Magus Networker and interactions within organisations

People at work interact in three different kinds of ways – transformational, transactional and tacit. The first involves changing materials from one form into another; the second involves changing information from one form into another, both occurring normally through the operation of prescribed processes. The third - tacit interactions - are about people acting with other people, often working across organisational boundaries, and often when engaged in problem resolution or capitalising on opportunities. So what?

Three reasons why interactions are important The methods for increasing productivity in transformational and transactional interactions are well known, and broadly well applied. In most organisations today less than 20% of employees are engaged in these first two types of interactions, and the percentage is dropping. The opportunity to improve profitability by applying traditional methods is, therefore, strictly limited.

All this adds up to a simple conclusion – if management today wishes to improve overall productivity and profitability, then it had better focus some attention on improving tacit interactions in the organisation. There are, however, challenges involved in translating this simple conclusion into improved performance.

The tacit-interactions challenges

Traditional methods for improving productivity do not work - standardising tacit interactions is not possible. They are too varied, too complex and far too ad hoc. Trying that approach is more likely to cause problems than solve them. No sort of automation will work, and mostly technology (except in the sense of improving the means of communication) will not work either. In short, they are beyond 'management'.

But a solution has to be found, as work involving tacit interactions generally produces highly variable standards of performance. The nature of tacit interactions, and what enables them to be more successful provides some clues about appropriate management action.

People generally, for example, produce better results when they:
●   Have better information
●   Can engage in multiple, collaborative interactions with colleagues
●   Are better networked with colleagues inside and outside the organisation
●   Feel safe to develop and try innovative, new ideas with colleagues
●   Can learn and develop through doing rather than just taking in information.

This points to a need for management action that is about enabling better tacit interactions, as distinct from trying to 'manage them'. Action is needed that will break down the barriers to tacit interactions, such as organisational hierarchies and silos. Bureaucratic rules must go the same way.

Management skills should be developed that focus more on negotiation and collaboration, than traditional command and control models. Lateral working across organisational boundaries needs to be modelled by management; resource and information sharing needs the same. Learning by doing must replace formalised processes - people will only try new ideas if management signals by word and action that it is safe to do so. Bureaucratic rules do not generate new knowledge.

Magus Networker … 'Enabling tacit interactions in a sea of change'

The key is the insight that management enabling action works better than command and control approaches. The question is how to get the action started. Magus Networker was designed to do just that.

Magus Networker applications use the simple thought that it helps to plan a journey if the start point is known. 'Discovery' in this sense is critical, if the journey plan is to be based in reality, instead of wishful thinking. Hence the old saw about 'If you wanted to get to Dublin, you wouldn't start here'. We are where we are, and good-quality journey planning needs a clearly identified start point.

Another simple thought is that the people best suited to planning the journey are the people who are already 'on the bus' and who will be making the actual trip. "The problems and their causes that impair organisational performance, together with their solutions, are generally well known to the workers."

Magus Networker is unique in the way that it uncovers the real patterns of tacit interactions within organisations. It uses custom-designed databases, with question sets that specifically target the business issues current at the time of the intervention. The process begins with an exploration of the key business goals and objectives to be achieved. It continues through an initial discovery stage to uncover key insights into the real organisation. After a qualification and elaboration of the business objectives, it collects its data via the Internet, using custom-designed questionnaires. Highly interactive 'results workshops' use graphical reports depicting the real organisation, with all respondents involved. The output of these workshops is an individual and collective action plan.

In addition to the business issues targeted, and the solutions developed to tackle them, the Magus Networker process has one built-in pay-off to the organisation. Participants always experience:

- A gain in good information
- Multiple, collaborative interactions with colleagues
- Better networking with colleagues, often outside the organisation as well as within
- Safety in developing and trying innovative, new ideas with colleagues
- An increase in learning through doing rather than just taking in information.

If that list sounds familiar, it should. It is the same as the characteristics that research, noted above, show lead to improved performance through tacit interactions.

Even with the front-end research and customisation, the Networker process is fast – very fast. Typical applications are completed within 4 to 6 weeks.

The unique power of Networker stems from the way that it can be used to discover and illuminate where tacit interactions are working well, and where they are not. It stimulates open dialogue about the causes and actions needed; it leads to healthy change processes - without the need for top down, formal change programmes.

- If you need to increase and improve tacit interactions between people, improve employee engagement, retain and develop good people, use Networker.
- If you need to improve productivity, innovation or programme management, Networker will help you do it.
- If you need to get a better return on the investment you make in your people, by capitalising on all the latent talent in your organisation, use Magus Networker - it will help there as well.
- And if you need changed organisational behaviour, and performance improvements now, the speed of Networker applications will get you up and running fast!

To find out more about Magus Networker, please visit the web site at;

http://www.magus-toolbox.com/networker

Or contact Magus Toolbox at enquries01@magus-toolbox.com

"While the informal structure was undoubtedly important in the traditional organisation, today it dominates." (Champy J, Nohria N, Fast Forward 1996 HBSP, Boston)