

People Powered Change

In an increasingly 'Digital' world, People are still the most important asset, and are becoming more so!

Insight Series

part 04

Custerian was formed on a simple idea:

Work Made Better

Having worked at a senior level in large organisations, with direct board level responsibility for delivering year on year gains, our founders shared a simple insight.

Too little time and attention was given to Colleagues in business to equip them with the basic necessities that could help deliver significant change.

Put simply, colleagues were often not aware of what the business did that was different and unique, so they were not able to contribute to it effectively (and feel good as a consequence).

This, we feel, is the start of a downward spiral towards an ultimate 'Lose/Lose' of lowering productivity, reducing competitiveness and ultimately an inability to react with the pace and agility required to survive in such marketplaces.

Collaboration Is A Two Way Street

For us whilst Collaboration is increasingly used, its true power is often not realised because of 4 simple factors:

- Purpose vs Outcome - A lot of people collaborate based on an outcome they are trying to achieve, without an appreciation of the context or purpose the outcome supports.
- Engagement vs Extraction - This is where the collaboration is onesided and really aimed at extracting ideas or managing to a predefined conclusion
- Pareto (80/20 rule) - It gets bogged down in detail, for example confusing solution creation with idea generation, which means that pace drops and silo driven behaviour set in reducing innovation
- Authority/Empowerment - The outcome is not acted on, or is diluted/changed to such a degree (without adequate explanation) that there is no feeling of cause and effect

You can sum up the above as: bad collaboration is driven by the desire to 'use' Colleagues to get something done and the desire of colleagues to get involved, but is done in a vacuum.

Workshops are an art form, but also a vital part of Collaboration. If you would like us to share some of our top tips, then get in touch with us: approach@custerian.com

Change Done With.. Not To..

There is an enormous amount that we can talk about with Work Made Better, however we like to keep things as simple as possible. So picking up on the theme of Pareto from above, here is a simple idea:

Adopt the mindset of “With, Not To”

It is a fact that, especially within western business culture, Colleagues are often seen as commodities to be consumed, vs a vital capability to be nurtured and invested in.

This means a culture of doing change to them has grown up and is almost a subconscious start point for managers who have learnt their trade often through doing the job vs specific training.

There seems to be a fear of conflict that holds collaboration back. We have fully involved teams in changes that may negatively impact them. The result is always more positive than taking a dark room approach.

However, there is a significant shift coming. This is often labelled as the impact of the millennial's (or gen X).

Being honest and having attended numerous senior leadership events on this including exclusive invite Chatham House rules versions (This simply means you can talk specifically about who said what), we think:

- The actual cause is not really widely or consistently understood, but very real and requires a shift in management approach
- Likely to be a function of the increased pace of change driven by the massive increase in connectedness that is making things more transparent and open

A really good start point on shifting the relationship with Colleagues onto a better footing is to engage them in and align them to the process of getting what you do best, to customers who want it most, as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This seems startling obvious, but it is surprising how little this is done.

The Benefit Of Collaboration - Empathy

One of our premises is that organisations are effectively living organisms, because they are the product of their Colleagues, who create a sense of behaviour and personality.

Ideally you want this Colleague driven personality to live in harmony with the Brand personality. Brand Equity is well recognised and universally seen as one of the biggest drivers of a businesses value/worth.

A lot of people talk about brand, but not many really get it in our view.

They think it is something Marketing spend their time creating to attract new customers and/or about logos & graphics.

Think of a brand as you would a person. Someone you like or dislike based on how they look and act towards you. Now imagine if a person looked like one thing - outgoing and colourful, but acted in a completely different way when you talked to them - cold and distant. - Feels odd doesn't it?

That's because there is an inconsistency between how they look and behave and as humans we don't like inconsistency. We are programmed to fear and avoid it.

Engagement

People are relatively simple in how they view things. How they react to it might be a bit more complicated!

In general we like things that share our values, enjoy similar things to us and don't surprise us too much - unless of course we like things that surprise us.

Run this model clockwise to improve engagement which in business equates to a preference to deal with you, for longer.

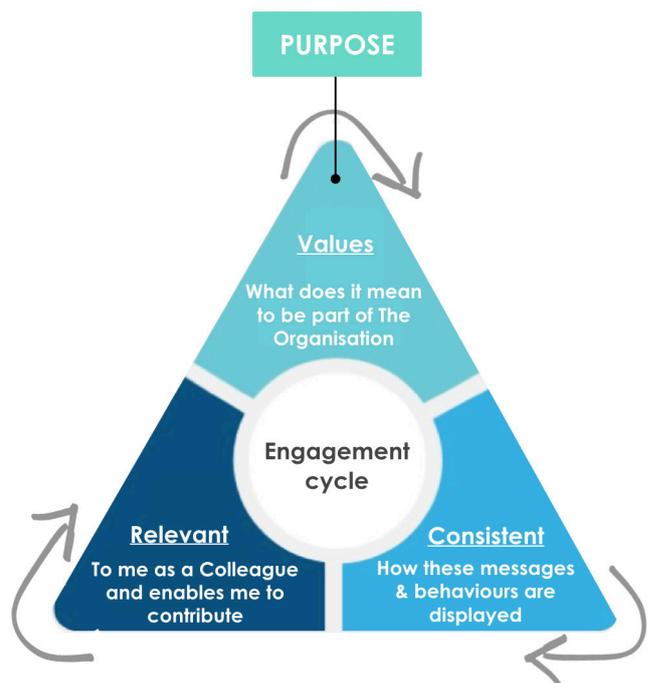


Fig 1 - Deciding if you like something

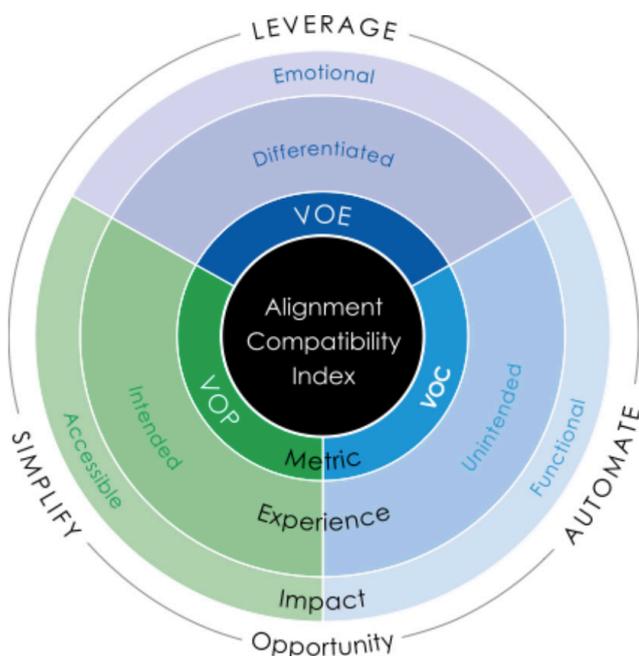
People (NOT Customer) Experience

This is why we created & championed People (as opposed to Customer) Experience. The route to true success for any organisation is to be absolutely clear what it exists for, and then collaborate with all its People (Shareholders, Colleagues, Customers & wider Stakeholders including the communities) to bring this purpose to life.

In part this focus on creating an aligned People Experience is what drives us to shout about the importance of people against a back ground of things like 'Digital Transformation' and the 'Rise Of The Bot/ AI'. Make no mistake these things are coming, in fact they have been here for 20+ years, but they are risking becoming a distraction.

Organizations with high employee engagement outperform those with low employee engagement by 202%.

(Business 2 Community 2016)



People Matter.

Nicola Collister our - co-founder was Group Board Experience Director at Shop Direct Group - a UK first.

Together with Simon Norie, they created a People Experience approach that aligns what a company does best, with what its customers want most.

All done with & through Colleagues who intuitively do what's right, because they know the business purpose and their role in it.

People In An Increasingly Digital World

I was at an Accenture sponsored event recently. Also attending were people from Human Resources & Technology representing both suppliers and clients.

What struck me and not for the first time, though I do accept as this is something we have been pushing for years so will naturally gravitate towards it, was the degree of agreement. That despite all the talk about intelligent technology (which is really the combination of data & usable insight), the real opportunity was using it to enable people to do what they do best more efficiently and effectively.

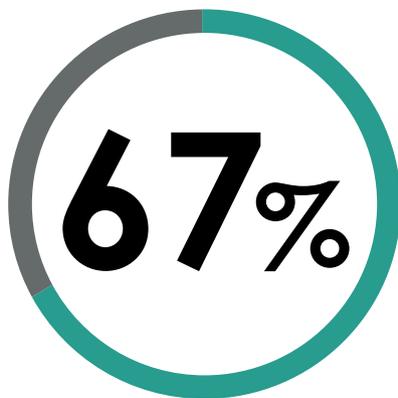
Doing more of the right stuff, faster, with less risk, with your colleagues, who understand the brand purpose and intuitively create outcomes aligned to it might not sound like Digital Transformation, but its going to be the best way of delivering it!

Impact. Often technology is something businesses are in conflict with. Users perceiving it as a disabler, or threat.

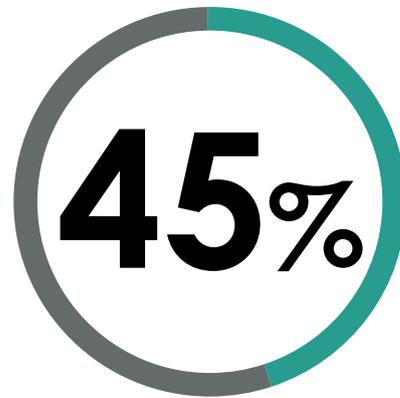
If there is one overarching reason that organisations need to engage in People Powered Change, it is to embrace the opportunity emergent technology gives to increase not only the pace of change, but also its effectiveness.



I believe intelligent technologies will create opportunities for my work



It will be important/very important to learn new skills to work with intelligent technologies in the next 3 to 5 years



AI will help me do my job more efficiently

ONLY 3%

Of executives say they intend to significantly increase investment in training and reskilling programs in the next 3 years

Final Thought

'People' is a deliberately wide ranging green for us as practitioner led pragmatic deliverers of change who focus on getting stuff done at pace.

Bringing people into the heart of purpose driven change is the best way of doing this and leaves people feel better as a result.

Or as you might also sum up -

Work Made Better

'Led the change to fundamentally change the way SDG dealt with its customers, bringing them into the heart of our thinking and planning.'

Mark Newton-Jones:

Group CEO (Former) Shop Direct Group

**We delivered
a full
colleague
and customer
engagement
programme
- supported
with new ways
of working
that reduced
OpEx by 15%**

Like To Know More

We'd love to share how we go about helping our clients create great outcomes for their customers through their colleagues.

If any of this has struck a chord and you'd like to talk to us, please just get in touch.

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