‘Changing times in UK universities – what difference can HR make?’

Linda Holbeche
Changing global context

Globalisation

- Mergers and Acquisition
- Emerging Global Business Practices
- Global Sourcing
- Standardised Global Markets
- Global Media
- Rationalisation of Transportation
- Potential of Telecommunications Information Systems
- Emerging Customers and Market Niches
We have had three decades of

‘Hyper’
-organisation
In this context, changes become...

**Broad Based**
(systematic and require broad support)

&

**Fast Paced**
(speed and lack of time)

with

**Unpredictable outcomes because of Constant Turbulence**
(past experience is insufficient to guide us)
Key challenges facing organisations

1. How to compete successfully in a crowded market
2. How to get the strategic direction right
3. How to continue to offer relevant value proposition to its stakeholders
4. How to develop an agile organisation
5. How to carry out the systemic internal alignment to support strategic implementation
6. How to mobilise and engage people to support the strategic ambition of the organisation.
7. How to align culture/strategy – to make change stick.
What is 'agility'? "The organisation’s capacity to gain competitive advantage by intelligently, rapidly and proactively seizing opportunities and reacting to threats."

KEY CONCEPTS
- Organisation-wide
- Integrated
- Competitive advantage
- Intelligent
- Rapid
- Proactive
- Strategic and operational

© Linda Holbeche 2011
Agility = a change-able culture

- Intense customer focus
- Anticipates need
- Speed and flexibility
- Climate conducive to experimentation, innovation and shared learning
- People are empowered
- Team working across boundaries
- Continuous improvement and risk management
- Efficiency and effectiveness

© Linda Holbeche 2009
Agile People

- Continuous Learning
- Rapid, Able Decision Making
- Multi-Skilled/Flexible People
- Adaptable Structure
Engagement - the business case

“Engagement matters because people matter – they are your only competitive edge. It is people, not machines that will make the difference and drive the business”

David MacLeod, 2009
What is employee engagement?

- The intellectual and emotional attachment that an employee has to his or her work and organization (Heger, 2007)

- The extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organisation, how hard they work, and how long they stay as a result of that commitment (Corporate Leadership Council)

- Employees’ relationship with the organization, its leadership and their work experience (Towers Perrin-ISR)

- Easily the most likely (and desirable) focus for developing the employment relationship.
Elements of engagement

Social

Intellectual

Emotional

VOICE

EQUITY

© Linda Holbeche 2011
Engagement, Performance & Retention

- Opportunities for upward feedback
- Feeling informed about what is going on
- Managerial commitment to the organisation
- Managerial fairness in dealing with problems
- Respectful treatment of employees

Engagement → Performance → Intention to stay
What is the distinctive contribution HR can make to this agenda? What gives us the right to play?
Contributions: Enhancing the student experience

• Culture change to focus on improving quality of student experience
• Mobilising and engaging staff to support the organisation’s vision and mission
• Supporting front-line staff (i.e. support and professional staff).
• Improving communications
• Developing core researcher skills
Contributions: Enabling institutional agility

• Creating awareness of need for change, getting the message across

• Improving capacity for change and ability to make decisions in uncertainty

• Building more agile organisational forms

• Developing ‘change-able’ managers and leaders
Contributions: The talent and engagement agenda

- Talent management - the ageing workforce and restructuring of the academic career
- Brokering a new psychological contract
- Retaining key staff
- Supporting the internationalisation agenda
Task: Examples of HR making a difference on key issues

What are the key issues/challenges/opportunities for your organisation?

– How strong is HR’s voice on these issues?
– What is the nature of HR’s contribution?
– To what extent is HR shaping or simply reacting?

Small group discussions on 2-3 themes. Specific examples helpful. Brief report back.

NB Please appoint a scribe to make notes!
The role of OD and HR in culture change

The strengths of a joint approach
Underlying logic of hyper-organisation

Focus on staying slim – outsource, temporary contract.

Strip out unnecessary positions, process, purchases and people

Keep performance up to remain competitive

Ruthless pursuit of greater efficiency

(all at great speed)

Reduce cost & externalise risk – Improve economic rationalism

© Quality & Equality Ltd
Continuous economic lean time – offering less but demanding more

- No more jobs for life
- No more clear cut career development track
- No more “substantial” financial bonus reward for most staff
- Limited resources for continuous development

© Linda Holbeche 2012
# Generational work attitude, motivation and expectation differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional work ethic</td>
<td>Money work ethic</td>
<td>Money/Principle</td>
<td>Principle / Satisfaction</td>
<td>Principle / Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work first</td>
<td>Work first</td>
<td>Some of both</td>
<td>Lifestyle first</td>
<td>Lifestyle first</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born to lead</td>
<td>Expect to lead</td>
<td>Lead and follow</td>
<td>No need to lead</td>
<td>Lead if necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal to employer</td>
<td>Loyal to employer</td>
<td>Some of both</td>
<td>Loyal to skills</td>
<td>Loyal to skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent but conventional</td>
<td>Care deeply what others think</td>
<td>Some of both</td>
<td>Don’t care what others think</td>
<td>Care little what others think</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value working well with others</td>
<td>Want others to work with them</td>
<td>Want others to work with them</td>
<td>Prefer to work alone</td>
<td>Like small groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technically competent</td>
<td>Technically challenged</td>
<td>Technically challenged</td>
<td>Technically savvy</td>
<td>State-of-the-art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe in the mission</td>
<td>Lip service to the mission</td>
<td>Care about mission</td>
<td>Must have mission</td>
<td>Must have mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong chain of command</td>
<td>Chain of command</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Individual first</td>
<td>Individual first</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to win</td>
<td>I win, you lose</td>
<td>Want to win</td>
<td>I win, you win</td>
<td>I win, you win</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Marilyn Moats Kennedy
Career Strategies (2006)
Implications of these changes for organisations

- **Everyone needs to be externally aware and savvy** – willing to voice and allow to act on such knowledge

- **Products and services need to be innovated continuously** - to meet the demands of the market place and customers

- **Organisation needs to be flexible and adaptable** in roles, responsibilities and structures.

- **Key staff – need to be able and willing to ‘re-engineer’ themselves** – adapt, flexible sourcing and multi-skilling

- **Costs need to kept low in all fronts** – tapping into the goodwill of local staff to implement the cost cutting initiatives.

- **Organisations need to aim for high engagement with staff** - to tap into the discretionary effort of all their knowledge workers

- **Organisation cultures need to be highly adaptable, agile, organic** with everyone, regardless of rank, acting like they are the ‘owner’ of the business with commitment to invest and contribute to its success.

© Linda Holbeche 2012
A sustainably high performing organisation is ...

• Adaptable and change-ready
• Enables innovation and is knowledge-rich
• Boundaryless
• Stimulates individuals to higher levels of performance
• A great place to work
• Values-based

Linda Holbeche, 2005
A high performance culture needs

- Appropriate management and leadership
- Flexibility built in
- Employee value proposition
- Empowerment and accountability
Open system perspective

The OD/HR Zone - **THROUGHPUT**

Your organisation

Performance Output

Your organisation

© Quality & Equality Ltd 25
Complementary goals

- Organisational development - to build healthy and effective organisations characterised by learning, innovation, improvement and self-renewal
- HR - to build sustainable high performance through people
Differences and tensions

- Content or process expertise
- Adviser or helper
- ‘Part’ or ‘apart’
- Inside or outside
- Policy or strategy
- Specific or systemic
- Positivist or social constructionist
- Working with ambiguity
HR and OD collaboration

- Change management
- Organisation design
- Engagement
- Leadership
- Culture change

© Linda Holbeche 2012
On the change agenda

• Retaining key talent
• Handling redundancies and other exits
• Supporting managers
• Ensuring effective communications
• Re-engaging the ‘survivors’
• Combining action and learning
• Defining the new employment relationship
• On culture change...
On culture change

• It’s about generating a social movement
• Helping people become aware, shifting attitudes
• Primary mechanisms (Schein) – leaders, rewards, recruitment, excommunication
• Secondary mechanisms – organisation design, structure, systems, procedures; design of physical space
• Stories, legends, myths
• Formal statements of organisational philosophy
• Bringing values to life: CSR, Volunteering, diversity
• Ethics – challenging poor practice
Shifting thinking, stimulating willingness to work together to achieve sustainable change results.
My daughter began her social policy BSc in 2009 at (a Russell Group university). In her first term she was astonished to find she had only four hours’ contact time... (the staff) were unavailable to give her any help and encouragement ... so my daughter left -£7000 in debt.
‘New’ Organisational Effectiveness

Language and action

Authenticity and mutuality

Paradox and ambiguity

Leadership and management

The New OE Mindset

© Francis, Holbeche and Reddington, 2011
Treatment of Employees

- Rethinking change in terms of dialogue / open conversations

- Challenging instrumental view of employees as ‘consumers’ of brands

Treatment of Tensions

- Thinking more systematically about the tensions at play

- Developing a strategic ability - working with paradox and ambiguity
The main engagement drivers

• Leadership

• Engaging managers

• Employee voice

• Organisation lives the values

MacLeod and Clarke (2009): Engaging for Success, BIS
On leadership

- Addressing ‘engagement deficit’
- Attracting, engaging and retaining talent
- Growing tomorrow’s engaging leaders
- Exercising stewardship-shifting leadership mindsets and practice
- From ‘I’ to ‘we’
Axelrod (2010) on engagement

• Widen the circle of involvement
• Connect people to each other
• Create communities for action
• Promote fairness
Typical L&D/OD applications

• In designing and delivering L&D interventions
• In process improvement
• In HR’s transformational role
• In culture change
• In leadership development
• In team development
• In conflict resolution
• In supporting clients in major change and organisation design projects
• As generalist system health practitioners; keeping the organisation healthy, ethical and agile to face future challenges

© L.Holbeche2010
On engagement

• Follow up on surveys
• Develop engaging managers – recruitment, coaching
• Help line managers to manage workloads and design roles
• Implement effective well-being and diversity policies
• Develop inclusive employee voice mechanisms
• Growth, development, career tracks
• A new employment relationship...
Sustainable implementation is always biased towards the right-hand column while doing the left-hand column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert led</td>
<td>Customer led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell/sell</td>
<td>Co-construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change drive</td>
<td>Transition driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project focus</td>
<td>Energy focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Body &amp; soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanistic</td>
<td>Holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task centric</td>
<td>People centric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externally imposed</td>
<td>Internally induced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>