

Engage for Change

A velvet revolution for employee communication?

Simply Summit 26th April 2012, John Smythe

Menu



- Social velvet revolutions & corporate leadership
- A velvet revolution at work – why now?
- Last millennia or new millennia workplace?

What/who is internal communication for?

Velvet revolutions.....here, there, China?



Lech Wałęsa at Gdańsk Shipyard addressing workers

Coincidental social upheavals?

The Arab Spring

Protestors gathering in Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt



Protests in Duma, Syria

Demonstrators marching through Habib Bourguiba Avenue, Tunis

Political dissidents in Sana'a, Yemen demanding the resignation of the president

A velvet revolution at work gathers pace



**Last millennia leadership
Command and control**



- Distributed:**
- Leadership
 - Intelligence
 - Collaboration

New millennia leadership

The end of the loyalty for security deal

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| ▪ Cradle to grave | → | portfolio careers |
| ▪ Loyalty for security | → | transactional relationship |
| ▪ Dependence | → | independence |
| ▪ ‘Our human resources’ | → | creative talent on loan |
| ▪ Employees | → | citizens |
| ▪ Command and control | → | well governed inclusivity |
| ▪ I left the company | → | I left my boss |
| ▪ CEO = GOD | → | CEO = Guide |

Last millennia or new millennia workplace?

Autocratic	Distributed leadership / power
Hierarchical	Flatter
Secretive	Transparent / trusting
Monolithic / central planning	Distributed
Adult to child	Adult to adult
Fear culture	Safe to challenge
Status conscious	Achievement oriented
Deference	Candour
Permission culture	Initiative culture
Bullying	Negotiative
Grandeur	Self deprecating
Clubby	Open
Elitist / private	Accessible
Formal	Informal
Serious	Sensitively humorous
Employee	Partner

What is internal communication for under command and control?

- Adviser to senior and local management on staff expectations and message appetite
- Provider of the big pictures
- Localising the big pictures
- Listening to employees
- Opportunities for dialogue
- Equipping leaders to communicate
- Celebrating corporate and individual success
- Acknowledging corporate failure
- Opportunities for corporate innovation
- And edit, align, coerce
- ?

Coercive communication



Internal communication – alignment or liberation?

A cross roads?

**FROM ASSUMPTION THAT ITS ROLE IS PRIMARILY
MESSAGING DECISIONS MADE BY ELITES TO THE
ASSUMPTION THAT ITS ROLE IS ALSO TO ENGAGE THE MANY
IN WELL GOVERNED AND WIDELY DISTRIBUTUED DECISION
MAKING**

- 1. Elites deciding**
- 2. Message forming**
- 3. Message delivery**
- 4. Message impact**
- 5. Reinforcement**

The same thing right?

Communication

- Making connections
- Sharing meaning
- Influencing mood / climate
- Setting context
- Reinforcing status quo / hierarchy

Engagement

- Opening decision making and change to the right groups to:
 - add value
 - accelerate execution
 - broaden ownership and sustainability
- = Power sharing
- Disturbing status quo / suspending hierarchy

Generalists solve complex problems

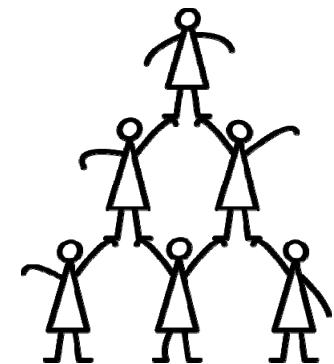


What engages us? - distributed leadership

“A culture of distributed leadership enables people at work to liberate their creativity to deliver surprisingly good results for their institution and themselves”

By:

- Inviting employees who deliver the end result to contribute to day to day decisions, strategy and change in a well governed way
- Leaders at every level who have the appetite and capability to engage people in the decision making process.



Shared power

Employee engagement – it's elective not coercive

*People engage themselves
when they are invited to contribute to
every day operational decisions and big
ticket strategy and change that effects
them and which they can affect.*

What engages people at work? – power sharing

Telling

the many what has been decided by the few

OUTCOME
Hooligans or spectators

Inclusion

Driving accountability down by implicating people as individuals in execution

OUTCOME
Willing collaborators

Selling

to the many what has been decided by the few

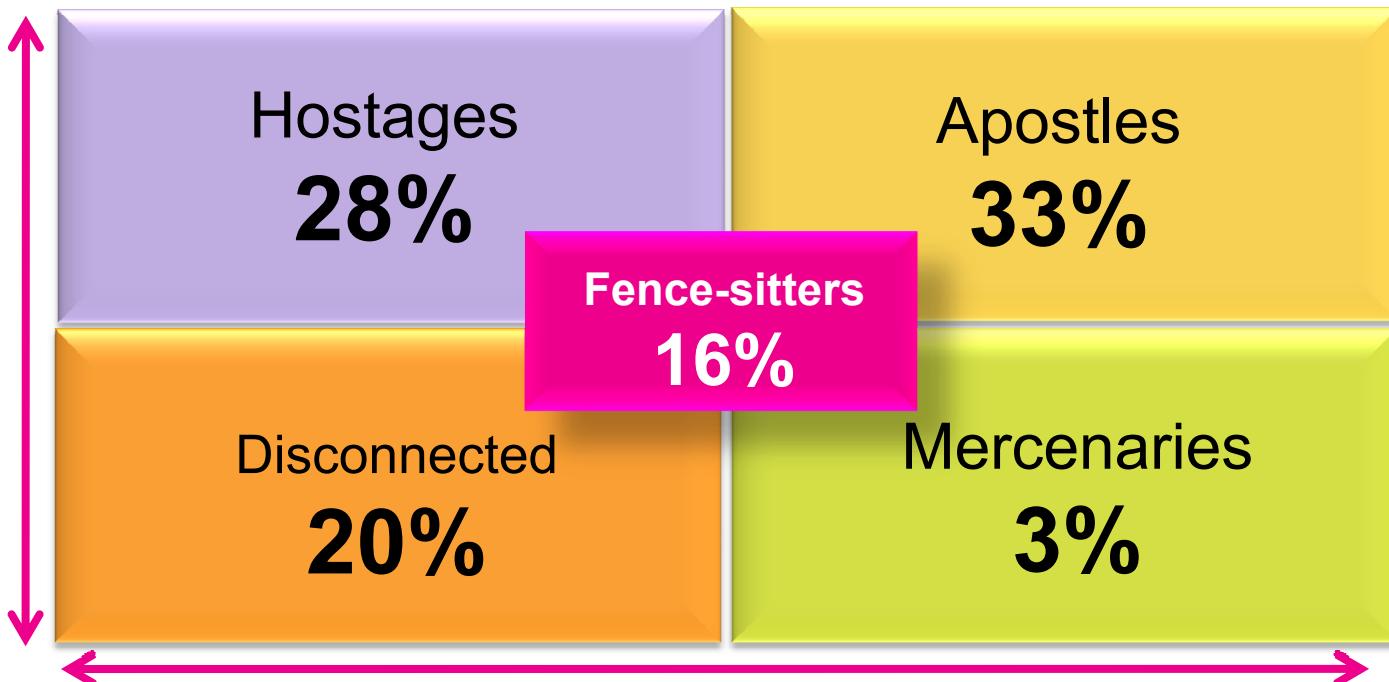
OUTCOME
Compliant collaborators

Co-creation

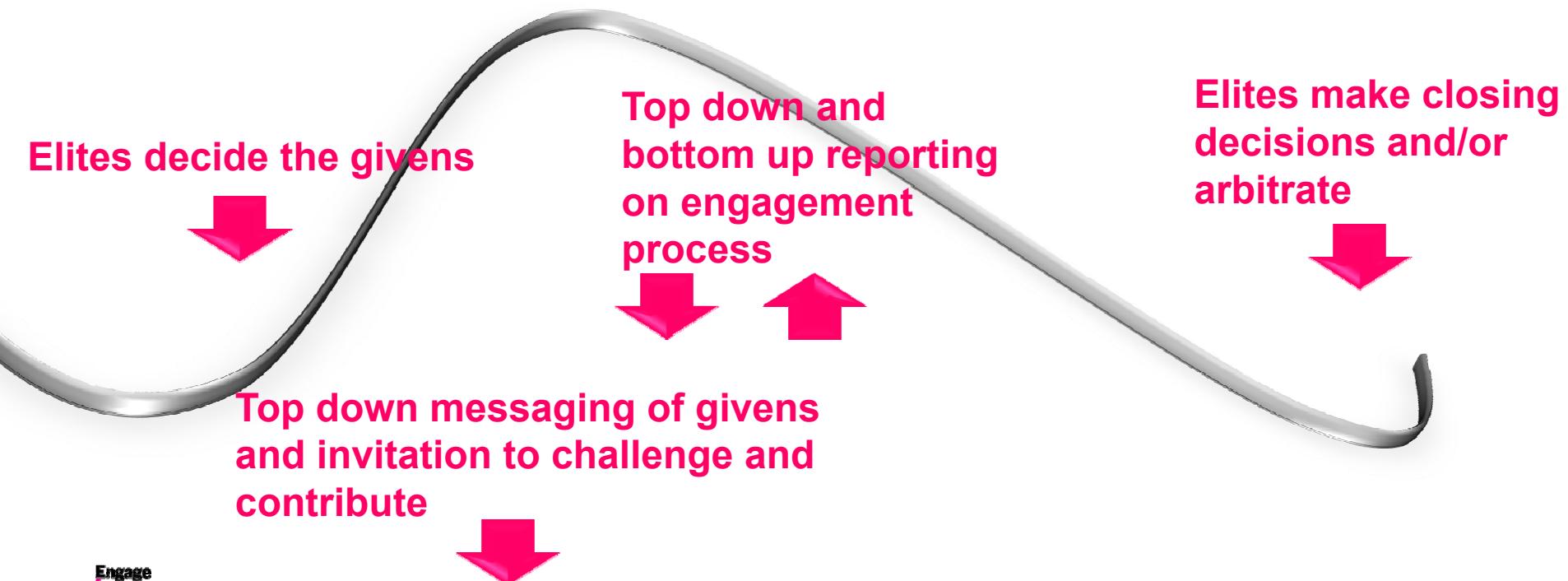
Judging who will add value if included in front end decision forming for change & strategy

OUTCOME
Personally committed reformers

Business case - the cost of the employee satisfaction industry...UK PLC

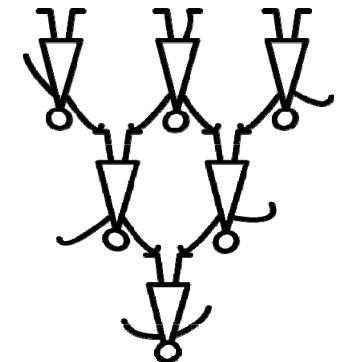


Effective engagement still requires top down clarity

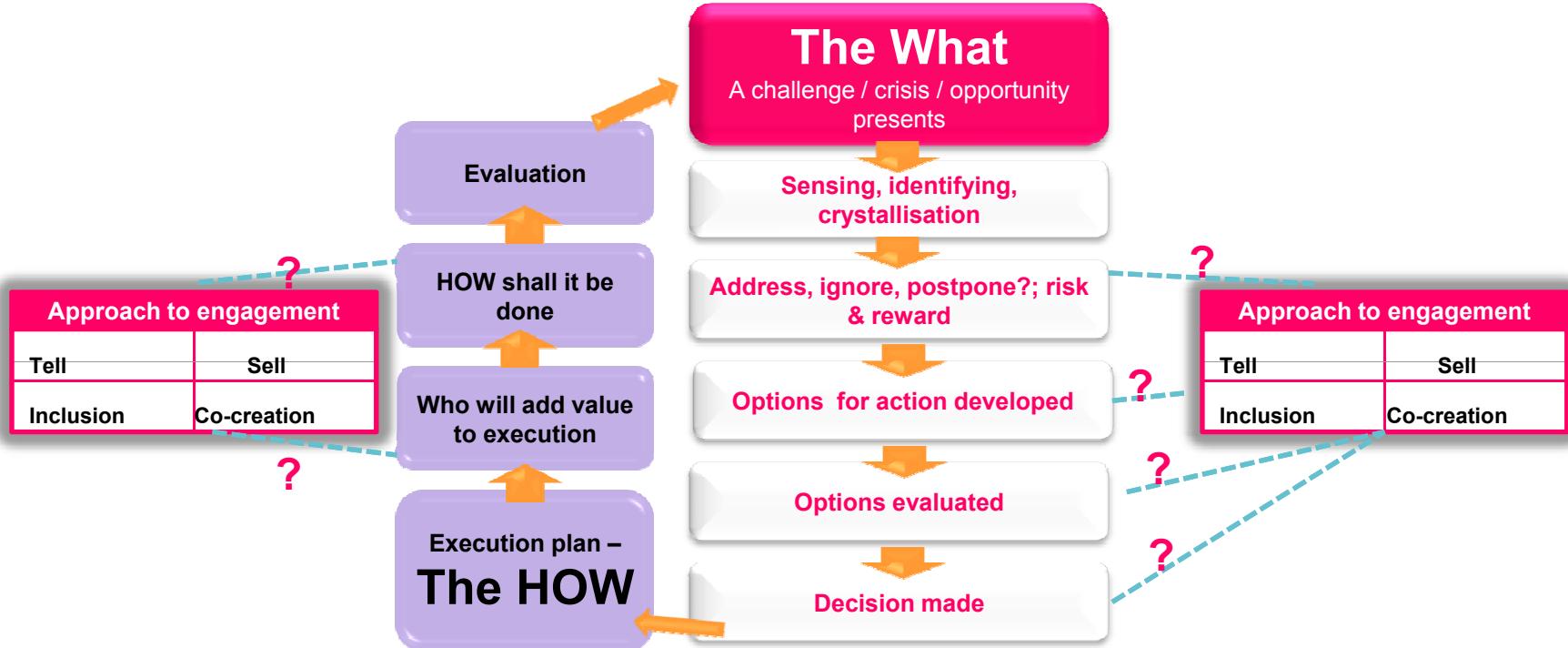


New roles for the communicator

- Advisor - **challenging the pattern** of top down, elite based decision making which must end in telling and selling
- Negotiating with elites where **others can contribute** to add value and accelerate change & strategy by understanding the **demographics** of the workforce
- Building the '**engagement challenge**' into change & operational improvement processes
- Grafting **engagement capability** into training, development, performance management & recognition



Building the engagement challenge into change



Decisions, large or tiny have a life cycle. Decision makers should make judgements about who will add value to ‘the what / content’ and the ‘how / execution’.

Building engagement skills into skills development

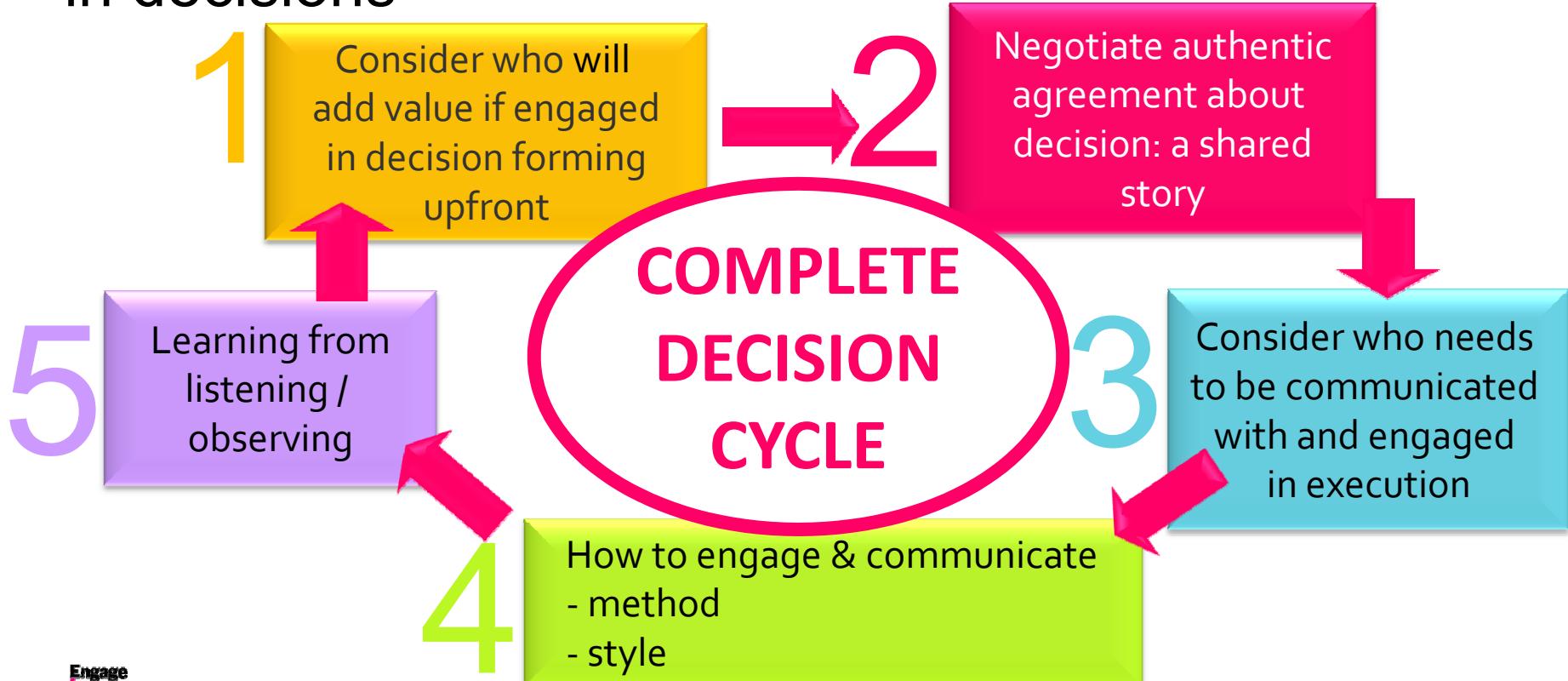
Effective engagement - three ingredients:

- **My decision making process skills:** engaging people in decision making
- **My presence:** my impact
- **My language:** “words are the key to the soul”



Effective decisions, fast execution, better relationships, culture of trust and respect.

Personal engagement skills = how I include people in decisions



Skills of leaders who engage effectively (YouGov;UK)

Creates space for teams and individuals to test and explore whilst ensuring short term demands are met (0.13)

Accepts challenge and addresses questions (0.11)

Provides insight and explanation to help create a clear context for the work we do (0.10)

Identifies the right people to contribute given the demands of different situations (0.10)

Creates value by engaging others (0.09)

Communicates clear messages about what needs to be done

Has the knowledge needed to lead our team in the work we do

Is adept at dealing with different personalities

Helps members of the team overcome resistance to change

Invites people who can make a difference to be involved, irrespective of level of seniority

Helps groups integrate different perspectives to create sustainable solutions

Stepping back

- Q) What is internal communication for today?**
- Q) A new millennia or last millennia organization?**
- Q) Is internal communication leading or lagging the leadership style?**
- Q) Starting a change in I/C's role**
 - Pilot in a business or change process
 - Pilot in a function
 - Work with HR on capability

And finally

Sir Wim Bischoff (chair Lloyds Banking Group) as a senior sponsor of Engage for Success, the government's report(s) into employee engagement – **has called for employee engagement** to be one of the key health factors to be considered by shareholders – **the velvet revolution** at work is becoming mainstream.



Is the internal communications establishment ahead or behind the wave?

Thank you.

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