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legal education & training group



LETG Newsletter Spring 2007

"Spring has sprung, or at least the shoots are showing, so here's the latest Chalk and Talk to get your little training buds bursting!

Lots to report in this quarter's edition, including what the LETG has in store for you for 2007 - 3 new events in this quarter alone!

LETG News

Committee news: adieu to Robin, come on board to Rebecca and Margaret!

Farewell to committee member Robin Henry of Simmons & Simmons, who's moved to the "dark side" (!) and back into fee-earning. Many thanks to him for his contributions, including the organisation of the well-received E-learning workshop last Autumn.

We were delighted that a number of you expressed interest in joining our merry organising band! Please therefore welcome Rebecca Fradley of Allen & Overy as a new committee member. Not wanting to miss out on willing volunteers, we've also gladly co-opted Margaret Dunmore of Shearman & Sterling to join us.



New work based learning consultation – have your say!

Hot off the press, the SRA is consulting on the new framework for work based learning. The deadline is 9 May – we would encourage all of our members to respond to the consultation and make their views known. Click this [link](#).

LETG and Law Society/SRA remain in direct contact

Pauline Holland, our Chair, has met with Jim Daniells, who is the interim Head of Training and Education at the SRA.

Jim has agreed with Pauline that it would be very useful to resuscitate the once regular Law Society attendance at LETG committee meetings, and we'll be looking forward to having Jim join us shortly. This is very positive, as we remain extremely keen to maintain a constructive dialogue with the Law Society and the Solicitors Regulatory Authority.

Do watch this space over the coming months for more news on this front.



How emotionally intelligent are you?

There is a wealth of useful information and resources on the CIPD website that law firm L & D professionals will find of relevance to their day-to-day challenges. Do you really understand where the concept of emotional intelligence came from? Check out the CIPD's factsheet on emotional intelligence (one among many on useful areas of L & D). Click on this [link](#) for more details.

Other news...

Have you read the Leitch report yet?



The Government commissioned Sandy Leitch in 2004 to undertake an independent review of the UK's long term skills needs.

The final report of the Leitch Review of Skills, Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills, was published on 5th December 2006.

The Review sets out a compelling vision for the UK. It shows that the UK must urgently raise achievements at all levels of skills and recommends that it commit to becoming a world leader in skills by 2020, benchmarked against the upper quartile of the OECD. This means doubling attainment at most levels of skill. Responsibility for achieving ambitions must be shared between Government, employers and individuals.

Why don't you check out the Leitch report – via the following [link](#).

New Dean at Nottingham Law School



In case you missed it in the Lawyer on 29 January, Keith Gaines (former Lovells litigation partner) has joined Nottingham Law School (NLS) as its new dean. With a remit to oversee NLS' LPC, undergraduate and post-graduate programmes, don't be surprised to receive a call from him as he's said his focus is on winning back top firms.



Story telling in vogue with business?

Apparently the way to innovation is through story telling, or so a recent Financial Times piece would have us believe.

In an interesting tale of how development consultancies are filling a skills gap, find out how using story telling might encourage your firm to think differently about a range of issues, from brand to knowledge management. Click this [link](#) here to find out how the story ends.

Articles



To get us off to a flying start this year, we have pleasure in attaching two new articles from LETG Friends, which you'll find at the end of this newsletter. Please do print them off, read and keep them – they're free!


McMULLAN PARTNERSHIP

“Helping lawyers learn – how our bodies influence our learning state”, by Paula McMullan

A very interesting article about how to get lawyers in the best state to maximise their learning. From circadian rhythms to CO2, find out more about how our bodies and the environment we create for them affects how well we learn.

Paula is a learning and development consultant with the McMullan Partnership, which specialises in trainer development, well being at work and business skills.

Understanding your Career Strategy, Des Woods, Overton Woods.

As the New Year is now well and truly under way, lawyers and indeed training managers (!) are thinking about their careers and strategies for progression. What is your career strategy? This article provides guidance on different career strategies and knowing how to manage them.

Des Woods is a Director of Overton Woods, a consultancy specialising in leadership development and change management through learning.

LETG Member sharing

Used any good trainers recently?

Are there any trainers YOU'VE used lately that have really impressed you? Let [Karen](#) know and we'll give them the praise deserved in this newsletter.

What's your favourite training venue?

LETG to compile member recommended venue list

Want to take the “guess work” out of sourcing the right venue for your training needs? Ever been to a venue that's blown your socks off?

Following on from a suggestion at the Conference, we're planning on compiling a list of training venues that you rate – this should give us a good “map” of places to use up and down the country!



Jot down on a quick email to [Jane](#):

- Name of venue
- Region
- What type of event you used it for (type of event, numbers and layout);
- How you rate it out of 5.

Alternatively, if you have any venue agencies you use and which you recommend for their service, do also let us know so that we can share your knowledge with other LETG members! We really look forward to hearing from you!

Great training websites to check out!

There are some great training websites out there! Tell [us](#) which ones you use regularly. If you don't already use training resource sites, check out these – we'll be featuring a few choice ones over the year.

www.businessballs.com – a great website that has a lot of theory models and training tools/resources, as well as activities, that can help you when you're in a creative rut.

Recent events report

Annual conference 2006 "Delivering Development....with Distinction"

15 & 16 November, Aston Business
School, Birmingham

*Diary of an anonymous staff member at
Aston Business School
AgedAnd?
(Mind Your Own Business!)*

Dear diary,

Have I got some news for you and a story to tell!

The past two days have seen some people called the LETG having their annual conference here at the business school; and what shenanigans have been happening. I think that they are something to do with law firms, though I have to say that if they are lawyers, then heaven help us all!

They seemed to do lots of different things during the two days - I think that a clever person from the LETG Committee had put together a programme of learning and sharing?



And all sorts of important speakers - for one they had that nice polite swimmer (such a good looking boy), Adrian Moorhouse. Though there was a very forward LETG committee member who just had to have his photograph taken with Adrian - you would think that he should have known better, fancy bothering someone famous like Adrian for his photograph (mind you when I was clearing up after Adrian, he said I must call him Adrian and not Mr. Moorhouse, but then I was just being my usual, helpful self). I am glad to say that Adrian's presentation was one of the highlights of the conference, although to be



fair there were a number of excellent speakers throughout the 2 days.

The first day started with an extremely informative presentation from an Alan Hodgart, who shared his thoughts on the future of the profession and the impact of some report written by a bloke called Clementi - seems that there are a raft of changes proposed for law firms and how they conduct business; and even more importantly how the new lawyers joining the profession are trained. This presentation sparked a lot of questions and debate, the delegates were both highly impressed with Alan's presentation and interested in the content and ideas covered.



There was also a presentation by an ex Red Arrows pilot and I managed to sneak into his session - very impressive and informative. The focus of his presentation was on providing feedback in the team and the need to



differentiate between a debrief on an action and giving feedback to improve individual and team performance; and how this should be structured and managed.

(Thing is diary, I think that this is something a number of firms and companies could do with improving - particularly for those people who are just not as naturally empathetic as I am.)

There were also a number of presentations from various HR and Training and Development people working in the profession; these sessions were invaluable in providing the forum for sharing ideas and successes and ideas that others may be able to implement in their own firms. Overall, diary, I think that the conference provided food for thought, inspiration and new ideas and the opportunity to meet colleagues who are extremely dedicated and professional in their roles.

However, there were a few 'funny antics' - I mean, what was the idea of that News at 5.00, very strange people involved there, I tell you.



Also, in one session, I saw some of the delegates sticking needles through balloons and tying rope around each other!! Not too sure about those sessions.



And the singing and carousing on that first evening - well, I tell you diary, it was well past the time those folks

should have been in their beds fast asleep.

I understand from the Conference organiser that the group are going to be back again this year - on 21 and 22 November. I wonder what on earth they will be getting up to this time?

Looking forward to more exciting sessions.

By the way diary, my manager has just asked how I managed to learn and observe so much of what happened on last year's conference, when I should have been doing my work - flipping cheek that's what I say, doesn't he want me to learn and develop?

At least the LETG people are committed to learning and development and that was clearly demonstrated over the 2 days.

More photos on the LETG website! Click <http://www.letg.org.uk/content/view/77/31/>

[Can you spot our diary writer on the table photo above?! ed.]

LETG Committee Away Day Trifling fun had at Canary Wharf! 8 December, Clifford Chance

Question: How many legal training and development specialists does it take to plan an LETG Year?

Answer: Nine! As proof that we did do lots of work at our Away Day, see the Events section below for only the first third of 2007! Even more to come! Watch out for our summer newsletter...

Here's our recipe for planning a new and invigorating LETG year for 2007...

Recipe for a fruitful December LETG committee away day and planning session, otherwise known as a **Committee Trifle**:



- Take nine sponges (of the Committee variety – Shannon, Jenny, Karen, Sue, Patrick, Peter, Pauline, Tracy, Sandy)
- One efficient stirring utensil (Jane)
- Break sponges into separate dishes (preferably sub-groups) and get them to stew on 2007 strategy, action plans and priorities
- Add a generous portion of duck salad and strange sweets/cookies (this is a multi-layered trifle, don't forget)
- Turn out onto a suitably sized presentation plate for members to consume vigorously.

New: 2007 LETG Events for your diary

Spring into Summer: LETG Year 2007

The diary's already buzzing with lots of busy committee bees organising a veritable smorgasbord of events for you to come to and network with other LETG members. We're looking forward to seeing some of the unsung heroes in your training teams (the administrators) at our February workshop.

February:

Weds 28 th	Charles Russell,	Personal Effectiveness in Law Firm L & D Administrators
9am to 1pm	8-10 Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1RS	(Led by Phil Parry and Tamsin Eedle, JSB featuring Belinda Scott of Watson Farley & Williams) £60 members, £85 non members
We're really pleased this workshop has proved popular – by the time this newsletter goes to air, hopefully 30 delegates will have got value from a session dedicated to the specific skills required of administrators to make it all happen.		

March:

Weds 28th	Pizza Express, Wardour St, London W1	L&D - Learn & Dine Come and share a bite and a drink with your LETG colleagues, and learn more about Support staff development to boot!  Approx £10 per member
What's this, I hear you cry? Network with other friendly LETG L & D professionals? New members especially welcome? Feed your belly and your soul? All this AND discuss a live L & D issue? And all for around £10? Don't miss out on the fun – eat, drink and learn with the LETG! Book your place with Jane.		

April:

Tues 24th	Clifford Chance 10 Upper Bank St, London E14 5JJ	Training for Long-term legal learning Led by Paula McMullan, the McMullan Partnership £85 members, £115 non-members
10am-4.30 pm		
Aimed at L & D professionals, lawyers who deliver training, PSLs and anyone else who delivers training to lawyers, this workshop aims to: increase your understanding of how information can be transmitted effectively; give you a greater awareness of how adults learn; provide an insight into designing and delivering legal technical training events for long term learning; inspire innovative L & D ideas to use in your firm. This has been designed specifically with LETG members in mind. Pass the details on to your PSLs too. Book now – places are disappearing fast!		

Can YOU help?



Venue needed for June LETG event!

Do you have offices in London? Yes? Do you have space to host an LETG mini conference on pre-qualification from 10am – 5pm on 13 June?

We need a main room that will seat up to 100 and up to 4 break out rooms.

If no, do you know a good value training venue we could use instead?

All replies appreciated: contact [Jenny Pugh](#).

Anyone going to the HRD Conference in April?

HRD 2007

17-19 April 2007, ExCeL London



If there are any members going to the HRD conference, do let us know! It would be great to hear from you on any new, fresh perspectives that law firm training departments ought to be considering as we start another year.

Please email [Karen](#) if you're attending.

This issue's "Member in the spotlight"!



Martin Nichols, Learning and Development Advisor, Bond Pearce



Current role: Learning & development advisor which I have now been doing for 4 months. I was previously with Halifax Bank of Scotland for over 10 years so it was a big step in changing who I work for and the industry I work in. Early indications are that the challenges facing Learning & development are very similar.

How long have you been an LETG member? After being in role for about a month I was advised to join by a colleague who is also a member, so about 3 months now.

Typical day: Great thing about the role is that it's so variable there isn't really a typical day. A typical week would include: some 1:1 coaching; delivery of training sessions; follow up of previous sessions; design of programmes and procuring external providers for this; consulting with internal departments to establish any requirements they have and how best to meet these; establishing clear communication routes with groups of lawyers; and some dreaded admin!

What's your office like? Fabulous, less than a year old and a real land mark for the firm. A big open plan office overlooking the river in Bristol, and right next to the train station for easy travel to our other offices in Plymouth, Southampton, Exeter and London, which I have to do a fair amount of. A real positive is that it's so new it is very environmentally friendly.

How many in your team? 6 including me, to manage all aspects of learning and development to our 750 staff in 5 offices - a challenge! As the newest member of the team I have been made to feel very welcome and supported.

Biggest challenges? Scaling down all the good ideas the team have for making a difference to the firm and having to limit these to what we can realistically deliver given the resources available. It's difficult knowing which ideas to shelve as you know they will make a difference on their own.

Greatest triumphs? Yet to be completed, but only one continent away from having visited every one. Time to put my feet up once I've played football on Copa Cabana beach in Rio.

Any training room nightmares? None that have left me mentally scarred.

If you had a magic wand, what would you make happen? Honestly? A culture of coexistence where people appreciate the differences in each other and their views, as a positive thing that they can learn from.

If you could be anywhere in the world, where would you be? With my family touring the Bay of Islands, New Zealand in my trusty old VW camper. Taking time to enjoy the outdoor life and catch a few waves at the same time.

Person you'd call in an emergency? My dad.

Favourite training provider? Yet to really establish any firm favourites in my current role. Previously did a lot of work with the Oxford Group who were always very knowledgeable.

One word of advice to new members? I think I should be asking for this from current members rather than offering any of my own.

Any help you'd like from providers? Don't agree to deliver something to a certain spec and then go about changing this over time so the end result looks like what you want to deliver rather than what you were asked to deliver. Obviously use your expertise to help our thinking but don't do things we don't want you to.

If the LETG could do one thing for you, what would it be? Exactly what they are doing, creating a network of people who face similar challenges and can support each other in helping overcome these.

A day in a trainer's life!

Phil Gott, www.philgott.com

Phil Gott is a conference speaker, trainer and consultant, specialising in people and performance in professional service firms. His clients include international and "magic circle" law firms, top 10 accountancy firms, and several mid-sized firms.

He was recently voted LETG Trainer of the Year.

How long have you been a trainer?

About a decade and a half. It's frightening to think about that!

What did you do before/in a previous life?

I'm a recovering chartered accountant. From there I moved into marketing for one of the big accountancy firms before settling on training, which I love.



Main topics you train?

Partner Development Programmes, Business development, Presentation & influencing skills, Leadership & developing people, coaching.

How long have you been an LETG friend?

The LETG has been a dear old friend for many years. It's a very supportive organisation.

A typical day?

Rise and shine at 5.30 so that I can be off by 6.00. I grab my things from the office – a converted barn in the garden – and then drive up North or catch a train to London.

I always arrive early so I usually have time for breakfast in one of my favourite greasy spoons (I could write a guide book about them) and can still get to the training venue in plenty of time to set up. It is then usually a pretty full day.

Many clients manage to squeeze a meeting or coaching session into my lunch break too, which is fine.

Once I get home I find out what the family have been up to. My wife, Clare, is an interior designer and my two teenagers Tom and Sam are both at a local school.

If I'm out again tomorrow I will need to spend an hour or two back in the office before settling down to dinner and probably watching an hour of TV before turning in.

Biggest training challenges in your field?

Training is ripe for a radical reinvention. I want to be at the forefront of that.

Greatest triumphs?

I was well chuffed to win the LETG Trainer of the Year award.

Any training room nightmares?

I once decided to rearrange a training room but when dragging a table it completely collapsed irreparably in a pile of broken wood and sawdust. Thankfully my client was very understanding.

Your perfect training venue?

Most law firms have pretty good facilities. Bigger is always better when it comes to training rooms.

What would a perfect law firm client look like?

Partners would insist on being the first to attend training courses. Everyone would arrive on time for training, having first turned off their Blackberrys. After training each person would be required to put their new skills into practice.

Any secret habits/interests?

Renovating old houses – more of a habit than an interest.

If you weren't a trainer, what would you be?

Unemployed. Seriously. I have come into training and conference speaking because I love doing it and wouldn't want to do anything else.



Want more from this newsletter?

Contact [Karen Aubrey](#).

Your LETG committee

[Pauline Holland](#), Chair, Annual Dinner, Law Society ETC

[Patrick McCann](#), Vice-Chair

[Peter Carrick](#), Website development

[Sandy Boyle](#), Treasurer

[Karen Aubrey](#), Newsletter

[Susan Way](#), Regions

[Jenny Pugh](#), Website development

[Tracy Clegg](#), Gifts

[Shannon Campbell](#), Annual Conference

Rebecca Fradley

Margaret Dunmore

[Jane Cochrane](#), LETG Administrator

www.letg.org.uk



McMULLAN PARTNERSHIP

Helping lawyers to learn: how our bodies influence our learning state

Much has been written about learning styles, multiple intelligences and other individual characteristics that affect our ability to learn. An awareness of these influences allows us, as trainers, to structure our learning events to appeal to a wide variety of learners.

But what about the physiological changes in our bodies which affect our behaviour and, consequently, our ability to concentrate, learn and remember? Can we minimise the negative effects and use the positive to our learners' advantage? After all, if we have managed to get our lawyers into a learning event, let's give them (and ourselves) the best chance of getting something from it!

Our circadian rhythm

Every 24 hours, our body goes through a cycle of highs and lows, known as the circadian rhythm, which results from our bodies producing chemicals, upon exposure to daylight and darkness. This, in turn, regulates our immune system, hunger, thirst and other basic physical functions. We are therefore able to perform different tasks better at different times of the day depending on the time on our circadian clock.

A useful tip from a sports psychologist when I was preparing for the London triathlon was to train at the same time of day as the race. Since I was starting at 3pm, training in the early morning would not have prepared me as thoroughly as an afternoon session because my circadian clock would have been at an entirely different hour on the day of the race.

This analogy may be useful if you are coaching individuals or teams for a specific event, such as a presentation or a negotiation. If they know when they are due to "perform", it may help them to practise at the same time of day.

A spoonful of sugar

Some of us struggle to get people to training sessions so how do we encourage participation? Bribery with a working lunch... And what is the most common ingredient? Processed white bread sandwiches.

This has a three-fold effect. Firstly, blood, which would be best taking oxygen to the brain to help it to concentrate by providing water and nutrients, is diverted to the stomach and liver. Secondly, a spike in insulin, which is secreted to deal with the sugar derived from your sandwich lunch, causes chemicals in your brain to turn into melatonin, the hormone that sends us to sleep. This induces a similar physical state to alcohol, dulling the senses and the ability to make thought connections. Thirdly, our circadian rhythm is on a downward curve from around midday until mid-afternoon so we are not in the best physical state to concentrate or remember, even if we do not feed our learners!

In the early afternoon, we should avoid covering new topics, or discussing those which require analysis or logic, concentrating instead on repetitive or mundane tasks. Tackle more taxing topics first thing in the morning or wait until later in the afternoon when it has been shown that people are at their most attentive.

Taking our delegates outside into daylight will help to reduce production of melatonin, making them more alert. Where possible, encourage delegates to eat food with a lower ranking on the glycaemic index, such as wholegrain pasta, pulses, dairy products and protein. Avoid sweets in the training room, or cakes and biscuits during breaks. Beware also of soft drinks, which contain deceptively high levels of sugar.

Taking the temperature

Research has shown that ambient temperature affects learning. The optimum temperature appears to be around 23°C, but raising the temperature just a few degrees significantly decreases the ability to learn. The brain consistently monitors the body's temperature - if it is too cold, the brain signals the body to cover up or, if it is too hot, to take off clothing or start sweating. Minimise this distraction by ensuring that the room is as constant as possible around the recommended temperature. Our body temperature rises slightly throughout the day so aim to lower the room temperature by the end of the afternoon.

The carbon dioxide footprint

The Resuscitation Council (UK) recently changed the number of chest compressions to breaths in CPR from 15:2 to 30:2. The reason? It is more important to get rid of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the lungs than to introduce oxygen.

The same principle applies to a learning environment. The build-up of CO₂ leads to drowsiness and headaches and impairs brain function, more than a lack of oxygen. Make

sure that your training space therefore has adequate ventilation and keep monitoring the “stiffness” of the room.

This is not the only answer to reducing CO₂ levels. We talked above about CPR. Chest compressions move blood into the chest so that CO₂ can be released through the lungs. If your delegates sit in one position for a period of time, what happens to their circulation?

We all know that physical movement is an element of accelerated learning, but it is not just important for the kinaesthetic learners amongst us. Of course, any form of physical activity must be undertaken with great care - ensure that you check whether any of your learners has a problem with moving around - but encouraging your delegates to move around (maybe create a simple obstacle course in the training room, walking around bins and throwing koosh balls, not hurdling over chairs...) will promote venal return (when the blood that has pooled in the lower part of the body due to inactivity is pumped back to the lungs to release CO₂).

Don't be a slouch!

How many times have you trained in a room with uncomfortable, rigid chairs, the same height, width, angle for everyone? While, as trainers, we have little to no control over the choice of furniture in our training environments, we can give our delegates the opportunity to move around and stretch, thus providing overworked muscles with a chance to rest. Beneficial stretches focus on the hamstrings and hip flexors because the adaptive shortening of these muscles when people sit for long periods can pull the spine out of correct alignment and lead to low back pain. The brain may use up energy to block this pain from the conscious mind, energy which would otherwise be available for learning.

In addition, sitting forward to write notes or to use a keyboard will cause the muscles of the chest to shorten and press the abdominal organs up against the diaphragm. In this position, it is impossible to breathe deeply to take in sufficient oxygen and expel CO₂. If your learners stretch their chest muscles and sit up with a neutral spine (not slouched, not ram-rod straight), this will help them to breathe more effectively and keep a clear head.

The extent to which you can use any of these tips will depend on the facilities available to you. If you are training at your own premises, it will be much easier to prepare in advance than training off-site, but a few additional questions to your client or to the venue will help you to plan your learning event. One last note of warning: be careful when encouraging your

delegates to undertake physical activity that you do not include exercises you are not qualified to demonstrate. You may otherwise find that you are not covered by your insurance.

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Paula McMullan is a learning and development consultant with the McMullan Partnership (www.mcmullanpartnership.com), which specialises in trainer development, wellbeing at work and business skills.

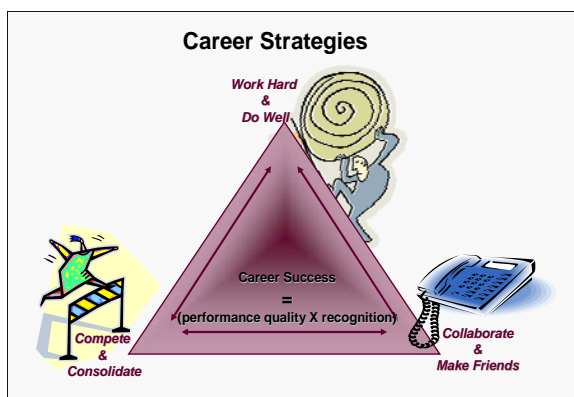
Understanding your Career Strategy

Des Woods

A central issue in making effective tactical choices about how you manage your development and maintain and grow your reputation is to be explicitly aware of the career strategy you are using. The majority of people manage their careers on an instinctive and short term basis and the term 'career' is often best described as 'retrospective concept'. Becoming aware of your 'de facto' career strategy, and judging whether it is actually appropriate to what you want to achieve, may substantially alter how you want to operate within the organisation you work for.

Three primary types of **personal career strategy** can be identified, each of which uses legitimate organisational means to achieve career development. But a successful career strategy is one which plays well to a particular organisational culture and a successful strategy at one level of the organisation may become inappropriate at a different level.

The career strategy mix can be described in the diagram below.



Work Hard - do well

This career strategy is embedded in a mindset which looks like, 'If I do a really great job and make myself invaluable, then somebody will notice and will reward me'. It carries a message which says: "I'm reliable and I'm here when you need me."

A **'work hard'** strategy is effective when an individual's bosses see the person as a provider of technical or expert value or highly reliable in churning out high volume work. As a result, it is the dominant career strategy in the low or middle parts of an organisation where the emphasis is on task completion and work quality. The strategy becomes less effective near the top of a hierarchy, when

'expertness' is assumed and does not act as a differentiator between individuals. Of course, there are always exceptions to this and a number of people have deployed this strategy at the highest levels in business and simply 'out work' their career competitors. It also has significant downside risk, which is that the person may actually become an invaluable expert producer of work and be 'boxed in' by bosses unwilling to risk a short or medium term reduction in their own business unit's work quality, if the person was moved.

One interesting twist to this strategy can be seen in people who find a very high profile, high achieving boss - and stick to him or her providing a 'value proposition' through working hard which allows the boss to move up, taking them with them.

Compete and Consolidate

This strategy is characterised by activity which is aimed at creating a value perception (as perceived by a boss) which is 'relative' to another person or an identifiable group i.e. the person is seen as a 'high flier' relative to the peer group. Being seen as a high flier allows the person more influence with bosses who respect and value the general contribution they make. It has strong resonance in most companies with lots of examples in the grapevine gossip, e.g. "He was promoted 6 months 'early' (relative to his peer group)". It often involves winning high profile work e.g. on large or important clients (sometimes from internal as well as external competitors). Once a competitively valuable position is achieved, it is used as a power base to take another career step. A person who is successfully using a 'compete' career strategy often attracts groups of loyal followers (the key here is making sure that they are very talented in their work) and can create very effective organisations which achieve quality results. This in turn creates a reputation of success, which becomes a platform for a new career step, often taking the followers with them.

Collaborate - and make friends

This strategy is rooted in a political understanding of 'how things get done around here'. It is important to note that 'politics' in this sense is not a dysfunctional activity; it is a perfectly legitimate use of influence and persuasion to achieve things which are of benefit to the organisation. In most organisations it is very easy to locate enduring collaborative alliances. Groups of people who support each other, work well together and create win-win situations where all the parties

benefit. Groups like this can often 'boot-strap' themselves up an organisation and it is not uncommon to find a leadership group in businesses who have, for example, worked together from many years previously as trainees or junior managers. A major risk with this strategy is that a collaborative grouping can become 'exclusive', turning itself into a power holding 'clique' and then attract opposition from other parts of the organisation.

This is essentially a networking strategy which is underpinned by fairly high levels of trust between individuals and also an implied assumption of competence about the people in the network. A rule of thumb measure here - which comes from research (Kotter et al) into networking and is used for example in 'start up' advice to sole traders operating a business-to-business service - is that an individual working a 'collaborative' career strategy, needs about 35 'friends' in the peer group. Friends, in this sense, mean people who know you (and your work) well enough to be able to support you in furthering your career aims. This ensures that:

- New, interesting work can always be found
- You have a 'profile' or reputation with people who can make decision or influence people who can affect your career.

Identifying Career Strategies

It is possible to identify people in your organisation who have successfully deployed one of the 3 career strategies outlined above in a 'pure' way (try it - they are easy to spot!). However most people need to develop a unique mix, dependent on their own skills and capabilities and of course these strategies are not exclusive; individuals can work aspects of all of them to a greater or lesser degree.

However, some guiding thoughts.

Work Hard - get on - is the dominant early career strategy. It becomes increasingly inappropriate near the top of an organisation when 'quality work' becomes increasingly a matter of 'getting agreement' as opposed to some obvious quality standard. Also 'expertness' becomes assumed near the top of a commercial hierarchy - so to effectively operate this strategy you either have to be really, really expert or work in a discrete but very high value niche.

Compete - and consolidate - first of all, you have to be naturally competitive to make this work, because once you start down this strategic route it becomes unrelenting. This is

because a successful 'compete' strategy means that you are continually judging yourself against your peers - is your performance as good or better than theirs? - are you working as hard or as quickly as they do? You are also asking others to judge you in the same way. Once you step out of this mindset your strategy will start to fail, as you ease off the pedal of competition.

In addition, if you relate competitively to others, they will be forced to adopt a competitive or defensive stance towards you. Successful 'competitor' strategists are often highly valued and respected, but people often 'walk carefully' when they are near.

Also, in a large organisation, you need to be very good at picking and coaching a talented group of followers and be prepared to reward them. These relationships often endure over many years and you need to put a high level of commitment, effort and loyalty into making them work.

Collaborate - and make friends - you need to be 'inclusive' in your thinking about people, 'who/how can I help?' Being exclusive, i.e. 'why should I?' closes down your network. You need to be willing to go out of your way for people. You need to know how the work that you do can be aligned to the network you create, which in turn can be used to support your career goals. You need a broad (and deep) range of interpersonal skills.

And finally... these strategies operate under a set of overarching assumptions about trust, ethical behaviour and the quality of individual competence and skill which set tangible boundaries and parameters around your behaviour.

Managing your Career Strategy

First of all, you cannot simply select a career strategy; you already have one! So a useful starting point is to identify what it is. You should consider how you actually achieved your current career position. What were you doing, who and how were you influencing to allow you to develop your role, move from one job to another and get promotion? Were you actively initiating in this or have you been swept up in other people's moves. Expand your thinking to the people you work with. What strategies do you see them using? What aspects of their strategy are more or less successful than your own?

Try to position yourself within the triangular model at the beginning of this article.

Secondly, once you have a fix on your career strategy, you should make an honest attempt to understand **WHY** you are operating this way.

This is not necessarily an easy process because it demands a fairly high level of self awareness and self disclosure. Your career strategy can result from an interaction between a large numbers of disparate factors. Your level of motivation (often expressed as your 'need for achievement'). The degree to which you have a mindset that puts you in control of your own destiny (expressed as having an internal 'Locus of control'). A cluster of personality factors which determine the degree to which you engage in social activity and also whether or not you relate competitively to others (i.e. I know I have done well because I've achieved more than you!). Finally there is the unique mix of your skills and talents.

Differences in any of these factors can result in significant differences in career orientation. For instance, high sociability would predispose one to a collaborative strategy, but combined with a high level of competitiveness, this would

shift to a 'compete' strategy. Low sociability, i.e. you like to work on your own, would predispose one to a 'work hard' strategy.

You also need to assess the degree to which your career strategy is appropriate to your current situation and your career aspirations. Do you need to shift your strategy? If so, you should remember that you may be changing aspects of your personality, motivation, attitudes and skills. Some of these, particularly personality factors and attitudes towards your need to control things (your locus of control), are difficult to shift as they have developed over decades. Alternatively, you may wish to play to your strengths, focusing into the career strategy that most naturally fits you.

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