THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT INDEX
putting personal values, leadership style, and learning power to the test

1. LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE (stakeholder expectations)

As we have already said, stakeholder response to the announcement of the arrival of a newcomer will be driven not only by past experiences and third party influences but by their stake in the future of the business.

At the very heart is **the staff community**, their learning power and the culture they experience as they go about their daily endeavours. Are they learning to learn? What learning experience are they taking into other environments: CPD, in the home, socially, further employment? Leaders will already have experiences of successes but no one size fits all and what works in one learning environment is not necessarily transferable in its entirety. The measurement and assessment of learning power and the building of capacity and confidence that will enable each individual member of staff to adapt to changing circumstances and environments requires a culture dynamic that will not necessarily be easy to pursue.

Staff expectation will be fuelled by their peers, their managers, their parents, their teachers and previous relations with authority.

No leader is an island and leadership style will manifest itself through the commitment of the **Senior Management Team** and their personal leadership styles. The sharing of the new or long-serving leader's personal vision and preferred direction should take place at the earliest possible moment, inviting challenge and accepting revision and amendment. Additionally, the team must be reminded to be mindful of the need to be responsive to the outcomes of the forthcoming stakeholder audit.

The **Managers** will probably have a different view, influenced by their experience of working with the newcomer's predecessor and the senior management team. In some cases they will be change-weary and disbelievers in fruitful consultation.

Both the **Senior Management Team and the managers at all levels** should be encouraged to express their views concerning not only the values that they would like to see encompassing the organizational environment in which they would prefer to work but also the character, as they experience it, of the wider stakeholder community.

2. THE LEADER-LEARNER VISION (personal desire/direction)

The true Leader-Learner will have taken the opportunity to amend, adapt and enhance the vision that they arrived with to take account of the preferences and prescriptions of their management and staff teams. However, in doing so, it will be important to maintain a direction that is learning-centric and puts learning and learning power as the factors fundamental to future success.

3. COMMUNITY CULTURE AUDIT (stakeholder expectation v. public, cultural and environmental realities)

Stakeholders will include the shareholders, customers and competitors. This will appear onerous at the outset and will require a representative database to be compiled but the benefits to be derived from the audit exercise far outweigh the time spent and can be conducted on the leadership's behalf by such as the Staff Association or external consultants. 'Ownership' of the programme by a group of stakeholders augers well for their engagement in the visioning and planning processes.

There are a number of ways in which audits can be conducted. They have a dual purpose: to determine what the expectations of each stakeholder group are and to match their perceptions and preferences with the realities of the business environment and its predominant cultural profile.

- **Social media**
- **Representative consultation groups**
- **Door drop questionnaires**
- **Telephone**
- **High Street Questionnaire Research**

... or an appropriate combination

The learning process will reveal a number of misconceptions and misunderstandings as well as the pervading realities. It will also enable the leadership team both to create a more engaging strategic vision and to inform their relationship management action plans in such a way as to optimise stakeholder buy-in to their future plans.

4. COMMUNUCATION AUDIT (information & knowledge transfer)

In the majority of stakeholder audits it is lack of communication and information that lies at the top of their list of frustrations. However, in today's social, digital and multimedia environments there is no excuse for breakdowns in information management and the transfer of essential knowledge. The critical issue here is to understand which technical solutions are most appropriate to each stakeholder group and how best to communicate with those stakeholders who may not have regular access to those technologies.

If the business has no history of on-line communication it will be important to create a process by which strategic and market initiatives can be relayed to the staff and customer populations should a breakdown in attendance be necessitated by such as the Foot and Mouth Outbreaks or Corona Virus.

5. QUICK WINS (audit response: immediate added value volunteered)

It may well be that the introduction of a more robust communication strategy becomes a priority. Nonetheless, to volunteer immediate solutions to easily-resolved stakeholder frustrations in the wake of the audit is an excellent way to create goodwill.

6. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (communication strategy implementation)

Whether or not, the implementation of a revised communication strategy is identified as a 'Quick Win' it will need to be worked on to ensure the longer-term satisfaction of the stakeholders.

7. MANAGEMENT MOBILISATION (skills audit: CPD)

In many businesses a major frustration of the staff team is the lack of attention paid to their personal and professional training and development. Frequently, CPD (Continuous Personal Development) has been found not to be a priority. The 'make-over' of a business that is truly Learning-Powered cannot be achieved in its absence.

We have already discussed a number of mechanisms for staff cooperation, knowledge transfer, and personal and professional development in the section on **Leadership** and whilst a Skills Audit will add value to the development of individual training and development programmes, the most significant contribution will come from the introduction and acceptance of a culture of performance monitoring and discreet observation.

8. RE-ENGINEERED VISION (teamworking/capture/distribution)

If the leadership team has followed a learning journey similar to that we have prescribed here, it should now have sufficient data to re-engineer its' vision, gain the support of the staff team, capture the imagination of all stakeholders and distribute and communicate the vision widely. It is wise to trial the re-engineered vision with stakeholder representatives, take account of their contributions and harness them to the dissemination process.

9. EMPOWERMENT (freedom to experiment)

Empowerment is an over-used, and often abused, claim in many organisations. Why? Because whilst the intention may be honourable and genuine, the empowered often find themselves without the skills and attributes to carry out the duties that empowerment allows.

In a Learning-Powered environment, empowerment needs to be matched by 'emancipation', the freedoms that come with the appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours. However, all too often these attributes need to be learned rather than being naturally inherent and offered as essential pre-requisites within the CPD curriculum.

10. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (relationship management strategy)

Stakeholder representation is vital as the business sets about creating a relationship management strategy that ensures an acceptable way of working, the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the strategic mission and decision-making processes and develops mechanisms for the communication of ideas as well as re-visiting the Complaints Procedure.

11. STRATEGIC PLANNING (bringing the vision to life)

The emphasis here is on the word *strategic.* The majority of business plans purport to be strategic but are, in truth, tactical, addressing the issues and challenges of today rather than taking the strategic approach that expects and anticipates change. Changes in national, or even global, circumstance may require political, economic, social or technical adjustment over a very few years or, in some cases, even months. Closer to home, the market may also change significantly with such as the construction of new housing estates or changes in the ethnic profile of the local population.

With these things such as these in mind, the plan becomes a much more dynamic document that maps the business's future journey, takes account of key risks and critical success factors and identifies the

milestones to gaining competitive advantage in an evolving competitive environment where the unforeseen is more likely than the expected.

12. LEADER-LEARNER'S RE-EVALUATION (personal learning journey: reviewed and redirected)

The Leader-Learner's work is never done! Nonetheless, he or she should take the opportunity, at regular intervals, to reflect on their own learning journey and re-consider their strengths and weaknesses as a leader-learner as they move step by step towards the development of a Learning-Powered organisation.

Learning must necessarily become a critical success factor as a strategic plan unfolds.

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2 DOWNLOADS: DOWNLOAD 2

THE 12 COMMANDMENTS extracted from the evidence gathered by research into the circumstances that have proved most effective in developing Learning Power …

THEME	APPLICATION FOR THE LEARNER	APPLICATION FOR THE MANAGER
Personal Values and Commitment **(found to have the most positive impact on developing Learning Power)**	The learner needs to take time out to consider his or her commitment to the task in hand before embarking on their learning journey. Strength of purpose, mind-set and an admission of personal values hold the key to success as a learner, especially when the going gets tough .	Whilst it is ultimately the values and commitment to be found in the learner that will underpin success, the manager is also making a commitment. Sustained partnership and trust will always require doing what the manager believes to be in the best interests of the learner.
Relationship Management	Learning opportunities abound throughout our daily lives and when we stumble across new resources it is important to recognise and nurture them.	Those managers strong in fostering positive interpersonal relationships were found, on the whole, to have the greatest impact on the development of Learning Power
Quality of Dialogue	Learners should not be afraid to find their own words to interpret new information and experiences and use that knowledge to formulate their own ideas.	Learning is a two-way process and whilst listening is important so is the manager's ability to motivate the learner to question and to engage in dialogue.
Modelling and Imitation	'Imitation may be the greatest form of flattery' but it is frequently helpful to model one's responses on those one admires when challenged by a particularly difficult learning experience or encounter.	Managers must for ever be aware that they will be used as examples by learners. Perhaps even more important for the manager is that this is the most important tool he or she has in their weaponry.

Finding a Language of Learning	This is perhaps one of the most widely recognised benefits of ELLI. Names and definitions can be given to the 7 dimensions of Learning Power and with them, a real understanding of who we are as learners. We can identify with our strengths and weaknesses.	The manager's role here is to add clarity to definition of the dimensions of Learning Power, to add value to the manner in which appropriate terminology is used and to be consistent and constructive in interpretation.
The Learning Environment	The learner must feel secure in his/her environment if he/she is to have the confidence to change a behaviour. It is essential to be able to make mistakes without unnecessary judgement and to be inspired and motivated to conquer them.	Here the manager can call on all manner of images and resources to provide an upbeat way of working. The manager can also address procrastination and indecision by allowing quick decision-making that will inevitably lead to mistakes being made but, provided they are remedied quickly, will be found to have no long-term effect.
Understanding Boundaries	This is about knowing when to ask for help and support and when to work through challenges for one's self.	In the manager's case, when to offer support and when to give the learner the freedom to find answers for themselves.
Self-awareness & Ownership	Simply, the underlying philosophy of ELLI, equipping learners to take responsibility for their learning by knowing how, why, when and how well they learn. Offering them the opportunity to develop their own sense of purpose and direction.	What applies to the learner also applies to the manager in their partnership role.
Sequencing Information Gathering	When faced with new tasks, new knowledge and new experiences, the learner must take control of their approach. There is no right or wrong answer, it is what suits an individual best.	Information gathering happens through purposeful learning, enquiry, activity and teamwork. Content is not the best organising principle for any appraisal or directional session.
Managing Expectation	Whilst being 'stretched' and accomplishing difficult things is an inspiration in itself, it is important not to be frequently defeated without asking for assistance.	Managers must be adept at recognising and managing expectation by calling on their creativity to build and execute options.
Recall and Reflection	Quiet reflection is found to deepen self-awareness, cement learning and make it more meaningful.	Manages must be careful not to be driven by pace and structure as they can readily erode effective learning.
Creativity	Creativity is one of ELLI's 7 dimensions and together with Critical Curiosity, vital attributes for the most successful learners.	Creative managers are found to devise clever ways of extracting learning out of activities. This is an innate skill but capable of being learned with imaginative problem-solving.