



Learning Strategy and Solutions

Efficient and effective implementation of people related projects

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With many initiatives we find that the idea is strong, the planning exhaustive, the reporting in overload and yet somehow it doesn't quite produce the results expected.

How do we move from the intellect behind the decision to the intelligence of operation?
Over a number of years of analysing the success or otherwise of HR initiatives there are always two component considerations that glare back

- People involved – shared sense of purpose
- The thoroughness of implementation

In terms of people it is the intangible and unexpected reactions that can reduce impact. Turf wars can crop up at the most unexpected moments and realise behaviours that ultimately destroy expected value return. When I look at sport I am reminded of how impactful the shared sense of purpose can be. For example the 4x100m relay demonstrates the importance of perfecting the handover and sharing the same territory for a while – imagine a race run where everyone stopped to pass the baton (or is that what the GB team have been doing lately?!)

In rugby I am reminded how a missed tackle is not debated and blame sought but that a team mate will instantly identify the need to act and cover – and do so willingly.

This does not mean that in planning there should not be a clarity of responsibility, this will help decision making. It does mean that in determining responsibility it is not a precious commodity but a role within a wider team who also have responsibilities and only when all take those responsibilities to the end purpose will sustained success occur.

There is usually depth in any solution being implemented and that depth requires a thoroughness in six elements of implementation if we are to maximise our chance of realising intended benefits.

6 Elements of Effective Implementation summary:

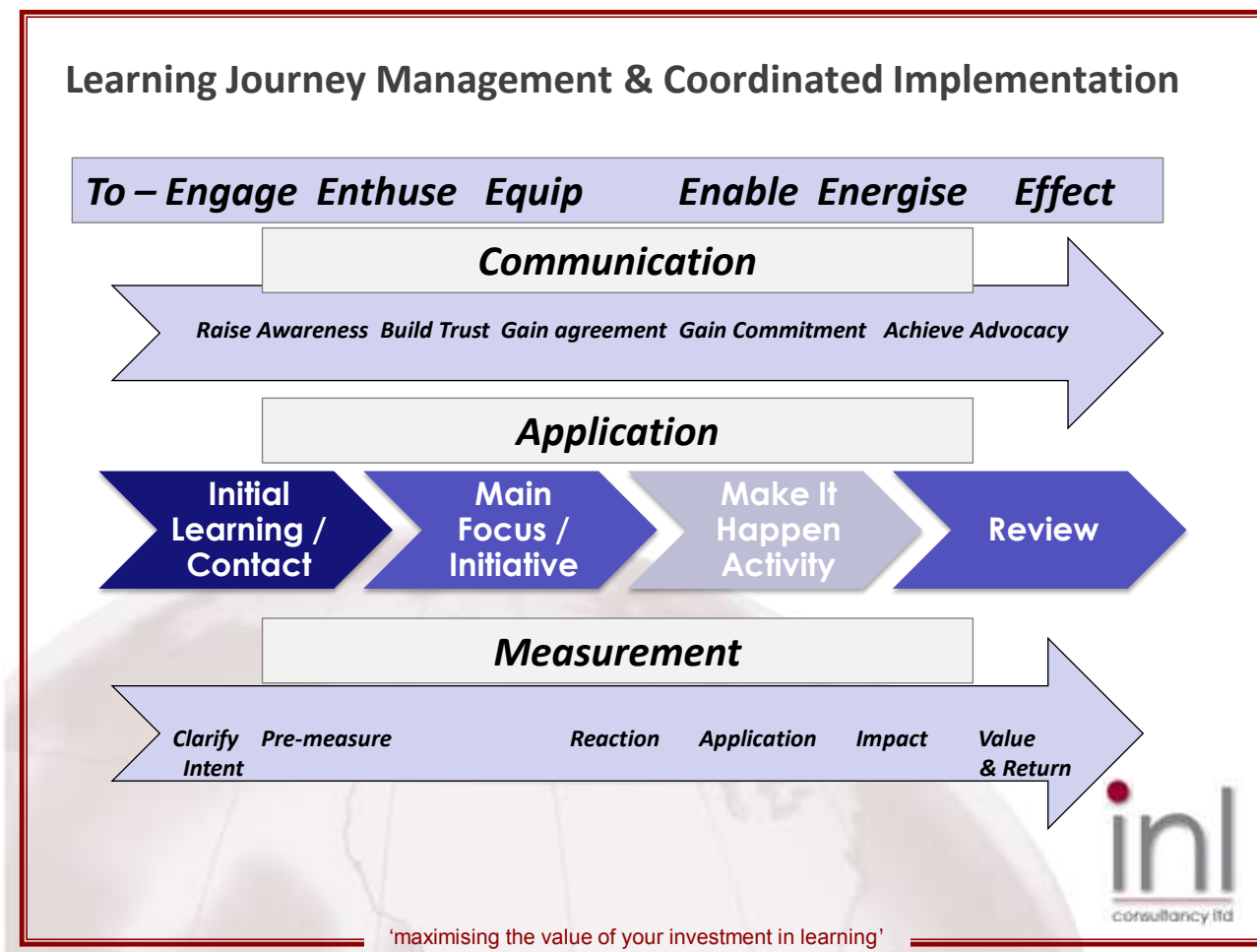
The 6 elements is a guide or 'aide-memoire' about how we should approach the organisation of a learning related project. It can be applied to wider people related projects. The six elements refer to the people rationale for each stage of implementation, namely the continuum that sees us need to

- Engage people in the need for change and the steps that will follow that will help them to achieve the expected and intended change.
- Enthuse people in the potential benefits and opportunities that will result
- Equip people to be able to achieve the intent
- Enable them to transfer any learning required into performance – to ensure the environment is an enabling one and to remove any systemic barriers to achievement

- Energise people to maximise the potential change – to collaborate, to share success, to coach, to drive performance
- Effect the changes as a new level of business as usual and expected performance – thus seeing a sustained performance that sees the intent realized.

The learning journey and activities should have a clear purpose and a focus on results. There are 4 core, key, steps to any learning & performance journey (noted below in the 'Application' line). The extent to which we are able to collaborate and co-ordinate communication and measurement through the journey combined with the impact and quality of the learning to achieve the rationale for that stage will determine the level of overall implementation success.

Each aspect needs to consider an appropriate and relevant blend of media utilization for key learning needs, communication and measurement coordination.



1. Initial Learning/ Contact: The first stage of building a relationship with our customer - for example, the pre-course work you receive prior to attending a training event

2. Main Focus/ Initiative: The 'main event' - for example, a training course whether face to face or on-line

3. Make It Happen Activity: Turning what delegates take away from a course into action - applying what has been learnt. This should be supported by Learning functions in a structured way to ensure that learning is embedded (e.g. through reflection, activities and coaching)

4. Review: This is the reflection on, analysis and evaluation of what has been learnt when 'make it happen' activity has had a chance to impact. This needs to happen at organisational, functional and individual levels. The key here is to provide meaningful and accurate data to enable essential analysis and decisions on that data to be relevant. Thus the customisation of data reporting so that it is relevant to the receiver is an essential consideration.

5. Communication (2nd line): throughout the 4 steps, communication between Learning functions and the learner and their management should be constant: thorough, consistent, motivational and utilize an appropriate mix of media. Explore all media channels and consider which is appropriate for which receiving group at what stage..... then do one more. Each stage and media selection should reflect the purpose of that stage in the overall implementation.

Initial Learning/ Contact: At this stage, we should be 'raising awareness' about the content of the learning experience. We should be 'engaging' and starting to 'enthuse' the delegate and their line.

Main Focus/ Initiative: We should be 'building trust' at this stage by 'enthusing' and 'equipping' the delegate to take part in the learning activity fully. We should be 'gaining agreement' to the delegate and their line to take part and 'enabling' them to do so

Make It Happen Activity: This is the stage at which we should be 'energising' the delegate and gaining their commitment to change the way they do things as a result. In other words, delegates should be leaving training courses with increased motivation and a desire to change the way they work and with the support of the line maintaining that energy throughout this period and beyond.

Review: At this stage, our actions should be producing results and we should be producing an 'effect' in the learner/ candidate. Our aim is to make them 'advocate' the learning experience to others.

Clear communication of results can reinforce value. The reporting should reflect relevant measures.

6. Measurement (3rd line): Throughout the 4 steps, we should be reviewing and measuring our alignment, integration efficiency and effectiveness (in terms of quality and the impact we have on the individual and the organisation) seeking sustained change and providing reassuring governance.

Initial Learning/ Contact: Prior to the 'main event' we should measure to establish a benchmark (e.g. a skills gap analysis before a learning event) and be clear on targeted intent.

Main Focus/ Initiative: At the main focus/ initiative we should confirm 'intent' (e.g. what we are hoping to achieve, our goals). We should also measure the reaction of the learner at the time of the 'main event' (e.g. course reactionnaires). Ask only that which is relevant and on which you will act.

Make It Happen Activity: After the main focus/ initiative, we should measure how the learning is applied (e.g. through line manager feedback or coaching- 3 month perception measure). This can be through simple survey although if you are able to align the performance data that naturally occurs within business areas to the intent of a programme then it is possible to work with the business to track actual impact.

Review: Finally, at the review stage, we should measure the value of what has been learnt, i.e. how it has impacted performance at an individual, team and organisational level (e.g. sales have increased by x%, 80% of customer complaints have been dealt with the SLA and establish monetary gain or cost saving against the cost of the programme)

Throughout, and with each aspect, we need to be thorough with our consideration of stakeholders, customers, receivers, partners and ensure we give media selection due consideration.

Through the use of this simple framework we have seen significant improvement in the realisation of intended benefit and the enhanced credibility of all those involved. We have also seen an improved perception of the contribution that Learning and Development can provide to performance and level of engagement in the transfer of Learning which has been reinforced through success and external recognition.

For more information please contact

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