CIPD Annual Conference 2013: Hacking HR to build an adaptability advantage

Speakers: Peter Cheese, Michele Zanini, Monique Jordan, Helen Amery, Gemma Reucroft

This session was not on my 'session I am most looking forward to' list, and selected as the least worst option of sessions at that time. It turned out to be the session I found most useful, engaging and exciting, and made me feel extremely positive about the role and function of HR in adding value.

The format was an introduction to the purpose of the Hackathon, the process followed and then three case studies. We were given a copy of the CIPD Hackathon report (well worth a read). Web site for further information *http://www.mixhackathon.org/hackathon/hacking-hr-build-adaptability-advantage/sprint-41*

The Hackathon issue was **adaptability and HR as a catalyst for adaptability** and the process was in 4 phases.

Phase 1
- Why adaptability matters now
- The enemies of adaptability
- The design principles of adaptable organisations

Phase 2 - Inventing mini hacks

Phase 3 - Developing and finalising adaptability hacks

Phase 4 - What did we discover?

Three case study hacks

1. Gemma Reucroft (Tunstall Group)

Chuck out your chintz   http://www.mixhackathon.org/hack/chuck-out-your-chintz

Organisations seeking greater adaptability should radically review all of the HR processes they blindly follow or think of as 'best practice' today

Habit is enemy – inflexible business practices

The Chintz test – HR teams step back and think - Does this HR process
- Mean managers are not thinking for themselves.
- Not add value

If the process doesn't meet the chintz test then people should consider just not doing it – this is how they 'chuck out the chintz'.

Reviewer Comments
This is an accessible, simple and understandable way of identifying and dealing with existing processes
- so that time can be more productively used
- change can be enabled in a planned way and in manageable 'bite sized chunks'
- that could be used in any organisation

2. Helen Amery (Boots UK)

Mix it up   http://www.mixhackathon.org/hack/mix-it

Problem - Silo working, employees who are so focused on their area of specialization they may be missing key opportunities and threats.

The hack Mix It Up was focused on ways to break the silos, specifically "Mix Visits" through temporary rotations where employees "visit" other areas to bring their skills, knowledge, and experience to the problems faced elsewhere AND to gain knowledge, perspective, and interpersonal connections that can help them to advance in their "regular" jobs.

When in the silo, the 'bubble' – we are less able to spot opportunities, not able to understand other people's bubbles; we can't see the bigger picture, connect the dots.

'Mix it up' solution – getting people moving

Manager has a 'mix'

'Mix Visit' opportunity
- Advertised
- Put forward
- Informal chats to decide on who
- Mix visit starts

A mix visit is different to secondment in its
- Pace – quicker and shorter introduction
- Duration - week or two weeks
- Contracts – give and take approach

Benefits
- Open access not hierarchical
- New career opportunities
- Organisation culture is supporting 'have a go'
- Relationships grow

Getting started
- Start small and keep it simple
- The only rule - there are no rules
- Enlist co-conspirators
- Tell story over and over again

Reviewer Comments
This is an effective way to encourage collaboration with a minimum of structure. The web site case study identifies a few structural constraints that are there to ensure the process works effectively. The advantages of enhancing intercompany communication, knowledge of roles within the organisation, increased internal relationship building all help to encourage and develop internal customer care, critical to achieving external customer care.

3.   **Monique Jordan (Pearson Education)**

Working for the customer, not 'the man'   http://www.mixhackathon.org/hack/working-customer-not-man

Bosses aka "the man" frequently blur the line of sight to the customer forcing people to choose between meeting the needs of the boss or the customer. The fact that the boss doles out reward and punishment based mostly on their 'subjective' evaluation sets up a power dynamic that all too often focuses on the boss' needs rather than the needs of the customer.

This is a framework for defining roles that puts the customer at the centre.

Problem - the way jobs are defined.
- Boss defines responsibilities rather than customer explains the problem.
- Reward – based on bosses assessment of work rather than reward based on customer satisfaction

Reframe this by asking the questions
- Suppliers   - who are your suppliers?
- Job parts   – what are your products?
- Customers   - what problem is solved?
- Requirements   - what does your customer require?

How – questions to ask

Strengths - What knowledge, skills and attitudes are needed?
Results - how will you know if requirements met?

Approach

Employee driven, to solve customer problems

Outcomes
- Problem solving, increased experimentation
- Boss compelled to enable employee success.

How to do it - Small steps
- List what you do
- Group into product categories
- Complete framework
- It's not a form

Reviewer Comments

When I am asked to design and deliver staff customer care training, I ask 'how is giving customer care recognised and rewarded?' Usually it's not. People do things that get recognised and rewarded and the person most often deciding this is the boss – aka the 'man'. This hack addresses this issue and has identified ways to help customer care be a reality. This approach can be used by any organisation to enhance customer service.

Personal learning points/areas for action

The role of HR in enabling organisational and individual effectiveness

Reflecting on why I found the session so interesting, energising and exciting, it's because the session showcased how HR can make a positive difference to organisations, in ways that harness the human resource.

The selected hacks did not need huge budgets or resources and can be used by any organisation, large or small to innovate and develop.

The session identified some great ideas that can be used by any organisation and from a CIPD volunteer perspective, applied by CIPD branches to enhance the local customer experience.

How to be perceived as a credible and professional female presenter

I had the opportunity to see three professional women presenting on a stage, in a large auditorium, and seeing them both 'in the flesh' and on a screen. This was useful in terms of seeing the impact of clothes selected, and the difference in impact of the different outfits. I was assessing speakers on how they communicated to me as their audience, their professionalism, credibility and impact.

The most effective clothing choices in achieving this (to me) was a long scarf wrapped around the neck (worked well on screen as it framed the face and covered the chest area), fitted but not figure hugging clothing (so the attention is on the face and voice and not the body), and stylish shoes (shoes are very obvious when on stage), but ones that are comfortable and easy to walk in – the gait is very noticeable on stage and a purposeful and powerful walk helps the impression of presence/authority.

About the Reviewer - Krista Powell Edwards

Krista is a very experienced and highly qualified consultant, coach, facilitator, trainer and author.

She uses her experience and expertise to support individuals and organisations to enhance their effectiveness and performance.

Krista is currently writing her first book on how to effectively communicate credibility.

Expertise and experience

Krista has developed her expertise through

- An extensive track record of supporting organisations in the UK and internationally since 1995.
- Masters level research in the factors that affect the achievement of workplace performance.
- Extensive Continuous Professional Development (CPD), (including regular attendance at conferences and development programmes).
- Research of 'best practice' consultancy, facilitation and learning and development
- Qualifying as a Master Trainer, Master Practitioner and Practitioner in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).
- Designing and delivering 500+ training and development programmes.
- 20+ years as Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) volunteer - branch chair, council representative - supporting the CPD and performance of 7500+ HR professionals.
- Lecturing at a university (International Human Resource Management).

Specialist areas

Krista specialises in three main areas:-

Credibility - How to communicate credibility for influence and positive impact in the workplace
Credible HR - Enabling HR to add value to the organisation
Personal Effectiveness Skills - Support in developing confidence, credibility, influence, time management and assertiveness and conflict management skills so that individuals and teams are able to perform effectively.

Services

Krista offers support in **workplace performance improvement**.

Tailored, cost effective
- Consultancy and Research
- Coaching
- Facilitation
- Training and Development

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