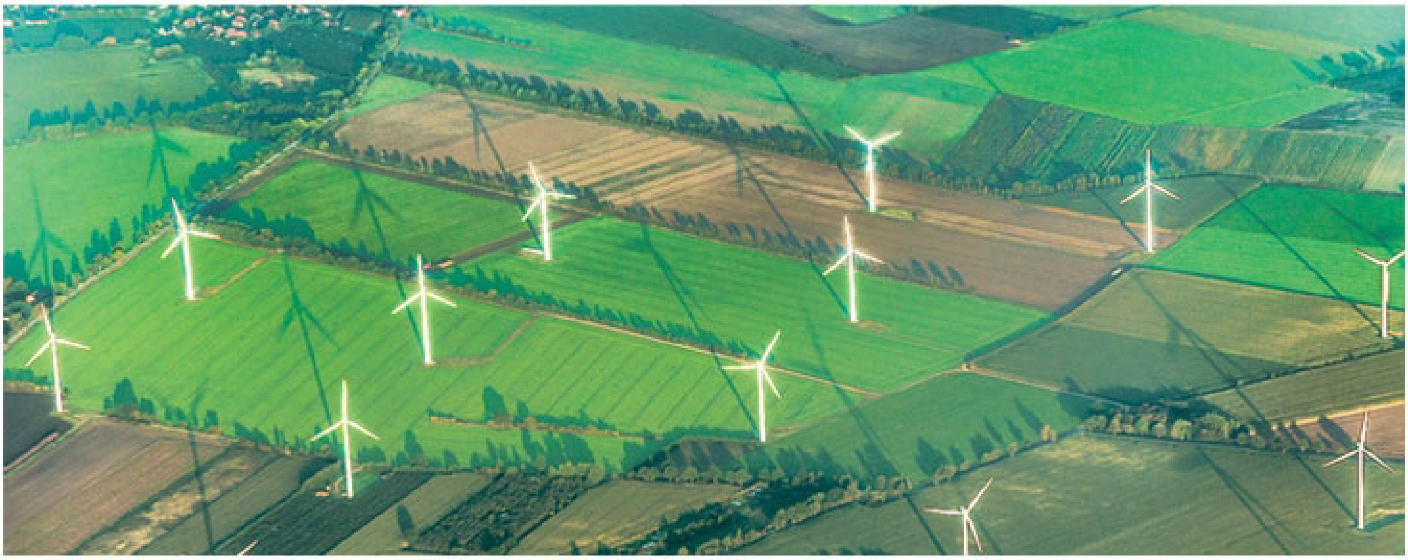
?? In one of the more widely publicized cases, dozens were injured in April riots when police tried to move protesters from an industrial complex in Wangkantou, a village in the east's Zhejiang province. The residents were outraged by chemical plant pollution they said had destroyed their crops.

?? "The issue of pollution has become a 'blasting fuse' for social instability," Zhou Shengxian, director of the State Environmental Protection Administration, said in comments posted on the agency's Web site.

?? Evidence of the negative effects of years of rapid industrialization, uncontrolled construction and widespread use of farm chemicals can be seen everywhere in China, from the biggest cities to the countryside.

?? Some 16 of the world's 20 smoggiest cities are in China, and the World Bank estimates that more than 400,000 deaths a year are linked to air pollution. Canals surrounding Shanghai stink and fester, as do many in the countryside. Piles of construction material and other waste cover huge stretches of rural land.

?? Local authorities have tended not to enforce pollution controls, land use restrictions and other limits that might hurt land sales and tax revenues or discourage investors. Heavily polluting factories often either bribe officials to look the other way or pay cursory fines.



Communicating

Corporate Social Responsibility to a Cynical Public

By: Laura Illia, Stelios C. Zyglidopoulos, Stefania Romenti, Belén Rodríguez-Cánovas & Almudena González del Valle Brena

COMMUNICATION & REPORTING

22nd Edition 2016

Communicating
Corporate Social Responsibility to a Cynical Public

By: Laura Illia, Stelios C. Zyglidopoulos, Stefania Romenti, Belén Rodríguez-Cánovas and Almudena González del Valle Brena

Corporate social responsibility has gone mainstream. But unless corporations communicate their CSR achievements wisely, they risk being accused of greenwashing.

Corporate social responsibility, once seen as peripheral to companies' main businesses, has been becoming standard practice, with an increasing number of businesses engaging in CSR activities. For example, in a 2007 global survey of corporate managers, the Economist Intelligence Unit found that the majority of respondents (55.2%) considered CSR a high or very high priority for their company, a significant increase from three years previously (33.9%). An even greater majority (68.9%) expected the importance of CSR to increase in the future.

Given that corporations are increasingly engaging in CSR activities, it makes sense to communicate those achievements to stakeholders. However, in publicizing CSR achievements, especially if they do so aggressively, corporations risk achieving the opposite result from what they intended — a so-called "boomerang response" described by Robert K. Merton and Patricia L. Kendall in 1944. Given the general public's distrust of major corporations, it is not unreasonable for a corporation to fear that stakeholders will perceive attempts to communicate CSR achievements as "greenwashing."

Greenwashing, in its narrow sense, refers to the use of environmentalism or green credentials to suggest that a company's policies and products are environmentally friendly. More broadly, the term describes public relations aimed at giving the false impression that a corporation is genuinely engaged in CSR. It is reasonable to be concerned that even companies that seriously engage in CSR could be perceived cynically by stakeholders. After all, most stakeholders cannot directly witness a corporation's CSR policies or initiatives and to a great extent must rely on the corporation's own reporting.

A key challenge for managers, then, is to minimize stakeholder skepticism and communicate CSR achievements without being accused of greenwashing. To better address this challenge, this article draws on a collaborative research project by faculty from the IE School of Communication at IE University, the Judge Business School of the University of Cambridge and Fondazione Università IULM, in partnership with the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management. In this project, we investigated the CSR communication practices of the largest (in terms of revenue) 251 European corporations and conducted in-depth interviews with 69 managers handling CSR communications.

These corporations, located in Denmark, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, represented 11 industries: financial services and banks; insurance; textiles, retail and fashion; gas, water and electricity; oil and coke; food, beverages and tobacco; chemicals and pharmaceuticals; telecommunications; transport and automotive; retail and wholesale; and tourism and hospitality. Although our sample included only European corporations, which have been at the forefront of adopting CSR practices, we believe our findings have global relevance as dealing with CSR becomes increasingly important for corporations everywhere.

Myths, Risks and Lessons for Communicating CSR

The fact that negative news seems to spread faster than positive can make the risks of communicating CSR seem greater than they really are. Our findings indicate that many beliefs about the risks associated with CSR communication are exaggerated, and that companies that communicate honestly about their activities have little to fear. In the following paragraphs we discuss in more depth the myths and reality of CSR communications.

1. Don't be afraid of the media.

Some managers we spoke with believed that media outlets are "out to get" companies and are more interested in bad news than good. However, most managers felt this fear of the media is exaggerated and believed that while some media outlets are more critical than others, overall the media are willing to report fairly on corporate CSR activities.

Managers, therefore, should not be afraid to engage with the media and explain their companies' positions and activities. If a company's managers shy away from engaging with the media, the organization's story will never come out, or someone else will tell it and possibly distort it.

2. Don't underestimate the public.

Given the complexities that often surround CSR activities, some managers were skeptical about whether corporations can effectively communicate CSR policies and activities. While these assumptions may have been true in the past, many managers noted that there has been growing interest in CSR activities and performance in recent years, and they said they believed the public to be capable of understanding CSR-related actions and issues. As a manager from Italy said, "Nowadays, there is fairly widespread knowledge of these subjects within the media and among opinion leaders," and the public even "asks for more information about CSR actions."

3. Address big issues head-on.

When a company fails to address major problems head-on, as Exxon did in its delayed response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, it can compound the damage to the company's reputation. Most managers we spoke with said that companies in industries such as tobacco or big oil should not try to gloss over the controversial issues and present themselves as CSR champions. "A good example of this is BP [PLC] with their 'Beyond Petroleum' campaign," a manager from the U.K. said. "It can come back to bite."

Instead, managers should address the big issues head-on. As another U.K. manager we interviewed said, "Don't shy away from your material issues because they are difficult. Be honest and balanced in your communications, not just the good news stories. Respond to what your stakeholders are asking for; if you communicate what people are interested in, it is more difficult to be accused of greenwashing and PR."

4. Don't present a picture-perfect company.

It is only natural for managers to want to share the good things about their company with the world. But stakeholders can be skeptical if everything seems too good to be true and interpret that as a sign that the company is hiding something. CSR activities should not be portrayed as the organization's sole purpose. Corporate communications should present CSR activities as integrated into the company's business and demonstrate that profit is not pursued without consideration for society. As a manager from Denmark said, "CSR engagements should never be the main topic of your communication activities, but complementary content."

5. Control the conditions.

Sometimes comments can be taken out of context because there is no opportunity to explain them, or because a company chose the wrong media outlet for a story. For example, a radio or TV show that does not allow time for participants to elaborate or put their actions in context might not be a good forum for communicating complex CSR issues. In addition, many managers we spoke with were skeptical about using social media, in particular blogs, to communicate CSR because of the risk of having to deal with critical responses.

Managers should try to create conditions that allow them to place their CSR actions in context and to communicate appropriately with different audiences depending on their level of familiarity with CSR. For communicating complex CSR matters, media that allow a company to expand on its actions through longer narratives, such as magazine inserts and well-designed websites, are preferable. As a Swiss manager we interviewed said, "If you have enough of their attention, you can explain convincingly."

6. Use the whole organization.

The idea that communicating a CSR agenda is the responsibility of only the communication or CSR department is a mistake. Stakeholders do not interact only with those departments, but with many different individuals and parts of the organization. It only takes a few people giving the wrong impression to undo the work of communication or CSR managers.

Communicating CSR should be the job of the whole organization — not in the sense that managers from other departments should communicate with the media, but in the sense that the rest of the organization should set a visible example of what is being communicated. While the communication department tells the world about a corporation's CSR activities, the rest of the organization must show the world it believes this same message.

7. Do what you say.

The managers we spoke with said they often see companies trying to cover up (greenwash) CSR deficiencies through CSR communication, and most agreed that this is not possible. No matter how effective or well-articulated a company's communication strategy is, it cannot make up for a lack of CSR. Saying that your company engages in more CSR than it really does can backfire and delegitimize existing CSR initiatives.

The managers we interviewed agreed that companies should do what they say. Before trying to communicate a business's CSR activities, it is crucial to ensure that its actions agree with the message. If the company has good CSR practices, they can be easily communicated. If not, the communications department cannot communicate what is not there.

Different companies will vary in which of the above lessons apply most to them. Companies that say they do more CSR than they actually do should understand that the public sees through such attempts. Companies also must understand that the whole organization communicates. On the other hand, companies that engage in high levels of CSR activities but do not communicate their achievements effectively need to engage more with the media and not underestimate the public's ability to understand what they are doing. Finally, companies that engage in high levels of CSR activity and communication must be careful to avoid having that communication perceived cynically by stakeholders.

Managers responsible for communicating CSR to the public often face pressure from above as to what kind of communication strategies to pursue. Given that they cannot control all of a company's decisions, managers communicating CSR must be aware of the risks they are susceptible to and which lessons might apply to them and their organizations.

Project Communications: How To Keep Your Team Engaged And Informed

By: Dave Nielsen

Communications are a critical deliverable of every successful project and a key project management soft-skill. You may not have thought of communications as an actual project deliverable, but it is. It may not be the one your client or customer places the most emphasis on, but that's because every client and customer will take good communications for granted.

Project communications is one deliverable that you are personally responsible for and it's one that has a large influence over your project's success or failure. I say this because personal experience has taught me that the best managed projects, delivering on all their promises, on time, and on budget can still get a bad reputation and be perceived as failures. The reason: the project manager did not do an adequate job of communicating project success to their stakeholders.

We hope that the information and template in this section will help guide you to choose the right information, schedule, and communication vehicles for your project.

The Major Elements of Project Communications

Who to communicate to...

You could just say that it's important to communicate with all the project's stakeholders and leave it at that, but this approach would guarantee failure. Each individual stakeholder has a different set of requirements for project information, and prefers different ways of receiving their communications. It will not be possible to define a unique set of communications and communication vehicles for each stakeholder in most projects, so the best you can do is identify the different category of stakeholder and define the required information and communication methods that best suits the group.

Executive Sponsor/Business Sponsor

Probably the most important customer(s) of your project communications. It's going to be worth your while to define a custom set of communications for each person in this category. Generally speaking, these are busy people who don't have a lot of time to read a lot of detail. Charts and graphs that tell the viewer a lot about the project at a glance will probably work best for them.

Take the time to interview them about their preferences: what they need to know, how they want to be communicated with, and how often. Keeping them informed about project performance is critical because they sign the cheque for the project (including your salary). They also need information so they can keep their peers appraised of the project's performance. Remember, they are your project champions so the better armed with information they are, the better job they can do promoting your project.

Tip: don't report a problem to them without suggesting a solution. For example, if you're reporting an SPI of less than 1.0 for the 2nd week in a row, you need to include a corrective action with the report.

Project Team Members

This is the single most populous group in your list of stakeholders. You may want to subdivide the group into sub-groups based on their roles. For example you may want to have a different set of communications for the Business Analysts and Software Developers, or for the Electricians and Plumbers on your project. This group has a different perspective on project performance than sponsors: the sponsor views the project as work being done for them. The team member views the project as work being done by them and therefore reports on project performance are a reflection on them. A good report pleases everyone - project sponsors and team members. A bad report will cause the sponsor to worry, but may negatively impact team morale.

Customers/Clients

These can be internal to your organisation, or external to it. These people may profess no particular interest in project communications until the final product or service is delivered. You need to overcome this disinterest and pique their interest in project progress. The more informed they are on the project as it progresses through its lifecycle, the more likely they are to accept the resulting products or services.

Partners

These are people who are doing work that is in some way affected by the work of your project. You may both be working on projects that are part of a programme, or your projects may simply affect one another without further integration. For example, you may be managing a software project that requires a corresponding database project - the database project team is your partner. Or, you may be working on a new software system that will utilise an existing web portal for customer access - the portal team is your partner despite the fact they aren't performing a project.

Community Stakeholders

These are an increasingly important category of stakeholder. As more emphasis is being placed on organisations ethical behaviour and social responsibility, there is an increasing demand for projects to be performed ethically. One of the ways this is done is by treating those who don't belong to the performing organisation, or to the customer/client organisation, as project stakeholders. Consideration of these stakeholders must go beyond communications, but project communications constitute an important part of your ethical dealings with them.

Project Manager

Don't forget to include yourself as a stakeholder. Your need for project information is perhaps the most important for the project. If you aren't receiving the information you need to run the project, you won't be able to share it with other stakeholders. Your needs will stem from the need to be updated on the progress of the individual tasks of the project so that you can keep the project plans up to date and identify preventive or corrective actions.

Project Management Office (PMO)

Your PMO may have requirements for project information that will enable it to identify opportunities for process improvement. While these needs are very much like the needs of sponsors, customers, and clients to know how the project is progressing, its focus is on the project processes, tools, techniques, and best practices it supports. Your PMO may also be tasked with reporting on project progress to the organisation. Reports which the PMO is responsible for should provide very specific requirements for information.

What to Communicate

What project information to communicate to a stakeholder group is inextricably tied to the information that is available for communication. After all, you can't communicate what you don't know. On the other hand, if the need for the information is real and gathering the information is feasible, you should make every effort to make it available. The choice of the information to be communicated cannot be made without considering the project's tools and techniques for gathering the information and vice versa.

Project communications is not a key deliverable of the project, but it should be treated as a project deliverable. Start with your Project Charter: does the charter contain any requirements for information? If it does, the information and its target audience ought to be included in your Communications Management Plan. Your Scope Statement may also include requirements for project communications. The Statement of Work (SOW) may also have captured requirements for project communications. When you are performing a project for an external customer or client the SOW is your bible and any project communications that are part of the legal contract should be specified there.

After identifying all the needs already expressed in the project documentation to date, you need to solicit requirements from the various groups of stakeholders. This solicitation should be done in the context of what is feasible for the project to deliver. Be prepared to meet with your sponsor to identify their requirements. Be specific as to presentation: should the SPI (Schedule Performance Index) be shown as a bar graph with a rolling 6 week tally? Should it be shown as a line graph with the benchmark line of 1.0 and a rolling 6 month tally? You may even want to mock up some sample reports to let them choose the format.

A project dashboard is a popular instrument for communicating project progress to sponsors and other senior executives. The dashboard is meant to show the status of your project at a glance and may consist of the project's SPI, CPI (Cost Performance Index), SV (Schedule Variance), CV (Cost Variance), PV (Planned Value), AC (Actual Cost), and EV (Earned Value). As a rule, you shouldn't mix schedule indicators with cost indicators, but you can show schedule and cost indicators in any combination your sponsor would like. You may also want to include such things as the top 5 risks, top 5 outstanding issues, metrics on change (number of change requests, number accepted, number of rejected, total costs, etc.), and quality (number of tests, number passed, number failed, outstanding bug reports, etc.). You should try to keep your dashboard to a handful of slides and provide supporting detail in text, or Excel format as backup.

You should repeat the requirements gathering exercise with each group of stakeholders, weighing their need for information with the project's ability to gather and communicate it. Tip: share as much of the information reported to the other groups with the project team (the people actually doing the work of the project) as is possible. Your organisation may have policies or guidelines around what can and cannot be shared outside executive offices; share as much information with the team as possible without violating these policies. You'll find sharing positive reports will boost morale, while sharing negative reports will stop the rumours that will further erode morale.

Be prepared to capture and report information by stakeholder group, department, or sub-project. The individual groups on your team will want the ability to view their progress in isolation from the rest of the team. Tip: make sure that you break the work down so that tasks performed by individual groups or departments are identifiable. This will enable you to report performance group by group or department by department and still roll totals up to report for the entire project.

The information you plan to communicate will drive your activities throughout the project. Your plans should include the metrics that must be gathered in order to support the information you plan to communicate. You will need to identify who is responsible for providing the information and where the information is to be stored and reported from. There are two questions you need to ask yourself before you commit to providing a report:

1. How do I get this information? (i.e. what metrics do I need to capture and where will they come from)
2. Where will I store the metrics?

A failure to answer both questions will mean that either you have to alter your plan to task someone to gather the metrics, identify a tool to capture and retrieve the metrics, or drop the requirement.

Finally, don't forget individual accomplishments and rewards when reporting project progress. There's nothing like a good news story to keep team morale high and the celebration of a team member's accomplishment is something most sponsors enjoy hearing about.

How to Communicate

There are many different means of communication available to you - face to face, email, Intranet, Internet, regular mail, phone, video conferences, etc., etc. These can be grouped into 2 groups: ";push"; communications and ";pull"; communications. Push communications requires you to push the information onto the recipient as the name would suggest, while pull communications requires the recipient to actively retrieve the information from a central source. Websites and centralised repositories are examples of pull communications, while email and meetings are examples of push communications.

Preference for either push or pull communications is typically a personal preference. Some people deal with information best when it's presented to them and some prefer to retrieve it at their own convenience. Be prepared for conflicting requirements from individuals in your stakeholder groups. You may have to make the final decision on which method to use if there are conflicting requests. Alternatively, you may be able to identify a spokesperson for the group who will be empowered to identify the group's requirements. The exception to this rule is your project's sponsor. Because there is only one or two of these people, you need to ensure that your communication methods suit their requirements.

Tip: if you determine that the project must have a new tool, such as a website, to satisfy a stakeholder requirement, you'll need to justify the cost with a business case. State the benefits to the project in business terms that justify the costs. You can also include benefits that supersede your project. For example a website or tool such as Lotus Notes could benefit all projects your organisation performs, and may even provide a benefit to operations. You may also want to explore having the PMO, or Operations bear the cost of the new tool.

When to Communicate

Your communication schedule will be driven by the needs of your audience and the availability of the information to be communicated. For example, if you had the bandwidth, you could report on any metrics managed by your MS Project file daily. On the other hand, you can't report on the results of your Gate Meeting until the Gate Meeting has actually been held. There is also no reason that a report communicated to one stakeholder group bi-weekly, can't be communicated to another group every week.

You need to use common sense in addition to capturing your stakeholders' requirements. If you choose to use a ";town hall"; to communicate to all stakeholders, don't schedule the meeting to occur weekly. Tip: when planning a meeting that involves you (or another team member) communicating information to an audience, count the audience, multiply that number by the number of hours the meeting lasts and multiply that number by the loaded labour rate for that group. Avoid spending large amounts on frequent communications.

Other meetings, such as status review meetings with project teams must be done more often to avoid the project going off the rails. I find that when the project is on track, weekly status review meetings are sufficient. When your project encounters problems, you might want to increase the frequency to better control the work. In extreme cases such as a project rescue, you may need to hold them daily. Tip: when the project is running smoothly and you have an alternate means of identifying completed tasks, don't be afraid to cancel a status review meeting and give the team an hour off!

Remember that communications is part of the project work. You should manage that work in your MS Project file like other project tasks, but be sensible - don't overload yourself by tracking every meeting in MS Project. You should be using the ";walk around"; style of management if your team is collocated, you needn't track each informal meeting you have with individual team members. Use MS Project to help you control the project, not overload yourself with work.

Tools and Techniques

Tools and techniques include tools you'll use to convey the information, tools you'll use to gather the information, and tools you'll use to store and retrieve the information. Conveyance tools will include email, websites, webcasts, conference calls, video conferencing, public directories, town hall meetings, and graphical tools such as Excel. What you're communicating, how you need to communicate it, and your communication budget will determine which of these tools you'll use.

There is one tool that you'll rely on more than any other to manage information about your project: MS Project (or Primavera, if that's the tool your company has selected for use). These tools are referred to as Project Management Information Systems (PMIS) by most PMP Exam preparation courses and in the PMBOK. These tools are capable of capturing, manipulating, and reporting most of your project's relevant information so you need to be very familiar with their use. There are many excellent courses available that will ground you in the fundamentals of their use.

Your organisation may employ a time tracking system in which case you have an additional source of information. Your time tracking tool should allow you to report on labour costs for your project (i.e. support the charging of time to your project code). It should also support the reporting of these costs by group and by type of work. For example it should tell you how much time was spent last week on analysis of your software project. You should reconcile the metrics from the time tracking system with your MS Project file to ensure they tally. Tip: if your time tracking system is used to generate the pay cheque for your team, make it your bible. A discrepancy means your MS Project file may be inaccurate.

MS Project comes complete with a selection of ";canned"; reports ready for your use. I have found that it's most useful feature for reporting project progress is its ability to export data to an Excel spreadsheet. Because Excel has been around so long it's feature rich and supports just about any type of graph or chart you can imagine. The trick here is to export the information you need to base your report on, then edit it in Excel. MS Project contains ample help facilities on how to export data.

I mentioned the 2 different categories for distributing information: push and pull. Many of your project's communications will lend themselves equally well to both methods. For example, if you communicate you can review your dashboard report with the project executive steering committee during a meeting, push it to the project team via an email broadcast, and archive it on a public directory or the project's website.

Lastly, remember that the accuracy of the information you communicate about the project will have a profound affect, either good or bad, on your reputation. You need to do your utmost to ensure the information you communicate is accurate. Measures such as the reconciliation between timesheets and your MS Project file can save you from making claims about project progress that aren't supported by the facts. Even with that degree of scrutiny your information can still be misleading or out of date. Be open and honest with your communications: tell your audience where the information comes from, how it was compiled, and how old it is. Be forthcoming with any information that could impact on the accuracy of your reports and let your audience form their own opinions of the accuracy and value of your communications.

Samsung Recall
Puts Supply-Chain
Oversight
in Spotlight

Samsung Recall

Puts Supply-Chain Oversight in Spotlight

Maintaining quality control is put to the test as companies use a giant network of suppliers

By: Angus loten, Sara castellanos & Steven norton

Samsung Electronic Co.'s botched recall of its Galaxy Note 7 smartphone is putting a spotlight on supply-chain oversight and raising questions about the ability of today's technology and management tools to help companies maintain quality control in giant complex networks of suppliers—as when products are being built and upgraded more swiftly.

Samsung on Tuesday said it would permanently halt production of the smartphone, just one month after issuing a recall of the device over complaints that batteries were prone to overheat and cause fires. It launched the phone on Aug. 19, aiming to bring it to market ahead of Apple's iPhone 7.

The company initially blamed the fires on one bad battery supplier, which it cut out of its production process. But similar complaints about supposedly safe Galaxy Note 7 replacements have led some industry analysts to suspect the company's problems run deeper.

"A design flaw should have been caught during review and testing," said Frank Gillett, a vice president and principal analyst at Forrester Research, "and this is much harder to do at global scale with multiple suppliers and factories for the same part."

It isn't clear why Samsung was unable to detect the problems earlier.

Samsung declined to comment.

But experts say that problems in the supply chain can be exacerbated when different departments within a corporation, and their suppliers, fail to communicate or coordinate effectively, said Fangruo Chen, a professor at the Columbia Business School whose area of expertise is supply chain management.

Marketers, executives, designers and suppliers within a company may have different ideas about when a product should be launched, he added.

Likewise, companies looking to reduce costs by outsourcing much of their supply chain to countries with cheaper labor markets also run the risk of sacrificing quality, said Timothy Brown, managing director at Georgia Institute of Technology's Supply Chain & Logistics Institute.

"There's a dispersion of all components around the whole continent that might make it more difficult to monitor," he said.

Samsung is based in South Korea.

Simon Jacobson, vice president of supply chain research at Gartner Inc., said most companies can trace where a product has been along the supply chain, but it is still difficult to get a full view of the entire product life cycle. Improving supply-chain visibility and traceability might help, he added.

It is possible that today's supply chains are so big and complex that they push current management tools and techniques to the limit. But a new generation of technology may help address the problems.

International Business Machines Corp. in July launched a blockchain-enabled cloud platform designed to help companies track items through complex supply chains. Blockchain, the technology that underpins the virtual currency bitcoin, creates an unerasable digital record of transactions along a chain of users.

For manufacturers with third-party suppliers, blockchain offers the ability to trace any problems down the production line back to the original source, said Mr. Jacobson.

Other organizations like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for Transportation and Logistics are also working on developing technologies that could help reduce the risk of supply chain management failures. One technology being developed at MIT would allow companies to see aspects of their supply chain, without physically being present, through virtual reality.

R Ray Wang, founder and principal analyst of Constellation Research Inc., said Samsung would have benefited from using a "digital me"—or "digital twin"—to better test its products and components before shipping them to market, including batteries and other parts from third-party suppliers. These "twins" are digital models of physical products or entities, which can be used to further analysis and understanding of the way they operate.

GE Digital, for instance, used a "digital twin" to develop a more efficient wind turbine based on testing from an exact software duplicate.

Increasingly complex supply chains, which can include resellers, retailers and telecoms to name a few, may exacerbate the challenges companies face as they try to execute a product recall, said Richard Soley, chairman and CEO of technology standards consortium Object Management Group.

"This is an example of where Internet of Things will make a difference," Mr. Soley said. "When you maintain a connection to all the devices, you know where they are and can do something about it."

Mr. Soley said it is unlikely that Samsung rival Apple Inc. is celebrating. "Apple knows this could happen to them too, and so do all the other manufacturers," he said.

Supply Chain
Management in 2015 and Beyond

Globalization, risk management, and the quest for talent are just a few of the challenges confronting supply chain managers in the coming years.

By: SigiOsagie

Global economic turbulence and geo-political factors are increasingly positioning supply chain management (SCM) as a key agenda item in boardrooms across the world. Recent media stories exposing slave wages, child labor, and questionable supplier management tactics by some companies are examples of the added socio-economic challenges companies have to contend with in their supply pipelines.

Undoubtedly, SCM capability will remain a critical concern for senior executives in 2015 and beyond; not least, because SCM is a vital element of many organizations' value chains.

Supply chain professionals face a myriad of issues in managing supply pipelines effectively. Some are traditional problems, like good IT systems capability. Others reflect the evolution of SCM in a more globalized world. The jet engine, the internet, and falling telecommunications costs have combined to create a global village, a new playing field which offers many new opportunities and challenges. Supply chain professionals must keep abreast of these trends, some of which we examine below.

Globalization

The global village has partly been driven by the continued push for better shareholder returns and higher business efficiencies. This proliferated a colossal move to exploit low-cost geographies. It has also created an outsourcing industry that has mushroomed beyond anyone's imagination. Outsourced and offshore operations have in turn created extended supply chains, which inherently entail increased complexity and risks.

The ability to manage supply chains effectively in this more globalized playing field will increasingly become a critical source of competitive advantage.

Supply Chain Risks and CSR

Risk impacts as regards intellectual property, quality, lead-times, supply continuity, and inventory-holding will be familiar to seasoned supply chain professionals. But now they must also contend with broader issues becoming more important – corporate social responsibility (CSR), including ethics and sustainability, probably tops the list. The reputational and financial damage CSR issues can create cannot be overemphasized, irrespective of the truths behind such incidents. BP's Deepwater Horizon experience and North Face's foiegras debacle should serve as reminders.

Resilient and agile SCM capability that incorporates sound risk management and good CSR execution at the coalface will become one of the hallmarks of effective corporate leadership.

Technology

SCM is one of the areas of enterprise activity seeing the biggest impact from technology. While laggard organizations continue to grapple their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) requirements, the more nimble players have extended their leverage of technology in different domains, with significant benefits in operational performance, organizational capability, and cost efficiency. Some application examples include;

• E-commerce, from e-auctions for sourcing a wider range of supplies to click-and-collect in retail supply chains. Also, integrating the use RFID into broader e-commerce capabilities is enabling seamless data flows, with greater accuracy and timeliness, even across organizational boundaries.

• 3D printing offers massive opportunities for product personalization, enhanced rapid prototyping, and time-to-market for new product launches. 3D printing is likely to see more areas of application as adoption grows. Innovation will create more areas of integration in enterprise value chain operations.

• Supply chain analytics and 'big data' – Supply chain analytics software offerings continue to evolve in leaps and bounds, providing better end-to-end pipeline visibility and spend management. Savvy businesses are now combining this capability with the exploitation of big data. This offers deeper insights to the marketplace and the supply base, allowing better alignment of SCM to the wider business environment, not least in the area of forecasting and demand management. Enhanced demand planning will remain a critical requirement, as organizations try to cope with the increased demand volatility created by economic uncertainty coupled with extended supply chain networks.

• Cloud-based software applications – This has massive impacts for organizations, largely through much lower capital investment requirements, significantly reduced total cost of ownership and, hence, greater return on investment. On-demand applications, or 'software as a service' (SaaS), is likely to mushroom once supply chain professionals can collaborate with their IT and Finance colleagues successfully to sell the business case to the boardroom.

• Human factors – Technology is also likely to have a huge impact on supply chain jobs and human interactions. Some conventional SCM job roles are already being supplanted by technology, e.g., tactical planning and purchasing activities now require less manual intervention, hence headcount, with reliable IT systems capability. And social media will continue to proliferate knowledge, benchmark awareness, and a different (although not necessarily better) sort of engagement dialogue with supply chain colleagues within the enterprise and supply partners externally.

Supply Base Management

Despite the impacts of social media on human interactions, the requirement to 'eyeball' key suppliers at periodic intervals remains crucial. Sound supplier relationships are the wellspring of harnessing great performance and increased value from the supply base to support enterprise goals. And sound supplier relationships are underpinned by good interpersonal chemistry between procurement buyers and supplier personnel.

Organizations will need to embrace robust supply base management, with structured supplier performance and relationship management (SPRM) and formal supply risk management at its core. To successfully harness the power of the supply base for competitive advantage, senior executives and supply chain managers must shift their traditional perspectives and recognise suppliers as extensions of the enterprise value chain.

People Capability

The requirement to shift perspectives is a key aspect of developing enhanced SCM 'people capability', i.e., the competences of SCM professionals. The benefits of developing better SCM processes and leveraging technology enablement are obvious. But these approaches can, and will, be replicated by others. Talent can not be copied; it can only be acquired and nurtured, through effective recruitment and employee development and engagement.

Many organizations have previously focused investment at process improvements and system enhancements. Yet people are the soul of any organization. The new playing field demands greater investment in developing people capability for sustainable success. This is already becoming apparent in procurement in particular.

As organizations continue to source more goods and services externally, the impact of purchasing spend on enterprise profitability has grown. With the need to manage supply risk exposure robustly and develop supply chains better aligned to corporate agendas, procurement has evolved from the conventional focus on "costs savings" to incorporate added critical requirements like SPRM; innovation; supply reliability; and value enhancements, where 'value' exceeds financial benefits. It demands a new breed of procurement professionals who are business savvy and adept at nurturing productive stakeholder relationships – they must be 'supply business managers' rather than 'purchasing geeks'.

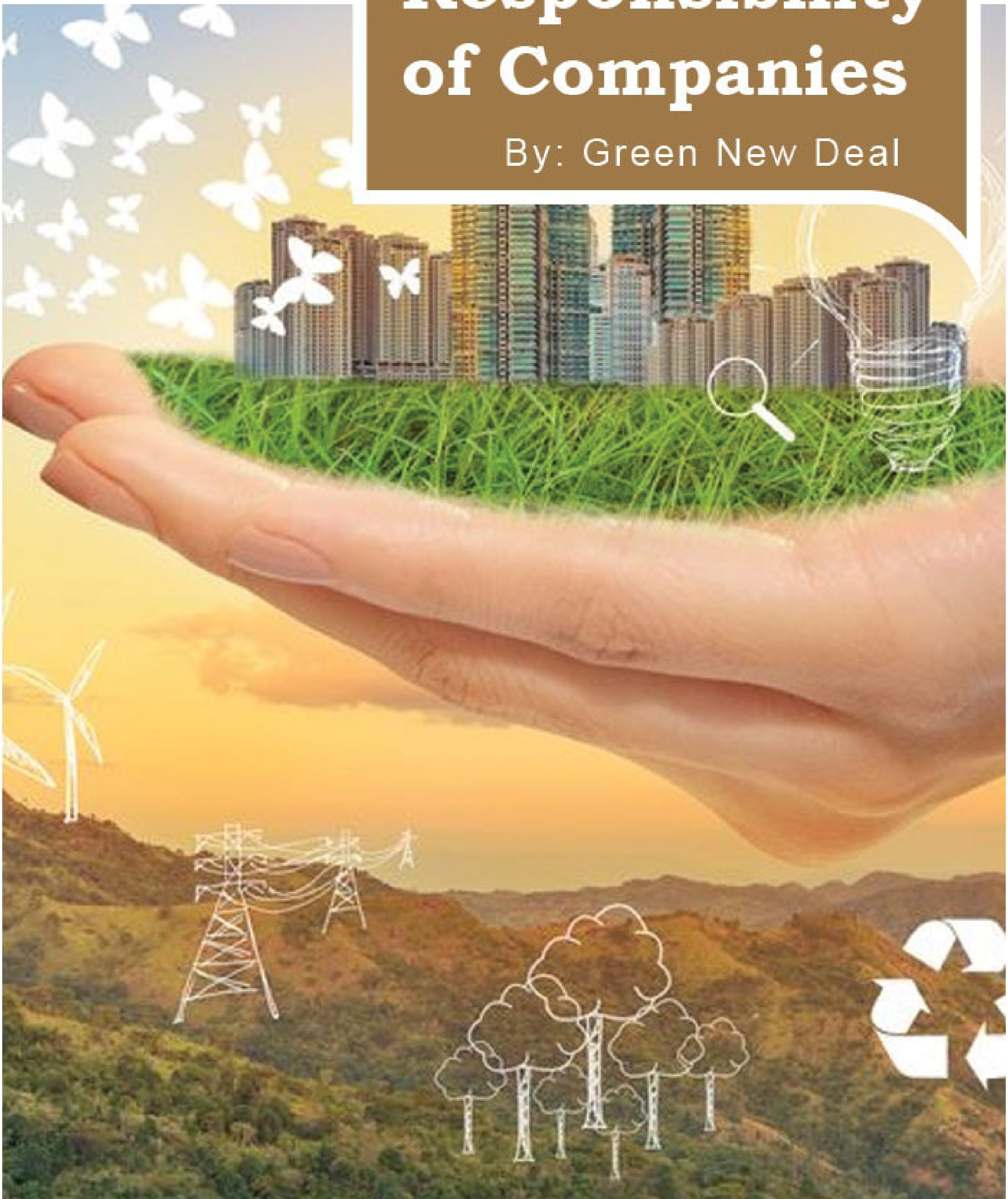
The importance of talent as a critical success factor applies right across the SCM spectrum; because, ultimately, it is people that create performance, good or bad. Building robust people capability is central to enhancing SCM performance. Several studies have demonstrated the correlation between SCM competence and enterprise strategic development and operating or financial performance; organizations with top-notch SCM capabilities earn as much as 22 percent higher profit margins than the SCM laggards.

2015 retains some of the uncertainties of the previous year. But it also offers a new dawn with significant opportunities. For many organizations, exploiting these opportunities fully and securing the benefits on offer will only come about by enhancing their SCM capabilities. Getting supply chain functions firing on all cylinders will be vital in 2015 and beyond.

CSR

The Societal Responsibility of Companies

By: Green New Deal



(CSR) – the
Societal Responsibility of Companies

By: Green New Deal

The voluntary compliance of social and ecological responsibility of companies is called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Corporate social responsibility is basically a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment. Corporate social responsibility is represented by the contributions undertaken by companies to society through its business activities and its social investment. This is also to connect the concept of sustainable development to the company's level.

Over the last years an increasing number of companies worldwide started promoting their Corporate Social Responsibility strategies because the customers, the public and the investors expect them to act sustainably as well as responsibly. In most cases CSR is a result of a variety of social, environmental and economic pressures.

The term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' is imprecise and its application differs. CSR can not only refer to the compliance of human right standards, labour and social security arrangements, but also to the fight against climate change, sustainable management of natural resources and consumer protection.

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility was first mentioned 1953 in the publication 'Social Responsibilities of the Businessman' by William J. Bowen. However, the term CSR became only popular in the 1990s, when the German company Betapharm, a generic pharmaceutical company, decided to implement CSR. The generic drug market is characterised by an interchangeability of products. In 1997 a halt in sales growth led the company to the realisation that in the generic drugs market, companies could not differentiate on price or quality. This was the prelude for the company to adopt CSR as an expression of the company's values and as a part of its corporate strategies. By using strategic and social commitment for families with chronically ill children children, Betapharm took a strategic advantage.

In July 2001, the European Commission decided to launch a consultative paper on Corporate Social Responsibility with the title "Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility". This paper aimed to launch a debate on how the European Union could promote Corporate Social Responsibility at both the European and international level.

The paper further aimed to promote CSR practices, to ensure the credibility of CSR claims as well as to provide coherence in public policy on CSR.

Responsible Companies in the Age of Globalisation

How a company perceives its societal responsibility depends on various factors such as the markets in which it operates, its business line and its size.

In recent years CSR has become a fundamental business practice and has gained much attention from the management of large international companies. They understand that a strong CSR program is an essential element in achieving good business practices and effective leadership. Companies have explored that their impact on the economic, social and environmental sector directly affects their relationships with investors, employees and customers.

For a long time, Corporate Social Responsibility was mainly promoted by a number of large or multinational companies. It is now also becoming important to small national companies.

Teflon Companies

Teflon Companies Shell was one of first companies to experience that early responsible action is better than crisis management after the fact. Shell was taken by complete surprise when the Greenpeace campaign against sinking the former drill platform Brent Spar achieved its goals. There was a widespread boycott of Shell service stations. The Brent Spar affair has brought quite a change of attitude to Shell.

As companies assess their brand in the context of globalisation, they are increasingly aware that Corporate Social Responsibility can be of direct economic value. Although the prime goal of a company is to generate profits, companies can at the same time contribute to social and environmental objectives by integrating corporate social responsibility as a strategic investment into their business strategy.

A number of companies with good social and environmental records indicate that CSR activities can result in a better performance and can generate more profits and growth. Research has shown that company CSR programs influence consumer purchasing decisions, with many investors and employees also being swayed in their choice of companies.

A major challenge for companies today is attracting and retaining skilled workers. There is not only an image gain for the companies using CSR, but it is also important for the employees. Within the company, socially responsible practices primarily involve employees and relate to issues such as investing in human capital, health and safety and managing change.

In India there are a small number of companies that practice CSR. This engagement of the Indian economy concentrates mainly on a few old family owned companies, and corporate giants such as the Tata and Birla group companies which have led the way in making corporate social responsibility an intrinsic part of their business plans. These companies have been deeply involved with social development initiatives in the communities surrounding their facilities.

Jamshedpur, one of the prominent cities in the northeastern state of Bihar in India, is also known as Tata Nagar and stands out at a beacon for other companies to follow. Jamshedpur was carved out from the jungle a century ago. TATA's CSR activities in Jamshedpur include the provision of full health and education expenses for all employees and the management of schools and hospitals.

In spite of having such life size successful examples, CSR in India is in a very nascent stage. In the informal sector of the Indian economy, which contributes to almost the half of the GNP and where approximately 93% of the Indian workforce is employed, the application of CSR is rare. On the contrary, the fight against poverty, the development of education, as well as the conservation of the environment are not existent in most of the Indian enterprises.

India has an advantage as far as labor is concerned. To some extent, business and capital go to those places where costs are less or standards are lower like the ones in India. But also in India, the demand for responsible and ethical goods is constantly increasing.

To guarantee the supply of responsible and ethical goods, it is especially important to implement a nationwide system of CSR standards.

How "Socially Responsible" are Companies in Reality?

Due to the lack of international CSR guidelines, the practical application of CSR differs and CSR Strategies within most companies still show major deficiencies. There are still complaints about multinational companies harming the environment and NGOs still denouncing human rights abuses in companies.

Some critics believe that CSR programs are undertaken by multinational companies in particular to distract the public from ethical questions posed by their core operations. While companies increasingly recognise their social responsibility, many of them have yet to adopt management practices that reflect it; company employees and managers need training in order to acquire the necessary skills and competence.

Pioneering companies can help to implement socially responsible practices by guiding the processes. The Copenhagen Centre and CSR Europe have recently launched a program to bring the business and academic community together with the aim of identifying and addressing the training needs of the business sector on Corporate Social Responsibility. While corporate social responsibility can only be taken on by the companies themselves, employees, consumers and investors can also play a decisive role in areas such as working conditions, environment or human rights, in the purchasing of products from companies that have already adopted CSR or in prompting companies to adopt socially responsible practices.

Critics suggest that better governmental and international regulation and enforcement, rather than voluntary measures are necessary to ensure that companies behave in a socially responsible manner. Corporate social responsibility should therefore not be seen as a substitute to regulation concerning social rights or environmental standards. In countries where such regulations do not exist, efforts should focus on putting the proper regulatory framework in place on the basis of which socially responsible practices can be developed.

International Initiatives for Corporate Social Responsibility

Why are governments interested in CSR? Their task is to make sure that the process of global and economic and social change is managed properly and fairly. Several guidelines or standards have been developed to serve as frameworks for CSR:

The OECD Guidelines for multinational Enterprises and the ILO - International Labour Standards form the principles for the societal responsibility of companies and will help to implement CSR on the international level.

CSR-Coverage

There is no unitary or binding international norm for CSR Coverage for companies. The Organization Ceres. Investors and Environmentalists for Sustainable Prosperity hopes for a greater engagement - as well as more transparency in reference to CSR. A Uniform reporting would besides reduce the possibility of "Greenwashing“ – The Dark Side of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)".

Australian (CSR) -

corporate social responsibility reports are little better than window dressing

Despite increasing visibility of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives over the last decade, real change in corporate behaviour has tended to be modest.

This is clear from the sections in financial reports from Australian companies listed on the stock exchange that cover social and environmental initiatives. For example, only a fraction of Australian firms report transparently, using suggested guidelines when publishing annual reports. Instead, there are carefully tailored public relations documents, fancy media campaigns, and glossy reports that showcase the firm's social good deeds. This weighting of image over substance, and spin over objectivity, leaves us questioning whether social initiatives today are simply window dressing.

According to the longest running study of CSR by the Australian Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility, Australians believe that progress in CSR has remained slow and insufficient over the last decade. The same study reports that compared to ten years ago, today there is at least an awareness of CSR.

It seems the majority of Australian businesses are just aware rather than truly integrating CSR into what they do. For example, although Qantasfocuses increasingly on addressing its approach to and role in global sustainability, the balance of its latest annual reporting on sustainability in 2016 seems predominantly about the emerging possibilities for Qantas, rather than reducing damage to the environment caused by the company's CO2 emissions.

Similarly, BHP states in its latest annual report that:

"Sustainability is core to our business strategy and integrated into our decision-making. It helps us live our charter values of putting health and safety first, being environmentally responsible and supporting our host communities".

However, the same report also informs about five fatalities and two significant community incidents in 2015 alone, as well as the disastrous Samarco tailings dam collapse in Brazil. It seems that the company is all talk and no strategic action.

Another example is ANZ bank, which sets its yearly and half-yearly sustainability targets in a separate sustainability report. But, while the bank's 2016 report shows that the organisation wants to improve its sustainability deeds, targets like "improving customer satisfaction ranking" are what the organisation should be striving for anyway in order to achieve its yearly profit.

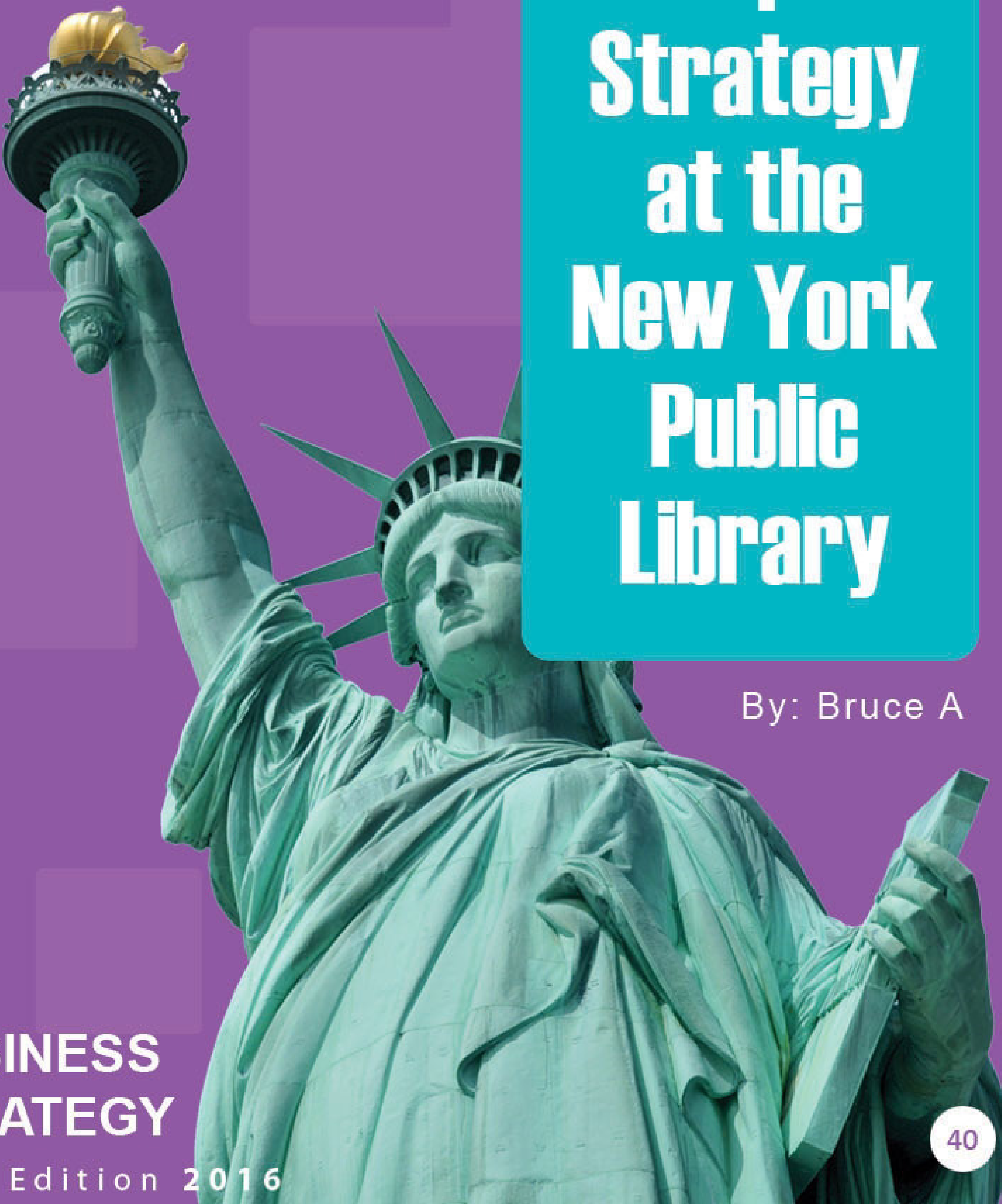
In getting companies to do better, there are various motivations. This could come from increasing regulations, class action lawsuits, and social movements holding firms accountable not just for their misdeeds, but their very existence. An example of such jurisdictions is South Australia's "Punters Tax" where 15% of South Australians' losses will be payable in tax by online betting agencies, in part to assist with gambling addiction. We expect other jurisdictions to follow with similar taxes.

However good initiatives should also be encouraged and promoted. Working with communities to proactively mitigate the potentially damaging consequences of business activities can create significant long-term benefits for generations to come. For example, Fortescue Metal'scommitment to training and employing indigenous workers could change the lives of thousands of young people in the Pilbara.

Judging from the CSR reports of Australian companies above, businesses here seem to have at least understood in the last decade that the social and natural environments within which they reside are intertwined with their own existence. But, as there is no national standard on exactly how deep CSR must be entrenched in Australian companies' strategies, the approach by even the largest firms towards CSR remains operational at best.

If firms truly want to incorporate CSR into their long-term strategy, then this is where CSR needs to sit right in the heart of the firm. Every action that follows, every move the firm does will then simply be a way of communicating this central cause.

How Employees Shaped Strategy at the New York Public Library



By: Bruce A

BUSINESS STRATEGY

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How Employees
Shaped Strategy at the New York Public Library

By: Bruce A.

The New York Public Library is one of the largest public libraries in the world, with 18 million visitors yearly, a budget of nearly $300m, and 93 branches. It serves vastly diverse populations: toddlers and caregivers, new immigrants, lifelong learners, famous novelists, and scholars. Although based in New York City, it serves a global audience of researchers and tourists.

Library leaders knew that given the immense changes brought on by digital innovations, as well as shifts in the communities that the Library served, it would need to evolve. How to transform such a huge, iconic institution, wrapped in history, into a nimble player? How to provide hyper-local services tailored to the diverse needs of its patrons while also upholding a consistent and high standard of service?

In the spring of 2014, we proposed a radical approach: offer anyone on staff – over 2,500 individuals, many of them union members – the chance to shape the library through strategic conversations with senior leaders. We believed that if the Library was to be truly nimble, senior leaders couldn't unilaterally come up with a plan. Involving staff in conceiving, designing, and implementing the change would result in a course of action that was more fit-to-purpose and more likely to be well executed. Staff would fully understand the changes and be accountable to each other for their implementation.

The conversation would be neither bottom-up nor top down. Staff would take a lead role in designing, testing, and advocating solutions. Leadership would shape the conversation to ensure proposals were strategically on-point. Senior leaders also would provide resources, guidance, and act as decision makers.

But would involving so many people work in practice? How to get them engaged? How to ensure that the conversations didn't bog down or become chaotic?

Several organizations for whom we had worked or had researched used a technique we call "innovation communities" to structure strategic conversations so that they're both efficient and effective. These diverse groups of volunteer employees work across organizational boundaries and outside of their regular operational duties. They are empowered by – and in frequent communication with – senior management. Innovation communities had been used by Best Buy to grow its portion of the women's consumer electronics market by $4.4b in less than five years. Boston Children's Hospital used them to make advances in telemedicine. Japanese pharmaceutical Eisai used them to improve care for Alzheimer's patients.

Convinced, the library's management team created three innovation communities with each one focusing on a core library function: circulation, collections, and reference.

The Teams

Each community was structured as three embedded circles. The smallest was the “core team” consisting of five to seven staff members from each of the three boroughs served (the Bronx, Staten Island and Manhattan). Their expectation was to spend about a day a week for the next six months on the identification, design, and testing of a business model innovation.

The next larger circle was made up of “testers,” approximately fifty staff members who piloted the solutions. Finally, all staff were invited to be “conversationalists” and participate by providing their ideas, critiques, expertise, and encouragement.

Internal experts helped innovation community members with unfamiliar tasks such as data collection and analysis, environmental scanning, and preparing and delivering management-level presentations.

Shared Spaces

The three innovation communities shared virtual, physical, and temporal spaces to promote cross-community exchanges. The virtual space was a social media platform open to all staff. This social network was designed to reduce the friction typically found in a hierarchical organization: we wanted staff from any branch to be able to communicate with each other and with senior managers, unmediated by reporting structures.

The physical space was a room in the Library’s Midtown Manhattan branch dedicated to the innovation communities where the core teams, and other interested parties, could work together. Painted on many of the walls were huge whiteboards, where the three teams worked on designs and exchanged ideas.

The temporal space was a day set aside each week: the three communities met on Wednesdays in order to reduce scheduling issues and allow support people – for instance the data and analytics experts — to meet with the three communities within a predictable block of time.

The Process

The three core teams were given a month to present to senior leaders options for their experiments, and the capabilities needed to try them. They were asked to describe their solutions, the benefits to the intended audiences, and to list up to five hypotheses that could be tested before the end of their six-month project. Built into the template were the library’s guiding principles: that its services had to be consistent, convenient, empowering, and inspiring. Each team came up with two to three of these “options statements.”

We knew from the start that coming up with all this in a month would be a challenge. But we anticipated that the very rawness of the presentations would create opportunities. Because the recommendations wouldn’t be fully baked, it would be easier for senior managers, and the rest of the community, to challenge assumptions and conclusions without seeming threatening. We wanted to create an environment where “thinking out loud” was encouraged.

The discussion around the options statements played out as we had hoped. In the crucible of these conversations, the library's strategy was transformed from an impersonal statement into a living, internalized guide. Having to develop testable hypotheses forced the participants to think deeply about how to structure their work so that it was rigorous and data-driven.

In partnership with senior management, and with the support of the internal experts and the rest of the community, the options statements were strengthened and then approved. The core teams then moved to design and test their solutions with senior management, the testers, and the conversationalists. Nearly 250 staff members (almost 10% of Library staff) became involved in the process, providing their own input as they became familiar with the core teams' work.

The Results

The Circulation team examined how books flow through the NYPL system. Of the total circulation of about 23 million, about two million items are reservations (called "holds" in library lingo) — typically items that the library needs to transfer from another location. The team discovered that the library was processing holds more slowly than its North American peers because of inefficiencies throughout the process. Implementing the team's recommendations should result in at least a 20% reduction in wait times for books while providing patrons with better information about where they are in the queue. The changes will also reduce staff workloads.

The Collections team focused on improving the library's ability to provide content to youth and young adults. They made a major discovery: this population was two and a half times more likely to use books and other materials in the library than check them out. NYPL librarians had long suspected that in-house use was substantial, but the magnitude was surprising and something for which the library's business model had never accounted. Of course, more usage is good news. But given this evidence, the team concluded that the library could do much better at serving this population. More materials could be made available for in-house use (as opposed to expecting patrons to put them on hold from other branches). And the collections could be tailored to serve local needs though more interaction with local educators and schools. The team also believed that this solution would appeal to branch librarians' professional pride by providing them more autonomy to shape their collections. The solutions, which required a radical rethinking of how materials circulate, are scheduled to be rolled out to all branches by the end of 2017.

The Reference team came to another startling–and in this case concerning– revelation. While NYPL's online reference service was heavily used, and its research libraries conducted in-depth consultations on a regular basis, patrons almost never consulted with librarians at neighborhood branches. The team discovered that when general reference support was sought, staff often didn't have the time or skills to meet patrons' needs. Based on its analysis of the issues, the team piloted a "reference receipt" for patrons with recommendations for book titles and online resources to support research beyond the initial reference conversation. The teams also tested signage at the local branches to guide patrons to such common services as signing up for using computers so that staff would have more time to offer reference services. And finally, they recommended modular training sessions for staff on providing those services. All three recommendations were adopted.

Both staff and senior leaders were enthusiastic about these outcomes – in fact, the library already has launched the next set of experiments.

Staff was energized by the opportunity to shape how the library worked. As a core team member put it, “We entered the process with the perspective of employees and came out with the perspective of leaders.” They were deeply appreciative of the chance to interact with, and learn from, peers across NYPL, something that rarely happened otherwise. They were excited to master new skills and knowledge relevant to librarians such as sophisticated data collection and analysis.

The core team members turned out to be superb community organizers. They rallied their peers to take on significant testing tasks and to participate in the overall conversations. They also were the best advocates for their solutions. And they had an innate notion of the types of conversations that would generate real change.

The project expanded their sense of belonging. Many had felt isolated in their individual branches. Now they had a clear line of sight to the entire system through their interactions with colleagues from across the institution. This institution-wide connection went beyond the work per se; staffers also felt much more connected to the library than ever before. As one participant put it: “Doing Innovation Communities changed everything for me. I went from looking for jobs outside of NYPL to looking at this system and thinking, ‘Where do I want to be next?’ It helped me think about the NYPL system and where my career could go here.”

It wasn’t just staff who were transformed. Senior leaders better understood how the library operated “on the ground” and they began to see how employee involvement in strategic conversations opened up real possibilities for reducing managerial burden. Staff — when offered meaningful autonomy and real opportunities for mastering their professions — become problem-solving leaders in their own right. And the cost was marginal. The project released staff energy that was more than ready to be tapped.

This isn’t to say that everything went completely smoothly. We were initially overly enthusiastic about exposing staff to new management concepts and templates, unnecessarily overwhelming them. The Reference team’s pilots didn’t immediately produce the desired results. Not everyone in the hierarchy –top, mid or bottom – was comfortable with networked, open conversations that exposed problem areas for all to see. And two of the three teams went beyond their six-month mandate, over-burdening participating staff and the branches in which they worked.

Despite these difficulties, innovation community participants more than rose to the occasion. Staff cared deeply about the work and put in much more effort than anticipated.

What surprised us most was the importance of the social aspect of the innovation communities. Community members consciously forged new and strong bonds of comradery, commitment, and common purpose.

And that brings us to our concluding point: strategy as currently practiced rarely emphasizes the importance of community. Our experience with the Library highlights it. The social bonds created by the innovation communities, we believe, will be integral to the Library’s continued efforts to realize its strategic direction. It will be up to leadership to continue to foster the social environment and the conversations in which strategic ideas are born, nurtured, and carried out.

Playing to Win:
How Strategy Really Works.

By: A.G. Lafley and Roger Martin.

BOSSES fail for many different reasons. Some are just unlucky. Some are sunk by their lack of ambition. As Alan Lafley and Roger Martin see it, settling for muddling along rather than going all out for victory means that a company "will inevitably fail to make the tough choices and the significant investments that would make winning even a remote possibility."

Many are brought down by making a strategic error, of which there are six common varieties. There is the Do-It-All strategy, shorthand for failing to make real choices about priorities. The Don Quixote strategy unwisely attacks the company's strongest competitor first. The Waterloo strategy pursues war on too many fronts at once. The Something-For-Everyone tries to capture every sort of customer at once, rather than prioritising. The Programme-Of-The-Month eschews distinctiveness for whatever strategy is currently fashionable in an industry. The Dreams-That-Never-Come-True strategy never translates ambitious mission statements into clear choices about which markets to compete in and how to win in them.

Mr Lafley, who usually goes by his first initials, A.G., did not fail. In his ten years at the helm of Procter & Gamble (P&G), he revived the global consumer-goods giant, roughly doubling its sales while increasing profit margins. He credits much of this to embedding a rigorous approach to business strategy in every part of P&G's vast empire. In doing so, he drew on conversations with the leading academic thinkers on strategy, including the godfathers of the field, Peter Drucker and Michael Porter. He also had a personal "brain trust" advising him as he designed and implemented his strategies. It included Clayton Christensen, an innovation expert at Harvard Business School, and a design guru, Tim Brown of IDEO, a consultancy. Above all, he relied on Roger Martin, initially a consultant at Monitor Group and latterly dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.

As Mr Lafley's "principal external strategy adviser", Mr Martin was the only person with whom the boss really shared his "out-of-the-box strategic musings", and "Playing to Win" is essentially their reflections on how to do business strategy effectively, as seen through the lens of their work at P&G. This is a fascinating tale, featuring a cast of familiar brands, including Pampers, Tide and Olay, each of which went through a transformation under Mr Lafley's eye. He has written about this before, notably in "The Game-Changer", a 2008 bestseller written with Ram Charan, but the extra detail in illustrating lessons learnt makes this the better, meatier book.

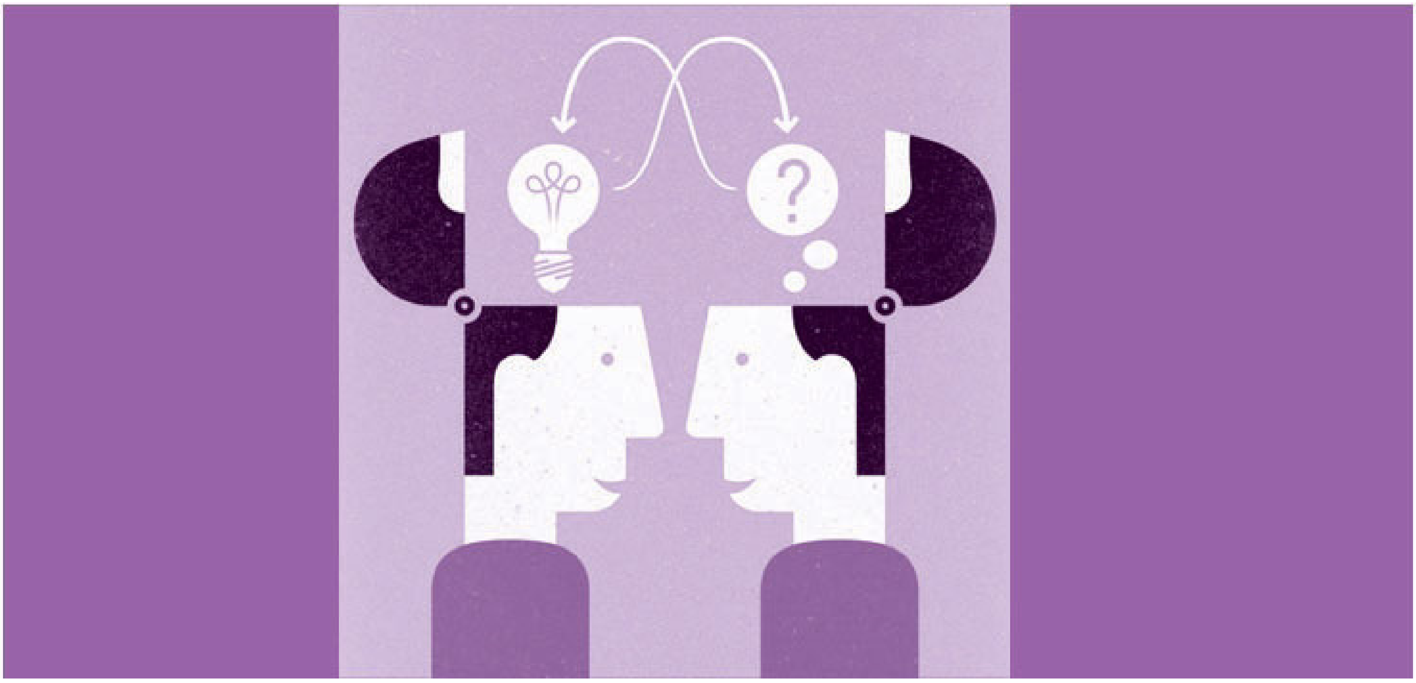
A good strategy has five components, the authors argue, all designed to shorten the odds of success by helping managers make the right choices. The first two are closely intertwined: figuring out what winning looks like and which markets to play in when seeking that victory.

For P&G, sometimes the goal became global domination, sometimes local; sometimes just one category of consumer for a brand, other times many. The next component is figuring out how to win—the company's distinctive strategy in any market it is trying to dominate. This in turn will be heavily influenced by the fourth and fifth components: identifying, and playing to, the company's unique strengths relative to its competitors, and identifying those things that need to be managed for the strategy to succeed.

The mirror image of the fifth component is deciding what not to manage. One of Mr Lafley's most important innovations was a slimmed-down strategy-review process. This replaced needlessly sprawling bureaucratic meetings with agendas that focused on the most important questions. One strength of the book comes from the examples provided to illustrate each of the five prongs of strategy, none stronger than the book's opening tale of how Oil of Olay was transformed from a struggling skin- care brand with a declining market reflected in its nickname, "Oil of Old Lady", into the booming Olay range serving the fastest-growing part of the market with its products for fighting the "seven signs of ageing". A crucial part of this strategy was to convince consumers who had once shunned Olay to buy its new incarnations at prices that were significantly higher than those charged by other mass-market cosmetic brands.

The book could have benefited from more about Mr Lafley's handful of strategies that did not deliver, for brands such as Folgers coffee, Pringles snacks, and pharmaceuticals. Rather than explore and learn from them, Mr Lafley prefers to bury these failures in an appendix.

Since Mr Lafley left P&G in 2009, the company has stumbled badly, and its new boss, Bob McDonald, is fighting to keep his job. Meanwhile, Monitor, Mr Martin's own firm, got into financial difficulty and has been sold at a discount to Deloitte. What do these sorry tales say about strategy? Rather than explore whether their many strategic successes somehow also sewed the seeds of later problems, Messrs Lafley and Martin coyly note that "no strategy lasts forever".



STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

Planning Stakeholder Communication

By: Rachel Thompson

Stakeholder

Management Planning Stakeholder Communication

By: Rachel Thompson

Stakeholder management is critical to the success of every project in every organization I have ever worked with. By engaging the right people in the right way in your project, you can make a big difference to its success... and to your career.–

Rachel Thompson (Mind Tools), experienced change management consultant

Having conducted a Stakeholder Analysis exercise, you will have most of the information you need to plan how to manage communication with your stakeholders.

You will have identified the stakeholders in your job and in your projects, and will have marked out their positions on a stakeholder map.

The next stage is to plan your communication so that you can win them around to support your projects. Stakeholder Planning is the process by which you do this.

To carry out a Stakeholder Planning exercise, download our free Stakeholder Communications worksheet. This is a table with the following column headings:

- Stakeholder Name.
- Communications Approach.
- Key Interests and Issues.
- Current Status – Advocate, supporter, neutral, critic, blocker.
- Desired Support – High, medium or low.
- Desired Project Role (if any).
- Actions Desired (if any).
- Messages Needed.
- Actions and Communications.

Using this table, work through the planning exercise using the steps below:

1. Update the Worksheet with Power/Interest Grid Information

Based on the Power/Interest Grid you created in your Stakeholder Analysis , enter the stakeholders' names, their influence and interest in your job or project, and your current assessment of where they stand with respect to it.

2. Plan Your Approach to Stakeholder Management

The amount of time you should allocate to managing stakeholders depends on the size and difficulty of your projects and goals, the time you have available for communication, and the amount of help you need to achieve the results you want.

Think through the help you need, the amount of time that will be taken to manage this and the time you will need for communication. Help with the project could include sponsorship of the project, advice and expert input, reviews of material to increase quality, etc.

3. Think Through What You Want From Each Stakeholder

Next, work through your list of stakeholders thinking through the levels of support you want from them and the roles you would like them to play (if any). Think through the actions you would like them to perform. Write this information down in the "Desired Support," "Desired Project Role," and "Actions Desired" columns.

4. Identify the Messages You Need to Convey

Next, identify the messages that you need to convey to your stakeholders to persuade them to support you and engage with your projects or goals. Typical messages will show the benefits to the person or organization of what you are doing, and will focus on key performance drivers like increasing profitability or delivering real improvements.

5. Identify Actions and Communications

Finally, work out what you need to do to win and manage the support of these stakeholders. With the time and resource you have available, identify how you will manage the communication to and the input from your stakeholders.

Focusing on the high-power/high-interest stakeholders first and the low-interest/low-power stakeholders last, devise a practical plan that communicates with people as effectively as possible and that communicates the right amount of information in a way that neither under nor over-communicates.

Think through what you need to do to keep your best supporters engaged and on-board. Work out how to win over or neutralize the opposition of skeptics. Where you need the active support of people who are not currently interested in what you are doing, think about how you can engage them and raise their level of interest.

Also, consider how what you are doing will affect your stakeholders. Where appropriate, let people know as early as possible of any difficult issues that may arise, and discuss with them how you can minimize or manage any impact.

Once you have prepared your Stakeholder Plan, all you need to do is to implement it. As with all plans, it will be easier to implement if you break it down into a series of small, achievable steps and action these one-by-one.

Key Points

As the work you do and the projects you run become more important, you will affect more and more people. Some of these people have the power to undermine your projects and your position. Others may be strong supporters of your work.

Stakeholder Management is the process by which you identify your key stakeholders and win their support.

Stakeholder Analysis is the first stage of this, where you identify and start to understand your most important stakeholders. Once you have completed your Stakeholder Analysis, the next stage is Stakeholder Planning. This is the process you use to plan how to manage your stakeholders and gain their support for your projects.

To prepare your plan, go through the following steps:

1. Update the planning sheet with information from the power/interest grid.
2. Think through your approach to stakeholder management.
3. Work out what you want from each stakeholder.
4. Identify the messages you need to convey.
5. Identify actions and communications.

Good Stakeholder Management helps you to manage the politics that can often come with major projects. It helps you win support for your projects and eliminates a major source of project and work stress.

Tips for Successful
Stakeholder Engagement

By: Vishal Agrawal

There are several factors that may impact your project success. One of the important factors is stakeholder engagement. It is often seen that project failed to produce its intended value due to lack of engagement from right stakeholders. In today's agile world, it is essential for scrum master to engage stakeholders at the right time at the right level. This helps to manage risks and issues proactively and build strong partnership.

Identify the right stakeholders:

It is important before kicking off a project, you should identify the all the stakeholders who can influence the project decisions. This is not restricted to immediate development team but should also include folks from business and operations. It is good time to know your stakeholder and start building relationship. This will be helpful to understand project requirement and to make necessary decisions to move things forward. You should have stakeholder map documented and available for team to review. This should be live document and should be updated on regular basis to keep it accurate.

Get them involved:

It is essential for stakeholder to stay engaged throughout the project. Look for early signals of stakeholder disengagement and address the issue right then. Use weekly status reports, regular checkpoint and sprint retrospective meetings, as a means to ensure stakeholder involvement is visible and monitored on the project. You can look for opportunity to reward and recognize stakeholder involvement, such as celebration for completing first sprint.

Manage their expectation:

managing stakeholder expectation adequately may take project on wrong path and results into failure. Meet with project sponsor and key stakeholders prior to kick-off. Listen to their feedback and concern. Understand set/reset their expectations; understand what success looks like to them. Follow three easy steps to manage their expectation.

1.Tell them what are you going to do   2.Do it   3.Then, tell them what you did.

Agreement on definition of "done":

It is crucial to create a shared definition of “done” for effectively managing stakeholder's expectation. Each stakeholder based on their area of work has certain criteria for done. It is important to align these definition and making sure stakeholders understand it. You can’t manage their expectation if you do not know what “done” like to them.

Informed them about project progress:

: It is important for your stakeholder to know how they will be informed about project progress and communicate with project team, to ensure everyone is on same page and kept up to date.There are several ways to keep project team informed. Leverage face-to-face discussion as often as you can, it is one of the most effective ways of communication. For remote teams, consider leveraging videoconference, voice chat etc. for effective communication. Consider scrum recommended meetings such as sprint planning, daily scrums, sprint review and sprint retrospectives. You may use additional meetings as you see the need. 1:1 meetings, project checkpoint and steering committee meetings are quite beneficial to establish trust and keep large team informed about project. Sprint Board and Burn Down charts are two powerful tools to catch stakeholder attention quickly without much explanation.

Show them as you actually build pieces:

Sprint demo is powerful way to get stakeholder feedback on the functionalities getting development. This makes the project progress highly visible and help to keep stakeholder involved as different pieces are built. This help to gain stakeholder confidence with the project team and keep them involved. If customer/sponsor does not like any feature, you can get that feedback as it is getting build and have opportunity to react and do any course correction if needed.

These are just few tips and not a complete list. Each project is unique and stakeholder engagement should be carefully crafted to address stakeholder's need. In summary, stakeholder engagement is key for project success, always identify key stakeholders as early as possible. Ask for and understand their expectation and review expectation on regular basis. Shift in business priorities may change their expectation. Plan ahead and communicate proactively to keep everyone up to date. The more your stakeholders are engaged the better the chances of project success.