
Engaged Leadership - The New Public Service Managerialism

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Abstract

In the significant challenges that face managers and leaders to reform and improve Welsh public services this article examines a new leadership behaviour emerging that combines a different set of competencies from those managers have been exhorted to develop in the past. Under pressure to reform delivery, improve resource management and develop new models of governance, premised upon better collaboration and engagement with stakeholders and citizens, managers and leaders are faced with the task of lifting performance beyond the execution of traditional process. The article explores some of the features of this evolving style of leadership as a framework to encourage managers to rethink and refresh their knowledge, skills and experience in the context of the changing needs of public services. These challenges are set within an emerging paradigm described as 'engaged leadership'. This concept is used to contrast a style of management which is open, inclusive emotionally intelligent and connected with what may be represented as counter intuitive to the traditional ways managers have tried to facilitate and maximise the performance of others.

Introduction

In the significant challenges that face managers and leaders to reform and improve Welsh public services we are beginning to see a new leadership behaviour emerge that combines a different set of competencies from those we may have exhorted managers to develop in the past. Under pressure to reform delivery, improve resource management and develop new models of governance, premised upon better collaboration and engagement with stakeholders and citizens, managers and leaders are faced with the task of lifting performance beyond the execution of traditional process. This article explores some of the features of this evolving style of management as a framework for encouraging managers to rethink and refresh their knowledge, skills and experience in line with the changing needs of public services. For reasons that will become apparent, I have chosen to describe this newly emerging paradigm as 'engaged leadership'. It reflects a move towards a relational mode of management that we might describe as open, inclusive, emotionally intelligent and connected. For many managers and leaders this represents a counter intuitive challenge to the traditional ways we have tried to facilitate and maximise the performance of others.

Before describing this change in management and leadership practice, this article will begin by focusing upon the public service context in Wales and the demand this is placing upon Welsh managers and leaders to develop a wider and more relevant skills port folio. Within a trans-national context, the challenges faced by managers in Wales are not dissimilar from those faced by men and women leading and managing services in other parts of the UK. We can of course find variations in the wider public service policy context often described as the 'clear red water' (Morgan, 2002) distinguishing the philosophy and principles underpinning public service delivery in Wales from that in England, however within a local context the challenges faced by managers and leaders are broadly similar to those outlined above.

Implicit in this analysis of some of the emerging development needs of managers and leaders is a recognition that to learn to do something differently one must occasionally unlearn or discard those practices and behaviours that no longer serve a clear and useful purpose. These manifestations of management and leadership behaviour reflect the accumulative knowledge individuals have acquired over the course of their careers to meet the imperatives of the past. It is not that they have become discredited but that anachronistically they serve another time and space. Addressing the tension between the old and new forms of management is often the most difficult and contentious stage in the process of acquiring new skills and knowledge. The sentiment associated with the ritual and tradition of long held beliefs and practices can often challenge and occasionally defeat the rational logic we use to lubricate organisational change.

For the purpose of this article, the terms management and leadership are used interchangeably to reflect the fact that while they are functionally distinct and separate, the same individual often performs both roles. In practice, managers spend some of their time leading and leaders spend some of their time managing. Deciding within a situational context when to manage or to lead is the critical factor determining the success of each (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002). This notion embraces the belief that leaders emerge often within real time and for a specific purpose as well as through more conventional processes of assignment (Hardcore, 2002).

The public service context in Wales

It is clearly evident to those engaged in management and leadership development that the current pressures to reform public services represent a burning platform on which managers and leaders are having to evolve and adapt or cease to exist. The improvement agenda unfolding across Welsh public services is all encompassing and paradigmatic, reflecting root and branch reform at a systems-wide cultural and structural level. In this respect, the terms of reference underpinning the way managers and leaders will need to operate in the future are being re-written into the evolving blue print of public service reform itself.

For those of us who can remember, this move towards a new way of doing management is not a new ritual but one that we have honoured in the recent past. During the 1990's a new public managerialism emerged in response to a decade of iterative public service reform (Exworthy and Halford). With its emphasis upon competitive models of service delivery and business transaction, coupled with explicit measures of performance and service dis-aggregation, managers were inculcated with a set of values and behaviours that challenged the old gods of Fabian paternalistic endeavour. Drawing upon private sector technologies to deliver public service outcomes became the *modus operandi* of a new generation of managers and leaders. It is in the context of this management dialectic that a new model is emerging to challenge established beliefs and practices about what managers and leaders must do to deliver improved services.

Within Wales, the public service improvement agenda has become the dynamic underpinning reform at all levels of service delivery and across all sectors. These changes are not confined to individual organisations alone but the wider public service community as a series of interacting and collaborating agencies collectively responsible for the social and economic wellbeing of the wider population. This includes Local Government, the NHS, the Civil Service, Assembly Government Sponsored Bodies and in some cases Non-devolved Government Departments. Within the context of this systemic transformation, managers and leaders have assumed by design or in some cases default the central role in making change happen. Their primary purpose is to initiate change and reform within the public service value chain and to manage the tension of maintaining systems equilibrium during a destabilising period of transformation.

In the context of public service reform, the responsibilities placed upon managers and leaders to meet the challenge of change requires that they exceed their authority and risk their personal significance to succeed where others would or have failed (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002). This venture into unmapped territory requires a significant shift in the self-perception and awareness of managers who may have traditionally considered their role to be defined in terms of control and systems maintenance.

At the current time approximately 304,000 people work within public services in Wales (Public Service Employment Digest, 2005). A conservative estimate would suggest that between fifty and sixty thousand individuals carry a responsibility for managing or leading others. This figure is growing as the imperative to improve day to day performance increases in line with the expectations

we place upon our managers and leaders to deliver outcomes. Unfortunately investment in management and leadership development remains fairly static as budgets continue to be determined by resource availability rather than resource need (Smith, 2007). Current per capita expenditure is as low as eighty pounds per head inside a number of public service organisations. This level of investment falls significantly below the European average and confirms the fact that within the UK we spend less on management development than any other major post-industrial economy (*ibid*). The disparity between the lower level of productivity within the UK compared to other countries, approximately 20%, has been attributed to the level of investment in management and leadership development.

Within a public policy context, the impact of the review of Welsh public services by Sir Jeremy Beecham and the subsequent publication of *Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-Centred Local Services for Wales* (Beecham, 2006) upon the nature and scope of the public service improvement agenda has been considerable. Identifying the key themes of *culture*, *complexity* and *capacity* to encapsulate the challenges facing Welsh public services, the report serves to reinforce the case for wide spread reform in relation to a number of critical themes. These include improving citizen focus and engagement, building robust and durable partnerships at an individual and organisational level. Also generating better use of resources to make the Welsh pound go further and developing models of governance that unshackle creativity and support the emergence of a prosperous and fully formed Welsh nation state.

The challenges that face Welsh public services and perhaps more importantly the managers and leaders who must deliver improvement include breaking away from cultures that are driven by compliance, protectionism, competition and opacity. These facets of Welsh public service culture have in general stifled innovation, disguised weak or poor performance, encouraged shortermism and constrained diversity. In relation to the issue of capacity, the lack of leadership skills featured highly within the review. Significant skill deficits were evident in the field of communications, partnership working, general management, innovation and creativity, and stakeholder engagement. The consequence of these capacity constraints were evident in the comparatively poor performance of Welsh public service organisations.

Within the review itself, Beecham attributed the gap between policy aspiration and service delivery to unnecessary complexity in the governance process, citing 'variable geometry' and the complexity of the delivery map as a net contributor to poor service performance. The prevalence of competing jurisdictions and often overlapping boundaries created a climate of 'busyness' that compartmentalised responsibility, encouraged boarder patrol and detracted from the real business of delivery. This in turn, led directly to significant amounts of confusion and obfuscation within the value chain.

Within the context of creating better and more efficient use of resources, the review recommended that leaders develop their ability to work beyond the boundaries of their formal authority to embrace the additional roles of enabler, contractor and co-producer. This expansion of the role of public service leaders was directly connected to establishing new models of governance delivered through partnership and collaboration.

In response to the review itself and the recommendations it proposed, the Welsh Assembly Government published a programme of action in the autumn of 2006. This included the establishment of Local Services Boards operating as regional partnerships between NHS, Local Government and third sector organisations within specific localities. Officers of the Welsh Assembly Government would attend partnership boards to support the collaborative process,

provide a vehicle for communication and help mature the dialogue between key players. To date, six Local Service Board pilot projects have been established across Wales to explore the boundaries and test the feasibility of this new model of working. Early indications suggest that the themes of shared governance, resource management, service integration and in some instances reconfiguration and re-organisation, loom large on the Local Service Board agenda.

A further programme of action involved developing a range of learning interventions to support managers and leaders acquiring new skills and knowledge. This has resulted in a range of new learning experiences including international placements to sub-Saharan Africa; scholarships to the J.F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, public service summer schools for up to three hundred managers and a new post-graduate programme in public service collaborative leadership to be launched in the spring of 2008.

From the perspective of public service managers and leaders, the impact of the Beecham Review and the establishment of Local Service Boards albeit embryonic at the current time, evidence an intention on the part of Welsh Assembly Government to reform in a whole systems way, the nature and function of Welsh public services. The personal and professional challenges emerging from this change process for individual managers and leaders broadly fall within four domains. They are not in themselves mutually exclusive but reflect the degree of emphasis placed upon particular aspects of the improvement agenda and the underlying areas of competence to which managers must in future aspire. They are:

- Working collaboratively and in partnership between the prescribed boundaries and beyond the traditional authority of public service organisations;
- Engaging stakeholder communities including the public service workforce, the service user, other providers and the citizen in a co-productive, meaningful relationship;
- Developing new technologies to manage the tension and dynamic between risk, governance, creativity and innovation;
- Finding ways to make sense of the change process for others and to influence outcomes and meaning beyond the realm of immediate control.

What is engaged leadership and why is it important?

The four development themes detailed above are significantly removed from the traditional fields of competence individuals have sought to acquire to develop and improve their performance. Not only do they re-direct managers and leaders towards a different set of priorities, they also focus upon developing new perspectives and patterns of personal behaviour that place relationships and human engagement above the totemic importance of organisational process. In this context, managing organisational complexity and ambiguity has become critical to harnessing the energy and intangible asset base of public services.

The concept of engagement describes the ability to step beyond the pale of organisational structure and process to interact and participate in ways that connect and engage human endeavour. To create a sense of shared mission among disparate communities and interests. It acknowledges that within today's complex and ambiguous work environment not all things can be transacted through prescribed processes, that success is contingent upon developing new forms of social and human interaction which incentivise and harness individual enterprise.

Recent research has suggested that only 13 to 14% of the workforce is fully engaged, 22% are completely disengaged and the remaining critical mass of approximately 65% strategically manage their disengagement. The consequences of disengagement for organisations are profoundly damaging. As part of its 2006 International Survey of employee engagement, Blessing White found

that individuals who were not fully engaged in delivering the goals of an organisation were likely to be 'spinning, settling or splitting' (Blessing White Inc., 2006). Those that were *spinning* were wasting their talents and skills on tasks that were not sufficiently important and below their ability. Those that were settling had already reached a plateau in the level of their contribution and were either waiting for something better or entering semi-retirement. Those that were *splitting* had made the decision to leave and were in the process of actively seeking other employment opportunities.

An estimate of the financial costs of disengagement to the Welsh economy based upon a proportion of the UK as a whole is calculated to be in the region of 1.4 billion pounds. This represents the actual cost of managing the effects of employee disengagement and the diminished capacity within organisations for achieving higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness. These costs represent the cumulative effect of low level productivity, workplace absence, a higher than average prevalence of organisational disruption and conflict, cultural inertia and insularity, recruitment and retention difficulties, change aversion and diminished innovation capacity.

The reasons why individuals disengage include dissatisfaction with the way they are treated by their line manager, pay inequity, lack of development opportunities and over-regulation and control (*ibid*). It is well documented in the research base underpinning this phenomenon that individuals join organisations but leave their managers. Ensuring individuals are fully engaged and motivated is a critical role for managers and leaders.

The concept of 'engaged leadership' is a summary description of the skills and knowledge necessary to address the four domains outlined above. Measured in terms of the ability to create impact and outcome through others, an engaged leader is defined as someone able to operate in the here and now, to manage in the moment, or as Senge has suggested, to be fully present in a physical, emotional and intellectual way at the right time and in the right place (Towers Perin, 2006).

Engaged leaders operate in real time, seeking outcomes and solutions that are delivered at the point when they are most needed. They utilise the energy and power of the present to generate outcomes that are not constrained by the past or contingent upon the future. Their engagement and connection with others is a liberating interaction beyond the realm of formal control. They build strong and powerful connections with people, places and principles to become the embodiment of the change process itself. At any one time they are the object and agent of change.

Engaged leaders are emotionally intelligent. They exercise intuitive judgement based upon profound self-awareness and knowledge of others. They are reflexive and self-learning. They use their personal and professional authority to connect others to the goals and outcomes of the organisation. They are often described as innovative, approachable, honest, passionate and adaptable (Senge *et al*, 2005). Unconstrained by boundaries and less committed to pre-defined plans, they are prepared to risk their personal status and credibility to secure change for the good of all.

In the next section of this article we shall look at the four areas of leadership competence that underpin this emerging model. They are depicted in the following graphic as narrative leadership, connected leadership, collaborative and thought leadership. Within the context of becoming an engaged leader or manager they are co-dependent themes existing within their own right but often indistinguishable in the process of operationalisation. For instance, a manager who is a good storyteller will use their sense-making skills to influence the thoughts and behaviours of others. They are likely to build and invest in relationships using the techniques of thought leadership to promote connectivity and collaborative practice. However for the purpose of this article it is useful to explore each theme individually to map the skills and attributes that constitute engaged leadership.

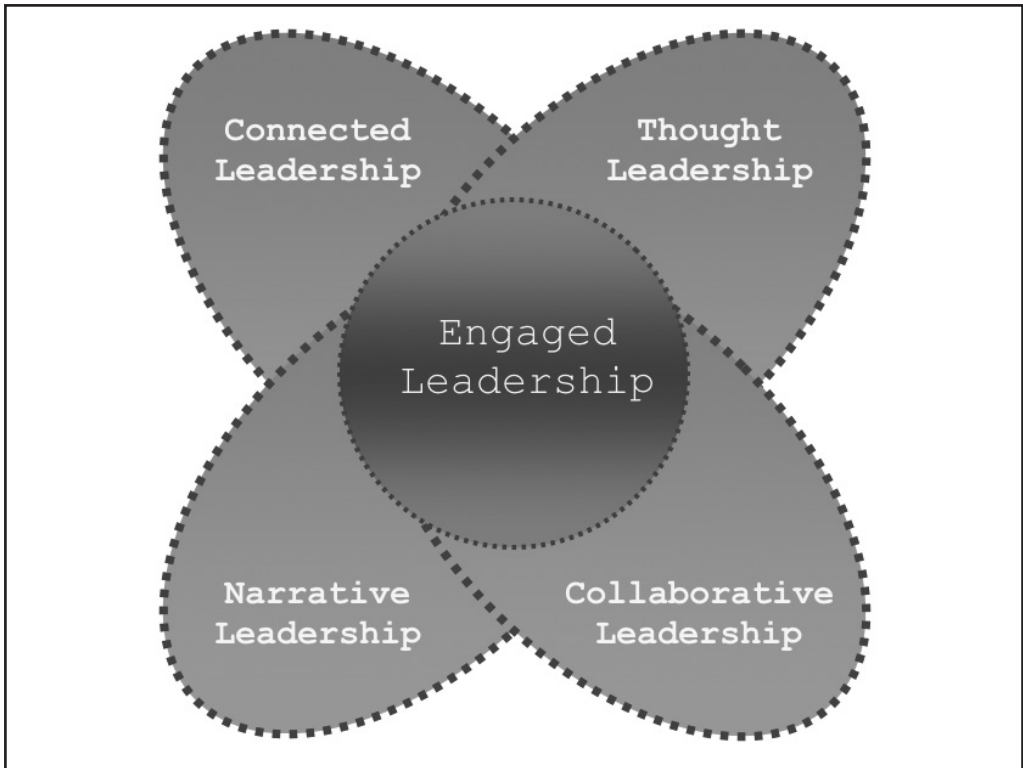


Figure1. A model of engaged leadership

Narrative Leadership

In today's complex and often ambiguous work environment managers and leaders must make sense of change for others. Narrative leaders and managers tell stories to communicate change to others. A story becomes real when different events or incidents are connected to each other and placed within a social context to signify meaning. Storytellers make sense of social phenomena for others. Through illustration, they provide the context and rationale for why things happen and offer an account of a different type of future that might be unimagined by the listener. An example of contemporary storytelling that has had a profound impact upon those who have listened is Al Gore's narration of 'An Inconvenient Truth'. With the alacrity of the *Ancient Mariner* he has on innumerable occasions told the tale of environmental destruction to enraptured audiences across the world. His story is simple, profound, thought leading and durable both historically and culturally.

Within the context of organisations and the workplace itself, story-telling can be a vehicle for inspiring and driving organisational change. Stories can help to tell the truth of organisations, clarifying and simplifying the complexity that often obscures organisational processes and behaviours. They help to expose the unwritten customs, rituals and practices embedded in the culture of organisations. Stories are sense-making devices that bring people together around a shared language and imagery. Telling a story can help to unite aspirations and promote commitment.

To bring about both cultural and structural transformation, leaders and managers must extend their reach into those parts of the organisation where control and authority is often weakest. Stories can

span both the formal and informal space (The Hay Group, 2007) inside organisation. They link the official structures, systems and processes with the culture, internal relationships and micro-politics of the workplace. Storytellers manage the tension between orthodox ways of doing things and radical alternatives. They help to build a platform for change by liberating the imagination of individuals to do things differently.

Telling stories can serve many purposes within an organisation. They can help to improve communication and promote innovation. They facilitate the transfer of insight and knowledge across organisations, building community and aiding collaboration. Stories enable individuals to externalise their fears and aspirations and to advocate on behalf of others.

To tell stories well, managers and leaders must be able to draw upon a personal library of knowledge and information to narrate an event or incident that resonates with the interests, ambitions, values and beliefs of the listener. The art of a good story is in the telling, timing and relevance. It should enable the listener to access his or her own depository of self-knowledge and experience.

To enhance the performance of others through storytelling, managers and leaders must ensure the stories they tell are well constructed, realistic and not too prescriptive. Engaging individuals in the process of storytelling is enabling them to find their own truth and meaning. The language used to narrate the story must also be accessible and not value laden. Telling stories for the sake of telling stories is not a useful enterprise it will deter listening and devalue the experience. For this reason, narrative leaders must focus upon the use of stories as a device to shift perspectives and change minds. In the context of transforming organisations though the individuals who work within them change from a management and leadership perspective is often about managing meaning. Finally, stories that are too long are likely to bore and frustrate the listener. The best stories are often of less than two minutes duration.

Storytelling is a tool of engagement. It enables those responsible for managing and leading others to build connectivity with individuals and communities by sharing personally relevant experiences. It promotes trust and awareness of others, encourages others to tell their story, and acknowledges the agentic role of the individual.

Thought Leadership

Influencing the thoughts and behaviours of others is a difficult and demanding task for many managers and leaders working within public services. This is partly because of the sheer volume of organisational traffic and 'busyness' that often undermines the clarity of purpose individuals need to do their job well. The ability to influence others is further exacerbated by the complexity of organisational structures and processes and the ambiguousness of modern hierarchies no longer predicated upon time served ritual and practices. Lines of accountability are less formal than they may have been in the past and the power to control the behaviour of others less absolute and authoritative. In this environment where issues and priorities compete for attention, the ability to influence others in what they think and do has significant currency. It requires the ability to use language and conversation to capture the attentive interest and concentrate the thought of other parties often beyond the terrain of formal control.

To affect individuals in terms of their thoughts and feelings is not difficult to achieve. A brief consideration of the conversations we have had in the past after which we might have changed our minds or altered our view of the world would testify to this. However, effective thought leadership is not a game of chance or opportunity. It requires an understanding of the direction that particular thinking habits travel and of the social thinking process itself (Polkinghorne, 1988) If we wish to

change the way people think we need to address the deep structure of our conversations with other. This is often hidden or submerged beneath the cultural veneer that determines our social interactions. In his analysis of what makes a successful thought leader, Ryde offers six forms of conventional thinking that form the basis of dialogue between individuals inside organisations. They are as follows:

- *Deficit thinking* - thinking that focuses upon the problems or weaknesses of a proposition;
- *Rational thinking* - thinking that gives disproportionate emphasis to the logical or sequential;
- *Sticky thinking* - thinking that attracts other ideas or thoughts in much the same way as word association but which is not incremental or evolutionary;
- *Commonsense thinking* - thinking that involves the application of generalised knowledge without insight or expertise;
- *Binary thinking* - thinking that encourages oppositional ideas or focuses upon the definitive differences that distinguish and separate one thing from another;
- *Equity thinking* - thinking that uses the concept of fairness as a construct upon which to evaluate and determine all other things.

Each of these different thinking technologies has significant merit in relation to influencing the thoughts and behaviours of others. They are the tools we use everyday in our conversations with colleagues to convey out thoughts and ideas and more importantly convince others of their value. Often we will use them to progress our own ideas and simultaneously to devalue or weaken the arguments and views of others where we feel we may be in competition. They will be used to advance and defend those things that we believe in and wish to share with others.

However to be truly effective, Ryde suggests thought leaders must expand each thinking style to incorporate a corresponding or alternative way of thinking. In the case of *deficit-thinking*, this must be *strength-based thinking*, encouraging individuals to build on the merits of a proposition and not just dismantle or diminish it. For *rational-thinking*, the alternative is *feeling-thinking*, an approach that advocates an intuitive and emotional perspective to balance the use of logic and rationality. To enhance the benefit of *common sense-thinking*, *insight-thinking* is used to weight the analysis of any proposition with expertise and wisdom. As an alternative to *binary-thinking*, *re-integrated-thinking* can be used to create a third option and reconcile what on the surface seem to be diametrically opposed views. *360 degree-thinking* can help to expand the narrow interpretation often given to issues of equity. Finally, *exit-thinking* can be used to recalibrate a conversation and stall the technique of *sticky-thinking* (Ryde, 2007).

Developing an a personal toolkit of thinking techniques can help considerably to influence others. The impact of using these skills is multiplied when thought leaders focus upon the process of thinking itself and the use of language in the context of maintaining a clear sense of the purpose of the conversation.

Connected Leadership

Engaging individuals as a connected leader builds on some of the key skills identified above. But to be effective, these must be exercised in the context of managers and leaders being prepared to take a personal risk to achieve outcome, to influence others towards positive engagement with a key goal and to facilitate a sense of being supported and challenged within teams and individuals (Gobillot, 2007) These skills are critical in leading others through the process of change.

Connected leaders bridge the divide between the *formal* organisation, its rituals processes, structures and goals and the *real* organisation which embodies the social networks and human asset

base underpinning service delivery. Creating synergy to harness the energy and intelligence of the *real* organisation in pursuit of the goals of the formal organisation is the primary task of the connected leader. As public service managers and leaders we are constantly aware of the importance of communication and the dislocating effect of failing to message individuals sufficiently well to foster engagement. This task is often made more difficult by a long established culture of separatism that stratifies the provision of services using linear patterns of design and delivery premised upon unilateral accountabilities. Developing connectivity across the terrain of service delivery is vital for the production of high quality services based upon the engagement of all stakeholders.

Gobillot suggests that many leaders become exceptionally good at reading and responding to the situation in which they find themselves but fail to intuit the wider context in which situational change is occurring. This is a consequence of responding almost exclusively to priorities that are localised and short term. To balance these competing interests connected leaders must rely upon the knowledge and insight of individuals who work beyond the environment they are responsible for leading or managing. They must create trusting environments to enable individuals to manage the risk of co-creation with customers and service users and instil relationships with meaning to unite stakeholders around a single agenda. Finally, they must learn to bank the trust and confidence of others by investing in relationships so that when the going gets tough they can draw upon a personal credit account of authority.

For the connected leader, engagement is secured by developing conversations that are deep structured, meaningful and authoritative. This approach rests on the knowledge that the desire for meaning and fulfilment is best met by building a co-productive relationship between the service supplier and service user.

Observing the kinds of conversations that take place within and across public services will often reveal a pattern of dialogue shaped by personal imperatives such as boundary management, risk aversion, trust deficit, short-termism and individual and organisational status. Developing conversations that are value driven, outcome focused and sustainable will help to secure higher levels of engagement with all stakeholders and lead to more meaningful outcomes.

Collaborative Leadership

Public services are inextricably linked in one way or another to each other. The strength of this connection is most obvious and real when the citizen or service user is placed at the centre of service delivery where it becomes self-evident that services are not only linked together but they are also contingent upon each other. For managers and leaders, developing an integrated approach to service delivery requires a commitment to collaborative working, the appropriate enabling skills and a capacity to determine outcomes beyond the pale of traditional authority.

Leaders and managers who display high authority thresholds, where they risk their status and personal significance, are open to challenge by others and who can deliver outcomes within an environment where the rules and conditions of play are not within their direct control are likely to prosper in circumstances where working with others is essential for delivery. Using the skills outlined above will help to provide a platform for leaders and managers to develop strong collaborative practice and venture in their aspirations beyond traditional boundaries.

However the capacity to operate successfully beyond the realm of ascribed authority where individuals have to use their personal power to influence the behaviour and actions of others requires a shift in perception that on the surface contradicts traditional ideas of what managers and leaders do. The most immediate differences are in relation to control and needs awareness.

Control within organisations is often absolute and includes resources, such as money, time, and physical effort.

The more complex and process driven organisations become the greater the need for systems of control to maintain and regulate performance. This inevitably becomes the main preoccupation of managers and leaders who are concerned with meeting the goals of the formal organisation. Similarly, recognising the needs of other organisations or stakeholders as valid and equal to one's own, challenges the legitimacy of individuals to act in self-interested ways. Putting other organisations before the needs of one's own even in the interests of delivering an integrated solution is often a necessary precursor to working in partnership. Within this context, managers and leaders often presume that because they operate successfully within the confines of their formal control they are able to achieve the same outcomes with the same mode of operation in other environs.

To operate effectively collaborators require an awareness of the needs of others and a recognition of the legitimacy of different thoughts, values and ways of doing things. Middleton suggests that most managers are trained to be effective within the realm of their personal control and not within the wider sphere of their organisation or community (Middleton, 2007). Outside the context of their immediate hierarchical control there is often greater plurality and equanimity resulting in a greater degree of ambiguousness. This is often a consequence of alternative realities and constructs representing different cultures, organisational structures and power relations.

To be effective in these circumstances, managers must display courage, humility and self-belief. They must try to brand themselves beyond their assigned role so that others value them not for the organisation they represent but for what they personally bring to the situation. This includes being able to articulate passion and to resonate with different aspirations and agendas. Finally managers and leader must be prepared to listen to the dialogue, the tone, context, substance, meaning, and the message to guide their response.

Developing a new awareness of others will provide infinite opportunities for engaging in collaboration. Underpinning one's personal leadership and management style with an acknowledgement of the difference of others will help to build a shared currency of understanding and transform the nature of the dialogue between key partners.

Conclusion

The challenge that lies ahead of public service managers and leaders is significant. Both in relation to the level of transformation necessary to bring about public service improvement and the skills that individuals will need to acquire to deliver such change. Becoming more effective in yesterday's management and leadership skills will not serve the purpose of sustainable public service improvement. This requires a different level of personal and professional development that addresses the need to be more engaged as a leader and manager in the transformation process.

The seeds of this emerging model of leadership are already germinating within public services, as managers and leaders explore new ways of working with each other, the workforce, service users and the citizen. The learning components of this new engaged model of leadership include developing narrative skills to manage the meaning of change and cultivate participation; becoming effective as a thought leader, to influence through dialogue the beliefs and practices of others; connecting with communities, to broaden understanding of the need of others and facilitate better opportunities for co-production; and finally working collaboratively to maximise service value and improve partnership working.

Generating new approaches to leading and managing organisations to promote better engagement will challenge the prevailing culture of risk aversion and the sacredness of existing public service rituals and practices that act against the interests of the wider public as service users and citizens. Distinguishing between those practices that help to deliver improvement and those that hinder progress will underpin the transformation process. Demonstrating the courage and commitment to take action in the face of hostility or disaffection will hallmark its success. Ultimately, managers and leaders must act in the service of the improvement agenda delivering insight and inspiring others to deliver.

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