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HR2025 – Human Resource Management in the Future

Book 1 – Work, People and HR in 2025

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About the author – Perry Timms

Perry is known for his energy, passion and insight around the world of people and work.   He is a **Chartered Member** of the **CIPD;** and **Visiting Fellow** at **Sheffield Hallam Business School**. Skilled as a facilitator, coach and mentor Perry is qualified in change and a range of psychometric tools and has been leading on business improvement and change for over 20 years. Perry is **Vice Chair** of the **Northamptonshire CIPD Branch**, and also lectures on HRM at Birmingham City, Westminster and Dublin City Universities.

Having held corporate roles as Head of Learning, Talent & OD in public and not-for-profit sectors, Perry has set up his own enterprise - **PTHR** (People & Transformational HR) delivering Perry's aim - *to change the world of work; one conversation at a time*.

Perry is a social HR Practitioner as he tweets, blogs and is active on LinkedIn and was voted **7th** in People Management magazine's **Top 20 HR power-tweeters** for 2012 and one of top the **top 10 HR Bloggers in the 2013** update.

Perry is currently the **Advisor to the CIPD on Social Media & Engagement** and is a Guide for the CIPD's "**Hackathon**" – an online, open-source innovation platform encouraging practitioners to "hack" HR; to create new practices, processes and protocols and build an adaptability advantage for HR to influence the world of work in complex, volatile and unpredictable circumstances.

A regular blogger and writer, Perry has been published by People Management, Training Journal, Robertson Cooper, ChangeBoard, Halogen, HR Zone, the ILM and Duke University's Dialogue journal plus a series of online books on the future of HR is due for publication in 2014.

Perry is a regular speaker across the UK and internationally (with dates in Paris, Istanbul and Bucharest confirmed for 2014) and has featured as a speaker, chair and blogger at the last 10 consecutive CIPD Annual and L&D national conferences. Perry hosted the Training Journal Awards 2013 and can be seen speaking on YouTube and via recorded Webinars.

Perry's values are **Respect; Autonomy; Growth, Hope and Happiness**. A tenacious reader; an enthused networker and a voracious learner, Perry describes himself as a *lifeaholic*.

Introduction

This is the first in a series of 15 books looking at the world of work and people and what 2025 will be like. Somewhat hopefully, somewhat practically, maybe somewhat scarily.

People and work have changed constantly so such changes predicted for 2025 are not really anything new – driven by societal moves; consumer trends; technology and science advances plus of course ecological/environmental shifts.

With an ever deeper array of information and data you would think we would have more to rely on to make firmer predictions about the future? But as Dan Pink calls it "we are not as…predictable as it might seem". "If this happens then that happens" is not a law one can rely on for the future. It's **way** more complex than that.

No instead, despite the volume and range of access to information and a deeper understanding of the history, psychology and science of things, the future remains, as Dan Ariely put it "predictably irrational". In fact people like Ariely are doing their utmost to help us get a handle on what the future could be through advanced insight into behavioural economics.

To a large degree, the future depends on what decisions we make. Of course there are factors beyond even our most brilliant decisions, but we like to think that what we decide to do, has an immeasurable impact on the future. Increasingly, we are also attuned to there being a variable aspect to our destiny and this is not just a single track not impacted upon by us. Fate and our destiny it appears is only partly laid out for us. It is more a range of options which we choose consciously or subconsciously.

Whatever we feel or believe about our control of the future and the events that will make up the future, we will make more and more predictions about it and work hard to get more and more insight and predictive analytics about it. We cannot settle for unknowns. Even if we were inaccurate for the majority of our predictions, those we did get right were helped or avoided by our predictive abilities.

So we have unpredictability, volatility, complexity and ambiguity. And that's just normal every day life. Change programmes? Pah – there is no longer such a thing.

There is no stability; no quiet periods and if there is, you ought to be worried. Things that stand still calcify. Erode. Crumble.

Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose

Agility is an over-used (but understandably so) word. Yet it is not hype. Agile organisations – ones who can mould themselves around market demands and customer needs; who can use efficiency gains to make their products/services and working environment positive and productive – they are often agile, adaptable, stand-out organisations.

Just because you have market share and buying power doesn't guarantee survivial and if you're a public service with a monopoly over regulated services matters not.

If you're not good enough for the here and now plus a clear indication you will struggle tomorrow, you will go. In some shape or form – you will disappear or be taken over. More likely the former these days.

This is not just the domain of FMCG or startups. In fact there appears to be as much (if not more) uncertainty about future job prospects in the public sector than in the accepted volatility of the private sector.

The lines are blurring ANYWAY with outsourced and contracted services where TUPE skills are in demand in HR like never before. Well maybe they have been, outsourcing in Government was big in the 1990s. EDS – remember them? Regular winners of Government contracts for IT services and where are they now? So is it any wonder that public servants feel they could be outsourced; TUPE'd and then subject to market forces like they never would have thought possible when they started work for the Government (Central or Local).

So is this uncertainty good for market forces/economy and our well being?

Maybe not as much as some might think but wherever it has a plus impact it also has a negative impact. If we brought manufacturing to the UK, would there be enough people prepared to go into factory/ production lines? Would it need to be more crafted production over mass-manufactering? Where are the skills and would we need to import the people to provide the labour? It's just not that simple anymore with everything so intricately linked.

With some companies growing to superhuge proportions and having influence in Government by supporting parties or candidates, will we see the Megacorps getting more powerful? Will they become the targets of not just eco-warriors (if their footprint is a damaging one to the environment) but more actual acts of terrorism like the oil industry suffers with Somali pirates?

Will large corporations break up under monopolies and mergers commission direction? Voluntarily disperse in favour or being more agile? Will buy outs and acquisitions become less desirable? Will culture continue to eat strategy for breakfast? Will smaller enterprises not work for the larger organisations but actually come together to challenge or co-exist with larger organisations as critical partners?

So many questions are unknowns in the game of work especially around 12 years from now.

In essence, is work destined for seismic shifts in its tectonic plates or will it just shake up a bit and then be reinforced?

In 2025 it is my prediction that there will be shifts with some big shocks – the beginnings of the fall of the Megacorporations being the most noticeable.

We may finally realise that there's a different kind of together and we're better off in many different ways other than shareholder-fuelled supersize organisions.

I can see already how the G8 will become more like a spread out G18 or G28. As emerging nations utilise their natural, intellectual and cultural resources to gain market share, we will see developments and innovation shape our future.

With ecological issues (whether you believe Gore or others) present, we HAVE to come together to deal with melting ice caps; increases in water coverage and temperatures rising. Diseases get more tricky to spot and then treat and proliferate faster than ever so we have to be on our bio-medical toes.

As the world gets more affluent, the world needs to be even more charitable. Bridging the gap between the poorest and the richest is not some leftist ideal; it makes sense to build communities of people who actually care about each other.

The welfare state will need more help than ever before – not more isolation that creeps into our focused-down lives. The care industry surely will become a huge employer; lifestyle choice and source of financial focus. Pensions and savings plans have been decimated so some form of asset usage that genuinely gives us comfort in our twilight years will become a sought-after stock.

Ctrl+Alt+Del – rebooting HR

So work will shift – it has to. As a result, the function known as Human Resources (HR) will need to be very different indeed. It is my assertion that HR is already (generally) behind the curve. HR has to focus on gaining ground and then getting ahead of it.

We've seen this before. Every 20 odd years is a nano-chapter in the book of life.

From child labour to industrial Taylorism; to unions rising and falling to state industries sold and market forces shaping our lives.

With the technology that all this has culminated in, we are finding our voices; our hearts are allowed to fly again and our views can come into the debates on what good looks like.

HR does not (currently) know how to create the right frames that exploit our skill; energy and most of all our love of a craft. McJobs – as was – has already been largely reinvented overnight so if it can be done in one of the idioms of the modern world, it can be done anywhere there is work.

HR will need to shift more than many professions (numbers are still the basis of accounting; technology is still a binary craft) because its dependent on the entire ecosystem and psychology of people which is incredibly unpredictable.

So HR will need to make huge strides in areas it is lacking now BUT IT CAN BE DONE. There is a new breed of HR professional which is keen to reestablish credibility and influence in a way many past compliance based professionals wouldn't dare to even think of let alone do.

It is a renaissance time for HR. It is my hope that this book will start that process and become a catalyst for more artistic application, genius thinking and lasting impact. So this book will become the first in a series of future-focused thoughts and aspirations from a range of practitioners from across the world some involved in the HR professional arena through their early choice; others by choice during their career journey. All are bothered about 1 thing: what will HR do to have impact; relevance and continued drive to make work something better today than it was yesterday, and that tomorrow should be even better than today. That's not idealist thinking – that's what we all deserve out of our career adventures. This book and the following series is – we hope – part of those adventures.

Perry Timms
Founder and Director – pthr and self-confessed lifeaholic.
October 2013

1   HR2025 – the rise of the HR Futurologist

"We are all interested in the future, for that is where you and I are going to spend the rest of our lives."
Woody Allen

It is around the "adventures in futurology" where I'll begin for HR Professionals.

The need to think more and more about the future and less and less about the past and even the here and now. Sure be mindful of the now, but the future is a place where much more cognitive time is needed. If HR spent more time thinking about how jobs will need to be constructed in the future, and how recruitment techniques need to reflect a changing world the less it will get caught out and be considered out of step with its policy machinery and/or its predictable and conventional way of setting out the employee value proposition. Marketers and R&D are CONSTANTLY looking to the future to try an get into our buying habits.

Already as an HR professional in 2013, I am reading Brian Solis, Magnus Lindkvist, James McQuivey and not as much Ulrich, Gratton or Michael Porter. Nothing wrong with anything that the HR/Business authors are saying; just that Solis, Lindkvist and McQuivey are talking of the future and the mindset needed to navigate it. Where digital and analogue co-exist and intersect. Where spirit and data collide /converge to help us make decisions of either seismic or nudge proportions.

And even what we know about work and people – the psychology around work (industrial, occupational and business psychology) – is still a reasonably young practice when compared to how long we've had industries and the construct of work. So what we know is clearly more than we did in 1813 and even 1913. And even in 2013 and then our projected point of 2025 will differ considerably.
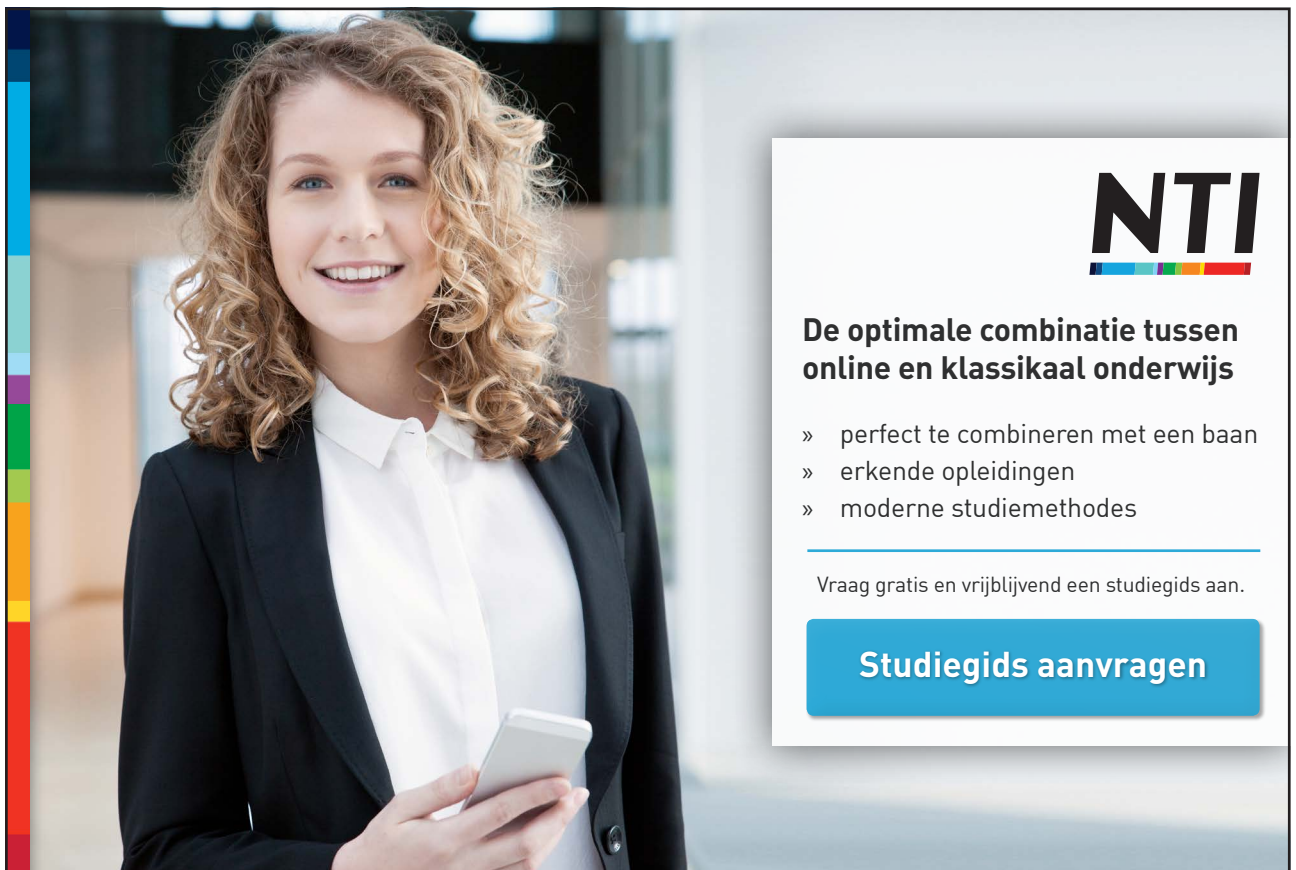
You can't handle the truth…

What we held as truths; inevitabilities and predicted paths will be subject to challenges and metamorphosis at rates of change we cannot predict with any assurance. Electric transport; robotic assistance, digital augmentation and intelligent technology were all science fiction to science reality in a comparative blink.

Medical, social and consumer science seems to be driving these changes. Medical as the life-enhancing science; social as the fabric of – and increasingly sense-making aspect of – our lives and consumer science as the economic engine of the world. And these 3 areas are things HR professionals WILL be proficient in by 2025. Medical – for the well-being/productivity links; Social for the learning/sharing and collaborating boosts to productivity; and consumer science for the understanding of motivation and decision "economics". These will all be critical in HR professionals knowing who to hire; how to keep them and the most of them then how to reward them.

So is it any wonder that there are appears to be more of a set of ideas and models in consumer psychology than in conventional workplace dynamics – so why not use the insight being created there when trying to look at what people want from their jobs?

So the HR professional of 2025 will have hard-wired into their "deliverables upload" will be the skill of futurology. And the outputs will be deductive anaysis of trends; commentaries; developments; research and innovation. Companies looking for competitive edge, will increasingly find this by the people they attract to their ranks.

So what we have now as Employee Engagement is – in 2025 a new version of the Customer Service NPS. The N Double-P – S – the Net People (Potential) Score.

More soulless measurement and numerical frames of reference? What's so futuristic about that. After all we have the Employee Engagement survey "movement" over the last few years giving us data. This has generated (albeit often yearly snapshots) of data about how much people are "into" their company; their managers; their colleagues and overall, how much extra they will give the organisation/cause.

We have performance data. Or do we? Well we have a lot of subjective appraisal data yet we are seeing more systems which take data from all sorts of origin and make a performance dashboard for individuals which is a little more useful.

Sports is showing us how a huge array of statistics can help us with team selection (Oakland Athletics/Billy Bean in particular) and this HAS to find its way into business more generally. Without being intrusive and too big brother-esque, those performing well will welcome a more data-driven performance and rewards system NOT based on Manager bias and interpretation. So we need an NPPS more than we realised.

The NPPS will allow us to use a range of different data sources:-

- Education attainment/report card assessments on the students' ability to learn; team up; innovate and be a responsible and considerate student
- Social capital – how connected we are; what our social networking footprint looks/scores like based on followers; reposting; depth of content; referenced by formal journalist organisations etc.
- Peer feedback from volunteer activity and charitable activity; and
- Workplace feedback and shared data on workplace performance/customer feedback etc.

All this will be in our digital ID wallet. We can use this like any other commodity we have – we can trade with it. We will post our digital record access for employers to find us. For 2025 will see us no longer advertising vacancies – organisations will simply find great people and put them to work. Headcount ratios and the likes will be done with. Still people will be counted on the balance sheet but in 2025, we will see people's true market value coming into play. The balance sheet for people will show not only what they COST the company but their social and innovation capital will also come into play as to what they GAIN the company.

Finally we will have an acute interest in people beyond what their salary costs us. Yes by 2025 we will have worked out algorithms that help us calculate what we GAIN by having certain people, doing certain work in a certain way. It's already starting in sport – as mentioned before, in American sports like the NBA and the NFL and in the English Premier League. Individualised statistics which, when aggregated can help predict performance in certain situations. And so it will be in mainstream work.

I can see clearly now…

So it will be that the more we have the better we'll be at predicting the future.

Well, not quite. As Malclom Gladwell said in Blink, there's more to decisions and predictions than data. There's hunch; intuition and plenty we just cannot see or predict. There's incidental innovation, there's accidental innovation and there's random acts of innovation. It brings science to the "hunch" moments – thing you do when you just believe them to be right.

We are not as predictable as some might have you believe and the world around us doesn't conform to anything other than – perhaps – chaos theory.

We've always thought about the future. We've often made sincere attempts to document what we think the future will look like, feel like and be like. From what I see around me now, I don't see any cessation of this – more an even more acute sense of wonderment about what we think the future will hold for us.

So here's the first prediction in this, a series of books all about the future: the amount of time devoted to thinking about the future will increase. We will ALL spend more time thinking about and then acting towards the future.

Why more time on futurology?

We're a bit sick of the unpredictable tides turning our world upside down. We are desperate to gain SOME advantage on what the future holds. We have always had the desire to plot our journey and plan for stability and comfort levels and yet events have transpired that diminishes the value of our pension plans and destabilizes our retirement schemes.

So the more we feel thrown by things we thought we could rely on; the more we want to get some advantage or coping mechanisms in place. Which is why we have will continue to spend even MORE time on predicting and innovating towards the future. Not just predicting – innovating towards it. It began to make NO sense that we should plan with what we have NOW for the future; more we should take products are available now and adapt/combine them for what WE feel we need in the future. Less being sold and more buying and hacking products.

That's why futurology is so important and more so in 2025. The more time we spend thinking about your future – with a sense of realism and positivity – the more we find ourselves able to adapt and be more attuned to the mindset and the approach that will see us cope/thrive. Futurology will become a taught discipline, a qualification and a practice field. No longer the domain of speakers and professors. Consultants get this, consultants attempt to help companies navigate the future. Thing is they are not around long enough to see it and so there is a missing link with the hiring of external experts; a return to see how the "garden has grown". I'm not talking deferred income here incidentally – organisations rightly pay for the independent experts to shape and advise. I am thinking more longitudinal learning and sharing.

We see the future…

But how do you become a futurologist you may ask?

Well, it starts with understanding context – where you are now in a grand scheme then it quickly becomes driven by 3 key things: imagination; insight and intuition.

Imagination is part taught/part innate skill. We have seen some fabulous imagineers in our times – Disney perhaps one of the greatest "commoditisors" of imagination of our day. Turning childhood fantasy and fun into one of the world's most successful companies ever. Dreams are a part of imagination – but then so is a process to enable something to emerge.

Insight is (according to Wikipedia) the understanding of a specific cause and effect in a specific context. It is also becoming a true commodity in this information age – for insight is driven by information. And then our understanding built from it. Amazon became successful for – amongst other things – using insight about us as consumers to market in a targeted way and help us make purchasing decisions.

Intuition – when imagination fails us or just isn't needed in a situation and where insight is an empty vessel OR just doesn't feel right – that all important factor – intuition kicks in. Making decisions in the heat of the moment in a complex and hostile situation by intuition, may be all you have and may be all you need.

So those 3 traits of futurology will help the HR profession.

You are an HR professional working in logistics. You come across some research into robotic exo-skeleton engineering (**insight**); you start to wonder where this could be applied in assisting warehouse workers and remove the need for forklifts (**imagination)** but yet you feel it is either disproportionately costly, need huge amounts of training/skilling or people will just not perform well using this equipment (**intuition**). It may be that you need more insight to manage that intuition BUT these 3 skills help you become a futurologist.

One key component you DO need to be a futurologist though is **curiosity**. For it is curiosity that will drive you to collect insight; your imagination if probable fired by curiosity and you may be intuitively curious or you act curiously about something intuitively you want to question. The futurologist mode for HR is clearly not beyond the realms of possibility yet many would not associate themselves with this skill – preferring to be in the highly practicable world of now.

Law – what is it good for…

So much of employment law is made once case precedents are put before Employment Appeals Tribunals or a Higher Court. That will always be the way surely? Not if there's more time spent on looking at the future and what might in the workplace. Enabling law which protects the interests of parties imaginative but insight-led outcomes? Possible. It will need more time for practitioners to spend on pre-emptive directions which may become law, but more time can be found in other areas of HR's role in the workplace and this will covered in other books in this series. The intent though is for HR practitioners to be informing more employment law and not just reactive to it.

The law is a small part of futurology and societal trends and urbanised fashions seem to take a grip on us before anything legal does. So how does HR keep its eye on these fads and act on the things that matter?

To a degree, this is already underway with social technologies and use of social networking tools. We can tell quickly what people are bothered about (zero hours) in an instant now rather than simply what the press tell us. So we have citizen journalism around this; rapidly assimilated movements via campaigns and hashtag lobbyists; and then quick to air views that spread like wildfire.

So socially-inclined HR practitioners is nothing new but social media is ever more likely to be the insight-capture mechanism of choice. Blogs, threads and posts are the research forums of the future and now. Knowing which platforms to peruse; which networks to join and when to join in, watch, stimulate is already critical and in the future hyper-critical. Dialogue with people – even in short bursts – is the new marketing gold. No longer a hard-selling ad campaign which is clever and moves people to purchase. Now it's about connecting with consumers, making them feel important and being honest in your chat with them. No spin and PR; let them do that by being genuine and listening to them (us).

So will it be for HR and people aspects of work. The most discerning employers allow their entire workforce to create the future WITH them and FOR them. Via their conversations with consumers, partners and potential customers.

So a socially-inclined HR function will enable outside-in influence and create inside-in influence too. It will become the trusted broker of insight, imagination and intuition.

In Chapter 2 we will discuss more about work 2025 and then in Chapter 3, the HR Professionals of 2025 – how they got here and how they'll get THERE.

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2   HR 2025 – what is work 2025 like?

"Tradition is the illusion of permanence." Woody Allen

What will be the 2025 version of work? I think we see a lot of it already and there is a new tradition emerging already…**social business.**

As we enter the middle of the second decade of the 21st Century, we see a huge amount of change coupled with familiar practices, methods and approaches **converging, clashing and being overwritten.**

What IS apparent is the impact technology is having – in a different way – every day of lives. At work and at play, we are becoming intertwined with our devices like never before, the data being captured about our habits and activities is richer than ever before and our definitions of success are constantly challenged by factors known and unknown.

Technology has given rise to a huge amount of innovation in the workplace – often once consumerism has tested their very fabric – and such approaches are now challenging the way we view work; the place we call work; and the forces we bring to bear as workers.

This isn't just about technology; it IS about habits; rituals; behaviours; attitudes; opportunities and risks. It is more about the fabric than than an approach to fashion and more about the art of tailoring (pardon the pun).

Taylorism has given us production lines but that in turm led to cubicle farms and call centres – all places where there is a feel of some robotic nature to work; automated and mechanistic. Work as a craft, an art and a mastery remains the domain of specialist industries yet increasingly (from Dan Pink, to Sir Ken Robinson to Fons Trompenaars and to Dan Pontefract) we see there are alternative ways to "bring back the love".

Yet we as workers are rebelling – by stealth admittedly. We've had enough of the "matrix" and want to connect to something that's more of a sociable way; something where we feel human still whilst capitalising on the best technology has to offer. We want in work what we have in play/shopping.

In short – we want social business. ALL of us? Well maybe not but many of us do. Be it the rise of the freelance army; the realisation that gray corporate is well, gray and that Ikeafication of work is not something to be celebrated. Served up, flat-pack jobs aren't likely to bring out the best in all of us.

Manufacturing, service industries; leisure; hospitality; knowledge work; finance; creative arts; first response whatever it is we find as our working lot in life, there is – IMHO – sociability to be had. As we have leaned out the error rates; we've roboticised the experience. In pursuit of Kaizen, we've created under-appreciation of our skills, craft and dexterity.

So what is a social business? How do you know if you have the right approaches to become one and what is the difference it ultimately make to you, your people, your customers, partners and your productivity?

A social business – search engine query reveals 2.5bn returns. I don't think I'd even heard the term 4 years ago. Apart from social enterprises doing great things in the charity space. Wikipedia quotes Muhammed Yunus and his amazing Micro-finance example. But that's not what I am talking about.

I'm talking a business that is set up to capitalise on "social" ways of working; where someone's "social capital" has real value; where there are lines across and down not pyramidal lines up to success; where there is more interconnectedness and people working "on a level"; where it's less about divisional structures that divide and more about units that can mould and literally swarm around problems or peak activities. Where innovating with the "adjacent possibilities" is our business as usual.

There's something that happens when you have a social business construct – you are, or become, agile. Another search engine hit reveals 2bn of those references to Agile working. Sure it's a methodology but it's more and more something we need more of.

And before you all go "well it'll only work on the Googleplex or in Palo Alto generally" there is research that proves this is not only an exciting development in work, but a productive one.

It has been described as Agile; Open; Engaged; Adaptive.

It now seems that in order to be an agile organisation (which, in the face of it appears to be most people's antidote/vaccine against sudden business failure) you have be a social business. Or the pursuit of being agile comes from a starting point of being a social business. Anyway, as a place to start, I wholly recommend looking at Sideraworks outline on this. NIcely encapsulated an oft misunderstood term (social business).

I'd also recommend you take a look at the CIPD's collaboration with the Management Innovation Exchange (MiX) and their joint venture the HACKATHON. Hacking HR to build an Adaptability Advantage. There's a stack of comments in their excellent online forum where the need to be adaptable was called out as critical for modern business and vital that HR enables that not disables that. This has been a triumphant exercise in bringing together HR-related hackers from across the globe – who have constructed some radical ideas for new ways to deliver HR interventions and strategic initiatives. Now all we need are organisations brave enough to try them out and take their steps towards becoming a social business with agile as the imprint on everything they do.

I've been thrilled to be a part of this – and I am continuing to spread the word on hacking to create that agility. It's becoming an essential way of disrupting positively before being disrupting destructively.

One disruption is that of the very traditional hierarchy. Can we REALLY rid ourselves of the longest standing feature of organised human structure?

The hierarchy may not be ritually buried for good, but it might – in itself – become a new form of hierarchy; a flexible helix like structure maybe? Fons Trompenaars calls it a heterarchy.

And if that's the case and we're creating a new norm; a mini industrial revolution (the social revolution?) what does this mean for us as people; human beings who happen to also be human resources. What will this mean for our career prospects? What does it mean in spotting and capitalising on talent? If there's no ladder to climb anymore, how will success be defined, measured and rewarded? If promotions become a thing of the past and we're a flat army where's my stripes and epaulet markings to indicate authority?

Many many questions around this let's take these one at a time.

What does it mean for people and people at work? I feel 3 "I's" here
Input; Influence; Impact. We can all input with more adeptness; creativity and personalisation – we make the job role truly ours when it's not a boxed commodity.

We can then have more influence – we have channels and methods for MY voice to be heard and I can have dialogue with people in senior or specialist positions and with my peers, partners and customers.

I can share ideas and these may have more of a likelihood of being fast fails or good gains – which is the impact piece. I can shape my impact. I believe and feel in what I do beyond a crib sheet; a script; a process flow and a dictated routine.

Feeling good about work; creating deeper loyalty to my coworkers and even my organisation.

So your career prospects will NO LONGER be defined by the act of ladder-climbing promotions and role extensions e.g. VP to SVP. Your career can become a varied lateral journey across many specialities where the remuneration is no longer linked to the hierarchy BUT ON THE IMPACT YOU HAVE to productivity and performance wherever you sit in a schematic.

We MAY become less hooked on our hierarchical status and more hooked on our social status and social capital (Kred/Klout scores over over "stripes" we currently earn).

We no longer look up the ladder for signs of success we look in and around.

Does this mean the end of talent development? Hell no. It means a rebirth of sophistication in talent development/management. Again, no longer about who's ready to ascend and more who's ready to explore/pioneer/guide/champion.

The more discerning learner probably doesn't want to be secretly plotted on a nine-box grid ANYWAY so why not have much more talent development in the open; driven by informed people and open to all. Democratise it. The power is no longer in a few people jockeying and battling for promotion. It's in collective wisdom; shared skill; crafted brilliance; and networked intelligence. Putting all of this into a talent management proposition is – IMHO – a fun, energising and sustainable thing to do.

Move over the Apprentice, here comes the Collaborators.

And a talent management proposition that gives you more AQ as well as EQ. EQ we know is all about Emotional Intelligence – how well we know ourselves; our impact on others and manage that. AQ in this example is our Agility Quotient. No questionnaire to establish this (YET!) but I can see this happening:-

As well as recruiting to traditional competencies and behaviours like analytical skills and planning we will want to find people who are:-

- Flexible as a norm;
- Adaptable with ingenuity
- A continuous and applied learner
- A creative solutions generator
- Full of drive and stamina

This is the talent we'll want to spot; and where we have the potential to, people who could grow those skills to become that talent we need. All of us. Change is dead – long live agility.

Team working as we know it is a false construct anyway.

People thrown together through recruitment because they have part responsibility for delivering a "whole". Team working is a fixed feature like the chairs and desks the team sits at. Team meetings are forced upon us and heck, we may even get to go on one of those legendary out of bounds team building events.
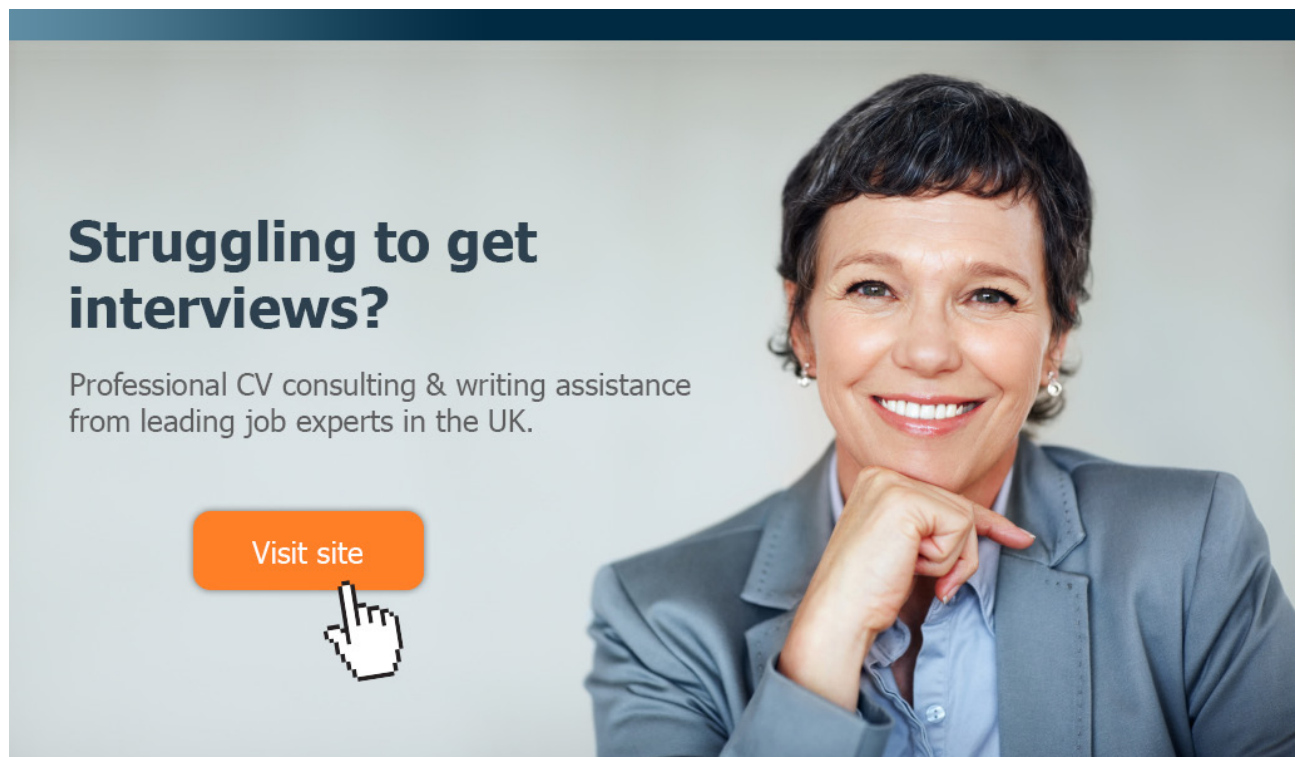
That's hackneyed, tired and just flawed. Stay on that track if you want but I want to FIND my team. Gather collaborators and build a unit which just as easily disassembles itself when its work is done, as it was assembled in the first place. More the X-Men than Mad Men.

My feeling that social business is needed is based on my own view that people don't belong to a team like they used to. And maybe never will. From my own experience, I found more affinity with like-minded souls who I connected with on social networks than I did the collection of people thrown together through circumstance that was my "team".

In my view of a social business construct, we congregate around work and this naturally leads to us coming together to work on new products; research pieces; client work or similar – irrespective of our "domain" or home-base. But fundamentally we have more choice about who becomes part of that team. A more fluid assemble/disassemble may feel less effective to some (time spent building trust and working the dynamics out) but there's energy and excitement in working with new people. There's a chance to focus on relationships as a key factor not a tolerance. There's a realisation that you won't have to spend the REST of your entire working career with this same band of folks.

Forced team relationships become stale. They create problems where people JUST DON'T GET ON. Yet in a fluid unit, you can work knowing there's a chance that when you disassemble, you may never have to work with that person again.

I found more affinity in colleagues in different divisions than I did my own HR unit. I worked on projects that were an escape from much of the drudgery that infected my base team and the energy and sense of purpose from the coming together nature made me perform better, generated innovative bursts and shared skills and expertise that couldn't be created via my own team structure.

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It wasn't even through a sense of not belonging or wanting to belong. I exercised huge efforts into my home team but to little or no avail. There was an under-appreciation of innovation; an (at times) painful obsession with process and a frustrating lack of speed or energy. In my mind, it was no wonder I wanted to be anywhere other than my desk. And rarely was I. Partly because being in with different parts of the business helped me do my job better and made sure I wasn't one of "those" HR types that sat in a particular area ad infinitum.

Anyway, personal gripes aside; social business models feel like they are made for this agile, responsive, exciting, energetic, creative, motivational units. I may be looking overly idealistically at this, but my experience of working in an agile (matrix if you will) way was all of these and not just because of the home base being a rather flat place to be.

Social Business constructs can give us something we just don't get from hard wired teams: variety. It's not just because of this that Social Business will take off, it's because we psychologically need more from work.

Just as customers need more from providers.

The "more" doesn't appear to come from solely from product design, reliability, ingenuity or longevity.

It appears to come from personalisation; individuality; recognition; significance; worth – a customer who feels they matter is a customer who matters. To you as a business that is. Because even if you do them wrong, if you treat them and repair the wrong like they matter, they will forgive you. Nothing is perfect. No service, product or action will ever be as perfect all the time as we sometimes think it will be. When the imperfection spectre raises its head, and you have to handle that with the customer, it's your chance to make a difference by making them feel like they matter to you.

Social Business is our way to reacting to attempted perfection (in, for arguments say call handling) by allowing something more natural, unpredictable and organic to wrap itself around the data driven, logically constructed mechanics of this thing we call work.

Social Business could also be the answer to many of our ailments in modern business. Even the venerable F.W. Taylor couldn't have predicted just how rubbish a lot of people would be at this management game. And despite Peter Drucker's amazing wisdom, people are still royally screwing up the gift that is management every hour of every day.

So, let's fire all the managers said Gary Hamel. And I don't want to pick on them because I was once one. And there are great ones. But the poor ones really do make it an bad barrel.

So instead of let's fire all the managers; let's reinvent and redeploy the managers – allowing people to do more self managing and allowing those clumsy people managers to get back to being some kind of technical specialist.

And that's where a social business provides the architecture so that we don't need managers. OK it might sound like an overly liberalised and idealistic way to be but honestly it has gotten to the point where after 50 years of leadership and management development, what we've tried JUST DOESN'T WORK. We're trying to teach seals to walk maybe?

The opportunity is arising now to remove layers of bureaucracy; ignite people's passion for what they do and invite responsibility for work we've stripped away in the name of efficiency.

Why do startups work? They don't overly manage. Why do start-ups stutter? They become bigger and then introduce management. C'est simple.

In big companies, why do we have layers and layers of control? Because we think that's how we control the size. Instead, how about centre on the people and create a small enterprise feel inside a big corporation? Many I have heard are actually doing this. Almost deconstructing themselves but working under the big brand and using the power of the corporation's non-people assets.

That makes sense to me and so is it any wonder that IBM are a social business? They appear to be driving this very model successful for 15 years so it's not an overnight fad there. It's a fundamental reworking of working. And I'm not fishing for a job at IBM and nor am I being overly romantic about it. What I've seen and heard and collected from research pieces, this stuff really works. So move over Googlers, IBMers are the new show in town.

Right back to the main point of this as a follow up.

Help us with what exactly?

Help us by being the saviour of "good" work.

Now good work is a concept I was introduced to by the marvellous Nick Isles. A thinker ahead of his time and a commentator on things economically and socio-politically that impact on the world of work. His book "The Good Work Guide" is a thing ahead of its time. I would recommend you read it. Published in 2010, it tells the story of how work became bad; what we can do about it and without a mention of "social media".

Getting people back to a feeling that work is valuable BEYOND the paycheck and the status is do-able. We seem to need to find a lot more meaning from what we do, impacts we create, and legacy we leave. In Indonesia and Bali there is also the construct of ecologically sound employ.

If we can bring something back to the way we feel about work, we might have less worries over ethical practices and regulations; overly compliant routines of process adoption and generally create work as a thriving socially-engineered place of efficiency and spirituality. Driving a bus spiritual? How about ensuring people are safely transported in helping fuel a local economy? OK that might be stretching it a bit BUT there's a serious point to people finding what they love doing and not just what they have to do.

Social Business might just do that. Remove the grey; colour it up. Take out the marching music; and bring some fluid jazz.

3   HR Professionals 2025

"Eighty percent of success is showing up." Woody Allen

We've already seen a huge amount of movement in the craft now known as Human Resource Management. From Industrial Relations through the Unionised 1970s and through Personnel into the 1980s and then into 1990s HR, it's that tag that seems to have stuck the longest. And yet arguably is one of the more mechanical sounding tags – Human Resources. People. Yes People. Not just numbered resources to shunt around. Anyway, will this change? It might – but I don't think anyone's ever emerged as likely to make a fortune by simply relabelling "the people function" and redirecting the professional body of practitioners.

After all, the "front face" of many organisations can be called Customer Service; Client Relations; Stakeholder Management; or Operations. But we seem to sweat over that one less, so let's leave HR as it is. It may not be the most elegantly labelled function, but people get it.

So if we're wedded to HR, then let's see what we get from HR. And by that I mean the **impact.** The Woody Allen quote above is deliberately aimed at being provocative that many HR professional are stuck in the act of showing up. Doing the bidding; nothing glamorous or controversial; helping the organisation function.

I would argue that the missing 20% in this equation is worth 80% of people-based value to the world of work. And my reason is that this 20% is made up of all the nano-differentiators companies are looking for. Ground-breaking ways to attract the best people out there; imaginative working patterns; inventive ways to get the best from people; innovative practices to develop people once they've joined; inspiring recognition and reward protocols that all equal high performance that creates an edge.

An edge that makes your organisation stand out. HR people who can build thus edge (so effectively taking the 80% turning up (and by this I imply doing all the basic functions well too like people administration and so on) and leveraging the 20%) with an array of small but hugely impactful activities will make the difference. Combined with your R&D; technology; business and data analysts and the like for sure. Well yes. But an HR person who can deploy themselves and the people of the organisation to fuel R&D; exploit technology; enhance data analysts – now that's a Dream Team.

So the HR professionals of 2025 will find themselves doing that. Perfomance architects. Enablers of collective brilliance. Orchestrators of company and individual success.

Yeah right. Tell that to many CEOs and they will struggle to see that in their HR Directors of now or the past. There is improvement – sure – but so much more to do.

Where do we start?

The HR Professional at an individual level, has to be bothered enough to want to be this Multi-disciplinary type figure in the organisation. Spending time in Operations; IT; R&D; PR and so on. Becoming the insight-led decision maker needed to get the best from people. Advisors – yes; experts – hell yes. Influential – should be. There will need to be more confidence and assertion on the HR professionals' part to give more weight to their proposals and arguments.

Here's what you as an HR Professional of 2025 will need to be able to do.

1. **Adopt the parlance of the part of the business you are with at that time**. No good not knowing your scrum from your checkpoint meeting if you're with IT. Get it. Talk it. Shape it. If IT want fluid job roles and descriptors, don't give them fixed ones. Work with them and fuse your skills and insight with their desires and experience. Do NOT be held back by the curse of best practice.

2. **Understand the customers perspective.** And here I mean the businesses real customers not you as an internal service provider. Only when you can present the case for the customer can you line up people management practices with what's best for them. Staff first of course, but customers second as they count.

3. **Know numbers.** So be able to work out accounting practices and go beyond your own budget management. Understand the flow of investments; spend; capital; on-costs and the like across the business.

4. **Be the futurologist in the room.** Understand what's impacting all sorts of working environments not just yours and then particularly what is impacting your work or your sector. You need to be a scanner and filter of what's over the hill. Be the one that beats R&D or Customer Insight to the game on predicted societal habits on spend; education; leisure etc.

5. **Get scientific.** Understand your mindfulness from your brain plasticity. People will become used to you having a stack of "ologies" at your fingertips. Be aware of being too superficial in your understanding though – as Woody Allen once said – *"I went on a speed reading course. Took me 20 minutes to read War & Peace. It's about Russia"*.

6. **Be an analyst and practice people-nomics.** Understanding all the date you have about people will give you an edge on decisions and matters of people performance; productivity and reward which will drive your companies creative engine.

7. **Become part of the creative hub**. Many HR professionals opt out and shy away from things where there's creativity involved. New products? No right to be in there that's for R&D; new customer technology? No right to be in there either. YET people are involved in this creative act and people are involved in implementing and delivering these acts of creativity. So maybe – just out of curiosity – be in the room or understand what's happening in the creative aspects of organisations. And then when you need creative solutions to people issues, you may JUST be better informed about them because of being involved in the creative process (or at least have an understanding of it) yourself.

8. **Be the most agile function.** In looking at credibility in organisations and delivering through strengths, agility is likely to be the most key facet of a high performing division. HR is probably joint least agile with Finance and Legal at the moment and so has a long way to go BUT can make leaps and bounds in becoming a leader in agility with a little more bravery; inventiveness and application. Research into Scrum and Agile methodologies; further research around social business and resource fluidity should bring HR right into the fold with other agile units like IT and Operations.

So 8 key facets of being a 2025 HR Professional – and they start now by reading this book. Personal credibility is built through knowing your core practice (learning; recruitment and HR advice) but then raising the game through additional business insight and know-how will give you not only increased potential but enhanced influenced. You WILL be able to shape the business – quite literally – through workforce planning; organisation design and development and continued performance sustained through applied business psychology.

4 Hiring 2025 style

What's going to be different about recruitment in 2025? One of our series will explore this in more detail and look into the more intricate elements of this aspect of the workplace. Before we dive into the new shape of hiring, what do we have now?

We have a range of models and methods that organisations use to employ people. Employ either permanently or temporarily. Not to mention of course the now infamous zero hours contract. Of course hiring doesn't just take those shapes and is done through a range of in-house; out-sourced technology and traditional methods covering headhunting executives and specialists to short-notice temp cover of a reception or hospitality role.

There are common trademarks in recruitment that haven't moved much since the 1980s

- competencies and behavioural frameworks;
- Interviews and assessment tests;
- Role profiles and person specifications; and then more recently
- The additional technology of Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) over manuscript forms; word document submissions or early generation web-based application forms.

The CV is still in play too. Which to me, is a surprise.

Another surprise for me is the continued reliance on recruiters when hiring managers are becoming more and more savvy in constructing and managing their own campaigns. The surprise won't last though, as there is a definite move to self-service in a range of roles with more specialist or senior roles being the domain of the recruiting agents.

So this hiring manager take over – isn't that the end of the recruitment agency then? It would appear to be a natural progression for hiring managers to take up some of the work in running campaigns and selecting applicants and then the recruiters would become search and secure agents for specialists, executives and top talent. It should mean an increase in several key areas for recruiters:-

1. They can continue to strengthen their role as a relationships-based business; relations with organisations/hiring managers and candidates.
2. They will be able to focus on using metrics; data and social media "footprints" to find more people and take on new clients.
3. It will become less about filling vacancies and more about the constant search for people that will differentiate the organisation
4. It won't just be about conventional hires – there will be contractors; freelancers; experts; people with portfolio careers; carers; and more flexible appointments.

Recruiters of this nature can go beyond the act of attraction and become 90 days orientors. They can help with the induction and the creation of a learning plan and the appointment of mentors and help ensure the new hire is up to speed pronto. There will also be more accountability with the recruiter over the impact this hire has and a better analysis where it just didn't work out.

Essentially all that people would point to as lacking with the current recruitment proposition is up for grabs. And certainly what will drive it is the desire for more flexible and impactful hires. It will need some persuading but I see workplaces of the future being more like a film production crew – a tight core ensemble added to with experts hired for various stages in the development of the film. Recruiters being casting crew is probably as good an analogy as needed. Casting crews need to know not only high-impact box office draws as leading actors but also post-production crew; animators/SFX/CGI and so on. Recruiters of 2025 will also be like this. More sophisticated than hiring low-value; high-volume roles. Junior Hiring Managers will manage this through tech platforms and social recruiting.

CVs will go in favour of online presence; Klout/Kred scores will make way in hiring for something more akin to LinkedIn analytics and people will offer themselves to organisations using tech-based filtering tools. Interviews will be digital conversations; tests will be scenarios and game-based activities and probation periods will be as much "do I like your company?" as "do you fit in here?".

This presents an exciting and challenging prospect as so much will be new methods and new ways of finding people for organisations. The freelance/contract army and job seekers will become more joined-up; most people will have a website and trading arm as well as their individual employable self and this make employment terms more challenging but also more flexible.

People making their own provisions for healthcare, pensions, leased cars and so on means the employee benefits package is less about what they offer like this and more about how does it feel? Will it fit that transcendent purpose Dan Pink calls out in Drive? Csikszentmihalyi's flow states that we search for greater good than just ourselves. And this is "works" trump card. We may be a solo player but we need to join up with organisations and companies to make sense of who we are and what we have to offer.

So shall it be for recruiters. They will be brokers of "flow". Creators of meaningful engagement in work. Not headhunters. Career plotters. People Performance Procurers.

5   Rewards 2025 – the only way is Ethics

What have we done? And by that I mean what have we done to ourselves that causes such short-sightedness; such destructive behaviour and such dog-eat-dog behaviour? I am talking about – of course – rewards. Bonuses. Remuneration. Salaries.

You'd have thought several lessons in crash/boom & bust "wreckonomics" would teach us that things of this nature are not a sustainable way to build reward mechanics that works for work. Yet we still have a reliance on financial rewards for roles like highly paid professional footballers, bankers, CEOs and many more of us. Performance Related Pay. Highly contentious. Again, to reference Dan Pink's "Drive" – when you take the issue of money off the table, performance incentives just don't work that way.

So there's something radical needed – and the key word for this is a return to ethical rewards. Something which stands public scrutiny; is even assessed and validate by some form of people panel and is mixed with financial rewards and charitable contributions.

Here's the thing; I have it on good authority that many of our best paid executives simply do NOT need any more money. They have their 2nd yacht; the wine cellar is stocked and choosing either the Maserati or Lamborghini to go to work means more and more salary is just not needed. Yet they still command it; draw it and stash it away somewhere. Why? Because it's more about relative comparison to their peers. It's status. It is reward but it is ALL about money.

It will be early days but there will be a new framework for reward – especially at senior level but right across the board.

A Corporate Philanthropic Index

Executives and high earners will not be published per their salary but a new form of competitiveness will emerge the "who gives the most/has the most impact with their giving". Corporations AND individuals will have ranking similar to Formula 1 drivers and constructors championships based on points. This will create a whole new PR and Talent attraction story for companies. "The organisation that gives the most" and "where the CEO donates 80% of her salary" will become hooks to aid company reputation. Team based charitable acts and donations will also feature and become a key part of "employee engagement" even more so than they are now in 2013.

Team Related Incentive Packages (TRIPs)

This will replace the majority of performance related pay at an individual level. Instead of once-a-year performance related pay benefits, regular finance and a whole heap of other rewards – will relate to awards linked to collaborative efforts. Either a permanent team or a short-term project/assignment applies and yes whilst people DO a lot of solo work, it is normally with or for others so solo awards will be rarely if ever featured.

TRIPs will be open and transparent; posted internally on staff accessible social networks and adjudicated on by managers and leaders; colleagues or the teams themselves.

Rewards will be vouchers, cash payments, Bitcoins; charitable donations or company shares. They will be extra days off; use of the company hospitality or whatever the individual chooses in line with agreed parameters.

It's about rewards set for openness; set for more altruism; and set by the people not who have the most to gain by it, but those who are likely to be turned off by greed; inappropriate bonuses and rewards that encourage solo-success behaviours. And again, it's not workplace socialism, it is though fairness and organisational justice at work.

Leadership Recognition Incentive (LRI)

When a team sets their leaders "bonus" based on how well they feel they've been managed, that may drive a little more constructive and productive management behaviour. No more "sucking up" to their own boss (who up to now has had the say on their bonuses through performance agreements), instead transparency, communication, involvement, empowerment, support, fairness, firmness will all be rationalised into their own reward structure.

Again, open and again scrutinised this is not about leadership popularity but effectiveness in leading a team.

A new era in rewards

So my predictions for reward are hinged on opening up the lines; making clear who gets what; who donates what and why they got "that" in the first place. There's been too much secrecy for too long about bonuses and bar public bodies and PLCs declaring Director salaries, it's all been too focused on financial incentives based on delivery but not on behaviours. Behaviours – not delivery – drove us into financial meltdown. Alleged delivery bias was in fact, over-confidence, trickery, downright gambling, greed and covert actions coupled with naivety and mistakes compounding other mistakes. If we had the right behaviours, they may have compensated for our lack of skill in navigating through a storm of financial cul-de-sacs.

More money does not always equate to feeling good or living well. It may have the opposite effect. Again this is not vote for communism in salaries and bonuses, it is a cry for a better way. A desire to see the spirit of humanity come through greed and for the conscience to come back into incentives.

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Performance Management? Come on in your time is up…

6 Performance Management? Come on in your time is up…

Why are our days numbered, and not, say lettered? Woody Allen

Performance by numbers. Success by a box rating. Promotability on a scale. Delivery by definition.

In pursuit of making some meaning out of work, we've taken this rather rocky road to ruin. Performance Management. A rather clumsy term for a contractual-like agreement between a manager and their team member; a set of definitions built around the SMART acronym (which actually, isn't very smart and more to come on this later) and then some way of rating that like A = Achieved; B = Brilliant; C= Come and see me after school…

It's a report card for adults. It potentially makes people act like children. I'll stick to what's in here. Better still, I'll do what I want and no-one will really notice, after all, does that REALLY matter? I can conjure up a load of examples of daily averageness and then with 2 great days where I stepped up to the plate and smashed things out of the ball park I'll ask for a bonus.

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Performance Management? Come on in your time is up...

It's a familiar tale of systems being used to "manage" people. It's increasingly not working and it's increasingly becoming the bane of jokes up and down the HR Profession. I have a 9 box grid. Oh I have 17 performance indicator statements. I use 40 competences and rate at least 28.

About as useful as comparing BHP on buses used by a transport company.

We need a new way here and by 2025 we will have one. Largely because the people will rebel and the HR textbooks on Performance Management will be cast aside into the recycle bins with a cheer.

Earlier I talked about reward and performance management has been brought in to LARGELY look at reward and promotability (if it is sophisticated enough). We spend hours musing over definitions of success criteria – "so a Box 1 means Utterly Mindblowingly Outstanding performance for at least 80% of the year then?"; spend hours mulling over performance agreement constructs only to never look at them again; and then get into disputes about a rating of Exceeded Expectations versus Successfully Delivered on All Objectives.

There are clues everywhere as to why this is a broken model and people are starting to define new ways, new measures, new constructs here. Here's my projection in this area based largely around this: trust.

Trust in 2025 goes like this.

I have joined a team of analysts in a retail environment. I was hired to help them with a mixture of research into new market areas and new ways to test products and initiatives. I am hired – like many hires these days – on a rolling contract of 3 monthly review points. I am salaried but as I have my own pension, health, car and gym membership, we have agreed I will get a package consisting of salary and travel costs which I am happy with.

I am told I will be part of a team of 7 who all report in to 3 Directors as their work befits: R&D; Marketing; Operations.

My mentor and onboard liaison is Jen. I have already Hungout with Jen online to catch up and talk about the role. We agree my starting time, location and likely first week.

Jen – having had no formal management training – knows that I am quite resourceful from our discussions, so we plot my inital week's activity. Instead of prescribing EVERYTHING for me, Jen simply signposts me to a few people.

Day 1; turning up at the office is easy as the App sent by Jen has maps and public transport links and also contains a code for my access to the building. I am asked for a biometric scan and upload my fingerprint and retina scan which means I can use the lifts and get to the 11th floor.

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The office is as I expected. Like a coffee shop/bohemian diner. Dress code is relaxed – I notice that – and people seem to be using a variety of ways to connect – 3 in person with video glasses on clearly conversing overseas and then 2 with flat panel displays and motion capture as they are clearly mining some data and building a screencast for a client.

I know I don't have a desk – no-one does – instead I head for a pod where I can connect my smart card which brings up a hologram access to the corporate system. I need to find my way around the structures; protocols; key events and working systems. This is my induction part 1. Part 2 is a chat with some key people I will be working with on projects. I know who they are because the company has video profiles of people that are dynamically updated about what they're working on.

And then I realised there's something really cool that goes on here. They have an archive of old things that companies like this used to do and one is a Performance Management Agreement and a video of a painful discussion around objectives. I watched it – laughing a lot as it unravelled – and then came the critical thing for me: it was a short online summary I had to produce of what I was here to do.

It was a mixture of a video clip I made and a short infographic I pulled together. I was logged onto the system and then a short message bounced to my colleagues. Quickly, 2 of them found out I was in the pod and coffee and pastry in hand, they came in to say hello. Jen had shared my arrival with the team and this was Nik and Shona welcoming me to the team and having a chat. We talked about the current priorities, we talked about the key products they were working on and then we set about crafting our "MOU". The way we work is this: -

1. We work out what we need from the others in the team;
2. We put across what we are offering to the team's reason for being;
3. We set out behavioural expectations (such as deadline management; decisions; issue escalation and so on);
4. We agree how we'll keep each other in the loop;
5. We agree on sharing learning and what we want to do with ideas and innovative thoughts.

These 5 simple exchanges set us up as a team and we replicate some of this with other suppliers and parts of the company as befits. We don't document it in a contractual sense, we use the corporate jotter and simply tag it to our profiles. The video updates do the rest.

We then get feedback from partners, suppliers and the like around those expectations. So if I miss a deadline and let down one of the team, I lose a little but can gain it by putting it right and then taking on a research assignment without being asked which helps someone else. It's a great way to share our appreciation and helpful comments on people's performance and input to the overall cause.

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We conclude our first team meeting and then I log on to our project space updating my responsibilities in the team hub. I can also log and accept work from this hub so I take on a piece of work which has just landed there – namely to set up a product launch event. I've been involved in launches before and this is right up my street. As soon as I do this, I find 2 new people – one from Tokyo and one from Mexico City – join me. I've never met these people but check out their video logs and we exchange the 1–5 above in a matter of minutes.

Day 1 is already feeling productive and so all the things I heard about the way this company works around people-centric technology-enabled and trusted ways of working has hit me from the moment I was approached about helping out. This is how work is meant to feel. I had a short video message from Jen pop up saying she'd spotted how quickly I was orienting myself and she welcomed our first check-in meeting next week where we'd talk about development and an early review on my progress. I forget Jen is in Johannesburg when the instant and personal nature of her messages pops up. It's like in the best possible way, she's keeping an eye on me for all the right reasons. I sense the support, I feel the freedom and I am enthused by the approaches here. No wonder this company is the owner of the World's Best HR team award. With ways of working like this, it's easy to see why.

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Performance Management? Come on in your time is up…

ENDS

So in this idealistic but (IMHO) possible model for work, we have enabled people connecting with each other and working from the get go. Light touch management and a set of HR practices that are both **Human** and **Resourceful.** Transpose this to manufacturing; technology; customer service; contact centres; building work whatever. The WAY the work is done might be different but they way we can set out expectations between organisation and individual; manager and job holder; team and team member; and amongst colleagues can be done like this.

The technology might be different but the principle is the same. Away from wordy contracts that people never look at again. Away from Staff Handbooks no-one ever reads unless there's an issue arise and by then it is probably too late. Away from form filling and objective setting where people are set tasks that again, often bear little resemblance to the real world they are in.

It's a return to simpler ways but something that technology enables so there's a low intensity but formalised way to do things.

It's not called Performance Management anymore. It's called My Role and it's driven by people and not by managers or HR. Sure there may be times when things don't go as planned – and HR is often involved coaching, mediating and working out routes to resolution. Employment Law hasn't changed much but people's approaches to resolving workplace issues has. Even lawyers have become conciliators and advisers in more complex circumstances and the cut and thrust of adversarial contest is now an exception rather than a norm. The level of commitment and engagement is now on the rise thanks to people being able to restore their sense of ownership and delivery compared to the boxed in approaches of the past.

People are feeling part of something bigger and more meaningful at work and HRs move to enable that not stifle that has rescued the profession from regulators to enablers and in some cases to performance enhancers and inspirers. It all started around 2013 and took some time, but finally, work has more vibrancy and about time too.

Naive dream? Distinct possible? Hopeful it will turn out that way? – If it's not 2024 and you're reading this and you believe there's a better way (and it might not be exactly like this) then you have a chance to effect the changes that will see this happen. Or even better than this. Go on, I dare you…!

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Performance Management? Come on in your time is up…

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Learning; learning; learning. You couldn't avoid it if you wanted to

7 Learning; learning; learning. You couldn't avoid it if you wanted to

I took a speed-reading course and read War and Peace. It involves Russia. Woody Allen.

I love learning. It's what makes me tick certainly. If I've not learned something new that day then it's been a wasted day. Whatever your view on the human spirit, there's no doubt that learning and by that I mean the curiosity; the obtaining of information and fact/supposition; the realisation and deduction; the belief and the application; the evaluation and replication have enabled us to move through history from primitive ways to a deeper understanding and impact on ourselves and what's around us. Not always for the good mind but largely so. Cultural traditions; medicinal and survival techniques; creation and exploration; – all amazing things. We learned from those before us and around us. We have built civilisation around learning and there are many of us who hold that fundamental right to learn as one of our dearest freedoms.

So we found ourselves – in the latter part of the 20th century and into the 21st in a bit of a quandry. We had learned so much, yet had also continually damaged so much. Our planet; our natural life; ourselves and our systems. Wars, poaching, resource depletion and economic meltdown. You'd have thought that going through several depression/recessions for example would teach us something about managing money? That's just one area.

Well we seem to be learning an awful lot still. That some of our approaches that we so confidently predicted would work haven't. Reading Malcolm Gladwell's latest book *David and Goliath* he refers to the smaller class size obsession in the US Education system. Not delivering. Moving to UK shores, league tables in the National Health Service – not delivering. Controls or freedom in the financial markets – not delivering.

So we learn. And we use that learning to applied practice and hopefully to better things. That's the way it should be. It seems we sometimes know we should learn more but we cast that aside in favour of doing tried and tested things and the curse of the best practice – there's a book there all of it's own. Anyway learning. Let's start by looking at learning in 2013 for what Professor Gary Hamel so rightly called "a busted flush" – management.

I'll start with this idiom. A labour of love. 2 words almost juxtaposed. Labour – the act of work; effort and employment. Love the emotion of strong attraction and personal attachment to something or someone.

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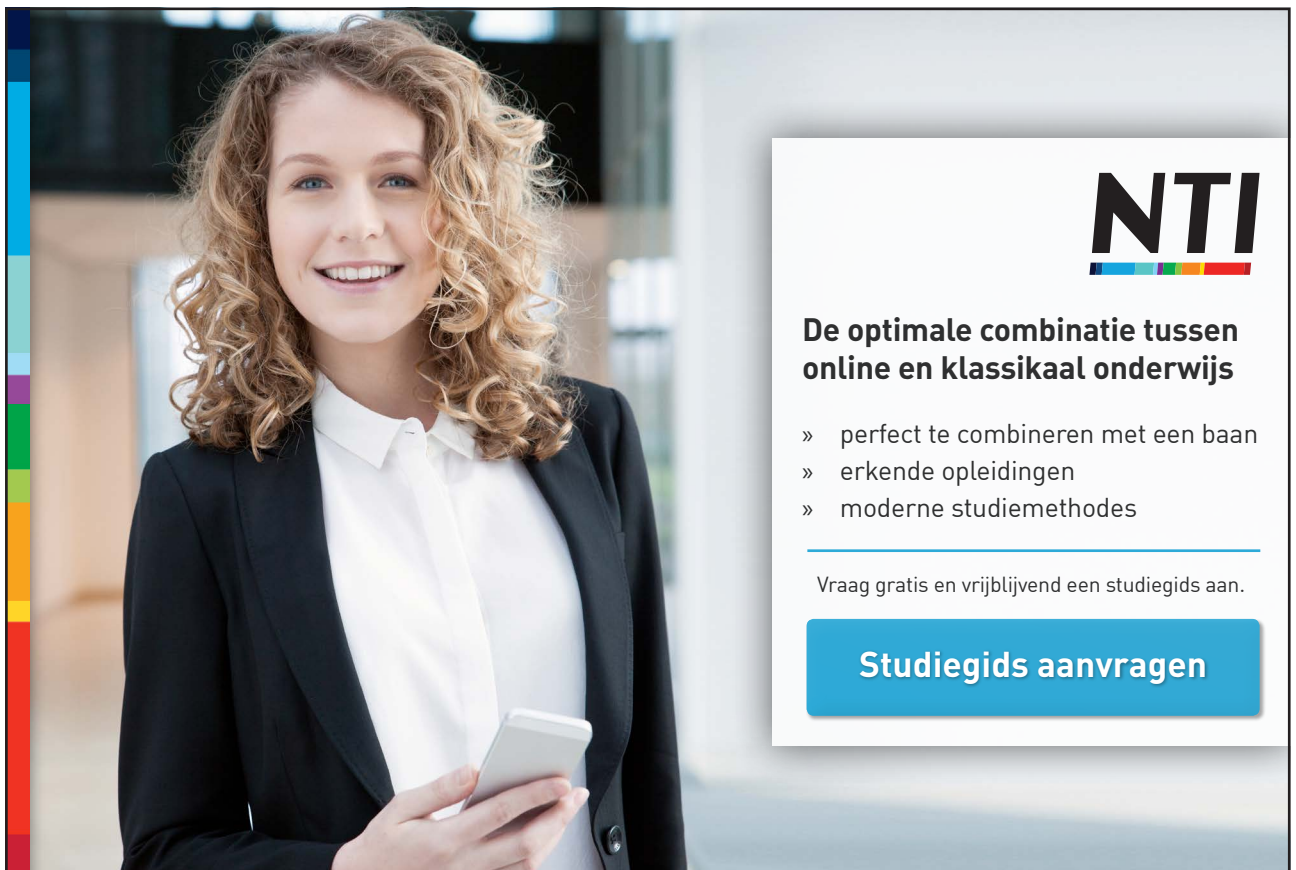Learning; learning; learning. You couldn't avoid it if you wanted to

How many of us and our leaders are engaged in a labour of love? A love of all they do and not just the glamorous bits? Did they choose the career path or was it chosen for them? Someone needs to lead us don't they? Yes. How they do it – choose to do it – has a massive bearing on all of us.

I recall Gary Hamel asking this question: "Who, when they were at school said 'I want to be a manager?' Answer, no-one".

Let's face it, you might want to a lawyer, or an accountant, or sales clerk, or a banker. Leader and a manager? That stuff happens ONCE you get into work – largely. Now there's nothing wrong with NOT wanting to be a manager or a leader at school. This homogenous, amorphous, over-defined craft is not what trips off the tongue of most teenagers.

Yet, when we get into work, we are faced with not a hierarchy of academics teaching us, but a hierarchy of people leading and managing us. Often badly. And by badly I mean at odds with what we instinctively feel is right in being managed or being led.

Now I'm not going down the "Google returns 8bn web mentions about leadership or management" but its staggering that we are in 2013 and there is still a huge debate about the right sort of leadership and management.

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So is it any wonder we find ourselves, as learning and people professionals, struggling to find the right educational, enlightenment and enrichment frames of reference with which to "teach" people what good leadership and management is, And please, let's not keep creating lines between the 2 disciplines and throw in supervisor and team leader too. We are talking about the key thing that is:-

Having responsibility for the welfare, performance and enablement of others to do their job and deliver on the purpose and values of an organisation.

Simon Sinek has a nice quote. The courage of leadership is giving others the chance to succeed even though you bear the responsibility for getting things done.

I'll do no more musing or posing of definitions for that in itself would take us until 2014 to agree on and still we'd all have interpretative, experiential and philosophical differences.

Leadership and management is so fundamental to organisational, societal and personal success that there's an industry around the theory; the research; the models; the learning and the "execution" of leadership and management that it is staggering we are still finding ourselves in this position

IT'S JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Taking supreme examples of brilliant, inspiring and legacy creating leadership and management like Peter Drucker's work; Nelson Mandela's acts and Martin Luther King's spirituality, what we see in government; military; society and in our case industry and work IS JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

Why is it not good enough in work?

RBS; Enron; BBC; BP – corporate failures and leadership and management mishaps. That's being kind, we're really talking an omnishambles.

Failure is not a word I like to use a lot and with ease, but in this case, leadership and management is largely, in Gary Hamel's words so I'll say it again is "a busted flush".

Blame the system; blame egos; blame corruption; blame power dynamics; blame inadequate learning; blame their parents. Blame is kind of pointless here as it often is anywhere.

Yet there is hope. See I'm an eternal optimist and so I'm never dark for long.

Where is the hope? What is it? How do we leverage it? When is the right time to start? Who is going to make it happen?

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We've had false dawns of hope before though haven't we? Eternal optimist I may be; totally naive dufus I am not.

Let's start with some white hot research = from these very shores and by the body most of you come to rely on and that supports your every move.

CIPD's Real Life Leaders confirms what we suspected. HR is part of the problem at the moment, despite trying to deliver the solution. Yet the problem is bigger, systemic and contextual.

Here's my predictions about the skills leaders and managers need more of and what people and organisation development professionals might want to focus on. Before I do that though, let me say this isn't the usual predictable list.

Big data; analytics; neuroscience; authenticity; mindfulness; servant leadership; Gen Y leaders; flat armys.

None of that and all of that.

Here's where I think Learning Professionals can add a huge amount to Leaders and therefore develop them.

Predictable start: **Social Leadership**. Understanding the constructs of a more social business, using social technologies and social learning. What do you mean by that? Buzzword bingo alert. Well. If a social business is defined by as **Agile; Open; Engaged; Adaptive** then these are good active nouns eh? With the convulsive changes felt by many organisations; with the sudden failures of high street established outlets and with 40% of Fortune 500 disappearing within 5 years, something is needed to get over that broken model of size will ensure survival – because it won't Size used to be the protection against aggressive take over. Now you're lucky if someone actually wants to buy you.

So why would/does Social Leadership help this? How about these factors:-

- Leaders attuned to the sentiment of their workforce;
- Leaders aware of innovations within their own workforce;
- Leaders understanding what their workforce needs from them in terms of vision setting; communication; inclusivity
- Leaders who feel part of something bigger and not they're the biggest fish in their pond;
- Leaders who WANT to be challenged by their teams and peers and encourage productive dissent;
- Leaders who give more than they take or demand;
- Leaders who don't war with each other, they are seen as the creators of collaborative advantage within the organisation
- Leaders who are personally understood and genuinely believed in by their workforce.

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How do you get this? You open up dialogue. You ensure there's transparency in conversations. There's no fear of retribution for speaking up. There's recognition of leaders contributions and their corporate responsibility.

Leaders need more of one vital commodity which is at its lowest ebb since we industrialised. **Trust.**

They will only get more of this by being more open and tuned in. Connected to their people in a way that would have seemed unmanageable in the past. Through a new construct leaders can become like the famed Zappos.

Here's the next thing Learning Professionals can do for Leaders; help them be the kings of **managing paradoxes**. Stay with Zappos for a minute. They really are a worthy example in work.

Connectedness and collaboration but fiercely protective of individuality and even weirdness. Traditional but radical. They put culture at the heart of their very being. That's the most important thing to them.

Culture eats strategy for breakfast.

Spend time on your culture being so sublime and awesome and your strategy will delivery like it was on illegal stimulants.

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Have a crappy culture then it doesn't matter how cool your product is or how fab the attitude of your CEO is – you will have an impaired organisation. The culture is more than your CEO and more than your product lines. It's the collective of everyone. Sure some people of more prominence and notice can impact significantly on your culture – esp your CEO and Top Leadership Team. So their behaviour – toxic, limp, safe, excitable, committed, thoughtful, decisive, commanding – will have a huge impact on your culture.

Cultural architects – I heard that phrase from Bob Wagner (MD at DPG PLC) connected to a programme I was building with him and his guys for the team I led at the time. It turned out I wasn't able to deliver on this but we knew what we needed. So the role of leaders is to create more leaders. Along with other things but this is very important. Dial up responsibility in people for what they do and things suddenly start to feel a little more controlled and professional.

Chief Learning Officers – we want to see our leaders strong, firm, resilience, decisive, resolute, determined. But we don't want to know they've arrived and there's nothing they can learn any more. Oh the arrogance. OK they might not want to go to a Business School for a course but here's where the 21st Century learning professional comes into play – the macro skill – IMHO is learning. A leader who learns is a leader who adapts; is more change than change itself; who is infectious in their approach; who shares; who inspires others to learn with tenacity; who puts into play wisdom with experimentation and who navigates risk with buccaneering spirit not cautious half-heartedness.

So let me put this together so we get this. Designing a learning programme you would like your Leaders to buy into? Here's my view on the approach/construct:

1. **Learning 2.0**. Think you can learn? Think you don't need any more learning? Think again. There's too much for you to consume this on your own. You need help and people are willing. Collaborative learning is fun and creates a bond and an advantage. Create cavities/space to learn and ingenuity becomes your foam insulation; your success will be measured by your warmth and the economics of your heating bills. No time to learn? I can feel you shivering…

2. **Social Capital**. There's a new show in town and it's not a fad. It's social business through social learning using social techologies and being collectively better. **Energy** generated; **insight** shared; **wisdom** created.

3. **Trust is earned, fragile and vital**. By learning more; sharing more; socialising with genuine intent you will build trust. Leaders need the equivalent of a trust pedometer. How many trust metres have you accrued though words; deeds and generosity?

4. **Culture is King**. Context is Kingdom. Everyone is a cultural architect. Behaviours create your culture not your values posters.

5. **Leadership is a team sport.** Otherwise you're a specialist. Make the choice and have others help you choose. We need specialists. We don't need leaders who don't want to be there.

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Learning; learning; learning. You couldn't avoid it if you wanted to

As a leader, you're paid to lead not because you're the best at stuff; because you have vision. And the head, heart and guts to deliver that for greater good with your people with all the way.

The renaissance leader is one who isn't the expert in any fields but one who understands how to learn – maybe? And the learning profession is there to drive, assist and enable that.

And that's just about leadership and management. Something I see will decline on the run up to 2025. We will see more specialists and less managers. We will see more self-management and less forced compliance. We will see people return to craftsman-like pursuits rather than homogenous manager roles.

In order to throw off this orthodoxy of management we need to learn how to do without it. Or make use of a more limited range of management practices and people. Are middle managers the curse of the modern world? No – I have been one for most of my working life and never meant any harm by being in that role. But equally, I would have traded some of the forced routines that didn't work for a more specialist pursuit leaving others to do the managing in a more enabling way. I had to work within a system but hacked it and adapted it all the time. It was harder work for me than it should have been. And that's plain wrong.

So less middle managers but more technical specialists; consulting types; cultural architects. More dynamics and movement around roles and more fluidity and purposeful deployment. Less hierarchical promotions and more granular achievement-based "badges" for people to show competency and expertise acquired.

Learning will help us do this. Not learning how to cope with the current system more learning how to hack, reinvent and reignite things for us, our colleagues, our customers, our leaders, our society.

Learning will be an always on pursuit. Learning will NOT come in boxes and packages. I've said this before on the record in April 2012; Learning will be a playlist not a compilation or even concept album. Learning may even be a vaporising download when we've learned, applied and don't need the learning anymore. Learning will be just in time and be put together by what Martyn Sloman called "the discerning learner". Like the discerning consumer. Exactly like that.

The power of learning is in sharing and we're seeing this with every MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) that is posted by revered academic institutions; by every viral learning programme posted to YouTube and Vimeo; by every virtual academy set up by corporations; by every one-laptop-per-child shared by Nicholas Negroponte; by every tweet with a link to some cool content and to every HR blog featured in a book of blogs or otherwise.

We will soon be able to positively trade our learning even more that we do already and have learning become a company asset not a productivity drain that it is often accounted for (initially) as.

It's time for learning to rise and be our work renaissance. If not, 2025 could be a bleak place for work.

8 Exits are on their way out

"Time is nature's way of keeping everything from happening all at once" – Woody Allen

All good things come to an end. So the saying goes. So for the latter part of this book, we have gone from hiring; to rewards; to performance and learning and now we're on the way out. Quite literally.

Exit is often a painful, let-down of a piece in the HR jigsaw. Either a resignation, a dismissal, a parting of ways, a move onto something bigger and better and an "about time too". The job for life was something where there was a 2-way loyalty exchange. Yet that was a1950s cheesy-ads world. Industrial disputes; the advancement of the "me" economy; corporate fraud and the rise of the mega corps; boom and bust economics and take-overs. It is a very different picture to postwar work. People still have loyalty and hang on though. I myself have had 2 employers in over 25 years work until setting up on my own. I had a lot of movement in those years and promotions and the like so it didn't FEEL like 2 employers. And that is probably the case with many people. They are loyal; progress and stick around. Sort of.

Exits though, largely, are considered sombre affairs. The wish them well but would like to have kept them type of reaction is often at play along with the "hurrah thought they'd never go" exception. HR conducts exit interviews – why are you leaving etc.

Yet Exits don't have to be like this. There is no reason why some kind of tenureship or rotating door is applied. Situational exits. A little like the consulting model but for non-consultant employees. Secondments if you will. People might need to do more of this to appreciate their "home" employer more. A little like the loan system in football. Especially for people learning their trade or wily veterans with a lot to offer in alternate settings.

We seem to think of our contract like a pre-nuptial in marriage – yet we all know they can be broken. And I'm not talking about career promiscuity here; just the feeling that there is more to offer by loaning people out; people loaning themselves out and exiting many times. Reminding them of why their "host" employer is good bad or indifferent and making more choices on the psychological contract that exists between them.

There is a huge amount of learning to be had from loaning people out. They may come to a situation afresh having tackled it in a smaller or larger context as a result of being on loan. The variety will unsettle some, but excite some in equal measure. Yes people may decide to leave if the experience is that good but if they were probably going to go anyway, you may gain something with a warmer exit and a possibility of them recommending a swap job holder in their place. We could see more a n exhilirating merry-go-round rather than a terryifying rollercoaster where the people risks can be managed by people themselves as well as organisations.

We could see loyalty given in the act of being allowed to roam free. Yes we could also see disloyalty and we clearly need to be careful of intellectual property or competitors stealing our market through stealing our people but this happens covertly now, so making things more overground may help us with more openness and less need to enforce Non-Disclosure Agreements.

So my final words are on exits being nothing like they are now – and all in the space of 12 years? Well maybe that is ambitious but equally, with the employment book being rewritten and the agency model for recruitment to vacancies feeling outmoded, this could be its replacement. Worker Loaning Brokers or similar.

In conclusion

This book is setting out some bold, some might say daft and unlikely propositions. There are 14 more that will deal with many other aspects of this thing called work in more intricate detail. They will alls et out the now, set out the reasons why things may change and how they might look, be and feel.

It's a rise. A rise of better over mediocre. Greater over good. Others more learned and eloquent than me have helped call it out and forged my understanding but it is my belief that I and people like me, will make this change one conversation, one act of innovation and one leap of faith at a time.

It's time for change. It's time for work to mean more. It's time for us all to bring 2025 into focus and make it better.