PERFORMANCE

I wonder if our tribal ancestors had issues with 'poor performance, mediocrity and disengagement?

Historically a Tribe was made up of a number of 'Bands' which were smaller, egalitarian, kin-based (connected) groups of perhaps 10–50 people (what we would call a team). Their survival depended on their collective performance. Their collective ability to work together to adapt, improvise, share work, and devise plans to secure resources and shelter. Successful tribes learnt how to work together to achieve more than on their own. Their ability to cooperatively work together was essential to overcome the volatile, unknown and constantly changing terrains they lived in.

Today, we are still living in a volatile, unpredictable, and even more rapidly changing world its just that the type of threats we are facing are different. Today we are needing to adapt to globalisation, digitisation, technological disruption to survive in business.

Given we know tribes were the natural co-operative mechanism that enabled our early ancestors to survive and thrive this causes me to ask several important questions:

'Why do our current performance management approaches focus on individual performance (in large) with individual performance plans, actions, and outcomes.

This tends to reinforce individual activity and siloed ways of working – even if people are working in the same 'team'. We know that people will no cooperatively and collaboratively work together unless there is shared work shared work, or mission, or cause or hunt to rally around – that will benefit from achieving by working together.

And perhaps even more worryingly, is if the world is so volatile, and we know that every great civilisation can fall if it doesn't adapt, then why are we so slow or in some cases resistant to turning performance on its head to ensure we survive and thrive?

If tribes had specified job descriptions, individual performance plans, and seemingly meaningless feedback processes that surmounted to an annual check in (tick and flick) the tribe would not survive.

The world of work isn't changing it has changes – and it has changed fast and many are playing catch-up. The challenges facing organisations today cannot be solved by any one individual. We need tribes of people - unencumbered by formality, process and bureaucracy – who are connected, and rallying around work which delivers real value to the business – to support everyone working whose livelihood is influenced by the businesses effectiveness and success!

To take a safe next step toward changing the way we look at performance, organisations are looking for ways to help them build effective teams, who rally around hairy challenges together in more self-directed and self empowered ways.

To start this change organisations – and their people – first need a shared language for teaming as well as effective performance processes which support teaming as an essential way of working.

To move forward, organisations and HR professionals can look to the past to inform the future and evolve performance practices so they support new team-based approaches.

Team based approach are turning performance on its head – because they move away from traditional top-down centralised cascaded approaches – to a bottom-up team-lead approach that empowers teams of people to rally together to deliver value and drive the change that many organisations are searching for.

POCKETS OF BRILLIANCE

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