

Robert Coles of Optima Group writes:



Coming home from a client meeting today, I am reflecting in what we discussed.

The client had a team of people, senior and experienced, who, in the words of our contact, 'can't meet successfully, never mind make a collaborative decision' She had gone down many of the usual routes - all the team knew their MBTI 'type' and had, as so often happens, successfully boxed their subsequent thinking in around their result.

I met one of the team, who told me, 'some of us are introvert, some extrovert; we're bound to be different!'. Even Madams' Myers and Briggs assert types are not set in stone. We begin to discuss the effects of this perceived inability to discuss and decide. 'Lots gets done' I am told, 'however, we quite often agree to differ in order to get things done. Sam does stuff her way, Matt, his way.' So far so good, for an Optima Consultant; we both need and want to hear and understand. 'Quite often', my contact continued, 'the best ideas come later on, when the more introverted have time to think. Unfortunately, the 'Doers' have done by then... '.

Then, the million dollar question comes; 'so, how do you create Amazing Business Relationships? Can it even be done?' And of course, our answer is yes. So, how?

Let's start by slaying some myths.

We are not the helpless servants of our own behaviour style or 'type'. We're not prisoners of our habits or preferences, we can and do evolve and adapt constantly. Age is not a barrier to change; indeed with age comes precious, unrepeatabe experience. We are however, often facing up to the wrong problems whilst trying to find the right answers. How often do you hear, 'we are a task culture'; 'There is so much to do, I never feel on top of things'; 'I do my real job in the evenings, when I am free of eternal internal meetings!'.

Right now, as organisations slim down, we have to learn to do more with less. So, the importance of collaborative relationships and results is greater than ever. Here's how we help our clients. We have spent a great deal of time and money researching how Business Relationships, in particular, work successfully. We found some interesting things:

1. We have to learn to **Think** adaptively and collaboratively, valuing differences as ideas are shared, listening is deepened and understanding of all relevant, do-able options is created.
2. Through shared, adaptive thinking, we build **Trust**. Respect for ideas and difference, encouraging feedback and praise, empathising with each other, knowing the source of our differences and using them to create opportunities rather than attempt to control them off the agenda to reach a quick outcome.
3. The more we understand and the deeper our levels of trust in ideas and difference, the more we **Learn**. In tough markets, the biggest challenge for adults is learning to learn again. Not just skills, but, far more importantly, new ways of relating. Adaptiveness, the confidence to change and the will to develop are born from relationships; we learn socially, so without

Amazing Business Relationships, learning will be less than amazing. The better our learning, the better able we are to change.

- From this thought - through, trust based, change capable team will come amazing **Collaboration**. From collaboration comes result. We will trust enough to challenge each other's thinking and actions, we will be collectively motivated to do what we say we want to do, because our results are drawn from our collective thinking and mind. And, we will innovate because we trust each other enough to try something new, receive challenge and praise and adapt faster and deliver more effectively than ever before.

So here is our story; born of a realisation that, without the skills to develop and sustain Amazing Business Relationships, other skills can never be fully engaged in an organisation. Why? Because no-one in a modern organisation can achieve outstanding results in a vacuum. We have to work together.

The first skill therefore, is of Business Relationships.



Optima have developed the RQ to help you. Whether for teams, or for organisations, or between teams and organisations, we can help diagnose your Business Relationship Capability, and through a programme of development, consulting and coaching, help you create in your organisation, Amazing Business Relationships, delivering Amazing Business Results.

Learn more from us; come and see our website at www.optimaabr.com and, whilst you are there, take the dolphin test to see how warm and challenging you are - *your* first step to Amazing Business Relationships. Then, let's talk!