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Respectful Workplaces

Practical Steps to a Big Society

By Lucian J. Hudson,
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Cornerstone Global Associates Ltd

11 October 2010

“The hallmark of an ‘appreciative conversation’ is that people listen without judgment, do not seek consensus or compromise, but share the sole purpose of continuing the conversation in order to sustain relationships of mutual respect.”

Sir Geoffrey Vickers, *The Art of Judgment: a Study of Policy Making (Rethinking Public Administration)* (1)

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By Lucian J. Hudson, Partner and Managing Director,
Cornerstone Global Associates Ltd

This Blue Paper™ is written in collaboration with
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Summary

In common with other governments, the UK Coalition Government's emphasis on cutting public spending provides an opportunity to look more radically at all available resources.

If politicians and public service managers are astute, they will recognise that there has never been a better time to make more sustainable use of resources – of which the most important is people – and improving, not just maintaining, service. But at a time when we want teams to pull together and produce more between them, we find more managers and staff acting defensively and non-cooperatively. Uncertainty gives rise to threat. This in turn creates tension that can trigger unproductive conflict.

“...if we take the small steps... we will be in a better position to... create a Big Society.”

A trio of hidden resources that managers could do more to tap is the initiative, creativity and goodwill of an engaged workforce, strengthening the role of individuals within groups so that people give more of themselves, and using practical collaboration and innovation to optimise resources and build engagement, first within an organisation, then between organisations (2). This means delivering results through improved voluntary behaviour, cooperation rather than compliance or coercion, and using approaches to improve that cooperation.

This paper draws on the work regarding building respectful workplaces in Australia as evidence that if we take the small steps and create small societies, we will be in a better position to take the bigger steps and create a Big Society. The work of our strategic partner ProActive ReSolutions provides a warning and strong evidence that managers need to tackle harmful behaviours and conflict at work and build respectful workplaces. As conflict management specialists, they operate at the extreme end of bad workplace behaviour.

But what we learn from these situations can be more broadly applied, and could be applied to the UK as public services come under increasing pressure.

The glue that binds effective and productive work is respect. To create the conditions for respect to take root and grow requires establishing and embedding a process based on principles rather than goals and targets, adopting a structured approach to participation, and taking advantage of the pivotal timing in group dynamics to build on breakthroughs, with full commitment from the leadership at the top of the organisation to make the changes lasting.

Context

In the four organisations covered by this study, ProActive ReSolutions were brought in to deal with incidents of workplace bullying, discrimination, harassment, abuse and assault – which were proving damaging to individuals, teams and organisations. I interviewed the leaders of the four different organisations, large public-sector organisations in New South Wales, Australia: the Ambulance Service, Fire Brigades, Juvenile Justice (which deals with young offenders) and Centrelink – the federal government welfare agency responsible for people in need of assistance, and the main agency that coordinates disaster-management relief.

The paper captures recent experience, dating back from the effects of the Global Financial Crisis on the

public sector – and much is still current. It provides a rare perspective on the challenges many managers are now facing.

“The glue that binds effective and productive working is respect.”

Even in good times, organisations can have dysfunctional teams, which might or might not be a larger problem for the business. However, in difficult economic times, dysfunctional teams become even more of an issue. In at least one of the cases detailed below, taking tough decisions to cut staff was made easier by having established a culture of respect.

Research

In the course of my work on collaboration, I have identified practical approaches that turn business challenges – which have at their heart a human dimension – into opportunities for the immediate team and the wider organisation. Building on research into high-performing teams that puts success down to teams working together, connecting and generating results (3), I have researched examples of dysfunctional teams.

The work of ProActive ReSolutions gives us insight into how its interventions can turn dysfunctional teams into effective and engaged teams. A powerful picture emerges of two worlds of work, with individuals and teams who flourish or languish and businesses that perform or underperform. Better connected teams deliver higher performance (4). The encouraging news is that with the right interventions, worsening situations can be turned around and more positive behaviour can follow.

“...what appear to be personal and interpersonal differences are deeper failures of teams...”

However, if the problem is not arrested, it will be exacerbated (typically, with concerns about absenteeism, allegations of bullying and harassment, dysfunctional or languishing teams, and legal/industrial disputes). Failure to tackle workplace problems that have, at their heart, a human dimension can prove costly, disruptive and damage an organisation’s performance and reputation. In every case, growing concerns over a few extreme cases led to a recognition of deeper organisational cultural issues.

The common strand in my research is the worsening of serious interpersonal differences between staff and managers or between staff goes hand in hand with a system’s failure to tackle inappropriate behaviour. The crossing of boundaries has serious implications for roles and authority (5). Such behaviour has a triple-whammy effect: it not only makes the environment unpleasant

to work in, but also undermines the effectiveness of the group and many of the individuals in it, and affects business performance – in some cases also damaging the organisation’s image and reputation.

Whatever reputation an organisation may have acquired in the past, this set of examples shows that no organisation is completely immune from incidents of inappropriate, if not harmful behaviour. The New South Wales Public Health System, of which the Ambulance Service is part, has been under intense public scrutiny for some time over long waiting lists, clinical shortcomings, and staff complaints of bullying and harassment. New South Wales Juvenile Justice is responsible for providing services to young offenders to decrease their re-offending and increase their capacity to reintegrate successfully into their communities – but it is regularly an object of public criticism, as young people committing crime is a favourite radio and television current affairs topic. The New South Wales Fire Brigades, until recently, enjoyed an excellent reputation for its work – but over the past year it started to experience much negative publicity, when it was widely reported that six of its officers had been charged with sexual offences that were alleged to have occurred against fellow officers up to 20 years ago.

Typically, what appear to be personal and interpersonal differences turn out to be deeper failures of teams to function together effectively and deliver.

The problem becomes apparent to senior managers and human resource managers over time, particularly when it manifests as a series of one-off incidents that take the form of a disruptive and corrosive phenomenon – e.g. bullying, discrimination, harassment, abuse and assault.

Often the problem coexists with what is otherwise functioning well in a team. A team of fire-fighters can be the heroes of the local neighbourhood because they put out fires and make a community feel safe. But back at the station, there may lurk a dysfunctional team where the team holds together in action despite, rather than because of, how members behave towards one another.

If a member of the team is subject to bullying and harassment, and this is tolerated, the team ultimately ceases to function effectively. The situation can become so aggravated for particular individuals that they may even try to take their own lives.

Unlike many other challenges that managers have to deal with, this kind of challenge is one that they find difficult to handle. In many cases, they would rather not deal with the problem, and hope that the problem goes away. In command-and-control cultures, where the style of management relies heavily on giving orders and instructions and getting on with the job, the culture does not lend itself to finding out what exactly is not working out between two people or among a group of people. Anger and resentment will be suppressed, only to find expression through harmful behaviour.

But problems of this kind do not disappear. I identified interesting parallels between some of the case histories in the Fire Brigades and Juvenile Justice: even though the nature of the challenges each organisation faces is different, each had a number of difficult and messy workplace conflicts.

What starts off as an acute and isolated problem becomes a chronic and possibly a widespread one. Staff spot managerial indecision, helplessness, even impotence, and further confidence in managers is lost. Managers can lose moral authority over time or quite quickly. Orders may be followed, but managers do not inspire. Managers and even staff may start keeping records of transgressions but the files are put away for yet another day. Power shifts to those who are getting away with bad behaviour.

At the root of these problems across my research is a cluster of negatives, present in different degrees: intolerance of or hostility towards other people's differences in personality and behaviour, undermining of personal and institutional authority, breakdown in trust, lack of confidence in colleagues and managers, and a collective failure to deal with problems.

Bringing in ProActive ReSolutions to help managers tackle such challenges led to progress in changing the culture, when combined with strong leadership from the top of organisation.

Case Studies

Ambulance Service of New South Wales

Greg Rochford, Chief Executive, Ambulance Service of New South Wales, engaged ProActive Resolutions during 2008/2009 to provide Respectful Workplace Training to all staff. This was a significant challenge with more than 4,000 staff, 90 per cent of whom are operational and work shift work at over 300 locations. Rochford has been CE since 1999: a steely reformer, he has withstood enormous pressure from unions and political opposition to have him removed for short-term political gain.

Rochford did not come through the system as a paramedic, but had a nursing and legal background and became a talented administrator and public servant.

“...the organisational focus on respect in the workplace has the clear potential to improve patient care...”

Rochford sees the ProActive ReSolutions’ training as having been beneficial for a range of reasons. In particular, the training reinforced that individuals, as well as organisations, have a responsibility to ensure that colleagues are treated with respect and to resolve workplace concerns. “The training clarified what a respectful workplace looks like and provided a conversational tool, ‘Straight Talk’ that staff could use to have difficult conversations with each other. The tool assisted staff to raise concerns in an objective, reasonable way and also assisted the staff member listening to respond constructively.”

Rochford says that the training also had the benefit of demonstrating to staff that the organisation was committed to supporting its employees and promoting a culture that is based on respect. He believes that the organisational focus on respect in the workplace has the clear potential to improve patient care by reinforcing the importance of effective communication.

Straight Talk formed just one component of policy, process and skills development across the organisation.

ProActive ReSolutions’ training is a key part of a number of integrated initiatives designed to improve the way the Ambulance Service of NSW responds to concerns from staff.

ProActive ReSolutions’ Straight Talk is now referred to widely across the organisation both to encourage employees to resolve concerns with each other, and as a tool that can be used more broadly. Managers also use ProActive ReSolutions’ Dialogue for Solutions to structure facilitated meetings between staff.

Centrelink

In assessing ProActive ReSolutions’ impact on his organisation, Grant Tidswell, Deputy CEO, Centrelink, points to the scale and complexity of the organisation – more than 27, 000 staff dispersed across Australia – and the different levels of intervention required. Tidswell is the man organisations go to when they have big challenges to deal with. Reflective and highly effective managerially, he has led major federal government initiatives such as improving Aboriginal living conditions and major bushfire disaster relief responses.

“...tackling behaviour issues was... important...in terms of the wider organisational objectives...”

Centrelink had three challenges. First, there was a need to tackle what gave rise to harmful behaviour in specific incidents. Second, Tidswell wanted to achieve greater collaboration across the organisation, particularly between teams that operated from multiple sites, and needed to work more closely to deliver an end-to-end service for the public. Third, Tidswell was alert to customer feedback that the variations in delivery of services among different sites could reflect badly on the organisation’s reputation for quality of service. Consistency was important.

Tidswell thinks that ProActive ReSolutions’ interventions have helped not only deal with the pressing problems

of harmful behaviour, but have been instrumental in changing the culture. More respectful teams created the possibility of bringing on teams that were more open to different ways of working, and the change of dynamic made it much easier to deliver the objectives set at the top of the organisation.

Tidswell says that ProActive ReSolutions dealt with “toxic issues” That many of his managers could not handle because it was not “business as usual”. Once those problems were fixed, the teams could move on. He singles out the need for leadership in making any changes in culture effective. “We managers all struggle to find the right metrics to create a more collaborative organisation. We have oodles of measures. Part of good management is knowing what to measure. We realised that tackling behaviour issues was not only important in itself, but also in terms of the wider organisational objectives we wanted to achieve.”

Tidswell says he loves a target, “especially a tough one”, but what he also finds necessary is a broad-based approach to achieving high performance, and being more strategic about managing workplace conflicts.

He exploited an opportunity created by ProActive ReSolutions’ work on difficult situations to drive change through more effective and engaged teams. “Rather than just push from the top, we tapped the change on behaviours from the ground-up,” he says.

New South Wales Fire Brigades

Greg Mullins, Commissioner, New South Wales Fire Brigades, runs one of the world’s largest urban fire and rescue services, numbering more than 7,000 staff. Mullins rose through the ranks, starting as a firefighter to become Fire Commissioner. Widely respected by staff, both firefighters and administrative employees, he has led the Fire Brigades for ten years, focusing on bringing firefighting skills up to world’s best practice.

The organisation has received praise worldwide for its operational expertise. The down-side is that in improving

operations, there has been less of an emphasis on the human-resource management side of the job, and this has now hit the organisation hard.

ProActive ReSolutions became engaged when senior management became aware of a number of stations and workplaces that were experiencing serious conflict, allegations of inappropriate behaviour and subsequent police investigations, and a growing number of internal complaints around bullying and harassment. Mullins and his Executive decided to act directly and forcefully to change and improve a culture that had allowed such behaviours to exist.

“...‘respect’ is in the psyche but it has yet to be in the DNA of the organisation...”

The NSW Fire Brigades has been described as “male, pale and stale”. According to many observers, there is some truth in the observation: there are few women firefighters; very few firefighters who are members of an ethnic minority; and even fewer who are open about their homosexuality.

ProActive ReSolutions was chosen from over 40 other competitive tenders to provide training on respectful workplaces to NSW Fire Brigades personnel from the Commissioner down, starting with the Corporate Executive Group and working its way out. In addition, ProActive ReSolutions is running five of its Conferences for workplaces experiencing significant conflict. In one station, it also completed a threat assessment where the behaviour of an individual firefighter was considered so worrying that other officers became afraid for their, and his, personal physical safety.

Mullins says that ProActive ReSolutions came highly recommended and is proving very effective at rolling out a major programme across an organisation where attitudes and behaviours can be very entrenched. ProActive ReSolutions provides a quality of analysis and mediation that Mullins does not have available in-house.

Asked about his evaluation of the programme, Mullins says that it is too early to reach conclusions on how much the organisation is changing subsequent to the ProActive ReSolutions' training. But he stresses that in all the fire stations he visits, ProActive ReSolutions' work is positively received. "It's the talk of the town," he says.

"Where there was conflict, there has been a change. It's a pressure-cooker environment where, in the worst cases, people were cast as victims and perpetrators. By working with everybody involved, ProActive ReSolutions has demonstrated that these conflicts are about human beings. It's about giving power back to people who think they've lost all power. By getting the problems out in the open, they get their power back."

Mullins is working with his senior leadership to consolidate progress. This, crucially, involves "walking the talk".

New South Wales Juvenile Justice

Peter Muir, Chief Executive, NSW Juvenile Justice, worked his way up through the ranks from being a youth worker. He runs marathons for relaxation, and the kind of challenges he has to manage are definitely marathons rather than sprints. Most of the Juvenile Justice employees who work in juvenile detention centres are youth workers, with the remaining staff employed as community/probation officers, counsellors and psychologists. Pressures on the system are great: overcrowding and high numbers are concerns, and the inmate population is disproportionately Aboriginal, with significantly more boys than girls.

This example brings out most clearly the link between staff behaviour and the example it sets for the young people with whom the staff work, particularly in how conflict is dealt with in high-pressure environments.

Muir singles out ProActive ReSolutions' director, John McDonald, and his ability to engage a wide group of people and bring them all into the process. "John has a great knack for breaking a negative cycle of behaviour

by getting agreement on the main issues, and also winning agreement for a change process. He puts a lot of preparation into his conferences with bigger groups by speaking first to participants on a one-to-one basis. He works with individual concerns, and gives those concerns a voice."

Muir emphasises how ProActive ReSolutions is particularly effective in generating commitment. "Local management owned the solutions and stuck to them. If anybody deviates from what has been agreed, they are brought back to the commitments that they made when they worked together as a group. They are brought back to a process."

"It was easier...to make budget cuts... because of the better quality of relationships..."

This has significant implications for the organisation's culture. Working with vulnerable children, it is most important to demonstrate accountability and to keep to boundaries.

Muir's staff are not armed, so the more skilled they are verbally, the safer they are, and the stronger the relationships they can forge with the young people.

Assessing the differences ProActive ReSolutions' interventions have made so far to developing the organisation, Muir makes this qualification: "We now have a much more positive culture, with proper rollout of the respectful workplace programme. I would say that respect is in the psyche, but it has yet to be in the DNA of the organisation. We must have a programme of reinforcement – that's how something becomes a habit."

The benefits are already clear to see. Muir says that the improvement in culture has given him and his senior team more scope in taking tough decisions. He says it was easier last year to make budget cuts than it had been to expand 10 years ago because of the better quality of relationships throughout the organisation.

ProActive ReSolutions: What Makes for Success?

I discern three main elements to be crucial to ProActive ReSolutions' success: a clear product, a comprehensive process, and a consistent set of principles. These three elements are harnessed to bring out broad and deep participation, with the ProActive ReSolutions' facilitators trained in getting issues to surface, and supporting and challenging participants to own their problems and solutions. Facilitators demonstrate two particular strengths: creating a safe space in which the most difficult issues are worked through, and getting the timing right to enable the group to negotiate pivotal points in their discussion.

Product

ProActive ReSolutions is an international expert in building respectful behaviour among people. It has offices located in Canada, Australia and the United States and its sights are now set on the UK. ProActive ReSolutions draws on a rich range of academic and in-the-field experience, presenting its knowledge to health, human-resources, government and private-sector organisations through in-house employee training and keynote speaking engagements.

“ProActive is an international expert in building respectful behaviour among people.”

ProActive ReSolutions' expertise may be rich and broad, but they apply it with a sharp business focus, so organisations have confidence that interventions will have real traction and produce results in the short- and long-term. As Centrelink's Grant Tisdwell put it, the emphasis has to be on changes in behaviour, which means going well beyond a “love-in or a PowerPoint presentation”.

ProActive ReSolutions has three main programmes:

- Prevent: using its Respectful Workplace and Dialogue for Solutions Modules where staff learn how to put the organisation's values into practice.

- Repair: through its Restorative Justice Conferencing approach to transforming workplace conflict into workplace cooperation.
- Protect: through its Threat Assessment and Threat Management expertise where it leads the world in violence assessment and management.

Interestingly, ProActive ReSolutions maintains that having workplace policies requiring respectful behaviour does not automatically guarantee respectful behaviour. Of 8000 government employees and managers who responded to a ProActive ReSolutions questionnaire, 69 per cent said they were aware of their organisation's policies around behaviour, yet 58 per cent said they did not feel equipped to respond to others behaving disrespectfully towards them.

Process

When dealing with workplace conflict, ProActive ReSolutions establishes a process that groups can follow to take them from identifying problems to finding solutions. Before the group is brought together in any plenary discussion, time is spent preparing the 'ground' with each of the participants. This preparation is essential in enabling each participant to open up, find and give expression to his or her concerns, and be heard. Often individuals have not previously had a safe space in which to begin to communicate. During this preparation phase, the facilitator listens, asks for clarification, and challenges the participant.

Without this early engagement with the person on the issues of concern, the work cannot start. Through these initial one-on-one sessions, participants can gain a greater level of awareness about their own responses to the issues being addressed, and find the language in which to describe the problem and its effect upon them.

The facilitator then takes the process to its next, crucial phase – the conference – where all participants come together to identify and work through the issues. The conference can last a full day: it is intense; conducted at multiple levels of engagement (one person can lead the

discussion, another can respond, others can hold back or take part); but nobody can escape his or her part in the problem/solution. It is not concluded until everybody has agreed on a way forward, and has made a personal commitment to make it happen.

At one level, the process can sound dry and methodical – this gives everybody confidence that whatever the nature of the problem, concerns and expectations will be considered fairly in a structured and organised way. But on another level, the process weaves a benign spell. Without being obtrusive, this very process builds in a positive and constructive dynamic, which encourages greater interaction between people, based on honesty and clarity, however difficult the issues. It sets out a clear path along which work can be done, with the building blocks of trust and respect gradually being laid because of small steps taken along the way. As one of my respondents recognised, the process need not have a fairytale ending: not everybody comes to agree with the new direction of ‘travel’. But every person will feel better understood.

Principles

One of John McDonald’s colleagues, Richard Hart, focuses on where managers can be most effective in changing behaviour and the way people feel about work. Based in Canada, Hart is responsible for the design of ProActive ReSolutions’ Respectful Workplace Programmes. He argues, “The key step in getting better at coping with change or crisis is realising you cannot control the outcomes, but you can act on a certain set of principles, and take timely decisions to address emerging challenges.”

Participants address underlying emotional and psychological issues, including how behaviours are experienced. Participants give expression to how a colleague’s words or actions leave them feeling. As Fire Commissioner Greg Mullins acknowledged, power play becomes more transparent, so whether the participant is a manager or one of the staff, all participants are held to account, and have to take responsibility for their role in the situation.

As all participants get to be heard, they get the chance to explore different perspectives on the problem, and

generate possible solutions together.

ProActive ReSolutions’ work involves significant preparation with each of the participants, but this preparation creates the opportunity to make the most of the occasion when everybody is brought together. Attention to the moment is critical. This insight is consistent with my experience of crisis and significant organisational change.

Much as a manager wants to give events a shape and a structure, and work through goals, targets and programmes, being present to the moment and acting on the spontaneous and emergent give that manager the best purchase on opportunity and threat. This means paying particular attention to how individuals and groups interact and to the conditions that give rise to effective interaction.

ProActive ReSolutions is an international pioneer in creating respectful workplaces and facilitating successful workplace conflict resolution. John McDonald believes that respect is the foundation of any successful organisation. “The best workplaces are more than just conflict free: they know how to create and maintain vibrant and respectful cultures.”

Our programmes are designed to complement and build on one another, creating lasting work cultures that boost productivity, and ensure a safe and vibrant workplace.”

ProActive ReSolutions makes a diagnostic distinction between conflicts and disputes, in the workplace (and elsewhere). Conflicts and disputes are qualitatively different experiences.

Conflict involves an emotional experience which we find draining and physically exhausting.

Dispute is about expressing differences without undue or excessive emotion. Differences are brought to the surface and properly discussed. We behave more constructively and cooperatively when we are in dispute (6).

Conclusion

Effective public policy is a combination of dealing with reality and pursuing ideals in order to improve society. The skill lies in recognising that one cannot be done without the other.

Britain is cutting public spending and putting its public sector under great pressure to do “more for less”. At the same time, it has aspirations to reduce the size of the State and establish David Cameron’s vision of a Big Society.

The Big Society idea will not take off unless practical, small steps are taken to build collaboration. As Chinese wisdom puts it, the first step on a long journey can be the biggest.

Address the microcosm – teams and the workplace – and you get the macrocosm, organisations and societies. Effective team-work can spread like a virus.

“...treating somebody well produces...a return on investment.”

If the glue that binds effective and productive work is respect, this calls for and fosters trust and greater appreciation of the following forces, operating in different degrees: independence, inter-dependence and dependence. Groups that come to realise their interdependence have greater prospects of generating results together and becoming higher performing. As one of my respondents elegantly conveyed, it was not just a matter of dealing with anti-social, but pro-social behaviour. Managers who let bad behaviour persist take a higher risk than the risk they take in tackling the bad behaviour.

In his latest book, *The Little Big Things* (7), eminent management theorist Tom Peters makes the case for kindness. Attention to kindness pays in business – because treating somebody well produces reciprocity, which in turn produces a return on investment. With so much concern about making more with fewer resources, it is a good sign that the author of *In Pursuit of*

Excellence attaches renewed importance to the quality of relationships at work. Recognising early on that the human side of management was the most challenging, it was Peters who said, “Soft is hard. Hard is soft”.

“...collaboration...[is] a precondition for trusting and productive relations...”

My work on collaboration has followed a similar journey to Tom Peters’. At first, I assumed (wrongly) that effective collaboration required an instrumentalist justification – that the reason to collaborate is based on a rational (self-interested) calculation that over time collaboration pays. I now think that even though collaboration can be justified by the results that it produces, its main value to management and business is as a precondition for trusting and productive relations within and between groups (8).

The work of ProActive ReSolutions demonstrates that tackling a crisis situation involving managers and employees can give an organisation a strategic advantage, and an opportunity to change culture and drive performance. Once these interventions have been made, senior management has an opportunity to ensure that any changes move through the organisation. So as well as helping a group function better, processes are put in place to change the workplace culture. Such processes protect the organisation against further challenges. There is no guarantee that the future will be problem-free. But challenges once deemed very difficult will now be easier to deal with.

The type of techniques used by ProActive ReSolutions, if carefully and professionally applied, give individuals a voice and a space in their own right, whether or not they stay with the organisation, or the organisation stays with them.

Managers and their teams confirm that their work with ProActive ReSolutions has helped them learn, adapt and grow.

Notes

(1) Sir Geoffrey Vickers, *The Art of Judgment: a Study of Policy Making (Rethinking Public Administration)*, Sage (1995). In developing what it takes to suspend assumptions to allow a proper conversation to take off, Professor Gillian Stamp of BIOSO makes the point usefully that if we want to put ourselves into another person's shoes, we should take our own off first!

(2) Lucian J. Hudson, *The Enabling State: Collaborating for Success*, HM Government (2009). The report is a comprehensive study from a practitioner's perspective of what makes for effective collaboration and partnership, especially between government, business and civil society. It researched more than 120 organisations worldwide, including 20 governments and international institutions. *The Enabling State: Collaborating for Success* can be downloaded from <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf9/enabling-state-v3>

(3) Chapter 5 of *The Enabling State: Collaborating for Success* discusses Marcel Losada's empirical research on teams. Losada demonstrates the link between how teams connect and generate results, and achieve high performance.

(4) Chapter 5 of *The Enabling State: Collaborating for Success*. Marcel Losada uses three pairs of team behaviour (positive/negative, outward/inward, and inquiry/advocacy) to arrive at a ratio of 2.9 to describe well-connected, high-performing teams. Broadly speaking, for every instance where a member of the team is either negative, inward-looking or pushing a particular argument, one needs to balance that almost three times more (hence the 2.9 ratio) with being either positive, outward-looking or demonstrating a spirit of inquiry and exploring the issues. One conclusion that I draw is that good team discussions must have a bit of grit in the oyster to produce the pearl.

(5) The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations holds every year a Leicester Conference aimed at exploring with participants the importance of role, leadership and authority. Having recently been a participant myself, as well as having served as Chairman of The Tavistock Institute between 2003 and 2007, I think the Leicester Conference brings to life how much behaving in a role is unconscious, as well as conscious. The Conference also brings out sharply how a better understanding of role and boundaries develops personal and group effectiveness.

(6) To understand the difference we can go to the Latin word *conflictus*, from which the English word derives. *Conflictus* means 'striking together', as in the striking together of

swords. There is no middle ground in conflict. *Dispute*, a word also derived from the Latin, allows for cooperation and collaboration. The combination of *dis* and *putare* literally means 'to clean'. When applied to human communication, to dispute means to clean or clear up a body of ideas. When in dispute we can even agree to disagree, but when in conflict the only way for me to win is for you to lose. A simple way for us to understand the difference is to think of a dispute as being of the head and a conflict as being of the heart.

(7) Tom Peters, *The Little Big Things*, Harperstudio (2010). In an article for The Financial Times (23rd August, 2010), Peters develops the hard/soft theme: "The signature of my first book, *In Search of Excellence* (written with Bob Waterman), was a sixword phrase: 'Hard is soft. Soft is hard'. As Bob and I examined the problems besetting US corporations circa 1980, we believed they and their advisers had got things backwards. We said that in the end it was the supposedly 'hard numbers', so readily manipulable as we have seen of late, and the 'plan', that are so often flights of fantasy, that were soft. And the true 'hard stuff' was what the business schools and their ilk undervalued as soft: people issues, character and the quality of relationships inside and beyond the organisation's walls. Thinking about all this led me to the softest word of all – and the word with perhaps the most lasting impact in dealings among humans: kindness. The novelist Henry James said: 'Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind'."

(8) Chapter 2 of *The Enabling State, Collaborating for Success* discusses the practical steps for establishing effective collaboration and partnership, and explores what it takes for trust to work. According to Gillian Stamp and others involved in my report, trust is not a fluffy concept, but about the conscious regulation of one dependence's on the other. Not surprisingly, it does not exist in isolation, but works with other factors to create the conditions in which tasks are accomplished, and relationships nurtured and preserved. Collaboration at its best heightens an awareness of one's independence, interdependence and dependence on the other. It's not about lazy consensus or cynical compromise, but about finding common ground and accepting or working through differences.

Cornerstone Global Associates

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