

### Here's a summary of the principles underpinning our approach to leadership and management development:

If you're considering investing in leadership development, then it might be worth understanding the viewpoint of the people delivering the programme. We would like to offer you our viewpoint on this below:

First of all let's consider the question of what is leadership? This is one of those questions academics love to throw into a group discussion because it uncovers such a wide range of perspectives and a debate that is rarely ever resolved. In our experience the debate tends to centre on how do you do it, rather than what is it. Most people would accept that leadership is something to do with getting people to take some form of action to either sustain a current position or move in a particular direction towards another position.

Rather than reaching agreement over this high level definition, long and heated debates usually centre on the process of leading and what is the best approach to take. Such debates are unlikely to resolve in harmonious agreement because in our experience effective leadership is context dependent. Effective leadership is determined by who is leading who, from where, and when, to do what, and where are they aiming to get to, by when and for how much? The effective leader is then the one who can answer these questions and formulate an approach accordingly. The wide ranging debate on the answer to the question of how to lead is therefore somewhat academic, there is no single practical answer, and the many different perspectives, based on personal experience and learning, guarantee a good discussion.

Our perspective is that there are many styles and approaches to leadership and management and we can look back over 200 years of industrial history to see where they each came from. Some, in our view, are totally inappropriate in our present culture! Others, such as the military based authoritarian command and control styles, are somewhat dated but still find a place, or rather a workforce, that responds well to them. This command and control approach is effective in situations where employees have little choice, or at least where the employees perceive they have little choice, but to do as they are told. This category of employee is less widespread than in the past, in

recent year's workforce mobility, communication developments, and equal rights campaigns publicising equality and diversity have all led to employee flexibility and higher workplace expectations.

In addition, in today's environment, fewer employees will accept either exploitative or poor management and high staff turnover figures are testimony to this change in attitude. Fewer and fewer employees expect to stick with the same company through thick and thin, and talented employees and high performers are the most mobile and mostly likely to respond to poor management by going to work somewhere else.

Employee satisfaction surveys have emerged as the barometer of management and leadership style and the positive alternative to monitoring turnover figures, however, satisfaction alone does not necessarily benefit productivity. Effective leadership is not just about creating satisfied employees, it's about creating satisfied and highly productive employees.

The challenge then is how do you optimise work rates and productivity whilst ensuring high employee satisfaction and low turnover. The solution to this paradox represented the real coming of age of much of the psychological research around motivation and organisational commitment of the last 50 years or so. Emerging in the 1990s as the psychological contract it has matured and evolved throughout the last decade into the concept of employee engagement. Employee engagement is about getting the active enthusiastic involvement and participation of every employee in the organisation in moving the business toward the vision created by the leadership team. In other words it is about leading and managing your workforce in such a way that each individual achieves high degrees of satisfaction in their work, and, the organisation's productivity benefits from high workforce effectiveness.

Being an effective leader and manager therefore means being able to provide an environment in which all people are engaged and want to perform. Our perspective is open to all possibilities and we have taken the time to learn to recognise the different approaches to leadership and management that different leaders, different people and different circumstances call for. We consider that leadership and management are

essentially about people, and that the highest performing people are those who are bought-in to their work; committed and enthusiastic.

We see our role as helping leaders and managers to know how to do this effectively.

Please contact us to ask your questions and discuss your specific requirements.