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SDF Digest:

A Practitioner Journal for HE Staff Development

staff development forum

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Contents

The SDF Digest is an online journal for staff developers. It seeks to share practical experience in a straightforward and accessible way, and to provide staff developers with a forum to share their expertise.

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A Message from the Chair of the Staff Development Forum

Paul Dixon

Dear Colleagues

In my 20 plus years of working in HE staff development I have witnessed the increasing complexity, sophistication, and strategic demands of institutions of their staff developers. Staff Development in HE has now become serious business and increasingly developers are justifiably staking their claims to legitimacy and gaining the recognition and appreciation of staff and senior management. The HE staff developer has become coach, consultant, OD practitioner, strategist, whilst still retaining the virtues and values of friend, counsellor, confidante and colleague: a true professional combining the best of personal mastery, self-management, interpersonal and technical expertise and skills.

I am delighted and privileged therefore to be able to introduce this first edition of the SDF Digest – our practitioner journal which we hope will showcase the many great staff development practices within our sector and recognise the work that colleagues contribute to their institutions. I am immensely grateful to all those colleagues who have contributed articles for this first edition – I hope that you feel the article suitably reflects your achievements. I would also like to thank Dr Andy Wilson, a long-term stalwart of the Staff Development Forum, for his magnificent efforts in bringing this first publication of the Digest to fruition.

Finally thank you for taking the time to read this – if you have got this far then job done and we are reaching the staff development community. I hope that the content of the Digest will interest and inspire you in your practice, and that you feel motivated to contribute to a future edition of the journal. We are interested in hearing about novel and innovative approaches and would love to have as many articles as we can fit in for our next edition – so please contribute and let others know of the fantastic work you are doing.

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How the SDF Digest Works

Andy Wilson

What the SDF Digest will be

We consulted on the idea of a publication and there wasn't much of a demand for an "academic" journal, but there was for something much more practitioner-based. So this is the approach we have taken.

We do, though, want to make sure that the contents will be of high quality. So contributions will be peer-reviewed. More than this, we will offer peer mentors to help people – particularly those not used to writing for publication – to prepare their papers.

And we are pretty relaxed about style and format. As long as contributions are clear, succinct and relevant we won't fuss about everybody following exactly the same stylistic conventions.

We will be electronic, but the papers will be in a format that is easy to print off.

What we want from you!

What we'd like from the staff development community is further contributions.

The contents of this issue will give you a good idea of the sorts of things we're interested it, but any suggestions are welcome. Some very short Hints & Tips could be useful.

After publication we will provide an online forum to allow time-limited discussions on the various contributions. At the end of this discussion period we will produce a brief synopsis of the exchanges.

Editorial Board Terms of Reference

- To ensure that the Digest develops and maintains a reputation as a source of high quality information for staff development practitioners in HE
- To identify and encourage submission of new material that is relevant to staff development practitioners
- To oversee the Digest's ethical standards in relation to submitted articles - i.e. ensuring they are original etc
- To support any would-be contributors in submitting their materials for publication including making clear instructions about submission style and approach, presentation
- To contribute as member of the board to process of peer review - in other words articles submitted will be reviewed by say two of the board and then recommended for publication or referred back to the author with suggestions for development

- To contribute ideas about further development of the digest as a source of practical and theoretical knowledge for staff developers in HE

Members of the Editorial Board

We're very grateful for the work put in by the members of the board:

- Rachel Crossley, HEaTED Programme Manager
- Paul Dixon, University of Manchester (Chair)
- Jean Harrison, University of Westminster
- Mark Holton, Coventry University
- Kathryn North, Loughborough University
- Kate Rowland, Manchester Metropolitan University
- Emily Hopkinson, University of Sheffield

Submissions Editor

- Andy Wilson, Strategic Lead, Projects & Publications, for the SDF and UK Staff Development Advisor to the British University in Egypt
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Psychological Contract Fulfilment: The Importance of the Annual Appraisal

Julie Mulliner

Abstract
This article provides practical information along with a summary of findings relating to the psychological contract and the importance of the annual appraisal, based on original research. It presents its findings, conclusions and recommendations within the context of existing literature relating to the changing landscape of the Higher Education environment within the UK, the concept of the psychological contract and the annual appraisal process.

Overview

1. **Introduction**
   The introduction provides a snapshot of external drivers of change facing the HE sector and implications for managers and Human Resource professionals as they strive to balance the evolving organisational demands and expectations and obligations of employees.

2. **Context**
   This section describes the need for HEIs to attract and retain a diverse range of clients or stakeholders in order to survive and thrive in a more competitive market place, implications for cultural transformation and the subsequent need to change ways of working.

3. **Aims**
   The paper describes empirical work carried out by the author, presents the findings from these studies and draws conclusions providing suggestions for future HR focus, strategy and policy development.

4. **Literature**
   The literature review focuses on two key concepts which are pertinent to leadership and management within the Higher Education sector given the unprecedented changing landscape:
   4.1. Psychological Contract
   4.2. Performance Management through Appraisal

5. **Research Focus**
   The research objective was to examine Psychological Contract breach and fulfilment during a period of significant transitional change within the UK Higher Education (HE) sector.

6. **Research Methods**
   A case study approach was taken using a medium sized post 1992 establishment. The study consisted of the development and

distribution of a questionnaire to measure perceived breach or fulfilment of the psychological contract. The questionnaire contained 26 constructs, 13 employer obligations and 13 employee obligations, which were influenced by elements of the annual appraisal process. For example, were the perceived obligations of employees to perform to the required standard fulfilled or breached?

7. **Findings**
   Out of the 26 constructs, 21 showed positive or negative statistically significant differences in terms of the perceived obligation and the extent to which they were fulfilled or breached. Interestingly, analysis showed that 11 of the employer obligations were perceived to be breached compared to 2 employee obligations. 1 of the employer obligations was perceived to be fulfilled compared to 7 employee obligations.

8. **Discussion**
   This section summarises the strength of breaches and fulfilment and differences between groups of respondents.

9. **Conclusions and Recommendations**
   The conclusion drawn here is that the psychological contract is a complex and dynamic concept which requires a balance of nurturing and managing expectations by leaders and managers who represent the employing organisation. Recommendations are provided by theme, for instance, Feedback and Goal Setting which may contribute towards the achievement of a reasonable balance of expectations and obligations for both employer and employee.

10. **References**

1. Introduction

In the past two decades the UK Higher Education sector has seen significant changes in both its funding and culture. Recession and associated public sector policies have been major drivers of this change (Dearing, 1997; Denham, 2010; Brown, 2010), creating considerable implications for managers and Human Resource professionals alike as they strive to balance both the evolving organisational demands and evolving expectations and the obligations of workers in the HE sector. Major reductions in public funding mean that the future success and sustainability of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will depend on their ability to deliver value for money within a competitive market place. In practice this means having to optimise income from a variety of sources and delivering a portfolio of quality core and bespoke services and products. In this respect employee resourcing, development and performance are critical elements of any people management strategy in order to achieve organisational goals.

The abilities and attitudes of employees to deliver and perform effectively in their roles are influenced by a cocktail of perceived obligations and expectations, some of which are expressed in the written terms and conditions of a contract of employment, many of which are unwritten beliefs about reciprocal obligations between the employer and employee; a concept known as the psychological contract which apportions intangible aspects of the contractual relationship. The psychological contract has been used by many to describe, analyse and explain the consequences of organisational change on attitudes and behaviours (Guest & Conway, 1999); as such it is an appropriate concept to use for this study to explore the attitudes and perceptions of employees towards their employment relationship within the HE sector as the landscape moves away from a 'scholarly community' and towards a 'workplace'. A 'workplace' potentially being perceived as more like a 'business' environment with less autonomy, more accountability, efficiency, profit, performance standards and activities aligned to the overall direction of the organisation; all potential elements of an annual appraisal process, one element of performance management. It also seems appropriate therefore to integrate elements of the appraisal process to identify any feelings of dissatisfaction or fulfilment, in turn to then determine the importance of investing in this practice as its various elements provide an ideal vehicle by which resourcing, development, performance and the psychological contract can be effectively managed.

Elements of the appraisal process were considered to establish questionnaire items used to examine the psychological contract, which in turn were used to discuss breaches and fulfilment of employee expectations and obligations by means of a case study at a UK Institution of Higher Education.

2. Context

A report by PA Consulting (2008) "Keeping our HEIs special: Surviving and thriving in a turbulent world" sets the scene by claiming that HEIs need to change from producer led finishing schools for the bright middle class children, devoted to intellectual discovery for its own sake, to becoming agents of learning. According to the report, HEIs need to provide services to a more diverse range of clients; the expectation of universities therefore is to take on new activities which go beyond the traditional notions of 'teaching' and 'research' including, consultancy provision, distance learning, continuous professional development provision, work based and lifelong learning and the commercialisation of intellectual property to assist global economic competitiveness (McCaffery, 2009), which probably means new responsibilities for employees or more emphasis on certain activities.

The implications of these changes for HEIs are many and are particularly significant for institutional management as a growing 'target culture' changes the way academics work, in other words they can no longer carry out their work in 'ivory towers' (Deem et al., 2007). According to Poole (2007), there seem to be elements of concern and objection to the introduction of managerialism and the transfer of private sector 'management' practices to the public sector; as public sector organisations are seen as not for profit establishments which seek stability compared to private sector organisations which are seen as unstable profit led establishments. She argues that irrespective of whether an organisation is public or private their management needs are often the same. In contrast MacIntyre (1985) describes 'management' as not only an insult to academic professional integrity but also not competent to make technical judgements about professional conduct or merit. A degree of flexibility is therefore required to transfer successful private sector managerial processes to the public sector, for instance the translation of familiar words used in the private sector from 'profit' to acceptable outcomes such as 'achievement of budget'. Careful management of the sensitive and dynamic psychological contract between employees and employers should be a key consideration for any organisation where tensions exist between cultural norms and the need to respond to external drivers of change. Research conducted by Dulac et al. (2008) examined psychological contract breach and found that this has been negatively associated with commitment and trust (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Robinson, 1996), the stronger the perceived breach, the less willing employees are to exert extra effort for their employer. Perceived psychological breach has also been positively associated with intentions to leave (Turnley & Feldman, 1999(a)); the stronger the perceived breach, the higher the intention to leave their employer. This research also concluded that perceptions of psychological contract breach differed in terms of the strength of negative emotions experienced. It seems that the strength of negative emotions experienced are dependent upon the quality of the social exchange relationship, described by Blau (1964) as the nature of the social exchange which is based on a trust that gestures of goodwill will be reciprocated at some point in the future, the quality of the relationship therefore being determined by the value placed on the specific benefits exchanged which determines a climate of mutual support to parties involved in the exchange. Where a high quality social exchange relationship existed less negative emotions were associated with breach of the psychological contract, and where lower quality social exchange relationships existed strong negative emotions were associated with breach of the psychological contract. The perceived quality of the employee-organisation and employee-leader exchange therefore appears to be highly influential in respect of the significance of negative emotions associated with any breach or violation of the psychological contract, which in turn influences effort and job performance. It is plausible to conclude that where there is a more positive social exchange relationship then breaches of the psychological contract produce less powerful negative emotions.

3. Aims

This paper begins with an overview of the development and elements of the psychological contract and appraisal processes. It describes empirical work carried out by the author, presents the findings from these studies and draws conclusions providing suggestions for future HR strategy and focus. It aims to challenge the poor perception of appraisal processes within the UK HE sector and to assert the need for effective implementation by managers and leaders within the UK HE sector, and shows that this 'forced marriage' can be happy and healthy when both parties are committed and flexible in terms of how they view this new world.

4. Literature

4.1 Psychological Contract

> *"The notion of a psychological contract implies that the individual has a variety of expectations of the organisation and that the organisation has a variety of expectations of him. These expectations not only cover how much work is to be performed for how much pay, but also involve the whole pattern of rights, privileges, and obligations between worker and organisations. For example, the worker may expect the company not to fire him after he has worked for a certain number of years and the company may expect that the worker will not run down the company's image or give away company secrets to competitors. Expectations such as these are not written into formal agreement between employer and organisations, yet they operate powerfully as determinants of behaviour."*
>
> (Schein, 1965, cited in Roehling, 1997)

The concept of the psychological contract within the workplace emerged from organisational research over the last 50 years and derived from Menninger's (1958) concept of the 'psychotherapy contract' which recognises the intangible aspects to the quality of the contractual relationship between psychoanalysts and patients. Originally developed by Argyris (1960) as a means of analysing employer and employee expectations, the psychological contract, as an analytical tool, has been used by many over the decades, including Herriot and Pemberton (1995) and Guest and Conway (1999), to describe, analyse and explain the consequences of organisational change on attitudinal reactions and behaviours. The emergent theme from on-going analysis is that expectations between employers and employees have fundamentally changed over the years (Davidson, 2001).

The psychological contract can be characterised as "an individual's belief about reciprocal obligations. Beliefs become contractual when the individual believes that he or she owes the employer certain contributions (e.g. hard work, loyalty, sacrifices) in return for certain inducements (e.g. high pay, job security)." (Rousseau, 1990, p.390) The psychological contract can contain literally thousands of items (Kotter, 1973 and Sims, 1994) such as the employee's expectation to be developed and have opportunities for career progression, and the employer's expectations for employees to work hard and positively engage with the organisation. As no standard tool exists to measure this theoretical construct researchers choose items dependent upon workforce demographics and environment, which are then grouped into broader higher level categories. Cavanaugh and Noe (1999) support Anderson and Shalk's (1998) viewpoint that there is no general consensus on what the psychological contract contains, although there does seem to be some agreement on components such as job security, organisational commitment and career development.

Many variables influence the psychological contract including: "Perceived Organisational Support" (POS), the global belief concerning the extent to which an organisation cares about an employee's well-being and values their contribution (Eisenberger et al., 2002); "Work Involvement", the degree of importance that work plays in an employee's life (Paullay et al., 1994); "Job Satisfaction", an employee is more likely to believe that they are obliged to meet the organisation's expectations of them when the attainment of job values is congruent with or helps to fulfil their basic needs (Locke, 1983).

Makin et al. (1996) identify two component parts as being important to the psychological contract. Content, which refers to what expectations and obligations are, for instance time and integrity, and process, which refers to how expectations and obligations are met, for instance how holidays are booked and how individuals are communicated with; both of which are illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Key elements within these two component parts are shown below.

FIGURE 1

CONTENT ELEMENTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT
(Makin,1996)

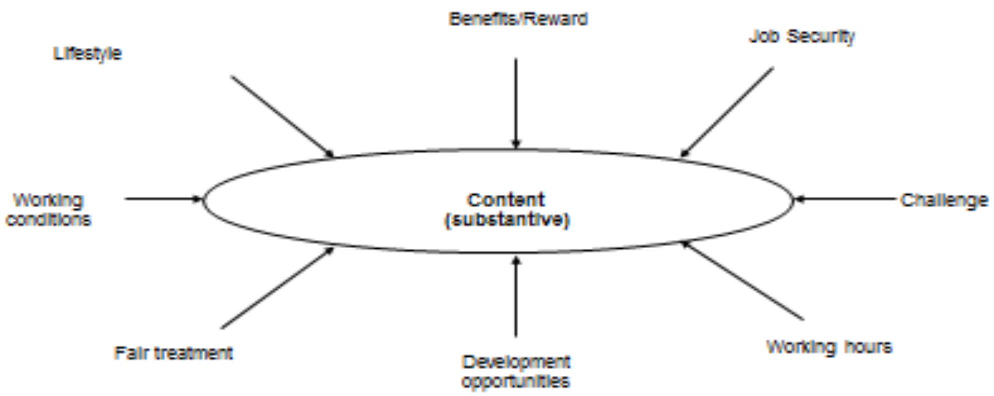
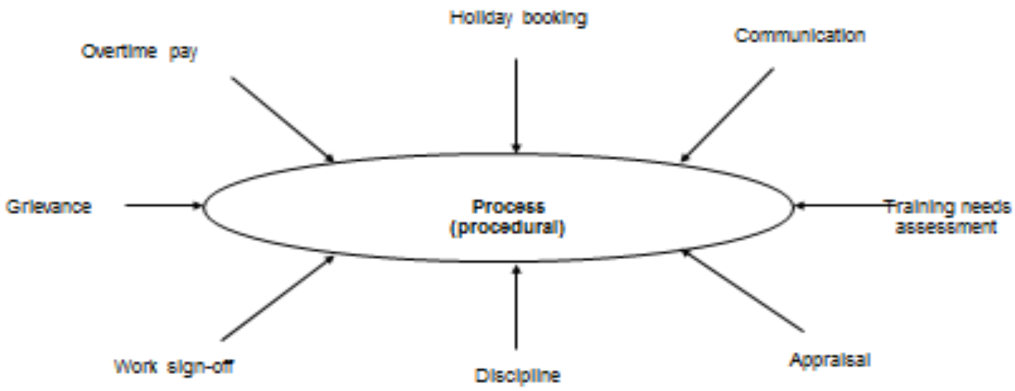


FIGURE 2

PROCESS ELEMENTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT
(Makin,1996)



Achieving a balanced mutual exchange between all these elements can be difficult within a stable work environment, which can only become more challenging during a period of change. As Makin et al. (1996) state "the importance of both content and process should not be underestimated as each will influence the nature of the psychological contract and levels of engagement, commitment and performance".

Employees during the late 20th century were seen to move away from the ideology that the employment relationship was based on a transactional 'I owe you and you owe me' philosophy, for instance the employee receives high pay for hard work, and moved towards taking on more responsibility for their own development and careers which transformed jobs from tasks into careers, service delivery and knowledge transfer (Bridges, 1995). This new ideology embraced a more holistic and longer term view of the employment relationship described as a relational psychological contract, which reflects longer term commitments, and as argued by Kissler (1994) is enforced through a co-dependent relationship which exists between employee and employer. The concept of a career for life is now no longer tenable as technology and the complexity of the global, modern work environment continue to shape organisations. These additional work pressures and current risk of redundancy raise the possibility of a decline in motivation and job satisfaction and an increase in work-related stress levels. All of these pressures have been reported by Bayliss (1998) and Hendry and Jenkins (1997) as having a significant effect on attitudes and levels of trust in employers. It is plausible to conclude that these external pressures on the employment relationship could shift the relational psychological contract, a concept with similarities to employee engagement, to a transactional psychological contract which is focused more on short term relationships where remuneration is a priority (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003) with low emotional investment and limited personal involvement in the job. (Rousseau,1995).

A vital component of psychological contract theory from the employee perspective is the concept of breach, defined as "the cognition that one's organisation has failed to meet one or more obligations within one's psychological contract in a manner commensurate with one's contributions" (Morrison and Robinson, 1997).

The psychological contract forms the basis of a harmonious employment relationship and Robinson et al. (1994) believe that breaches of the psychological contract "can erode an employment relationship" damaging trust and job satisfaction, and Makin et al. (1996) found that employees who had experienced a breach are more likely to leave an organisation than those who hadn't. They also go on to suggest that where there has been a perceived breach and an employee remains with the employer s/he is likely to re-assess their psychological contract and focus on transactional elements such as pay and benefits.

Research into the fulfilment of the psychological contract continues and is important if we are to understand the 'fit' or achievement of mutuality. Larwood, Wright, Desrochers and Dahir (1998) found that where there was greater 'fit' it was associated with higher job satisfaction and a reduced intention to quit.

Lambert, Edwards and Cable (2003) and Ho (2005) explored the situation of over-fulfilment which still may be perceived as a breach or violation e.g. too much autonomy may result in an individual feeling unsupported and abandoned. For both parties to work effectively together the essential element of trust must prevail (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002). Anger and greater surveillance often arise when trust is eroded through breaches or violation of the psychological contract (Strickland, 1958, cited in Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995).

Sparrow and Marchington (1998) concluded that the psychological contract can be used as a framework to capture and analyse concerns over new employment practices during times of change and uncertainty. As trust is a key component of the psychological contract any feeling of fulfilment, over-fulfilment, breach or violation will influence the behaviours and commitment of employees (Johnson and O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). Studies have shown (e.g. Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Turnley and Feldman, 1999(a); Rohrer, 2004) that consequences of violation are increased staff turnover, decreased commitment and decreased organisational citizenship behaviours, which subsequently impact on levels of individual and organisational performance.

4.2 Performance Management through Appraisals

The literature concerning performance management through appraisal offers a number of different views, those most critical of managing by appraisal reside in the Quality movement. Deming (1986) and Sholtes (1993) believe that the setting of individual short term goals and arbitrary targets, through the annual appraisal process, undermines teamwork creating a barrier to continuous improvement and achieving excellence. However, most literature in the HR arena acknowledges that when carefully designed and used judiciously appraisals can be beneficial. Campbell (1990) believes that 'Performance is behaviour and should be distinguished from the outputs because they can be contaminated by system factors', in other words an individual's job performance can be determined or restricted by system capabilities, which implies performance is more to do with attitudes towards work than outputs. In contrast Bernadin et al. (1995) explain that performance should be defined as the outcomes of work because they provide the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of the organisation, customer satisfaction, and economic contributions. However Bates and Holton (1995) point out that performance is a multi-dimensional construct, the measurement of which varies depending upon a variety of factors and that it is important to determine whether the measurement objective is to assess performance outputs or behaviour. In summary, it would be reasonable to embrace attitude and behaviour, which could be described as inputs, and outputs, both long term and short term, within any annual appraisal process. This would facilitate a more holistic approach to enabling individual performance through a review of attitudes, skills, behaviours, achievements and systems capabilities, which can restrict performance, in the belief that most people strive to do the best they can in everything they do – a sense of achievement.

In order to achieve better organisational results therefore an integrated framework, driven by management, should exist to establish a shared understanding of what is to be achieved in terms of goals, standards and competency requirements. As described by Hartle (1995) 'performance management should be integrated into the way the performance of the business is managed and it should link with other key processes such as business strategy, employee development, and total quality management'. To ignore organisational behaviours and focus purely on outputs would be at the peril of any organisation in respect of the psychological contract and performance. To enable a comprehensive view of both output and behaviour a 'mixed model' approach, referred to by Hartle (1995), which covers competency levels and achievements in addition to objective setting and review, appears to be the most appropriate.

It seems that the appraisal process and elements within it can detract from the quality of the interaction, potentially making the experience a negative experience between managers and those being managed; Winstanley and Stuart-Smith (1996) provide a number of ethical principles that line managers should operate in accordance with:

- "respect for the individual – people should be treated as 'ends as themselves' and not merely as 'means to other ends'
- mutual respect – the parties involved in performance management processes should respect each other's needs and preoccupations
- procedural fairness – the procedures incorporated in performance management should be operated fairly to limit the adverse effect on individuals
- transparency – people affected by decisions emerging from the performance management process should have the opportunity to scrutinise the basis upon which decisions were made"

The appraisal process is not always expressly linked to performance related pay however any formalised record of an individual's performance could in the long term be referred to as evidence for promotional opportunities, capability or disciplinary matters, which creates an arena for conflicting interests. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the actual fairness and perceived fairness of the appraisal process to minimise any conflict thus reducing the threat of violation of the psychological contract. The concept of fairness is known as organisational justice, described as the employees' perception of the extent to which they are treated fairly and honestly (Elovainio et al., 2005) and whether the process and results obtained within the work setting are fair or not (Hubbel & Chory-Assad, 2005). There are multiple facets of organisational justice which will not be explored further in this paper however Greenberg (1990) proposed two specific types of interpersonal treatment: (1) informational justice which primarily focuses on the outcome of an activity, and (2) interpersonal justice which focuses on the degree to which employees are treated with dignity, politeness and respect. These two types of treatment seem to mirror the mixed-method (Hartle, 1995) approach to appraisals, and research carried out by Greenberg (1990) identified five procedural factors which contribute to the perceived fairness of such a process when appraisal is used as an evaluation tool. He describes this as 'procedural justice' and the five factors are:

- employee input is solicited before the evaluation (appraisal) and is used
- there is two-way communication during the evaluation (appraisal) interview
- employees have the ability to challenge or rebut the evaluation (appraisal)
- the rater is familiar with the employee's work
- performance standards are applied consistently

These procedural factors identified fall into two main groups, structural aspects and social aspects. Structural aspects include consistency of application and unbiased decisions. Social aspects relate to the quality of the interpersonal interaction between the reviewer and reviewee including being treated with dignity and respect, able to have their say in respect of the decision making process. Cropanazano and Greenberg (1997) and Folger and Cropanzano (1998) found that where there is perceived unfairness or injustice, the consequences are the possibility of decreased co-operation, withdrawal behaviours and lowered job performance which could amount to violation of the psychological contract. This research is consistent with research conducted by Gilliland and Langdon (1998) which shows that performance improvement may result when employees are more accepting of decisions made, when procedures are perceived to be fair even if unfavourable.

When designing a performance management framework, contextual factors of culture, management style and structure normally influence the content and procedures. Armstrong and Baron (1998) and Rowland and Hall (2010) suggest that performance management works best when it fits the existing values of the organisation, which should support high performance, quality, involvement, openness, freedom of communication and mutual trust. The paradox of aligning performance management with organisational values and culture in the absence of a performance culture as the HE sector strives to improve efficiency and effectiveness seems contradictory. As such the delicate balance between the external driving forces of change and any existing restraining culture, in particular the notion of academic freedom and academics' perceived incompetence of managers to make technical judgements about professional conduct or merit, must be managed sensitively to achieve acceptance of appraisal by employees.

4.3 Leadership and Management in HEIs

Over the last two decades Universities have increasingly had their autonomy challenged which has meant that vice-chancellors' authority has had to rest more on managerial competence than on collegial charisma when wielding power akin to their role (McCaffery, 2009). According to Bargh et al. (2000) to reflect on leadership style within HE is a trait not often found. Leadership and management within HE tends to have a low status and some managers treat their role as a distraction from their 'real' work of teaching and research (McCaffery, 2009). To ignore the way HEIs are managed and leadership styles is at the peril of HEIs who choose to do so during a period of transitional change.

Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2002) provide a transformational leadership model for the public sector which offers an approach more suited to universities compared to private sector practices which traditionally have been more concerned with profit margins resulting in the application of a more transactional style. Key characteristics deemed crucial include:

Characteristics of the transformational leader in the public sector

Leading and Developing Others
• Has genuine interest in staff as individuals; values their contribution; develops their strengths; mentors; has positive expectations of staff abilities. • Trusts staff to take decisions and initiative on important matters; delegates effectively; develops potential; supportive of mistakes. • Approachable and not status conscious; prefers face to face communication; accessible and keeps in touch. • Encourages staff to question traditional approaches to the job; encourages new approaches/solutions to problems; encourages strategic thinking.
Personal Qualities
• Transparency; honest and consistent in behaviour; more concerned with the good of the organisation than personal ambition. • Integrity; open to advice, criticism and disagreement; consults and involves others in decision-making; regards values as integral to the organisation. • Decisiveness: decisive when required; prepared to take difficult decisions and risks when appropriate. • Charisma: in touch; exceptional communicator; inspires others to join them. • Analytical and creative thinking: capacity to deal with a wide range of complex issues; creative in problem-solving.
Leading the Department/Organisation
• Inspiring communicator of the vision of the organisation to a network of internal and external stakeholders; gains the confidence and support of various groups through sensitivity to needs and by achieving organisational goals. • Clarifies objectives and boundaries; team-oriented approach to problem-solving, decision-making and identifying values. • Has a clear vision and strategic direction, engages various internal and external stakeholders in developing; helps others to achieve the vision.

NATFHE (2002) found that more than half of the employees who responded to a national survey of UK post-1992 universities considered the management of their institutions to be either 'poor' or 'mostly unreasonable'. Potentially the biggest challenge then for many universities is to put in place frameworks for developing leadership and management capabilities in HE; essentially behavioural and technical competency development, knowledge of appropriate policies, procedures and support mechanisms, for instance, mentoring. It is paramount that managers have the resources, confidence and appetite to manage effectively within what can be described as an unfavourable climate, where management may be regarded as inessential, discredited or intrusive.

As the performance of any organisation is dependent upon the contribution of its employees, the contentious issue here is how managers maintain motivational levels and maintain and improve standards of performance where tensions exist between academic freedom and managerialism, in particular, where this may be perceived as a negative process of controlling, potentially restricting freedom of inquiry and communication. Attempts to guide and support academic work through staff appraisals have made many academics dismissive of such initiatives as they are seen as an unwelcome intrusion on their academic freedom and more unnecessary bureaucracy (McCaffery, 2009). It appears that trust between the two parties is pivotal in respect of acceptance of and enthusiastic participation in the appraisal process.

5. Research Focus

The research objective was to examine Psychological Contract breach and fulfilment during a period of significant transitional change within the UK Higher Education (HE) sector. In particular it focused on elements of an appraisal process which generally was perceived as being imposed and a 'stick' to improve performance as opposed to a developmental tool, which had been the primary focus of the superseded annual review process.

6. Research Methods

The study involved the development of a questionnaire to measure employees' perceptions of the psychological contract for a group of 510 employees piloting a new formal appraisal process; themes from interviews conducted with senior managers, literature review and key elements of the pilot appraisal process were included to measure the psychological contract (employee expectations and obligations). A case study approach was used based within University A; a medium sized post 1992 establishment in Northern England.

A critical review of the research literature published over the last 12 years indicates that no commonly accepted method of characterising the psychological contract, or assessing the degree to which it has been fulfilled or violated has been developed. Conway and Briner (2005) however have found that questionnaire surveys are the most commonly used method to investigate the state of the psychological contract to enable the collection of useful comparable data from a large number of employees in a convenient way.
The research questionnaire was designed from a unilateral perspective (Rousseau, 1990) limiting data collection to employee's perception of the state of the psychological contract. A bilateral view of the psychological contract, meaning the collection of data from the employee and employer relating to the fulfilment or breach of obligations and expectations of employees, is not only problematic (Freese and Schalk, 1993) but would not achieve the aims and objectives of this research.

The employer obligations (perceived employee expectations of the University) contained 13 constructs or themes and the employee obligations (perceived employer expectations of employees) coincidentally, also contained 13 constructs. Both sets are shown in Table 1.0 below. The questionnaire was subjected to a construct validation process by testing the clusters of questions using a convenience sample. From a sample of 50 employees contacted, a total of 36 (72%) employees responded. Each response was coded and input to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to obtain a Cronbach Alpha measure for each multi-item cluster.

Each construct included a question to measure what the employee expectations and obligations were and a number of multi-item questions to measure the extent to which employees felt that both they and the University fulfilled these obligations. The word 'inducement' is used to refer to the extent to which a particular construct was fulfilled or breached. This would facilitate the identification of any breach or fulfilment of the psychological contract for different groups of employees.

The paper-based questionnaire comprised 123 statements which asked respondents to rate their view on each of the statements by ticking a box. Each response was coded on a four-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked to score each statement from: 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Agree, 4 - Strongly Agree. This scale can be categorised as an ordinal scale as it describes a hierarchy of strength of feeling as a continuum, however the intervals between each response were not equal (Cohen et al., 1996) and therefore not categorised as an interval scale, which is significant when considering which tests to apply to analyse data.
A mix of positive and negative statements was used to obtain a more reliable response as there is some evidence to indicate that respondents may be more likely to disagree with a negative statement than agree with a positive statement (Cohen et al., 1996). The purpose of a survey was to make respondents express an opinion, therefore the option of "Don't know" or "Not applicable" was omitted from the questionnaire to prevent respondents from "sitting on the fence". The best advice from Walonick (2004) being not to use this for attitudinal questions.

Out of the 510 questionnaires 194 (38.04%) employees responded by returning a fully completed questionnaire. The numerical data collected was analysed using SPSS.

The assumption was made that the sample was not normally distributed and therefore non-parametric tests were used even though they are more prone to type II error which means that it is more likely that a significant difference is missed than with parametric tests. (Pallant, 2001).

TABLE 1
CRONBACH ALPHA SCORES FOR EACH CONSTRUCT

	Perceived Employer Obligations			Perceived Employee Obligations	
Cluster	**Construct**	**Alpha Measure**	**Cluster**	**Construct**	**Alpha Measure**
1A	Job Security	0.688	1B	Performing to the required standards	0.709
2A	Career Prospects	0.643	2B	Adhering to the rules	0.786
3A	Opportunity to learn new skills	0.750	3B	Working extra hours	0.707
4A	Interesting work	0.602	4B	Volunteer to get involved	0.668
5A	Freedom to do job well	0.656	5B	Look for ways of doing the job better	0.629
6A	Involvement with decision making	0.909	6B	Look for ways of improving the way things are done in the faculty/department	0.650
7A	Information on important developments	0.879	7B	Work flexible hours when required	0.601
8A	Clarification of the aims and objectives of the University	0.857	8B	Work unpaid hours to finish a task	0.541
9A	Fair treatment	0.761	9B	Look for ways to save costs	0.600
10A	Clarification of what is required of employees in their role	0.831	10B	Adapt to necessary changes	0.654
11A	Provision of a good working environment	0.823	11B	Keep abreast of current development in the University	0.608
12A	Resources to do the job	0.831	12B	Contributing towards the University's aims and objectives	0.676
13A	Provision of feedback in respect of how well an employ is doing their job	0.845	13B	Speak highly of the University	0.775

7. Findings

The relationship between perceived employer and employee obligations and inducement for each construct was identified using a 2-tailed Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. Out of the 26 constructs used, 21 were shown to have a significant positive or negative relationship in terms of the perceived obligation and the extent to which they were fulfilled or breached. This analysis used two thresholds; p = 0.05 meaning a 95% confidence level in that there is a 5% probability of the effect or relationship happening by chance; and a p = 0.01 meaning a 1% probability of the effect or relationship happening by chance. For example respondents may strongly agree with the statement "The University should provide me with the resources to do my job" however may strongly disagree with the statement "I have the right equipment to do my job", which is interpreted as a negative difference or breach of an element of the psychological contract. Positive differences were interpreted as fulfilment or over-fulfilment for constructs where the opposite applied.

There were more perceived feelings of breach with respect to the obligations or expectations of University A as an employer than with respect to employee obligations. 11 of the employer obligations were perceived to be breached compared to 2 employee obligations. 1 of the employer obligations was perceived to be fulfilled compared to 7 employee obligations. The strength of the relationship between variables is simply a standardised measurement of the magnitude of the observed effect, known as the effect size, in this case the relationship between obligations and inducement. Effect sizes for constructs where statistically significant differences existed for breaches and fulfilment of obligations are provided in the summary Table 2.0 below. Guidelines provided by Cohen (1988) were followed to understand the 'effect size':

- < 0.29 - a small effect
- = / >.29 and <.49 - a medium effect; and
- = / >.49 - large effect

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF EFFECT SIZES OF PERCEIVED CONSTRUCT BREACHES AND FULFILMENT

Breach of perceived Employer obligations	Significance Level	Effect Size	Breach of perceived Employee obligations	Significance Level	Effect Size
The University should provide long term job security	.000* Z - 6.803(a)	- 0.35	Staff should be performing to the required standards expected in their job	.003 Z - 2.984(a)	- 0.15
The University should provide staff with good career prospects	.000* Z - 9.329(a)	- 0.47	Staff should look for ways of improving the way things are done in their Faculty/ Department	.001 Z - 3.330(a)	- 0.17
The University should provide staff with opportunities to learn new skills	.000* Z - 7.094(a)	- 0.36			
The University should provide staff with the freedom to do their job well	.000* Z - 4.342(a)	- 0.22			
The University should provide staff with the opportunity to be involved with decision making	.000* Z - 7.520(a)	- 0.38			
The University should provide staff with information on important developments	.000* Z - 9.162(a)	- 0.47			

Breach of perceived Employer obligations	Significance Level	Effect Size	Breach of perceived Employee obligations	Significance Level	Effect Size
The University should provide staff with information to clarify what its aims and objectives are	.000* Z - 8.162(a)	- 0.41			
The University should treat staff fairly	.000* Z - 8.814(a)	- 0.44			
The University should provide staff with a good working environment	.000* Z - 6.197(a)	- 0.32			
The University should provide staff with the resources to do their job	.000* Z - 8.345(a)	- 0.42			
The University should provide staff with feedback to tell them how they are doing their job	.000* Z - 8.714(a)	- 0.44			

Fulfilment of perceived Employer obligations	Significance Level	Effect Size	Fulfilment of perceived Employee obligations	Significance Level	Effect Size
The University should provide staff with clarification of what is required of them in their job	.000* Z - 5.039(b)	- 0.26	Staff should be adhering to the rules	.023 Z - 2.276(b)	- 0.12
			Staff should work extra hours when required	.000* Z - 7.575(b)	- 0.38
			Staff should volunteer to get involved with tasks that are not part of their job	.000* Z - 5.252(b)	- 0.27
			Staff should work flexible hours when required	.001 Z - 3.203(b)	- 0.16
			Staff should work additional unpaid hours to finish a task	.000* Z - 9.381(b)	- 0.48
			Staff should adapt to necessary changes	.000* Z - 4.225(b)	- 0.24
			Staff should speak highly of the University when not in work	.016 Z - 2.413(b)	- 0.12

a – based on positive ranks = obligation stronger than inducement and therefore a breach
b – based on negative ranks = inducement stronger than obligation and therefore fulfilment
Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) 0.000* = <0.0005

In summary, the strength of differences between obligations and inducement ranged from small effect to medium effect; for example, the smallest effects were found between the perceived breach of the obligation of staff who should be performing to the required standards expected in their job (-0.15) and perceived fulfilment of the obligation of staff who should be adhering to the rules (-0.12) and perceived fulfilment of the obligation of staff who should speak highly of the University when not in work (-0.12); medium effects were found between the perceived breach of the obligation of the university who should provide staff with good career prospects (-0.47) and perceived fulfilment of the obligation of staff who should work additional unpaid hours to finish a task (-0.48). Implications are discussed in Section 8 of this article.

Summary of findings and group differences
Statistically significant differences were found to exist amongst certain groups of staff based on responses for certain constructs, for example, a significant difference existed between academic and support staff in respect of the perceived breach of the obligation of the university to provide long term job security, support staff responding more positively implying academic staff feel less secure in their jobs; and a significant difference existed between full-time and part-time staff in respect of the perceived breach of the university to provide staff with information on important developments, full-time staff responding more positively implying part-time staff feel less well informed. Differences between groups however fell within the effect size range of -0.14 and -0.29, meaning a small effect, and it is therefore plausible to conclude that overall the psychological contract is not too dissimilar for the various groups of employees.

Important current developments – data showed that the perceived obligation for the university to provide staff with information on important developments (-0.47) was breached, one of the constructs with a stronger strength of feeling of breach than most, however still remaining within the medium effect range using Cohen's (1988) guidelines.

Future direction and aims and objectives – respondents clearly felt that the university's obligation to provide staff with information to clarify what its aims and objectives was moderately breached (-0.41).

Development and career opportunities – data showed that respondents felt that the university's obligation to provide staff with good career prospects (-0.47) and opportunities to learn new skills (-0.36) were both moderately breached, the perceived absence of career prospects having a stronger sense of breach; small differences existed between academic and support staff in relation to the perceived breach of the obligation for the university to provide opportunities for career progression (-0.14), and in relation to the perceived breach of the university's obligation to provide opportunities to develop new skills (-0.16) with academic staff responding slightly more strongly for both constructs, which implies a stronger breach for this group of staff. Females responded slightly more positively than males about the availability of opportunities to help improve skills, acquire new skills and that adequate support was given (-0.23) and in respect of the feedback they received about how well they were doing in their jobs (-0.14) implying a stronger feeling of breach against these expectations for male staff. It would be plausible to conclude that male academic staff have a stronger sense of perceived breach when compared to female support staff, in relation to the obligation of the university to provide them with feedback, development and career opportunities.

Working environment and performance – Data showed that the obligation for the university to provide job clarification was slightly over fulfilled (-0.26) however, a moderate feeling of breach existed in relation to the university's obligation to provide employees with autonomy and freedom to do their jobs (-0.22). Male staff responded slightly more negatively (-0.17) than female staff about having less autonomy and freedom do their jobs, as did employees aged 51+. Staff aged 36 to 50 were more positive about their levels of autonomy which implies that males aged 51+ perceive there to be a stronger breach for this construct. Robinson (1996) found that individuals who trust their line manager are less likely to perceive a breach which may imply lower levels of trust in their line manager for males aged 51+.

Smithson and Lewis (2000) however suggest that little difference exists between genders in younger workers and that work expectations are similar. There is evidence (Harwood, 2003) that perceptions of contract violation have decreased amongst younger workers as their expectations are more realistic i.e. they do not have the 'good old days' to draw comparisons with and more is communicated in the current day. The nature of the psychological contract will change dependent upon where an individual is in their life cycle (Rousseau, 1995; Turnley and Feldman, 1999(b)). Younger workers' expectations will be different to older workers, which will continually change as employees become more prepared to challenge the norms of working life.

A general feeling of moderate dissatisfaction about the work environment (-0.32); job security (-0.35) and lack of available resources (-0.42) may imply that staff feel undervalued which could have an impact on performance levels; staff reporting that they felt they were performing to a slightly lower standard than they should be (-0.15). Small differences existed between male staff and female staff (-0.15) male staff responding more negatively; and academic and support staff (-0.18), support staff responding more negatively, in respect of not having the right equipment and resources to do their jobs to the required standards, implying that males in support roles had a slightly stronger feeling of breach than most. In summary, male respondents seemed to respond more negatively than female respondents for a number of constructs relating to available resources and standards of performance.

The obligation to adhere to the rules and standards was slightly over fulfilled (-0.16) with academic staff responding slightly more positively than support staff (-0.15) about the inducement of this expectation.

The perceived obligation to work flexible hours when required was slightly exceeded or over fulfilled (-0.16) for all respondents. A small difference existed between part-time staff when compared to full-time staff (-0.23), part-time staff responding slightly more negatively in respect of actually working flexible hours when required. Female compared to male staff (-0.16), and academic compared to support (-0.18) staff responded slightly more positively in terms of actually working flexible hours when required. It appears then that male support staff, who work part-time, do not work as flexibly as others which supports Herriot et al.'s *(*1997) suggestion that women have a different notion of the psychological contract than men in that they expect less in terms of pay and promotion and trade these for flexible working arrangements primarily for childcare reasons. Respondents with >10 years' service perceived themselves to have a lower obligation to work flexible hours when required compared to respondents with >5 and <10 years' service.

Fair treatment – small differences were found to exist between part-time staff and full-time staff (-0.14) in respect of feeling unfairly treated by the University with part-time staff responding slightly less positively, which implies a stronger feeling of breach amongst part-time staff.

Involvement in decision making – responses to the statements relating to the expectation of the university to provide staff with the opportunity to be involved with decision making indicated a small to moderate feeling of dissatisfaction (-0.38), with males feeling less involved than females (-0.19); academic (-0.18) and full-time staff (-0.21) compared to support staff, and full-time staff responding slightly more positively about their involvement in the decision making obligation. This implies that male support staff who work part-time perceive there to be a stronger breach for this construct, with academic, female, full-time staff feeling slightly more involved in the decision making process.

Change – data showed that respondents felt that they slightly exceeded the obligation to adapt to necessary changes (-0.24), with full-time staff feeling they had a slightly stronger obligation (-0.15) to adapt to necessary changes compared to part-time respondents.

Employee Commitment – data suggests that respondents are committed to the university, commitment being characterised by a sense of belonging and willingness to go the extra mile and exert voluntary discretionary effort; as the obligation to work extra hours when required was moderately exceeded (-0.38), the obligation to work additional unpaid hours to finish a task was also felt to be moderately exceeded (-0.48) by respondents. Respondents also indicated a slight feeling of exceeding the obligation to volunteer to get involved with tasks that were not part of their job (-0.27). However, it appears that employees were slightly less interested in looking for ways of improving the way things are done within the Faculty/Department, (-0.17), with full-time respondents feeling slightly more strongly than part-time staff (-0.18) about this obligation, and slightly more positively (-0.16) about executing this obligation. It would be reasonable to infer a causal relationship between the perceived breaches of the obligations of the university to provide staff with information about the future direction, aims and objectives of the university and information about current developments, influencing a silo-mentality approach to work; the perceived obligation to work extra hours and additional unpaid hours therefore being exerted at a very local level.

Academic staff felt slightly more strongly about their obligation (-0.15) and their inducement to work additional unpaid hours to finish a task when compared to support staff (-0.29). Academic staff also responding slightly more positively about actually working extra hours when required when compared to support staff (-0.18). Full-time staff responded slightly more positively (-0.15) about actually working additional unpaid hours to finish a task when compared to part-time staff. It seems that full-time academic members of staff feel that they far exceed these obligations which could be interpreted as a breach.

8. Discussion

Research findings clearly showed that breaches of perceived employer obligations far outweighed breaches of perceived employee obligations by 6:1 and fulfilment of perceived employee obligations far outweighed fulfilment of perceived employer obligations by 7:1. The main conclusions drawn from this research are that full-time respondents were more positive when compared to part-time respondents overall in terms of both their obligations and the inducement or extent to which they fulfilled their obligations. However, they had a very strong feeling that they far exceeded their obligation to work additional unpaid hours which could be perceived as a breach where a transactional or short-term psychological contract exists.

It appears that there is a hierarchy of breaches and fulfilment when taking into consideration the effect size, albeit within the small to medium effect range using Cohen's (1988, 1992) guidelines. The table below provides a hierarchical summary of breaches and fulfilment:

Breach of perceived Employer obligations	**Effect Size**	**Breach of perceived Employee obligations**	**Effect Size**
The University should provide staff with information on important developments	- 0.47	Staff should look for ways of improving the way things are done in their Faculty/Department	- 0.17
The University should provide staff with good career prospects	- 0.47	Staff should be performing to the required standards expected in their job	- 0.15
The University should provide staff with feedback to tell them how they are doing their job	- 0.44		
The University should treat staff fairly	- 0.44		
The University should provide staff with the resources to do their job	- 0.42		
The University should provide staff with information to clarify what its aims and objectives are	- 0.41		

Breach of perceived Employer obligations	Effect Size	Breach of perceived Employee obligations	Effect Size
The University should provide staff with the opportunity to be involved with decision making	- 0.38		
The University should provide staff with opportunities to learn new skills	- 0.36		
The University should provide long term job security	- 0.35		
The University should provide staff with a good working environment	- 0.32		
The University should provide staff with the freedom to do their job well	- 0.22		

Fulfilment of perceived Employer obligations	Effect Size	Fulfilment of perceived Employee obligations	Effect Size
The University should provide staff with clarification of what is required of them in their job	- 0.26	Staff should work additional unpaid hours to finish a task	- 0.48
		Staff should work extra hours when required	- 0.38
		Staff should volunteer to get involved with tasks that are not part of their job	- 0.27
		Staff should adapt to necessary changes	- 0.24
		Staff should work flexible hours when required	- 0.16
		Staff should be adhering to the rules	- 0.12
		Staff should speak highly of the University when not in work	- 0.12

Consideration must be given to the situation of over-fulfilment as this may be perceived by the employee as a breach or violation (Lambert, Edwards and Cable, 2003; Ho, 2005); for example, too much autonomy may result in an individual feeling unsupported and abandoned. It is plausible to conclude therefore that the effect size of -0.48, which was the highest size effect, for the fulfilment, or over-fulfilment, of the perceived obligation of employees to work additional unpaid hours to finish a task was enough to injure feelings, potentially eroding positive characteristics of the employment relationship. However, the analysis shows that respondents slightly exceeded (-0.12) the perceived obligation to speak highly of the university when not in work, even though ten employer obligation constructs were perceived to be breached; inferring that these perceived breaches did not result in the violation of the psychological contract for this group of respondents, violation being characterised as feelings of 'broken promises' or 'unfulfilled expectations'. Intense feelings of broken promises create feelings of violation implying the erosion or loss of trust, negatively affecting job satisfaction, organisational satisfaction and potentially individual and organisational performance.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusion drawn here is that the psychological contract is a complex and dynamic concept which requires a balance of nurturing and managing expectations by leaders and managers who represent the employing organisation. It appears to be an unwritten, dynamic and unique contract between an employee and their employer, influenced by many internal and external variables in respect of how an individual sees the importance of work in their life. Determination of whether elements of the psychological contract are breached or fulfilled can be determined by both employer and by the employee, however this study's focus was to explore the employee's perception of the relationship with their employer, influenced by their values, beliefs, obligations and expectations of their employer.

It is reasonable to conclude that the psychological contract for these respondents could be described as a 'skewed contract' positively weighted towards the perceived fulfilment of employee obligations and negatively weighted towards perceived breaches of employer obligations, and therefore employees perceive themselves to be giving more than their employer. However given the fact that the average tenure for this group was approximately 8 years it appears that the psychological contract is a relational contract enforced by a co-dependent relationship (Kissler, 1994), implying a state of mutual dependence on each other, however doesn't mean that people don't feel put upon. It seems *prima facia* that the implementation of managerialism and performance management through the guise of an appraisal process, which could be perceived as a threat to academic freedom, has not violated the psychological contract for this group; in the absence of a longitudinal study however there is no evidence to show whether the appraisal process positively or negatively influenced the state of the psychological contract post implementation.

As Makin et al. (1996) state, the importance of the psychological contract in terms of the content and process should not be underestimated as each will influence levels of engagement and performance. Various studies (Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; www.towersperrin.com, 2008) have shown that high levels of employee engagement impact positively on productivity, profitability and customer satisfaction and low levels of employee engagement have been linked to a reduction in operating income and increased turnover intention. The achievement of a balance or mutual exchange of key elements of the psychological contract appears to be the exception (Turnley and Feldman, 1999(b); Robinson and Rousseau, 1994), implying that breaches of key elements are the normal state of the psychological contract; however given that a complete balance of expectations and obligations is highly unlikely, the decision to strive to achieve this balance can only be ignored at the peril of any organisations. Likewise, a number of detrimental consequences can result from breaches and violations of the psychological contract (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000) including the exertion of less effort, stifled performance and increased intention to leave.

The challenge to constantly achieve equilibrium between two parties' expectations and obligations during periods of considerable change can be a rather daunting task for managers given the ever increasing demands on human capital to achieve sustainability.

Avoiding Breaches and Violations of the Psychological Contract

Leaders and managers clearly have a key role to play in facilitating a balanced mutual exchange of expectations and obligations and therefore need to be flexible and adaptable in terms of leadership styles influenced by the context of any given situation. There are many leadership models and theories which will not be explored here, however diagnostic exercises such as 360 degree tools should also be considered as this could enable employees to engage actively with leadership development. Frameworks such as Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe's (2002) "characteristics of the transformational leader in the public sector" might be of use to create a leadership development or competency framework. Mao et al., (2008) also provide a number of tactics to avoid violation of the psychological contract which include:

1) dynamic communication to clarify the ever changing expectations of both parties
2) effective development of employees' ability

and potential

3) provision of opportunities to be innovative and participative
4) enhancement of employees' sense of identity and belonging through the provision of training and development and promotional opportunities
5) maintenance of a harmonious and comfortable work environment and expectation of a bright future
6) enhancement of employees' sense of achievement and pride by clearly communicating the organisation's goals and giving employees the right to be involved in the decision-making and implementation
7) maintenance of mutual trust through open, transparent communication and respecting employee suggestions

Robinson (1996) found that individuals who trust their line manager are less likely to perceive a breach. It is reasonable to conclude that all of these practices can be facilitated by leaders and managers informally on a day to day basis promoting feelings of fairness and trust, along with the application of human resource practices in terms of managing the psychological contract (Guest and Conway, 1999); they also seem to be the perfect antidote to rectify the perceived breached employer constructs which were the findings from this research. Even though relatively recent literature casts a shadow over appraisal systems, (Coens & Jenkins, 2000) which have been said to "...inspire hatred and distrust among employees..." (Lee, 2006, p.21), if used effectively this formal process still has a key role to play in creating a highly engaged workforce.

Practical suggestions relating to how elements of the appraisal process and concepts that span the employment relationship can achieve and maintain a positive relational psychological contract are provided below. They are based on the assumption that employees feel fairly treated and fairly paid for the work they do:

Leadership as a facilitator of the fulfilment of the psychological contract

Effective leadership is integral to fulfilling the psychological contract, easier to say than to achieve at an organisational level, however Burns (1978) suggests true leadership needs to engage with higher level or more sophisticated intelligences to inspire others and extends beyond meeting needs and expectations in exchange for support. Burns views transformational leadership, influenced by Maslow's (1943) and Kohlberg's (1963) work, as helping people on their journey from meeting basic needs such as physiological to achieving higher level needs such as self-actualisation. Haslam et al., (2011) contend that there must be at least four elements for an adequate leadership model: context; power; followers and transformation. They also suggest that there needs to be a better understanding of group behaviour and social identity, an individual's sense of belonging or meaningful membership of a group, (Tajfel, 1972) as social influence is central to leadership effectiveness as this is "bound up in group processes" (p.45). Social identity, one thing we cannot do without, (Jetten et al., 2002) allows individuals to be effective in the world, telling us who we are, what is important in the world, who we can rely on and how we should act. Based on studies by Ellemers et al., (1997; 1998), it is plausible to conclude that leaders are in a better position to exert power when regarded as having the same social identity as an in-group member, exerting 'power through' others, compared to an out-group member, exerting power over others; the former creating organic energy, the latter having a finite lifetime.

In addition to being regarded as an in-group member and trustworthy to exert power through others, relatively recent research conducted by Ryan and Deci (2000) is significant in terms of achieving a balance of expectations and obligations. They say that the historic 'carrot and stick' approach to motivating employees is no longer appropriate for businesses of today as the majority of roles are now heuristic in nature, meaning roles which facilitate flexibility, problem-solving and creativity; the minority now being logarithmic, meaning roles which consist of repetitive tasks with little flexibility, which has traditionally influenced the authoritarian style of management since the 1930s. This new model known as 'The Self-Determination Theory' (Deci and Ryan, 1985) concludes that humans have three innate psychological needs: autonomy; mastery; and relatedness, all of which create our innate inner drive. It is these three innate psychological needs that leaders need to facilitate to influence the fulfilment of the psychological contract and the appraisal process provides the perfect opportunity and vehicle to formally achieve this. It would be reasonable to suggest therefore that leadership is not a direct motivator but is rather a facilitator of the conditions that achieve a fulfilled psychological contract and ultimately an engaged workforce. In conclusion, the absence of effective leadership would seem to create dissatisfaction at work and therefore can be described as a hygiene factor.

The element of trust appears to be the foundation of the psychological contract, as is implied in all people-related activities, and therefore the one thing that changes everything; however not a concept which is expressly at the top of HR or Staff Developers agenda. Trust, described by McGregor in 1967 as meaning "I know that you will not – deliberately or accidentally, consciously or unconsciously – take unfair advantage of me" meaning "I can put my situation at the moment, my status and self-esteem in the group, our relationship, my job, my career, even my life in your hands with complete confidence" (p.163) appears to be a complex concept. However in simple terms it means having confidence in another person, the opposite of this being mistrust creating suspicion. Whether a line manager is trusted or mistrusted will have a significant impact on their relationship with each of their followers in relation to the way in which individual's communication, enjoy the relationship and get things done. Contrary to what some people believe, Covey (2006) believes that trust can be increased and is not something that exists or doesn't exist. He describes thirteen behaviours that inspire trust in others, and it is advisable for HR practitioners to invest resources, expressly related to trust, on developing leadership capabilities to enable them to build high levels of integrity.

Elements of the Appraisal as facilitators of the fulfilment of the psychological contract

Various elements of the appraisal process are used in this final section to consider their importance in terms of achieving the mutual balance or fulfilment of the key elements of the psychological contract.

Feedback

The expectation of the University to provide staff with feedback to tell them how they are doing their job was breached and, as performance management is a relatively new concept within HE, leaders need to be skilled in the provision of effective feedback about performance and behaviours, both informally and formally using the appraisal process and competency framework/standards/professional standards.

Goal Setting

The expectation of the University to provide staff with information relating to important developments and information to clarify its aims and objectives was breached and therefore the interpretation of the University's aims and objectives needs to be clear in terms of how this relates to individuals and teams and what is expected of them. It is suggested that a review of how key messages are determined by senior managers and how these are interpreted and cascaded by middle managers is considered. A review of the effectiveness of formal communication channels at organisational, team levels is also a consideration. The attitude and skill of a manager is critical as this determines the 'tone' and level of 'buy-in' from the appraisee in relation to levels of motivation and future achievements. Lack of ownership was found to be a barrier in performance management systems (Styles et al., 1997) where goals were imposed.

The expectation of the University to provide staff with the freedom to do their job well, which is consistent with autonomy one of the elements of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985), was breached and therefore consideration of how individuals carry out their work and who with, to achieve agreed goals, should be as consultative as possible. Also research published by Management Today in 2003 suggests that employees now have a higher sense of entitlement to flexible working arrangements which implies that the provision of realistic flexible working arrangements can only serve to strengthen the psychological contract.

Work Environment and Resources

It seems that consideration of the right work environment and available resources that enable individuals to perform to the required standards and achieve agreed outcomes is an implied and not an expressed element of the appraisal process; line managers may assume required resources are available in the absence of any issue being raised. Given the findings from this research it is recommended that this forms part of the appraisal discussions as both a harmonious and comfortable work environment and available resources influence performance at an individual level and it is reasonable to conclude that this also impacts on organisational performance.

It would be appropriate to suggest that leaders and managers reflect upon their leadership styles and their levels of Emotional Intelligence to understand whether they cast a 'shadow' over their team creating a climate of 'doom and gloom' which is de-motivational; or generate a 'glow' creating energy and enthusiasm, a motivational climate. The availability of a voluntary 360 degree tool and coaching provision can only serve to support this reflective process.

Development
Both objective setting and behavioural competencies are integral to the appraisal process to enable effective skills development and progression. The appraisal will facilitate effective evaluation of the return on investment regarding learning as this will be more aligned to corporate aims and objectives. Given that the UK and Europe are facing skills shortages, older workers will have an increasingly important role to play in terms of capturing their skills, knowledge and experience by way of up-skilling the younger less experienced worker, it is recommended therefore that this group of employees are integral to appropriate people management policies, for instance, induction, mentoring, coaching shadowing arrangements and training delivery.

Willis and Daisley (2006) found that when an organisation demonstrates their commitment to the older workforce e.g. through the provision of specific development programmes this regenerated their psychological contract which generated greater commitment in the form of loyalty, longer retention and contribution. Given that 45% of employees at University A are over the age of 51 a review of development opportunities for this group would be beneficial to see if they are disadvantaged. Consideration should be given the list of practical recommendations provided by Hewitt (2009) to help break the psychological contract disengagement for older workers which are detailed here (p.90):

"Providing a supportive learning culture, challenging stereotypes and addressing the things in the organisation that eat away at their motivation will help to break the psychological disengagement of your older workers, enabling you to make the most of this valuable section of your workforce. Putting in place the following 13 points will significantly improve their happiness scores. You will get more out of them and they will want to stay with you longer:

- Assiduously collect data on your age profile.
- Encourage managers to build a picture of the whole life of employees so that they are aware of any external influences.
- Provide opportunities to satisfy higher order needs.
- Ensure that policies and procedure are designed to make older workers feel wanted.
- Create a learning and development culture where attending courses is seen as a positive activity rather than being remedial.
- Encourage older workers to take control of their own development, planning their own future at work in conjunction with their managers.
- Remove arbitrary age bars on training and development.
- Focus on the provision of personal development for older workers rather than skills based training.
- Find ways to allow older workers to get together, whether on specific development programmes or in other ways.
- Engage older workers in formal and informal mentoring arrangements with both younger colleagues and those with less experience.
- Provide and promote positive role models of older workers.

- Challenge self-stereotyping.
- Promote cross generational working."

Career Aspirations
It is recommended that HR practitioners and Staff Developers together review policies and practices in relation to developmental roles, career pathways, succession planning and internal promotional practices as Scholl (1983) found that employees are more likely to leave the organisation when fewer promotional opportunities are available and therefore more likely to lose more skilled employees who have more career mobility. Where employees have taken a risk and voluntarily made a job change, personal growth, satisfaction and innovation are the more common outcomes of the change (West and Nicholson, 1984).

Involvement and Consultation
The provision of opportunities to be innovative and participative and where possible and practical, are asked for their input to human resource management policies and practices to ensure fairness and encourage employee commitment. Setton et al. (1996) concluded that as human resource management practices underpin the employment relationship, they are influential regarding levels of employee commitment which impact on performance. Eisenberger et al. (2002) found that Perceived Organisational Support (POS) was positively related to employee obligations toward their employer which also strengthens both commitment and performance.

Fair Treatment
Takeucki, Tekleab and Taylor (2000) found that significant reductions in employee perceptions of contract violation resulted when organisational interventions were introduced to enhance perceptions of procedural justice or fairness. A recommendation is that the way in which employees are consulted is reviewed organisation-wide in terms of contributing to the decision-making processes. Further qualitative research to understand why part-time employees feel less fairly treated than full-time employees would also be helpful.

The same recommendation is made for older employees who have responded less positively than others. These findings also support research conducted by Hewitt (2009) who found that the older employees felt invisible, redundant and undervalued, due to the stereotypical perception of older workers that they are just keeping their heads down and treading water until they retire.

Contribution
This research adds to the plethora of articles and publications relating to the psychological contract and appraisals, and reinforces their importance for HR practitioners and Staff Developers in the pursuit of creating a climate of highly engaged employees. Employee engagement being of particular importance given that various studies (Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; Towers Perrin, 2008) have shown that high levels of employee engagement impact positively on productivity, profitability and customer satisfaction and low levels of employee engagement have been linked to a reduction in operating income and increased turnover intention. These studies are consistent with Hewitt Associates LLC (2005, p.1)) who indicate that they "…have established a conclusive, compelling relationship between engagement and profitability through higher productivity, sales, customer satisfaction, and employee retention." Kenexa (2009) predict a £25.8bn increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) within the UK should organisations increase their engagement levels to the middle of the top quartile, a significant shift from the UK's ninth ranked position for engagement out of the twelve GDP ranked economies. Research by Towers Watson (2012), shows that only twenty seven per cent of UK employees are highly engaged, and eight per cent strongly engaged (Alfes et al., 2010). The link between the fulfilment of the psychological contract, employee engagement and organisational performance cannot be ignored.

Further Research
It seems that limited research has been conducted into how, and to what extent leaders and HR professionals contribute to the creation of an organisational climate conducive to highly engaged employees; the question remains as to what it is employees are actually engaged with and whether particular loci of engagement are more important than others, and subsequently implications for the abilities of leaders and HR priorities.

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Imperial Coaching Academy

Judy Barnett, Imperial College

Imperial College London launched its Coaching Academy in 2009 and coaching is now widely available as an additional support to development for College staff at all levels and across all job roles. It was not always the case that any member of staff could ask to work with a coach. Before 2009 most of the coaching was done by external coaches, and because of cost, this tended to be reserved for senior staff at the College. Judy Barnett, Talent Development Manager at Imperial, had long wanted to make coaching more widely available to staff, but it wasn't until she took on the talent development remit with explicit responsibility for the nurturing of staff identified as having the potential to work at more senior levels within the College, that it became easier to argue the benefits of having a cadre of trained internal coaches.

In financial terms, the costs of setting up the Coaching Academy were relatively low, involving trainer costs for the 4-day programme, and internal staff time. The cost-benefits are more difficult to quantify and the emphasis has been more on qualitative evaluation. The approach was taken that if the initial pilot programme led to reasonable take-up of the coaching offer – enough to build on the coaching skills of the pilot group of coaches – and generally good feedback, then there would be sufficient budget for a second programme a year later. Alternatively if that was not the case, no new coaches would be trained.

Why set up a coaching academy within a university?

- To widen the coaching offer to all Imperial staff subject to coach availability.
- To create a pool of talent coaches to support participants on the talent programmes.
- To offer follow-up and practical support to participants who have completed other leadership and professional development programmes available within the College.
- To recognise the potential of staff outside HR and L and D to support and develop others.
- To offer an innovative form of personal and professional development to those staff who, whatever their job role, and however demanding, welcome the opportunity to develop their own capability as coaches, and in many cases, as managers.

There are currently 30 Imperial coaches from across the College who are part of the Imperial Coaching Academy and who take on coaching assignments. The coaches represent a wide cross section of departments and divisions from across the College and bring a range of experience and insight to the coaching role. In addition to supporting participants on the talent development programmes, coaches work with any member of staff who has contacted the Coaching Academy to request this form of support and development.

Coaches are recruited from across the College, through a 2-stage process, involving an initial written application and an interview.

Training and support for coaches

The 4-day Coach Development Programme runs as one two-day module and two one-day modules over 3 months. Based on ICF Coaching Competencies, it takes a solutions-focused approach and has been recognised by the Institute of Leadership and Management as an endorsed ILM Programme. Participants work in coaching trios alongside the Programme and are required to complete a Learning Log as part of any coaching activity they participate in. These provide opportunities for reflective practice, and enable those who are interested in gaining further coach accreditation at a later date to use the programme as part of their evidence of their ability to coach. Ongoing supervision and regular CPD are part of the support and development offered to coaches

What coaches have said about coaching practice:

- ‘The coaching trios are one of the best aspects of the course. I have gained a lot of insights and confidence from these sessions’.
- ‘My coaching trio worked well together and we are still meeting. It has been very useful for getting in some practice, getting feedback and support from peers’.
- ‘I found the Coaching Log surprisingly useful - I always go back and read what I wrote last time, before another coaching session, so that I have a couple of coaching goals in mind’

What coaches have said about support:

- ‘Coaching supervision is vital as a fairly new coach because it allows us to share experiences, learn from each other; and therefore, enhance our skills far more quickly’
- ‘The support of the supervision days has proved invaluable; and having an ongoing programme of CPD means that we get to come together as a group and keep learning (and are inspired by seeing the possibilities of what we could be doing!) ‘

The coachee's experience

Contracting and the issue of confidentiality are always of great importance , but with the use of internal coaches it was clear from the outset that some form of actual contract might be necessary, that would enable coach and coachee to clarify expectations and establish groundrules. We have developed the Imperial Coaching Academy Agreement that the coach talks through at the initial ’coffee’ meeting and this seems to work very well.

Coachees have wanted to work on such areas as:

- Enhancing personal impact
- Career transition/ moving into a more senior role
- Managing a new team more effectively
- Developing greater self-awareness, building confidence
- Stress at a time of departmental restructuring
- Time and workload management

What some previous coachees have said about their experience of coaching:

- Coaching made me think about my role as a supervisor and how I approach problems. My coach was very good at making me think about the problem and finding a solution myself and, in this way I got more confident in my role
- I found the coaching to be extremely beneficial and allowed me to become much more productive and clear in my aims. Without it, I would have been under a great deal more stress at a difficult time.

- The coaching sessions have been immensely helpful and I'm convinced the coaching process and techniques are a really useful tool for personal development.
- I have really enjoyed our coaching sessions. X has been a great listener and has a unique way of raising awareness of my strengths and the alternative approaches available to tackle emerging issues.

Between Spring 2009 and December 2012 around 300 Imperial staff have worked with a coach over, on average, 4 meetings over two to six months. A sign of the 'reach' of the Coaching Academy is in the way demand has increased over this period and requests for coaching come from all groups of staff - academic, technical and professional.

The benefits of coaching to the organisation

- Embedding some of the learning from professional development and leadership development programmes by providing a follow-up opportunity to review learning and plan for further application
- Enhanced management effectiveness - coaches who are managers talk about how coaching skills such as deep listening and improved questioning skills, have broadened their approach to managing staff, and enhanced their effectiveness.
- Coachees who have worked on their leadership style and team-building skills report an improvement in their effectiveness and impact.
- Coachees who work on career development issues often report back to the Coaching Academy when they are promoted and attribute a significant part of their success to the changes they have made to the way they approach situations, deal with more senior staff, and conduct themselves at interview.
- This is particularly the case with coachees who have been nominated for one of the talent development programmes.

Over the last 5 years the Coaching Academy has grown in reach, impact and reputation. During that time improvements have been made in the PR side, in the recruitment, training and development of coaches and the processes for coach-coachee matching and record-keeping. To finish with, here are some quotes from Imperial coaches about what they have gained from the experience of coaching:

- Each coaching relationship and each session can be very different and, while that is a challenge, I really like the fact that you just have to keep learning
- It's the first time in my professional life I'm in a situation where my sole concern is about the welfare of a colleague with no conflicts on organisational matters. I have also been surprised how open people are on work matters that are so personal to them
- I've seen how powerful it is to give people time and space to reflect, particularly in an organisation as big and fast-paced as ours where the focus on getting the job done can sometimes become all-consuming. For myself, coaching has taught me that it's not up to me to have to have all the answers; a good question is much more effective and leads someone to their own.

Notes

- Judy Barnett is Talent Development Manager and runs the Coaching Academy at Imperial College.
- For further information see the Coaching webpages: http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/talentdevelopment/coaching or contact j.barnett@imperial.ac.uk

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Judy is a learning and development professional, with expertise in leadership and talent development, executive coaching, coach supervision and a range of OD consultancy interventions. Judy's approach to coaching and leadership development has been shaped by twenty years' experience leading learning & development functions, and in a range of teaching and training roles in local government and the private sector, as well as overseas. Judy has been Talent Development Manager at Imperial College London since 2008, after leading the Staff Development team at Imperial College from 2003. She has introduced a range of talent programmes and has set up an internal Coaching Academy at Imperial, to provide talent coaches for the programmes as well as to provide coaching more widely to College staff.

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Developing Professional Practice with Front Line Staff

Alison Bryant, Liverpool John Moores University

I was delighted to have the opportunity to write about my experiences and observations whilst developing a group of front line staff. The interesting aspect about this newly formed team was the integration of Reception Staff, who previously were locally managed at their sites, with colleagues who were new in post. This marked the formation of a 16 strong, Corporate Team of Receptionists who would work together and become interchangeable over our three campus sites. The majority of the new recruits were members of our domestic staff, who had shadowed the reception role during a period of several months. Some were employed full time and others on a part time basis. Most saw it as a marvellous opportunity to widen their experience as well as progressing in their career.

These sessions with front line colleagues were stimulating for me, as participants had great enthusiasm for the development they would receive. People very much wanted to learn or refresh their skills, acquiring knowledge for their new team roles. The Receptionists were enthusiastic to engage in a range of development activities. These taught sessions provided the group with a mixture of understanding, astonishment and reflection about their previous experiences.

The directive from management was for a consistent and standardised approach, to provide an excellent reception service. The focus of the sessions therefore was on team building, empowerment and customer service excellence. I promoted the building blocks and values of the SEDA Developing Professional Practice Award. The emphasis was on continuous learning and development, to equip staff with self-confidence and increase levels of self-awareness in order to be able to differentiate between standardised approaches when dealing with customer queries. Attendees also learnt how to trust their own judgement to problem-solve difficult or atypical customer queries as appropriate.

The main aims of the taught programme were:

- To ensure people have professional customer care skills to deliver an excellent service
- To examine University values and those attached to the SEDA qualification
- To learn effectively how to handle difficult situations
- To understand how new teams are formed and deal effectively with change
- To appreciate Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity and unconscious bias

- To raise awareness of Personal Safety
- To develop professional practice to support the achievement of LJMU's strategic aims

Following the induction and the first tutorial the confidence and knowledge of the participants increased. Internal guest speakers were introduced to the programme including our Equality and Diversity Adviser, Quality Support Officer, Library Manager and Head of Academic Policy. The specialist know-how and experience which they brought to these sessions helped everyone to understand the wider remit and responsibilities of the University. Not least of which was the far reaching impact we have on our students, our research and our local, national and international communities.

The Equality and Diversity session proved to be another confidence boosting experience for the Team. An on-line module quiz was completed as a whole group exercise. The benefits for the learners meant they could collectively reach a consensus following discussion on topics such as victimisation, indirect discrimination, gender and ageism. This led to interesting debate whilst breaking down the questions into their component parts. With support from the tutor we steered the discussion around the questions, checked understanding, and then asked people to vote on which answer they believed to be correct. There was much discussion about the pros and cons of the questions, making the event memorable and enjoyable. The results were enhanced because of the group discussion and the fact that support had been provided to access the software. Myths around the difficulty of this test were dispelled, as people succeeded in the task. It also demonstrated the value of group work, learning together and working together to agree shared team values.

Exploring learning styles, personality traits and looking at how we listen and filter information was a very useful workshop. People could again relate to situations they had experienced in their role, recalling the different reactions of clients. A variety of ideas, solutions and tactics were now emerging. Combinations of diplomacy, probing questions and problem solving were now firmly on the agenda. Self-belief was increasing in the group as much of what people had believed intuitively was now being justified.

As expectations and pace gathered momentum people were interested in learning more about body language, NLP and using IT beyond a basic level. A buoyant mood prevailed about the forthcoming structured interviews, which would form the main assessment. The Receptionists realised how they could deal more effectively with situations that they had previously encountered. By appreciating the different options around how to articulate and handle difficult problems, these examples could now be used to demonstrate how they had developed their professional practice. The last session consisted of a professional discussion in the form of a semi-structured interview, carried out with each member of the group. People had time to prepare themselves by reflecting on their own learning and future development needs, as well as the core values of the SEDA Developing Professional Practice qualification. One to ones, questionnaires and learning logs, were also put in place. Audio recordings were made of these confidential structured interviews. Before the interview started time was spent having a cosy chat to help calm the apprehension people were feeling. I am a believer in spending a little time to speak on other subjects as I think it is beneficial to warm up before talking or presenting. It certainly calmed me down anyway! Some recordings were very natural with people sounding relaxed, confident and talking in depth about their values, development, aspirations and career in general. For others, going from notes they had written to help prompt them proved a little overformal. However, there was good feedback from people who found the digital recorder non-threatening. I must have inadvertently given the impression that I would be replicating the BBC Radio 4 studios!
I am pleased to say there were a lot of positive outcomes; people understood that self awareness was an important part of their role. Examining client behaviour had in turn helped people to look at themselves in a more constructive way. Understanding personality types and communicating with openness, trust and honesty was now being viewed as fundamental.

A few months down the line it is very encouraging to hear from the Manager and Director that people are now better equipped to deal with more complex tasks. Helping with Clearing, Open Days and supporting School Offices with administrative duties, enables their Manager to feel that the investment in this Team's development has shown a good return. On the whole the Team are more confident, feel valued, happy and are enthusiastic. The learning has been embedded; people are performing at higher levels and have certainly developed their professional practice.

> "I feel more confident in dealing with difficult customers about specific access issues, which could breach security."
>
> (Receptionist quote)

My own reflection, after reading the feedback and carrying out the interviews, has been that although business models and analysis tools were used to inform the group, practical support in the form of more work place scenarios would have been equally useful. This has subsequently been carried out in a follow-up session for this team. The other development requirements for a significant number of the team, was better IT skills, which my own department have been supporting.

In contrast I am currently working with a well established team, our Catering Department, who display excellent team working skills and a good understanding of each other. The SEDA Developing Professional Practice Award has helped them further appreciate: equality, diversity and inclusivity; handling difficult customers; and managing operational change, of which they have undergone plenty in the last year. Again, it has been another very satisfying and inspirational experience, working with people who have evolved into a high performing team.

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StaffFest - Daring to Do Things Differently

Marj Spiller, Staffordshire University

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to give an account of a recent innovation or 'newness of idea' (Rogers, 2003, p.12) tried out within one institution which may have transferable elements for staff-developers working in other organisational contexts. It is a 'warts and all' account, giving an honest appraisal of how staff responded to this new initiative, and the lessons learnt for future development. Importantly it argues that staff-developers, like other HR professionals, not only have a key role in supporting innovation and change within organisations (McGurk, 2012) but also in modelling this notion through their own approach to practice.

Setting the scene

Until last summer, staff development activities within Staffordshire University had typically been distributed throughout the academic year, requiring staff to fit these in around their other teaching, administrative or management commitments. Whilst this had been entirely appropriate for some staff, it had not allowed for a concentration of activities in which everyone could engage. The Centre for Professional Development team within the University therefore proposed a new two-week programme of activities at the end of the academic year. Despite the usual cynicism from some that 'this will never work' and 'others have tried it and failed', staff within the University's Centre for Professional Development clung to their vision for successfully delivering this concentrated programme of activities, confident that it would:

- Strengthen the message about Staffordshire University's commitment to professional development by providing a momentum of activity
- Reinforce the importance of professional development as a core requirement in everyone's role
- Raise awareness of the diversity of development opportunities available
- Facilitate engagement in staff development activities in a *predominantly* non-teaching and non-assessment period
- Provide a natural place for showcasing innovation and excellence
- Enable staff to begin to make sense (Weick, 1995) of their evolving development within a changing university
- Encourage and promote enjoyment for staff taking part in development activities

With the full support (both moral and financial) from the University's Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, this carefully selected programme of varied staff learning and development 'events' (Harrison, 2005, p.116) was therefore launched. Although not perfect in its first iteration (nor did it need to be), it proved to be very successful in engaging more staff in workplace learning. It took place in the last week of June and the first week of July which *in theory* was a gap between award boards and graduation (even though it is acknowledged that *in practice* there is no absolute 'downtime' for everyone working in a University).

Brand identity and key themes

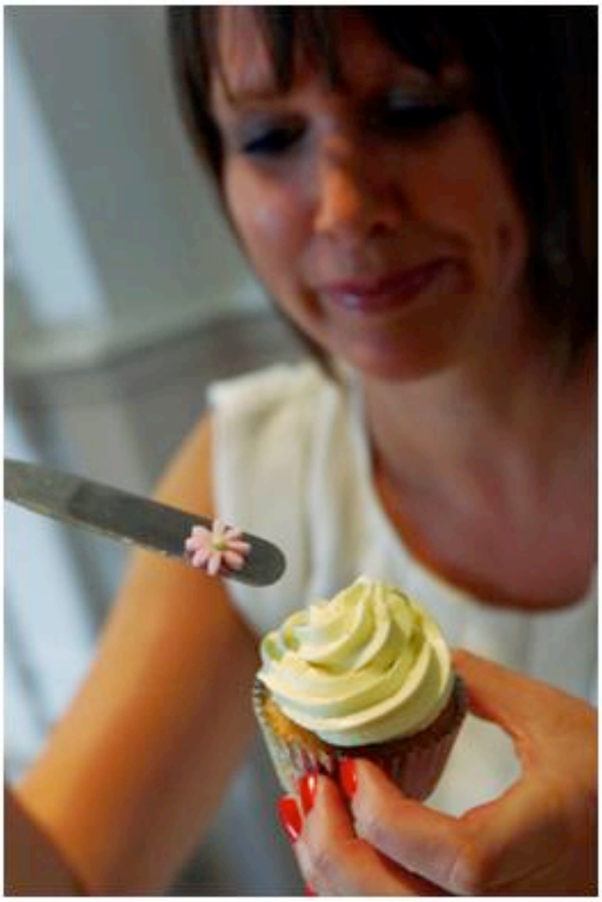
From early in the planning stage, it became evident that this two-week programme of activities had to be given a name. It was something new, something different and needed a brand identity. With the intent of enticing staff to engage in and enjoy this new experience, the idea of 'StaffFest' was born, a festival of activities to promote professional learning, development and improvement. Anticipating the need to pull together a vast array of disparate activities, an overarching theme of 'Into the Future' for this programme was also introduced, with the related sub-themes of:

- Something old, something new
- Facing the Future
- Thinking Differently

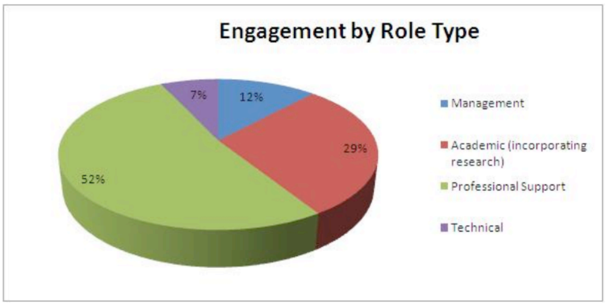
This themed approach provided the glue to stick the StaffFest programme together. Added to this, a festive motif allowed for the StaffFest brand identity to reinforce the celebratory message:

Staff engagement

In total, there were 694 conference and workshop attendees in StaffFest 2012, with positive engagement from all Faculties, and Services. A wide range of workshops, master-classes, forums and activities were organised, some led by externals but most were offered by members of staff (many of whom clearly had hitherto unknown and well-hidden talents!) Once the idea of StaffFest was born, offers from staff to run workshops came in unsolicited with a clear commitment to engage and share their knowledge, skills and experiences. To ensure a consistent and quality-assured approach, briefing guidelines and expectations of workshop leaders were produced. In the end, 65 different workshops/conferences were delivered, covering a wide range of topics such as social media, pre-retirement and stress-reduction techniques. These were all deliberately different to the content within the normal programme of activities run throughout the year. Added to this, a range of recreational and fun activities such as cup-cake making, belly-dancing, salsa and nature trails were also arranged. All of the latter proved to be extremely popular, serving as a reminder that staff development can be enjoyable, and that 'it's good to talk' to colleagues from across the University. Interspersed within this programme of workshops and activities, three major conferences were also organised, targeted towards the learning and teaching, leadership and management and professional support groups of staff.



Whilst analysis of the attendance figures showed that the male/female ratio (33.5%/66.5%) was broadly representative of the University population, the diagram below indicates that the role-holders who most supported the events were professional support staff.



The vast majority of the activities were open to all staff from across the University. In addition, on the same day of the two-week programme of activities, each Faculty committed to arranging a focussed Learning and Teaching conference, giving localised ownership to its content, structure and outcomes.

What our customers said...

Evaluation was sought from participants following each Staff Fest activity. Over 300 participants completed the evaluation questionnaire, giving a return rate of 43%.

Participants were asked a range of questions in order to identify both the appropriateness and effectiveness of each event. Overall 89% of participants rated their Staff Fest event as either good or excellent, with 91% stating that they would either 'highly recommend' or 'recommend' the event they attended to others.

Participants were also given the opportunity to give additional feedback, resulting in comments such as:

- "Tom Kenney was very engaging and charismatic."
- "This was an excellent day. Craig Mahoney (CEO HEA) was very inspirational and challenged pre-conceived ideas and gave an interesting vision to the future."
- "The demonstrator was superb!! He was so professional and yet added a splash of humour. His recipe choices were excellent and the food we sampled was delicious. This is a 'must' to repeat next year – excellent."

What we learnt

Running this first StaffFest programme was a rich learning experience for the Centre for Professional Development Team. Based on a combination of responses from post-event questionnaires, comments made at different committees and forums, views of workshop leaders, and informal comments from a wide range of staff, they were able to establish what was successful, or conversely, what needed to be changed. In essence, what seemed to work well was:

1. **The successful institutionalisation of StaffFest.** There was a lot of positivity across the University about StaffFest as a concept, and very soon after its launch it became incorporated into the normal vocabulary of the University.

2. **Investing both time and money in the branding was well worth it!** This certainly helped to launch StaffFest, for staff to understand what it was, and to have a unique identifier that was different to the normal provision of staff-development activities.

3. **Having an over-arching theme.** This definitely helped to link together the various activities, giving them a common purpose and a defined focus. Through this focussed approach, key organisational messages were reinforced, providing a platform to articulate the need for change 'into the future', thereby continually echoing the theme.

4. **Using a mix of own staff and external presenters.** This kept the programme fresh. It was different, it was new, and staff seemed to appreciate the investment that had been made in their development (an investment which totalled £15,000 and was drawn from a separate cross-institutional fund for specialist projects).

5. **Hooray for goody bags!** An early decision in the planning stage was to give goody-bags to participants in the conferences and workshops. Specially commissioned StaffFest bars of chocolate, pens, coasters and flower seeds (linked to the StaffFest motif) were a huge success, and were frequently commented upon in the evaluations. (Yes, back to Maslow (1970) again, motivating through meeting their basic needs before learning takes place!)

6. **Role-focussed conferences**. Having three major conferences which attracted staff in teaching, leadership and professional support roles was a valued feature of the programme. There were also separate small-scale forums for technicians and for professors. This demonstrated the value of facilitating a community of practice (Handy et.al, 2006, Wenger, 1998 and 2000, and Wenger and Snyder, 2000) approach to development, enabling the informal transfer of ideas between staff, irrespective of their location within the University. Feedback suggested that many staff value this way of learning and development, but unless it is made possible through activities such as these, it is unlikely to happen.

7. **Incentivised attendance.** All staff attending StaffFest events were encouraged to enter a prize draw for an iPad and the more they attended, the greater their number of entries. This certainly sparked a lot of interest and became an additional extrinsic motivator to the goody bags!

Based on the feedback, the following changes are now being implemented for future StaffFest programmes:

1. **Early incorporation into the calendar.** It was suggested that StaffFest needed to be incorporated into the academic calendar of events and committees so as to maximise the opportunities for staff to attend. Furthermore, **comments suggested that the Professional** Support staff conference needed to be at the end of the StaffFest fortnight to allow award-administrators to be free of post award-board activities.
2. **Advance planning.** This is to ensure that StaffFest can be accounted for in Centre for Professional Development's priorities and workload. StaffFest as a programme has been a welcome addition to the normal activities undertaken by the Centre for Professional Development, but it is now acknowledged that planning needs to start a year in advance to ensure effectiveness of delivery.
3. **Earlier confirmation of the final programme.** Some staff wanted more advance notice of the dates of specific events, for example, the dates for key conferences.
4. **Getting the balance right.** Some comments suggested that more learning and teaching and leadership activities would have been welcomed.
5. **Reaching all parts.** Mirroring the challenges with the advertising of other staff-development programmes, it was suggested that relying on electronic communication had probably excluded some staff without access to emails, for example, cleaners and some estates staff. This needs to be addressed, for example, encouraging their managers to disseminate information and displaying leaflets and posters in locations frequented by these staff.
6. **Making connections.** It was suggested that although the content of StaffFest was intentionally different to the normal staff-development programme, links to other planned activities should be made so as not to lose momentum and enthusiasm generated.
7. **Proximity to all customers.** Being a multi-campus University always presents challenges and so locating the different StaffFest activities in appropriate venues was never going to please everyone. However, in the planning of future programmes, this challenge needs to be addressed and hopefully a sensible balance achieved.

Conclusions and way forward

Was it worth it? Would we do it again?- Absolutely! Learning from the lessons outlined above, it is clear that a much more informed approach can now be taken. With advance planning, early communication and a greater appreciation of the workload involved, a revised and more informed strategy to make it work even better will be adopted. For the University, this first iteration of StaffFest has left a legacy. It is not uncommon in meetings to hear staff say 'We'll have to do it in StaffFest' or 'That would be an ideal session for StaffFest'. It has, indeed, become part of the vocabulary, an institutionalised norm, an expectation that it will, for the foreseeable future, be a key feature within the University cycle of events. For the Centre for Professional Development, we have dared to do things differently, to innovate and change. It has greatly expanded our (already wide) portfolio of activities, and has not only provided a fresh professional challenge but has brought us a renewed reputation as a team who can deliver. And finally, for the individuals attending the StaffFest programme of activities, it has introduced new opportunities to stimulate their learning, to inspire their development and to capture their imagination. So as expected, the planning for next StaffFest event is well underway, and with the theme of 'New Horizons', the future looks bright.

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Organisational Development Support for Commercial Services: a Subjective Narrative of Long Term Engagement

Steve Rathborn, Imperial College

Laying Foundations

In my role as an OD consultant within College, one of the most satisfying elements of my job is the opportunity to work in tandem with senior colleagues to nurture change. One such example is the progress that I have delivered together with Jane Neary who is now our Director of Campus Services. We have worked in partnership since I went to see her shortly after she arrived to take up the role of Head of Catering some seven years ago. At that time the department was hugely subsidised and the threat of outsourcing hung heavily. Jane wanted to turn the business around to enable it to generate revenue that could be reinvested in the improvement of students' experience of campus life.

Going North

Telling it how it is and nurturing enthusiasm are a natural part of Jane's leadership style and we built on these early in her tenure as we sought to create a sense of hope and urgency. Within weeks of her arrival, we set up two half-day sessions that would provide access to all of her 130 staff. These were designed to be vibrant, fast-moving and fun whilst, at the same time, encouraging participation from everyone and the collection of ideas for improvement. We sought to capture hearts and minds and to generate a sense of fun and involvement. We needed to tap into people's understanding of the business and also their hopes and fears. Someone had suggested that the team was 'all at sea', so Jane and her senior team turned up in sou'westers and lifejackets and kicked off with an exploration of where people thought they were heading. The informality broke the ice and when group tasks were allocated by a version of 'pass the parcel' that had the whole room on its feet, everyone was energised and engaged. Subsequent table group discussions generated a wide range of outputs that were collated and displayed on notice boards along with data showing just how resources were being frittered away by sloppy performance.

'All at sea' was also seen as pulling in different directions. Jane wanted to unite the effort and in order to identify a rallying point we all decided that we were going to head north. 'Going North' became a rallying cry and a shorthand way of indicating success and progress. Several years later the senior chef reported an incident in the kitchen: 'We were going south for a bit this morning, but we've turned it round and are heading north again now'.

Half a decade on, with the business in very good shape and Jane now Director of Commercial

Services, we decided that it was time to review progress, integrate the new teams that now fell under Jane's management and seek proposals for the increased commercialisation of the business. With this in mind we designed an approach we labelled 'Going Further'.

Going Further

In five years the transformation wrought within Catering and Conferencing had been huge. From an annual deficit of £1.124m on a turnover of £8.379m the unit was now in the black and in the2011/12 academic year contributed £1.9m to College funds. However, Jane had taken on responsibility for a much wider remit and was keen to integrate the various parts of the business and share learning and best practice across her patch. We were now dealing with 230 staff that covered catering, conferencing, accommodation, student information services and all aspects of sports provision, many of whom were spread around College locations throughout west London. Our approach was to build on success and the 'Going Further' programme was based loosely on 'Going North' combined with the longer term 'Customer Service Academy' model that I had developed for wider College use with Jane's predecessor.

The programme involved a series of half day events to gather together mixed groups of team members to show them how far we had come and to ask them to share their ideas for business development and improvement. From this we would create a priority list of issues. Some of these could be addressed directly by management, and others were to be inserted into the Customer Service Academy as projects to be addressed by small teams who would later seek senior level support in a Dragon's Den style bid for resources. Once adopted successful bids would be championed by a senior manager and given financial support to enable them to develop further.

Seven half-day events were scheduled to account for shift patterns, part-time workers and holidays. As far as possible all levels of team members were represented on each occasion and work groups were encouraged to split up when table groups were formed so that cross-fertilisation was championed from the start. Jane started the session by explaining how much had been achieved in five years with some spectacular photographic 'before' and 'after' shots relating to catering outlets, kitchens and student accommodation.

Table groups were then asked to illustrate their experience and observations using pictures cut from magazines and based on four themes: 'what has been successful?', 'where is there room for improvement?', 'how are we viewed by others?' and 'where do we want to be?'. This approach was chosen to elicit a more emotional, creative response than might have been achieved by talking alone. It also allowed for those for whom English was not a first (or even second) language to participate on equal terms. Having created a picture, each group was given time to explain the imagery and other groups were encouraged to probe and explore further. The sessions were extremely good-humoured with high levels of participation and some clear common themes. Once this stage had been completed, teams were invited to record on flipcharts their recommendations for actions that could improve working style and conditions and build a better business. Over one hundred recommendations emerged that were coalesced into seven focal themes or topics for consideration on the Customer Service Academy.

It was clear from the manner of engagement and interaction at the events that participants had been inspired and felt that their contribution had been meaningful and appreciated. This was supported in the kind of follow-up conversations that took place and the level of interest expressed in joining the Academy cohort.

Customer Service Academy

The Customer Service Academy comprised a programme of seven one-day events spread over a three month period. As the name suggests the core theme was one of customer service and this, of course, is a vital element of the working style and responsibility of the Commercial Services team. However, we had previously discovered that participation developed a range of interpersonal skills and understanding that gave participants an edge when applying for more senior jobs. Consequently, the programme had been developed to maximise this additional benefit.

The 21 participants were largely self-selected following the Going Further sessions, but some influence was exerted in order to get a cross-sectional representation of departments and levels of seniority. The programme commenced with an introductory lunch, exemplifying the best that Imperial can offer, at which Jane explained her hopes for the programme. Following this, pre-determined groups of four spent the afternoon travelling to a variety of venues in London sampling customer service provision with a view to building comparisons between good and poor service and contrasting both extremes with what Commercial Services achieved.

Having established a range of standards and expectations the next event required the same groups to visit different organisations to examine aspects of customer service, to meet with providers to compare and contrast need and provision and, in some cases, to report their findings and recommendations to the host organisations.

Four further days were built around consolidating the experience of the first two sessions, incorporating learning into the workplace, learning more about issues raised and considering options for developing the key themes that Going Further had identified. During this period the original teams were disbanded and interest groups assembled around the key themes. Typically they comprised people who were either intrinsically interested in the theme or had a responsibility for it. There was no attempt made to balance the teams and they varied enormously in size and often individuals were in more than one grouping.

The final phase saw the refining and, in some cases, rejection of projects followed by the preparation of the presentations for the Dragons' Den. This turned out to be a hugely engaging and motivating session with its element of added theatre. The commitment of all concerned was obvious as they combined a passionate belief in what they were arguing for with a recognition of the importance of building a business case. Winning bids secured support and, if necessary, further funding to implement them within the business.

Once adopted and incorporated into day to day business, ownership was redistributed and more people became involved. 'Spark groups' (fan a spark and it becomes a flame), chaired by the Dragons' Den champion, turned the initial plans into concrete action that in turn started to have impact throughout the business. For example, one group that had adopted the theme of improving internal training made the case for a full-time departmental Training and Development Co-ordinator and this post went live before Christmas. Other tangible outcomes include the development of a new Student Hub. A team from the Customer Service Academy had researched experiences of and responses to the existing Hub (the centre for student enquiries) and had pitched their ideas at the Dragons' Den. This has led to a £1m redesign and relocation of the Hub in a move that supports College commitment to the student experience.

The Impact of Going Further

Through this programme, everyone had the opportunity to contribute and junior members of the team were able to influence departmental thinking and planning. With this has come a greater sense of common purpose and an openness to helping and engaging with others along with an expectation that people will be interested in what is going on around them and likely to be able to make positive contributions. Furthermore, the scope of engagement has spread and now encompasses families through initiative like Christmas events and theatre visits, which provide less formulaic ways of networking and finding common issue.

Being open to suggestion and creating dialogue has spawned new thinking about the business and, in particular, its image and impact. As a result, a new vision has been adopted along with a name change for the department. It was felt that Commercial Services emphasised the business element too heavily and might not appear sympathetic to students who comprise the bulk of the customers. With this in mind the name has been changed to Campus Services, which it is hoped will more accurately reflect the purpose and profile that all are striving to achieve.

Intangible benefits have been manifold and include a bringing together of disparate functions with an accompanying reduction of departmental silos and the establishment of a Campus Services community. Managers have started to migrate across a wider domain and there is an enhanced sense of opportunity combined with more trust, better communication and the sense that it is okay to be critical so long as the criticism is constructive. During this period, the team has grown with many supervisors and managers having been promoted internally following their engagement on the Customer Service Academy. A further increase in business has recently been reported and last year £3m surplus was reinvested in the College on a turnover of £37m.

Going Beyond

My relationship with the department continues. This term I will be working with the senior team and, using 360˚ reviews and the MBTI, exploring the way in which they work together to lead the department and to identify opportunities for improvement and growth. One likely area is to engage in a further all-embracing project – 'Going Beyond'. Associated with Campus Services are members of support staff from other functions such as finance, ICT, HR Facilities and Capital Projects. In previous programmes these people have not been included and, with hindsight, this may have been a mistake. Going Beyond will aim to imbue them with the same commitment and sense of belonging as their colleagues who, in turn, will be asked to contribute to another step change in the success of the College.

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A Review of *Tricky Coaching* by Konstantin Korotov, Elizabeth Florent-Treacy, Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries, Andreas Bernhardt

John Trantom, Liverpool John Moores University

You join me in the penultimate session of the ILM level 5 Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring. It's the first time that the course has been run and it has gone well. At times the discussion has taken us into high levels of complexity and there have been lots of enthusiastic 'what if's..?' and 'ah but remember we talked about…?' leading to the conclusion that this coaching and mentoring malarkey can be very tricky! Before the course the group had done very little coaching or mentoring – or at least they hadn't seen it as being that if they had – and accordingly the course could be improved, one participant justifiably pointed out, by considering some case studies. Enthused, I set myself the challenge of rectifying this.

An internet search threw up plenty of options for books and research but nothing was particularly catching my eye until I chanced upon 'Tricky Coaching: Difficult Cases in Leadership Coaching'. The title seemed to fit the bill and I was pleased to see that on Amazon you could preview some of the content. A read through the introduction was all it took to hook me in; describing a real situation where the coach felt ethically obliged to break some coaching 'rules'.

The purchase was duly made and, feeling pleased with myself, I then let the book sit on my desk where it periodically seemed to wave at me and, unsuccessfully, ask to fit into a busy work schedule. It would have to wait until semester had ended I decided. Right on cue came the call for input into the *Staff Development Digest*. This gave me something to aim for and before you could say Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries (one of the editors) I had rediscovered the joy of this book.

Joy? Well, yes. I wanted an up-to-date read with variety but didn't want a scholarly tome to wade through. The 225 pages are divided into 26 succinct sections spread over two parts. The first is concerned with thought-provoking contemporary coaching issues enlivened with a splash of research theory. This enables the reader to discover, for example, whether they suffer from 'rescuer syndrome' or as Braiker (2001) puts it "the disease to please". However, it is the second part, providing the tricky coaching cases and commentaries, which I feel really shines. Each section is written by a different coach and is around 6 pages in length. Most sections have case studies outlining the background, the approach taken, the challenge, what happened and post-case thoughts and reflections. Individual and group coaching is covered and the assortment of topics include; a refusal to be coached, coaching someone with a different agenda to senior management, a clash of international cultures, and even the impact on a team of a boss having an extra-marital affair.

I found myself reading each of the 21 scenarios and thinking how I might react in the same position. It's not so much food for thought as an all you can eat buffet. I relished (no pun intended) being able to dip into these scenarios in any order that I liked. It reminded me of parallel conference sessions; concise and to the point. It is not surprising to learn therefore that the idea for the book was conceived at a coaching Colloquium in December 2009 where "experienced and effective executive coaches…realized that [they] had an opportunity, even a responsibility, to do some critical self-analysis and share our insights with the coaching profession".

The more scenarios I read the more I sensed the importance of resilience to a coach. It's always tempting to think that others find the act of coaching or mentoring a straight-forward process and so I found it refreshing to read the honesty of the coaches; the uncertainty of what to do for the best and waivering self-belief in an unfamiliar situation. By the end I felt like I had observed a dynamic action learning set and feel sure that the contents will come in useful in the coming months.

Rating: 8/10

Recommended as an easy and stimulating read around coaching even if executive coaching is not something you'll be doing yourself. You can read this in several sittings or it has the distinct advantage of bite-sized chunks of reading and is thus ideal if you only have limited time to spare over a cup of coffee. Published by Palgrave Macmillan and available in hardback and as an e-book, ISBN: 978-0-230-28022-9.

References

H.B. Braiker (2001). *The Disease to Please*. New York: McGraw-Hill

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John Trantom has been a Staff Development Adviser at Liverpool John Moore University since January 2009. Prior to that he worked for five years as Director of a cross-institutional employer brokerage / student employability project. He has also worked in LJMU's Careers Advisory Service. Effective communication has played a huge part in each role – John is a firm believer that the workplace is a better environment when managers have an enhanced insight into coaching.

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The Modern Staff Developer

Andy Wilson

We all of us are typical of modern staff developers.
It's hard to stay on top of all the issues that envelop us.
We're Jacks and Jills of many trades and masters only of a few
One day it's Belbin, Bloom or Kolb, the next assessing NVQ.
Our role is really quite exposed we're always in the public view
And not for us the cop-out clause, "Do as I say, not as I do".
Our institutions think that we can answer everything they ask.
They want to see the smiling face and not the tears behind the mask.
They often bring us in - too late - to tidy up some horrid mess
And seem to think that we should be the first to do much more with less.
In short, without revealing all the secrets of confessionals,
We are the very model of development professionals.

We need to know our acronyms, there surely are a lot of 'em
Like *HEFCE*, *ARMA*, CAA and HEA and LGM.
There's ILM and ILOs and *JISC* and *SRIF* and IiP
And RCI and ACU and fEC and NLP.
There's QAA, FDTL, EFQM and CPD
And TQA, ESRC, *STEM*, VLE and PDP.
There's *SEDA*, *ALT*, *MASHEIN*, LF, and *CETLs*, *SCAP* and RDF
We used to have the RAE and now we're getting used to *REF*.
There's *DFID*, *OFFA*, DDA, and BME and *KIS* and *RIN;*
There's not a single made-up one, they're all of them quite genuine.
In short, and please don't think of us as acronym-obsessionals,
We are the very model of development professionals.

With so much knowledge you might ask, "Whatever can the matter be?"
The problem is that most of us are seen as bad at strategy.
If ever there's a problem they say, "Solve it with a training course"
To get them to consult us first would take a wild and willing horse.
But sadly there is no one else who talks to staff the way we do
Who understands the HEI from different people's points of view.
Who listens to the VC's words and also to the little voice
And knows just how essential people feel it is to have a choice.
And so it is essential that we all work hard on strategy,
And that is why we had that project run by Paddy, Paul and me. *
We all know rather more of this than students at pre-sessionals
We are the very model of development professionals.

To the tune of the Modern Major General's Song from the Pirates of Penzance by Gilbert & Sullivan

* See the SDF Strategic Staff Development Project at… http://sdf.ac.uk/resources.html#publications