

DO WE MODEL THE PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT WE WANT TO SEE IN OUR ORGANISATIONS?

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In the last five or six years I have spent much rewarding and fascinating time in a variety of different organisations supporting and facilitating their performance development at a one-to-one, group and organisational level.

So, perhaps unlike you, I get the luxury of an external perspective on how organisations are (or are not) modelling performance development. And what I see is intriguing.

Public sector, private sector and voluntary sector organisations alike have all variously engaged with a model of performance development that may often be **process** driven rather than **performance** driven.

And often it is **training** oriented, rather than **development** oriented.

All too often, the responsible manager and leader invests much of their time considering the training and development needs of their team of people at the expense of their own personal development.

They are engaged in regular one-to-one meetings with team members, concerned to help others attract the training and development they need to meet their job or career aspirations. They are insistent that individuals in the team take time out of the business to undertake training and development. They investigate accredited programmes with training providers to support their team members' career aspirations. They put together proposals that demonstrate

value for money for budget holders and balance the tensions between time for training and development and time to do their job. Sometimes there are processes in place which attempt to capture the return on investment from training – though these often work outside a context for organisational performance.

The focus is usually on process. And there is a belief that if the process is in place then the expenditure on training and development must be giving a return for the organisation. Time after time absence figures, grievances, disciplines, attrition rates and internal people surveys tell a different story. And yet it seems there are always reasons why things should stay the same!

I've lost count of the times managers and leaders in a diverse range of business markets and sectors have said to me:

'Paul, I've spent all my budget on the team.'

'I know I could really use the development but actually I don't have time to do it right now – we're too busy!'

'It's not the right time for me now – there's too much going on.'

'I think we should be putting all our attention into the team.'



And while I firmly believe that it's important to do all of the things highlighted above for team members, I also think that it is important to achieve something of a balance!

If all of a manager's energies are focussed on developing others in the team, and often at the expense of themselves, then how is that likely to be perceived by the team members?

Let me share with you what I hear when I work with team members in this situation:

'Why have I been singled out for development? Do they think I'm not good enough?'

'Actually it's really great to get all of this development but what's the point if my manager's still the same? It won't make any difference.'

'I shouldn't really be here. My manager asked me to come but they need me back at the office!'

'If it's so good ... why aren't my managers doing it?'

There is clearly a deep and real incongruence in supporting the development of others without valuing that development for yourself. It is an incongruence that is often on the lips of delegates as they enter training events, seminars, and other development activities. An incongruence that, if development were a race track, would have these team members setting off 100 metres behind those whose managers and leaders personally demonstrate the value of development as a real and important part of their work and personal lives.

So... what about you?

To what degree are you focussed entirely on the team ... at the expense of your own personal performance and development?

Have you thought about your next developmental step?

And if you haven't thought about it until today ... what could you do about it right now?

When was the last time you shared your own development plan with your team? Do they know what you're working on? Have you asked them to help you become more successful as a leader and a manager?

Or, more likely I find, is your development plan the unfinished

outcome of your last sporadic one-to-one with your own manager? Is it gathering dust beneath six or seven seemingly more urgent to-do's?



For all that any of us **say** about development it is primarily what we **do** that sets the scene for development within the team and the organisation. It's our **behaviours** as managers and leaders and not our **processes** that encourage a proactive responsibility for personal and professional development.

And that is what impacts on the performance of the individual and the organisation.

Does what you do for yourself, in terms of your active engagement in personal and professional development, model what you want to see from your team? And, if it doesn't, what are you doing to change that?

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