

## **Quality Continuous Improvement Events Why are they needed now more than ever?**

In my article 'Peter Drucker and Remote Working' (Featured on my Profile here on LinkedIn) I highlighted the lack of communication and collaboration that had taken place over the past 2 years due to the poor management of remote working. It showed that, in research undertaken by HR Review, 48% of Millennials had reported difficulties in communicating with colleagues. Despite the fact that Forbes had highlighted that 61% of Millennials and Gen Z preferred learning online, research undertaken shows that 41% of Gen Z were not receiving the mentoring that they perceived necessary to undertake the tasks set for them and a higher percentage of Gen Z and Millennials felt that they were not receiving the development perceived necessary for career progression. This means that both employee and organisational development and growth will have been stifled. However, this need not have been the case.

Despite the availability of bespoke software that provides 'live streams', allowing employees to have 'real-time' communication with their colleagues, it would appear that many employers opted for the occasional link-up on 'off-the-shelf' software (such as Zoom) which provided little, if any, real value; mainly because communication had been restricted to an up/down link (Senior Management, to Team Leaders to Team Members) – there had been little thought given to the provision of communication across the organisation. This, in turn, has resulted in Implicit Learning (unstructured learning that is spontaneously picked up by employees in the workplace through listening to conversations and/or watching as things develop around them) to be stifled. My own research, across both the public and private sectors, has shown that the lack of cohesion has also had a detrimental effect on strategy, capability and culture with people becoming disengaged leading to poor customer service and a lack of trust (by both the employee and the end customer).

From an employee perspective we are already seeing a high level of staff turnover and, in some cases, employers are finding it increasingly difficult to fill vacant positions. From a customer viewpoint it has resulted in frustration leading to a lack of confidence in the Supplier. Much of this has been brought about by the customer receiving contradictory information (dependant upon who you are speaking to within the organisation); the amount of time taken to resolve problems due to a lack of capability and, often, because the person dealing with the original query is unsure of who, within the organisation, has the capability to resolve it; lack of engagement with the customer – not listening to what the customer is actually saying to them (something that I have recently experienced) – which might suggest a lack of engagement in their work. However, how does the Leadership Team now identify the affect that this is having on strategy, capability and culture? How will this likely affect innovation, creativity and growth? What value is being lost to the Customer and to the Organisation?

These questions can be answered by the completion of a Quality Continuous Improvement Event to ascertain how processes may have changed; why they have changed; the effect that change has had on the organisation as a whole; how lines of communication and collaboration (internally and externally) might have changed, or even become distorted; the detrimental effect on capability – given the lack of staff development due to the stifling of

implicit learning and lack of mentoring (mentioned earlier); the effect on the Value Chain (working back from the Customer) – especially when it comes to customer service; changes in the Culture within the Organisation, brought about by lone working. Until these questions have been answered it will make future strategic planning extremely difficult, if not impossible.

It is about looking at the 'new working realities' and how they might have been brought about by changes to the organisational structure or business contexts, unseen by the leadership, and determining the effect on business strategy.

Having taken the lead in Quality Continuous Improvement Events for the Ministry of Defence, I will be providing an insight into the How and What of Quality Continuous Improvement, specific to remote working, in my next article.