

Cranfield University

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A Study Of The Implications Of Applying A Competency-Based
Approach To Performance Management In A Global
Organization

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ABSTRACT

Evidence shows that an organization will function more effectively if the various components of its human resource management system are aligned and acting in a mutually supportive way (Baird and Meshoulam, 1988; Semler, 1997; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004). According to some authors a competency-based performance management system supports the concept of alignment by defining and rewarding the behaviour that is expected and associated with effective performance (Grote, 2000; Boam and Sparrow, 1992; Richards and Howard, 2004; Hopen, 2004; Mosley and Bryan, 1992). The assumptions underpinning the competency-based approach to performance management have, however, been questioned by a number of other authors, including Burgoyne (1989), Jacobs (1990), Morgan (1997) and Day, (1988).

The motivation for this research study resulted from a perceived misalignment between (1) the desired leadership behaviour espoused by the top team members of a major UK multinational organization, (2) the behaviour prescribed in the organization's leadership competencies, and (3) the behaviour that was rewarded in practice. The study takes an unusual opportunity to conduct an in-depth study of the application of a competency-based approach to performance management.

In the first of three linked research projects, one-to-one interviews were conducted with the organization's six top team members using an approach that combined repertory grid and laddering techniques. The aim was firstly, to identify the top team members' criteria 'in use' for assessing and rewarding leadership behaviour in the context of the organization's decision to utilise a competency-based approach to performance management, and secondly, to test the degree of alignment of these criteria among the top team members. The data revealed a good degree of alignment regarding the competencies required, but a poor degree of alignment on their definitions of the behaviours needed to support those competencies. It was also found that two competencies mentioned by the top team members were missing from the organization's new formal leadership competencies.

In the second project the output of Project 1 was used in a web-based questionnaire that was distributed to the 301 members of the organization's Global Services Leadership Team (GSLT), whose performance appraisals were based on the leadership competencies. The purpose of Project 2 was firstly, to test the degree of alignment between the GSLT's views of what constituted appropriate behaviour and the views of the top team revealed in Project 1, and secondly, to test the degree of alignment of how the desired behaviours identified by the top team were seen to support the leadership competencies. The results showed a good degree of alignment across the GSLT with the top team views of what constituted appropriate behaviour but a poor degree of alignment of understanding of how those behaviours supported the formal competencies. The results also identified a degree of ambiguity within and between the competencies.

In the third and final project I conducted a series of participative feedback sessions with key organizational stakeholders based on the results of Projects 1 and 2. Using principles taken from action research, Project 3 was a joint exploration of the problems

identified with the performance management system exposed in Projects 1 and 2. The purpose of Project 3 was to stimulate the organization to make changes to improve the alignment and effectiveness of the performance management system. Project 3 identified that it was deemed unrealistic and inappropriate to try to define a unified set of competencies that could be applied in all contexts and applied to all of the different challenges facing the organization.

The principle proposal resulting from this study is the need for a modification to alignment theory. It is proposed that extant competency literature appears to be overly prescriptive and fails to take account of contextual factors and the particular challenges facing individuals. The proposed modification to alignment theory requires the inclusion of the process of dialogue and the need for the active involvement of the leadership team members in facilitating understanding and effecting organizational alignment when applying a competency-based approach to performance management. It is proposed therefore that effective leadership action is critical to the creation of alignment that ultimately leads to more effective performance at the level of the individual, the process and the organization. Suggestions for further research to explore these proposals are made.

Keywords:

Alignment

Management competencies, Performance management, Top team, Staff appraisal,
Dialogue

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Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Motivation for this research

For an organization to function effectively and deliver its desired outputs all of its constituents parts and processes must be driving in the same direction (Semler, 1997; Baird and Meshoulam, 1988; Middleton, 2004). In a well aligned system all of the separate components 'fit' together congruently and provide support and reinforcement for each other (Baird and Meshoulam, 1988: 122). In this sense the effective alignment of the individual components of a performance management system leads to effective performance at the level of the individual, the process, and ultimately at the organization level (Semler, 1997: 28).

The original motivation for this research was stimulated by a perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused, the behaviour prescribed in the organization's competencies and the behaviour that was rewarded by the top team in practice. It was also perceived that there was a misalignment within the top team, in that different top team members appeared to value and reward different behaviours.

Taken together it was perceived that these two issues were likely to create an unacceptable degree of ambiguity and misunderstanding within the wider leadership team as to what behaviour was expected and would be rewarded.

This misalignment was considered to be an important concern as the leadership team impacted by the ambiguous messages are key influencers and important role models for the wider organization.

My research study undertook to investigate if the perceived misalignment and inconsistency was valid, and if so, what could be done to correct it; in so doing the aim was to improve the strength and effectiveness of the performance management system.

1.2 Background and context to the research

The context for my research is my own organization, herein after referred to as the 'organization'. At the commencement of my research the organization was comprised of four individual lines of business and a research and development unit, detailed in Figure 1 below.

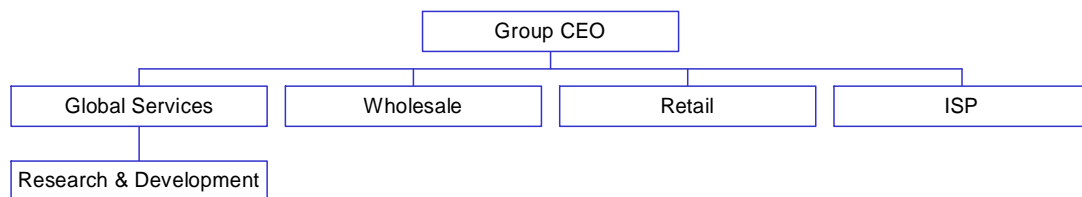


Figure 1: Group organization structure

A brief explanation of the role of each of the business units is provided in order to place their roles in context.

Wholesale is responsible for building and managing the UK telecommunication network and for providing wholesale services to external customers and internal lines of business. Global Services is the solutions and services business that provides telecommunications and computing solutions and services to 'multi-site' corporate customers; Global Services also owns and manages the global network and web hosting business. Retail is the UK corporate and consumer mass-market sales unit. The Internet service provider's (ISP) main responsibilities are to provide consumer and business Internet services. Finally, there is the research and development unit whose reporting line is through Global Services.

1.2.1 Competitive and regulatory environment

Over the last five years the organization has faced significant change in the level of competition and regulation, both in its home market in the UK and in its global markets. Under the stewardship of the previous group CEO the strategy was to run the business as a portfolio of strategic business units (SBU), all operating and competing separately. This five-year history, of separation and segregation, driving towards the SBU concept and 'initial public offering' (IPO) flotation, has created an organization culture based on independence, self-reliance and both internal and external competition.

With the retrenchment of the telecommunications industry, aligned with the organization's exposure to the massive investment in third generation mobile licences, the effects of the dot.com crash, the failure of a number of global joint ventures, and the consequences of the MCI / Worldcom bankruptcy, the organization faced significant pressure for change and shareholder pressure to reduce its £30 billion debt burden.

Two of the casualties of this pressure for change were the group Chairman and the group Chief Executive Officer who both left the company during 2002.

1.2.2 A new management team

The subsequent appointment of a new Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer led to a significant shift in both the way that the organization is managed and its strategy.

With the arrival of the new CEO the focus shifted from a portfolio of separate strategic business units in to a single organization managed by a single operating committee whose focus is group wide teamwork, collaboration and co-operation. This new operating committee comprises the group Chief Executive Officer, the five CEOs of the business units shown in Figure 1, the Chief Financial Officer and the company secretary.

1.2.3 A new strategy

The new CEO was quick to stamp his mark on the organization with the introduction of a new seven-point strategy, a new set of organizational values and a new set of leadership competencies.

The new strategy focuses the whole organization around a few key areas and identifies the top priorities for the next three years (See Appendix A on page 262):

1. A relentless focus on customer satisfaction.
2. Financial discipline.
3. Broadband at the heart of the organization.
4. A new focus for Global Services.
5. Clear network strategy.
6. Clear strategy for each customer group.
7. Motivated people.

1.2.4 A new set of values and leadership competencies

Working with a number of external consultants, including Haye, Mercer Delta and YSC, the organization has developed a new set of values, shown in Figure 2 below, to support the delivery of its new strategy.

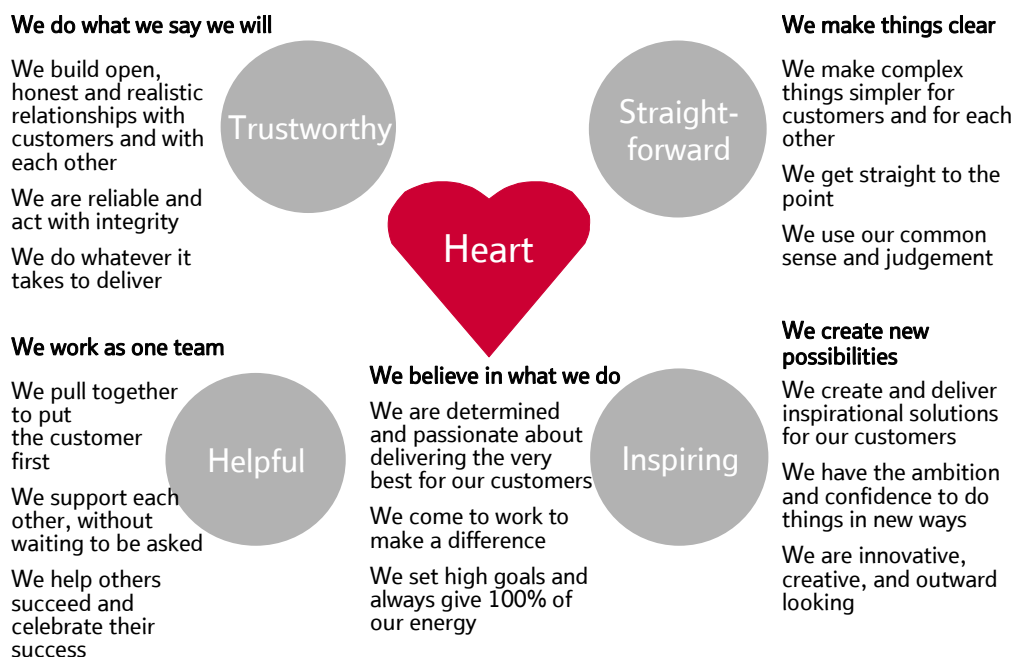


Figure 2: The new values

These new values are intended to provide both an external and an internal focus. Externally these five values represent the brand promise and internally they provide a focus for five of the new leadership competencies. These first five competencies are

supplemented by four additional competencies shown in Table 1 below (See Appendix B starting on page 264 for a full and detailed description).

Inspiring - We create new possibilities
Straightforward - We make things clear
Trustworthy - We do what we say we will
Helpful - We work as one team
Heart - We believe in what we do
Coaching for Performance
Bottom Line
Drive for Results
Customer Connected

Table 1: The new leadership competencies

1.2.5 The performance management system

The organization currently employs a performance management system (PMS) that relies on the use of an annual appraisal process. This formal process includes a two-part assessment, by the individual's line manager, of the individual's performance against their objectives, the 'what', and also of their behaviour, the 'how'.

The assessment of the behaviour, the 'how', is based on an assessment of performance against the behaviours defined in the leadership competencies shown at appendix B (A copy of the appraisal form is attached at Appendix C on page 266). In the current model the performance management system is based on a single unified prescription of behaviour that is used to assess the behaviour of the leadership team members throughout the organization.

1.3 Bridging academia and practice

Given the nature of this doctoral programme, the sponsorship of this research study by my employer and the influence of my own practitioner background and role, there is a strong practitioner thread running through this research.

The focus from a practitioner perspective was to tackle 'real-world' topical issue and to develop practicable recommendations for action that would lead to an improvement in the functioning of the performance management system.

To address the theoretical requirements, and to demonstrate that this study is of doctoral standard, I have endeavoured to fully document the way in which I have conducted the research study throughout this thesis. I have also provided an 'evidence trail', from the findings to the conclusions, in order to demonstrate the critical and analytical reasoning behind my arguments and recommendations.

In Chapter Two I have outlined the key areas of literature that inform my research and my research methods. Throughout the thesis I have referenced other authors and associated my work with the wider field of knowledge in order to demonstrate how

my findings support or challenge the consensus among 'experts' (Burgoyne, 1995: 69).

Overall my approach has been to try to ensure that this doctoral research study as a whole provides an effective contribution to both theory and practice; it is based on the tenet that "HR practice should be informed HR theory" (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 217).

1.4 The research project structure

As stated above, this research study addresses the perceived misalignment and inconsistent definition of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour.

The focus of the research concentrates therefore on the definition of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in support of the organization's competencies and strategic intent. The research does not attempt to address the application of the competencies, the assessment process or topics such as coaching or feedback; neither does it address the wider field of leadership.

In common with most research there were a number of different ways in which this research could have been approached. In choosing how to tackle this research, the critical considerations were the desire to effectively address the business issue, to maximise my learning opportunities and to define an approach and scope that could be completed within the time scales of the DBA.

After due consideration and consultation it was decided to focus on leadership behaviour in terms of the top team's requirements, the Global Services leadership team's (GSLT) understanding and the leadership competencies. These choices were influenced by a review of the literature, as a result of discussion with my sponsor, through a consideration of my own experiences, and finally as a result of a number of practical considerations including time, access and cost.

This research study started in Project 1 by focussing on the top team, as they are the people who "*cast a shadow in to the organization*" (Korac-Kakabadse, Korac-Kakabadse and Myers, 1998) and as such organizational processes, structures and values are simply little more than extensions of the self construct of the leaders of the organization. Their influence pervades the organization and sets the tone for the rest of the organization (Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998: 381).

As a leader within the organization it appeared to me that I received conflicting messages from the top team in terms of what was said, versus what I inferred through what I saw and experienced. It also seemed that there was a misalignment between what was espoused by the top team and what was detailed in the organization's competencies. The research study in Project 2 investigated the degree of alignment of understanding across the GSLT with the top team's views and the competencies. The approach in Project 2 was based on the premise that people want and need to know exactly what is expected of them and what behaviours they need to demonstrate (Richards and Howard, 2004: 38).

In Project 3 I explored the implications of the system 'as is' with the key stakeholders in the organization who have the power to change the system. The particular approach adopted in Project 3 was chosen because change has to start at the top if it is to be effective (Argyris, 1991: 106; Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998: 381).

This research study can be therefore seen to be looking at the business issue from the perspective of the top team in Project 1. From the perspective of the GSLT in Project 2, and from the perspective of the organization in Project 3.

The research questions were formulated to align with the three research projects. The structure and content of these three, separate but linked, research projects is represented in Figure 3 below:

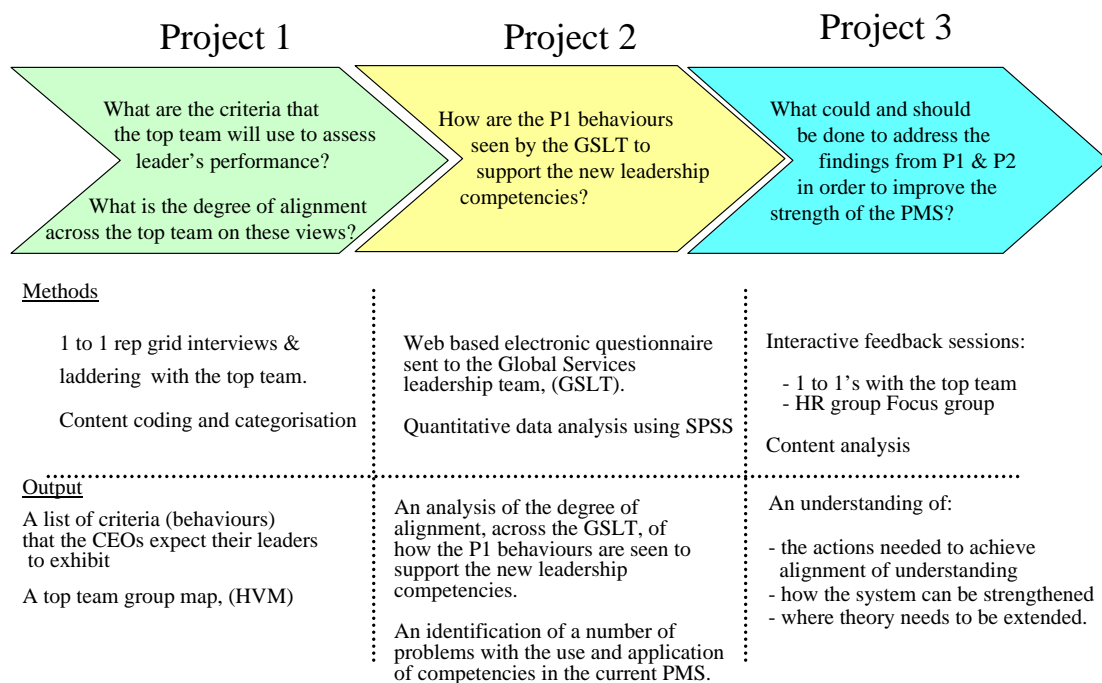


Figure 3: Research study structure

The terms representing the core concepts of this research study and that will be used throughout this thesis are detailed below:

- *Top team*; the top management team members included in this research study comprising the group CEO and the CEOs of each of the lines of business shown in Figure 1 on page 1.
- *GSLT*; the Global Services leadership team.
- *The organization*; the sponsoring organization in which this research study was conducted.
- *Competencies*; the new leadership competencies and supporting behaviours summarised in Table 1 on page 4 and shown in detail in Appendix B on page 264.

1.5 Thesis structure

I begin this thesis in this chapter by presenting the motivation for the research study and the background and context against which the research was conducted.

In Chapter Two I provide a summary of extant theory and literature that has been used to inform my research and my research design. Chapter Three, Four and Five present a summary of each of the three linked research projects. In Chapter Six I explore the implications for theory and practice through a discussion of the findings in order to produce a set of conclusions and recommendations that demonstrate the contribution of this research study for both theory and practice.

In the final three Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine, I present a full and detailed report of each of the three separate research projects.

1.6 Overview of the research design

A schematic representation of the research design for this study is shown in Figure 4 below. This figure shows the next level of detail below that shown in Figure 3. A summary of the analysis conducted in the 'pre-project' phase is shown in Figure 5 on page 8. A summary of Project 1 is provided in Chapter Three with the full report in Chapter Seven. A summary of Project 2 is provided in Chapter Four with the full report in Chapter Eight. Finally a summary of Project 3 is provided in Chapter Five and the full report is included in Chapter Nine.

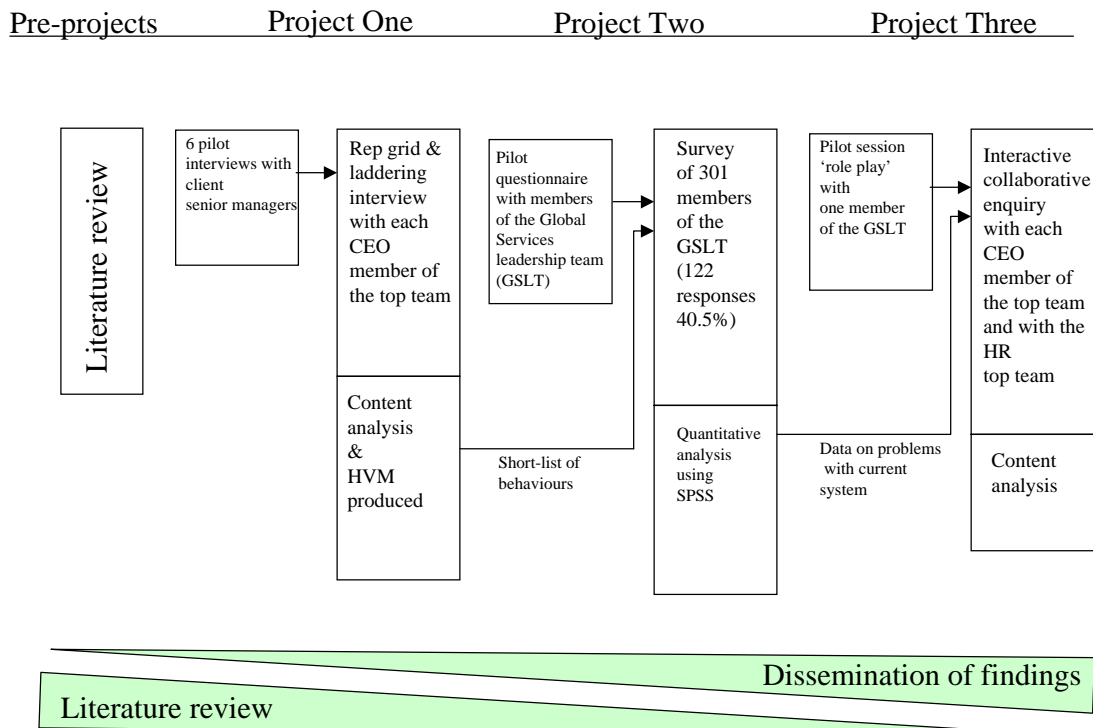


Figure 4: Schematic representation of the research design

The research design adopted involved the top team and the GSLT in order to obtain a picture of the current reality from the individual actors' perspective. By obtaining a picture of 'as is' it was hoped to stimulate the top team to take action to strengthen the system and thereby move the organization towards what 'should be' and what 'could be' (Senge, 1990: 9).

1.7 Literature review

The literature review is presented in Chapter Two; Figure 5 below provides an illustrative (not exhaustive) summary of the areas reviewed. The six main elements shown in the figure; alignment / strong system, competency-based approach to performance management, personal construct theory, (PCT), values and decision making approaches are the main areas of literature discussed, in detail, in Chapter Two.

It should be pointed out that prior to starting the fieldwork I was not fully aware of all of the areas of literature that would inform my research. In the spirit of action research (Eden and Huxham, 1996) I revisited the literature between each project and between each intervention within each project to identify confirming and disconfirming evidence related to my conclusions.

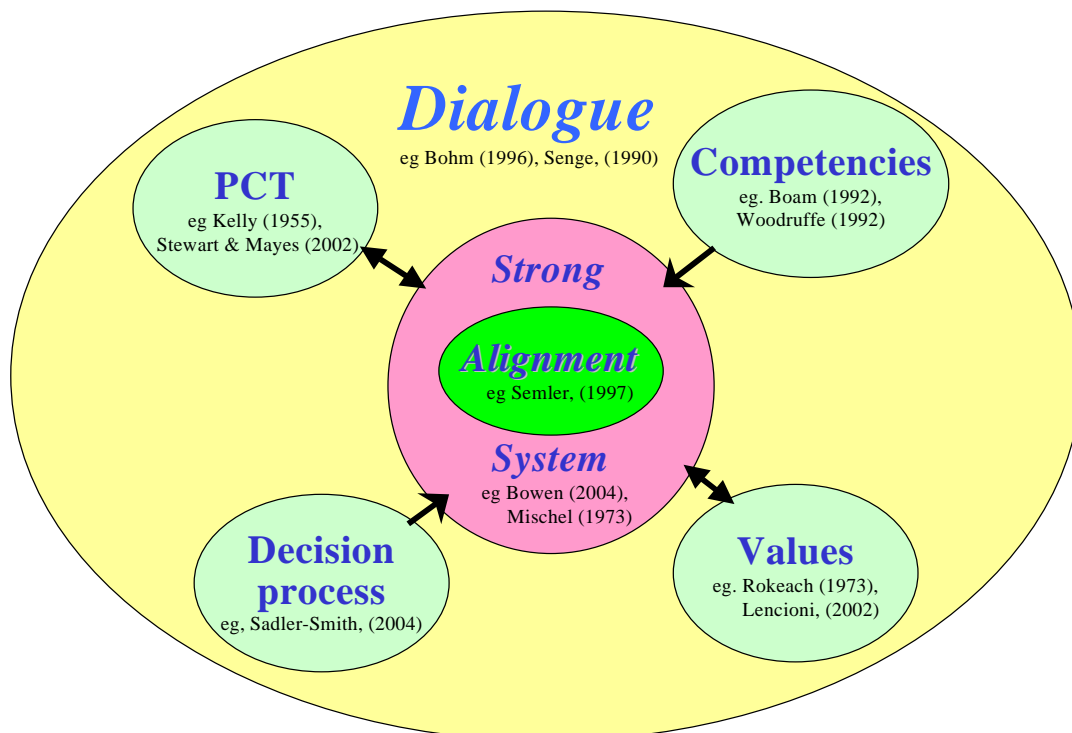


Figure 5: Illustrative summary of the literature review

As a result of the findings in Project 3 it was necessary to revisit the literature specifically to investigate the implications exposed by my findings and it was at this point that I included an understanding of the literature on 'dialogue'. Dialogue is represented in Figure 5 as the 'glue' underpinning all of the other components.

No literature was found that directly addressed the research question for this doctoral research study in relation to creating an aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in the context of using a competency-based approach to performance management. Figure 5 illustrates that there are a number of areas of literature that inform my research and my research design. The bringing together of these separate areas (it is believed for the first time), is one of the contributions of this research study.

In the next chapter I provide a detailed review of extant literature informing my research followed by three chapters summarising each of the three research projects.

Chapter Two - Extant theory informing my research

In this chapter I present a review of the various areas of extant theory and literature that inform my research and my chosen research protocols.

The key areas of extant theory and literature that inform my research are:

- Alignment theory and the creation of a 'strong' HR performance management system.
- The competency-based approach to performance management; the use of competencies and defined behaviours.
- Personal construct theory and the way in which an individual's 'reality' and understanding is formed through their own experiences - leading to multiple realities.
- Values literature and the way in which values influence the selection and application of behaviour.
- Decision-making styles; *analytical*, *intuitive* and *integrated*.

I close this chapter with a summary of the implications of extant theory and literature for my research.

2.1 Alignment theory

Organizations are constructed of component parts that interact (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 22). These parts can fit together well and function effectively, or they can fit together poorly and lead to problems and disfunctions, that leads to performance below potential (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 22).

For an organization to function effectively and deliver its desired output, all of its constituents parts and processes must be driving in the same direction (Semler, 1997; Baird and Meshoulam, 1988; Middleton, 2004). A well aligned system is one in which all of the separate component parts and processes 'fit' together *congruently* and provide support and reinforcement for each other (Baird and Meshoulam, 1988: 122).

Congruence in this sense is defined as "*the degree to which the needs, demands, goals, objectives and/or structures of one component are consistent with the needs, demands, goals, objectives and/or structures of another component*" (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 29). Effective alignment therefore can be seen to be "the achievement of congruency where all parts and functions of an organization work towards the same purpose" (Fonvielle and Carr, 2001: 4).

Organizational alignment is a descriptive concept referring to the extent to which the various interdependent organizational elements combine to create a synergistic whole that makes it possible to achieve the goals espoused by the organization. It is a measure of degree expressed as a correlation ranging from complete opposition (-1.00) to perfect harmony (+1.00) (Semler, 1997: 28). At the individual level it is a measure of "the degree to which the behaviour of each employee supports the organization's key goals" (Robinson and Stern, 1997).

The basic hypothesis underpinning alignment theory is that "other things being equal, the greater the total degree of congruence or fit between the various components, the more effective will be the organization" (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 25); effectiveness being defined as the degree to which actual organization outputs at individual, group and organization levels are similar to expected outputs as specified by management (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 25).

Alignment theory explains how the creation of high-performance work systems results from the creation of internal consistency (Quiros and Rodriguez, 2005: 2) and how alignment is a necessary condition for organizational effectiveness (Fonvielle and Carr, 2001: 4). Alignment theory builds on the original work of Nadler and Tushman on system congruence (1988) who proposed that organizations need to be internally consistent in order to function efficiently and that this consistency can be achieved by aligning interdependent elements towards the same ends.

2.1.1 Alignment and the HR system

World-class organizations value and invest in their people through a number of activities including the strategic alignment of human resource policies and practices (Oakland and Oakland, 2001: 776). A good fit between the organization's needs and the results of the HR practices leads to organizational effectiveness, (Cook and Ferris 1986; Legnick-Hall and Legnick-Hall 1988; Milliman et al 1991; Kozloski et al 1993 as referenced in Jackson and Schuler 1995). HR practices and performance management systems enhance firm performance when they are internally aligned with one another to manage employees in a manner that leads to competitive advantage (Delery and Doty, 1996).

In well-aligned organizations top teams apply effective performance management practices to create systematic agreement among strategic goals, (vision and values), behaviours, (competencies), and the performance and reward systems (Semler, 1997: 23). In this way effective alignment helps increase performance of individuals, processes and the organization as a whole (Semler, 1997: 24) and in this sense alignment can be seen to be the *axial principle* of high performance organizations (Guttman, 2004: 20).

Alignment is both a process and an end state; it is the process whereby the organization's leadership establishes and communicates the business priorities and establishes appropriate support systems and process to deliver these priorities (Faidley, 1996: 14). And it is the end-state that an organization should strive to achieve (Semler, 1997).

An effectively aligned performance management systems can be seen therefore as a vehicle for facilitating the alignment of behaviour with the strategic aspirations of the organization (Fonvielle and Carr, 2001: 7). Performance management systems are at their most effective therefore when they are aligned to support operational goals (Britton and Christian, 1994). The better the alignment the higher the organization performance (Baird and Meshoulam, 1988: 122).

The Watson Wyatt Work study in 2002 showed that organizations that do a good job of conveying to employees how their individual contribution impacts on the business

enjoy a 21% total return to shareholders over three years, compared to only 5% total return for those companies that do not (2003: 10).

Research evidence also shows however that using HR practices to create employee alignment can only improve the bottom line, and be a source of sustained competitive advantage, when they support the creation of competencies that provide value to the organization (Wright, 2001 as reported in Collins and Clark, 2003: 740). The success or failure of a firm is not likely to rest entirely on its human resource practices, however these practices are likely to have a significant effect on the organization's performance (Schuler and Jackson, 1987: 217).

2.1.2 Alignment and the reward system

An important aspect of alignment is that of rewards and the reward system (Middleton, 2004: 330). Whilst motivation can be both intrinsic and extrinsic, it is especially important to pay close attention to the design of extrinsic reward systems because extrinsic rewards need to be administered in such a way as to ensure that employees are focussing their energies on the desired behaviours (Schneider, Brief and Guzzo, 1996: 17). "The policies that reward, punish and offer incentives to people create a motivational structure within organizations that exerts a great influence on individual and team behaviour" (Semler, 1997: 28). "Whilst leaders cannot control the actions of individuals directly, they can implement organizational structures in the form of reward systems that encourage or discourage specific behaviours" (Semler, 1997: 29).

Effectively aligned reward systems help top management communicate by deed as well as word and to "put their money where their mouth is" (Schneider et al, 1996: 17). As will be discussed later, an individual's personal values influence their choice of behaviour, but a well designed effective performance management system (PMS) can help facilitate acceptance of the behaviours specified as necessary and appropriate (Semler, 1997: 35). Conversely, misaligned reward systems have been a major factor in the failure of many organizational change efforts (Britton and Christian, 1994). "By not aligning reward systems you often get behaviour that you were not looking for" (Welch, 2001: 387). Reward systems need to be specifically designed therefore to provide incentives towards some behaviours and disincentives towards others (Semler, 1997: 34). As Gerstner comments "...you cannot transform institutions if the incentive programs are not aligned with your new strategy" (Middleton, 2004: 329).

In the context of the business problem addressed by this research study it can be seen that the measure of alignment is the degree to which the top team's expectations, the organization's values, the competencies and the reward system work together congruently to facilitate the delivery of the organization's vision (Semler, 1997: 29). Figure 6 below identifies the elements within the organization's PMS that need to be aligned to help ensure that people understand how their behaviour supports the organization's vision and values.

By aligning performance expectations, feedback and reward systems to people requirements, performance management may foster employee behaviours that are consistent with business opportunities and the need for strategic and operational effectiveness (Haines, St-Onge and Marcoux, 2004: 146). In this sense effectively

aligned systems get the best out of people by aligning everyone to create value for customers and shareholders (Dell, 1999: 115).

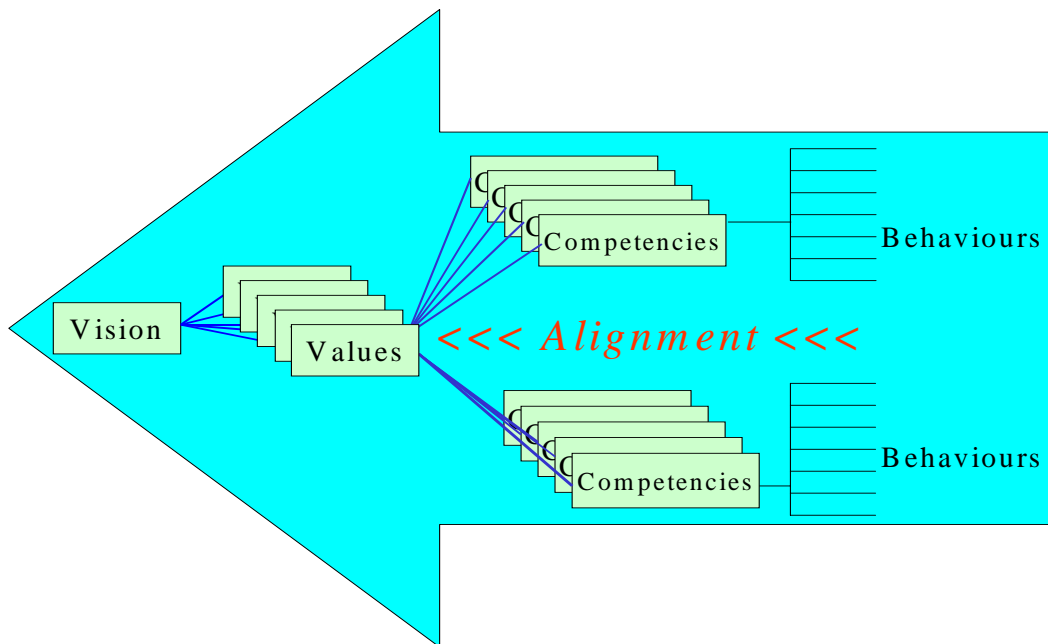


Figure 6: Alignment of vision, values, competencies and behaviour
(Adapted from Hopen 2004: 17)

2.1.3 Alignment and the creation off a strong system

Strong alignment requires agreement of the component parts, rather than conflict (Semler, 1997: 23). Just as misalignment of the wheels of a car cause inefficiency in its driver's efforts to move in a straight line, misalignment of an organization's internal guidance systems causes inefficiency in its attempts to achieve its goals (Semler, 1997: 24). Alignment is the antithesis of ambiguity which Meyerson and Martin define as "that which is unclear, inexplicable, or capable of multiple meanings" (Golden, 1992: 23).

From a total system perspective a number of components need to come together; top team rhetoric and action, and the human resource processes and system. Working together the top team and the HR processes can create alignment in the systems components (Semler, 1997: 38) leading to congruence and effective performance.

By aligning the organization's top team and HR processes in this way organizations can systematically create alignment between the behaviour espoused in support of the vision and values, the behaviours observed and modelled, and the behaviours rewarded, leading to a strong alignment between the key components of the performance management system. In this sense a system with strong alignment can be defined as a 'strong system' (Mischel, 1973: 276; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 207).

A well-aligned strong system has both 'internal coherence' and 'strategic congruence' (Quiros and Rodriguez, 2005: 7). The development of a strong system at the individual employee level supports performance management at the organizational

level (Graham, 2004: 5) and is the best way to avoid inefficient and ineffective employee effort.

People need and want to know exactly what is expected of them; what behaviours they need to demonstrate (Richards and Howard, 2004: 38). A strong system creates a clear and aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour for all those being managed within the system (Mischel, 1973). In a strong system desired behaviour is fostered and rewarded, inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated, and all possible policies and practices are put in place to support sustained high performance (Graham, 2004: 46). In this sense effective performance in a strong system is facilitated by the appraisal and compensation practices that the organization uses to elicit and reinforce desired behaviours (Latham and Wexley, 1981).

A strong system helps everyone to 'see' the situation similarly, induces uniform expectations about what constitutes appropriate behaviour, provides clear expectations about rewards and incentives for the desired behaviour, and induces compliance and conformity through social influence (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 213). A strong system can be seen as a vehicle to send clear messages to employees about what is important to the organization and what the organization expects (Britton and Christian, 1994: 45), thus improving the likelihood that those behaviours will actually be demonstrated (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 207).

2.1.4 Consistency and consensus

In order to function effectively in a social context and to develop an accurate understanding about a situation an employee must have adequate and unambiguous information (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 208) and they need to know what is expected of them (Faidley, 1996: 16). A strong system provides unambiguous consistent messages about what constitutes appropriate behaviour leading to consensus across the target group (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 208).

A strong system has consistency, and individuals desire consistency in organizational life (Kelley as referenced in Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 211). Any lack of consistency in communication can lead to particularly intense cognitive dissonance (Siehl, 1985). Inconsistency in communication occurs when the recipient receives different messages, which relate to the same subject, but which are incongruent or contradictory. In the context of this research study this can be equated to the experiences of the Global Services Leadership Team (GSLT) members witnessing different members of the top team rewarding behaviour that appears to be 'at odds' with the behaviour prescribed in the PMS.

Three types of consistency are required. One is between what leaders say and what employees actually conclude from their perception of what is modelled and rewarded - the difference between what is espoused and what is inferred (Martin and Siehl, 1983). The second element is internal consistency between the HR practices themselves (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 211). Internal alignment among practices should result in performance advantages for firms because the different practices work together to elicit, reward and control the appropriate behaviours aligned to the values and vision of the organization (Ulrich and Lake, 1991). The third and final element of consistency referenced in the literature is stability over time. Behaviours

and their associated rewards need to remain stable when the operating conditions remain stable (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 211). In organizations where practices have been in place for a long time there is usually a stronger alignment of understanding and agreement among employees as to what is expected of them (Rousseau and Wade-Benzoni, 1994; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 208).

Consensus results when the consistency factors referenced above are present and when there is agreement among employees of the behaviour-reward relationship (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 212). Several factors can help foster consensus amongst employees and can influence whether individuals perceive the same message about what constitutes appropriate behaviour. Among these are agreement among message senders (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). In addition consensus is helped when there is a perceived fairness in the PMS, in as much as employees understand the rules by which they do or do not get rewarded.

Overall agreement among the top team can help foster greater consensus among employees since it allows for more visible, relevant and consistent messages to be conveyed to employees (Britton and Christian, 1994: 45) and because individuals view the top team as strongly agreeing amongst themselves on what constitutes appropriate behaviour this also helps to create consensus (Fiske and Taylor, 1991).

Consistency and consensus are distinct but interrelated concepts. In a strong system individuals throughout the organization experience consistency in what is espoused, modelled and rewarded, and as a result consensus is more likely to be fostered (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 212). Weak ambiguous systems conversely create confusion, disillusionment and other negative reactions (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 214).

2.1.5 Rhetoric and reality in the PMS

Figure 7 below identifies the relative weighting and importance of what leaders say, what they demonstrate through their behaviour and what they reinforce. This model shows that how leaders behave is twice as impactful as what they say, and what they reward has three times the impact of what they say (Harrison, 2005).

Many examples exist of the ways in which leaders say one thing and do another; one example where this becomes apparent is where leaders advocate the use of a participative management style but then subsequently exclude organization members from the decision making process. The impact of this behaviour is that there is a misalignment between the behaviour espoused and the behaviour modelled, and people will take twice as much notice of what they see and experience as against what they are told.

Theory in use therefore is more impactful than theory espoused, and organization reality is what people see and experience rather than what they are told (Mangham, 1990: 106). It can be seen therefore that the benefit of a well-aligned strong performance management system is that it acts as a multiplier of what is espoused by the leadership team (Semler, 1997: 35; Finegan, 1994).

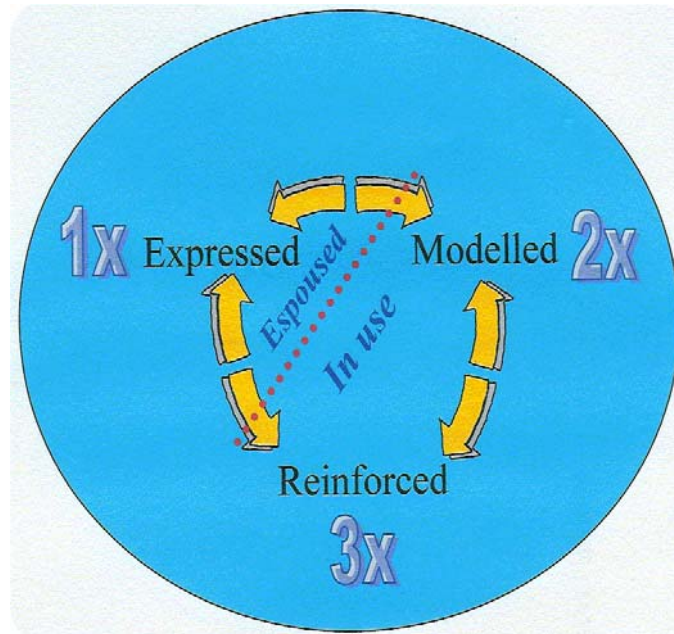


Figure 7: The 'Express', 'Model' and 'Reinforce' model
 (Adapted from Harrison 2005)

To summarise, alignment theory identifies the benefit to be derived from ensuring that what leaders espouse, what they model, and what they reward are all aligned. To successfully implement a new set of competencies there needs to be strong alignment between the behaviours espoused and the behaviours rewarded, both by the top team and the formal performance management system (Lencioni, 2002; Brunson, 1985; Finegan, 1994). A competency-based approach to performance management makes the behaviour requirements explicit. I will explore this in the next section.

2.2 Competency-based approach to performance management

A strong system that aligns the behaviour of individuals in support of the organization's vision and strategy recognizes the fact that individual performance is the primary driver for ensuring that the organization's vision and strategy are achieved (Grote, 2000: 20). An approach to performance assessment and reward that details the leadership behaviours that top management deem are associated with effective performance shows the organization what 'lever's to pull' (Boam and Sparrow, 1992). Taking this approach affords organizations the opportunity to sustain high levels of performance by bringing together and integrating the way individuals are motivated to perform and are rewarded for that performance (Boam and Sparrow, 1992: 13). In this sense "It is the organization's leaders responsibility to set the vision and to be clear about what success looks like" (Hughes in Trapp, 2001: 34). They then need to communicate this to the leadership team by defining the particular behaviours that are deemed necessary to achieve the vision of the organization (Richards and Howard, 2004: 38), and by aligning the reward system to promote the desired behaviours (Hopen, 2004: 19).

Taking this focus recognises the vast opportunity for organizational progress through a development of individual ability (Mosley and Bryan, 1992: 156) but requires the active involvement of the top team in defining what good (behaviour) looks like.

Boyatzis's book "*The Competent Manager*" (1982) triggered the popularity of the term 'competency' (Woodruffe, 1991). His work looked at how managers behave in their jobs and he uses the following definition for competency "*an underlying characteristic of a person. It could be a motive, trait, skill, or an aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses*" (Boyatzis, 1982: 1). Woodruffe argues however that this definition seems to cover pretty well anything, but that it avoids getting to the root of the concept. To simplify and clarify matters Woodruffe (1991) applies the following meaning:

First, it can be used to refer to areas of work at which the person is competent. This is the job-related sense of the word, and he calls these *areas of competence*.

Second, it is used to refer to the behaviours that lie behind competent performance. This is the person-related sense, for which he uses the word *competency*.

Woodruffe defines a competency as "*a set of behaviour patterns that the incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform its tasks and functions with competence*" (Woodruffe, 1992: 17).

In this sense 'competencies' are the behaviours needed to perform a given task, whilst 'competence' is the ability and willingness to perform that task (Burgoyne, 1989: 57).

Both Kanter (1989) and Senge (1997) have pointed to the need for effective ways of managing the development of competence. Kanter (1989) demonstrated that the most successful companies in the United States were those that paid most attention to constantly training and developing their employees, and that a fundamental source of high productivity and competitive advantage was the ongoing development of competence throughout the organization. The competence of managers is seen to be a key influence on the return that an organization can secure from its investment in both human and material capital (Mangham, 1986: 6; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990: 82).

For the purpose of my research I will apply the following meanings:

- **Behaviours** - these are observable actions that constitute the way people actually operate on a daily basis.
- **Competencies** - clusters of behaviours that are grouped together to form categories of behaviours that go together to create a common purpose, e.g. a focus on bottom-line, a focus on customers or a focus on people. (A competency is a single cluster of behaviours).
- **Competence** - the ability and willingness to behave in accordance with the behaviour prescribed within the competencies.

2.2.1 Competencies in context

The increasing awareness of the benefit of managing human resources proactively and aligning reward systems to corporate strategy has led to an increasing focus on the creation of competency frameworks (Morgan, 1988). These frameworks, which are used to motivate staff towards desired behaviour, should be derived from, and be supportive of, the business strategy (Mosley and Bryan, 1992: 147).

Over the past few years there has been increasing recognition however that there is a need to match the competencies to the business context, and that as conditions change so does the importance of different competencies (Boam and Sparrow, 1992).

Figure 8 below identifies how the importance of competencies changes over time; *emerging competencies* are those which support the path that the organization has chosen to follow, *maturing competencies* have played an important role in the past but become increasingly less relevant in the future. *Transitional competencies* come in to importance for a period of time, for example 'change management' competencies when new projects are started or new strategic directions chosen. Finally *stable competencies* that remain at the heart of effective performance despite changes in the organization's strategic direction.

When a business is pursuing a growth strategy it needs people who are likely to abandon the status quo and adapt their strategies and goals to the market place (Schuler and Jackson, 1987: 207). In environments where the fast-changing knowledge and expertise required is found on the front-line, leaders need to adopt different behaviours to capture this knowledge (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1994: 81).

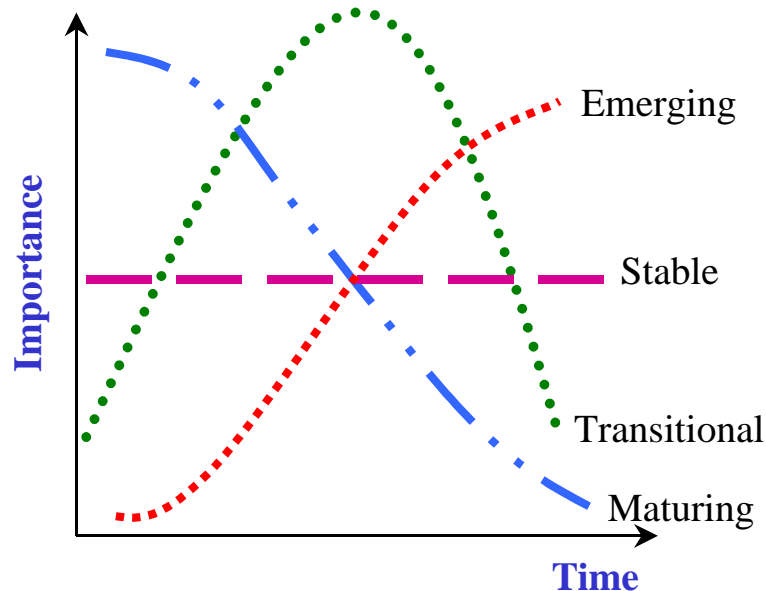


Figure 8: Competency life cycles

(Adapted from Sparrow and Boam 1992: 181)

It can be seen therefore that an organization's chosen competencies need to reflect the particular challenges faced by the organization and the context in which they arise

(Boydell, Burgoyne, Pedler and Ryder, 2004: 33). Thus employees may be asked to exhibit different behaviours over time (Schuler and Jackson, 1987: 217). For the systems to remain strong the top team must respond to these needs and align their rhetoric and the reward system in such a way as to encourage leaders to display the required competencies (Boyatzis, 1982).

It is critically important, therefore, to continually identify those competencies that are required to enable leaders to become competent in their own environment so that they are able to model them and conform to the top team's expectations (Biddle, 1979). In this way leaders can increase their effectiveness by systematically melding their behaviour with the selected competitive strategy (Schuler and Jackson, 1987).

Evidence shows that if the top team is able to articulate what competencies it needs from its leaders, it will not only be able to let the leadership community know what is expected of them, but it will also be able to hire the most appropriate people (Mangham, 1986: 6). Evidence also shows that if the top team members are all in agreement as to what behaviours leaders need to display to deliver the organization's strategy then they are more likely to be consistent in their decision to develop and nurture these behaviours (King, Fowler and Zeithaml, 2001: 95). The top team's requirements can be used therefore to drive and align the HR processes with the business strategy, and in so doing, create a strong system. In this sense it can be seen that the key human resource practices need to work together to generate and reinforce the desired behaviours (Schuler and Jackson, 1987: 217), see Figure 9 below.

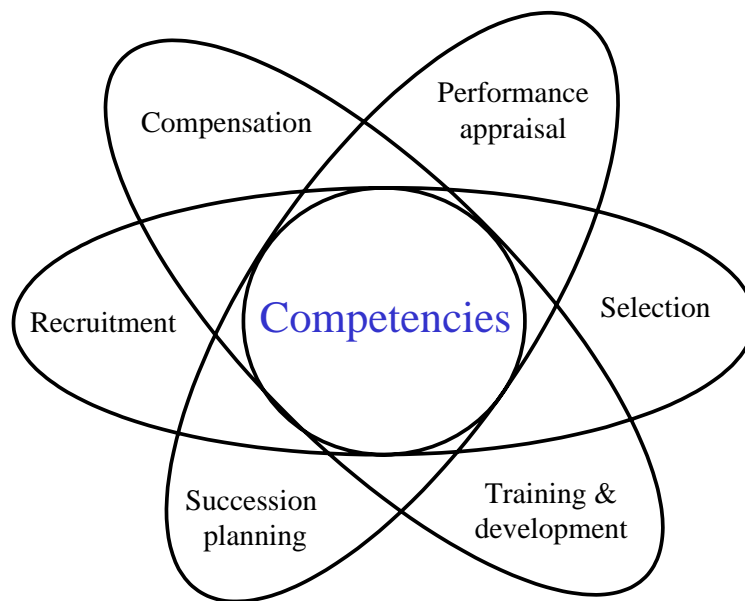


Figure 9: An integrated performance management framework
(Adapted from Spencer & Spencer 1993: 316)

In the context of a strong system it can be seen that a set of well-defined competencies provide the glue that holds a number of other HR and organizational processes together.

The model in Figure 9 is based on the proposition that people will produce competent action in a given situation if they know how to, and if they value the consequences of the expected outcomes of the action (Krampen, 1988). Krampen goes on to suggest that unless people understand that certain behaviours are expected of them, and also that they know how they will be rewarded for displaying them, they will not of their own volition display them. It can be seen that it is very important therefore to tightly link and align the required competencies to the reward system. The competencies become an explicit articulation of the 'how' of the reward system and a key component in the process of creating a strong system.

2.2.2 Competencies 'best-practice' guidance.

In this section I present a summary and synthesis of the nine key considerations exposed by, and derived from, my literature review:

1. **Focus.** It is pointless making distinctions between competencies that are so fine that they might be intellectually satisfying but they serve no practical use (Woodruffe, 1992: 20).
2. **Visible.** To enable an assessment to be made against a particular competency the behaviours need to be *observable* (Boam and Sparrow, 1992).
3. **Simplicity and brevity.** The number of competencies against which performance can be realistically assessed has a practical limit and therefore the number of competencies must be kept within bounds. Gaugler and Thornton (1989) demonstrated that the accuracy with which assessors classify and rate people declines as the number of assessment categories is increased.
4. **User friendliness.** Competencies must be phrased in plain English and reflect the language of the organization. This increases ownership of the list and reflects the prevailing, and future, culture (Walkley, 1988).
5. **Behaviours come first.** The behaviours come first and the categorisation in to competencies comes second (Honey, 1992: 26). This means that the relevant behaviours that are needed to deliver the strategic aspirations of the organization are identified first, and then these are clustered together in to groups of similar 'intent' to form competencies.
6. **Labelling of competencies.** Once each of the competencies has been formed, it is given a label that provides the best summary term that can be found to describe this cluster of behaviours (Woodruffe, 1992: 21). "The labels should be evocative and create meaningful images and messages for users that ensure consistency when they are used as a short-hand, which they inevitably will be" (Craig, 1992: 115). The label needs to provide users with a clear message as to the intent of the competency. If the labels chosen are ambiguous, or lack meaning within an organization, their usefulness as a shorthand diminishes, but most importantly, there will be inconsistency in application. Vague inappropriate category labels leads to ambiguity of the behaviours that support the competency and people will quickly give their own meaning to competencies (Craig, 1992: 115). Without an agreement on the appropriate behaviours the assessment process will be haphazard

(Feltham, 1992: 91) and will result in a 'weak' systems with a significant degree of incoherence and ambiguity. The risk therefore is that without appropriate labels and an aligned understanding of the intent of the competencies, the value of the competency-based approach, with its improved objectivity and consistency, will be lost (Craig, 1992: 115).

7. **Discreteness.** Spreading behaviours across competencies leads to ambiguity (Woodruffe, 2000). Woodruffe's guidance is that each of the required behaviours needs to be allocated to just one competency (1992: 21). If there are behaviours that could be attributed to more than one competency then a decision must be made as to whether the two separate competencies are in fact duplicates, or so similar that they should be combined.
8. **Future orientation.** Competencies should look to the future. They need to take account of the organizations needs both today and tomorrow (Woodruffe, 1992: 27), and once established, it is vital that they are kept under review to ensure that they continue to reflect the organization's needs (Greatrex and Phillips, 1989).
9. **Comprehensiveness.** To ensure an alignment of understanding of the desired behaviours it is necessary to define the competencies at a level of granularity and specificity so that people can correctly align their behaviour against the organization's expectations and ensure that they 'know' what is expected of them. The competencies lie at the foundation of the assessment system and if they are wrong or ambiguous they will raise problems for evermore (Woodruffe, 1992: 21). A poor set of competencies, or a set that is not understood by those who will have to use it, and who are rewarded against it, will make it difficult to use in practice. "It is false economy to try to save time defining the behaviours and competencies as they are at the centre of the PMS and they must be able to stand up to the most critical evaluation" (Woodruffe, 1992: 21).

In summary, it can be seen that if the competency requirements are articulated in a clear and unambiguous way the individuals whose performance is assessed against them will be able to identify how their behaviour differs from the prescribed model and adjust it accordingly (Finegan, 1994: 753). In this sense competencies produce a common language through which effective and non-effective performance can be identified (Torrington and Blandamer, 1992: 143). In a strong system people understand "how things ought to be done" and they either take on that behaviour or they leave (Chatman, 1989).

It is clearly important therefore to create the conditions that promote an aligned understanding of the performance requirements and a demand for the appropriate behaviours (Boam and Sparrow, 1992: 12). Competencies can be seen to be an explicit articulation of the desired behaviours that an organization deems appropriate and that should be rewarded (Woodruffe, 2000: 47).

The use of competencies in this context, however, has been questioned by a number of authors including Burgoyne (1989), Jacobs (1990), Morgan (1997) and Day, (1988). "*There can be no exact description of what makes a good manager as exact requirements vary by industry, seniority, and organization*" (Day, 1988). Management embraces a great variety of activities and the competencies needed seem

to depend on the circumstances prevailing (Wilcox and Harrow, 1992). There are inherent dangers in using generic competency lists in that in order to be generalisable, the level of abstraction and generalisation used does not expose the true nature and requirements of specific jobs. "Managers jobs are different at a detailed level of resolution, and the same at a high level of abstraction" (Burgoyne, 1989). "It is extremely dangerous to generalise" (Harvey-Jones, 1994: 16). Many jobs require unusual or unique competencies that are poorly captured, or not captured at all, in generic frameworks (Spencer and Spencer, 1993: 23).

Notwithstanding the constraints and reservations detailed here, given the causal relationship between individual's competence and organizational success, it is important, from an alignment perspective, to create an agreed view of what good (behaviour) looks like. In this context the establishment of a performance management system, based on the use of competencies, can be used as a vehicle to bring the organization together; to create a shared understanding and to gain commitment to particular ways of working (Feltham, 1992), and in so doing help to create a strong system (Mosley and Bryan, 1992).

2.2.3 Creating the competency framework

Figure 10 below provides a summary representation of my understanding of the 'ideal process' for the creation of a set of competencies defined in extant literature. The process starts with the involvement of senior policy makers in the definition of the required behaviours needed by the organization to deliver its strategy, both today and tomorrow (Dulewicz, 1989: 52). The next step involves a discussion with the target population to check for understanding of the language used before the behaviours are clustered together in to categories of similar behaviours to form the competencies. After, and only after, the clusters are formed they should be given an evocative and self-explanatory label (Craig, 1992: 115).

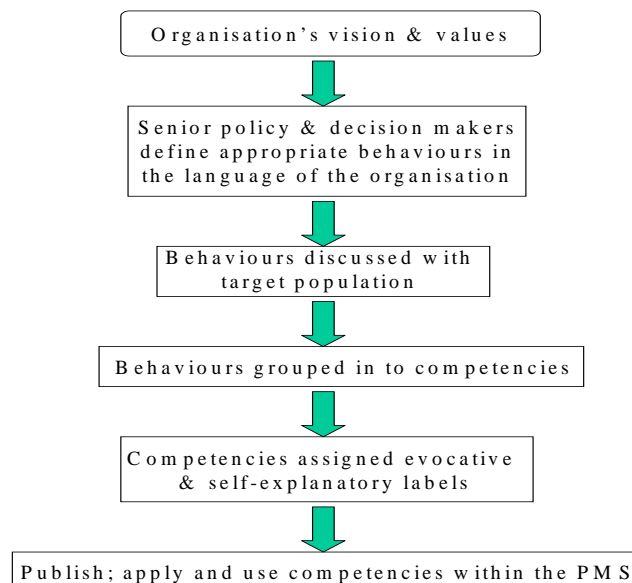


Figure 10: The process for establishing a set of competencies

Finally the full list of competencies and behaviours are published, incorporated into the appraisal form, and embedded within the formal performance management system.

Figure 11 below represent this process from a *design, implementation* and *use* perspective. Evidence shows that the main focus of this process in the organization has been the design phase; the creation of a unified set of competencies and supporting behaviours deemed necessary to deliver the organization's strategy.

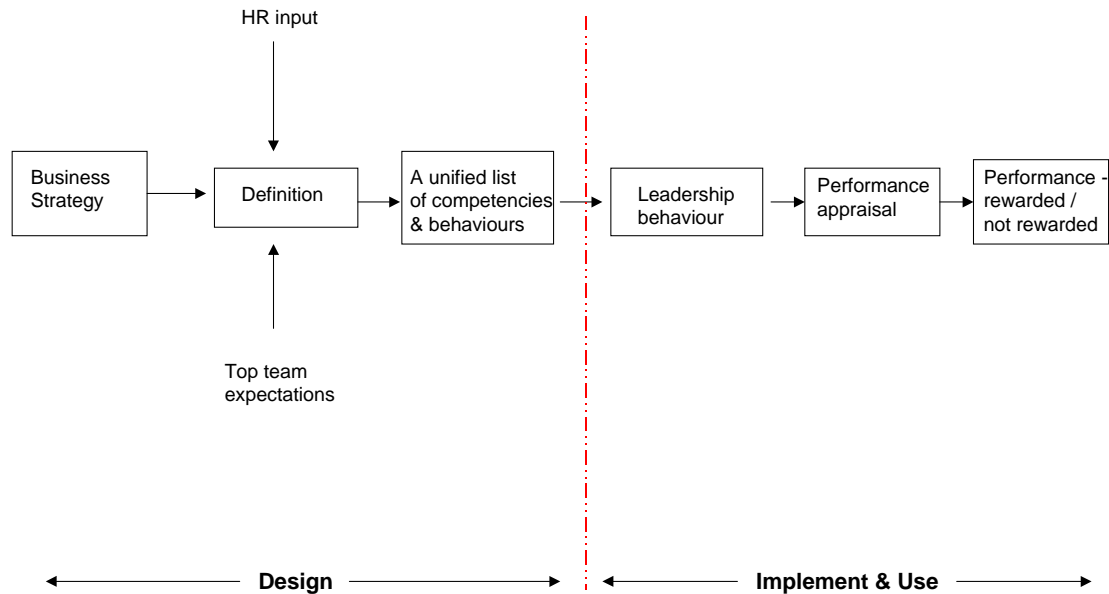


Figure 11: Aligning behaviour to business strategy

These three distinct, but inter-dependent, phases need to be managed effectively. Firstly the organization needs to define the required competencies, the *design* phase. Secondly the new competencies need to be incorporated in to the performance management system and the target audience briefed; the *implementation* phase. Finally the competencies need to be kept up to date to address the changing business needs; this is the *use* phase (Furnham, 2004: 90).

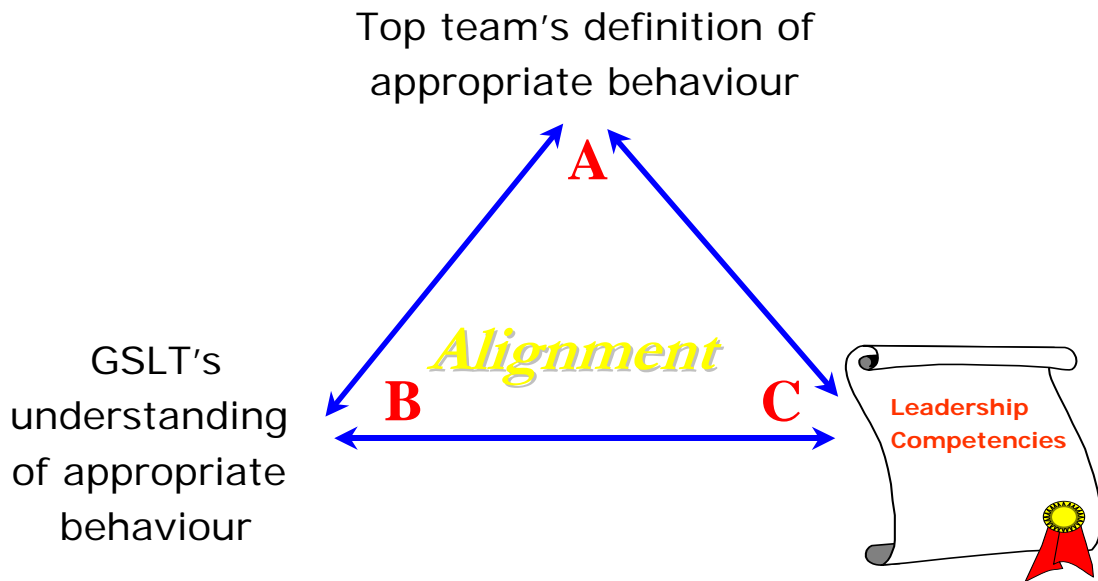


Figure 12: The critical elements of alignment

In the context of using a competency-based performance management approach and the creation of a strong system it can be seen that there is a need for strong alignment of the components shown in Figure 12 above. In this model it is important for there to be a strong alignment between what the top team defines as appropriate behaviour, what the leadership team understand constitutes appropriate behaviour, and the competencies defined and rewarded within the performance management system. In other words there needs to be a strong alignment between the behaviours espoused, the behaviours inferred from what the GSLT see and experience, and the behaviours reinforced and rewarded (Nadler and Tushman, 1988). The strength of this alignment therefore can be seen to be highly reliant on the individual understanding of the members of both the top team and the GSLT; how this individual understanding is formed will be explored in the next section.

2.3 Personal construct theory

Personal construct theory (PCT) helps to explain how sense making begins with the personal perspective individuals use to understand and interpret events that occur around them (Bannister and Fransella, 1986). Using a process of deletion, distortion and generalisation people create a map of their perceptions and interpretations of their experiences which go to form their own personal perspectives of what is important (Charvet, 1997: 11). These personal perspectives help people make sense of the world and create their own individual cognitive map; their own view of reality. Each person's map is peculiar to them, and therefore different from that of the next person (Baker, 2002).

A number of authors have used various terms to describe these personal perspectives that people develop, these include "schemas" (Cossette and Audet, 1992; Jelinek and Litterer, 1994), "cognitive maps" (Eden, 1992; Weick and Bougon, 2001), "technological frames" (Orlikowski and Gash, 1994), "mental models" (Daniels, de Chernatony and Johnson, 1995) and "frames of reference" (Harrison, 2005).

Whilst there is this variety of terms to represent cognition, for my purposes I will employ Kelly's (1995) term "personal constructs" to represent the cognition of my respondents.

George Kelly, who published his first work in 1955, developed personal construct theory. The term *personal construct* in Kelly's theory refers to a set of models, hypotheses, or representations that each person has made about their world (1955). The function of this personal construct system is to interpret the current situation and to anticipate future events (Tan and Hunter, 2002: 42). Each person's construct system is created from a myriad of inputs and experiences and is therefore peculiar to each individual; it is what forms each person's 'truth' (Stewart and Mayes, 2002).

Living in a world where reality is created in the minds of the observer means that people live in a world constituted through images of what they perceive as real (Morgan, 1983: 389), where all knowledge of the world is filtered through the knower and is thereby powerfully altered by cognitive, social and cultural forces (Hatch, 1997: 47). Each person creates his or her own reality based on their individual preconceptions thus giving rise to the existence of multiple realities (Baker, 2002). As such "Man is suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun" (Geertz, 1973 as quoted in Hatch, 1997: 218).

Situations and a person's understanding are defined by the selective perception of data and given meaning by the continual detection of repeated themes (Eden, 1978). These themes lead people to adjust their behaviours and expectations based on this abstraction and simplification of 'reality' (Tan and Hunter, 2002). These cognitive processes determine the external stimuli to which an individual is sensitive (Jenkins, 2002). In effect people become unconsciously sensitised to certain stimuli (Cialdini, 2001). For my research this is an important consideration as it appears that these response patterns can be triggered by some specific feature of a person that leads to an automatic, often unconscious, assessment (Bargh and Chartrand, 1999; Langer, 1989). In this context people are often not consciously aware of their assessment criteria in use (Argyris, 1991).

People use their construct system to make sense of the world and to make it easier for them to find their way around; they adjust their behaviours and expectations based on what they 'know', consciously and unconsciously. Construct systems reflect people's constant efforts to make sense of our world; they observe, draw conclusions about patterns of cause and effect and then they behave according to those conclusions (Tan and Hunter, 2002).

Construct systems are not static but once formed individuals continuously adapt, immunise or confirm them. Some constructs however, those that represent a person's core values, are complex, quite firmly fixed and difficult to change (Kelly, 1955). From a PMS perspective it is also worthy of note that people unconsciously dismiss information that does not fit their extant constructs whilst acknowledging information that does support their constructs (Tan and Hunter, 2002). For example if someone described one of their people as hard working and conscientious they are likely to go on seeing them as such even though their performance may have changed or deteriorated.

The key components of personal construct theory can be summarised as:

1. All individuals develop and test constructs as a way of explaining and anticipating events.
2. Many constructs will be constantly updated, as they prove useful or less useful in interpreting events.
3. People differ in how they construe events (although there will be some constructs that will be shared).
4. Social context influences individuals' constructs.
5. If one individual construes events in a way similar to another then both of their psychological processes are similar.

(Goffin, 2002: 203)

A consideration of PCT is particularly useful for my research because constructs carry two meanings of equal importance. One meaning is retrospective: “*a construct represents how the person classifies (has constructed) his or her past experience*”, for example what behaviour was perceived to lead to success for an individual in the past.

The other meaning is forward-looking: “*a construct represents the person's predisposition to perceive (or construe) in the future*” (Tan and Hunter, 2002), for example what behaviour is deemed to be important in the context of delivering the organization's new strategy.

The modern world is very complex, the level of technological advance and burgeoning information sources make it impossible for human beings to process all of the information available to them (Cialdini, 2001). People do not have the inclination, time, energy or cognitive resources to undertake a complete analysis of the situation and often use a single piece of evidence to make decisions (Berkowitz and Buck, 1967; Bodenhausen, 1960; Cohen, 1978; Easterbrook, 1959; Gilbert and Osborne, 1989; Hockey and Hamilton, 1970; Keinan, 1987; Kruglanski and Freund, 1983 as reported in Cialdini, 2001).

Counter to the views expressed in the rational economic optimising model, presented in much of the business literature, it appears that people often act in an unconscious automatic way (Bargh and Chartrand, 1999; Langer, 1989). They are only likely to respond in a controlled, thoughtful, rational economic optimising fashion when they have both a conscious desire and the ability to do so (Cialdini, 2001). With the pace of modern life however more often than not people do not make fully thoughtful and rational assessments and decisions (Cohen, 1978; Milgram, 1970).

What this means in the context of a PMS therefore is that when top team members make performance assessment decisions about someone, they are unlikely to use all of the available information in a fully thoughtful and rational way (Cialdini, 2001; Langer, 1989; Cohen, 1978; Milgram, 1970). In effect people create an automatic unconscious response to certain stimuli (Cialdini, 2001; Bargh and Chartrand, 1999) where these unconscious responses are triggered by some specific feature of a person or situation that leads to automatic, often unconscious assessment (Langer, 1989).

Construct systems represent a person's truth as they understand it, and it is this understanding that informs their decision-making (Kakabadse, 1991). A key consideration therefore in attempting to align the criteria in use with the criteria espoused is that the criteria in use may not be consciously known to the respondent (Argyris, 1991). To explore each person's 'truth' I will need to adopt a research protocol that helps to expose these personal constructs. As these constructs may be partially hidden from the conscious mind, a protocol that extracts these unconscious, as well as conscious, 'data' needs to be used. In this sense repertory grid interview techniques is a useful tool.

Kelly developed repertory grid as a means to address his concerns that personality theories of his day suffered from both a lack of rigour and a tendency to force people to fit the theory, rather than the other way round (Stewart and Mayes, 2002). Repertory grid allows the researcher to expose the constructs that a person uses and to show how they actually see the world; their 'truth'.

The key benefit of adopting a research protocol based on PCT and repertory grid therefore is that it will enable me to identify the top team's criteria 'in use' rather than what might ordinarily be espoused or what some well-honed management theory or business rhetoric implies should be used (Jenkins, 2002).

2.4 Values

My initial literature review did not include any reading on values and value systems however it soon became clear, as I started my field research, that values are a very important concept in understanding the domain of the GSLT's behaviour and that an understanding of how values guide action and cognition would be critically important for my research; "*personal values occupy a central position in the determination of human behaviour and in our assessment of any given activity or person*" (Cooke and Slack, 1984: 61).

Values play an important role in understanding the behaviour of individuals at work (Lenartowicz and Johnson, 2002). "*A value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristics of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action*" (Kluchhohn in Durgee, O'Connor and Veryzer, 1996: 90).

Building on this proposition Howard and Woodside's (1984) definition posits that the definition of values has two parts, one relating to the means and one to the ends (1) "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct is personally or socially preferable" (2) "an enduring belief that a specific end-stage of existence is personally or socially preferable". Preferable modes of conduct are called *instrumental values* whilst end-stages are *terminal values* (Rokeach, 1973).

Values can be thought of as a guidance system that a person uses when faced with a choice of alternatives, however they are so much an intrinsic part of people's lives and behaviour that people are often unaware of them (Guth and Tagiuri, 1965). The effect of values operates at both the conscious and the unconscious level in directing behaviour (Rokeach, 1968) and as such behaviour therefore can be viewed as a consequence or manifestation of an individual's underlying values (Rokeach, 1968)

which exist in a hierarchically interconnected structure that relates to ways of living and behaving (Fjeld, Schutz, and Sommer, 1984).

As discussed in the section on PCT, individuals do not consider all of the information available to them when making decisions or forming opinions due to the level of cognitive overload. The effect of values tend to further erode the concept of “perfect knowledge”, which is a pre-requisite of the rational decision-maker, by limiting the kind of information which is considered (Cooke and Slack, 1984). Evidence shows that people identify certain behaviour in others which supports their own values, and that this selective identification reinforces the assumption that it is their own values that are normal and correct (Cooke and Slack, 1984).

In the process of assessing the GSLT's performance it seems inevitable that the top team's own values will help to create a subjective world where their unconscious values are powerful determinants of their opinions. It appears to me that these subjective judgements are often not presented in the rationalistic performance management literature. It is also apparent that, despite the importance of values, “*few of us make the effort of studying our own values to the point of being able to explicit and articulate about them*” (Guth and Tagiuri, 1965: 124).

Argyris identified how people act in accordance with their governing values, but that “the master program people actually use is rarely the one they think they use” (1991: 325). When you ask people to articulate the rules that govern their action they will give you what he calls their “espoused theory”. When you observe people in action, however, Argyris comments that you discover a different theory in action, what he calls the individual's “theory in use” (Argyris, 1991: 325).

2.4.1 Corporate values

“It is just as meaningful to speak of institutional values as of individual values” (Rokeach, 1973:24) and at the corporate level Lencioni (2002) provides a useful definition of the types of values that one might encounter.

Core values – deeply ingrained principles that guide all of a company’s actions; they serve as its cultural corner stone and can underpin a company’s competitive advantage.

Aspirational values – are those values that a company needs to succeed in to the future. Lencioni notes how a company may need to develop new set of values to support a new strategy.

Permission-to-play values – the minimum behavioural and social standards required of any employee. These values tend not to vary greatly across companies and are therefore unlikely to provide a company with a competitive advantage.

Accidental values – are values that arise spontaneously, without being cultivated by leadership; they result from common interests of the people within the organization, they can be good for a company or they can be detrimental to a company’s success.

Aggressively adhering to the core values of the organization reinforces the strength of the system and the degree of alignment between what is espoused and what is enacted. Adhering to the organization's core values in this way can also help a company make strategic decisions and differentiate between choices in terms of the degree to which they align with the organization's strategic intent and values (Louis, 1980). To reinforce and strengthen the system the organization's core and aspirational values should be aligned with, and integrated in to, every employee-related process from the first interview to the last day of service; they should be the basis for every decision that the company makes (Lencioni, 2002). Hence the previous integrated performance management competency model, Figure 9 on page 19, can be represented as below, in Figure 13, where both the competencies and the values are aligned to one another and to the organization's processes.

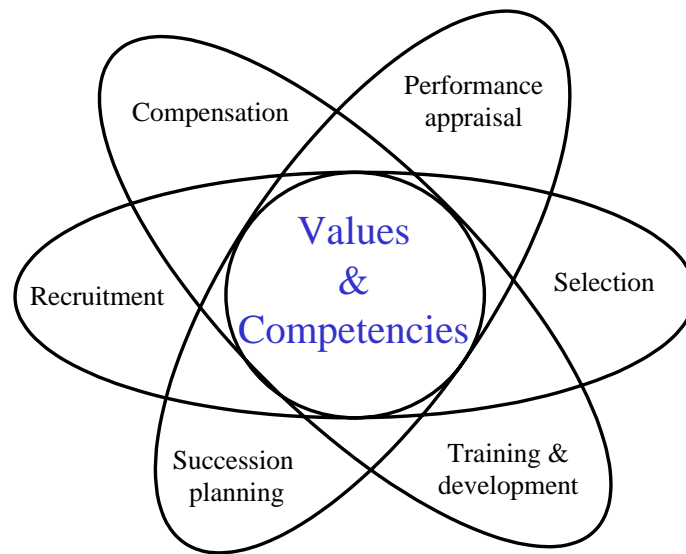


Figure 13: An integrated values model

2.4.2 Individual values within the corporate context

As noted previously an individual will bring his or her values to the corporate context, and some of their values may be shared with other members of the organization. Over a period of time the social process of constructing reality involves the interaction, perhaps the collision, of several subjective readings of the surrounding world (Langfield-Smith, 1992).

The more a person becomes consciously aware of a misalignment between his own values and those of the organization the greater the likelihood that it will lead to dissatisfaction (Rokeach, 1973: 225). To reduce this dissatisfaction people will either change their values and value-related behaviour to take on the values of the organization (Finegan, 1994: 753), or they will leave (Chatman, 1989).

Over a period of time changing circumstances and shared experiences will tend to result in the formation of shared beliefs (Langfield-Smith, 1992) and these shared

beliefs, these core values, will impose structure and meaning on particular situations and activities. Van Naanen noted how the shared organizational experiences that take place during the socialisation process contribute to the creation of the organization's beliefs and values (1976) and help develop a strong system.

Following the pattern identified in Figure 14 below a group cognitive map will emerge where the values and beliefs of the members of the group change and align; existing beliefs will be reaffirmed and new beliefs will be created which will guide members daily decisions (McCaskey, 1972 in Langfield-Smith, 1992: 353). The resulting shared cognitive map will provide a frame of reference for taking action and interpreting experience (Armstrong and Eden, 1979), and at this point team communication will be greatly aided due to the level of rapport present, the common outlook and common language (Michel and Hambrick, 1992; Finegan, 1994: 753).

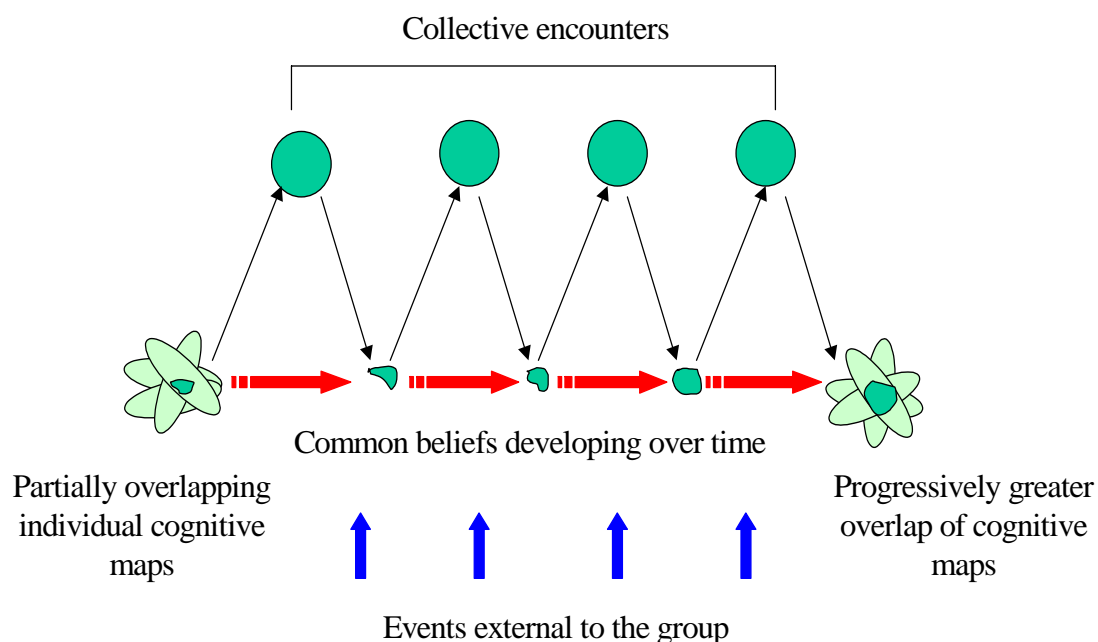


Figure 14: Interaction between individual belief systems and collective cognition
(Adapted from Langfield-Smith 1992)

2.4.3 Implication of values for my research

Leaders' action and behaviour is driven by values, and leaders reinforce the core values through their action; through what they say, how they behave and through what they reward (Harrison, 2005). Values therefore have both *antecedent* and *consequential* properties, that is values shape behaviour and in turn behaviour shapes values (Howard and Woodside, 1984). It is worth pointing out however that instrumental values are better predictors of judgement and behaviour than terminal values (Finegan, 1994). It is also worth noting that organizational process, structures and values are simply little more than an extension of the self-construct of the leaders of the organization (Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998).

To successfully implement a new set of organizational values there needs to be a strong alignment between the values of the top team, the core and aspirational values of the organization and the values of the organization's members (Lencioni, 2002). In this sense it is important that there is no 'antagonism', or misalignment, between the new values and the extant values (Gagliardi, 1986: 131), and that there is no misalignment between what the top team members say, what they demonstrate through their behaviour, and through what they reward (Harrison, 2005; Nadler and Tushman, 1988).

In the context of alignment it can be seen that a formally constructed map of the top team's value system could be helpful in raising the awareness of differences in values and hence aid team effectiveness and the creation of a strong system (Brunson, 1985).

2.5 Problem solving and decision making

The final component of extant theory that informs my research relates to the top team decision making process and the way in which this impacts on the issue of alignment and the use of a competency-based performance management system.

Reference to literature supports the view that problem solving and decision making are not purely rational undertakings, but that leaders employ three broad types of decision making style: analytical, intuitive and integrated (Weston, 1984: 50).

The analytical approach employs techniques that focus on so-called rational and logical methods. Problems are solved by breaking them down in to manageable parts, then approaching them sequentially, and relying on data and tools to undertake the analysis. In the context of competency based performance assessment this aligns with the idea of identifying specific behaviours and then making an objective assessment of the leader's performance against the competencies.

An intuitive approach conversely relies on feelings rather than facts. Problems and decisions are solved by first looking at the whole - often with inadequate information or data at hand. Decisions are then reached through intuitive insights or flashes of awareness (Allinson and Hayes, 1996: 122).

The third decision making style, which has often been called integrated, employs both analytical and intuitive skills (Weston, 1984: 50).

Most management education and training has focused on the analytical aspects of decision making, and this is still the norm in most management and business school curricula (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 77). This understanding helps to start to explain the perceived disconnect between praxis and management theory. The use of intuition is not acknowledged within my readings of the competency literature, yet all action must be partially subjective or value-laden (Feldman, 1986: 590). The decision making of individual leaders is primarily influenced by the past experience that has led to the creation of his personal construct system and values (Schwartz and Davis, 1981).

Extant literature reports that top team members have learned, often through painful experience, that analysis by itself is often both inappropriate and inadequate (Weston,

1986: 49). Top team members tend to make their decisions guided by intuition after scanning the available facts (Weston, 1984: 50). In this sense knowing is ordinarily tacit and implicit in their patterns of action (Isenberg, 1984).

2.5.1 Intuition defined

Reference to literature identifies intuition as "the capacity for attaining direct knowledge or understanding without apparent intrusion of rational thought or logical inference" (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 77). It is "the power of knowing" (Weston, 1986: 49); "of recognizing the possibilities in any situation" (Vaughan, 1979).

Kahneman and Tversky defined intuitive judgements as those that are arrived at by an informal and unstructured mode of reasoning without the use of analytical methods or deliberative calculations (1982). Carl Jung defines intuition as "the function that explores the unknown, and senses possibilities and implications which may not be readily apparent (Jung as cited in Von Franz and Hillman, 1971). In effect intuition enables us to 'know more than we know' (Myers, 2002: 44).

The root of the term 'intuition' can be traced to the Latin *intueor* or *intueri*, meaning to 'look within' (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 81). In this sense intuition goes beyond linear thinking to recognise patterns, draw analogies and solve problems creatively (Senge, 1997).

In this way we can think of intuition as our innate ability to tap in to the massive data store that we have accumulated throughout our life. A "subspecies of logical thinking - one in which the steps of the process are hidden in the subconscious portion of the brain" (Sprecher, 1983).

Intuition has a significant effect on the way in which people make decisions and reach conclusions. "Everything is evaluated, good or bad, within a quarter of a second" so well before they engage in conscious rational thought they may find themselves either loathing or loving something or someone (Bargh as quoted in Myers, 2002: 44).

In this context intuition poses a major challenge to the rational decision making process defined in the competency literature because it seems that decision making operates on two levels: the conscious / deliberate and the unconscious / automatic (Myers, 2002: 44). In other words decision making has both an analytical component and an intuitive component with much of this cognition occurring automatically outside of consciousness (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 76).

2.5.2 Intuition and top teams

From the perspective of my research purpose a consideration of intuition is important because it appears that the more senior that a leader becomes the more that they come to rely on intuition. "Evidence shows that senior leaders are likely to be more intuitive than their middle or junior counterparts" (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 79). Mintzberg (1976) and Isenberg (1984) both observe how an individual's reliance on intuition increases with seniority, and how it is inevitable therefore that the top team members will use intuition to support their decision making processes (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 79).

The rationale underpinning this assertion is that top team members are faced with situations that are extremely complex and where the information that they have available to make decisions is less than complete. The databases necessary for analytical processing are not available, or are inadequate, too costly, or too just slow to gather (Weston, 1984: 51). In addition cognitive over-load prevents a complete analysis of all of the facts available, and often there is no way that leaders could thoroughly analyse all of the options or alternatives available (Hayashi, 2001: 61).

In complex environments evidence indicates that top team members become accustomed and skilled in making speedy decision in the face of an overwhelming mass of information through the use of intuition (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 78). Top team members seldom think in ways that one might simplistically call 'rational' (Isenberg, 1984: 82), they come more and more to rely on their intuitive approach to decision making (Mintzberg, 1976). Intuition therefore becomes a prominent feature in their decision making style. The top team members' cognitive system become programmed to look for cues that relate to previously experienced patterns (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 83). They become the 'well travelled expert' where their developing knowledge stored in memory is subconsciously combined in complex ways to produce judgements that feel right (Miller and Ireland, 2005: 21). Expertise is brought to bear but without a full-blown explicit analysis of the person or situation.

As such it seems that top team members do not follow the classical rational model of decision making, but instead they rely heavily on a mix of both analysis and intuition (Isenberg, 1984: 81). The implication for theory and praxis therefore is that this proposition challenges the rationalistic principles, and decision processes, underpinning competency theory and literature. From the perspective of my research study this has implications for the research methods employed.

2.5.3 Intuition denied

Traditional management theory and training has heavily emphasised the use of 'rational' analytical techniques almost to the exclusion of other useful skills and methods (Weston, 1986: 52).

Intuition is automatic and involuntary, but because of the general conformance to a rational paradigm it is often not publicly acknowledged by the leaders concerned (Atkinson, 2000). Organizational and community culture has tended to reinforce this such that highly intuitive executives indicate that they 'keep it a secret' that they use intuition to make decisions (Weston, 1986: 52).

Because of these cultural pressures employees at all levels may not be predisposed to openly admit to colleagues that they might be basing their actions and decisions on intuition (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 80). Intuitive executives often feel that their colleagues do not, or will not, understand and accept that intuition can be a reliable basis on which to make important decisions (Weston, 1986: 52).

The use of intuition can also be a concern to the leaders themselves as the idea that unconscious processes exists that control their actions and decision making can be seen as very threatening to those who pride themselves on rationality and judicious decision making (Senge, 1990: 19). As a result top team members rely upon intuition

privately and covertly (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 80). They often engage in elaborate games to legitimate their conclusions and "dress up an intuitive decision in data clothes to make it acceptable to others" (Weston, 1986: 52). It seems that rational explanations are often imposed on decisions *after* they have been made (March as reported in Morgan, 1997: 81).

A key consideration for my research and for management theory therefore is that this has the potential to mislead practitioners and academics as to the way in which the top team members actually make their assessment of the GSLT's performance.

2.5.4 Down-side of intuition

Relying on intuition alone can be problematic as "intuition errs, even the most intelligent people make intuitive errors" (Myers, 2002: 50). By relying too heavily on intuition our own ego can cloud our judgement and we do not see what is in fact true; we transform reality in to what we would like to be true (Weston, 1986: 51). This can be particularly problematic in cases where executives become so personally involved with people, about whom they have to make decisions, that they fail to see people objectively, *"not as they are, but as they would like them to be"* (Weston, 1986: 51). This element of self-fulfilling prophecy is particularly acute when the top team recruits or promotes someone, as in these situations there is a tendency to both consciously and subconsciously make an extra effort to ensure that person's success - in the end justifying their original decision (Hayashi, 2001: 64). Intuition can be seen therefore to have similar 'self-reinforcing' aspects to those present in personal construct theory (Tan and Hunter, 2002).

Another implication of the use of intuition, is that when we make an appraisal of a situation or a person, we do not necessarily understand the basis on which the appraisal is made, as the outcome may be based upon an inarticulable gut feel (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 84). Leaders often know their preference among several subjects or items before they can explain the reasons for that preference; the evaluation, good or bad, becomes activated immediately on perception of the subject (Bargh and Chartrand, 1999: 474). When asked to articulate their reasons they often find themselves at a loss (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 82; Hayashi, 2001: 60; Senge, 1990: 19; Schon, 1983: 49).

2.5.5 Intuition: Summary implications

Most views of management theory have an analytical bias and reinforce the bureaucratic model. The emphasis is placed on rational and analytical approaches, and intuitive approaches are under-emphasised, if mentioned at all (Weston, 1986). In practice however it appears that top leaders rely much more on their unconscious intuitive decision making ability than is traditionally acknowledged within management theory and literature (Senge, 1990; Mintzberg, 1976).

Analysis and intuition are best conceived of as two parallel systems of knowing (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 76). Even though different people may bring an analytical or an intuitive dominance to a specific task, both are necessary for effective action or problem solving to occur (Morgan, 1997: 76). By considering only the analytical approach one is left with only a partial means of knowing the world. The

challenge is to weave the two together (Haidt, 2001) and to find ways of opening thinking styles and decision making that take us beyond the rational model (Morgan, 1997: 81).

The implication for management theory and praxis therefore is the need to recognise this duality in the assessment process and find ways to help the assessors understand and expose their decision criteria in use. In this way those being assessed can understand on what basis the assessors are making their decisions (Weston, 1984: 51) and the top team members can align their assessment criteria in use to eliminate ambiguity and in so doing create a strong system.

2.6 Summary implications for my research

In summary it can be seen that extant theory and literature summarised in Figure 15 below links to and informs my research in a number of ways.

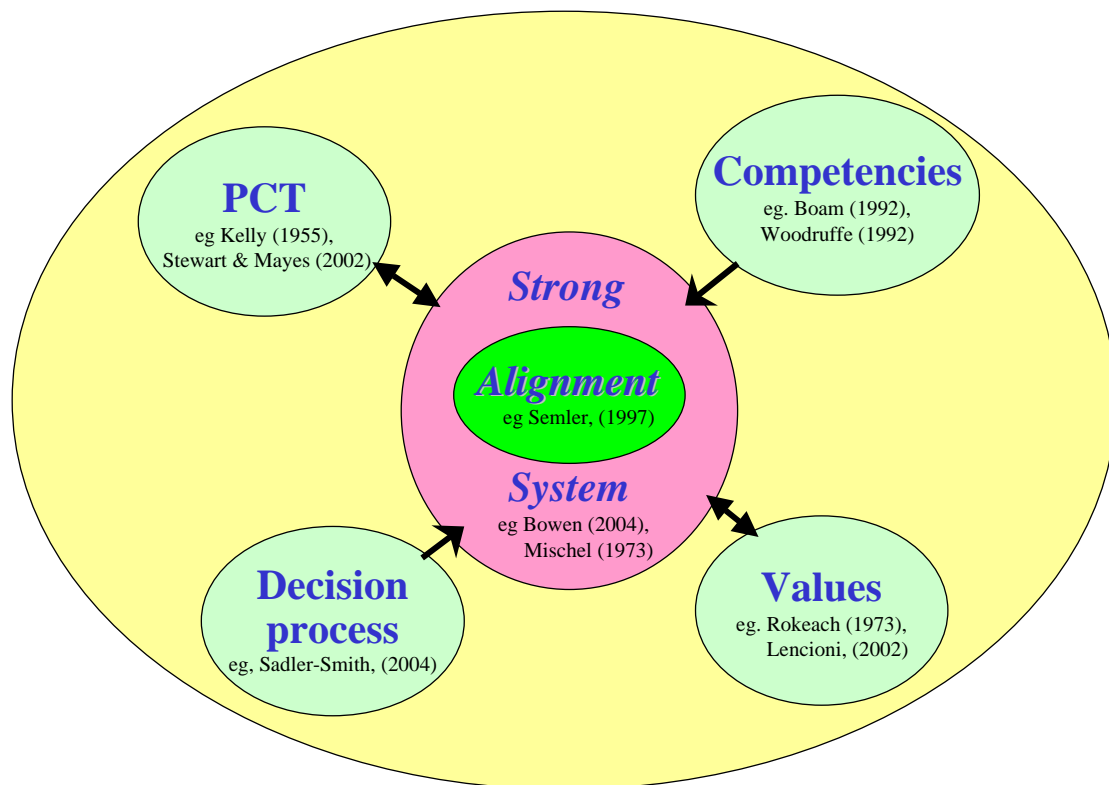


Figure 15: Areas of extant theory and literature informing my research

Firstly the way in which people are managed has come to be recognised as one of the primary keys to improved organizational performance (Oakland and Oakland, 2001: 773). In this sense the top team has a responsibility to ensure that the GSLT knows what is expected and what good (behaviour) looks like. Alignment theory identifies that the effective alignment of each component of the performance management system leads to effective performance at the level of the individual, the process and the organization. By carefully designing and aligning the performance and reward system the top team is able to encourage certain behaviours (Semler, 1997: 28). For

the system to operate effectively there needs to be a strong alignment between what the top team say is important, what they demonstrate through their actions is important and through what is rewarded (Harrison, 2005; Nadler and Tushman, 1988). To build a strong system there also needs to be a good degree of alignment and consistency of the top team's views and actions so that the GSLT members obtain an unambiguous understanding of what is expected of them.

It has been explained that from a total system perspective a number of components need to come together, top team rhetoric and action and the human resource processes and system. Working together the top team and the HR processes can create alignment in the systems components (Semler, 1997: 38) leading to congruence and effective performance.

It can be seen therefore that the top team is responsible for not only setting the vision and ensuring that people know what is expected of them but also for ensuring that appropriate processes and systems are put in place to encourage the desired behaviour. People need, and want, to know what is expected of them (Richards and Howard, 2004: 38). Competency-based performance management system address this need by identifying and expressing the behaviours that people are required to display (Woodruffe, 2000).

Evidence shows that if the top team members are in agreement as to what behaviours leaders need to display they are more likely to be consistent in their decision to develop and nurture these behaviours (King et al, 2001: 95). In this sense the top team's requirements can be used to drive and align the HR processes with the business vision and strategy, and in so doing create a strong system.

Personal construct theory (PCT) helps to explain how sense making begins with the personal perspective individuals use to understand and interpret events that occur around them (Bannister and Fransella, 1986). PCT also explains how people create their own reality based on their experiences and interpretation of events (Kelly, 1955). The creation of personal constructs in this way therefore leads to the creation of multiple realities (Baker, 2002). PCT therefore shows how understanding needs to be managed at the level of the individual. PCT also identifies how the purpose of a construct system is to make sense of the world and to make it easier for people to find their way around. People adjust their behaviours and expectations based on what they 'know' and these constructs operate at both a conscious and unconscious level (Kelly, 1955). In developing my research protocol it will be important to bear this in mind and ensure that the protocol adopted exposes both the conscious and unconscious criteria in use.

Reference to 'values' literature identifies how a person's values "occupy a central position in the determination of behaviour" (Cooke and Slack, 1984: 61). Values can thought of as a guidance system that a person uses when faced with a choice of alternatives, however they are so much an intrinsic part of people's lives and behaviour that they are often unaware of them (Guth and Tagiuri, 1965). Like personal constructs the effect of values operates at both the conscious and unconscious level (Rokeach, 1968). And therefore my research protocol needs to take account of this.

Finally in reviewing the literature on decision making it appears that the process operates on two levels; the conscious / deliberate level and the unconscious / automatic level (Myers, 2002: 44).

The creation of a strong system requires the alignment of what is espoused, with what is enacted and what is rewarded. The implication for my research therefore is the need to adopt a research protocol that helps the top team members expose their conscious and unconscious decision criteria in use (Weston, 1984: 51). To help accomplish this it will be necessary to adopt a research protocol that exposes the assessment criteria 'in use' rather than what might ordinarily be espoused or what some well-honed management theory or business rhetoric implies (Jenkins, 2002).

Chapter Three - Project 1 Summary Report

3.1 Project 1 summary introduction

In this chapter I have provided a summary of Project 1; the full project report is included in Chapter Seven starting on page 105.

3.2 Motivation for this study

At the time that I began this research project a number of major changes had recently been effected in the organization, or were in the process of being implemented. These changes included the appointment of a new chairman, a new group CEO, the appointment of a new top team, a new seven-point strategy, (Appendix A), and a new set of values and competencies. Perhaps most importantly, from the perspective of my research, the group CEO had also announced an increased focus on reward for performance, with individual reward being tightly linked to an individual's personal contribution and their behaviour.

This performance management system (PMS), it was proposed, would utilise an annual performance review that included an assessment of both the 'what' and the 'how'. The 'what' related to the delivery of objectives and the 'how' related to an assessment of behaviour against the new competencies, summarised in Table 2 below (the full list of competencies, along with their supporting behaviours, is included at Appendix B on page 264):

Inspiring
Straightforward
Trustworthy
Helpful
Heart
Coaching for Performance
Bottom Line
Drive for Results
Customer Connected

Table 2: The new leadership competencies

The original motivation for this research study resulted from a perceived misalignment between (1) the desired leadership behaviour espoused by the top team members, (2) the behaviour prescribed in the organization's leadership competencies, and (3) the behaviour that that was rewarded in practice. I also perceived that there was a misalignment within the top team, in that different top team members appeared to value and reward different behaviours. Taken together it was perceived that these issues were likely to create an unacceptable degree of ambiguity and misunderstanding within the GSLT as to what behaviour was expected and would be rewarded.

3.3 Research purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the criteria being used by the top team to assess the GSLT's performance and to thereby ascertain if my perception of a misalignment against the espoused criteria was correct. In conducting this analysis I also planned to assess the degree of alignment of these criteria across the top team.

With the increasing focus on linking reward to individual contribution the timing of this intervention seemed prescient.

3.4 Research questions

The research questions were focussed on identifying what the respondents held as their conceptions of the criteria for assessing leaders' performance in the context of delivering the organization new strategy.

- What are the 'criteria' that the top team will use to assess the performance of leaders in the context of delivering the organization's new strategy over the next three years?
- What is the degree of alignment of these views across the top team?

3.5 Research methodology

In constructing the research design for Project 1 I was keen to address the concerns raised by Argyris (1991: 103), who warns that if you ask people in an interview or questionnaire to articulate the rules they use to govern their actions and decisions they will give you what he calls their "espoused theory". He goes on to say that this espoused theory has very little to do with how people actually behave and the choices that they make in practice, what he terms their "theory-in-use".

In conducting this research project therefore it was important to help the top team members identify their criteria in use, rather than their espoused criteria, in order to be able to assess the true degree of alignment across the top team.

3.5.1 Selecting respondents

As the key focus of this research was to identify the top team's decision criteria the line of Business CEOs and the group chief executive were selected to be interviewed. This team of people is the group who have the most power to influence and control events and it is their beliefs and values that influence the direction of the company and the beliefs and values of others (Eden, 1977).

3.5.2 Repertory grid interview technique

Given that the research purpose was to investigate the perceived misalignment between the espoused behaviours and the behaviours rewarded in practice, I was very keen to adopt a research protocol that exposed the 'real' assessment criteria in use. For this reason I employed a protocol based on repertory grid elicitation techniques, supported by in-depth probing using laddering. Repertory grid was used because it is

an investigative technique that helps respondents identify their decision criteria, even if these criteria are unconscious. In addition, repertory grid has a degree of structure that helps eliminate researcher bias, whilst at the same time providing rigour and transparency (Stewart and Mayes, 2002). Used in 'extractive' mode it provides a framework that can be used to 'suck out' information from the interviewee (Stewart and Mayes, 2002).

One-to-one, face-to-face, interviews were conducted with each CEO member of the top team. In each interview I asked the respondent to identify six leaders that they knew well so that we could compare and contrast their 'qualities'. The six leaders included two who they considered met the required standards, two who did not and two who did in some ways but not in others, (a full description of this interview process is contained in Chapter Seven, pages 110 to 121).

The names, or pseudonyms, of each of the leaders provided were written on to a set of cards before being presented back to the interviewee in groups of three.

As each triad was presented the respondent was asked to group two cards together that they considered had similar qualities, either positive or negative, when compared to their desired criteria. These 'qualities', in PCT terms, represents a single "construct" (Fransella and Bannister, 1977).

The next step was to ask the respondent to give me a label to represent both the positive and negative poles of the construct.

In this exercise it was important to remember that *“one is not aiming to encapsulate the whole of an individual’s construct systems but that part of it which is relevant to the research purpose”* (Pope and Keen, 1981: 44).

3.5.3 Laddering

The utilisation of the triadic elicitation and sorting technique provided a highly involving situation that helped facilitate a good level of rapport with the respondents and that provided an excellent basis on which to proceed to the in-depth probing process of laddering.

The laddering process, represented by Figure 16 below, involved taking each of the construct poles in turn and asking the respondent to tell me what it was that the person actually did. I used a range of questions for this part of the exercise including *“What would I see? “How do they do that?”, “What do they actually do?”*.

Having laddered 'down' from the construct the next step was to ladder 'up' to the values level. This was achieved by asking the interviewee why this was important to them. By asking the "Why" question three times it is possible to get to the terminal value (Stewart and Mayes, 2002; Charvet, 1997).

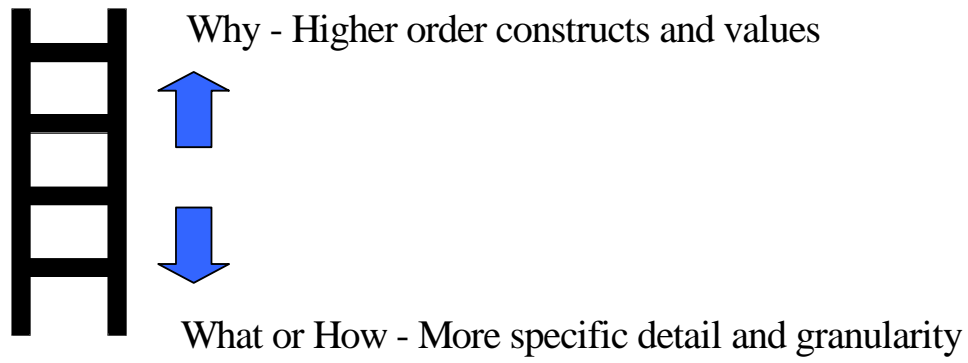


Figure 16: Laddering for behaviours and values

By repeating the 'how', 'what' and 'why' questions it was possible to obtain a useful level of granularity and a string of hierarchically linked super ordinate and subordinate constructs (Hill, 1995). The laddering process uncovered data at three levels, as well as their connections and linkages that served to provide the details and the structure of the interviewees' decision criteria.

3.6 Results

A total of six top team member interviews were conducted yielding 50 pages, and 20,000 thousand words, of transcript.

When the transcript data was coded and categorised three distinct levels appeared, which subdivided further in to 33 distinct categories.

At the lowest level there was a range of factors that related to the way in which people were perceived, i.e. their displayed ‘attitude’. At the level above this was a set of categories that related to behaviour; these behaviours can be equated to ‘means’ or ‘instrumental values’. This level can also be mapped directly on to the organization's new competencies.

At the upper most level was a group of categories that were seen as the ‘ends’ that people were driving towards, i.e. the ‘end states’ or ‘terminal values’.

The full list of data categories is shown below:

33	V7	Value	Provide Business and organizational leadership
32	V6	Value	Innovate and grow
31	V5	Value	Deliver for customers
30	V4	Value	Be the best; Deliver
29	V3	Value	Teamwork
28	V2	Value	Community; Shared purpose
27	V1	Value	Maximise individual contribution
26	B19	Behaviour	Focus on execution and delivery
25	B18	Behaviour	Adopts a solution orientation
24	B17	Behaviour	Develops own position and views
23	B16	Behaviour	Engages people at all levels
22	B15	Behaviour	Builds a story
21	B14	Behaviour	Aligns and dovetails outcomes
20	B13	Behaviour	Gives praise and feedback; Cheers at others
19	B12	Behaviour	Leads by example
18	B11	Behaviour	Pushes the envelope
17	B10	Behaviour	Searches out new ideas and opportunities
16	B9	Behaviour	Works with fact; not opinion
15	B8	Behaviour	Focuses on customers
14	B7	Behaviour	Communicates clearly and effectively
13	B6	Behaviour	Values and use diversity
12	B5	Behaviour	Takes a firm hand
11	B4	Behaviour	Shows a deliberate focus on delivery through team
10	B3	Behaviour	Involves and listens; Doesn't own wisdom
9	B2	Behaviour	Sets bold and stretching targets
8	B1	Behaviour	Uses the full range of emotional intelligence
7	A7	Attitude	Analytical
6	A6	Attitude	Enquiring mind
5	A5	Attitude	Positive / upbeat 'can do' attitude
4	A4	Attitude	Self confident
3	A3	Attitude	Humility
2	A2	Attitude	Drive and determination
1	A1	Attitude	Self aware

Table 3: Attitudes, behaviours and values

The table below shows the numbers of categories and the number of discrete elements within each of these categories.

Level	Number of categories	Numbers of elements
Values	7	66
Behaviours	19	198
Attitudes	7	67

Table 4: Data categories and elements

(A full list of the attitude, behaviour and values categories and their composite elements is included at Appendix G starting on page 272).

From the table above it can be seen that there is a high number of elements for each level. The 'Behaviours' level has a particularly high number of elements, and hence wide range of language to describe the required behaviours.

The resulting data was analysed to identify linkages between the different categories, elements and levels to create a group map as shown below. A cut-off level of 3 was used so that the map constructed exposed just the dominant categories and linkages, (a full and detailed description of how this exercise was conducted is included in chapter 7 on pages 133 to 144).

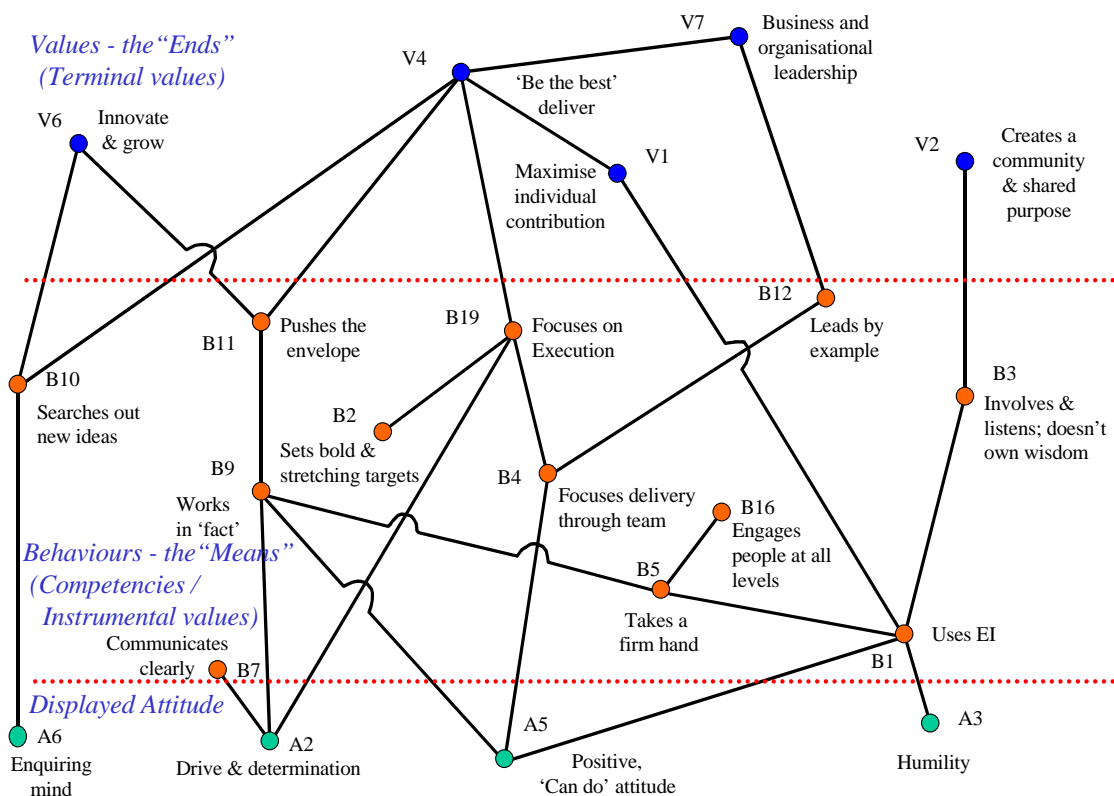


Figure 17: A combined top team hierarchical value map

In order to assess the degree of alignment across the top team and the degree of alignment against the new competencies, the behaviour categories were mapped on to the new competencies, as shown in Figure 18 below.

It can be seen from this mapping that two categories, B1 ‘Uses the full range of emotional intelligence’ and B17 ‘Develops own position and views’ do not appear to be present in the new leadership competencies.

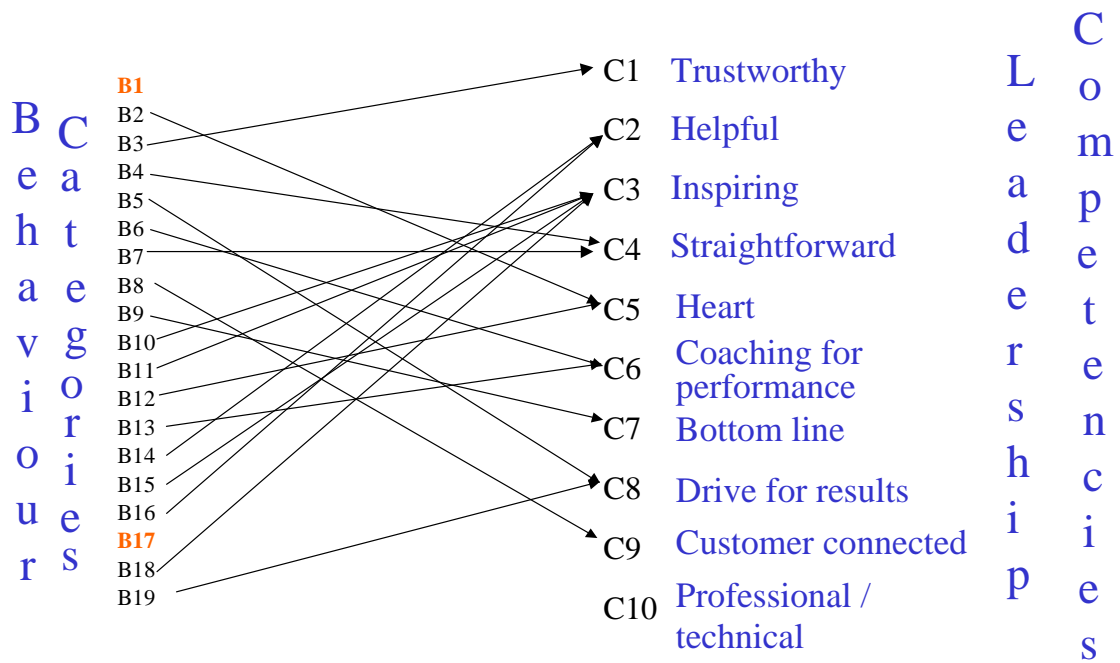


Figure 18: Behaviour category mapping to the new competencies

As a final step in the analysis the new behaviour-competency data was mapped back on to the respondents ladders to assess the degree of alignment against the new competencies for each top team member. Figure 19 below shows the frequency mapping of the new competencies and the two additional categories B1 and B17 against the top team's responses.

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	B1	B17
2	X			X		X				X	
3	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X

Key 2-6 interviewees, C1-C9 Competencies, B1 and B17 missing categories

Figure 19: Frequency analysis of the new competencies in top team responses

The results of this analysis show that against the new competencies (C1-C9), there is an 80% degree of alignment across the top team's responses.

Against the new competencies and the two additional behaviour categories identified in my analysis (C1-C9 + B1 and B17), there is a 76% degree of alignment, and finally, against the new competencies, C1-C9 and B1 alone, there is an 80% degree of alignment.

It should also be mentioned at this point that at the end of a number of interviews the respondents reported that "they had told me things that they did not know".

3.7 Project 1 Summary - Discussion and conclusions

3.7.1 Project 1 - Contribution: Implications for practice

From the analysis of the data it can be seen that across the top team there is a good degree of alignment (80%) on the competencies needed.

It can also be seen however that the responses contained a high number of elements and a wide range of language to describe the expected behaviours (198 discrete elements). A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that even though the top team members are well aligned on their definition of the competencies required, their understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in demonstrating these competencies is poorly aligned. It is my proposition that this finding lends support to my original perceptions that motivated this research study. It is also my proposition that this poor alignment is likely to lead to inconsistent messages being 'inferred' by the GSLT, which will lead to a degree of ambiguity and confusion of what constitutes appropriate behaviour.

The analysis of the findings also identified that two categories of behaviour could not be mapped on to the new competencies, and therefore these two categories, whilst being identified as needed by the top team, seem to be missing from the new competencies. Category B1, 'Uses the full range of emotional intelligence' is the most significant omission as it appeared in four out of five top team member responses. It was also apparent from some of the closing remarks in the interviews that many of the top team members were not consciously aware of all of the criteria that they use to assess the GSLT's performance, and therefore elements of the assessment process appear to be unconscious.

The results of Project 1 show that the current system is weak in two areas. Firstly it is weak in terms of the degree of internal alignment across the top team, point A in Figure 12 on page 24, and secondly it is weak in terms of the degree of alignment of the top team's requirements and the competencies. The strength of the A-C relationship is weak as not all of the competencies and behaviours defined by the top team are included.

Summary of practitioner contribution

In summary it is my view that Project 1 has made a practitioner contribution from a number of perspectives. I have been able to:

- Identify and expose the top team's definition of appropriate behaviour and show that there is a good degree of alignment across the top team on the competencies needed by the organization (80% alignment).
- Identify a high degree of alignment between the top team's expectations and the new competencies with seventeen of the nineteen categories identified in Project 1 mapping directly on to the new competencies (see Figure 18 on page 1).
- Show that two competencies, identified by the top team as important, appear to be missing from the new competencies. This finding indicates that there is a need to

review the new competencies in order to ensure that they capture the full range of competencies desired and expected by the top team.

- Show that even though the top team members espouse the need for the same competencies, they will be likely to reward different behaviours against these competencies leading to a degree of confusion and ambiguity amongst those being assessed. The findings indicate that further work is needed to align the understanding across the top team of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour to deliver the new competencies.
- Expose the fact that the top team decision process contains 'criteria' and elements that are unconscious. The findings indicate that more analysis is needed to understand the implications of this finding on the organization's ability to create a strong system.
- Identify the need for mechanisms to create an improved degree of alignment and understanding of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour both within the top team and the GSLT.

3.7.2 Project 1 - Contribution: Implications for theory

In the section on extant theory informing my research I identified how personal construct theory (PCT) explained that individuals create their own individual reality based on their own experiences (Morgan, 1983: 389; Hatch, 1997: 47; Baker, 2002). For newly formed teams, such as the organization's top team, PCT would indicate that there would be a relatively low level of cognitive overlap and hence a heterogeneity of views and conceptions; i.e. a poor degree of alignment.

It is my view that my findings provide support for the assertions in PCT. My findings indicate that if a new set of competencies is implemented without due regard to helping the assessors form an agreed and aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, there is likely to be a level of heterogeneity of views leading to miscommunication and misunderstanding both within the top team and to the GSLT.

My findings can also be seen to imply therefore that there is a need to find ways to expose and share individual constructs in order to improve the degree of alignment, to overcome the effects of PCT, and in so doing improve the strength of the system. In this sense my findings indicate that taking a functionalist approach to alignment and performance management (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), as defined in extant literature, fails to acknowledge the subjective nature of reality and ignores the advice provided in PCT and values literature. It is my proposition that extant theory needs to be extended to include ways in which understanding and alignment can be achieved at the level of the individual.

Summary of theoretical contribution

In summary, it can be seen that my findings indicate that simply publishing a list of competencies will not be sufficient to generate an alignment of understanding as it does not address the individual nature of reality. My findings lend support to the assertions in PCT that an individual's personal constructs, their mental models of how they see the world, will tend to lead to heterogeneity of views. It is proposed therefore that extant performance management literature and the functionalist approach to

performance management inadequately addresses understanding at the level of the individual. It is proposed that some 'mechanism' is needed to improve this understanding in order to improve the strength of the system and more accurately align extant theory to praxis and the individual's reality.

Finally, it is my assertion that from a methodological perspective the protocol adopted in Project 1 provides a vehicle that can be used to open up the top team's constructs for examination. This protocol can be used to help facilitate a dialogue around what constitutes appropriate behaviour and enable the top team members to get a better understanding of their constructs in use. In so doing it will be possible improve the degree of alignment within the top team (point A in Figure 12 on page 24), and thereby improve the strength of the system.

3.7.3 Summary and next steps

In summary, Project 1 has identified a good degree of alignment of the competencies in use, across the top team, to assess leader's performance. Project 1 has also identified a poor degree of alignment of the definition of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in support of the competencies, and finally, Project 1 has shown that two competencies defined by the top team as needed are missing from the organization's competencies. Project 1 has shown therefore that the current system is 'weak' in terms of the internal strength of point A and in terms of the A-C relationship, (Figure 12 on page 24).

Project 2 will further explore the strength of the system by using the output of Project 1 to investigate the degree of alignment between the behaviours defined by the top team and the GSLT's understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. Project 2 will also investigate the degree of alignment of how the behaviours defined by the top team are seen to support the competencies.

Project 2 will explore the strength of three areas of the system shown in the model in Figure 12 on page 24:

- It will explore the degree of alignment of responses from the GSLT; the internal strength of the system at point B.
- It will explore the degree of alignment between the top team's defined behaviours and the understanding of the GSLT as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour; the strength of the A-B relationship.
- It will explore the degree of alignment of the GSLT's responses on how the top team defined behaviours support the competencies; the strength of the B-C relationships.

The two research questions addressed in Project 2 are:

- What is the degree of alignment of the GSLT's views with the top team's constructs of appropriate behaviour?
- How are the behaviours defined by the top team seen to support the organization's new leadership competencies?

Chapter Four - Project 2 Summary Report

4.1 Project 2 summary introduction

In this chapter I have provided a summary of Project 2. The full project report is included in Chapter Eight starting on page 156.

4.2 Motivation for this study

One of the key challenges facing organizations is the need to effectively link the management of human resources to the business strategy (Boam and Sparrow, 1992: 5). One way to achieve this is through the use of appropriate and effective HRM systems and practices (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 213). In this sense a competency-based approach to performance management aims to make the linkage between the individual's and the firm's performance explicit by eliciting top management's expectations of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, and then communicating these expectations to the target population (Feltham, 1992: 90).

The motivation for this research study resulted from a perceived misalignment between (1) the desired leadership behaviour espoused by the top team members, (2) the behaviour prescribed in the organization's leadership competencies, and (3) the behaviour that that was rewarded in practice. I also perceived that different members of the top team valued and rewarded different behaviour.

4.3 Research purpose and aims

In this, the second in a series of three linked research projects, I utilise the findings from Project 1 to test the degree of alignment of understanding across the Global Services Leadership Team (GSLT), against the constructs of the top team as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour. I also test the degree of how the top team's constructs of appropriate behaviour are seen to support the organization's new competencies, and by implication to test the degree to which the competency labels provide a self-explanatory sense of the meaning of each of the competencies.

4.4 Project 1 findings

The main findings from Project 1 are shown below:

- There is a good degree of alignment across the top team on the competencies needed by the organization (80% alignment).
- There is a high degree of alignment between the top team's expectations and the new competencies with 17 of the 19 categories identified in Project 1 mapping directly on to the new competencies (see Figure 18 on page 1).
- Two competencies, identified by the top team as important, appear to be missing from the new competencies. This finding indicates that there is a need to review the new competencies in order to ensure that they capture the full range of competencies desired and expected by the top team.

- Even though the top team espouses the need for the same competencies, they will be likely to reward different behaviours against these competencies leading to a degree of confusion and ambiguity amongst those being assessed. The findings indicate that further work is needed to align the understanding across the top team of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in support of the new competencies.
- The top team's decision process contains 'criteria' that appear to be consciously 'unknown'. The findings indicate that more analysis is needed to understand the implications of this finding on the organization's ability to create a strong system.
- There is a need for mechanisms to create an improved degree of alignment and understanding of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour both within the top team and the GSLT.

4.5 Project scope

The scope of this research project was the 301 members of the GSLT.

The GSLT comprises the:

- CEO and Presidents.
- Vice Presidents.
- Country leadership teams.
- Major programme executives.
- Management team members with 100+ staff.

By directly engaging with the GSLT the intent is to assess the degree of alignment of expected behaviour between the top team and the GSLT.

This approach is predicated on the basis that, in the context of effective performance management, it is vitally important for there to be a good degree of alignment across the GSLT, with the top team's views, as the GSLT are responsible for role modelling and communicating the top team's expectations to lower level managers (Schermerhorn, 1986; Bourgeois, 1980).

4.6 Project 2 research questions

- What is the degree of alignment of the GSLT's views with the top team's constructs of appropriate behaviour?
- How are the behaviours defined by the top team seen to support the organization's new leadership competencies?

4.6.1 Project 2 Research premise

Three premises underpin the approach adopted in Project 2:

- Firstly that each of the behaviours identified by the top team in Project 1 are valid expectations of behaviour.
- Secondly that these expectations will influence the performance assessments of the GSLT.
- Thirdly that each behaviour needs to be uniquely assigned to just one of the competencies in order to avoid ambiguity.

4.7 Method and methodological considerations

Project 2 was principally concerned with quantification of the degree of alignment of the views of the GSLT around the world with those of the top team and of how the Project 1 behaviours were seen to support the new competencies.

A questionnaire containing the top team defined behaviours from Project 1 was produced. Because of the fact that the GSLT were distributed across the world the case for using an electronic, self-administered survey questionnaire was strong (Yin, 1994: 6; Neumann, 2000: 271).

In choosing to use an electronic survey questionnaire for Project 2 I needed to consider a number of factors. Firstly, it would not be possible to use all of the data from Project 1 in the questionnaire; secondly, the need to reach as wide an audience as possible meant that, due to time and cost considerations, the research tool would have to be self-administered, and thirdly, as Project 2 was principally a quantitative study there was a need to be able to use computer aided analysis tools.

4.7.1 Questionnaire structure

The questionnaire was structured as follows:

- Section 1:** Introductory paragraph.
- Section 2:** Behaviours from Project 1.
- Section 3:** Demographic questions.
- Section 4:** Thank you note and confidentiality statement.

4.7.2 Selection of behaviours

As a result of a consideration of the guidance in the literature (Newell, 1995; Oppenheim, 1996; Neumann, 2000), the results of the pilot testing (see section 4.7.3 below), and as a consequence of discussions with my sponsor, it was decided to limit the number of behaviours in the questionnaire to a short-list of 50.

By limiting the number of behaviours the respondents were able to complete the questionnaire in less than 15 minutes, thus helping secure good completion and

response rates (Newell, 1995; Oppenheim, 1996; Neumann, 2000). The selection of the behaviours for the questionnaire was facilitated through a process of iteration and review in order to ensure that the final short-list represented the full range of behaviour identified by the top team in Project 1. A full description of this process is detailed in section 8.6.5 on pages 165 and 166.

4.7.3 Piloting

Before conducting the main survey time was set aside to conduct a thorough test of the design and usability of the questionnaire. The aim of the piloting was to test as many of the different aspects of the questionnaire as possible, including the interpretation and understanding of the behaviours in the questionnaire (Oppenheim, 1996: 47). This piloting activity formed a “vitaly important” part of the design process (Chisnall, 1997: 139), and helped to improve the reliability of the instrument (Neumann, 2000: 47).

A stratified sample was chosen for the pilot testing who were representative of the main sample (Oppenheim, 1996: 62). The pilot team included male and female members from the UK, the US, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium and Hong Kong and from a range of functions including Customer Services, country operations teams, Solutions and HR.

The pilot work was completed in two phases, the first phase concentrated on the structure, content and language of the survey, while phase two utilised the electronic web form to test the usability aspects of the web interface. This second phase was considered to be of paramount importance as poor interface design reduces the response rate (Oppenheim, 1996: 59).

The pilot team was briefed that this was a "try out study" (Oppenheim, 1996: 62) and asked to be critical about anything and everything that they did not understand. They were also asked to raise any issues or concerns that they had in order to ensure that any problems could be corrected before the questionnaire was distributed to the wider audience. The eight rounds of pilot work were time consuming and required significant effort and resource. Ultimately however the piloting inevitably improved the quality of the questionnaire and addressed Oppenheim's concerns (1996) that studies that have been inadequately piloted, or not piloted at all, will find that a great deal of effort has been wasted.

4.7.4 Administration

A reporting web site and database was established to capture the responses. These responses were automatically coded against the schema detailed in Appendix H on page 290 and captured in a format that could be 'cut and pasted' directly in to SPSS.

This reporting web site allowed the number and frequency of responses to be monitored and tracked so that I could observe any unusual patterns and develop a first sense of the data (Gilbert, 1993: 110). Using this web site it was also easy to see when the response rate was tailing off, and thereby what the optimal timing was for reminder emails to be sent (de Chernatony, 1989).

4.8 Results

The target population for the survey questionnaire was the 301 members of the GSLT. In total 122 responses were received, equating to a response rate of 40.5%.

Each of the individual responses was logged into an SPSS database in order to enable an analysis to be conducted on the number and percentage allocation of behaviours to competencies. Figure 20 below shows an example of one of the Pareto charts that was produced from this analysis. The chart shows the results for one particular entry in the questionnaire, "B2 - Focuses on cost and revenue" (the Pareto charts for each of the 50 behaviours are included at appendix P on page 292).

The graph for each behaviour shows a number of points; which competencies the behaviour was allocated to, the number of times it was allocated to a particular competency and, on the right-hand axis, the cumulative percentage of responses.

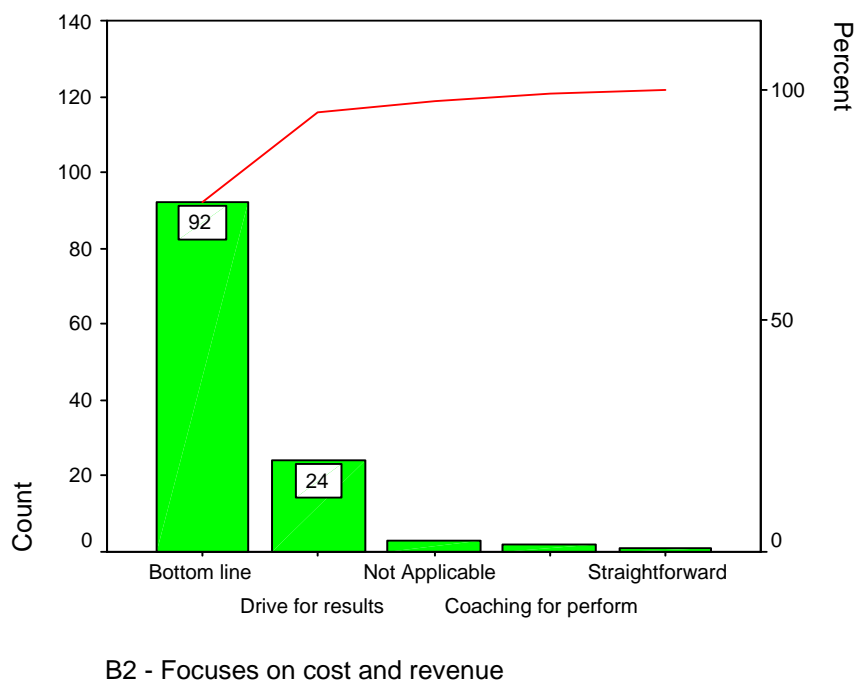


Figure 20: Example Pareto chart

In the example in Figure 20 above it can be seen that 92 respondents allocated this behaviour to 'Bottom line'. 24 respondents allocated it to 'Drive for results'. Three respondents allocated it to 'Not Applicable', two respondents allocated it to 'Coaching for performance' and finally one respondent allocated it to 'Straightforward'.

In total therefore it can be seen that the 122 respondents allocated this behaviour to one of four competencies or the 'Not applicable' category. The results for this behaviour show a reasonable degree of alignment across the GSLT responses, with 92 out of 122 (75%) respondents allocating the behaviour to 'Bottom line'.

'Not Applicable' responses

Analysis of the results shown Figure 59 on page 177 shows that of the 50 Project 1 behaviours "B30: Uses anger, frustration and intolerance", was identified by ninety-three respondents (76%) as 'Not Applicable'.

"B5: Tries a lot and sees what works" was identified as 'Not Applicable' by 46 respondents (38%).

Degree of alignment

Analysis of the Project 2 results show that across the respondents there is a high degree of agreement that the Project 1 behaviours are seen to support the new competencies, with 96% of the behaviours being seen to support the competencies. Analysis also shows however a generally low degree of alignment and understanding of how the Project 1 behaviours support the new competencies.

Figure 21 below provides a summary chart showing the degree of alignment of responses for each of the fifty behaviours against a particular competency. In Figure 21 the vertical axis refers to the number of behaviours and the horizontal axis relates to the percentage of alignment. This chart can be explained by reference to Figure 20 on page 53, which identified that there was a 75% degree of alignment of responses, with 93 respondents allocating "B2 - Focuses on cost and revenue" to 'Bottom line'. In Figure 21 this behaviour therefore is included in the results shown in the third bar from the right which is annotated "70%".

The graph in Figure 21 shows that only four behaviours achieved a degree of alignment, to one competency, of 90% or over. Seven behaviours achieved a degree of alignment of 80% or over, 10 behaviours achieved a degree of alignment of 70% or over, 15 achieved a degree of alignment of 60% or over and 20 behaviours achieved 50% or over. The graph shows the results for all 50 behaviours; the degree of alignment ranged from "B38: Adapts style and tone to suit audience", at the low end, with just 16% of respondents allocating this behaviour to 'Straightforward'. Through to "Focuses everyone on customers", at the high end, with 118 out of 122 (97%) respondents allocating this behaviour to 'Customer connected'.

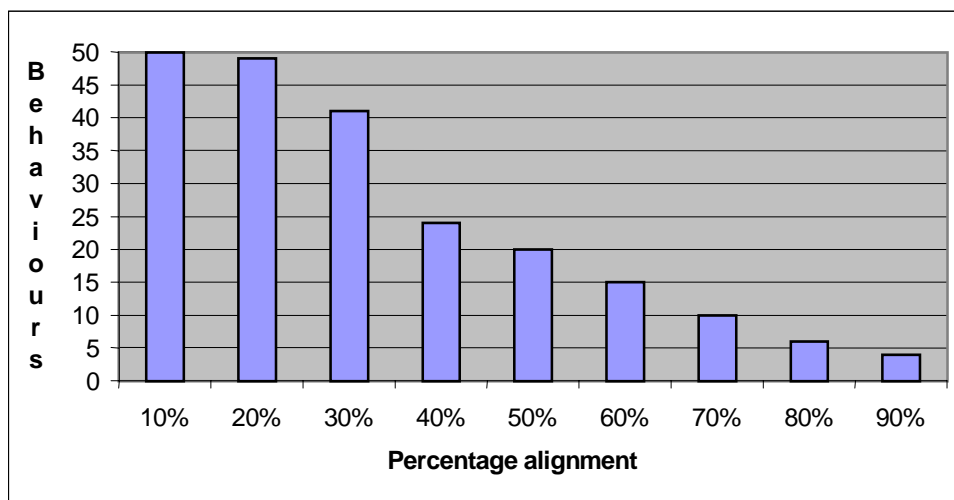


Figure 21: Degree of alignment of allocation of each behaviour to one competency

Ambiguous competency pairings

30 behaviours achieved less than 50% alignment (Figure 21) and of these 14 showed a relatively even split of responses against two competencies, indicating a significant degree of ambiguity of how these behaviours support the competencies.

Analysis of the data shows that there are six competency pairings where a degree of ambiguity exists. The competency pairings are:

- Trustworthy and Helpful.
- Trustworthy and Straightforward.
- Helpful and Coaching for Performance.
- Inspiring and Straightforward.
- Inspiring and Drive for Results.
- Drive for results and Bottom Line.

(For a full detailed analysis see page 183)

'Other' responses

Analysis of the responses coded as 'Other' show that there were nine behaviours where 13 or more respondents chose to allocate the particular behaviour to 'Other', i.e. they did not / could not allocate the behaviour to one of the competencies (Figure 64 on page 185).

Missing competencies

Analysis of the behaviours identified in Project 1 as being missing from the organization's new competencies shows that "B30: Uses anger, frustration and intolerance" was deemed 'Not Applicable' and that the other behaviours received a fragmented allocation against the new competencies (Table 36 on page 186). These results indicate a significant degree of ambiguity of how these particular behaviours support the new competencies, and provide support for my conclusion in Project 1 that there are competencies missing from the organization's new competencies.

Customer connected

The competency 'Customer connected' is the only competency that shows a high degree of alignment with its supporting behaviours. The results for this competency are shown below.

No.	Behaviour	Responses	
		No.	%
3	Puts the customer first	111	91%
17	Personally goes after customer complaints	104	85%
40	Gets out a lot to meet customers & their own people	102	84%
49	Focuses everyone on customers	118	97%

4.9 Project 2 Summary - Discussion and conclusions

4.9.1 Project 2 - Contribution: Implications for theory

I began this study with the assumption that it is possible to follow the process prescribed within the competency literature to define a unified prescription for the competencies and supporting behaviours that are required to deliver the organization's strategy. It can be seen on reflection however, that this assumption, and the extant competency literature, takes the lens of the functionalist perspective (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 25).

In the section on extant theory informing my research in Chapter Two, I identified how sense making begins with the personal perspectives individuals use to understand and interpret events, and that individuals create their own reality conditioned by their own experiences (Morgan, 1983; Kelly, 1955; Hatch, 1997; Goffin, 2002). In this sense extant theory indicates that an individual's understanding is 'subjective' and conditioned by their own experiences. This orientation takes the lens of the 'interpretist' perspective (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 28).

Both the functionalist and the interpretist perspectives reflect the desire for 'regulation' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 17). The interpretist perspective reflects the views present in PCT and values literature that an individual's understanding is subjective and that it is conditioned by their own experiences. Adopting an interpretist perspective recognises the fact that to achieve an aligned understanding it is necessary to explore individual understanding.

The interpretist perspective proposes that by sharing and exploring individual constructs it will be possible to surface assumptions, and in so doing, help form a shared cognition (Senge, 1997; Senge, 1990). Taking an interpretist perspective therefore indicates the need for a significant level of effort by the top team and the GSLT to expose individual constructs and in so doing create an aligned understanding. In the context of my research study, and the use of a competency-based performance management system, therefore the role of the top team can be seen to start with the need to bring to the surface their own and other people's constructs of appropriate behaviour (Senge, 1990: 11).

Evidence from this study has shown that one cannot assume a common and agreed understanding, and that there is a subjective element to a competency-based performance assessment process. The findings lend support to Langfield-Smith's (1992) view that in newly formed teams, such as the organization's top team and the GSLT, there would be a relatively low level of cognitive overlap, and hence a heterogeneity of views.

The competency literature appears to be written from a functionalist perspective and fails to take account of the 'subjective' nature of reality. It is my view that my findings extend the PMS literature by demonstrating the need to consider the effects of the subjective nature of reality when introducing a competency-based approach to managing performance. It is my proposition that this is not something that is expressly articulated within the competency literature.

4.9.2 Project 2 - Contribution: Implications for practice

From a practitioner perspective the importance of having a common and agreed view of appropriate behaviour is an obvious benefit as "organizations will function more effectively if all of the work force agree on what constitutes appropriate behaviour with respect to the conduct of business" (Finegan, 1994: 353).

The results from Project 2 show a high degree of alignment of views between the top team and the GSLT with 48 out of the 50 Project 1 behaviours being seen to support the new competencies. This finding shows therefore that the A-B relationship is strong (Figure 12 on page 24).

Despite this degree of alignment, however, the results also show that there is a significant degree of ambiguity and a poor degree of alignment of individual GSLT responses as to how specific behaviours support the competencies. In this respect the internal alignment of the model at point B is weak (Figure 12 on page 24).

The findings from Project 2 indicate that the current system does not induce an aligned understanding of the competency-behaviour relationship, the findings also show that the B-C relationship is weak (Figure 12 on page 24). It can be seen therefore that Project 2 provides further evidence to support the view that the current system is 'weak', rather than 'strong' (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 213).

From a practitioner and empirical research perspective my research in Project 2 can be seen to have made a number of contributions:

- I have identified a high degree of alignment of the views of the top team and the GSLT, with 48 out of the 50 Project 1 behaviours being seen to support the new competencies (96% alignment). This finding shows that the A-B relationship is strong (Figure 12 on page 24).
- I have exposed the lack of a common understanding and alignment of how the top team-defined behaviours are seen by the GSLT to support the new competencies. The B-C relationship is weak (Figure 12 on page 24).
- I have exposed the fact, by reference to the point above, that the competency labels do not create an aligned understanding of the competency-behaviour relationship for the GSLT. The internal strength of point C is weak (Figure 12 on page 24).
- I have identified that it appears that there has been insufficient dialogue on the meaning of the competencies and the behaviours supporting them to align individuals' constructs.
- Finally, the results indicate that as things stand, the organization's current system is not 'strong'.

4.9.3 Summary and next steps

In summary the findings of Project 2 can be seen to have identified poor a degree of alignment of understanding of how the top team-defined behaviours are seen to support the competencies. In addition, the findings indicate that a number of other problems exist with the current performance management system.

Project 3 will share these findings with key stakeholder groups within the organization in order to validate my understanding of the findings and to motivate action for change to improve the strength of the system.

---- End of Project 2 summary report ----

Chapter Five - Project 3 Summary Report

5.1 Project 3 summary introduction

In this chapter I have provided a summary of Project 3; the full project report is included in Chapter Nine starting on page 195.

The motivation for this study is based on the premise that healthy, self-correcting systems make use of data about the nature of the systems outputs to make corrections and improvements to the way that the system functions (Nadler, 1976: 178).

The starting point for my research was a perceived misalignment between the behaviour espoused and rewarded by the top team and the behaviour defined in the organization's competencies. Project 1 and Project 2 have validated this original perception and provided evidence to show that the 'system' was neither healthy nor self-correcting.

The purpose of Project 3 was to share and validate my findings with the top team and the HR team responsible for the values and competencies in order to stimulate the organization to make changes to improve the strength of the system.

5.2 Research design

In conducting this final project I was mindful that feedback alone cannot produce change, it can only initiate action for change (Nadler, 1977). By presenting a picture of 'as is' it was hoped to stimulate energy for change towards what 'should be' and ultimately what 'could be'.

5.2.1 Research protocol

The overall structure of Project 3 was based on a pilot session followed by a series of participative data based feedback sessions in a joint exploration of the problems with the performance management system identified in Project 1 and Project 2. These feedback sessions were conducted *face-to-face* because evidence shows that face-to-face meetings are more effective than written reports (Nadler, 1976: 181). My desire was to create a 'two way' participative dialogue in order to generate a good degree of understanding of the perceived problems with the current systems. The aim was to validate my findings with the key stakeholders and to generate a level of enthusiasm for, and commitment to, improving the functioning of the system.

Following the feedback sessions the results were discussed with a number of the respondents in order to capture a further round of feedback and to help refine my understanding. This is analogous to Morgan's definition of double-loop learning which he suggests depends on taking a "double look" at the findings (1997: 87).

In conducting Project 3 I was keen to maximise the opportunity to focus on my personal development. This final project provided an excellent vehicle for my personal learning based on personal reflection and seeking feedback from participants on my intervention style.

Based on the principle that reflection "after the event" is helped by careful observation "during the event", good planning and in the surfacing of assumptions, "before the event" (Dick, 2004). I completed the self-review questionnaire (Table 39 on page 215), before and after each intervention session. These questions are derived from Argyris and Schon's 'theory of action' (Dick, 2004). The purpose of this activity was to become aware of the assumptions guiding my actions, to identify if the outcomes supported or disproved my assumptions, and to review the effectiveness of my intervention style. This *intervention-reflection* cycle was particularly useful for developing and refining my intervention style and approach.

In addition, throughout the research process I kept a journal in which I recorded my ideas, feelings and questions (the full details of how this journal was used is detailed in the section on my personal learning starting on page 88).

Before each of the intervention sessions I read through my journal and all of the previous self-review questionnaires in order to revisit the learning points and previous ideas. Immediately after each intervention I listened to the recording of the session and made notes in my journal of the things that had gone well and the things that could be improved. I actively used my journal at all stages of the research process.

5.2.2 Sample selection

Being cognisant of the fact that feedback is most effective if it starts at the top and if it involves those people who have the power to change the organization and its processes (Nadler, 1976: 179; Argyris, 1991: 106) I selected the top team and the group HR director and her team, with responsibility for the new competencies, to receive my feedback.

Table 5 below shows the details of the feedback sessions that were conducted in Project 3.

Respondent(s)	Duration	Recorded	Transcribed
Group CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
Wholesale CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
Global Services CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
ISP CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
R&D CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
Retail CEO	Excluded -	left business	Jan 2005
HR Group (13 people including the HR Director)	Two hours	✓	✓

Table 5: Project 3 data capture sessions

5.2.3 Feedback instrument structure

A copy of the feedback instrument is attached at Appendix U on page 337. This instrument is based on the structure shown below:

- Introductory section to outline the purpose of the feedback session.
- Alignment model.
- Summary of Project 1 findings.
- Summary of Project 2 findings.
- Overall summary and conclusions - "*So what?*"

5.2.4 Data capture

Each session was recorded and extensive notes taken. The recordings were then transcribed and analysed. Running alongside this process, as mentioned earlier, I maintained a research journal that captured my personal thoughts and reflections on the actions and outcomes. Before and after each feedback session I recorded my personal understanding of the critical issues using a set of self-review questions (Dick, 2004), (see Table 39 on page 215). This allowed me to reflect on what went well and what could be improved, both in terms of the process and in terms of my own behaviour.

5.2.5 Data analysis

The structure for the data analysis was mirrored on the structure of the feedback instrument. Each transcript was analysed to identify the specific comments against each of the key stages as defined in section 5.2.3 above. This data was then transferred in to a separate database where the responses to each element of the feedback instrument were collected together. The data from the top team sessions were pooled together but kept separate and distinct from the HR data so that comparisons could be made between the two stakeholder groups.

In line with Eden and Huxham's (1996) guidance, the data exploration process was begun after the first feedback session. By becoming sensitised to the emerging trends early on I was able to go back to the literature between each session to identify potentially supporting or disconfirming literature

A summary of the key findings is included in the next section. A full and detailed exploration of the Project 3 findings is included in section 9.6 on pages 224 to 234.

5.3 Project 3 Results

The six principal findings, summarised in Table 6 below, are expanded on within the results section of the full Project 3 report starting on page 224.

1. The findings support the view that two important competencies are missing from the organization's competencies, and that the respondents believe that they should be included retrospectively.
2. The findings support the inference that there is a degree of ambiguity between and within the competencies and behaviours. The results also indicate however that the top team and HR stakeholder communities believe that it is more important that a particular behaviour is displayed than where or how it supports a given competency. Behaviours are perceived not to be 'mutually exclusive'.
3. The findings support the view that "Using anger, frustration and intolerance", identified by the top team in Project 1 as required behaviour, is inappropriate behaviour, and that this issue needs to be discussed with the top team.
4. The results imply that the organization's current approach to the definition and application of a performance management system based on the use of competencies contains unrealistic expectations of the applicability or desirability of defining leadership behaviour in the way that is prescribed within the competency literature. It is considered neither desirable nor possible to define and articulate, in a unified way, all of the leadership behaviours needed to function effectively in all of the different situations and contexts that they might encounter.
5. The results infer that when the top team are making an assessment of leader's performance that elements of their assessment process is 'unconscious' and contains 'criteria' of which they are not fully aware.
6. The findings indicate that there has been insufficient dialogue to generate an appropriate level of understanding of the competencies and the supporting behaviours, or to expose the assessment criteria 'in use' by the top team.

Table 6: Key findings

5.4 Project 3 Summary - Discussion and conclusions

5.4.1 Project 3 - Contribution: Implications for practice

In reflecting back the findings from the previous research projects to the top team and the HR community evidence from this study shows that both of these stakeholder groups recognise and acknowledge the previous research findings. They also recognise that action needs to be taken to address these findings; the missing competencies need to be included, the ambiguous competencies need to be combined and the use of the behaviours that are deemed inappropriate needs to be discussed by the top team.

The findings from Project 3 support the previous assertion that as things stand the organization does not have a set of competencies that represent the full needs of the organization, and that the misalignment and ambiguity that exists will lead to inefficiency, miscommunication and confusion unless addressed. The key stakeholders recognise and acknowledge therefore that the current system is *weak*.

The first new finding from Project 3 is that the key stakeholder groups believe that there has been insufficient dialogue at the level of the individual, team and organization to form an agreed understanding of what the competencies mean in practice. The respondents reported that conversations about performance and about what constitutes appropriate behaviour are infrequently conducted, if at all. From an organizational effectiveness perspective this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed, as the previous findings show that simply leaving people to form their own understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour will lead to multiple interpretations and confusion. If there isn't an open dialogue the organization will not expose individual's constructs or the top team's assessment criteria 'in use' (Argyris, 1991: 101). As such feedback and coaching between the top team and the GSLT will be ineffective as people will talk past each other (Argyris, 1991: 102).

Global organizations operate in complex multicultural environments where there is a need for diversity of thinking and behaviour in order to meet the requisite variety of the business environment (Morgan, 1997: 113). The research findings show that the two key stakeholder groups value diversity and that they expect to see a diversity of behaviour within the GSLT that reflects the needs of their particular challenges and context. The results also show that the organization's current system for managing performance is perceived to be overly mechanistic and that it does not deal well with the issue of diversity or situation specific behaviour with its '*one size fits all*' approach.

The second new finding from Project 3 identified therefore is that the respondents feel that it is not realistic or desirable to create a single unified prescription for behaviour as defined in extant competency literature (Boam and Sparrow, 1992; Woodruffe, 1991). The findings support the view that there is not just one best way to behave (Burgoyne, 1990; Maccoby, 1993: 49) that can be applied to all challenges and contexts. In this respect the results indicate a desire to move away from a centrally defined unified list of competencies and supporting behaviours to a situation where the organization's competencies are used to guide a dialogue between the top team and the GSLT to agree on what constitutes appropriate behaviour. In this context the

top team needs to work with the GSLT in a process of dialogue and use the competencies as *interpretative frames* rather than as a *rulebook*.

The third key finding confirmed by Project 3 is that the top team members make decisions using unconscious mechanisms; they do not solely rely on analytical decision making skills to assess leader's performance but rely on their assessment of the 'sense' of the person. In coming to conclusions in this way it appears that the top team's actions align with extant literature that indicates that leaders are very often not consciously aware of the criteria that they use to make decision (Senge, 1990: 15; Mintzberg, 1976; Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004).

The organization's current performance management system acknowledges the analytical component of the top team's decision making but ignores the intuitive component. In this respect the current system is perceived to have an overly optimistic view of the 'rationality' of the assessment process.

Contribution to practice

The findings from Project 3 provide support for the view that the organization does not currently have a set of competencies that represent the full needs of the organization, and that the misalignment and ambiguity that exists will lead to inefficiency, miscommunication and confusion unless addressed. The current system is *weak*.

The findings also show that the key stakeholder groups believe that there has been insufficient dialogue at the level of the individual, team and organization to form an agreed understanding of what the competencies mean in practice.

The findings also show that the respondents feel that the competencies need to be operationalised and aligned to the particular challenges and contexts that individuals face. The findings indicate that it is incumbent upon the top team to engage in a dialogue with the GSLT about what the competencies mean for the way that people should behave and to help them understand and expose their own criteria 'in use'. In this respect effective communication through dialogue can be seen as a prerequisite for effective organizational functioning and for creating "mutual understanding" (Covey, 2002: 138) and alignment (Semler, 1997).

In summary, as a result of these new findings it is proposed that it would be beneficial for the top team to engage in dialogue with the GSLT. This dialogue will help both parties to come to a better understanding of the decision criteria 'in use' and to create alignment of understanding of what constitutes appropriate GSLT behaviour for a given set of challenges and contexts.

5.4.2 Project 3 - Contribution: Implications for theory

Effective business performance is predicated on the ability to align the management of human resources to the business strategy (Boam and Sparrow, 1992: 5). A competency-based PMS aims to make this linkage explicit by eliciting the top team's expectations of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and aligning these expectations with the target population's understanding (Feltham, 1992: 90).

It can be seen therefore that a competency-based approach to performance management is based on principles of scientific management in which it is perceived that the whole can be represented by its constituent parts in a single unified way (Jacobs, 1990). Project 3 however has shown that this approach does not acknowledge the complexity and diversity found and needed in the environment of the modern organization. The current business reality is that we live in a highly complex environment where we cannot expect to recognise and analyse all aspects of person, events and situations in advance (Cialdini, 2001: 7). In addition, research and common sense show that even in very specific situations there is more than one way to manage, and therefore any performance management approach must be flexible and adaptive enough to be compatible with this reality (Burgoyne, 1990: 24).

My findings indicate that it is perceived that it is neither realistic nor desirable to try to define an infinite number of behaviours for all contexts and all situations. As such my findings support the view that "there is an inappropriateness of the concept of a universal, mechanistic list of leadership behaviours" (Burgoyne, 1990: 25) and there is no longer a single unified 'truth' that can be applied in all circumstances and in all contexts (Legge, 1995: 301).

Evidence for Project 3 supports the observation in Project 2 of the need for theory to reflect the subjective nature of reality (Morgan, 1983; Kelly, 1955; Hatch, 1997; Goffin, 2002). "The functionalist paradigm has provided the dominant framework for academic sociology in the twentieth century and accounts for by far the largest proportion of theory and research in the field of organizational studies" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 48). As such the majority of competency literature appears to be written from a functionalist perspective and fails to take account of the 'subjective' nature of reality. It is my view that my findings extend the PMS literature by demonstrating the need to consider the effects of the subjective nature of reality when introducing a competency based approach to manage performance. It is my proposition that this is not something that is expressly articulated within the competency literature.

Evidence from my findings also supports the view that the top team members tend to make their decisions intuitively (Weston, 1984: 50). Often they cannot say on what basis they have made their decision, when they try to describe it they find themselves at a loss (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 82; Senge, 1990: 19; Schon, 1983: 49). Traditional management theory and training has heavily emphasised the use of "rational" analytical techniques and intuitive approaches have been under-emphasised (Weston, 1986: 52).

In this context intuition poses a challenge to the rational decision making process defined in the competency literature because it seems that decision making operates on both a conscious / deliberate level and an unconscious / automatic level (Myers,

2002: 44). In other words, decision making has both an analytical component and an intuitive component, with much of this cognition occurring automatically outside of consciousness (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 76). The implications of this finding for theory and praxis is that top management need to become aware of and acknowledge that many of their decisions are based an unconscious intuitive assessment, rather than on a wholly rational analytical analysis of all of the available facts. Perhaps, as suggested, analysis and intuition are best conceived of as two parallel systems of knowing (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 76). By considering only the analytical approach one is left with only a partial means of knowing the world. The challenge is to weave the two together (Haidt, 2001) and to find ways of opening thinking styles and decision making that take us beyond the rational model (Morgan, 1997: 81). To ignore the intuitive component is to deny a significant component of the assessment of people in praxis. In this context a more fully developed perspective would balance and integrate both analytical and intuitive decision making capacities (Simon as reported in Morgan, 1997: 80).

The implication for management theory therefore can be seen to be the need to extend theory to recognise this duality in the assessment process.

In closing it is worth reflecting on Sadler-Smith's observation (2004: 89):

"Intuition is a natural component of top management's' thinking but one that, although we are all too often aware of it, we may tend to ignore or consign it to the closet, perhaps because it is perceived as unscientific or irrational"

Contribution to theory

The findings from Project 3 can be seen to support and extend the previous research findings and make a contribution by showing that extant theory contains unrealistic assumptions about the appropriateness of producing a single centrally defined unified list of competencies and behaviours. It is considered neither desirable nor possible to centrally define and articulate, in a unified way, all of the specific individual behaviours needed to function effectively in all of the different situations and contexts that the GSLT might encounter.

Secondly, my findings indicate the need for competency literature to acknowledge and address the need to align competencies and the PMS to the particular challenges and context that an individual faces.

Thirdly, the findings indicate the need for the active involvement of the top team with the GSLT to expose individual's constructs and thereby confront the subjective nature of reality. It is proposed that through the process of dialogue it will be possible to facilitate shared understanding and create alignment. This approach and requirement is not something that is referenced in the competency literature.

Finally, it is proposed that extant competency-based performance literature needs to reflect the duality in the assessment process. The findings support the view that a more fully developed perspective would balance and integrate both analytical and intuitive decision making capacities (Simon as reported in Morgan, 1997: 80).

----- End of Project 3 summary -----

5.5 Consolidated summary of findings: Project 1, 2 and 3

	Competencies	Behaviours	PMS / process
Project 1	<p>There is a good degree of alignment across the top team of the competencies needed, (80%).</p> <p>Two competencies appear to be missing: "Uses the full range of emotional intelligence" and "Forms own position and views".</p>	<p>There is a poor degree of alignment of behaviours seen as supporting the competencies, (298 behaviours).</p> <p>The system is 'weak' in terms of the degree of aligned understanding of appropriate behaviour.</p>	<p>The top team's assessment criteria '<i>in use</i>' appear to often be unconscious: - "<i>I told you things that I did not know</i>".</p> <p>There is a need for 'mechanisms' to facilitate an improved degree of alignment and understanding.</p>
Project 2	<p>There is a poor degree of understanding across the GSLT's of how the P1 behaviours align to the competencies.</p> <p>The competency labels do not provide 'self-explanatory' meaning.</p> <p>There is ambiguity between competencies: "Bottom line" and "Drive for results".</p>	<p>There is a high degree of alignment of behaviours seen as appropriate by GSLT against those defined by the top team in Project 1, (96%).</p> <p>One behaviour was seen as inappropriate by most respondents: - "Uses anger frustration and intolerance".</p>	<p>The system is 'weak'; it does not generate an aligned understanding of competency-behaviour relationships.</p>
Project 3	<p>A single unified competency list is deemed inappropriate.</p> <p>The competencies need to be 'operationalised' and used as a guide, not as a 'rule book'.</p>	<p>The behaviours need to be aligned to the particular challenges and context faced by the individual.</p>	<p>The top team's decision process and criteria are often 'unconscious'.</p> <p>There has been insufficient dialogue to create understanding.</p> <p>Active leadership involvement is needed to expose individual's constructs in order to create a strong system and aligned understanding.</p>

Table 7: Project 1, Project 2 and Project 3 summary of findings

Table 7 above provides a summary of the key findings from Project 1, 2 and 3 that will be used to inform and underpin the discussion in the following chapter on the contribution to theory and practice of this research study.

Chapter Six - Contribution to theory and practice

6.1 Contribution introduction

I start this chapter by restating the research aims and the original motivation for this research study. I then go on to provide a short summary of the key aspects of extant theory and literature informing my findings, before discussing the implications of these findings for theory and for practice in the sponsoring organization in order to demonstrate the contribution of this research study.

In the introduction to this thesis I identified how the original motivation for this research study resulted from a perceived misalignment between the behaviour espoused by the top team, the behaviour prescribed in the organization's competencies and the behaviour rewarded. As such the primary aim of this research study was driven by a desire to understand if this perceived misalignment was valid and if so what could be done to correct it; in so doing the aim was to improve the strength and effectiveness of the performance management system.

A review of extant theory and literature, in Chapter Two, identified how the way in which people are managed has come to be recognised as one of the primary keys to improved organizational performance (Oakland and Oakland, 2001: 773). I reported how leaders have a responsibility to ensure that people know what is expected of them and what good looks. I also reported how alignment theory identifies that the effective alignment of each component of the performance management system leads to effective performance at the level of the individual, the process and the organization (Nadler and Tushman, 1988). I explained that by carefully designing and aligning the performance and reward system it is perceived that the top team are able to encourage behaviour that effectively supports the organization's strategic aspirations (Semler, 1997: 28).

Extant literature reports that, in the context of performance management, a strong system results when there is strong alignment between what the top team says is important, what it demonstrates through its actions is important and through what is actually rewarded in practice (Harrison, 2005; Nadler and Tushman, 1988). To build a strong system there needs to be a good degree of alignment and consistency of the different top team member's views and actions, such that the system functions effectively, and such that the GSLT members develop a clear and unambiguous understanding of what is expected of them (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004).

Competency-based performance management systems address this need for clarity by identifying and expressing the behaviours that people are required to display in support of the organization's vision and values (Boam and Sparrow, 1992; Woodruffe, 2000). Competencies aim to make the desired behaviours explicit by eliciting the top team's views of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, and then aligning these expectations with the GSLT's understanding (Feltham, 1992: 90).

My research is also informed by the perspective that evidence shows that if the top team members are in agreement as to what behaviours the organization needs to display, that they are more likely to be consistent in their decision to develop and

nurture them (King et al, 2001: 95). In this sense it can be seen therefore that if the members of the top team are aligned in their requirements these can be used to drive and align the HR processes with the business vision and strategy, and in so doing, create a strong system.

Personal construct theory (PCT), explains how sense making begins with the personal perspectives individuals use to understand and interpret events that occur around them (Bannister and Fransella, 1986). PCT also explains how people create their own reality based on their own experiences and interpretation of events (Kelly, 1955), leading to the creation of multiple realities (Baker, 2002). PCT shows therefore how understanding needs to be managed at the level of the individual as well as at the level of the team and the organization.

Finally, in reviewing the literature on decision making it appears that the performance assessment process operates on two levels; the conscious / deliberate level and the unconscious / automatic level (Myers, 2002: 44). The implication for my research therefore is the need to consider the implications of this for the way in which the top team members may not be consciously aware of their assessment criteria, and that their espoused criteria and their criteria in use may be different (Weston, 1984: 51).

6.2 Contribution: Implications for theory

6.2.1 *Single unified truth?*

It can be seen from an analysis of my research findings that they lend support to the view that it is neither realistic nor desirable to try to define an infinite number of behaviours for all contexts and all situations. As such my findings support Burgoyne's view that "there is an inappropriateness of the concept of a universal, mechanistic list of managerial behaviours" (1990: 25). In our postmodernist world universal rules are no longer seen to be relevant or desirable (Legge, 1995: 301), and as such extant competency literature seems to inadequately address the needs of the modern business environment. As a member of my supervising panel put it, "the prescribed competency-based approach fails to take account of the need to operationalise the competencies in order to address the particular challenges and context that individuals face".

My findings lend support to Boydell et al's view that there are important limitations to the competency-based approach in conditions of complexity, unpredictability and rapid rates of change (2004: 33), and that producing a unified prescription for management behaviour is inappropriate, particularly for organizations operating in the dynamic global environment.

6.2.2 *Diversity and performance management*

Extant theory indicates that diversity within teams can improve the quality of decision making and innovation (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996; Pitcher and Smith, 2001) and that it can bring a wealth of information and knowledge vital to operating in complex, highly dynamic competitive environments (Barkema, Baum and Mannix, 2002: 920). In addition the law of requisite variety postulates that any systems must

encourage and incorporate variety internally if it is to cope with variety externally (Goss, Pascale and Athos, 1993: 106).

As organizations compete and grow globally they will inevitably become infused with new ideas, insights, people, values and behaviour (Morgan, 1997). As a result organizations will face an increasing level and range of diversity that will need to be managed effectively. For a business unit or team to be successful, in dealing with the challenges of a complex task, or a difficult environment, it is vital that it be allowed to possess sufficient internal complexity and diversity (Morgan, 1997: 113). The inclusion of a diversity of behaviour however, appears to run counter to the concept of a single unified list of acceptable behaviours as defined within the competency literature.

Diversity is a real-life business issue; however, it does not appear to be referenced, or allowed for in the competency literature, and as such therefore, the extant literature appears to provide an inadequate paradigm for managing in a complex, dynamic global environment.

My findings show that the sponsoring organization, like many others, has recognised that they must develop approaches to managing performance that fit their own unique business needs (Devine, 1990: 3). It is proposed that my findings provide support for Jacob's view that the theory supporting performance management must become capable of accounting for the diverse dynamic nature of business (1990: 29).

6.2.3 *The unconscious nature of decision making*

The findings from Project 3 provide support for the assertion in extant literature that the top team members do not use a purely conscious rational thought process when assessing the GSLT members' performance, and that they come to rely on the use of intuition (Weston, 1984: 50).

In this context intuition poses a major challenge to the rational decision making process defined in the competency literature, because it seems that decision making operates on two levels: the conscious / deliberate and the unconscious / automatic (Myers, 2002: 44). In other words decision making has both an analytical component and an intuitive component, with much of this cognition occurring automatically outside of consciousness, where the decision criteria are 'hidden' from both the assessor and the assessed (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 76).

From a competency literature perspective this issue poses a direct challenge to the possibility of being able to effect an objective performance management system that is based on an assessment of behaviour in the traditional 'rational' sense. The prescribed approach within the competency literature simply does not address the intuitive component of the decision process that the top team members use to make decisions, and that they use to form judgements about individuals. To ignore the intuitive component seems to deny a significant component of the assessment of people in praxis.

It is proposed that analysis and intuition are best conceived of as two parallel systems of knowing (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 76). Even though different people may

bring an analytical or an intuitive dominance to a specific task, both are necessary for effective action or problem solving to occur (Morgan, 1997: 76). By considering only the analytical approach one is left with only a partial means of knowing the world. The challenge therefore is to weave the two together (Haidt, 2001), and to find ways of opening thinking styles and decision making that take us beyond the rational model (Morgan, 1997: 81).

The implication of these findings for management theory is that it needs to recognise this duality in the assessment process. In this context a more fully developed perspective would balance and integrate both analytical and intuitive decision making capacities (Simon as reported in Morgan, 1997: 80). The top team members need to become aware of, and acknowledge, that many of their decisions are based on an intuitive assessment of the person or situation, rather than on a wholly rational analytical analysis of all of the available facts. Theory also needs to reflect the need for top team members to find ways to identify and expose their criteria in use so that they can achieve alignment with their top team colleagues, and so that they can expose and align their criteria in use with those being assessed. The repertory grid and laddering protocol adopted in Project 1, provided a useful tool to support a dialogue that helped to expose these unconscious criteria.

6.2.4 Focus of effort

In Chapter Two it was identified how there are three phases in the creation and use of a competency-based performance management process; the *design* phase, the *implementation* phase and the *use* phase. These phases are represented in Figure 22 below. The main focus of this process in the client organization, like many others (Collins, 1996), has been the design phase during which a unified set of competencies and supporting behaviours was created.

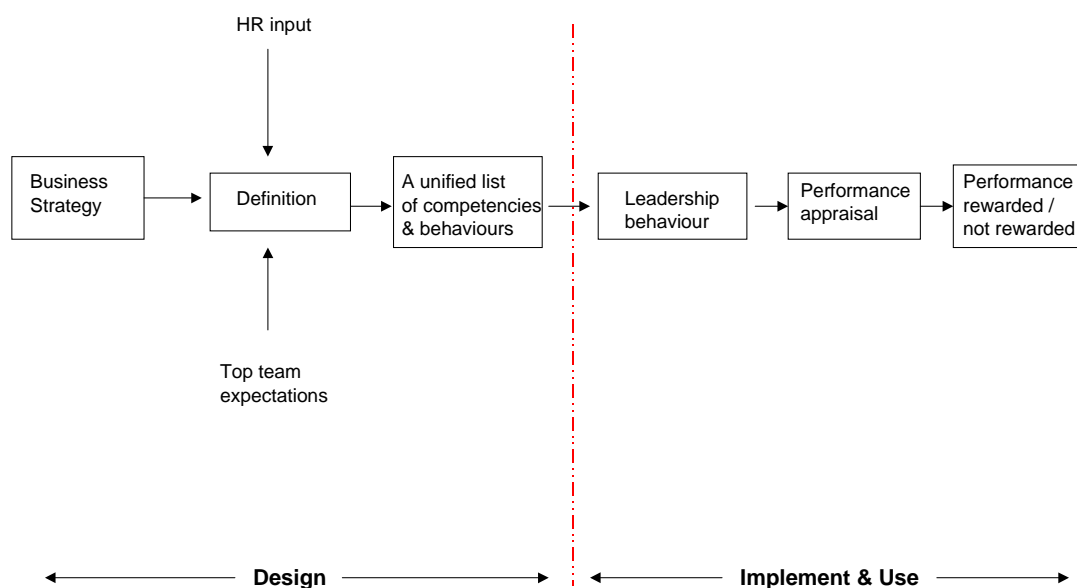


Figure 22: Aligning behaviour to business strategy

My findings have shown that this approach misses an important step in the process, which helps achieve alignment and understanding, and which can be used to address the concerns raised earlier in this chapter with respect to contextualisation and operationalisation of the competencies. Through a process of dialogue it is proposed that it is possible to expose the top team's assessment criteria in use and to expose the constructs and understanding of the GSLT members.

By focussing on the process of dialogue during the implementation phase leaders can achieve an alignment of understanding that addresses the particular challenges and context that the individual faces, and that can be used to account and allow for, the desire for diversity. In this context the creation of an aligned understanding is unlikely to be the same as the creation of a common or homogenised understanding.

It is my proposition that by introducing a process of dialogue it will be possible to create an effective strong system based on an agreed and aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour for a given set of challenges and contexts. This approach differs from that prescribed in extant literature in that through a process of dialogue the assessor and the assessed develop a shared and agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour that is *specific* and *particular* to the challenges and context that the individual faces. The result of this process of dialogue, throughout the leadership team, will be a 'set' of prescriptions for behaviour, rather than a single unified generic list. These various agreements then become the criteria against which each individual separate GSLT member's performance is assessed.

In this context therefore it is proposed that a 'strong' system requires the active involvement of the assessors with those being assessed. In a strong system the focus of effort becomes much less to do with a quest for the one right answer, than a focus on the real embodied people who are the key actors involved in corporate life (Brocklesby and Cummings, 2003: 294). In a strong system therefore the focus needs to be on the relationship between the people involved, not on the appraisal form.

In essence my findings align with Morgan's view, that indicates that management theory needs to reflect the move towards a model where expectations of behaviour *emerge* through a process of dialogue and an understanding of the organization's values and competencies (1986). Where this process includes all of the relevant actors and is conducted on both a one-to-one and a group basis.

The resulting prescriptions for behaviour become very much a product of the specific conversations through which they are arrived at. Figure 23 below represents this diagrammatically:

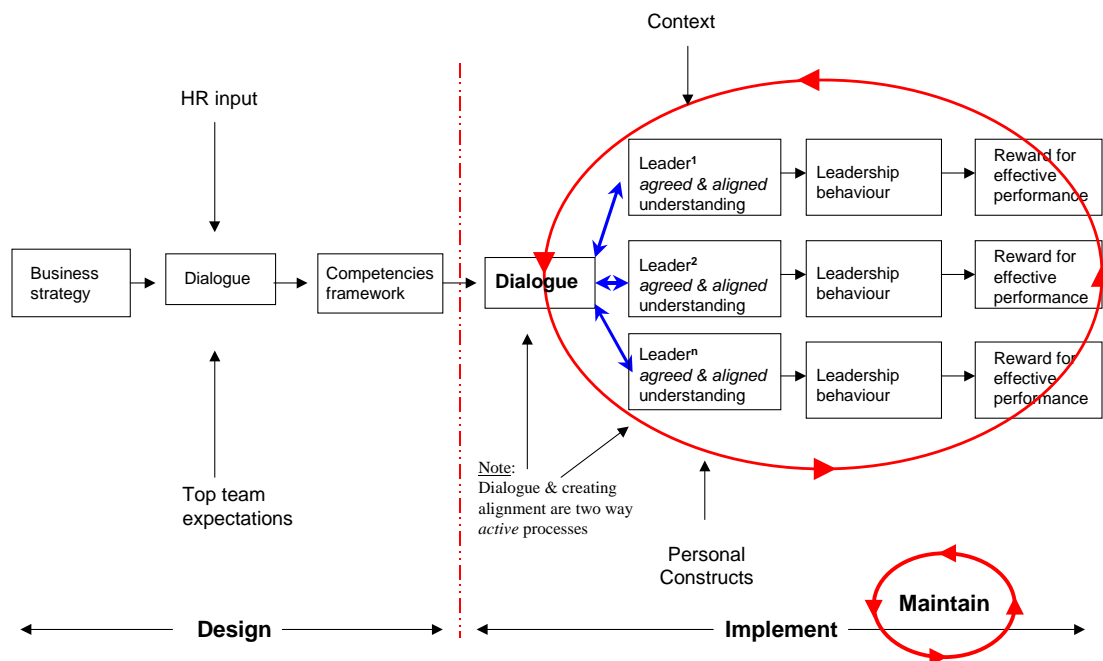


Figure 23: Focus of the performance relationship

In creating this model I have followed Whetten's guidance and created a model that is parsimonious (1989: 490). That is it only includes those variables that add value to my proposition, and that make a direct contribution to extant alignment theory.

The assumption underpinning this model is that once people have an agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour that they will also have the *willingness* and *ability* to behave in that way. (This will be discussed further in the *implications for practice* section).

The principle on which this proposals is based is that improved individual and organizational performance will result if this model is followed because the assessor and the assessed will have a shared and aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. It then becomes possible to use the resulting prescription for behaviour to align what is espoused with management action and the reward system.

In this model the weight of management effort shifts from the design phase to the implementation and maintenance phases. In the maintenance phase, shown in Figure 23, previously entitled 'in use' (Figure 22 on page 71), the process of dialogue becomes continual. The competencies and supporting behaviours are reviewed and updated on a continual basis in order to ensure that what is espoused and what is rewarded continue to reflect the changing business challenges and contexts that leadership team members face.

My research can be seen to provide support for Collin's (1996) recommendation that the weight of management effort should be placed on the implementation and use phases, rather than where it is typically applied, in the design phase.

From a theoretical perspective it can be seen that the addition of a mediating variable, 'dialogue', aligned with the acknowledgement that there will be multiple ways of defining behaviour to support the competencies, rather than one unified prescription, leads to a new causal map supporting the creation of a strong system (Whetten, 1989: 493).

My proposal also changes the causal map in terms of *ownership* of the PMS. Traditionally performance management systems have been owned and driven by HR (Furnham, 2004). These proposed changes put much more emphasis on the role and involvement of the top team, and other leaders within the organization. The findings indicate that active leadership involvement is a key and necessary component of an effective performance management system. Active leadership and participant involvement can be seen therefore, to be a necessary prerequisite for creating and maintaining a strong system.

6.2.5 Contribution: Conclusions and implications for theory

In conclusion it can be seen that the contribution to theory offered by this discussion of the research findings is to call in to question a number of aspects of extant theory.

The discussion has identified that in the extant management theory and literature there appears to be serious limitations and problems in the application of the rational model in a complex, dynamic global environment that is full of diversity and complexity.

One contribution offered by my findings is to provide support to Boydell et al.'s assertion that the performance management system needs to recognise and address the particular challenges and contexts that individuals and the organizations face (2004: 33).

The second contribution offered by my findings is the need to extend current management theory to recognise and address the unconscious decision making process of top team members.

The final contribution offered by my findings is the need to extend performance management theory to recognise and include the process of dialogue and the need for the integral active involvement of leadership team members in facilitating understanding and effecting organizational alignment. In this way leadership action is critical to the creation of a strong system that ultimately leads to more effective performance at the level of the individual, the process and the organization.

In-line with Bowen and Ostroff's proposition that HR practice should be informed HR theory (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 217), I now turn my attention to the implications for practice of these findings with specific reference to the sponsoring organization.

6.3 Contribution: Implications for practice

Evidence shows that organizations function more effectively if the various components of the human resource management system are aligned and acting in a way that supports each other (Baird and Meshoulam, 1988). In a strong system each of the individual components are aligned effectively to each other so that they work together coherently to produce effective individual and organizational performance (Semler, 1997; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004).

For a competency-based PMS to be strong it needs to create clear expectations among its target audience of what behaviour is expected and how this behaviour will be rewarded (Semler, 1997). As explained previously, the motivation for this research study was a perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused and the behaviour rewarded, leading to a degree of ambiguity and confusion across the GSLT; as such the system appeared to be weak, rather than strong.

Figure 24 below identifies three components of a competency-based performance management system that need to be in alignment in order to facilitate the creation of a strong system.

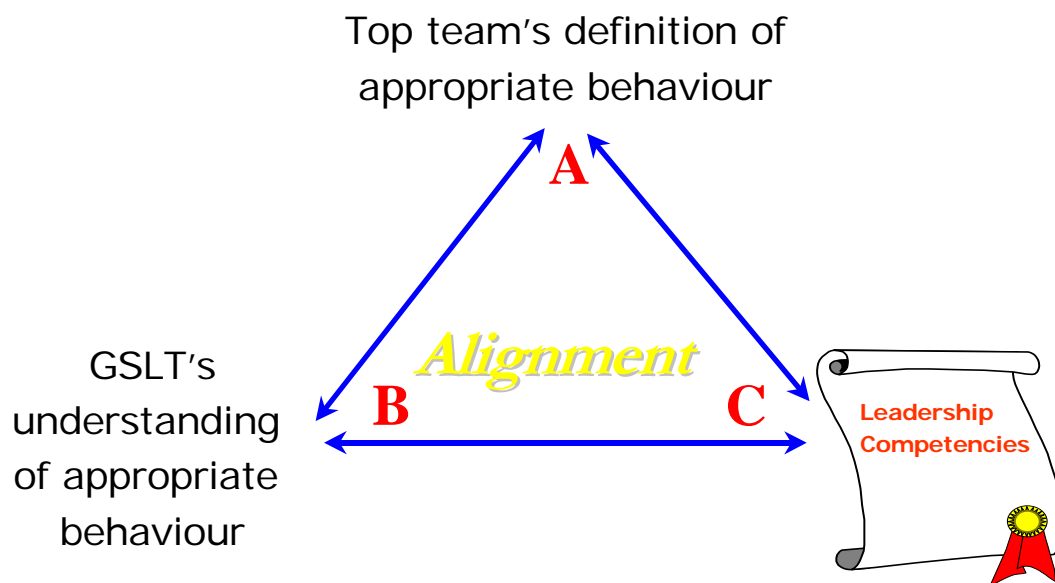


Figure 24: The elements of alignment

In the model shown in Figure 24 above it is important that there is internal coherence and alignment in each of the separate components, and that each component is effectively aligned to the other components.

Effective alignment and the creation of a strong system requires a good degree of consistency in what the top team say, and in what the GSLT 'infer' from what they hear, see and experience. Evidence shows however that what people experience and infer are more powerful determinants of behaviour than what is espoused (Harrison, 2005). Organizational reality in this sense is what people see and experience, not what the rhetoric implies it should be (Mangham, 1990).

Alignment between the top team members, in terms of what they espouse, model and reward, helps to create consensus and an aligned understanding in the GSLT. To the extent that Project 1 exposed a lack of alignment among top team members of the required behaviour, it becomes difficult to send unambiguous and consistent messages to people about what is important. Ambiguity results in a 'weak' system in which variability of response and understanding may be large (Mischel, 1973). This lack of consistency therefore is likely to lead to a degree of ambiguity where each GSLT member, who experiences different 'messages', will form their own particular view of what constitutes appropriate behaviour (Baker, 2002).

The findings from Project 1 showed that the degree of internal alignment of understanding at point A (Figure 24 on page 75) is weak in terms of behaviours, but strong in terms of the definition of the required competencies. Project 1 also identified however that two competencies deemed necessary by the top team were missing from the organization's competencies; "Uses the full range of emotional intelligence" and "Forms own position and views". This finding indicates therefore that the A-C relationship is weak (Figure 24 on page 75).

In summary, Project 1 indicated that at the top team level the system is weak, and that the competencies do not fully align with the top team's requirements.

Project 2 investigated the degree of alignment between the behaviours defined by the top team and the views of the GSLT.

The findings from Project 2 showed a strong degree of alignment of the behaviours seen as appropriate (96%), but a poor degree of alignment of how the behaviours were seen to support the competencies.

The findings from Project 2 also identified a significant degree of ambiguity between competencies, with six competency pairings showing a degree of ambiguity. The findings from Project 2 therefore can be seen to lend support to the assertion that the meaning of the competencies is unclear. Based on these findings Project 2 can be seen to have provided evidence to show that the specific competency-behaviour relationships are not well aligned or well understood.

In summary, the findings from Project 2 showed that the A-B relationship is strong, that the B-C relationship is weak, and that the internal alignment of the competencies, point C, is weak.

Taken together Project 1 and Project 2 can be seen to have provided a comprehensive analysis of the strength of the key components of the organization's performance management system. The combined findings lend support to the perception underpinning the original motivation for this research study, that different top team members appeared to value and reward different behaviours, and that the behaviours rewarded were out of line with those defined in the organization's competencies.

Project 3 was based on the premise that healthy, self-correcting systems make use of data about the nature of the system's outputs to make corrections and improvements to the way that the system functions (Nadler, 1976: 178). Using the findings from

Project 1 and Project 2, the aim of Project 3 was to stimulate the organization to make changes to improve the strength of the system.

What emerged from the feedback sessions in Project 3 however was the revelation of a degree of unrest with some of the principles underpinning the current system and the way in which it had been enacted. The findings from Project 3 confirmed my earlier conclusion that the organization currently has a 'weak' performance management system.

I will now explore the implications of these findings in order to arrive at a set of conclusions and recommendations for the organization's practice that can be used to improve the strength of the system.

6.3.1 *Missing competencies*

Firstly, the strength of a performance management system is improved if all parties understand what is expected of them (Semler, 1997), and if the formal system aligns with and supports the desires of the top team (King et al, 2001). Therefore the first recommendation is to revisit the competencies in order to address the omission of the two competencies identified in Project 1 as missing from the organization's new competencies, "Uses the full range of emotional intelligence" and "Forms own position and views". The recommendation is to include these in the formal PMS thus increasing the internal strength of the system at point A and strengthening the A-C relationship (Figure 24 on page 75).

6.3.2 *Eliminate ambiguity*

The second recommendation is to review the competencies in order to eliminate any ambiguity of the meaning of the competencies such that people have a clear understanding of the difference between them; specifically "Drives for results" and "Bottom line". This will improve the internal strength at point C and improve the strength of the B-C relationship (Figure 24 on page 75).

6.3.3 *Making it personal*

The findings in Project 3 identified that it was deemed neither realistic nor desirable to produce a single unified prescription of behaviour for the GSLT that could be applied in all contexts and that would be suitable to address the multiplicity of different business challenges. The results also show that the organization's current system does not deal well with the issue of diversity or situation specific behaviour. In effect what was identified was a failure to recognise the diverse needs of the business environment and a failure to operationalise the competencies (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004; Schon, 1983; Hayashi, 2001). Overall the findings indicated that there was an overly optimistic expectation of the rationality of the performance assessment system. The current system appears to be based on an unrealistic expectation that a centrally defined unified set of competencies is appropriate for all contexts and challenges. In this context I am using Boydell's definition of 'context' and 'challenges' (Boydell et al, 2004: 33).

'Challenges' are the critical tasks, problems and issues requiring action. 'Context' is the local situation in which any challenges arise and the environmental and on-site conditions.

Traditionally management has been about control and creating conformance to centrally defined standards (Harvey-Jones, 1994: 12), yet different aspects of the business demand different behaviors from individuals (Jackson and Schuler, 1995: 207). My findings provide support for the view that to mechanistically apply a unified set of competencies and supporting behaviours is inappropriate and that "it is extremely dangerous to generalise" (Harvey-Jones, 1994: 16). As a member of my supervisory panel suggested "there needs to be a level of effort applied to operationalise the application of the competencies".

As referenced previously, for the performance management system to be effective it is important that the assessor and the assessed have an aligned and agreed understanding of performance expectations, i.e. what good (behaviour) looks like. The findings show that the top team and the HR community are looking to the GSLT members to define their own understanding of what the competencies mean so that they can customise them for their particular challenges and context. My findings support the view that "it is better to let employees sit down with their boss and decide which competencies are appropriate for their role and to agree concrete examples of behaviour that are appropriate to their particular challenges and context" (Wyatt, 2003: 10)

Based on these findings it seems that, as one of my supervisory panel suggested, "it would be more appropriate to use the competencies as 'tram lines' and 'guidelines' to facilitate an effective dialogue between those doing the assessing and those being assessed, rather than as a 'hard and fast', 'rule book' prescription for behaviour". In this sense, working with the competencies, leaders can serve as 'interpretative filters' and promote high-quality exchanges that create an aligned understanding of what behaviour is appropriate and expected (Naumann and Bennett, 2000).

In this way the definition of the behaviour supporting the competencies becomes a collective construction through dialogue (Burgoyne, 1995: 62). The competencies 'frame' the dialogue and provide a set of guiding principles that help to align this dialogue in the direction of the organization's values and vision. The purpose of this process therefore is to create alignment towards a common end, it is not about trying to regiment behaviour (Harvey-Jones, 1994).

The competencies, in this model, become the 'guarantors'; the "guarantee that that the system will produce what it purports to deliver" (Burgoyne, 1995: 68). So in this context the competencies are 'given' but the behaviour supporting their delivery, the content, needs to be defined to suit the particular challenges and context. In this sense the individual assessor working with the person being assessed needs to use the competencies to guide a dialogue towards achieving an aligned and agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour for the individual's particular challenges and context.

In this new scenario, of *collective construction*, each leader needs to adopt a participative approach and be willing to share power, in constructing the definition of appropriate behaviour (Blanter and Belcher, 1994). In this scenario effective

participation of all parties, on an equal footing, is critical to the success of the process (Senge, 1990).

It seems therefore that the organization needs to change its approach to performance management from one that is based on a centrally defined, unified list of behaviours owned by HR to one which is owned by the leadership team but guided by the organization's competencies. An approach that encourages people to use their own judgement in identifying the behaviour that they see as appropriate for their particular challenges and context; a paradigm where the organization's competencies provide a vehicle for creating shared understanding, the 'tram lines', whilst allowing people to identify and agree with their boss what constitutes appropriate behaviour (Tichy, 1997: 106). The application of the performance process then becomes a focus on the dialogue between the assessor and the assessed to create an aligned understanding of what behaviour is appropriate and should be rewarded. In this sense the hard system needs some 'soft' support (Burgoyne, 1988: 43).

The third recommendation is to initiate a programme of activity to *'make it personal'* and to put the emphasis on operationalising the competencies such that their application addresses the particular challenges and context that individuals face. Following this approach will help the organization address the internal weakness of point B, and strengthen both the A-B and B-C relationships (Figure 24 on page 75).

6.3.4 The need for dialogue

My findings indicate a latent desire for an improved level of dialogue and the active involvement of leaders in creating alignment and understanding. The next implication of my findings therefore builds on the previous discussion and relates to the need for a significant increase in the level of dialogue across the organization to improve the degree of understanding and alignment.

In reverting to the competency literature it appears to me that the literature was missing an important 'component' that would help achieve alignment and understanding. This component is dialogue.

In recommending the inclusion of "dialogue" I am using the meaning provided by Bohm which comes from the Greek word dialogos (1996: 6). Logos means "the word", and in this respect I am using the term to mean the 'meaning of the word'. "*Dia* means through - it does not mean two" (Bohm, 1996: 6). It can be seen therefore that 'Dialogue' is a process for creating understanding through the use of words.

"A dialogue can occur among any number of people" (Bohm, 1996: 6). In this sense the process of dialogue is "a stream of meaning flowing among us, through us and between us" (Bohm, 1996: 6). This shared meaning facilitates alignment and is the "cement" that holds people, teams and organizations together. Senge and Argyris have been reminding us for years of the importance of creating dialogue within organizations (Hirst, 1999: 50). Dialogue stimulates learning, strengthens relationships and most importantly of all builds understanding (Hirst, 1999: 50).

Dialogue is necessary to create shared meaning (Bohm, 1996: 19). Dialogue is a way to improve understanding, to stimulate and sustain interpersonal relationship, to chart

an agreed course of action and to establish a fertile atmosphere for self-motivation (Bauby, 1976: 2). In addition participation in active two-way dialogue is critical to the creation of collective and organizational learning (Burgoyne, 1995: 67).

Through the process of dialogue people can come to understand the assumptions and values guiding their actions (Bohm, 1996: ix). In this sense effective dialogue gets people to 'open up' resulting in better understanding (Bauby, 1976: 8). By talking to each other more, both on a one-to-one basis and in groups, understanding is improved (Senge, 1997).

No two people see things in the same way since no two people are alike in background and thinking (Bauby, 1976: 30). Dialogue helps to expose peoples' assumptions and offers them up for challenge. Effective dialogue concludes with mutual understanding between the people involved (Bauby, 1976: 30). It is proposed that by engaging in an open two-way dialogue this process will lead to better understanding and ultimately to a strong alignment of expectations. The process of dialogue itself is as important as the end product because through this 'sharing' process it is possible to help all parties uncover their hidden assumptions and constructs - their theory in use (Senge, 2001: 19). In addition, it is proposed that by undertaking a joint exploration together with their people the top team members can better understand and align their own theory espoused and their theory in use.

Dialogue is not just about letting people have their say, even though this is important, but rather it is used to engage people in the search for the most appropriate answers (Collins, 2005: 5). Effective leaders will be those who have an engaging style and who get out of their offices to listen and to talk with people (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2003: 60). By engaging in empathetic communication leaders will be able to gain a clear understanding of another's needs, ideas and basic paradigms but also assurance that they themselves are accurately understood (Covey, 2002: 273). Dialogue is something in which there is common participation, in which people are not playing a game against each other, but *with* each other (Bohm, 1996: 7).

Regular two-way communication, particularly face-to-face, has been identified as an important factor in establishing trust and a feeling of being valued (Mumford and Hendricks, 1996). In a global environment, with a dispersed work force, there is a significantly reduced number of opportunities for dialogue, leading to an increased reliance on email and other forms of electronic communication. The findings from Project 2 lend support to the evidence that email and electronic communication is not as effective as 'face-to-face' communication in building understanding (Hirst, 1999: 50).

"To engage the individual and collective intellect and emotions of people in meaningful conversations organization's must create time and place" (Ghoshal and Gratton, 2002: 2). In a global environment it is proposed therefore that there is an increased importance on maximising any opportunities that leaders do have to meet with, and talk to, their people (Hirst, 1999: 52). If people do make the effort to meet face-to-face regularly understanding and trust will be much improved (Hiscock, 2001: 46).

The Project 3 findings indicated that the quite often the top team members were not able to articulate the criteria underpinning their decisions, *they just felt right*. As such the findings supported the assertion in extant literature that much of a leader's decision making process is 'unconscious' (Senge, 1990). Dialogue can be used to help expose and explore these 'unconscious' constructs and thereby help the assessors and the assessed develop an aligned understanding.

Dialogue leads to a more complete understanding for all parties than they would have achieved alone, in this sense dialogue is synergistic. In addition evidence shows that involvement leads to high commitment (Faidley, 1996: 23), and commitment increases the chances of the agreed behaviour being displayed. "Processes done with people are much more effective at achieving buy-in" (Wyatt, 2003: 10), and help to establish and preserve a pleasant and rewarding relationship for all concerned (Bauby, 1976: 30).

The research findings show that it is not currently normal practice for leaders to actively engage with people to create understanding and it was reported that "people are afraid to talk about behaviour". "Conducting a dialogue may not always be comfortable, but it's the main avenue available to people whereby they can relate successfully with each other" (Bauby, 1976: 30) and is therefore something that leaders need to do. In this sense the practice and process of dialogue becomes both a core leadership competency and a key responsibility (Oakland and Oakland, 2001: 779).

In essence my proposal is that social exchange will help facilitate shared cognition and the building of a strong system (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 214). To create total organizational alignment it will be necessary for individual understanding to harmonize with collective understanding and for people with similar challenges in similar contexts to have an aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. In this sense engaging in a collective dialogue will help to create collective awareness and understanding, thus helping to create total organizational alignment. Dialogue in this sense is concerned with creating *meaning* (Bohm, 1996: 37). Where meaning is shared it flows among the group and holds the group together (Bohm, 1996: 40). Dialogue opens the door to understanding, of ourselves and of others (Bauby, 1976: 58), and if it happens collectively it means a lot more (Bohm, 1996: 46).

Dialogue is a two-way process that must be participated in by all parties with equal enthusiasm and understanding (Bauby, 1976: 30). To create a strong system therefore the focus needs to be on the relationship; "performance management done right; its not the form, it's the process" (Murray as reported in IOMA, 2004: 11). In a weak system, such as that exposed by my research findings, the process of dialogue becomes even more important (Harrison, 2005).

Supporting the move to an environment where meaning is created through joint exploration needs not only a willingness to undertake a process of dialogue, but it also calls for a new 'tool set' from the one that has traditionally been required and employed in the client organization. All levels of management will require training in dialogue and facilitation skills (Oakland and Oakland, 2001: 785).

The process of collaborative enquiry through the application of dialogue will help to achieve an aligned understanding of what behaviours are appropriate to address an individual's particular set of challenges and context, the process of dialogue can therefore be seen as a vehicle to facilitate *'making it personal'*.

6.3.5 Aligning the reward system

Evidence shows that effective performance does not just happen, it is caused by a performance management system which aligns all resources towards a common objective and which establishes clear responsibilities and expectations for everyone involved (Faidley, 1996: 23). HR practices and systems can enhance organization's performance when they are internally aligned with one another to manage employees in a manner that leads to competitive advantage (Delery and Doty, 1996). To elicit desired behaviors from employees therefore, including top team members, organizations must provide incentives and feed-back that reinforce the desired behaviours (Locke and Latham, 1990).

The next consideration exposed by my findings therefore is the need for the PMS to reflect and reward the desired behaviour. This proposition is based on the premise that people will only behave in a certain way if they want and choose to (Hopen, 2004: 19). The top team cannot directly control behaviour, but they can control the reward system, and the consequences delivered in response to particular behaviour. The top team can construct the system in such a way as to encourage or discourage certain behaviour (Hopen, 2004: 19). By paying close attention to the organization's reward system it will be possible to ensure that employees are focussing their energies and behaviour appropriately (Schneider et al, 1996: 17).

A successful performance management system accomplishes two principle goals:

- It sends a clear message about what is important to the organization.
- It reinforces that message by rewarding those who accomplish what is important (Britton and Christian, 1994: 40).

Individuals who are to be influenced must perceive that there is a direct linkage between their behaviour and their reward, and that positive consequences will result from demonstrating the prescribed behaviour (Krampen, 1988). There needs therefore to be an unambiguous cause-effect relationship between the espoused behaviour and the associated consequences (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 210). The organization needs to create a very clear line of sight between behaviour and reward and it will be necessary to link both monetary and non-monetary rewards to specific behaviours (Schneider et al, 1996: 17).

6.3.6 Reinforcing desired behaviour

"The ability to distinguish and recognise desired behaviours speaks volumes about what is important and valued in an organization" (Hopen, 2004: 8). Employees need, and want, to know what is expected of them, they also need feedback on how they are doing and they need to be rewarded for their efforts (Furnham, 2004: 85). Reinforcement and reward of desired behaviour is most effective when if it is closely linked in time (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 211), not just once a year in the annual

appraisal process. This will therefore need the active involvement of leaders in 'real-time' reinforcement activity on a daily basis.

The organization's performance management system therefore needs to become a daily management system that ensures that the organization accomplishes its vision and becomes a high performing entity (Hopen, 2004: 15). In this sense the PMS requires interaction between the assessor and the assessed at every step (Hopen, 2004: 18).

As referenced in the section on the implications for theory, it is assumed in this proposed model, (Figure 23 on page 73), that once the individual understands what constitutes appropriate behaviour, that they will have both the willingness and ability to behave that way. If however subsequently the leader identifies that the agreed behaviour does not get enacted, it then becomes incumbent upon them to identify if this is an issue of *willingness* or *ability*. If it is related to *ability* it is their responsibility to work with the individual to remove any barriers to performance, be these related to skill, training, education or organizational barriers (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 210). If it is an issue of *willingness* then a different set of corrective actions will be required.

Leaders need to be strongly committed to creating conditions and consequences that support and sustain a strong system leading to effective performance (Furnham, 2004). Desired behaviour needs to be fostered and rewarded and inappropriate behaviour must not be tolerated (Welch, 2001), or it will lead to ambiguous messages and inconsistency leading to a weak system. All possible policies and practices need to be put in place to sustain effective performance (Graham, 2004: 6).

Effective individual and collective performance management will be crucial to achieving the organization's vision, it is therefore a basic and highly important management obligation for which all leaders should be held accountable (Graham, 2004: 8). It can be seen therefore that the main thrust of the appraisal process needs to become a continual and focussed alignment of understanding and expectation through a process of two-way dialogue (Oakland and Oakland, 2001: 778).

Chapter Two identified that there are three phases of creating and using a performance management system. It is the effort that is put in to the implementation and maintenance phases however, rather than the design phase, that is most important in ensuring its success (Furnham, 2004: 90). Consequently leaders in the organization need to adopt an approach that focuses on continuous improvement and learning; in essence the challenge therefore is to create a norm of behaviour that values continuous development (Wyatt, 2003: 10).

Based on the evidence from this research study I would recommend that the leadership team be mandated to conduct regular face-to-face dialogue with their people, and therefore the performance management system needs to be amended to reflect and support this need. By altering the tangible aspects, the everyday policies, practices, procedures and the reward system it is possible to impact on the beliefs and values that guide employee actions (Schneider et al, 1996: 12). Change will not occur through rhetoric alone (Collins, 1996). To communicate new values, beliefs and ways of working, deeds, not words, are tangible (Schneider et al, 1996: 12).

To support this desired change I would recommend the creation of a 'performance management dashboard' (PMD) that spells out very clearly and explicitly what is expected of leaders in terms of their active involvement in dialogue and sense making. The PMS needs to support the PMD by tracking and recording leader's actions against the PMD. The results of this dashboard can then be used as part of the formal reward process. In this sense the recommendation is to use the PMD to drive an improvement in the application of the PMS.

Change has to start at the top if it is to be effective (Argyris, 1991: 106), therefore the top team need to start to spend time with their people in dialogue and role modelling the required behaviour. This dialogue process can then, as one of my top team respondents suggested, "daisy-chain all the way through the organization".

The organization needs to see that the top team is serious about changing behaviour (Rosenthal, 2001: 19). Harrison identifies that what leaders model and reward is more impactful than what they espouse (Harrison, 2005). And as Mangham (1990) informs us people form their view of reality through what they infer from what they see and experience. It can be seen therefore to be vitally important that what is espoused, what is modelled and what is rewarded are all aligned.

Finally, evidence shows that successful organizations pay much more than lip service to the axiom "People are our most important resource" (Oakland and Oakland, 2001: 775). It is my proposal that by implementing the recommendations detailed in the text above the organization can improve the strength of the performance management system and demonstrate a commitment to managing people effectively.

It is my belief that these recommendations will lead to an improvement in performance at the level of the individual, the process, and ultimately, at the level of the organization.

6.3.7 Contribution: Conclusions and recommendations for practice

In conclusion it is my view that this research study has made a contribution to practice by identifying a number of ways in which the strength of the organization's system can be improved. By implementing the following recommendations it is my view that the organization can improve the strength of the system and in so doing address the original motivation for this research study of a misalignment between the behaviour espoused and the behaviour rewarded:

- Include the missing competencies defined by the top team in Project 1; "Uses the full range of emotional intelligence" and "Forms own position and views".
- Review the competencies that appear to be ambiguous and provide further guidance on their meaning in order to help eliminate any ambiguity and improve the degree of understanding.
- Develop a '*making it personal programme*' that drives understanding and alignment at the level of the individual and team, such that each person and each team has a clear and agreed understanding of what the competencies mean for them in their context and for their particular challenges.

- Review the tools, techniques and training that are needed to equip the top team and the GSLT to facilitate the practice of dialogue and the joint creation of meaning.
- Modify the PMS and the reward system to encourage the desired behaviour and the application of the process of dialogue. In this sense use the PMD to drive the effective application of the PMS and in so doing drive a change of leadership behaviour where leadership becomes an active role and responsibility, not just 'position'.
- Put all necessary process and practices in place to ensure alignment between what is espoused and what is rewarded such that the organization 'puts its money where its mouth is', because as Schneider et al. (1996: 12) inform us, "*deeds speak louder than words*".

A general and over riding conclusion drawn from my research findings is that the organization needs to pay much more than lip service to the popular idiom "people are our most important asset" if they are to effectively align effort in support of the organization's strategic aspirations. Engaging in the act of communicating with people was identified in Project 1 as important. This behaviour however forms part of one of the competencies that Project 1 exposed as missing from the organizations new competencies - "Uses the full range of emotional intelligence". In the light of these findings, this can be seen to be a serious omission that needs to be addressed.

In closing it is worth reflecting on the fact that much of what has been discussed relates to leaders' ability to communicate effectively with each other and with their people. In this sense my findings lend support to Bauby's assertion that "People do not seem to be able to talk with each other - to understand each other. Most individuals appear unable to carry on an effective dialogue" (1976: 1). And perhaps, as Hirst suggests, "Almost all the problems we experience are, to a greater or lesser extent, communications problems" (1999: 50). Finally it is perhaps worth reflecting on one middle manager's comments in Hirst's research study, "If we do not relearn how to talk with each other, frequently and on a meaningful level, the organization won't survive" (1999: 52).

Post script

Throughout my three research projects I have taken a functionalist stance in order to test-out the appropriateness of applying the prescribed competency based performance management approach in practice. Overall it is my belief that my research shows some serious weaknesses in adopting such a mechanistic approach, (I will explore this further in the section 6.6 which discusses my personal learning).

It is my view that my findings support Barkema's view that "emerging trends in strategizing, organizing and managing can only be imperfectly described, understood and managed using traditional conceptions in management scholarship and practice, and perhaps new conceptions are needed" (Barkema et al, 2002: 916)

At the turn of the 20th century social engineers sought to substitute rational 'scientific management' for the highly personalised, pre-modern, owner manager style, - substituting rational procedures for intuition and values (Lessem, 1990: 172). In this post-modern age, at the start of the 21st century, it is perhaps now time for

management theory to recognise the need to return to a more personalised, pre-modern, style of management and leadership.

Perhaps, as Pascale suggests, management theory needs to recognise that "it is now the age of the gardener, rather than the engineer" (Pascale, 2002 in Flower and Guillaume, 2002: 20). Where the role of leaders is to nurture and tend rather than to dictate and control - this new approach will require a new paradigm and new skills - it will also require, as Barkema (2002) suggests "new theory for a new age".

6.4. Limitations of the study

Although the results identified are important for the sponsoring organization, there are a number of potential limitations with this study:

6.4.1 Limitations of Project 1

1. In Project 1 I employed a research protocol utilising repertory grid and laddering. This technique is acknowledged as giving good insights but due to the one-hour time limit with each interviewee the total number of constructs that could be obtained was constrained.
2. In Project 1 one of my CEO respondents stopped the interview partway through and despite efforts to persuade him otherwise he refused to continue. Project 1 therefore does not contain input from the complete set of CEO top team members.
3. By adopting an interview protocol in Project 1 that included the use of repertory grid and laddering I made the conscious decision to trade-off the number of constructs that I could obtain against the depth of understanding of the constructs that I obtained. The choice of this protocol meant that I was able to obtain a detailed level of understanding of each construct but that, as this activity took significant time, I may have missed some constructs.
4. The analysis of the repertory grid and laddering data was complex and inevitably open to some degree of researcher interpretation. To correct for this two independent researchers were asked to review the research findings. As Goffin (2002: 220) reports however there is no 'accepted' method for analysing data and "There is still a need for substantial research on the repertory grid technique itself" (Goffin, 2002: 220).

6.4.2 Limitations of Project 2

1. In Project 2 the questionnaire achieved a 40% response rate from the GSLT. It is felt unlikely however, based on the analysis of the results, that a higher coverage would have produced a materially different result from those that were obtained.
2. The questionnaire in Project 2 had to be self-administered due to the global nature of respondents and due to time and cost constraints. An improved degree of

alignment of responses may have been achieved if the questionnaire had been administered in a controlled environment by a researcher.

3. In Project 2 data was obtained on the gender of the questionnaire respondents. Due to the relatively small number of female respondents it was not possible however to produce a statistically valid analysis of the data to identify if there were any significant differences in the level of understanding between male and female members of the GSLT.

6.4.3 Limitations of Project 3

1. Due to time and the practical constraints imposed by the DBA research structure there was limited opportunity to empirically validate or embed the final research findings from Project 3 with the target GSLT audience.

6.4.4 Limitations of the research study from an overall perspective

1. This was a single organization study and the research approach adopted focussed on “relevancy” to the sponsoring organization (Coghlan, 2001; Dick, 1993) rather than generalisability. It does not seem unreasonable to assume however that the findings and theory would be applicable to other contexts and to organizations facing the similar objective of aligning understanding and managing performance across a global organization (Whetten, 1989).
2. It is unclear if the same results would be found in low-technology organizations or in environments that are less complex or dynamic. It is possible that the degree of fragmentation exposed by the results in Project 2 was greatly influenced by the global nature of the respondents. It is not known, given the sample size, if the results would have been different had the study been conducted in a single country. Consequently, future research should examine a broader range of organizations, industry sectors and also specific geographies in order to isolate for cultural and organizational variables and to assess the level of generalisability of my findings.
3. Given the structure adopted for this research study there was a limited number of opportunities for triangulation of the findings between the three separate projects. The validity of the findings may have been enhanced if the research structure had been amended to increase the number of opportunities for triangulation.
4. No assessment was made in this study of the validity of the claims made by alignment theory. Further research could investigate the claims and use the subsequent findings to inform the use and application of a competency-based approach to performance management.
5. This research can be considered an incomplete test of the degree of alignment as I only included the top team and the GSLT in my study. There are many different groups of employees inside organizations that can create competitive advantage

(Collins and Clark, 2003: 749), thus future research should also include other employees.

6. There may be a number of other variables that influence alignment and understanding that have not been examined or isolated in this study. In particular the degree to which the effects of demographic factors and upper echelon theory (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998) affect the degree of alignment have not been examined.

6.5. Opportunities for further research

A number of opportunities for further research exist, including the opportunity to repeat all or part of this study with other groups within the sponsoring organization or in other organizations and industry sectors. It would also be potentially beneficial to repeat the same study with the same organization and the same respondents at some point of time in the future to see if the findings remain stable.

Secondly, it would be useful to explore industry 'best-practice' application of dialogue in order to identify ways in which the process of dialogue can be encouraged, to identify tools and techniques that help ensure the effective application of this process, and then to empirically test and assess these findings in use.

Thirdly, it would be useful to empirically validate the conclusion that an enhanced level of dialogue is beneficial to creating an aligned understanding and improving organizational effectiveness and performance. It would be helpful to conduct a longitudinal study across two similar organizations; one where the process of dialogue was applied, and one where it was not.

Fourthly, it would be useful to further explore and understand the automaticity of assessment that occurs through the unconscious application of intuition in order to help organizations understand how they can develop and harness this capability. I have not encountered any papers within the competency literature that acknowledges this phenomenon.

6.6. Personal learning

In this section I will outline the personal learning that resulted from conducting this research study. The structure of this section is based on a discussion of the personal learning from each of the three separate research projects followed by a summary and overview of the more general learning points resulting from conducting this study.

6.6.1 Project 1 learning

One of the major problems that I experienced in the early stages of my research was the ability to get time in the top team members' diaries. They are clearly very busy people and they also appeared to be quite nervous about being questioned and asked to divulge their inner thoughts. Whilst I had support for my research project from a number of the human resource directors, I believe that it would have been easier to gain access to the top team if I had more closely aligned my research study with the

corporate values and competencies work that was underway. In one interview the interviewee refused to continue with the questioning and the interview was abandoned, this was disappointing and may have been prevented if I could have engaged the group CEO as the formal sponsor for my research.

Establishing a 'safe' environment is critical to the success of the data elicitation exercise and a key enabler in this process was the ability to build rapport with the respondent. Where I knew the top team member the interviews went pretty smoothly, where I did not know them some of the interviews were more problematic and more difficult to manage. This was not something that I encountered in any of the initial pilot interviews. I would attribute this to the fact that I had chosen people for the pilot sessions that I knew pretty well, which made it easy to establish a good level of rapport and to win their confidence. If I were starting this research exercise again I would choose some respondents for my pilot interviews whom I knew well, and also some whom I did not know so well so that I could increase the chances of meeting 'difficult' candidates. My observation is that conducting a sufficient number of pilot interviews was key to ensuring that as a new researcher I got sufficient practice, and that this practice was crucial to being able to perfect my interview technique and to develop ways of overcoming objections.

During the pilot phase of Project 1 I arranged to be interviewed by a fellow DBA student using the repertory grid process so that I could experience the interview technique from the interviewee's perspective. This proved to be a very useful exercise that helped enable me to adjust my approach, and in so doing, improve the effectiveness of my interventions.

The triadic elicitation process used in Project 1 is quite complex, with a number of things happening at the same time. To help the process it was useful to have a preformatted data capture sheet with sections aligned with the interview structure. I quickly realised however that the 'why' questions was very important, and that this was something that I had missed off of my data capture form. Even though I did remember to ask the questions I believe that adding a section to the capture template, asking the why question three times, would have been useful.

In Project 1 I deliberately chose not to start the data analysis until I had conducted most of the top team member interviews, as I did not want to colour my views or influence my impartiality. However, when I did finally listen to the recordings it was possible to hear areas where my interview technique worked very well, and some areas where it worked less well. Specific areas for improvement were the use of silence, the use of reframing of questions when the respondent got blocked, and the observation that sometimes it was very easy to be perceived as displaying some form of approval or disapproval through either verbal or non-verbal cues.

Listening to the interview recordings provided very useful feedback and helped me identify what to do to ensure that I was perceived as an interested yet neutral recorder of information. As this was the first time that I had conducted qualitative research interviews I believe that I would have benefited from listening to the interview recordings earlier so that I could have honed my technique sooner. On reflection I could have done this without jeopardising my epistemic reflexivity, objectivity or the reliability of the data capture exercise by listening to the pilot interview recordings.

After the first few interviews it became clear that some of my respondents had difficulty in identifying two elements for each of the three categories, *good*, *average* and *poor*, and this took up valuable interview time. It transpired that a more effective use of the interview time could be made by asking the respondents to identify the elements for discussion in advance. It was important however to balance this need against giving the interviewee too much prior notice and encouraging them to come with pre-prepared answers. It was important to set expectations about the need to compare and contrast elements whilst at the same time not letting them know the full details of how the interview was to be conducted. I decided therefore not to let the interviewees know that I would be using a pre-determined matrix for the presentation of the elements.

The repertory grid triadic elicitation process is quite complex and not something that is in general use within the organization. If I were conducting this research study again I would consider including an exemplar of a construct elicitation exercise in my introductory letter.

After I had completed all of the interviews I began the transcription of the session recordings. Undertaking this exercise myself was very time consuming but allowed me to get close to the data and to become sensitised to its full richness (Partington, 2002b: 144).

The repertory grid process can be used in a number of different ways and the resulting data can be analysed in various ways. For the researcher new to repertory grid it is important to understand that the particular choices made are important consideration in being able to robustly defend their position and their chosen use of the technique. It seems that people who are not familiar with repertory grid may not always be aware of the full range of *extractive* and *reflective* modes of application of the technique or the range of content analysis options available. My experience shows that it is necessary to fully understand these issues and options in order to be able to defend your chosen approach.

6.6.2 Project 2 learning

When I came to start Project 2 I found that the HR director of Global Services would not allow me to distribute the survey questionnaire. He said that as there were a number of other surveys underway it would be inappropriate to distribute mine. As a result the project stalled.

It was at this stage that I realised how important it was to have the support and sponsorship of my own HR director. He was the person who prevented me from distributing the survey; he also accused me of not having enough to do if I had enough time to complete a doctorate!

To get around the problem I reverted to the group HR director and asked her to intervene on my behalf, and although her support and intervention did ease the situation and enabled me to move forwards - albeit three months behind plan - on reflection this was probably a very high-risk option.

I now realise that the timing of any research study is critical and any research plans need to take account of other organizational activities that may well be outside of your direct control. The key point is that research activities need to 'mesh-in' with other activities within the organization. It also clearly helps if people who have the power to stop your research are supportive of your work. My experience supports the view that "neglecting political influences is a recipe for inaction as any proposed course of action may be planned to death and eventually be stillborn" (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 81).

The other key learning point from Project 2 was the value that piloting the questionnaire brings. During the pilot phase I was able to identify and correct issues both in terms of form and content. By building a multidisciplinary, multicultural pilot team I was able to eliminate many potential issues that I personally had not seen. The piloting activity was time consuming and resource hungry, but inevitably proved valuable as I received only one query, in relation to the completion of the questionnaire, when it was finally distributed.

6.6.3 Project 3 learning

In Project 3 I decided to place extra emphasis on my personal development through the completion of a self-review questionnaire (Table 39 on page 215). This questionnaire is derived from Argyris and Schon's 'theory of action', (Dick, 2004). The purpose of this self-review activity was to become aware of the assumptions guiding my actions before the intervention, and after the intervention, to identify whether the outcomes supported or disproved my assumptions.

This approach was based on Dick's guidance that reflection "after the event" is helped by careful observation "during the event", good planning and the surfacing of assumptions "before the event" (Dick, 2004).

Before each of the intervention sessions I read through my research journal and all of the previous self-review questionnaires in order to revisit the learning points and previous ideas. Immediately after each intervention I listened to the recording of the session and made notes in my journal of the things that had gone well and the things that could be improved. I also completed the second half of the self-review questionnaire.

The *intervention-reflection* cycle was particularly useful for developing and refining my intervention style and approach and for identifying improvements that could be made to the feedback instrument and the intervention process.

The main areas of personal learning from Project 3 were:

Data: I soon discovered that different people have different needs in terms of the level of detail and supporting data that is required for them to understand what I was trying to impart. I learned that it is best to 'chunk-up' the data, in order not to overwhelm respondents, and to have the detailed data available in a separate data set as a handout.

Specific care was needed to provide sufficient detail but not to overload people. I needed to keep the discussion out of the detail and ensure that the supporting data set

was only used to support my argument and propositions when needed. I only had thirty minutes with each top team member and it was important therefore to get the maximum benefit from their input by keeping the session flowing and focussing the discussion on the key issues. By keeping this detail separate I only needed to refer to the supporting information when specifically needed.

The pilot session identified that it was more impactful to end with a provocation slide. As my pilot respondent articulated, "to end with a bang, not a whimper" by ending with a '*so what?*' slide.

Procedural: in the pilot session I found that the intervention questions did not deliver the responses I expected or needed. I found that I received answers that attempted to try to justify why the results were as they were, rather than proposals for how the results could be addressed.

As a result I concluded that I needed an introductory section that clearly outlined the purpose of the session and that I needed to include relevant supporting exemplars throughout the session. I also produced a slide showing the individual components that needed to be aligned that I used to focus the discussion (see appendix U, slide 2 on page 338). This slide proved very useful as it 'centred' the discussion on the theory underpinning my research and because it generated a lot of useful input from the respondents.

One session was interrupted half way through when the phone rang; the top team member being interviewed then made some comments about another top team member. When he realised that the recorder was still running he demanded that I delete the recording. I managed to negotiate that I would transcribe the recording before I left and show his secretary the evidence that the recording had been deleted. The key lesson from this incident was that as soon any interruption occurred it was safest to stop the recording immediately.

Rapport: effective rapport was key to an effective session and when I reviewed and reflected on my experience and the session recordings it appeared that it was easier to establish good rapport with people whom I already had a working relationship. It was also apparent from reviewing the session recordings that where I managed to create a good level of rapport with the respondents they were more open and willing to share their thoughts and ideas.

Where I achieved a good degree of rapport and the top team member was clearly interested in the subject matter this was potentially problematic in that I found that the individual talked a lot, making it difficult to adhere to the planned structure and the time available. I also found that in the sessions where I achieved a good level of rapport, it was really important not to let my enthusiasm overtake me and I was careful to reflect on the process as it was happening and thereby to remain 'self-aware'. In two sessions I found myself tempted to offer my own opinions, as I would in my practitioner role, which was something that I was careful to try to guard against.

It was helpful, in establishing rapport, to know what the respondents 'hot buttons' were and their preferred style for receiving feedback. In two top team member interviews I was advised to keep the session with the group chief executive "short,

sharp and focussed" so I adopted this approach and the session subsequently worked very well.

My view of the feedback process and approach that I adopted in Project 3 is that it is time consuming and repetitive, but that it is absolutely necessary in order to facilitate understanding and in order to create a level of energy and willingness to change the system.

Listening: in listening to the recordings it soon became clear that during the session there was quite a lot that I did not hear, and listening to the recordings allowed me to get a much better, and more complete, understanding of the respondents' views.

In reviewing the recordings it seems that I was not fully listening in some session and that I had a tendency to talk-over people. Listening to the recordings proved invaluable not only in helping me capture everything that was said but also in identifying ways in which I could improve my intervention style and approach. Improvements included the use of silence and the use of targeted provocations using the actual words used by my respondents.

When summarising what had been said it was important to use the respondents exact words as I found that when I paraphrased I was challenged on the meaning of what had been said. It was also important to listen for the respondents' meaning and I found that a useful phrase to employ was "What is important about ...?". I was then able to target my provocations using their specific criteria words; this helped me increase the level of rapport and led to more productive sessions.

I also found that it was easy to unconsciously indicate some form of approval for what was being said so it was important to only speak when necessary, and a useful approach was to use the 'psychiatrist's nod' rather than to use any words at all. I concluded that sometimes "less is more".

One of the difficulties that I faced in trying to fulfil the researcher's objective detached observer role was the conflict that I experienced between me as the researcher and me as the practitioner. One specific example of this was that in a number of the sessions I was asked to offer my opinions and to propose solutions. I was keen that I did not mix my two roles or offer opinions in any of the sessions. By 'reflecting in action' I was able to keep a watch out for when I might be confusing the two roles and remind myself that "today I am a researcher, not a manager".

6.6.4 General learning resulting from this research study

To support and facilitate my personal learning I maintained a research journal throughout my research study to record my thoughts, issues and questions as they arose. I found that keeping a journal was very useful for developing my reflective skills as it allowed me to see how my thinking had developed over the period of the research study (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 33). Keeping a journal also allowed me to keep a record of how important early ideas about the data and theory iterated and moved forwards towards my final conclusions (Partington, 2002b: 143). The journal also proved useful for recording my thoughts resulting from the "argumentative discourse" (Sandberg, 2005: 62) that I undertook. By recording things in this way my

journal enabled me to integrate information and experiences which helped me to understand my reasoning process (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 33).

In each of the participative sessions I used a voice recorder to capture everything that was said and I also made extensive notes. By recording the sessions I was able to concentrate on what was being said and not have to worry about missing anything. Listening to the recordings also allowed me to hear the 'tone' of what was being said, as well as the words. By recording the sessions I was able to listen to the recording repeatedly until I truly understood the theoretical implications of what was being said. Finally by listening to the recordings I was able to reflect critically on my interview style and thus improve my technique (Partington, 2002b: 144).

Conducting research within your own organization is inherently 'high risk', as any information about the organization can be intensely political (Kakabadse, 1984). As I found in Project 2, neglecting political influences is a recipe for inaction and exclusion (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 81).

In conducting this research study I found that involving top team members has provided me, as the practitioner-researcher, with excellent personal visibility but it has also had the potential down-side that it was very high risk, particularly if the research findings did not please the top team members or accord with their views.

As a member of the organization in which the research study was being conducted meant that the way that I behaved in the feedback sessions, and the way in which I presented the data, had a particularly impactful effect on the degree of resistance to or acceptance of that data (Nadler, 1976: 181). For the feedback to be effective it was important for participants to be open and receptive so I needed to be consciously aware of any comments, or anything in my behaviour, that might trigger a defensive reaction. Throughout the research study I found that people either welcomed my activities or they appeared to object to them; there seemed to be no middle ground.

Augmenting my normal role with the research enterprise in this way was not easy, in fact at times it was very difficult and awkward (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 49). My intent was to continue working for the client organization after completing my research and therefore the whole research process needed to be managed very carefully.

In reflecting on my experiences during this research study it seems to me that one key learning point is the need for effective listening. By reviewing the session recordings I was able to identify that it appeared that I was not a particularly good listener when I started out on this research study.

The session recordings indicate that the key components that appear to me to be needed to make this listening process effective are firstly to concentrate on what is being said. This first point has implications for note taking and for the use of a preformatted template as in Project 1. Using a voice recorder allowed me to concentrate on the dialogue and to finalise the session notes later.

The second component of an effective listening style, evidenced by my research, is the need not to interrupt or talk over respondents, and to allow the respondent to finish what they have to say before I make any comments.

Thirdly, it appears to be beneficial to listen to keywords of interest so that any intervention can be targeted, as in Project 3. It is also important to remember that as a research it was not my role to judge and comment on what was being said.

Finally, my findings show that effective communication needs an awareness not only of the words that are being spoken but also the respondents' tone of voice and an awareness of their body language. In one session in Project 1 it became clear that the respondent was uncomfortable with my probing and I was aware, from their tone of voice and their body language, that the respondent had reached the end of their ladder well before they used the words to tell me so. I learnt that building and maintaining rapport with respondents required me to be aware of how the respondent was feeling, not just what they were saying.

Throughout the course of the research study I took every opportunity available to present my findings and my conclusions to both practitioner and academic audiences in order to clarify and strengthen my thinking. During the analysis and writing phases I took the opportunity to discuss my interpretation of the data with members of the client organization through a process of "argumentative discourse" (Sandberg, 2005: 62) in order to ensure inter-subject reliability and consensual validity. By following a process of dialogue I was able to explore multiple perspectives and different frames of reference that added a degree of richness to my understanding of the business problem under study.

Conducting doctoral level research whilst holding down a senior full-time job, is not easy, and is not a choice that should be made lightly. Homa (1998 as referenced in Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 50) provides useful advice for any senior practitioner intending to combine their practitioner role with a doctoral level research study:

1. You need to be on top of your job as it is hard to switch psychologically from management responsibility to research with out it. Therefore, selecting the right time in your career to do research is an important choice. You need to possess effective personal organization - time management and the ability to create a distance between work and study - so that you can leave the organization for periods of uninterrupted study.
2. You need excellent secretarial support, particularly if you do not do your own typing.
3. Over time you need to balance the achievement of being a manager and working through others with the solitary work of a researcher.
4. You need a strong team and a strong and supportive boss.

In addition to Homa's advice I would extend point one to include the need to consider when is the correct time to do research in terms of your family life and family commitments. My doctoral research study, like most people's I would expect, was a major strain on my family life and relationships due to the amount of time that I

needed to expend on my study. Without the support and understanding of my family I would not have completed this research study. In my particular circumstances I found that when I needed to concentrate for an extended period of time it was beneficial to take a week or two off of work. That way I could get on with my work without the distractions of email or phone calls and my wife could enjoy a holiday.

6.6.5 From a 'functionalist' to an 'interpretist' perspective

As an engineer and practising manager when I started this research study I brought a perspective to the research in which I believed that it was possible to identify and define behaviour in a unified way, and that this unified prescription could then be applied consistently across the GSLT. In this respect, therefore, my initial perspective can be seen to align with the functionalist paradigm in which it is seen as possible to define "universal laws" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 26). "The functionalist paradigm has provided the dominant framework of academic sociology in the twentieth century and accounts for by far the largest proportion of theory and research in the field of organization studies" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 48).

As I undertook the research study it became increasingly evident that social reality is subjective and is constructed in the minds of individuals. My experiences lead me to conclude that rather than trying to define universal rules there was a need to find ways in which to expose individuals' understanding; an approach that required an understanding of the world that individuals create and inhabit, and that required an understanding of how individuals interpret the world that they find themselves in (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 3).

The research study helped me to see the need to adopt a perspective that places the emphasis upon the importance of understanding from the point of view of the actors involved (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 27). A perspective that is orientated towards obtaining an understanding of the subjectively created world "as is" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 31) from the point of view of the actors directly involved in the social process (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 227).

My research study has led me to develop and adopt a perspective that sees human beings as being both conditioned by their environment, and also able to create and condition their environment. As such my perspective is now informed by the view that an individual's social environment has both antecedent and consequential properties, in that human beings are shaped by their social environment, and in turn they shape their social environment. In this sense my perspective positions me some where between the extremes of "determinism" and "voluntarism" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 3).

I began this research study with a perspective that carried assumptions consistent with the functionalist paradigm. I ended the study with an understanding and a perspective that is more aligned to the interpretist paradigm. My experience has led me to see that the "the supposedly hard, concrete tangible 'real' aspects of organizational life are dependant upon the subjective constructions of individual human beings" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 261). It seems to me that traditional management theory, based on the functionalist paradigm, as well as management training and education, have neglected the subjectivity involved in individuals' understanding.

6.6.6 Summary of personal learning

In summary it is my view that by undertaking this research study and deliberately focussing on my personal learning throughout the period of this study has been tremendously beneficial. I believe that this study has provided benefit to me in terms of my personal learning and development and also to the sponsoring organization in terms of the learning that I now bring to my practitioner role.

Given the hectic pace of work life, and a heavy schedule, self-review and reflection, unfortunately, do not appear to be a normal part of practice. Listening to the session recordings was quiet 'painful', perhaps because I soon realised that my theory in use was not as good as I perceived.

Self-review and reflection proved invaluable in helping me to improve the content and structure of the interventions, and perhaps most importantly and particularly, my personal effectiveness and intervention style. Reviewing the recordings helped me to develop my listening skills and the use of provocations and silence. The improved listening skills and self-review process are something that I am now trying to carry through in to my practitioner role in order to improve my effectiveness and value to the organization.

Overall I learned that conducting insider research, with such a high-powered audience, gave a very high degree of visibility but that it was also very high risk given that I wanted to continue my career in the client organization, once the research study was complete. The exercise was very rewarding and as an 'insider' I was able to get access to people and a research opportunity that may not have been available to people outside of the organization.

It is my view that, in-line with Nadler's (1977: 174) observation, I have learnt that through the systematic collection and use of data it is possible to encourage the organization towards taking steps to make the organization more effective and towards making it a better place for people to work.

6.7. Overall contribution

Finally in this last section of the linking document I have provided a summary and explicit articulation of the key contribution from this research study; the need for modified alignment theory.

I start this section by recapping what alignment theory is, and the benefits that it can bring to organizations. I then go on to identify the issues and implications identified by my research in terms of alignment theory in the context of the organization's use of a competency-based approach to performance management.

Following this I outline the key implications of a modified alignment theory for both practitioners and researchers.

I close by identifying opportunities for further research to validate the conclusions that I have reached.

6.7.1 Alignment

"Alignment is the axial principle underpinning high performance organizations" (Guttman, 2004: 20). It has been observed that organizations are constructed of component parts that interact (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 22). These parts can fit together well and function effectively, or they can fit together poorly and lead to problems and disfunctions, leading to performance below potential (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 22).

For an organization to function effectively and deliver its desired output, all of its constituents parts and processes must be driving in the same direction (Semler, 1997; Baird and Meshoulam, 1988; Middleton, 2004). A well aligned system therefore is one in which all of the separate component parts and processes 'fit' together *congruently* and provide support and reinforcement for each other (Baird and Meshoulam, 1988: 122).

Congruence in this sense is defined as *"the degree to which the needs, demands, goals, objectives and/or structures of one component are consistent with the needs, demands, goals, objectives and/or structures of another component"* (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 29). Effective alignment therefore can be seen to be "the achievement of congruency where all parts and functions of an organization work towards the same purpose" (Fonvielle and Carr, 2001: 4).

Organizational alignment is a descriptive concept referring to the extent to which the various interdependent organizational elements combine to create a synergistic whole that makes it possible to achieve the goals espoused by the organization. At the individual level it is a measure of "the degree to which the behaviour of each employee supports the organization's key goals" (Robinson and Stern, 1997).

The basic hypothesis underpinning alignment theory is that "other things being equal, the greater the total degree of congruence or fit between the various components, the more effective will be the organization" (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 25); effectiveness being defined as the degree to which actual organization outputs at individual, group and organization levels are similar to expected outputs as specified by management (Nadler and Tushman, 1988: 25).

Alignment theory explains how the creation of high-performance work systems results from the creation of internal consistency (Quiros and Rodriguez, 2005: 2) and how alignment is a necessary condition for organizational effectiveness (Fonvielle and Carr, 2001: 4). Alignment theory builds on the original work of Nadler and Tushman on system congruence (1988) who proposed that organizations need to be internally consistent in order to function efficiently and that this consistency can be achieved by aligning interdependent elements towards the same ends.

Evidence shows that world-class organizations value and invest in their people through a number of activities including the strategic alignment of human resource policies and practices (Oakland and Oakland, 2001: 776). A good fit between the organization's needs and the results of the HR practices leads to organizational effectiveness, (Cook and Ferris 1986; Legnick-Hall and Legnick-Hall 1988; Milliman et al 1991; Kozloski et al 1993 as referenced in Jackson and Schuler 1995). HR practices and performance management systems enhance firm performance when they

are internally aligned with one another to manage employees in a manner that leads to competitive advantage (Delery and Doty, 1996).

In well-aligned organizations top teams apply effective performance management practices to create systematic agreement among strategic goals, (vision and values), behaviours, (competencies), and the performance and reward systems (Semler, 1997: 23). In this way effective alignment helps increase performance of individuals, processes and the organization as a whole (Semler, 1997: 24).

Alignment is both a process and a desired end-state; it is the process whereby the organization's leadership team establishes and communicates the business priorities and establishes appropriate support systems and process to deliver these priorities (Faidley, 1996: 14). And it is the end-state that an organization should strive to achieve (Semler, 1997).

An effectively aligned performance management systems can be seen therefore as a vehicle for facilitating the alignment of behaviour with the strategic aspirations of the organization (Fonvielle and Carr, 2001: 7). Performance management systems are at their most effective therefore when they are aligned to support operational goals (Britton and Christian, 1994). The better the alignment the higher the organization performance (Baird and Meshoulam, 1988: 122).

An important aspect of alignment is that of rewards and the reward system (Middleton, 2004: 330). Whilst motivation can be both intrinsic and extrinsic, it is especially important to pay close attention to the design of extrinsic reward systems, because extrinsic rewards need to be administered in such a way as to ensure that employees are focussing their energies on the desired behaviours (Schneider, Brief and Guzzo, 1996: 17). "The policies that reward, punish and offer incentives to people create a motivational structure within organizations that exerts a great influence on individual and team behaviour" (Semler, 1997: 28). "Whilst leaders cannot control the actions of individuals directly, they can implement organizational structures in the form of reward systems that encourage or discourage specific behaviours" (Semler, 1997: 29).

Effectively aligned reward systems help top management communicate by deed as well as word, and to "put their money where their mouth is" (Schneider et al, 1996: 17). Well designed and aligned performance management systems (PMS) help facilitate acceptance of the behaviours specified as being necessary and appropriate (Semler, 1997: 35). Conversely, misaligned reward systems have been a major factor in the failure of many organizational change efforts (Britton and Christian, 1994). "By not aligning reward systems you often get behaviour that you were not looking for" (Welch, 2001: 387). Reward systems need to be specifically designed therefore to provide incentives towards some behaviours and disincentives towards others (Semler, 1997: 34). As Gerstner comments "...you cannot transform institutions if the incentive programs are not aligned with your new strategy" (Middleton, 2004: 329).

By aligning performance expectations, feedback and reward systems to people requirements, performance management may foster employee behaviours that are consistent with business opportunities and the need for strategic and operational effectiveness (Haines, St-Onge and Marcoux, 2004: 146). In this sense effectively

aligned systems get the best out of people by aligning everyone to create value for customers and shareholders (Dell, 1999: 115).

From a total system perspective a number of components need to come together; top team rhetoric and action, and the human resource processes and system. Working together the top team and the HR processes can create alignment in the systems components (Semler, 1997: 38) leading to congruence and effective performance.

In the context of the business problem addressed by this research study it can be seen that the measure of alignment is the degree to which the top team's expectations, the organization's values, the competencies and the reward system work together congruently to encourage appropriate behaviour that facilitates the delivery of the organization's vision (Semler, 1997: 29).

6.7.2 Implications of my findings for alignment theory in the context of the use of a competency-based approach to performance management

The findings from my study provide support for the views within personal construct theory that individuals form their own understanding and interpretation of reality based on their own experiences and interpretations. My findings also provide support for Boydell's view that an organization's chosen competencies need to reflect the particular challenges and contexts faced by individuals (Boydell, Burgoyne, Pedler and Ryder, 2004: 33).

The findings indicate therefore that, in the context of utilising a competency-based approach to performance management, to achieve effective alignment it is necessary to address the nature of reality at the level of the individual. In this sense it can be seen therefore that the achievement of alignment is not about creating a single unified prescription for behaviour, but about facilitating individual understanding and aligning individual behaviour in support of the organization's values and vision.

In Chapter Two it was identified how there are three phases in the creation and use of a competency-based performance management process; the *design* phase, the *implementation* phase and the *use* phase. These phases are represented in Figure 25 below. The main focus of this process in the client organization, like many others (Collins, 1996), has been the design phase, during which a unified set of competencies and supporting behaviours was created.

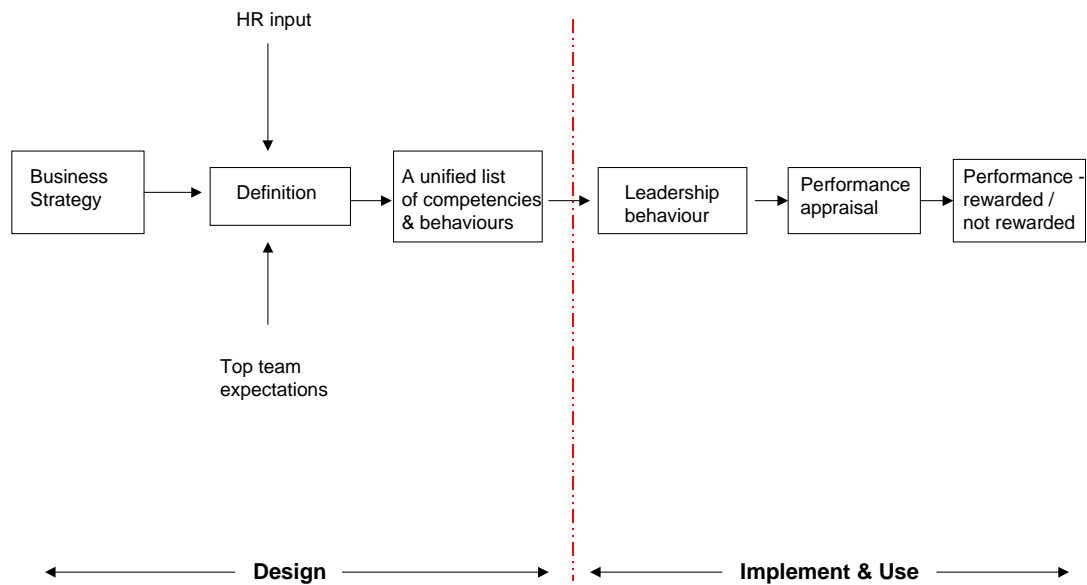


Figure 25: Aligning behaviour to business strategy

My findings have shown that this approach misses an important step in the process, which helps achieve alignment and understanding, and which can be used to address the concerns raised earlier with respect to the need to contextualise and operationalise a competency-based approach to performance management.

Through the application of the process of dialogue it is proposed that it is possible to expose the top team's assessment criteria in use and to expose the constructs and understanding of the GSLT members. It is proposed that by applying the process of dialogue leaders can achieve an alignment of understanding that addresses the particular challenges and context that the individual faces. In this context the creation of an aligned understanding is unlikely to be the same as the creation of a common or homogenised understanding.

Based on these findings it seems that extant competency literature is somewhat overly prescriptive, and that as one of my supervisory panel suggested, "it would be more appropriate to use the organization's competencies as 'tram lines' and 'guidelines' to facilitate an effective dialogue between those doing the assessing and those being assessed. Rather than as a 'hard and fast', 'rule book' prescription for behaviour".

From a practitioner perspective therefore one of the implications of a modified alignment theory is the requirement for leaders to serve as 'interpretative filters' and promote high-quality exchanges that create an aligned understanding of what behaviour is appropriate and expected (Naumann and Bennett, 2000).

The implications of a modified alignment theory for performance management is that the creation of alignment becomes a collective construction through dialogue (Burgoyne, 1995: 62). The focus of the performance management process then becomes a focus on the dialogue between the assessor and the assessed in order to create an aligned understanding of what behaviour is appropriate and should be rewarded.

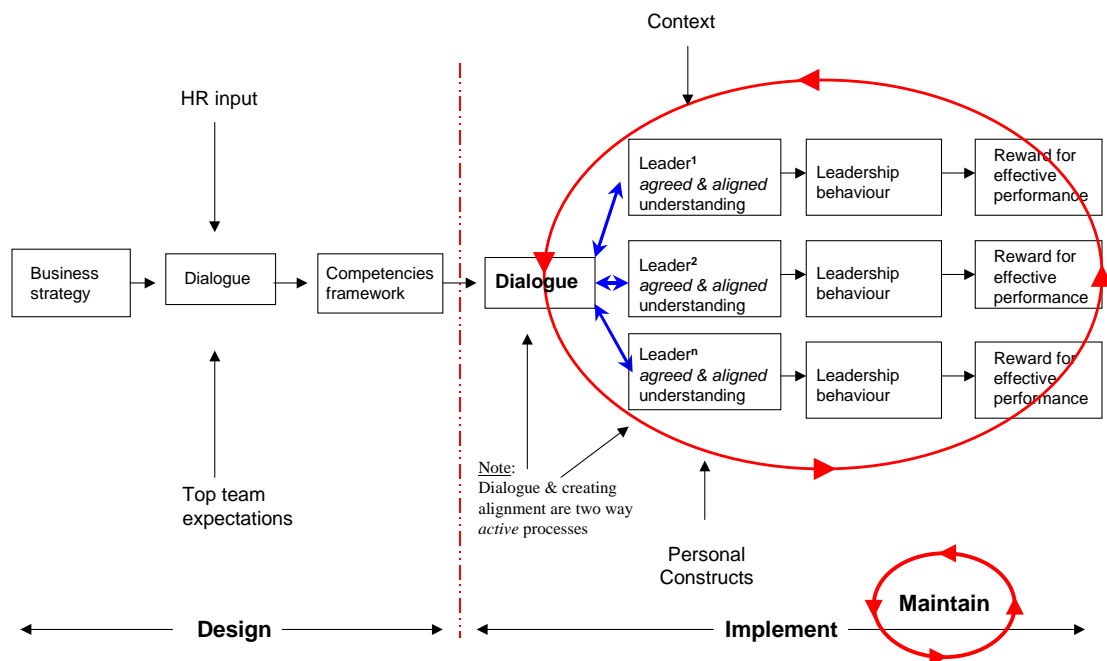


Figure 26: Focus of the performance relationship

The competencies 'frame' the dialogue and provide a set of guiding principles that help to align this dialogue in the direction of the organization's values and vision. The purpose of this process therefore is to create alignment towards a common end, it is not about trying to regiment behaviour (Harvey-Jones, 1994). In this sense the hard system needs some 'soft' support (Burgoyne, 1988: 43).

It is my proposition that by introducing a process of dialogue it will be possible to create an effective strong system based on an agreed and aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour for a given set of challenges and contexts. This approach differs from that prescribed in extant literature in that through a process of dialogue the assessor and the assessed develop an aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour that is *specific* and *particular* to the challenges and context that the individual faces. The result of this process of dialogue, throughout the leadership team, will be a 'set' of prescriptions for behaviour, rather than a single unified generic list. These various agreements then become the criteria against which each individual separate GSLT member's performance is assessed, and in this context alignment does not equate to regimentation.

In this new model the weight of management effort shifts from the design phase to the implementation and maintenance phases. In the maintenance phase the process of dialogue and the creation of alignment becomes continual. In this sense my findings can be seen to provide support for Collin's (1996) recommendation that to achieve alignment of understanding in the use and application of a competency-based approach to performance management the weight of management effort should be placed on the implementation and use phases, rather than where it is typically applied,

in the design phase. This consideration reinforces the earlier observation that alignment is both a process and a desired end-state (Semler, 1997).

The final implication identified here for practitioners is that one effect of a modified alignment theory is to change the causal map in terms of *ownership* of the PMS. Traditionally performance management systems have been owned and driven by HR (Furnham, 2004). These proposed changes put much more emphasis on the role and involvement of the top team, and other leaders within the organization. The findings indicate that active leadership involvement is a key and necessary component of an effective performance management system. Active leadership and participant involvement can be seen therefore, to be a necessary prerequisite for creating and maintaining alignment.

The key implication of my findings for researchers is the need to allow for the impact of the existence of personal constructs, the individual nature of reality and the need for the application of the process of an open two-way dialogue as a vehicle for facilitating alignment and understanding. It is my observation that the subjective nature of reality is not something that is referenced or allowed for in the any of the extant performance management literature that I have encountered.

In summary the key contribution offered by my findings is the need for a modified alignment theory and a consideration of its implications for both practitioners and researchers.

The modification to alignment theory requires the inclusion of a mediating variable, the process of dialogue, and the need for the integral active involvement of leaders in facilitating understanding and effecting alignment. In this way leadership action can be seen to be critical to the creation of alignment that ultimately leads to more effective performance at the level of the individual, the process and the organization.

6.7.3 Opportunities for further research in relation to alignment theory and a modified alignment theory

A number of opportunities for further research have been identified related to alignment theory and a modified alignment theory:

1. No assessment was made in this study of the validity of the claims made for alignment theory. Further research could investigate these claims and use the subsequent findings to inform the use and application of a competency-based approach to performance management.
2. In considering the findings from my research it is unclear if the same results would have been found in low-technology organizations or in environments that are less complex or dynamic. It is possible that the degree of fragmentation exposed by the results was greatly influenced by the global nature of the respondents. It is not known, given the sample size, if the results would have been different had the study been conducted in a single country. Consequently, future research should examine a broader range of organizations, industry sectors and also specific geographies in order to isolate for cultural and organizational variables and to assess the level of generalisability of my findings.

3. It would be useful to explore industry 'best-practice' examples of the application of dialogue in order to identify ways in which the process of dialogue can be encouraged, to identify tools and techniques that help ensure the effective application of this process, and then to empirically test and assess these findings in use and their effect on the degree of alignment.
4. This research can be considered an incomplete test of the degree of alignment as I only included the top team and the GSLT in my study. There are many different groups of employees inside organizations that can create competitive advantage (Collins and Clark, 2003: 749), thus future research should also include other employees.
5. There may be a number of other variables that influence the degree of alignment that have not been examined or isolated in this study. In particular the degree to which the effects of demographic factors and upper echelon theory (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998) affect the degree of alignment have not been examined. It would be useful to conduct further research to test for and isolate other mediating variables and their effect on the degree of individual and organizational alignment.
6. It would be useful to empirically validate the conclusion that an enhanced level of dialogue is beneficial to creating an improved degree of alignment.
7. In turn it would be beneficial to test if this improved degree of alignment leads to improved organizational effectiveness and performance by conducting a longitudinal study across two similar organizations, one where the process of dialogue was applied, and one where it was not.

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Chapter Seven - Project 1

Project 1 abstract

Extant literature identifies that the alignment of both values and language among top team members is a necessary prerequisite for communicating a consistent understanding throughout the organization of what constitutes appropriate and desired leadership behaviour.

The original motivation for this research study resulted from a perceived misalignment between (1) the desired leadership behaviour espoused by the top team members, (2) the behaviour prescribed in the organization's leadership competencies, and (3) the behaviour that that was rewarded in practice. I also perceived that there was a misalignment within the top team, in that different top team members appeared to value and reward different behaviours. Taken together it was perceived that these issues were likely to create an unacceptable degree of ambiguity and misunderstanding within the GSLT as to what behaviour was expected and would be rewarded.

The appointment of a new group CEO and top team provided a timely opportunity to determine the degree of alignment of the top team views relating to what leadership behaviours were seen as appropriate to deliver the organization's new strategy.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the six top team members using an approach that combined repertory grid and laddering techniques.

The findings showed that there was a high degree of alignment among the top team over their definitions of the competencies needed and the alignment of these views with the organization's competencies. The findings also showed however that there was considerable divergence in the definition of the behaviours needed to support the competencies.

In addition the findings identified that two competencies, defined by the top team, are missing from the organization's leadership competencies:

- Uses the full range of emotional intelligence.
- Forms own position and views.

These results lend support to the original view motivating this research study that there is currently a degree of misalignment within the top team as to what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour. It is proposed that this misalignment is likely to be a barrier to fostering an agreed and aligned understanding among the leadership team of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, and of how their behaviour and their reward are linked.

7.0 Introduction

In the introduction to this research study (Chapter One) I identified how the original motivation for this research was stimulated by a perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused, the behaviour prescribed in the organization's competencies, and the behaviour that was rewarded by the top team in practice. It was also perceived that there was a misalignment within the top team, in that different top team members appeared to value and reward different behaviours.

This chapter provides a report of Project 1, the first in a series of three linked research projects. The chapter starts by outlining the background and context to the research; it then goes on to describe the methodology adopted, before presenting the results of the research. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for theory and practice.

7.1 Background and context to the research

The context for my research is my own organization, herein after referred to as the 'organization'. At the commencement of my research the organization was comprised of four individual lines of business and a research and development unit, detailed in Figure 1 below.

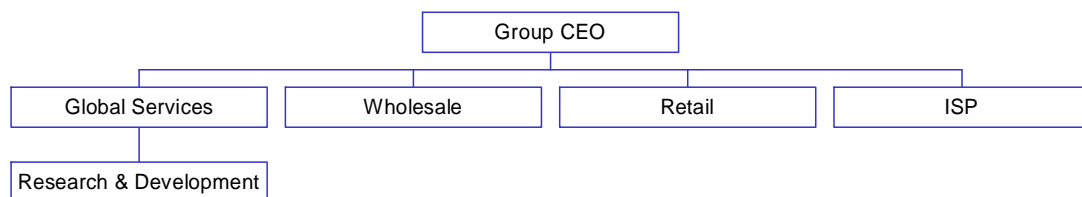


Figure 27: Group organization structure

A brief explanation of the role of each of the business units is provided in order to place their roles in context.

Wholesale is responsible for building and managing the UK telecommunication network and for providing wholesale services to external customers and internal lines of business. Global Services is the solutions and services business that provides telecommunications and computing solutions and services to 'multi-site' corporate customers; Global Services also owns and manages the global network and web hosting business. Retail is the UK corporate and consumer mass-market sales unit. The Internet service provider's (ISP) main responsibilities are to provide consumer and business Internet services. Finally there is the research and development unit whose reporting line is through Global Services.

7.1.1 Competitive and regulatory environment

Over the last five years the organization has faced significant change in the level of competition and regulation, both in its home market in the UK and in its global markets. Under the stewardship of the previous group CEO the strategy was to run the

business as a portfolio of strategic business units (SBU), all operating and competing separately. This five-year history of separation and segregation, driving towards the SBU concept and 'initial public offering' (IPO) flotation, has created an organization culture based on independence, self-reliance and both internal and external competition.

With the retrenchment of the telecommunications industry, aligned with the organization's exposure to the massive investment in third generation mobile licences, the effects of the dot.com crash, the failure of a number of global joint ventures and the consequences of the MCI / Worldcom bankruptcy the organization faced significant pressure for change and shareholder pressure to reduce its £30 billion debt burden.

Two of the casualties of this pressure for change were the group chairman and the group chief executive who both left the company during 2002.

7.1.2 A new management team

The subsequent appointment of a new Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer lead to a significant shift in both the way that the organization is managed and its strategy.

With the arrival of the new CEO the focus shifted from a portfolio of separate strategic business units in to a single organization managed by a single 'operating committee' whose focus is group wide teamwork, collaboration and co-operation. This new operating committee comprises the group Chief Executive Officer, the five CEOs of the business units shown in Figure 1, the Chief Financial Officer and the company secretary.

7.1.3 A new strategy

The new CEO was quick to stamp his mark on the organization with the introduction of a new seven-point strategy, a new set of organizational values and a new set of competencies.

The new strategy focuses the whole organization around a few key areas and identifies the top priorities for the next three years: (See Appendix A on page 262)

1. A relentless focus on customer satisfaction.
2. Financial discipline.
3. Broadband at the heart of the organization.
4. A new focus for Global Services.
5. Clear network strategy.
6. Clear strategy for each customer group.
7. Motivated people.

7.1.4 A new set of values and leadership competencies

Working with a number of external consultants, including Haye, Mercer Delta and YSC, the organization has developed a new set of values, shown in Figure 2 below, to support the delivery of its new strategy.

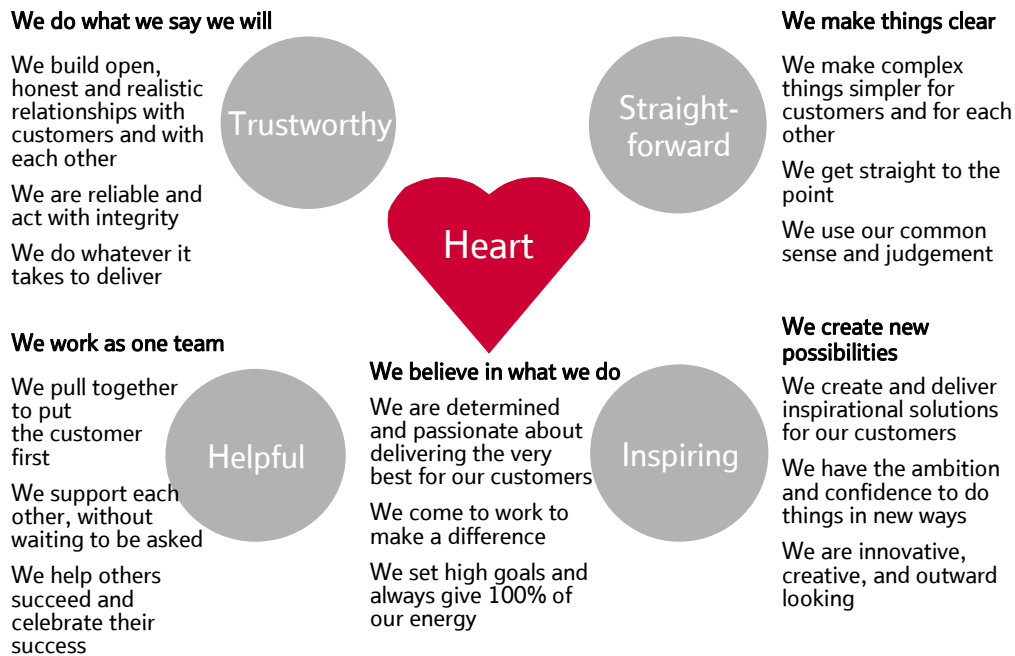


Figure 28; The new values

These new values are intended to provide both an external and an internal focus; externally these five values represent the brand promise and internally they provide a focus for five of the new leadership competencies. These first five competencies are supplemented by four additional competencies shown in Table 8 below. (See Appendix B starting on page 264 for a full and detailed description).

- Inspiring** - *We create new possibilities.*
- Straightforward** - *We make things clear.*
- Trustworthy** - *We do what we say we will.*
- Helpful** - *We work as one team.*
- Heart** - *We believe in what we do.*
- Coaching for Performance.**
- Bottom Line.**
- Drive for Results.**
- Customer Connected.**

Table 8: The new leadership competencies

7.1.5 The performance management system

The organization currently employs a performance management system (PMS) that relies on the use of an annual appraisal process. This formal process includes a two-part assessment, by the individual's line manager, of the individual's performance against their objectives, the 'what', and also of their behaviour, the 'how'.

The assessment of behaviour, the 'how', is based on an assessment of performance against the behaviours defined in the competencies shown in appendix B. (A copy of the appraisal form is attached at Appendix C on page 266). In the current model the performance management system is based on a single unified prescription of behaviour that is used to assess the behaviour of the leadership team members throughout the organization.

7.2 Motivation for this research

The original motivation for this research was stimulated by a perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused, the behaviour prescribed in the organization's competencies and the behaviour that was rewarded by the top team in practice. It was also perceived that there was a misalignment within the top team, in that different top team members appeared to value and reward different behaviours.

Taken together it was perceived that these two issues were likely to create an unacceptable degree of ambiguity and misunderstanding within the wider leadership team as to what behaviour was expected and would be rewarded. This misalignment was considered to be an important concern as the leadership team impacted by the ambiguous messages are key influencers and important role models for the wider organization.

7.3 Research purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the criteria being used by the top team to assess leader's performance and to thereby ascertain if my perception of a misalignment against the espoused criteria and the criteria 'in use' was correct. In conducting this analysis I also planned to test the degree of alignment of the criteria in use across the top team. With the increasing focus on linking reward to individual contribution the timing of this intervention seemed prescient.

7.3.1 Research questions

The research questions were focussed on identifying what the respondents held as their conceptions of the assessment criteria for leaders' performance in the context of delivering the organization new strategy.

- What are the 'criteria' that the top team will use to assess the performance of leaders in the context of delivering the organization's new strategy over the next three years?
- What is the degree of alignment of these views across the top team?

7.4 Extant theory and literature informing my research

In Chapter Two I have provided a summary of the extant literature and theory informing my research.

The key consideration for Project 1 was the need to adopt a research protocol that considered the implications of personal construct theory and the fact that individual top team members' cognition will affect the selection of assessment criteria.

The following section outlines, in detail, the methodology and research protocol that I adopted to elicit the top team's constructs of appropriate assessment criteria.

7.5 Research methodology

In constructing the research design for Project 1 I was keen to address the concerns raised by Argyris (1991: 103). Argyris warns that if you ask people, in an interview or questionnaire, to articulate the rules they use to govern their actions and decisions that they will give you what he calls their "espoused theory". He goes on to say that this espoused theory has very little to do with how people actually behave and the choices that they make in practice, what he terms their "theory-in-use".

In conducting this research project therefore it was important to help the top team identify their criteria in use, rather than their espoused criteria, in order to be able to assess the true degree of alignment across the top team.

7.5.1 Repertory grid interview technique

Repertory grid was selected because it is an investigative technique that helps respondents identify and articulate their unconscious / semi-conscious decision criteria. In addition repertory grid has a degree of structure that helps eliminate researcher bias whilst at the same time providing rigour and transparency (Stewart and Mayes, 2002). Repertory grid technique can be said to be content neutral in that it provides a framework that can be used in 'extractive' mode to 'suck out' information from the interviewee without having to provide any content to the respondent (Stewart and Mayes, 2002). In 'reflective' mode repertory grid techniques can be used for counselling or conflict resolution situations (Stewart and Mayes, 2002).

In the extractive mode of repertory grid the common practice is to conduct 'time bound' interviews and to manage the interview in such a way as to keep the interviewee to the point. In the reflective mode it is more usual to follow the interviewee's lead and it is quite possible that several meetings will be necessary to complete the process and to get to the point where the interviewee no longer needs help.

Due to the nature of the investigation purpose in this study the extractive mode of repertory grid was utilised. I followed the guidance provided by Landfield and Epting (1988) that it is frequently unnecessary to conduct a full repertory grid in order to achieve the required level of understanding. To obtain the salient information often requires a move directly from construct elicitation to implications procedures such as laddering technique (Hill, 1995). The key for researchers using repertory grid is to

remember that the grid methodology is best seen as a flexible procedure (Pope and Keen, 1981). Where the aim should be to focus on those parts of the interview where you expect to discover the information which is relevant to your purpose (Stewart and Mayes, 2002).

The key components of a repertory grid interview are:

1. *Elements*: the objects of thought and attention within the domain of investigation (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe, 1991). These objects in my research were leaders that were identified by, and well known to, the top team.
2. *Triads*: consists of a set of three cards, representing a set of three elements.
3. *Constructs*: these are the 'qualities' which the individual uses to describe and differentiate between the elements. The words describing the 'rules' by which individuals attempt to organise their conscious and unconscious thoughts about particular elements.
4. *Criteria*: the specific attributes against which the CEO judgements are made.

Before starting the interview process it was important to think about in which parts of the repertory grid interview process I expected to discover the information relevant to my purpose, and the techniques needed to analyse the resulting data. For some purposes all that is needed is to uncover the patterns of language used by the respondents, when they are describing elements, and conduct a simple content analysis (Stewart and Mayes, 2002).

For my research using the extractive form of repertory grid only required the use of construct elicitation and laddering, it was not necessary to produce a 'grid'. Simple construct elicitation on its own however, without the use of in-depth probing using laddering, would not have enabled me to identify the respondents meaning of their constructs and could have lead to semantic ambiguity. The use of laddering helped 'push' the interviewee beyond the superficial descriptive level (Reynolds and Gutman, 1984) in order to get to a level of granularity and meaning that enabled a robust assessment of the respondents' meaning to be made. The subsequent focus during the content analysis was on the content of these construct ladders.

7.5.2 Selecting respondents

The key focus of this research was to identify the top team's decision criteria that they use for assessing and rewarding leaders. The top team was selected to be interviewed as they are the key influencer group in the introduction of a new performance management system (PMS), and because it is their constructs that will pervade the organization. The top team beliefs and values influence the direction of the organization and the beliefs and values of others (Eden, 1977; Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998).

7.5.3 Pilot Interviews

It was clear that I was only going to get one chance with each top team member to obtain the data that I needed, and therefore I was very keen to practice and pilot the interview process before I began the 'real' interviews.

I conducted five pilot interviews in total with four different people. I also arranged for a colleague to interview me, using repertory grid. The aim of this exercise was to understand the process from the respondents' perspective, because as Pope and Keen (1981:56) point out "*one should have undergone this experience, (repertory grid), as this is perhaps the best way of learning the pitfalls as well as the benefits of the repertory grid method*".

The pilot interviews provided very useful learning. The repertory grid triadic elicitation process is quite complex with a number of things happening at the same time. As a new researcher, inexperienced in the use and application of the repertory grid protocol, it was a challenge to remember all of the different steps that needed to be taken, whilst at the same time maintaining rapport with the respondent and keeping the interview flowing. Managing the presentation of the cards, listening effectively, recording the constructs and notes, whilst watching for body language clues all at the same time was quite stressful.

By experiencing the process from both the interviewer's and the interviewee's perspectives it was possible to become aware of some of the pitfalls and difficulties on both sides. Repertory grid is a complex process for both the interviewer and the interviewee; as the interviewer it was important to demonstrate a competent approach and to ensure that the interviewee understood what was required of them and how the process worked.

The way in which the background to the research, the research purpose and the repertory grid triadic elicitation process was explained were very important because the potential for misunderstanding was high (Goffin, 1994: 8). To help this process I produced a pre-prepared script to ensure that I covered off all of the key points and to ensure that I provide a comprehensive and consistent explanation of the background and purpose of the research study in each interview.

Listening to the interview recordings helped identify specific areas for improvement such as the use of silence, the use of reframing of questions when the respondent got blocked, and also the observation that sometimes it was very easy to be perceived as displaying some form of approval or disapproval through either verbal or non-verbal cues. Listening to the recordings provided very useful feedback and helped me identify what to do to ensure that I was perceived as an interested yet neutral recorder of information.

Conducting a sufficient number of pilot interviews was key to ensuring that as a new researcher I got sufficient practice. This practice was crucial to being able to perfect my interview technique, to build my confidence and competence with the process, and to develop ways of overcoming objections.

7.5.4 Introductory letter

To help gain access to the top team I engaged my corporate sponsor, the director of HR strategy policy and organizational design, and asked her to write to the interviewee's on my behalf. A copy of the letter and the research abstract are included at Appendix D (page 269) and Appendix E (page 270) respectively.

7.5.5 Interview timings

My respondents are very busy people and it was very difficult to get time in their diary so I decided to follow Goffin's advice (2002: 208) and limit my interviews to a duration of one hour.

Fifty minutes was allocated to capturing and exploring the constructs and the rest of the time allocated to the introduction, explanation of the purpose of the research, answering any questions and closing the interview. The timing and structure for my interviews is shown in Table 9 below. This timing was maintained across all interviews, even where it was possible to get a longer diary slot, so that I maintained a level of consistency in the time spent capturing input from each respondent in order to ensure a balance of influence on the final group cognitive map.

Time	Activity
5	Initial introduction; reassure the interviewee and answer general questions about the repertory grid approach and the purpose of the interview.
3	Recording the 6 elements (leaders)
50	Elicit and ladder constructs
2	Question and answers and close
====	
1 hour total	

Table 9: Interview structure and timing

7.5.6 Interviews

One of the key aspects of successfully capturing qualitative data from respondents in one-to-one interviews is the ability to create rapport with the respondent and to make them feel 'safe' so that they are willing to be introspective (Reynolds and Gutman, 1984). With interviewees who are new to repertory grid it is particularly important therefore to make sure that they are comfortable with the process and the two-against-one triadic comparison method (Stewart and Mayes, 2002). Some of my respondents took to the repertory grid process very quickly, whilst others found it difficult at first.

At the beginning of each interview I utilised a pre-prepared written opening statement to make sure that I said the same things to each respondent in order to ensure

consistency and to make sure that my respondents had a good understanding of the purpose of the interview. This step was critical as a clear negotiation and definition of the purpose of the interview has a significant effect on the elements and constructs chosen (Pope and Keen, 1981).

In introducing the session I was careful to stress that there were no right or wrong answers and to reinforce the notion that the purpose of the interview was simply to identify the criteria that they used to assess leaders' performance. I wanted them to feel that they were the experts and to see that the goal of my questioning was to understand the ways in which they see the world.

In one particular interview I encountered some resistance at the start of the process, as the respondent was very uncomfortable with discussing the topic even though he had read my introductory letter and he had agreed to being interviewed. When it came to the session he said *"I am not sure that I want to discuss this as it cuts to the heart of the organization, I certainly do not want it recording!"*. To which I replied *"Absolutely, this is critical, that is why it is important that I capture your views"*, with a little further gentle persuasion the interviewee agreed to proceed and then actually asked me to turn on my recorder!

7.5.7 Elements

At the beginning of the research exercise I asked the respondent within the interview to identify and select elements for discussion (leaders that they knew well). It quickly became apparent however that this proved quite time consuming and it was difficult for some of my respondents to identify two leaders from each category; for others it was deemed a very sensitive issue with one of my respondents commenting:

"What I need to understand is what you are going to do with this information, particularly those that don't meet my requirements as that's a damnation on people."

As a result of this learning I decided to write to the remaining respondents a few days before our interview to ask them to think about which elements they wished to discuss and advised them that they could use pseudonyms to disguise the elements if they preferred. (A copy of the letter is attached at appendix F on page 271). Taking this approach helped to speed up this part of the process and allowed more time for the elicitation of constructs and laddering.

With the triadic elicitation process it is possible to present the interviewee with a pre-selected list of elements, for my purposes I deemed that it was important that my respondents selected their own elements for two reasons. Firstly, each member of the top team might not have known all of the elements if I had selected them. Secondly, it enabled me to assess the level of congruence between the rating given to the element selected, 'good', 'average' and 'poor', and the scores given to each element on each construct (see Table 13 on page 130).

Whilst the selection of elements was left to the respondents I was very keen to stress how important it was that they selected exemplars of 'good', 'average' and 'poor' performers so that we could compare and contrast the different elements.

Each element was recorded onto an element matrix (Table 10), and the element name was printed in large print on to an individual card as depicted in Figure 29. The elements were then entered on to the construct elicitation matrix (Figure 30 on page 117).

Each of the six element names were numbered as follows:

	GOOD		AVERAGE		POOR	
Element (card) number	6	3	1	5	2	4
Element Name						

Table 10: Element matrix



Figure 29: Element card

This element card was numbered top and bottom so that it could be read from both sides. It was important to write the names of the elements on separate cards so that they were moveable and so that when I placed the triad in front of the interviewee it was possible to physically put the two similar cards together and to keep the third one separate.

Once I had been given the elements by the interviewee I applied the following test to the element set to make sure that they were fit for purpose:

- Did they give adequate cover of the domain being explored?
- Did the element set contain, two good, two average and two poor elements?
- Were the elements concrete and specific? i.e. a real person.
- Did the interviewee know them well enough to be able to relate to them and be able to articulate what they do?

- Did we have enough / too many?
- Did they feel as if they ‘belong’ to the purpose?

In one interview the element set failed this test, as the interviewee was only willing to give me four elements. Despite repeated requests and encouragement he would not offer any additional elements. As things transpired however this did not affect the content of the construct or the final result as the interviewee refused to continue the exercise, after we had conducted the first elicitation exercise, and the interview was abandoned.

7.5.8 Construct elicitation

The next step in the process was to present back to the interviewee the first triad. To ensure a consistent approach I produced a table of pre-determined triads, Table 11 below, which I used in all of my interviews. In defining this order I was careful to ensure that at least two elements changed between subsequent triads because as Goffin advises, (2002), subjects may give less important constructs when they are presented with a subsequent triad with only one new element. *“The sequential form ... only changes one element in each triad; thus if the new element is not striking for the subject, since he is not allowed to repeat himself, he is forced to give a less important construct”* (Bender, 1974 as cited in Goffin, 1994: 6).

Triad number	Card Numbers
1 st triad	1 2 3
2 nd triad	4 5 6
3 rd triad	1 3 5
4 th triad	2 4 6
5 th triad	3 5 6
6 th triad	1 2 5
7 th triad	3 4 6
8 th triad	1 2 4

Table 11: Triadic order of element presentation

By reference to Table 10 on page 115 and Table 11 above it can be seen that in the first triad an element from each competency group is represented as 1 / 2 / 3 – average / good / poor, in the second triad there is a similar situation where the alternative element of each pair is presented as 4 / 5 / 6 - poor / average / good. The third triad contains one ‘good’ element and two ‘average’ elements and so forth. As each triad was presented at least two elements were changed with each iteration.

As each triad was presented I asked the respondent to group two cards together that they considered had a similar quality, either positive or negative, when compared to their criteria for assessing leaders. Specifically I asked *“Can you please tell me which two of these people are similar to each other, from the standpoint of either possessing, or not possessing, the attributes that you believe leaders need to display in order to be able to deliver the organization's new strategy - whilst at the same time being different from the third?”*

The next step was to ask the respondent to give a label to both the positive and negative poles of the construct; *"Can you please give me a word or a short phrase that describes the way in which the two that you have chosen are similar...and a word or a phrase that represents the other one that is different"*. The purpose of this activity was to invite the interviewees to tell me what the constructs are that they use, in their own words, to describe their criteria.

In this exercise it was important to remember that *"one is not aiming to encapsulate the whole of an individual's construct systems but that part of it which is relevant to the research purpose"* (Pope and Keen, 1981: 44).

Respondent: ++++++		Date:						Tape no.
		Good		Average		Poor		
Element (card) number		6	3	1	5	2	4	
Element name								
		ELEMENTS BY CARD NUMBER						
CONSTRUCTS	Ideal	1	2	3	4	5	6	OTHER POLE
1)	*	*	*					
2)					*	*	*	
3)	*			*		*		
4)			*		*		*	
5)				*		*	*	
6)	*	*				*		
7)				*	*		*	
8)	*	*		*				
9)								
10)								
11)								
12)								

Figure 30: Construct elicitation matrix

My aim in all cases was to elicit both poles of the construct but in one interview the respondent only provided a label for the positive pole of three of his constructs. Given the individual nature of constructs it was not appropriate for me to ascribe labels for the three negative poles.

7.5.9 Laddering

The utilisation of the triadic elicitation and sorting technique provided a highly involving situation that helped facilitate a good level of rapport with the respondent and the output obtained provided an excellent basis on which to proceed to the in-depth probing process of laddering.

The process of laddering involved taking the construct pole and asking the respondent to tell me what it was that the person actually did. I used a range of questions for this part of the exercise including *"What would I see?"*, *"How do they do that?"*, *"What do they actually do?"*

Having laddered 'down' from the construct the next step was to ladder 'up' to the values level. This was achieved by asking the interviewee why this was important to them. By asking the "Why" question three times it is possible to get to the terminal value (Stewart and Mayes, 2002; Charvet, 1997).

Using the process of laddering helped uncover data at three levels, as well as their connections and linkages, which served to provide the detail and the structure of the interviewees' decision criteria.

The two parts of the laddering process are represented in Figure 31 below.

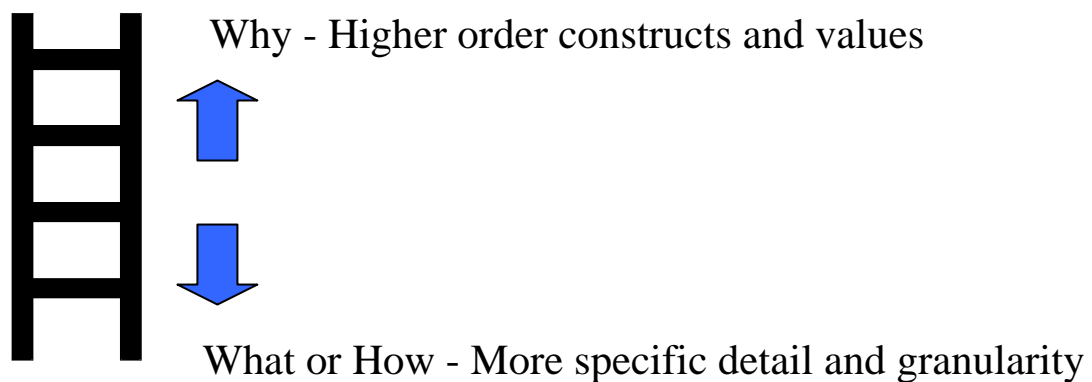


Figure 31: Laddering for behaviours and values

The extract below shows an example of this laddering process:

Construct: Pole - Outward looking

PD: In terms of demonstrating 'outward looking' what is it that they do?

CEO: They are not introspective and they look for ideas, standards and inspiration outside of the organization.

PD: How do they go about that?

CEO: I think first of all by a natural instinct to do it. Its about a curiosity about the world, both the telecoms world and the broader world, about how business is done, how technology operates and how markets work, a curiosity about those things. To go and find out how others do it and not just rely on our own enormous stores of knowledge and views in the company because at times you have to challenge that. Often by inspiration from small outfits and small companies as well the big ones.

PD: Talking about their natural instinct to find out about telecoms and the natural world etc, how would they go about that?

CEO: They would spend time with other organizations in other markets, it may be at a conference, it may just be travelling, visiting companies in the UK and abroad, it might just be from the newspapers and papers.

PD: Is there anything else that they do?

CEO: No

By repeating the 'how' and 'what' questions it can be seen that it was possible to obtain a useful level of granularity and to produce a string of hierarchically linked super ordinate and subordinate constructs (Hill, 1995).

There were times within this process however when some interviewees seemed to get 'stuck' and it proved useful at this point to rephrase the question along the lines of "If I wanted to model this what would I have to do?" or "If I wanted to describe this to someone else what would I say?"

The two extracts below, from one interview, show how the laddering process worked at the value level. In both the cases the terminal / end stage value behind the construct was "Customers pay our wages".

Example 1

PD – For this construct, in terms of all things we talked about, recognising the outside world, outside the immediate sphere etc, why is that important to you?

CEO: Because fundamentally we run businesses to serve customers in the external environment. We don't run businesses to serve our own tasks and in order to be successful you need to have an appreciation of how the market is moving as well, and how customers are reacting, and so then an external perspective is critical.

PD - And why is it important to serve customers?

CEO: Because if you don't focus on what customers want, they won't buy your products and they won't pay out wages.

PD - And why is that important that they buy our products?

CEO: To pay our wages.

Example 2

PD - We talked about growth, inquisitive searching, innovative, anticipating, constantly searching for new ideas, travelling, meeting people, external contacts, being open to new ideas, communicating. Why is that important?

CEO: It's about refreshing, it's about bringing new ideas and freshness into the business.

PD - Why is that important?

CEO: Because otherwise we become dinosaurs.... and the status quo.... others will leap frog us, think of new stuff and we won't.

PD - Why is it important not be leap frogged?

CEO: Because otherwise people come up with new exciting ideas and customers would buy their products and not pay our wages.

During the interview it was important to watch the body language of the interviewee because there were times when they became very uncomfortable, either because they had reached the end of the ladder or because they were very uncomfortable with what was being said. In the first example the respondent demonstrated through their body language and the tone of their response that they had reached the end of the ladder after answering the “*Why*” question for the second time, this was born out by their third response.

The laddering process proved very effective in eliciting data elements and linkages between the three distinct data levels that the interviewees provided.

7.5.10 Scoring

Once the laddering was completed for each pole of the construct I placed seven numbered cards in front of the interviewee (Figure 32), and asked them to place each of the elements (leaders) against this scale. The respondents were asked to treat the ‘positive’ or most preferred end of the construct as the ‘1’ and the least preferred or ‘negative’ pole as ‘7’.

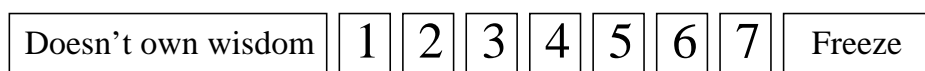


Figure 32: Construct / element scoring scale

I explained to the interviewee that they could place any element in any position along the scale and that if they wished they could place all cards against the 'one', all cards against the 'seven' or that they could choose any combination in between. I also gave them an additional card to represent an 'ideal' element and asked them to place this on the scale too.

For the construct above the final placement was as shown in Figure 33 below, where element one and five were scored as a 4, element four and two were scored as a 6, element three was scored as a 3 and element six was scored as a 2. The ideal element was scored as a 1.

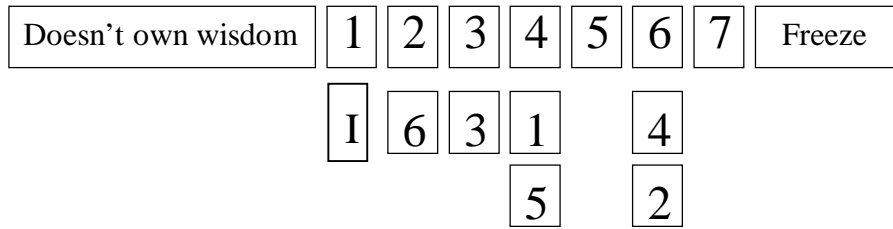


Figure 33: Element / construct scoring scale - an example

7.5.11 Close and feedback

As we approached the end of the interview I asked the respondent if there was anything important that we had missed and that they would like to add, if there was we explored this.

I thanked the interviewee for their time and their input and explained that I would let them have sight of the interview transcript as soon as it was typed up. I asked the interviewee to review the transcript when they received it and told them that if they wished to change or add anything that I would be pleased to receive their input.

7.6 Content analysis

In conducting this research exercise and writing up this chapter I have attempted to address the concern raised by Hill (1995) that whilst researchers' reports tend to mention that a content analysis occurred the literature has remained relatively silent on how to execute a content analysis and the pitfalls to be wary of.

The basis of the research protocol that I have followed for analysing my content is taken from Baker (2002) which is based on the work of Reynolds and Gutman (1988).

7.6.1 Interview transcription

The first step in the analysis of the interview content was to transcribe the interview recordings. At this stage I was not aware of what would be important so following Partington's guidance (2002b: 146) I transcribed everything. Taking this approach also allowed me to maximise the opportunity to become familiar with my data and my informants' worlds.

Once the transcripts were completed I entered all of the relevant data elements on to an Excel spreadsheet and sent both the transcript and spreadsheets back to the respondents for review and comment. I was keen to allow them the opportunity to add anything that they felt that we had missed and for them to review my initial data capture exercise for validity remembering that a key focus of the research was to get a true representation of their conceptions of their assessment criteria.

7.6.2 Producing the construct and ladders

Working with the data in the Excel spreadsheet and my original interview notes I then documented the respondents' ladders and classified the data in to three levels. For the

purpose of clarity I labelled these three levels as “attitude”, “behaviours” and “values”. The definition attributed to these three levels is:

- Value – the perceived value or motivation behind the observed behaviour; “an enduring belief that a specific end-stage of existence is personally or socially preferable”. In this context the label represents *terminal values* (Rokeach, 1973).
- Behaviour – the observable actions that constitute the way people actually operate.
- Attitude – an external perception and representation of the element's attitude as perceived by the interviewee.

In this sense the data obtained from the interview respondents can be seen to largely align with the model shown in Figure 6 on page 13. At the uppermost level are the values, at the next level down are the categories of behaviour, the competencies, and supporting this level are the individual behaviours. Where my findings diverge from Hopen's model (2004) is through the inclusion of an additional set of data elements representing displayed attitude.

7.6.3 Data categorisation and reduction

The next step in the content analysis was to make the data more manageable by reducing down the amount of data through an iterative process of identifying commonality of meaning (Baker, 2002: 226). The key at this stage was to choose a strategy for data reduction that did not impoverish the information that remained (Hill, 1995). My aim was to create categories of meaning and a set of master codes that led to replications of more than one respondent saying that one element led to another, whilst not being too broad that meaning was lost (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988: 18).

Using a process of *constant comparison* (Partington, 2002b: 147) I examined each instance of a data element and compared it with the categorisation and codification of previous elements. If the new instance did not fit an existing category, I created a new category. It was often necessary to go back to the original interview transcripts to contextualise the ‘words’ and make sure that I associated the categorisation with the respondents meaning, rather than mine. This approach helped to ensure epistemic reflexivity and validity.

This process of iteration and cross referral demanded a high degree of persistence, patience, sustained concentration and mental flexibility (Partington, 2002b: 155). Having conducted this study it is my view that the description of the data categorisation activity within the literature is treated very superficially, and does not indicate how complicated and time consuming this exercise really is. Neither does it indicate the level of effort that one needs to go to make sure that the data coding stands up to external scrutiny.

In order to ensure reliability and validity I asked two co-researchers to review my coding and data categorisations. One co-researcher was a fellow DBA student and the other was a colleague from the sponsoring organization who was involved in research in to organizational values.

This external review identified no disagreement as to the definition or titles of the master categories, however within the categories eight data elements were allocated differently to the way in which I had categorised them. Through a process of discussion and reflection these differences were resolved.

7.6.4 The implication matrix

Once the content categories were finalised I recast the respondent's ladders using the final master codes. The next stage in the research process was to create an implications matrix. The purpose of the matrix was to show the number of times that each element of each ladder led to another. Two types of relations were represented in this matrix: 'direct relations' and 'indirect relations' (Reynolds and Gutman, 1984). *Direct* relations refers to relationships among adjacent elements, i.e. where one element led directly to another with no other element in between, and *indirect* relations refers to relationships among non-adjacent elements, i.e. where one element led to another but with one or more intervening elements.

By examination of the ladder in Figure 34 below it can be seen that there are seven direct relations amongst the eight elements: A-B, B-C, C-D, D-E, E-F, F-G and G-H. An examination of the indirect relations shows that there are 21 indirect relations within this ladder: A-C, A-D, A-E, A-F, A-G, A-H, B-D, B-E, B-F, B-G, B-H, C-E, C-F, C-G, C-H, D-F, D-G, D-H, E-G, E-H and F-H. It can be seen therefore that there are significantly more indirect relations than there are direct relations.

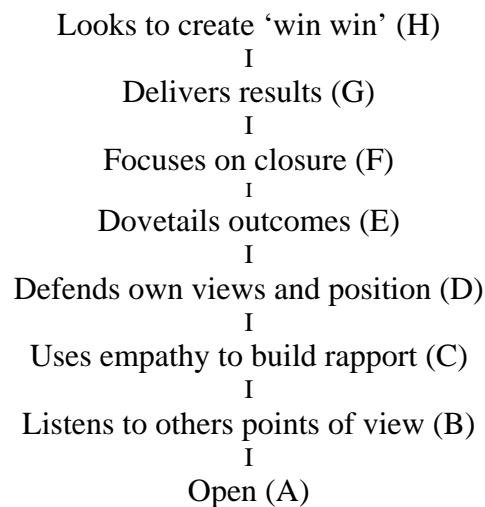


Figure 34: Example ladder

Reynolds and Gutman (1988: 20) recommend exploring both types of relations to determine what paths are dominant in an aggregate map of relationships among elements. They point out that without examining indirect relations a situation might exist where there are many paths by which two elements may be indirectly connected but not connected directly and a valuable, attitude-behaviour or behaviour-value, relation would be lost. As a result all of the individual respondents' ladders were decomposed in to their direct and indirect relations. Attitude-to-attitude relations were not included.

It was at this point in the content analysis that I discovered that there was a gap in the literature on how to produce an implication matrix. The first time that I mapped the data it became apparent that in some ladders data elements were reversed, i.e. in one ladder element A would lead to element B, and in others element B would lead to element A.

To ensure consistency the data was recorded in line with Gutman's example model (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988: 21) where all element relations were recorded as unidirectional relations irrespective of which element preceded which.

My understanding was informed by the perspective that the key purpose at this stage of the exercise was to capture the existence of a relationship between elements, not whether 'A' follows 'B' or 'B' follows 'A'.

By recording the direct and indirect relations in this way it allowed me to overcome the problem that in some ladders the order of the data elements was 'reversed', and allowed me to provide a consistency of coding (see Figure 37 on page 133).

7.6.5 Extracting the data chains from the implications matrix

The next step in the process was to analyse the aggregate implication matrix to identify the data chains. For the purpose of clarity the definition of chains and ladders offered by Reynolds and Gutman (1988) is used in my analysis. Where the term "chains" refers to a sequence of elements which emerge from the aggregate implications matrix, as distinct from the term 'ladders' which is used to refer to the specific elicitations from individual respondents.

Thus if there were three or more relations between A and B, B and C, and C and D, ($A \rightarrow B \geq 3$ and $B \rightarrow C \geq 3$ and $C \rightarrow D \geq 3$), then a chain A-B-C-D is formed. Reynolds and Gutman (1988) point out that there does not necessarily have to be an individual with an A-B-C-D ladder for an A-B-C-D chain to emerge from the analysis.

A step by explanation of how this process was conducted is included within the results section starting on page 135.

7.6.6 Hierarchical value map

The next step in the process was to produce a hierarchical value map (HVM) in order to represent the implications matrix data in a compact, easy to understand pictorial format. The main benefits of producing a HVM can be summed up as "*a picture paints a thousand words*" (Baker, 2002: 242), and the fact that it is possible to use this graphic device as a tool to facilitate understanding and decision-making (Huff, 1990).

The HVM was constructed by using the aggregate data in the implications matrix and creating a series of chains.


The HVM was constructed by starting in the first row where there is a value at or above the chosen cut-off level. For this exercise I chose a cut off level of three, i.e. where there were at least three direct and/or indirect relations between elements. I

chose this cut off level because I considered that it gave a good balance between looking for homogeneity and heterogeneity in the sample. With only six respondents it was important to choose a cut off level that would provide a sufficient number of relations for analysis. Reynolds and Gutman (1988) recommend selecting a cut-off level of between 3 to 5 relations for a sample of 50 to 60 respondents' ladders. In my case I had a total of 27 constructs and 51 ladders. Baker (2002) chose a cut-off level of two in her study where she had a smaller sample size.

Once all of the chains were captured the next step was to draw the hierarchical value map by building up the map from the chains extracted from the implications matrix.

As the chains were plotted on the HVM a picture was gradually built up showing the consensual nature of the data where the dominant perceptual orientations represented the common ways of thinking (Calder and Tybout, 1987 in Baker, 2002: 242).

Both Reynolds (1988) and Baker (2002) state how considerable ingenuity is required to build up the HVM, particularly if you are to achieve the guidelines that "one should try at all times to avoid crossing lines", so that the map remains coherent and easily interpretable.

The production of this HVM needed several iterations before it was possible to draw a map that minimised the number of crossing lines. The final map contained three lines that cross over four others. To aid clarity and readability this was addressed by using a cross over device () (Baker, 2002).

7.7 Reliability and validity

The aim of this section is to demonstrate how I have tried to achieve validity and reliability in each part of the research process from formulating the research question, to selecting research participants through to conducting the research interviews and conducting the content analysis.

For the purposes of this chapter I have utilised the following definitions of validity and reliability.

Validity is defined as:

Does the instrument measure what it is supposed to measure?

(From a constructivist perspective, have I gained full access to the knowledge and meaning of informants?)

Reliability is defined as:

Will the measure yield the same results on a different occasion - assuming no real change in what is to be measured?

(From a constructivist perspective, will different observers make similar observations on different occasions?)

7.7.1 The research question

It was important to understand that formulating the research question is crucial since it influences the researcher's interpretations of the remaining phases of the research process (Sandberg, 1994: 70). My first pilot interviews quickly exposed the difficulty of utilising the rationalistic approach to the elicitation and definition of assessment criteria. The top team members adopt an approach that indicates bounded rationality and a very severe level of deletion, distortion and abstraction of the plethora of environmental and person specific data available to them in assessing the performance of an individual.

It quickly transpired that the assessment of leaders was not an objective fully informed assessment of all of the available data. The assessment process appeared to be dependent on the use of the assessors' own values, where their own values serve as the criteria and standards against which evaluations are made (Williams, 1968 as reported in Rokeach, 1973: 4)

The assessment process appeared to be predicated on value triggers and a subconscious automatic assessment of the individual rather than a full rational analysis of the person specific data available.

In essence the results from the initial pilot interviews led me to conclude that the leaders attitudes and behaviours were not used to support a rational fully informed assessment, but triggers for recognition, or at least the perception of recognition, of a perceived alignment with their own values.

Viewed differently one might propose that one of the ways in which the top team form their impression of others is through a feeling for the values that are important to that person (Cooke and Slack, 1984: 61). The top team appeared to be subconsciously making a comparison against their own values in the assessment of others. From an interpretist research perspective therefore, it became important in ensuring validity to explicitly capture the actual criteria used by the top team members to assess leaders' performance by utilising a research protocol that facilitated a detailed level of data capture and that exposed the criteria 'in use' (Argyris, 1986).

After conducting the first pilot interviews the basic research purpose of obtaining details of leaders' assessment criteria remained the same. However in order to ensure validity my focus became much stronger on gaining full access to the meaning of my respondents by detailed probing and the eradication of linguistic ambiguity and subjectivity.

- What are the 'criteria' that the top team will use to assess the performance of leaders in the context of delivering the new strategy over the next three years?
- What is the degree of alignment of these views across the top team?

It was also clearly important, in ensuring validity, to capture data from the respondents that spanned the whole range of assessment criteria. Key enablers to achieving this were the establishment of a 'safe' environment and the adoption of a conversational elicitation technique (Stewart and Mayes, 2002). Both of these

elements helped build rapport in order to gain full access to the data and meaning of the interviewees.

7.7.2 Selecting research participants

The selection of research participants was done on the basis of who the key decision-makers were in the adoption of a new set of organizational values and competencies. Whilst the top team are not the only active players in this activity they are a key influencer group.

From a reliability perspective it is my opinion that if this research activity had been conducted by a second researcher at the same time, using the same technique and the same elements of discussion, that similar results would have been obtained. However given the nature of personal constructs and the fact that constructs change and are dependent on the time at which they are elicited (Goffin, 2002: 203), reliability 'post event' is not an appropriate criterion of assessment.

7.7.3 Conducting the research interviews

Both social contexts and the context of the research exercise itself influence an individual's constructs. In order to mitigate my influence I used a standard introductory letter and a standard 'pre-prepared' introduction for each interview so that I positioned my research purpose consistently with each of my research respondents. In addition by using an approach based on repertory grid I was able to help remove my influence and any potential bias.

From my experience it seems that with repertory grid there is a potential danger that the researcher may assign their meaning to the 'pole', rather than the respondent's meaning, thus jeopardising the validity of the data obtained. To overcome this I adopted a process of in-depth probing, 'laddering', based on the output of the triadic elicitation exercise. Laddering was particularly useful as it provided a technique for ensuring validity by probing to understand the meaning assigned by the respondent and by providing a tool for capturing data across the full range of assessment criteria. It was important to remember that words have different meaning for different people and a concerted effort was made therefore to get to expose and understand the respondents' meaning.

Once I had completed the transcription of the interview notes I fed back my results to the respondents, and asked for their amendments and any corrections, to ensure consensual validity.

7.7.4 Content analysis

My content analysis was primarily concerned with the accurate expression of leaders' assessment criteria used by the top team members. In keeping with the spirit of constructivism (Mahoney in Hill, 1995), and the particular strengths and sensitivities of the repertory grid method, my objective was to interpret the output of my research respondents' rather than impose external constraints. As such the content analysis of participants' ladders was intended to be descriptive and explanatory rather than following a hypothesis testing model. Put another way, I had no intention of

predetermining the content categories and then counting the frequency of their occurrence.

The categorisation of data elements was accomplished through an iterative process of comparison and cross-comparison (Partington, 2002a: 146) and constantly asking “*Where does it say that in the data?*” in order to ensure reliability of categorisation and validity of the data analysis.

The nuance of meaning and ambiguity was addressed by maintaining the data elements in their original form and then asking the interview respondents to validate my recording and representation of their data, thus ensuring consensual validity (Partington, Young and Pellegrinelli, 2003) and semantic confirmation (Hill, 1995).

To achieve a measure of external validity and reliability I produced a single spreadsheet showing all of the master codes and groupings and asked two independent researchers to review my data allocation and classification; I specifically asked them to:

- Check on their agreement as to how I had grouped the elements in to the master codes.
- Review the label that I had given to the master codes to ensure semantic validity and reliability.

Finally, in writing up my research I have reported my approach in detail so that other researchers can replicate my research using my protocol and in so doing provide some degree of evidence of the reliability of my approach.

7.8 Project 1 Results

In this section I report the findings from Project 1. I have written this section in such a way as to lead the reader through the data in order to ensure that the results are presented in such a way that they are accessible and understandable.

The structure of this section follows the method of analysis outlined on pages 121 to 125; I start by presenting the details of the constructs and poles obtained from the repertory grid laddering interviews. I then go on to present the results of the construct rating exercise. Following this I present the data categories obtained from the content analysis. Utilising this data I then present the data showing the degree of alignment across the top team members' responses.

Utilising the data from the individual ladders I then present the implications matrix which shows the details of the number of relations between data elements within the total set of ladders obtained. Analysis of the implications matrix is then performed in order to identify the dominant elements, and in order to identify the data chains present.

Having obtained these chains they are then gradually built-up to form a hierarchical value map (HVM) that provides a facsimile of the total set of responses in a pictorial format. Following the creation of the HVM I perform an analysis of the dominant perceptual orientations before finally closing this section with a mapping of the data against the organization's new competencies to provide an analysis of the degree of alignment across the respondents against the organization's new competencies.

7.8.1 Constructs and poles

From the six interviews that were conducted a total of 50 pages of transcript of just under 20,000 words were obtained. Within this data a total of 27 constructs and 51 construct poles were obtained, as shown in Table 12 below.

	<u>Positive pole</u>	<u>Negative pole</u>
1	Aim high	Survivor
2	Partnership Mgmt / Leadership	Autocratic
3	Empathy	False
4	Leadership	Insecure
5	Appreciation	Self centred
6	Magnanimus	Cold
7	Passion for customers	Indifference
8	Self integrity	Strongly influenced by politics
9	Natural teamworking	Not 'win win', 'out to win'
10	Going for a BHAG	Risk averse
11	Outward looking	Introspection
12	Determination to deliver results	Excuse culture
13	Don't own wisdom	Dumb
14	Energise their people	Freeze
15	Set the tone	-
16	Set the agenda	-
17	Recruit the right people	-
18	Execution & delivery	Not aligned in support of customers, 'ME'
19	Respect and valuing people	Self (Own performance) more important than team
20	Appreciation of external environment	Miopic concentration on self and unit
21	Intolerance of sloppy expenditure	Lacks cost control
22	Searching for innovation	Focus on status quo
23	Sets clear goals & achieve them	Does not deliver
24	Collaborative coaching	Task deliverer
25	Self Reliant	Dependency
26	Good internal strategic partner	Poor relationship manager
27	Strategic leaders	Strategic follower

Table 12: Elicited constructs and poles

Each of the elements (leaders) under discussion was scored against a 7 point likert scale for each construct provided. Table 13 below contains the scoring data for each of the elements against each of the respondent's constructs. In total 24 fully rated constructs were obtained against the 30 elements. One respondent's responses have been excluded as the interview only produced one construct. Three constructs were not rated as the respondent provided only one pole for each construct. Of the 23 constructs that were rated 26 elements (leaders) out of a total of 30, were given scores that were in line with the original 'good', 'average' or 'poor' grouping that the element had been assigned to. This gave an 87% alignment with the respondent's initial classification of the element, good, average or poor.

Construct	Ideal	Good 6	Good 3	Average 1	Average 5	Poor 2	Poor 4	Total	Range
1	1	3	3	3	1	2	5	18	1 - 5
2	3	2	3	2	6	6	1	23	1 - 6
3	2	3	2	7	6	1	5	26	1 - 7
4	2	2	3	6	6	7	7	33	2 - 7
5	2	5	3	1	2	4	6	23	1 - 6
	10	15	14	19	21	20	24	123	

Construct	Ideal	Good 6	Good 3	Average 1	Average 5	Poor 2	Poor 4	Total	Range
1	3	3	2	6	4	6	4	25	2 - 6
2	2	1	2	4	5	7	3	22	1 - 7
3	2	1	2	5	4	6	5	23	1 - 6
4	1	1	2	3	5	7	6	24	1 - 7
5	1	1	2	4	5	6	5	23	1 - 6
	9	7	10	22	23	32	23	117	

Construct	Ideal	Good 6	Good 3	Average 1	Average 5	Poor 2	Poor 4	Total	Range
1	1	1	3	6	7	5	4	26	2 - 6
2	2	2	3	4	4	6	2	21	1 - 7
3	1	1	1	4	5	2	4	17	1 - 6
4	1	2	3	2	6	5	4	22	1 - 7
5	1	2	2	2	7	4	4	21	1 - 6
	6	8	12	18	29	22	18	107	

Construct	Ideal	Good 6	Good 3	Average 1	Average 5	Poor 2	Poor 4	Total	Range
1	1	2	1	2	4	5	6	20	1 - 6
2	2	2	3	3	5	2	5	20	2 - 5
3	2	3	2	4	3	6	4	22	2 - 6
4	2	1	2	4	4	6	5	22	1 - 6
5	1	2	3	3	2	4	6	20	1 - 6
6	1	1	2	1	4	2	5	15	1 - 5
	9	11	13	17	22	25	31	119	

Construct	Ideal	Good 6	Good 3	Average 1	Average 5	Poor 2	Poor 4	Total	Range
1	1	2	3	4	4	6	6	25	2 - 6
2	2	2	3	3	2	4	4	18	2 - 4
	3	4	6	7	6	10	10	43	

Table 13: Element / construct ratings

7.8.2 Data coding and categorisation

When the transcript data was coded and categorised three distinct levels appeared. These three levels subdivided in to 33 distinct categories as shown in the tables below. The fully detailed list of categories and data elements is shown in Appendix G on page 272.

	Attitude	Behaviours	Values
Unique data elements per category	67	198	58
Category master codes	7	19	7

Table 14: Frequency count of attitude, behaviour and value data elements and master codes

33	V7	Value	Provide Business and organizational leadership
32	V6	Value	Innovate and grow
31	V5	Value	Deliver for customers
30	V4	Value	Be the best; Deliver
29	V3	Value	Teamwork
28	V2	Value	Community; Shared purpose
27	V1	Value	Maximise individual contribution
26	B19	Behaviour	Focus on execution and delivery
25	B18	Behaviour	Adopts a solution orientation
24	B17	Behaviour	Develops own position and views
23	B16	Behaviour	Engages people at all levels
22	B15	Behaviour	Builds a story
21	B14	Behaviour	Aligns and dovetails outcomes
20	B13	Behaviour	Gives praise and feedback; Cheers at others
19	B12	Behaviour	Leads by example
18	B11	Behaviour	Pushes the envelope
17	B10	Behaviour	Searches out new ideas and opportunities
16	B9	Behaviour	Works with fact; not opinion
15	B8	Behaviour	Focuses on customers
14	B7	Behaviour	Communicates clearly and effectively
13	B6	Behaviour	Values and use diversity
12	B5	Behaviour	Takes a firm hand
11	B4	Behaviour	Shows a deliberate focus on delivery through team
10	B3	Behaviour	Involves and listens; Doesn't own wisdom
9	B2	Behaviour	Sets bold and stretching targets
8	B1	Behaviour	Uses the full range of emotional intelligence
7	A7	Attitude	Analytical
6	A6	Attitude	Enquiring mind
5	A5	Attitude	Positive / upbeat 'can do' attitude
4	A4	Attitude	Self confident
3	A3	Attitude	Humility
2	A2	Attitude	Drive and determination
1	A1	Attitude	Self aware

Table 15: Data categories

7.8.3 Degree of alignment of views

To assess the degree of alignment of views across the top team, an analysis of the interviewees' ladders was conducted in order to identify which of the data categories appeared in which of the respondent's ladders.

The results of this analysis shows a degree of alignment for the behaviours of 60% (B1 – B19), 71% for the terminal values (V1 – V7) and 65% across all of the data (B1 – V7).

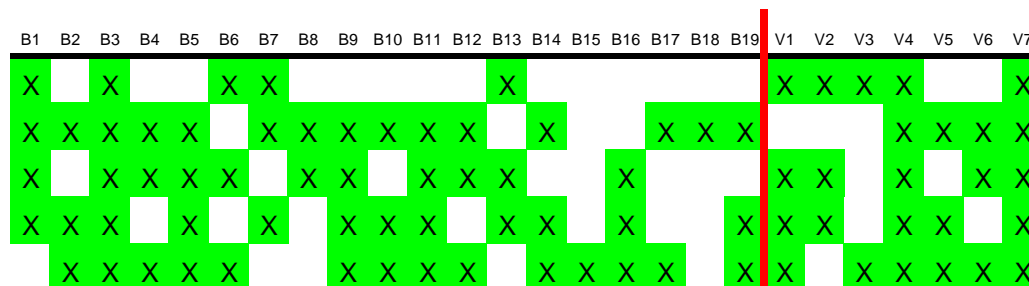


Figure 35: Frequency mapping of behaviours and values

7.8.4 Mapping the ladders to the master codes

In order to produce a view of the relationships between all of the data elements within the complete sample the original ladders were recast utilising the new master codes.

An example of this mapping exercise for one ladder is shown below:

Ladder data elements	Master category	Category number
Displays drive	Drive and determination	A2
Maintains close involvement with people	Engages people at all levels	B16
Gets to know and engage people	Involves & listens; doesn't own wisdom	B2
Focuses self and team on beating targets	Focuses delivery through team	B3
Sweats the assets; capital and people	Maximises individual contribution	V4
Delivers business results	Provides business and organizational leadership	V7

Figure 36: Mapping the original ladders using the new master codes

By explanation the first column of Figure 36 above contains each of the data elements from one ladder. The second column contains the details of the master category against which the individual data element was mapped, and the third column contains the associated category reference number. This exercise was completed for each of the individual ladders that were obtained from the respondents.

7.8.5 Creating the implications matrix

The next step in the process was to conduct an analysis of the number of direct and indirect relations across the full data set in-line with the process detailed in section 7.6.4 on page 123.

Each ladder was inspected in order to identify the number of direct relations and indirect relations between elements. This can be explained by reference to the example in Figure 36 above for the ladder 'A2 > B16 > B2 > B3 > V4 > V7'.

By inspection of this ladder it can be seen that there are direct relations between A2 and B16, B16 and B2, B2 and B3, B3 and V4 and finally between V4 and V7.

In addition there are indirect relations between A2 and B2, A2 and B3, A2 and V4, A2 and V7, B16 and B3, B16 and V4, B16 and V7, B2 and V4, B2 and V7, and finally between B3 and V7.

All of the data from the individual ladders was aggregated together and entered in to the implications matrix as shown in Figure 37 below. The number of direct relations is shown to the left of the colon, and the number of indirect relations to the right. Thus it can be seen that A3, for example, “Humility” links to B1, “Uses the full range of Emotional Intelligence”, three times directly and twice indirectly.

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7		
A1	2.0																				0.3	0.3				0.1	A1	
A2	1.1	2.0		0.2	0.2		1.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2		0.1	0.1		0.1			0.4	0.1	0.1		0.5	0.1	0.1	0.4	A2
A3	2.3		0.4	1.0	0.2	0.2						1.0	0.1	0.2		0.1	0.1	0.1			0.3	0.4	0.2				0.1	A3
A4			0.1	0.1	0.2	1.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1			1.0					0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3			0.2	A4
A5	1.3		1.0	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.1	1.2	0.1	1.0	0.2	0.2		0.1	0.1		1.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.5		0.1	0.2	0.1	A5
A6	0.1	1.0				0.1	0.1		0.1	3.0	0.2			0.1			0.1				0.2		0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	A6
A7				0.2					2.0		0.1			1.1		0.2							0.1	0.3		0.2	0.2	A7
B1			3.2	1.0	0.3	1.0	0.1	2.0	0.1				1.1	0.1		1.1	1.0	0.1	0.1	1.3	1.4	0.2	0.4	0.1		0.1	0.1	B1
B2				0.2	0.1		1.0				0.1		1.1	0.2	0.1					1.2	0.1		0.2			0.3	0.2	B2
B3				0.1	1.1	1.0						1.0	1.0	0.2		2.0	0.1	0.1		0.2	0.3	1.1	0.1			0.1	0.1	B3
B4					0.1							1.2		1.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2		1.0	1.3				0.2	0.2	B4
B5								0.1	0.3	0.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.1		2.1				0.2	1.1	1.1	0.2	0.2		2.2	0.2	B5
B6											1.0	0.1		1.0						1.0	1.0	0.1	0.1			0.1	0.1	B6
B7								1.0	1.0					0.1					0.1	1.0		1.0	1.0			0.2	0.2	B7
B8								0.1	1.0		0.1	1.0						0.1		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1			0.2	0.2	B8
B9									2.0	2.1				1.0		0.2	1.0		1.1				0.3	0.2	1.1	0.3	0.3	B9
B10											1.1						0.1		0.2				0.3	0.1	1.2	0.1	0.1	B10
B11																0.1	1.0		1.0	0.1			1.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	B11
B12													0.1	0.2	2.0				1.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.1			1.3	0.2	B12
B13																				1.1	0.2		0.1			0.1	0.1	B13
B14														0.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0		1.0	1.2	0.2			1.3	0.2	B14
B15																			1.0	0.1	0.1	0.1				0.1	0.1	B15
B16																					0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2		1.1	0.1	B16
B17																	0.1	0.1					0.2		0.1		0.1	B17
B18																						1.1						B18
B19																				0.1			1.3		0.1	0.4	0.1	B19
V1																					2.0		3.0			0.1	0.1	V1
V2																						2.0					2.0	V2
V3																										1.0	0.1	V3
V4																								1.0	2.0	3.0	0.1	V4
V5																									1.0	2.0	0.1	V5
V6																												V6
V7																												V7

Figure 37: Implication matrix showing the number of direct and indirect relations between elements

7.8.6 Dominant elements

The next step in the process was to analyse the aggregate data in the implications matrix in order to identify the dominant elements within the total set of responses.

The values in each column were summed to produce the number of relationship links 'to' each element, and the values in each row were summed to produce the number of relationship links 'from' each element. By example, analysis of the data for 'B1' shows how this was achieved. The B1 column values (Figure 37) were summed as follows: $2:0 + 1:1 + 3:2 + 1:1 + 1:3 + 0:1 = 8:8$, showing that there are eight direct links and eight indirect links to B1, thus giving a total of 16 links 'to' B1. The B1 row values (Figure 37) were then summed to show the number of 'from' links: $3:2 + 1:0 + 0:3 + 1:0 + 0:1 + 2:0 + 0:1 + 1:1 + 0:1 + 1:1 + 1:0 + 0:1 + 0:1 + 1:3 + 1:4 + 0:2 + 0:4 + 0:1 + 0:1 = 12:27$. Thus showing that there are 12 direct and 27 indirect links from B1, giving a total of 39 links from B1.

Table 16 below shows the full set of results for all data elements.

	To	From	Direct & indirect links	Total links
A1	-	2:12	2:12	14
A2	-	4:37	4:37	41
A3	-	5:26	5:26	31
A4	-	3:24	3:24	27
A5	-	6:34	6:34	40
A6	-	4:18	4:18	22
A7	-	3:12	3:12	15
B1	8:8	12:27	20:35	55
B2	3:0	3:16	6:16	22
B3	4:8	7:14	11:22	33
B4	2:10	4:17	6:27	33
B5	1:15	9:17	10:32	42
B6	3:4	4:4	7:8	15
B7	2:8	5:4	7:12	19
B8	4:5	2:8	6:13	19
B9	2:13	8:13	10:26	36
B10	6:6	2:11	8:17	25
B11	6:7	3:9	9:16	25
B12	5:11	3:12	8:23	31
B13	4:5	1:5	5:1	15
B14	4:14	8:9	12:13	25
B15	3:7	1:4	4:11	15
B16	6:10	1:7	7:17	24
B17	4:5	0:5	4:10	14
B18	2:5	1:1	3:6	9
B19	6:25	1:9	7:34	41
V1	5:24	5:1	10:25	35
V2	6:26	4:0	10:26	36
V3	5:14	1:0	6:14	20
V4	10:52	6:0	16:52	68
V5	2:17	3:0	5:17	22
V6	5:13	0:0	5:13	18
V7	13:46	0:0	13:46	59

Table 16: Total number of 'to' and 'from' relationship links for all data elements¹.

¹ The number to the left of the colon represents the 'direct' relationship links and the number to the right of the colon represents the 'indirect' relationship links.

The dominant elements for each level are shown in Table 17 below. These dominant elements represent the elements that had the most linkages to and from other data elements, the value of this analysis is the ability to be able to indicate the relative importance of each of the dominant elements across the sample.

A2	(41)	Drive and determination
A5	(40)	Positive / upbeat; ‘Can do’ attitude
A3	(31)	Displays humility
B1	(54)	Uses the full range of emotional intelligence
B5	(42)	Takes a firm hand
B19	(40)	Focuses on execution and delivery
B9	(35)	Works with fact, not opinion
B14	(35)	Aligns and dovetails outcomes
B3	(33)	Involves and listens; does not own wisdom
B4	(33)	Shows a deliberate focus on delivery through team
B12	(31)	Leads by example
B11	(25)	Pushes the envelope
V4	(68)	Be the best; deliver
V7	(59)	Provide Business & organizational leadership

Table 17: Dominant attitude, behaviours and values

7.8.7 Extracting the data chains from the implications matrix

The next step in the process was to identify the data chains within the implication matrix (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988: 20). These chains represent all of the interconnections of the various data elements that met or exceeded the defined cut-off level.

Starting in the first row of the implication matrix, (Figure 37 on page 133), I began by looking for any value that met or exceeded the cut-off level of three.

Looking along the first row of the implication matrix, (Row A1 in Figure 38), it can be seen that there were no attitude-behaviour values that met the required cut-off level.

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	
A1	2.0		0.1	0.1			0.1					0.1			0.1						0.3	0.3					0.1

Figure 38: Implication matrix - Row A1

The first attitude-behaviour value that did meet the cut-off level of three occurred in the second row A2 at B7 (Figure 37). A2–B7, “Drive and determination” – “Communicates clearly and effectively”. This relation has a value of (1:2) indicating one direct relation and 2 indirect relations between these two elements.

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	
A1	2.0		0.1	0.1			0.1				0.1				0.1						0.3	0.3				0.1	
A2	1.1	2.0		0.2	0.2		1.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2		0.1	0.1		0.1			0.4	0.1	0.1		0.5	0.1	0.1	0.4

Figure 39: Implication matrix: A2-B7

The next step was to move to the row B7 (Figure 40) to identify the next significant relation in the chain. In row B7 there are no significant relations, i.e. no values that meet the cut off level of three, and hence this chain ends at this point.

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
B7								1.0	1.0					0.1					0.1		1.0		1.0	1.0		0.2

Figure 40: Implication matrix: Row B7

Returning to row A2 row the next significant relation can be seen to be A2-B9, “Drive and determination” – “Works with fact, not opinion”, with zero direct relations and three indirect relations, (Figure 41).

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	
A1	2.0		0.1	0.1			0.1				0.1				0.1						0.3	0.3				0.1	
A2	1.1	2.0		0.2	0.2		1.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2		0.1	0.1		0.1			0.4	0.1	0.1		0.5	0.1	0.1	0.4

Figure 41: Implication matrix: A2-B9

Moving to row B9 the first significant relation present was B9-B11, “Works with fact not opinion” – “Pushes the envelope”, creating a chain A2-B9-B11.

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	
B8									0.1	1.0		0.1	1.0							0.1		0.1		0.1	0.1		0.2
B9										2.0	2.1			1.0		0.2	1.0		1.1		0.1		0.3	0.2	1.1	0.3	
B10											1.1						0.1		0.2				0.3	0.1	1.2	0.1	

Figure 42: Implication matrix: B9-B11

Continuing the process I then moved to row B11 where the first significant relation was B11-V4, “Pushes the envelope” – “Be the best; Deliver”, extending the chain to A2-B9-B11-V4.

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
B10											1.1						0.1		0.2				0.3	0.1	1.2	0.1
B11															0.1	1.0		1.0	0.1				1.2	0.1	0.3	0.1
B12													0.1	0.2	2.0				1.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.1			1.3

Figure 43: Implication matrix: B11-V4

The final link in the chain was V4-V7, “ Be the best; Deliver” – “Provide Business & organizational leadership”, thus giving a full chain A2-B9-B11-V4-V7.

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
V3																										1.3
V4																								1.0	2.0	3.0
V5																									1.0	2.0

Figure 44: Implication matrix: V4-V7

The next step in the process was to return to row A2 of the implications matrix, where the next significant relation was found at B19, “Focuses on execution and delivery”.

At row B19 the first significant relation was V4, “Be the best; Deliver”, with one direct and three indirect relations. Examination of row V4 identifies a value of 3:0 to V7 thus providing the final link in the chain to V7, “Provide Business and organizational leadership”, thus giving a second chain A2-B19-V4-V7.

By examination it can be seen that the first two chains converge at the values level, i.e. the two separate chains result in a linkage to the same value.

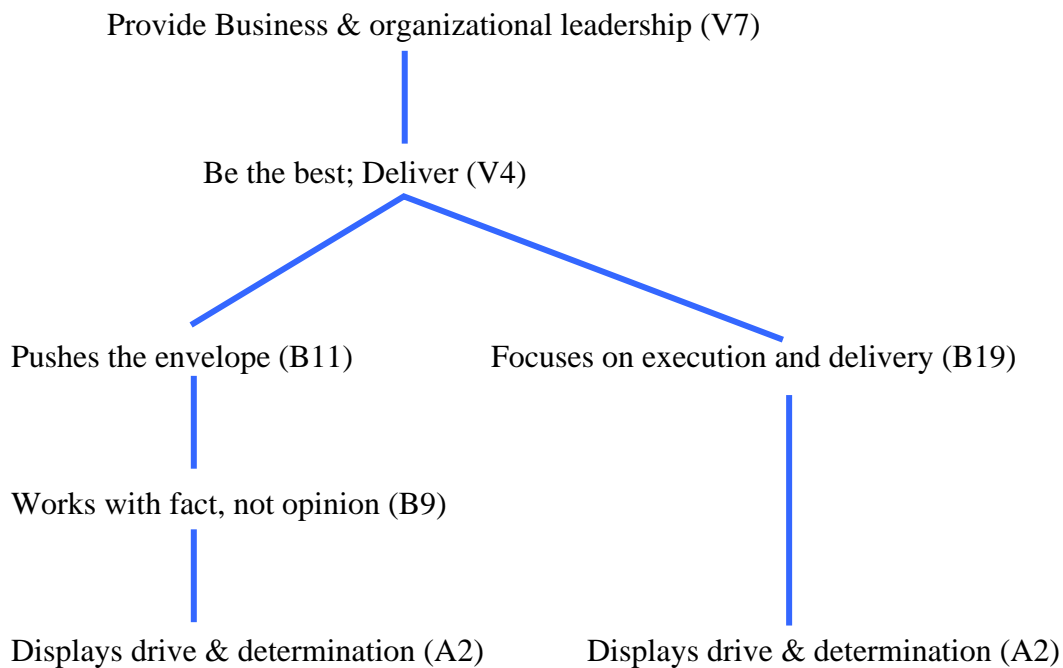


Figure 45: Mapping the first two chains

Further analysis of rows B9 and B19 show a direct relation to V7, B9-V7 and B19-V7, following Reynolds’s and Gutman’s recommendation (1988) these can be folded in to the previous chains A2-B9-V4-V7 and A2-B19-V4-V7 to aid clarity and coherence.

Returning to the beginning of the matrix the next significant relation was in row A3, “Displays humility” which had a significant relation with B1, “Uses the full range of emotional intelligence”, giving A3-B1. Moving to row B1 the next significant relation was B3, “Involves and listens; does not own wisdom” thus extending the chain to A3-B1-B3. Moving to row B3 the next and final significant relation in this chain was with V2, “Community; Shared purpose”, giving the full chain as A3-B1-B3-V2.

Returning to row A3 there was a significant relation to B3, “Involves and listens; Does not own wisdom”. At row B3 the one significant relation was to V2, “Community; Shared purpose”, thus giving a new chain A3-B3-V2.

A level of simplification and clarity can be gained by ‘folding in’ consistent elements (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988). For example there are five relations from B1 to B3 and three relations from B3 to V2 so it seems reasonable that rather than showing two chains, A3-B1-B3-V2 and A3-B3-V2, that these are mapped as a single chain, A3-B1-B3-V2.

The next significant relation on row A3 was an extension of a previous chain at the B1 level. Examining row B1 shows a significant relation to B5, “Takes a firm hand”. Moving to row B5 the first significant relation is B9, “Works with fact’ not opinion”, extending this chain to A3-B1-B5-B9. Moving to row B9 the only significant relation is to B11, “Pushes the envelope”. At row B11 the first significant relation is V4, “Be the best; deliver” and then the final link in the chain was to V7 thus giving a complete chain as A3-B1-B5-B9-B11-V4-V7.

Combining this with the previous A3-B1 chain gives a family of chains as below:

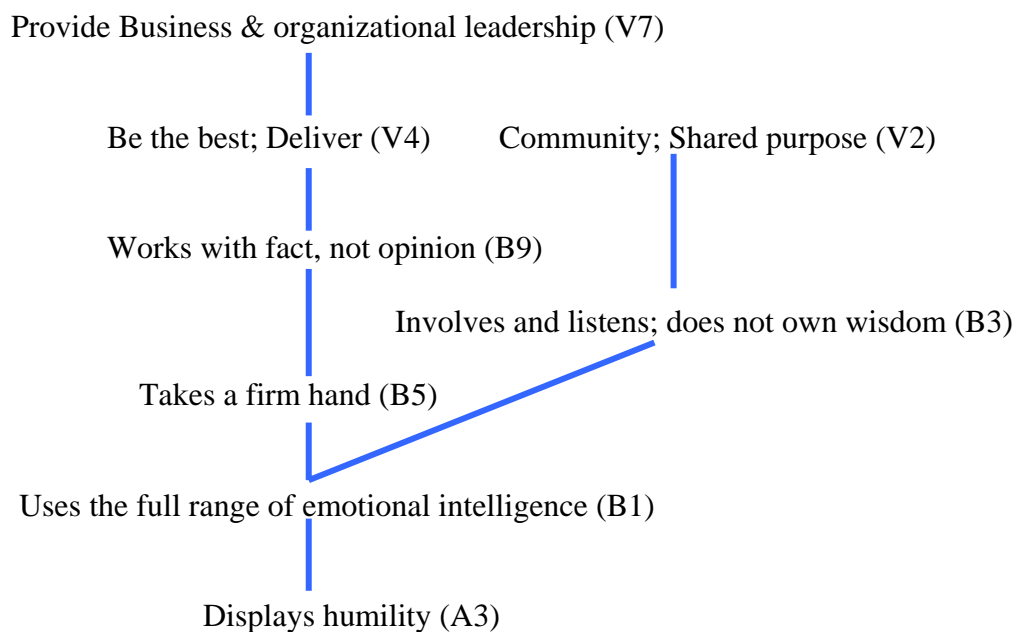


Figure 46: Combining the A3-V2 and A2-V7 chains

This analysis and mapping process was continued until all of the remaining chains were identified. The full set of chains is shown in Table 18 below.

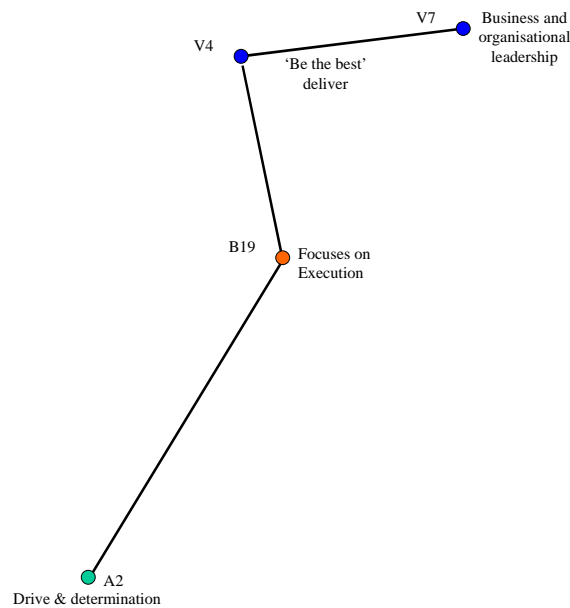
A2 - B19 - V4 - V7
 A2 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7
 A2 - B9 - B11 - V6
 A3 - B1 - B3 - V2
 A3 - B1 - B5 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7
 A3 - B1 - B5 - B9 - B11 - V6
 A3 - B1 - V1 - V4 - V7
 A5 - B1 - B3 - V2
 A5 - B1 - B5 - B16
 A5 - B1 - B5 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7
 A5 - B1 - B5 - B9 - B11 - V6
 A5 - B4 - B12 - V7
 A5 - B4 - B19 - V4 - V7
 A5 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7
 A5 - B9 - B11 - V6
 A6 - B10 - V4 - V7
 A6 - B10 - V6
 B2 - B19 - V4 - V7

Table 18: Implication matrix chains

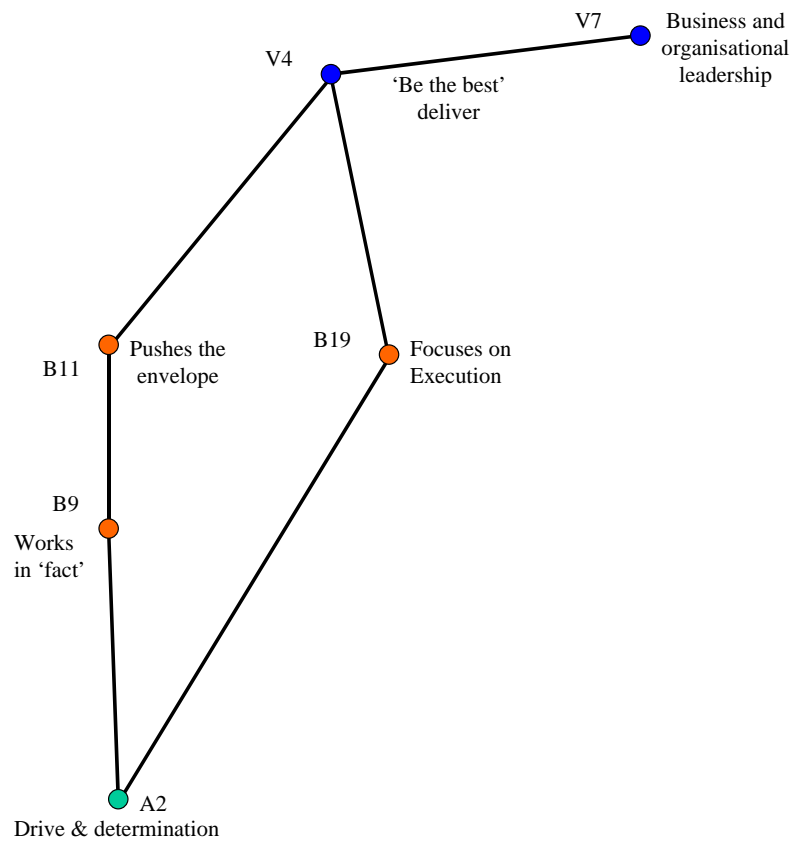
7.8.8 Creating the hierarchical value map (HVM)

Having obtained the data chains the next step in the process was to combine them together in to a single pictorial representation as detailed below.

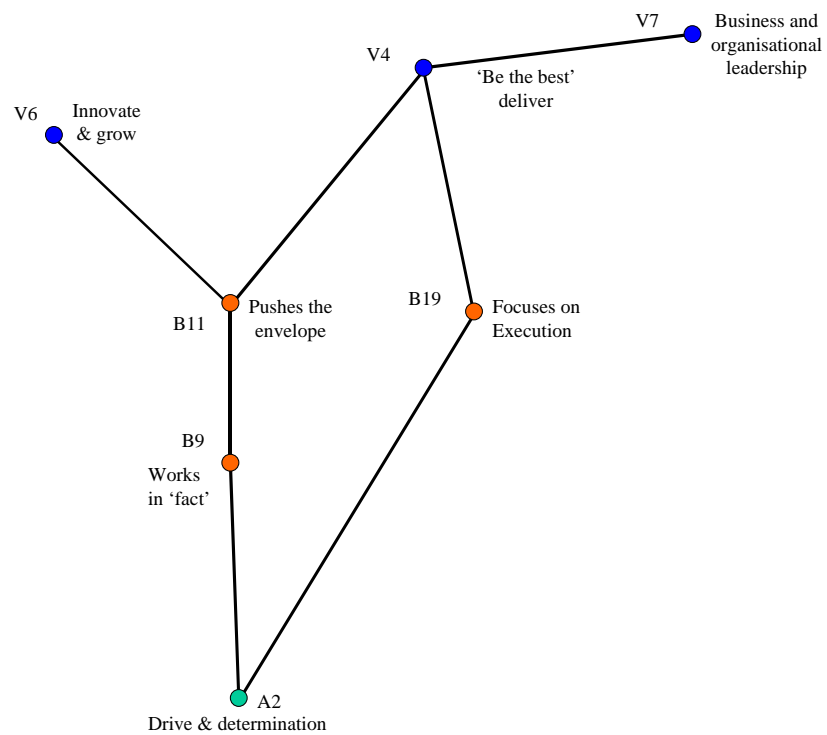
The first chain, A2 - B19 - V4 - V7 was represented pictorially as shown below:



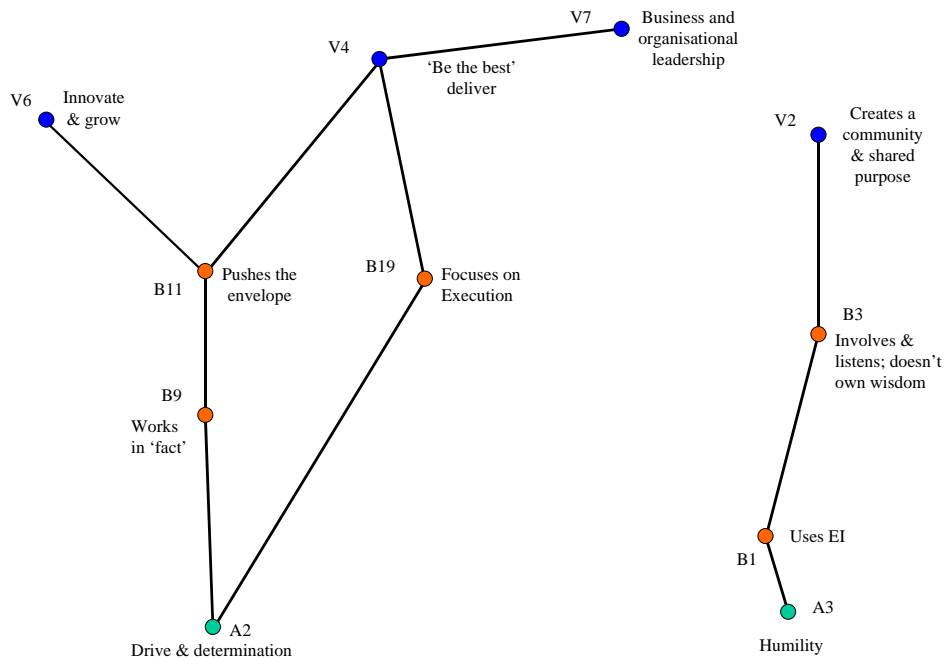
The next step was to add-in the second chain, A2 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7:



Following this the next chain was added, A2 - B9 - B11 - V6:



And then chain A3 - B1 - B3 V2:



Continuing in this way all of the remaining data chains were progressively added in order to build-up a complete single picture. The resulting hierarchical value map is shown in Figure 47 below. This HVM represents a facsimile of the top team's collective views in a single consolidated picture.

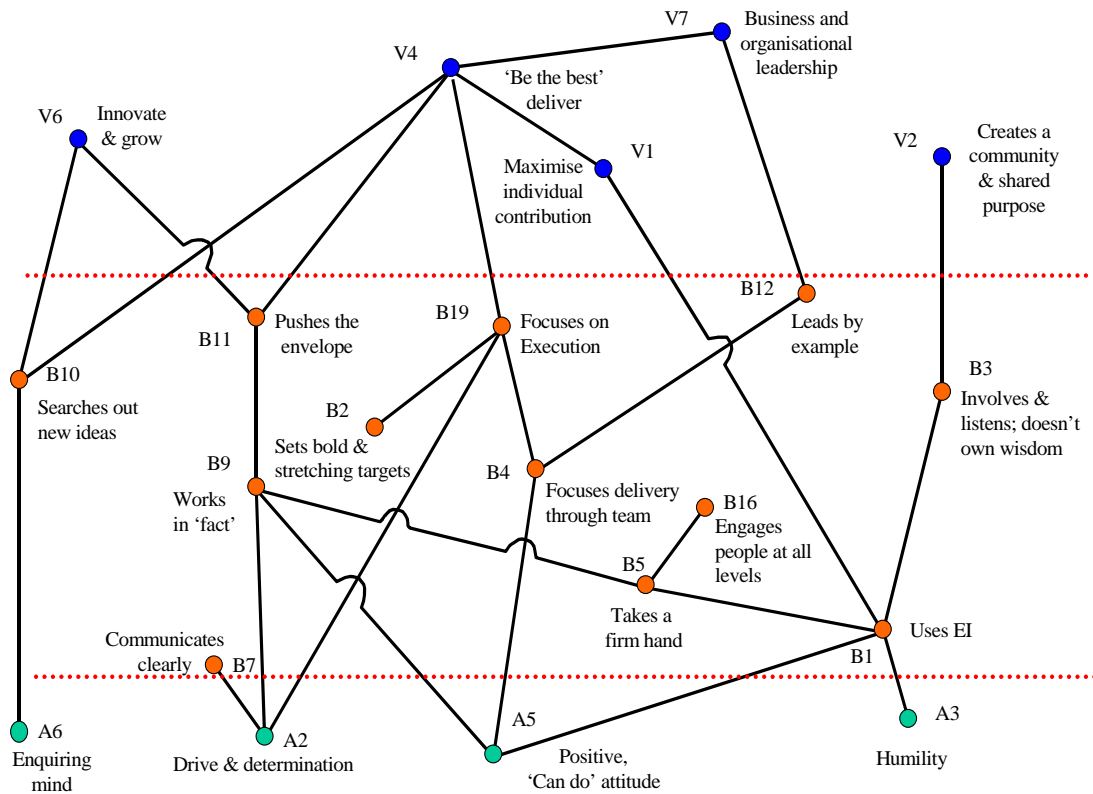


Figure 47: Hierarchical value map of leaders' assessment criteria

7.8.9 Determining the dominant perceptual orientations

Once the hierarchical value map had been constructed, the identification of the dominant perceptual orientations required the identification of ‘bottom to top’ chains. These chains represent potential perceptual orientations. In my map there are 17 unique chains that start at the attitude level and end at the values level, (Figure 47). There is also one chain that starts at the behaviour level.

The two partial chains, that start at the attitude level, but do not reach the value level, A2-B7 and A5-B1-B5-B16, have been ignored as the key focus are the chains that link through to values and the behaviour-value orientation of the respondents.

To more fully understand the strength of the chains within the HVM, and the relative dominance of any given chain, Reynolds and Gutman (1988) recommend that the intra-chain relations be examined. To achieve this each chain within the HVM was listed out along with the details of the number of direct and indirect relations between elements within the chain.

A2 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7

	A2	B9	B11	V4	V7	Row total
A2	0:0	0:3	0:1	0:5	0:4	0:13
B9	0:0	0:0	2:1	0:3	0:3	2:7
B11	0:0	0:0	0:0	1:2	0:1	1:3
V4	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	3:0	3:0
V7	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0
						6:23
						29

Chain relations total

Table 19: A2-V7 chain relations ¹

Table 19 shows the direct and indirect relations linking A2, “Drive and determination”, with V7, “Provide Business & organizational leadership”, (A2-B9-B11-V4-V7). It can be seen by inspection that all elements are linked directly or indirectly to all other elements in the chain. A2, “Drive and determination” has 13 indirect relations but no direct relations with any other element within this particular chain. From inspection of Table 16 on page 134 it can be seen that with four direct relations and 37 indirect relations A2, “Drive and determination”, is one the most significant elements identified by the respondents.

Moving up the A2-V7 chain it can be seen that element B9, “Works with fact; not opinion”, has two direct relations and one indirect relation with B11, “Pushes the envelope”. These results show that these two elements appeared in two respondents' ladders with a direct linkage and a third with an indirect linkage. In this particular

¹ The number to the left of the colon represents the 'direct' relationship links and the number to the right of the colon represents the 'indirect' relationship links.

chain B9 has two direct relations and seven indirect relations. Across all of the data B9 has ten direct relations and 26 indirect relations with other elements, thus B9 is not only an important element within this chain but it is also one of the most dominant behaviours identified in the respondents transcripts, Table 16 on page 134.

B11, “Pushes the envelope”, is the next element in the A2-V7 chain with one direct relation to another element in this chain and three indirect relations. Across all of the data B11 has nine direct relations and 16 indirect relations, Table 16.

V4, “Be the best; Deliver”, has three direct relations and no indirect relations in this chain. Table 16 shows that V4 has 16 direct relations and 52 indirect relations making it the value element with most relations, and hence is the ‘core’ terminal value.

Continuing in this way, for each of the chains in the HVM, all of the dominant perceptual orientations were identified as shown in Table 20 below.

Chain	To:From links	Total number of links
A5 - B1 - B5 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7	12:39	51
A3 - B1 - B5 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7	12:33	45
A5 - B4 - B19 - V4 - V7	5:27	32
A2 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7	6:23	29
A3 - B1 - V1 - V4 - V7	10:17	27
A5 - B9 - B11 - V4 - V7	8:19	27
A3 - B1 - B3 - V2	7:19	26
A5 - B1 - B5 - B9 - B11 - V6	7:19	26
B2 - B19 - V4 - V7	11:14	25
A2 - B19 - V4 - V7	4:2	24
A5 - B1 - B3 - V2	5:14	19
A5 - B4 - B12 - V7	2:14	16
A3 - B1 - B5 - B9 - B11 - V6	9:15	14
A5 - B1 - B5 - B16	4:1	5
A2 - B9 - B11 - V6	3:1	4
A5 - B9 - B11 - V6	5:8	13
A6 - B10 - V4 - V7	6:7	13
A6 - B10 - V6	4:5	9

Table 20: Dominant perceptual orientations

The top 4 dominant pathways identified in Table 20 are represented pictorially in Figure 48 below. These chains represent the top four perceptual orientations in the domain of assessment criteria for leaders as defined by the top team members.

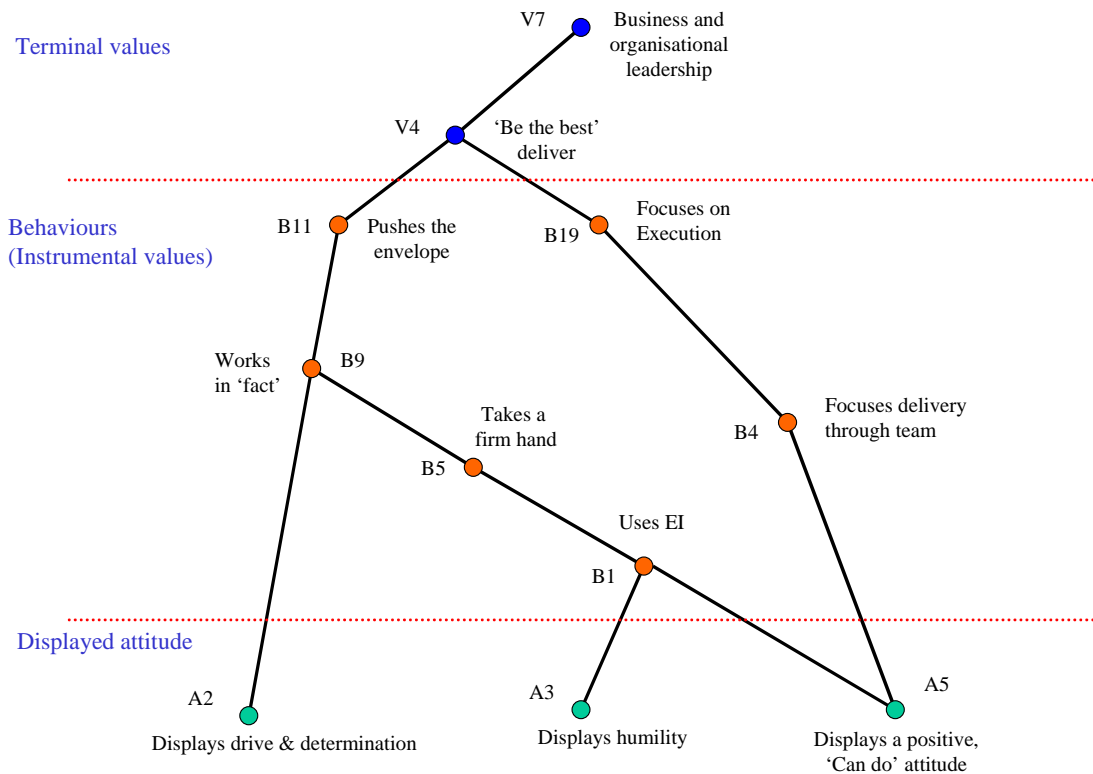


Figure 48: HVM showing the top four dominant perceptual orientations

7.8.10 Mapping to the new competencies

The next step in the analysis was to map the results obtained from this analysis on to the organization's new competencies in order to assess the degree of alignment of responses against the new competencies underpinning the performance management system. This activity was performed by identifying where there was an observed commonality of language and meaning between the behaviour categories and the new competencies, as shown in Table 21 below.

B1 Emotional intelligence	-
B2 Sets bold & stretching targets	<> C5 Set stretching targets to win today and in the future
B3 Involves & listens	<> C1 Listens to others with respect and create an open environment
B4 Shows focus on delivery through team	<> C4 Create a shared agenda
B5 Takes a firm hand	<> C8 Manage performance robustly
B6 Values and uses diversity	<> C6 Value diversity, encourage & leverage people's unique ability
B7 Communicates clearly and effectively	<> C4 Communicates priorities. Think through complexity.
B8 Focusses on customers	<> C9 Puts customers at the centre of everthing that we do
B9 Works with fact	<> C7 Won't accept decisions without clear commercial rationale. Considers costs and benefits.
B10 Searches out new ideas & opportunities	<> C3 Challenges existing thinking and embraces new ideas form everywhere and everyone
B11 Pushes the envelope	<> C3 Challenges existing thinking
B12 Leads by example	<> C5 Acts as a role model
B13 Gives praise and feedback	<> C6 Gives fair, accurate and insightful feedback
B14 Aligns and dovetails outcomes	<> C2 Takes responsibility for creating a shared agenda
B15 Builds a story	<> C3 Create a compelling vision for our part of the business
B16 Engages people at all levels	<> C2 Know when and where to seek help
B17 Develops own position and views	-
B18 Adopts a solution orientation	<> C3 Creates and deliver inspirational solutions
B19 Focuss on execution and delivery	<> C8 Drive for results. Galvanises action. Won't accept late delivery.

Table 21: Behaviour category mapping to the new competencies

In all but two cases it was possible to show a direct mapping between the data categories obtained in my findings and the new competencies.

In order to assess the degree of alignment of the top team members' responses against the new competencies the behaviour categories were mapped on to the new competencies by utilising the commonality mapping shown in Table 21. The results of this category to competency mapping are shown in Figure 49 below. It can be seen from this mapping that two categories, B1 'Uses the full range of emotional intelligence' and B17 'Develops own position and views', do not appear to be present in the new competencies.

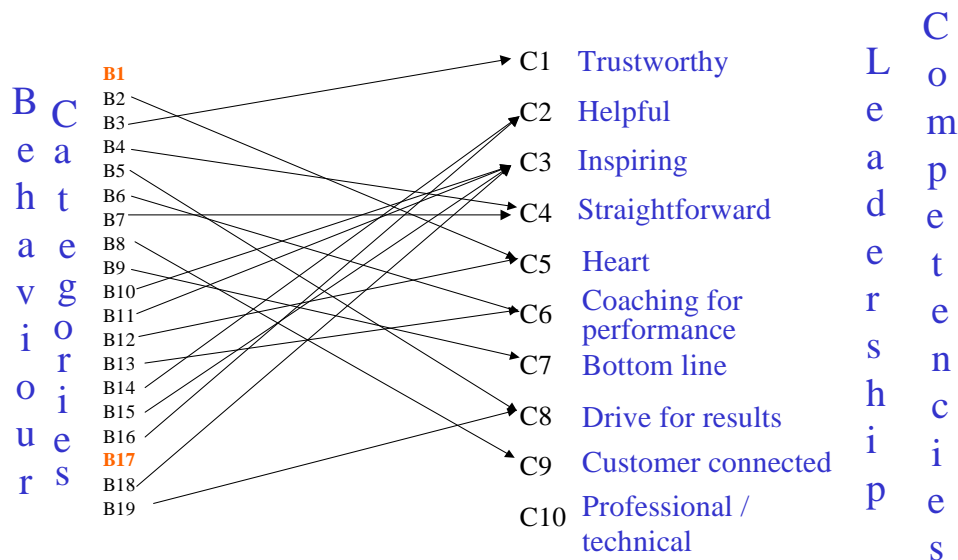


Figure 49: Behaviour categories mapped to the new competencies

7.8.11 Assessing the degree of alignment

As a final step in the analysis the new behaviour-competency data was mapped back on to the respondents' ladders, in order to assess the degree of alignment across the top team members' responses utilising the competency mapping shown in Figure 49.

An example of this mapping exercise is shown in Figure 50 below. This example uses the ladder referenced in Figure 36 on page 132.

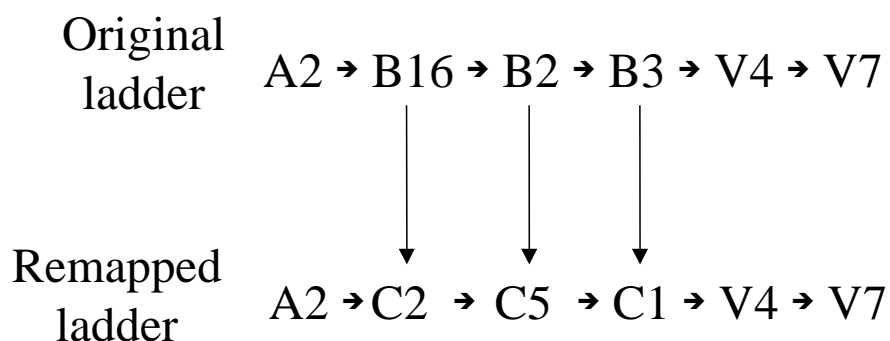


Figure 50: An example of a chain mapped using the new competencies.

Once each of the original ladders was remapped utilising the new competencies a frequency analysis was conducted in order to identify the degree of alignment across

the top team member's responses. Figure 51 below shows the frequency mapping of the new competencies and the two additional categories B1 and B17.

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	B1	B17
2	X			X		X				X	
3	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X

Key 2-6 interviewees, C1-C9 Competencies, B1 and B17 missing categories

Figure 51: A frequency mapping of response against the new competencies

The results of this analysis, represented in Figure 51 above, show that against the new competencies (C1-C9) there is an 80% degree of alignment of responses across the top team.

Against the new competencies and the two additional behaviour categories identified in my analysis (C1 – C9 + B1 and B17), there is a 76% degree of alignment, and finally against the new competencies and B1 alone (C1-C9 + B1), there is an 80% degree of alignment.

7.8.12 Missing competencies

It can be seen the mapping in Figure 49 that two of the categories identified in the research data appear to be missing from the new competencies, B1 and B17. Of these B1, "Uses the full range of emotional intelligence", appears to be a significant omission as Figure 51 shows that it appeared in 4 out of 5 respondents' ladders.

7.9 Project 1 - Discussions and conclusions

7.9.1 Project 1 - Contribution: Implications for theory

In the introduction to this project I identified how the impetus for this study had arisen from the perception of a misalignment between what behaviour was espoused by the top team, the behaviour prescribed in the competencies and the behaviour that was rewarded in practice. It was also perceived that there was a misalignment across the top team, as different members appeared to value and reward different behaviours.

I also identified how there had been a number of important organizational changes recently, including the appointment of a new group CEO and top leadership team, the introduction of a new strategy and the introduction of a new set of corporate values and competencies. Taken together these changes provided a timely opportunity to examine the top team's leadership assessment criteria in use and contrast these to the criteria espoused in the competencies. This intervention also provided the opportunity to identify the degree alignment of these criteria across the top team.

In the section on extant theory informing my research I identified how personal construct theory (PCT) explained that individuals create their own individual reality based on their own experiences, and that shared cognition develops through a series of common encounters and the formation of shared values and beliefs; over a period of time the level of cognitive overlap of team members increases (Langfield-Smith, 1992)

For newly formed teams, such as the organization's top team, PCT would indicate that there would be a relatively low level of cognitive overlap and hence a heterogeneity of views and conceptions of the required leadership behaviours leading to a 'weak' system.

PCT would also propose that without a concerted level of effort, in terms of communication and discussion, it was unlikely that there would be a common understanding or a common language to support the PMS. PCT also proposes that if a new set of competencies is implemented without due regard to helping the assessors and the assessed form a common and agreed understanding of what constituted appropriate behaviour, there would be a level of heterogeneity of views, leading to a degree of ambiguity and misunderstanding which would result in a 'weak' system.

PCT also proposes, conversely, that an increased degree of alignment of views and language aids understanding leading to effective communications and improved performance.

Values theory (Rokeach, 1968; Rokeach, 1973) indicates that at the heart of the search for assessment criteria are the beliefs and values of the top team members. In this context assessment criteria can be seen as simply little more than an extension of the self construct of the leaders of the organization (Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998).

The results of my research show that both the extant theory on personal constructs and values are supported to a greater or lesser extent. My findings exposed three distinct levels within the data. The top two levels, values and competencies, mapped very

closely to Rokeach's means-ends value levels – instrumental and terminal values, (1973). The bottom level identified related to the way in which individuals were perceived by top management in terms of their 'attitude', for example; action orientated confident etc.

My findings showed a high degree of alignment of the conception of the competencies needed, with an 80% level of alignment. However in terms of the required behaviours, in support of the competencies, my findings identified a poor degree of alignment. Reference to Table 14 shows that there 198 unique ways of describing the required behaviours identified in Project 1, these behaviours are the sum of the unique instances of the results achieved from laddering the constructs following the process as detailed on pages 117 to 120.

In addition the analysis of the results produced 58 unique value descriptors and 69 unique attitude descriptors. The individual value descriptors were categorised in to seven terminal values, and the attitude descriptors were allocated to seven categories of attitude. My research findings can therefore be seen to support the assertion in PCT that indicated that as the organization's top team is a newly formed team that there was likely to be a high level of heterogeneity of views and no common language across the domain of leadership assessment criteria.

My findings also show that taking what the respondents say on 'face value' can be misleading. The use of laddering helped 'push' the interviewee beyond the superficial descriptive level (Reynolds and Gutman, 1984) in order to get to a level of granularity and meaning that enabled a robust assessment of the respondents' own meaning to be made and the identification of the core conceptual orientations. In this context these conceptual orientations can be taken to reflect the current level of overlap of the top team's conception of leadership assessment criteria and provides a measure of the degree of alignment.

My findings indicate that the top team have not engaged in an appropriate level of dialogue to generate a sufficiently comprehensive body of shared language to describe the required behaviour supporting the competencies, indicating a lack of a common understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. These differences in cognition are likely to lead to a degree of ambiguity that is likely to be a barrier to fostering a common understanding amongst the leadership team of how their behaviour and their reward are linked.

It is my view that the results of this analysis help to explain the nature of misunderstanding (where many words mean the same thing to different people and the same words mean different things). My findings infer that there is a need for some form of mechanism to help create a coherent and shared understanding of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour.

Finally, PCT posits that people tend to identify information that supports and confirms their constructs. From an analysis of the marks allocated to each element (leader), on each construct it can be seen that this proposition is supported, with the marks allocated against each of the categories of elements, 'good', 'average' and 'poor' (Table 13 on page 130) correlating with a 87% alignment against the original categorisation. My research finding provide evidence to support the proposition in

PCT therefore that constructs are self-reinforcing and confirming once established; once the top team member had made their mind up about someone that they marked them in such a way as to support and confirm their construct.

Summary of theoretical contribution

In summary it can be seen that my findings indicate that simply publishing a list of competencies will not be sufficient to generate an alignment of understanding as it does not address the individual nature of reality. My findings lend support to the assertions in PCT that an individual's personal constructs, their mental models of how they see the world, will tend to lead to heterogeneity of views. It is proposed therefore that extant performance management literature and the functionalist approach to performance management inadequately addresses understanding at the level of the individual. It is proposed that some 'mechanism' is needed to improve this understanding in order to improve the strength of the system and more accurately align extant theory to praxis and individuals' reality.

Finally, it is my assertion that from a methodological perspective the protocol adopted in Project 1 provides a vehicle that can be used to open up the top team's constructs for examination. This protocol can be used to help facilitate a dialogue around what constitutes appropriate behaviour and enable the top team to get a better understanding of their constructs in use. In so doing it will be possible to improve the degree of alignment within the top team, (point A in Figure 12 on page 24), and improve the strength of the system.

7.9.2 Project 1 - Contribution: Implications for practice

With information about the assessment criteria that top team members are using, rather than just espousing, leaders can develop positioning strategies that leverage this knowledge. The HVM that I have produced gives a hierarchical view of the assessment criteria in use and exposes the dominant perceptual orientations linking attitudes, behaviours and values.

The output of my research identified the presence of seven categories of attitude that were referenced as important by the top team. A2, 'Drive and determination', A3 'Humility', A5, 'Positive /upbeat' and A6, 'Enquiring mind' appeared in four out of five responses. A4, 'Self confident' appeared in three responses. A1, 'Self aware' and A7, 'Analytical' appeared in two responses.

A structured analysis using hierarchical value mapping (HVM), and an analysis of the dominant perceptual orientations exposed however that three categories of these were the most important in the group cognitive map, and therefore from a practitioner perspective are the key determinants of success at the attitude level. The three key attitudes are A5, 'Positive / upbeat, 'can do' attitude', A3 'Drive and determination' and finally A2 'Displaying humility'.

My research has shown however that displaying these attitudes in isolation is insufficient to meet the top team's conception of what good looks like and that the displayed attitude needs to be combined with a specific set of behaviours.

19 categories of behaviour were identified from my research of which 17 aligned with the new competencies.

An analysis of the dominant perceptual orientations exposed the fact that just six of these categories were present in the top four dominant perceptual orientations, and that a significant omission from the new competencies was B1 'Uses the full range of emotional intelligence'.

The six dominant categories of behaviour are:

- Uses the full range of emotional intelligence.
- Focuses delivery through the team.
- Takes a firm hand.
- Works in fact, not opinion.
- Pushes the envelope.
- Focuses on execution and delivery.

In my view B1 should be added in to the new competencies because not only was it one of the most important behaviour categories in my original mapping (page 134), with 54 links to and from other elements, but it appeared in four out of five top team member's responses.

When the categories were mapped to the new competencies a frequency analysis of the top team responses showed that all of the new competencies were seen as important elements in the domain of assessment criteria. C1, Trustworthy, and C4, Straightforward, appeared in all five top team member's responses. C2, Helpful, C3, Inspiring, C5, Heart, C6, Coaching for performance, C7, Bottom line and C8, Drive for results, appeared in four out of five responses and C9, Customer connected, was present in two out of five responses.

At the top level seven categories were identified in the research data; these categories related to 'end states' or in Rokeach's terminology (1973) 'Terminal values'.

An analysis of the frequency of these responses showed that V6, 'Innovate and grow' was an important category as it appeared in all five respondents data. V1, 'Maximise individual contribution' and V4, 'Be the best, deliver' were also important, as they were present in four out of five responses. V2, 'Create a community and shared purpose', V5, 'Deliver for customers' and V7, 'Provide business and organizational leadership' appeared in three out of five responses and finally V3, 'Teamwork' appearing in just two out of five responses.

Further analysis of the dominant perceptual orientations however showed that just two terminal values provided the key focus within the group hierarchical map that considered both frequency and weighting, these were:

- Be the best; deliver.
- Provide business and organizational leadership.

The findings support Langer's (1989) view that the assessment process is often unconscious and the assessment criteria in use are largely unknown to the assessor

(Senge, 1990: 15). The use of repertory grid helped to expose data that people did not consciously know about their decision criteria in use. A frequent comment at the end of the interview sessions was "I told you things that I did not know". The findings therefore can be seen to provide support for Argyris's (1986) assertion that very often an individual's theory in use is different from their theory espoused.

By exposing these personal constructs in use, these mental models, it is possible for both the assessor and the assessed to form an agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and therefore improve the degree of alignment and the strength of the performance management system.

From a practitioner perspective it seems therefore that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the implementation and application of competencies in order to achieve a common and agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour than has occurred so far.

On a final note my findings, on page 130, can also be seen to support the assertion in PCT that once formed, constructs are self-reinforcing. The implication of this finding for leaders within the organization is that if they want to be seen as successful they will have to pay careful attention to how they are initially perceived as once constructs are formed they are difficult to change.

Summary of practitioner contribution

In summary it is my view that Project 1 has made a practitioner contribution from a number of perspectives. I have been able to:

- Identify for the top team their assessment criteria in use.
- Show the degree of alignment across the top team of what competencies are deemed appropriate.
- Identify for leaders the top team's assessment criteria in use so that they can model the behaviour and attitudes.
- Show that two competencies, identified by the top team as important, appear to be missing from the new competencies.
- Show that the way in which the description of how the espoused competencies should be enacted differs across the top team and as such I have demonstrated that even if the top team espouse the need for the same competencies that they will be likely to reward different behaviours against those competencies thus leading to a level of confusion and ambiguity amongst the leadership team.
- Expose the top team to the fact that much of the assessment process is unconscious so that they can try to consciously bear this in mind when assessing the performance of leaders.
- Demonstrate the need for a greater level of dialogue between the top team members themselves and between the top team and the wider leadership community, to create an improved degree of alignment of understanding of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour.

7.9.3 Project 1 - Methodological contribution

Throughout this research paper I have identified that the key purpose of my research was to obtain an accurate understanding of the top team's conceptions of the assessment criteria for leadership team member's performance. My aim in exposing these conceptions has been to expose the individual constructs and to create a top team cognitive map that not only exposes the assessment criteria but also their relative importance and hierarchical positioning.

In conducting my research these requirements posed two specific problems; firstly from a validity perspective it was important to identify a research methodology that exposed the real 'truth' of the criteria in use in the assessment process, as potentially distinct from the top team's espoused views. And secondly it appeared, from an analysis of the literature on management competencies, repertory grid and personal construct theory, that there was no suitable methodology for producing a group cognitive map.

Much of the traditional qualitative research methods have tended to focus on 'frequency count' type analysis (Hill, 1995), but as the extant theory on values shows there is an hierarchy of importance that people apply when making decisions and a simple frequency count does not expose the relative importance or positioning of particular elements, nor does it provide a view of the dominant perceptual orientations.

To address these challenges I adopted a research protocol that combined triadic elicitation techniques, from Kelly's (1955) repertory grid methodology, with in-depth probing using laddering (Baker, 2002) in order to produce the data to create a top team hierarchical value map (Reynolds and Gutman, 1984).

Repertory grid methodology itself is a very flexible multi-functional technique that can be used in many different ways to both obtain and to interrogate data (Stewart and Mayes, 2002). It has many advantages, not least of which is the ability to uncover interviewees' unconscious understanding of complex issues.

From my perspective however there are also limitations with the use of repertory grid in that the data obtained only captures the top level constructs and can leave the researcher with a relatively superficial level of understanding, such that they have to assign much of the meaning of the constructs provided. There is a possibility therefore that solely using repertory grid can leave the researcher open to having to assign their own interpretation, thus giving a potential opportunity for a loss of validity. The second problem with repertory grid is that even if a 'full grid' (Fransella and Bannister, 1977) is performed it is not possible to combine individual grids to create a group cognitive map (Goffin, 2002).

To overcome the first of these problems I adopted a detailed probing technique using laddering that 'pushed' the respondents to open up and provide a greater level of detail and granularity (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988).

Adopting this perspective and research approach recognises the subjective nature of reality, and hence individuals' belief systems, as was identified earlier in Chapter Two.

It is my belief that, through the use of laddering, to identify the 19 categories of behaviours and 198 descriptors of behaviours, I have shown that repertory grid construct, elicitation alone provides data at a superficial level and encourages the researchers interpretation, thus jeopardising content validity. Using laddering conversely, with its in-depth probing of constructs, helps define the respondents' own meaning and helps eliminate semantic ambiguity. Laddering also provides a level of granularity and understanding that helps expose the lack of a common language and the degree of alignment across the top team.

To address the problem of not being able to combine individual maps or grids I borrowed a technique from consumer marketing (Reynolds and Gutman, 1984), based on 'means end' theory, which analyses not only the presence of a given element but also its relative importance in relation to other elements. Taking this approach allowed me to produce a map of the domain of the top team's leadership assessment criteria. This hierarchical value map represents a synthesis of the views and values and provides a facsimile of the top team's cognitive map.

As noted previously, values occur in a hierarchy of importance to the individual (Rokeach, 1968) therefore it is important to understand not only what values are important to the top team, but their relative placement and importance against the other criteria within their hierarchy of assessment criteria. The HVM, and the analysis of dominant perceptual orientations, helps to show the hierarchical nature of this structure through the mapping of the implications matrix to expose the dominant perceptual orientations that would not have been shown by a simple frequency count.

Summary of methodological contribution

HVM is a useful tool for mapping group cognition and identifying dominant perceptual orientations whilst overcoming some of the limitations of repertory grid, with its inability to produce a group map. The HVM, which shows the dominant attitudes, behaviours and values all on one map along with their linkages, quickly paints a picture of all of the elements that go to make up the top team's domain of leadership assessment criteria.

The literature on strategy and culture change talks about the "recipe" (Johnson and Scholes, 1989: 40), "the values of actors within the organization", but does not give any advice on the tools or techniques for analysing this recipe. My protocol addresses this issue by allowing the identification of what top team members hold as important so that these can be compared and contrasted against the values and competencies.

From a practitioner perspective this protocol can also be seen to be helpful in that it can be used as an intervention tool that helps the top team, or any other management team, to identify their own mental models, their shared values and constructs and the degree of alignment across the team. In addition I propose that this research protocol can be used to help the top team 'see' their theory in use and in so doing to help them make their assessment criteria known and visible to themselves and others.

In essence it can be seen that my protocol provides a vehicle to facilitate dialogue around what constitutes appropriate behaviour. The protocol provides a mechanism to help the top team explore their assessment criteria in use and it also enables leaders to

identify what behaviours they need to display in order to satisfy the assessment criteria of the top team.

With the points above in mind I have been careful throughout the documentation of this research activity to detail my research protocol to a sufficient level of granularity that will allow fellow researchers to adopt my research protocol in order to identify dominant perceptual orientations in other management teams.

This protocol has proved to be particularly appropriate for my research purpose; the combination of different techniques has helped facilitate my research aims and overcomes the limitation of the individual techniques by themselves. I would propose that my protocol makes a methodological contribution to the study of individual and group cognition.

7.10 How my Project 1 research could have been improved

One of the major problems that I experienced in the early stages of my research was the ability to get time in the top team members' diaries, they are clearly very busy people and are quite nervous about being questioned and asked to divulge their inner thoughts. Whilst I had support for my research project from a number of the human resource directors I believe that it would have been easier to gain access to the top team if I had more closely aligned my research with the corporate values and competencies work that was underway. In one interview the respondent refused to continue with the questioning and the interview was abandoned. This was disappointing and may have been prevented if I could have engaged the group CEO as the formal sponsor for my research.

In all of the interviews none of my respondents would give me a full list of the actual names of the elements but elected to use pseudonyms. In most cases this was not a problem, however with one particular top team member I had to accept that we would conduct the interview over two separate thirty-minute sessions. When we reconvened the top team member could not remember who some of the pseudonyms were and we had to backtrack over some of his comments from the first interview so that he could remember who the elements were and which pseudonym related to which element. Ideally it would have been better to complete this interview in one sixty minute session, however as this was not possible, with hindsight, it would have been useful for the top team member to have made a record for himself in the first interview clarifying which pseudonyms represented which element.

Establishing a 'safe' environment is critical to the success of the data elicitation exercise and a key enabler in this process is the ability to build rapport with the respondent. Where I knew the top team member the interviews went pretty smoothly, where I did not know them some of the interviews were more problematic and more difficult to manage. This was not something that I encountered in any of the initial pilot interviews. I would attribute this to the fact that I had chosen people for the pilot sessions that I knew pretty well which made it easy to establish a good level of rapport and to win their confidence. If I was starting this research exercise again I would choose some respondents for my pilot interviews that I knew well and also some that I did not know so well so that I could increase the chances of meeting 'difficult' candidates. My observation is that conducting a sufficient number of pilot

interviews was key to ensuring that as a new researcher I got sufficient practice, as this practice was crucial to being able to perfect my interview technique and to develop ways of overcoming objections.

The triadic elicitation process is quite complex with a number of things happening at the same time. To help the process it was useful to have a preformatted data capture sheet with sections aligned with the interview structure. I quickly realised however that the 'why' questions was very important and that this was something that I had missed off of my data capture form. Adding a section to the capture template asking the why question three times would have been very useful.

I deliberately chose not to start the data analysis until I had conducted most of the interviews, as I did not want to colour my views or influence my impartiality. However when I did finally listen to the interview recordings it was possible to hear areas where my technique worked very well and some areas where it worked less well. Specific areas for improvement were the use of silence, the use of reframing of questions when the respondent got blocked, and also the observation that sometimes it was very easy to be perceived as displaying some form of approval or disapproval through either verbal or non-verbal cues.

Listening to the recordings provided very useful feedback and helped me identify what to do to ensure that I was perceived as an interested yet neutral recorder of information. As this was the first time that I had conducted qualitative research interviews I believe that I would have benefited from listening to the interview recordings earlier so that I could have honed my technique earlier. I could have done this without jeopardising my epistemic reflexivity, objectivity or the reliability of the data capture exercise by listening to the pilot interview recordings.

After the first few interviews it became clear that some of my respondents had difficulty in identifying two elements for each of the three categories, *good*, *average* and *poor*, and this took up valuable interview time. It transpired that a more effective use of the interview time could be made by asking the respondents to identify the elements for discussion in advance. It was important however to balance this need against giving the interviewee too much prior notice and encouraging them to come with pre-prepared answers. It was important to set expectations about the need to compare and contrast elements whilst at the same time not letting them know the full details of how the interview was to be conducted and so I did not let them know that I would be using a pre-determined matrix for the presentation of the elements. If I were conducting this exercise again I would consider including an exemplar of a construct elicitation exercise in my explanatory letter.

The repertory grid process can be used in many different ways and the data can also be analysed in many ways. For the researcher new to repertory grid it is important to understand that this is an important consideration in being able to robustly defend their position and their chosen use of the technique against challenges from people who are not necessarily very well informed about the range of extractive and reflective modes of application of the technique and the range of content analysis options available.

---- End of Project 1 ----

Chapter Eight - Project 2

Project 2 abstract

Extant theory identifies how the effective alignment of the individual components of a performance management system leads to effective performance at the level of the individual, the process and the organization.

In the first of three linked research projects it was found that there was a high degree of alignment among the members of the organization's top team as to the leadership competencies needed, but that two competencies identified by the top team were missing from the organization's competencies. Project 1 also identified that there was no common and agreed understanding of what behaviours supported the required competencies and that the behaviours that were identified by the top team as being 'appropriate' were different, and in addition to those defined in the organization's new leadership competencies

The primary aims of this second empirical study were firstly to test the degree of alignment across the organizations Global Services Leadership Team (GSLT) against the constructs of the top team as to what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour; secondly, to test the degree of alignment of how the behaviours defined by the top team were seen to support the organization's new leadership competencies, and finally, by implication to test the degree to which the competency labels provided a self-explanatory sense of the meaning of each of the competencies.

To undertake this analysis a short-list of 50 behaviours from Project 1 was used in an electronic web based survey questionnaire that was distributed to the Global Services Leadership Team (GSLT).

The findings show a good degree of alignment of the GSLT's views with the top team's construct of appropriate behaviour. Conversely however the findings show a poor degree of alignment of understanding of how the behaviours support the new competencies and a degree of ambiguity within and between competencies. These findings lend support to the conclusions from Project 1 that firstly, there is currently no common and agreed understanding of the behaviours that go to support the competencies, and secondly, that two competencies are missing.

My findings also provide support for the assertion in extant literature on the importance of providing competency labels that provide a self-explanatory 'sense' of the meaning of each competency. The results identified a degree of ambiguity within and between competencies.

The findings from this second study identify the importance of considering the subjective nature of reality and the need to align individuals' personal constructs in the pursuit of fostering an aligned understanding of desired behaviour. The observation is made however that the subjective nature of reality is generally not something that is considered in the competency literature.

This intervention can be seen to have provided the stimulus for the organization to 'stop and think' - these findings will be shared with key stakeholders in Project 3.

8.0 Project 2 introduction

In this first introductory section I:

- Identify the motivation for this research study.
- Outline the purpose and aims of this study.
- Provide a summary of the findings from Project 1.
- Describe the research context and scope of this study.

8.1 Motivation for this study

“Shared beliefs and values are an integral component of an organization’s cultural identity and are a necessary prerequisite for collective functioning” (Louis, 1980). In this context culture represents shared values, shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sense-making (Morgan, 1986). Where these shared values represent “enduring beliefs that specific behaviour is personally or socially preferable” (Howard and Woodside, 1984: 4; Rokeach, 1968).

A key construct underpinning this theme is that one of the key challenges facing organizations is the need to effectively link the management of human resources to the business strategy (Boam and Sparrow, 1992: 5). A competency-based approach aims to make this linkage explicit by eliciting the top team’s expectations of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and aligning these expectations with the target population’s understanding (Feltham, 1992: 90).

The coherence of a group requires the development of a shared understanding, a shared conceptual map (McCaskey, 1972). For an organization to function effectively individuals must share a set of domain-specific beliefs, that is a collective map (Langfield-Smith, 1992: 353). These collective beliefs act as a set of assumptions and as a frame of reference for guiding individual and group behaviour (Armstrong and Eden, 1979). “An examination of the extent to which beliefs and values are shared by members within an organization can therefore be seen to help create an understanding of the subsequent strengths and weaknesses that this sharing lends to organizational functioning” (Langfield-Smith, 1992: 353).

It is important to consider the views of the top team as they *cast a shadow in to the organization* (Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998). As such “organizational processes, structures and values are simply little more than an extensions of the self construct of the leaders of the organization - top team influence pervades the organization and sets the tone for the rest of the organization” (Korac-Kakabadse et al, 1998).

The original motivation for this research came from my perception that there was a misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused by the top team, the behaviour prescribed in the competencies and the behaviour that was rewarded in practice by the top team. I also perceived that different members of the top team valued and rewarded different behaviour.

8.2 Research purpose and aims

This is the second in a series of three linked research projects in a single organization study investigating the theoretical and practical implications of the decision to utilise a set of competencies to assess and reward leadership behaviour.

In this second empirical study I utilise the findings from Project 1 to test the degree of alignment across the organizations Global Services Leadership Team (GSLT) against the constructs of the top team as to what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour. I also test the degree of how the top team's constructs of appropriate behaviour are seen to support the organization's new competencies, and by implication to test the degree to which the competency labels provide a self-explanatory sense of the meaning of each of the competencies.

In this context Project 2 will investigate the strength of the model in Figure 24 on page 75. Specifically it will investigate the strength of the A-B relationship, the strength of the B-C relationship, and the strength of the internal alignment of the competencies, point B.

8.3 Project 1 findings

The main findings from Project 1 are shown below:

- There is a good degree of alignment across the top team on the competencies needed by the organization (80% alignment).
- There is a high degree of alignment between the top team's expectations and the new competencies with 17 of the 19 categories identified in Project 1 mapping directly on to the new competencies (see Figure 18 on page 44).
- Two competencies, identified by the top team as important, appear to be missing from the new competencies. This finding indicates that there is a need to review the new competencies in order to ensure that they capture the full range of competencies desired and expected by the top team.
- Even though the top team espouses the need for the same competencies they will be likely to reward different behaviours against these competencies, leading to a level of confusion and ambiguity amongst those being assessed. The findings indicate that further work is needed to align the understanding across the top team of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in support of the new competencies.
- The top team's decision process contains 'criteria' that appear to be consciously 'unknown'. The findings indicate that more analysis is needed to understand the implications of this finding on the organization's ability to create a strong system.
- There is a need for mechanisms to create an improved degree of alignment and understanding of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour both within the top team and the GSLT.

Appendix G contains a full list of the behaviours that were identified by the top team in Project 1.

The findings from Project 1 can be seen to start to explain the perceived disconnect between the espoused competencies and the behaviour that gets rewarded. The findings also provide support for the view that there is currently a misalignment, and no common agreement of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour.

8.4 Research context and scope

The findings from Project 1 had created a level of interest and concern in the sponsoring organization about the divergence of views and understanding at a level of granularity. These findings, along with direct feedback from the leadership team as to the lack of understanding of what good (behaviour) looks like, had stimulated the organization to create a programme of activity to drive this understanding and to facilitate continuous leadership change and the alignment of leadership behaviour.

This level of interest and the timing of Project 2 therefore became prescient as my sponsor proposed that the findings from Project 2 would be used as an input and support to the organization's leadership change programme.

The intent in Project 2 was to directly engage with the Global Service Leadership Team (GSLT) to generate an assessment of the degree of aligned understanding between the top team and the GSLT of expected leadership behaviour. This was an important undertaking because this team is a key influencer group that acts role models of behaviour for the wider management community. It is vitally important therefore for there to be a good degree of alignment and consensus across this team as they are responsible for interpreting and communicating the top team's expectations to lower level managers (Schermerhorn, 1986). If the members of this team agree on the behaviours required they are likely to behave that way themselves and communicate this agreement to the wider management community (Bourgeois, 1980). As a result the organization will function more effectively (Finegan, 1994: 353).

It was also envisaged that by engaging directly with the GSLT that the process of discussion and communication itself would help to create an aligned understanding (King et al, 2001: 97).

The scope of this research project is the 301 members of the GSLT spread across the globe.

The GSLT comprises the:

- CEO and Presidents.
- Vice Presidents.
- Country leadership teams.
- Major programme executives.
- Management team members with 100+ staff.

8.5 Project 2 research questions

- What is the degree of alignment of the GSLT's views with the top team's constructs of appropriate behaviour?
- How are the behaviours defined by the top team seen to support the organization's new leadership competencies?

8.5.1 Project 2 research premises

The approach adopted in Project 2 is based on three premises:

- Firstly, that each of the behaviours identified by the top team in Project 1 are valid expectations of leadership behaviour.
- Secondly, that these expectations will influence the performance assessments of the GSLT.
- Thirdly, that each behaviour needs to be uniquely assigned to just one competency in order to avoid ambiguity.

8.6 Method and methodological considerations

In this section I:

- Outline the methodological considerations underpinning this research.
- Identify the considerations made in respect of utilising a survey as part of the research protocol.
- Present a consideration of the potential disadvantages of surveys.
- Examine the issues considered in designing the survey questionnaire.
- Detail the process followed to produce a short-list of behaviours for the questionnaire and the process used to validate that the full list of Project 1 behaviours were adequately represented.
- Summarise the steps taken to form a sample for the survey.
- Detail the work that was done in the piloting stage.
- Identify the steps that I took to maximise the response rate and what was involved in the administration of the survey questionnaire.

Good research depends on the careful planning and execution of the study and the choice of an appropriate research protocol (Pallant, 2001). This choice of protocol includes rational considerations such as the likelihood of producing valid and reliable data and the practical constraints of time and cost. Other factors that I considered included my own personal preference and a consideration of the likely effect of a given method on the participants (Brown, 1992).

A number of factors influenced my choice of protocol however at its most fundamental level the key driver behind the final decision was the ability to be able to provide answers to the research questions (Bouma and Atkinson, 1999).

Project 2 was principally concerned with quantification of the degree of alignment of the views of the GSLT with those of the top team of how the Project 1 behaviours were seen to support the new competencies. To achieve this understanding, and to ensure that the results were generalisable across the whole community under study, it was important to get views from as wide an audience as possible in order to capture as many of the global cultural and functional influences as possible.

To address the issue created by the global distribution of the GSLT and the time pressures mentioned above, the case for an electronic self-administered survey questionnaire was strong (Yin, 1994: 6). My final solution utilised an electronic web based questionnaire that provided a quick and efficient method for capturing a wide range of views from across the global leadership team (Neumann, 2000: 271).

8.6.1 Survey design considerations

In choosing to use an electronic survey for Project 2 I needed to consider a number of factors. Firstly the level of detail and the volume of data obtained in Project 1 was significant and it was important therefore at this stage to start to ‘funnel down’ the data to a manageable and practical number of behaviours that could be used in the survey questionnaire. Secondly, the need to reach as wide an audience as possible meant that, due to time and cost considerations, the research tool would have to be self-administered. Thirdly, as Project 2 was principally a quantitative study there was a need to be able to use computer aided analysis tools.

8.6.2 Potential disadvantages of survey questionnaires

In choosing to use a survey questionnaire in the research protocol it was important to be aware that they have a number of potential disadvantages and that their success is directly related to the level of up-front investment of time and effort in the design stage (Oppenheim, 1996). Because of the time pressures, and the narrow window of opportunity for the survey, a lack of preparation was particularly high risk as there would be no time or ability to get a ‘second chance’ to get it right. Because of this careful consideration was given in the design stage to any item that would help minimise the potential disadvantages of using a survey.

Questionnaire response rates can be notoriously low (Oppenheim, 1996: 249). One of the key reasons for this is when questionnaires are too long tedium sets in and respondents abandon the questionnaire part way through (Bryman and Cramer, 2003: 43). Careful note was taken in the pilot stage to test what the pilot respondents believed was an acceptable overall length for the survey, and what an appropriate number of questions was (see the section on piloting on page 168).

In choosing to use a web based questionnaire there were a number of potential ‘hidden hazards’, that are particular to this approach and that have the potential to affect the level of validity, reliability and response rate. These hazards include respondents opting out, skimming, clipping and reshuffling (Morrel-Samuels, 2003).

Opting out affects web response rates which can be as much as 80% lower than print surveys due to difficulties accessing the survey, the inability to move backwards through the questions, difficulty completing an interrupted survey, and fears about

confidentiality (Morrel-Samuels, 2003).

The completion of a web based survey necessitates the use of a computer and where a survey is offered in both print and web form the web survey will tend to skim higher-level respondents off of the top while lower-level employees stay with paper. Web surveys also tend to elicit clipped responses that artificially compress the range between high and low scores, and they almost always reshuffle rankings of scores (Morrel-Samuels, 2003). That is when the average response for each question is computed from highest to lowest the ranking between paper and web will be different. This is a serious issue because the correlations between questions are disrupted.

Despite these risks well designed web surveys can be cheaper, easier to use, faster, better received by participants, and actually more accurate than its paper equivalent (Morrel-Samuels, 2003). A careful consideration of the questionnaire design and administration can go a long way towards addressing these issues. The survey respondents in Project 2 were all computer literate leaders with their own personal computers so skimming was not something that would affect the responses. However the ease of use of the questionnaire interface and its level of intuitiveness are key determinants of the level of response, and therefore the interface needed to be thoroughly piloted and all poor usability issues addressed.

Please select just one box on the right hand side that best represents your view for each item

	Trustworthy	Helpful	Inspiring	Straightforward	Heart	Coaching for Performance	Bottom Line	Drive for Results	Customer connected	Other	Not applicable
BEHAVIORS											
No 1: Articulates goals clearly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 2: Focuses on cost and revenue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 3: Puts the customer first	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 4: Searches out new ideas and opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 5: Tries a lot and sees what works	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 6: Sets clear goals and expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 7: Seeks opinions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 8: Values & uses diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 9: Celebrates success	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 10: Focuses on execution and delivery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 11: Keeps people informed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 12: Communicates clearly and effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 13: Challenges the status quo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Continue to next section ... Progress

Figure 52: Survey questionnaire interface

Clipping and reshuffling were addressed by not using ranking scales but instead presenting the respondent with a list of behaviours, and asking them to select from a list of options, as shown in Figure 52 above. The issue of accuracy and response rates was improved by making it easy for the respondent to complete the questionnaire. Clearly visible categories for 'Other' and 'Not Applicable' were added along with a lockout feature (Morrel-Samuels, 2003). This lockout feature required participants to provide an answer before allowing them to move on thus ensuring that all fields were populated. Whilst this had the potential disadvantage in that it might have affected the response rate, it was decided that on balance that this was a risk that was worth taking as it was important to ensure that responses to each of the questions were obtained.

The length of each page of the questionnaire was adjusted so that respondents were able to view an entire page of the survey without having to scroll down, and a progress bar was added during the pilot phase.

By understanding the potential problems with surveys, and web surveys in particular, it was possible to address these issues in the detailed design phase and during the pilot phase.

8.6.3 Questionnaire design

In constructing the questionnaire there were two basic options in the choice of questions, *open* or *closed*. Open, or free-response, questions allow the respondents to answer in any way that they like and their chief advantage can be seen to be the freedom that it gives to respondents (Oppenheim, 1996: 112).

Closed questions, conversely, ask the respondent to choose from a range of provided answers. Closed questions are easier and quicker to answer, they require no writing and quantification is straight forward (Oppenheim, 1996: 114). They also have the specific advantage that they can be pre-coded and the responses can be easily input to a computer for analysis saving both time and money (Newell, 1995: 101).

The two tables below summarise the advantages and disadvantages of using the two types of questions.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Freedom & spontaneity of answers	Time-consuming
Opportunity to probe	In interviews: costly of interviewer time
Useful for testing hypotheses about ideas or awareness	Coding: very costly and slow to process, and may be unreliable
	Demand more effort from respondents

Table 22: Open questions: Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
Require little time	Loss of spontaneous responses
No extended writing	Bias in answer categories
Low costs	Some times too crude
Easy to process	May irritate respondents
Make group comparisons easy	
Useful for testing specific propositions	

Table 23: Closed questions: Advantages and disadvantages
(Adapted from Oppenheim 1996: 115)

Closed questions are particularly advantageous in studies using questionnaires as they are less time consuming for the respondent to complete (Neumann, 2000). It is relatively simple for respondents to tick pre-coded categories, whereas answers which are unrestricted require more thought and consideration (Newell, 1995).

As referenced in the chapter on methodological considerations, page 160, the type of study and research purpose influences the choice of research protocol. Similarly the choice of open or closed questions is also influenced by the type of study (Newell, 1995: 103). Closed questions should be used where alternative replies are known, are limited in number and are clear-cut (Stacey, 1969 in Newell 1995: 103), and where a self-completion questionnaire is being used.

Given that Project 2 was utilising data from Project 1 it was appropriate to use this data to produce a set of closed questions. The basis for the questionnaire was a short-list of 50 behaviours identified in Project 1 as being examples of behaviours that the top team expects to see and that support their definition of appropriate leadership behaviour. The length of this list was sufficiently succinct as to be effective in a survey (Oppenheim, 1996) (see Appendix H for the final list of the 50 behaviours used in the questionnaire).

8.6.4 Questionnaire structure

The questionnaire was structured as shown in Figure 53 below, the full questionnaire is included at appendix L on page 287.

- Section 1:** Introductory paragraph.
- Section 2:** 50 behaviours from Project 1.
- Section 3:** Demographic questions.
- Section 4:** Thank you note and confidentiality statement.

Figure 53: Questionnaire Structure

Section one contained an introductory paragraph that gave clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. In section two respondents were asked to read a

statement and then select a single category that, in their view, provided the ‘best fit’ for the particular behaviour (Figure 52).

Section three was used to capture personal demographic data and to provide the respondents with the opportunity to enter their email address so that they could be contacted for follow-up discussions

Finally, in section four, at the end of the questionnaire, a note of thanks expressing appreciation for their response was included (Neumann, 2000: 109).

The quality of the overall presentation of the questionnaire, its conciseness and the attractiveness of the design were all important aspects in ensuring a high completion rate (Gill and Johnson, 1997: 89). It was important that the layout was pleasing, that the web technology worked in a seamless way, and that the questions were easy to understand and overall it was important that the questionnaire did not appear too lengthy in order to maintain the respondents' interest (Newell, 1995). The final appearance of the questionnaire was important as this has a significant influence on whether the questionnaire was completed or not (Gilbert, 1993: 109).

Careful attention to detail was maintained in the design stage to address the common disadvantages of using the survey method as detailed above. Further enhancements and adjustments were made as a direct result of the pilot feedback.

8.6.5 Selection of behaviours

Project 1 provided a list of 198 data elements that represented the top team's views of what constituted appropriate leadership behaviour. The aim of Project 2 was to use these behaviours to test the degree of alignment of the GSLT's views with the top team's constructs, and to test the degree of alignment across the GSLT of how these behaviours were seen to support the new competencies

A number of practical considerations needed to be addressed to make this exercise manageable and to improve the expected response rate. The initial pilot work showed that the survey was too long and that the full list of indicators needed to be shortened. (Oppenheim, 1996; Neumann, 2000)

The initial list was reduced through a process of iteration and review to produce a list of 121 behaviours, however further pilot work showed that this was still too long and the list was reduced to 90 behaviours. In later stages of the pilot work this list was subsequently reduced further as it was felt by the pilot team and by my sponsor that unless the questionnaire was shortened further that there was a serious risk that the response rate would be very low. After further discussions it was decided to limit the number of behaviours to 50, which enabled the respondents to complete the whole questionnaire in less than fifteen minutes so that they did not lose interest part way through and give up (Newell, 1995)

Two examples of how this reduction process was conducted are shown in Table 24 and Table 25, for category B2, “Sets bold and stretching targets” and category B6, “Values and uses diversity”:

B2 Sets bold and stretching targets	
1	Sets and agree targets
2	Sets BHAG's (Big hairy audacious goals)
3	Sets bold targets
4	Sets clear goals and expectations
5	Sets stretching targets
Indicators used	
4	Sets clear goals and expectations
5	Sets stretching targets
Indicators not used	
1	Sets and agree targets
2	Sets BHAG's (Big hairy audacious goals)
3	Sets bold targets

Table 24: Selection of behaviours – category B2

On first sight each of these behaviours in the top section of Table 24 are all unique, i.e. the words are different in each case. Through a process of review, consideration and iteration it was possible to reduce this list of 5 indicators down to 2 whilst still providing a good representation of the original meaning.

From the initial list of 5 indicators number 4 and 5 were chosen to represent the top team's statements. "Sets clear goals and expectations" was aligned with "Sets and agrees targets" whilst "Sets stretching targets" was aligned with both "Sets BHAGs" and "Sets bold targets". In all cases the original words and language used by the top team were retained and it can be seen that the two behaviours selected represent the original *sense* of all of the original behaviours in this category.

B6 Values and uses diversity	
1	Looks for diversity
2	Recognises people for who they are, Not just what they do
3	Recruits for diversity
4	Recruits form different backgrounds
5	Sees and values differences
6	Shows understanding of and for others
7	Values and uses diversity
Indicators used	
2	Recognises people for who they are, Not just what they do
7	Values and uses diversity
Indicators not used	
1	Looks for diversity
3	Recruits for diversity
4	Recruits from different backgrounds
5	Sees and values differences

Table 25: Selection of behaviours – category B6

From the initial list of 7 indicators in B6 (Table 25) numbers 2 and 7 were chosen to represent the top team's statements. "Recognises people for who they are, not just what they do" was aligned with "Shows understanding of and for others". "Values and uses diversity" was aligned with "Looks for diversity", "Recruits for diversity",

"Recruits from different backgrounds" and "Sees and values differences" - again in both cases it can be seen that the original sense has been maintained.

The most important part of any research survey questionnaire is the development of the questions (Newell, 1995: 94; Gilbert, 1993). And whilst the wording of the questions was lifted directly from the language of Project 1 each of the questions was checked, within the pilot stage, to make sure that they were understandable.

The final list of 50 behaviours was reviewed by the pilot team and the research sponsor to ensure that it provided a true reflection of the original list, and that it retained the original sense of all of the behaviours.

The constraint on the number of how many behaviours could be included was a frustration to me, however the key issue under investigation was to understand how the behaviours were seen to support the competencies, the degree of alignment of these views across the GSLT, and to understand to what extent the competency labels are self-explanatory in terms of the competency-behaviour relationship. Against these objectives using a short-list of 50 behaviours was deemed sufficient.

8.6.6 Behaviour to competencies mapping

Once the list of behaviours was finalised a check was made to ensure that all of the new competencies were represented sufficiently. This was achieved by using the category to competencies mapping from Project 1 (shown in Figure 18 on page 44), and performing an analysis of the percentage of behaviours from each competency (see Figure 54 below).

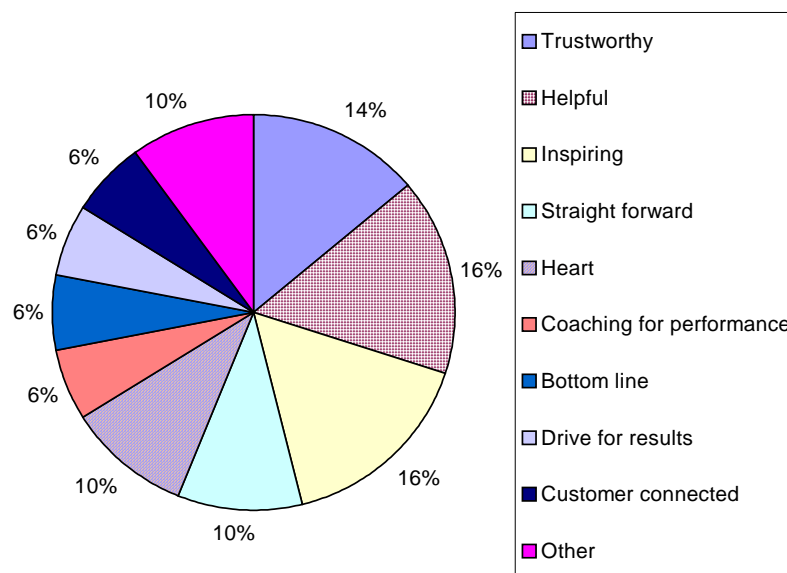


Figure 54: Percentage breakdown of behaviour by competency

It can be seen from Figure 54 that whilst there was a weighting in favour of three of the competencies, *Trustworthy*, *Helpful* and *Inspiring*, all of the new competencies were represented by the final 50 behaviours chosen. In addition it can be seen that 10% of behaviours were categorised as 'Other'. These behaviours represent the two categories from Project 1 that could not be mapped to the new competencies; B1 'Uses the full range of emotional intelligence' and B17 'Forms own position and views'.

8.6.7 Sampling

The first step in obtaining a suitable survey sample was to accurately define the population to be surveyed (Chisnall, 1997: 108), to do this a list of the names of the members of the GSLT was obtained from the internal communications team.

Consideration was given to what needed to be done to form a representative sample of the population such that every member of the population would have a non-zero probability of being included in the sample (Oppenheim, 1996: 39). In this 'probability sample' every member of the target population would have a statistically equal chance of being selected.

A number of different options were explored for generating this research sample, as detailed below (Black, 1999: 118):

- Simple Random; a random sample from the whole population.
- Stratified Random; random samples taken from identifiable groups (strata) making up the population.
- Cluster; random samples of identified smaller groups. Clusters of subjects for example by geography.
- Stage; a combination of cluster and random.

After careful consideration and discussions with the research sponsor I decided to include the total membership of the target population in the web survey because even with senior sponsorship I anticipated that the response rate might be relatively low. It was important therefore to do everything possible to maximise the number of responses.

8.6.8 Piloting

Before conducting the main survey, time was set aside to conduct some pilot research and a number of trial run-throughs to test the design and usability of the survey questionnaire.

It was important to remember that questionnaires do not emerge fully-fledged; they have to be created, fashioned and developed to maturity (Oppenheim, 1996) and that piloting activity forms a "vitally important" part of the design process (Chisnall, 1997: 139). Piloting also helps to improve reliability (Neumann, 2000: 47).

My aim at this time was to pilot as many of the different aspects of the questionnaire as possible (Oppenheim, 1996: 47). This included the wording used in the

questionnaire and the introductory letter, the chosen order for the question, the technology used to host the questionnaire, the colour, text and layout used in the questionnaire interface and the interpretation and understanding of the questions used.

Respondents for the pilot studies were selected who had similar characteristics to the main sample so that they would be as similar as possible to those in the main enquiry (Oppenheim, 1996: 62). A stratified sample was chosen for the pilot team that included male and female members from the UK, the US, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium and Hong Kong from a range of functions including Customer Services, country operations team, Solutions and HR.

The pilot work was completed in two phase. The first phase concentrated on the structure, content and language of the survey and was completed before the web survey was produced. The idea at this stage was to resolve as many of the procedural issues as possible before the questionnaire was coded. In this way the coding and rework costs could be minimised. The pilot team was provided with an electronic copy of the introductory letter and a Microsoft Word version of the survey instrument, they were then asked to individually read the survey letter and complete the survey questionnaire.

The pilot team was briefed that this was a 'try out study' (Oppenheim, 1996: 62). The team members were asked to be critical about anything and everything that they did not understand and to raise any issues or concerns that they had in order to ensure that any problems could be corrected before the questionnaire was distributed to the wider audience. (A copy of the text of this letter is included at Appendix I on page 282).

Phase two of the pilot work utilised the electronic web form with specific focus on the usability aspects of the web interface, which is of paramount importance as a poor interface design will reduce the response rate (Oppenheim, 1996: 59; Morrel-Samuels, 2003).

Following good practice guidance (Oppenheim, 1996: 63) a detailed question-by-question log was produced as part of the pilot work (see example at Appendix J). This pilot log dealt with the comprehensibility of the various components and the proposed modifications to items that required them. Details of each of the issues were recorded; what the issues was, the name of the pilot team member raising the issue, and the owner of the issue for resolution. After each 'round' of testing the issues log was updated and circulated to the pilot team and a conference call held to discuss the feedback in plenary.

In total eight full test cycles were conducted in the pilot phase, followed by the application of a number of minor changes in later stages. A key component of this stage of the research was the opportunity to check for any issues resulting from the individual pilot team member's understanding and comprehension of the questionnaire.

Feedback from the pilot team showed that it was not clear to some of the pilot respondents whose behaviours the questionnaire was referring to. As a result the introductory letter and introductory paragraph of the survey were amended to make it very clear that the survey was focused on the behaviour of the GSLT.

The pilot team also felt that the questionnaire needed to contain a reminder of the competencies and that these should be available at all times. To address this an hyperlink was added in the introductory paragraph with an option for the respondent to print a copy of the competencies.

As a result of the pilot testing, the plenary discussions, and consultation with my sponsor a number of changes were made to the structure and content of the questionnaire and covering letter. One key change was to align the language in the covering letter with the programme of activity, which had been initiated by the Global Services CEO, to align leadership behaviour with the new competencies. The benefit of this alignment was that I was able to get senior sponsorship for the survey which enabled the invitation to participate in the survey to be distributed in the name of the Global Services CEO thereby improving the potential response rate (Chisnall, 1997).

The pilot work was time consuming but in the end it inevitably saved time and money as I only received one query on the completion of the questionnaire when it was distributed. The pilot work also addressed Oppenheim's (1996) concerns that studies that have been inadequately piloted, or not piloted at all, will find that a great deal of effort has been wasted.

8.6.9 Maximising the response rate

Given the relatively small size of the target population it was important to try to maximise the number of responses. No data could be found on web survey response rates but de Chernatony (1989) reports a range of 13% to 84% for postal surveys which are similarly self-administered, and Neuman (2000: 268) states that a response rate of between 10% and 50% is common for mail surveys.

The response rate to questionnaires is directly affected by many factors including those issues referenced in the method and methodological considerations section, as well as a number of other factors such as how interesting the subject matter is to the respondents, the perceived importance and legitimacy of the study, the effect of cultural differences, how easy the questionnaire and technology is to use, what the perceived level of confidentiality is and what incentives are being provided to the respondent to complete the questionnaire (Gilbert, 1993: 84; Oppenheim, 1996: 103).

To improve the response rate consideration was given to offering respondents a reward for completing the questionnaire. The proposal was to enter all respondents in to a prize draw. However the sponsoring organization would not allow individual responses to be tracked and so this was not possible, in addition the sponsor was specifically averse to offering any incentive to respondents.

To maximise the response rate, however, a number of other actions were undertaken. Firstly, the issues identified in the survey design section and the pilot feedback were addressed, as referenced above. Secondly, senior sponsorship was obtained and the questionnaire invitation letter was distributed in the name of the Global Services CEO. The completion of the questionnaire was aligned with the leadership change programme and included as pre-work for a GSLT event that was being held on 30th March and 1st April. The URL for the web site was included in both the call-up information for the event and the event reminder email.

Thirdly, care was taken in the crafting and piloting of the introductory letter to ensure that the purpose of the questionnaire was clearly understood, that the instructions for completing the questionnaire were simple and complete, and that respondents understood that their responses would be reported in aggregate and that no individual details would be disclosed (Oppenheim, 1996: 103).

Fourthly, as mentioned earlier, the length of the questionnaire was adjusted as a result of feedback from the pilot team and my sponsor. The final length of the questionnaire was seen as appropriate given the topic of enquiry and its expected degree of interest to the respondents (Oppenheim, 1996: 103).

8.6.10 Administration

The timing and communication of the questionnaire was affected by a number of factors outside of my control. Firstly, the HR director had imposed a ban on any surveys being distributed between the middle of January and the middle of March, and secondly, I had been asked by my sponsor to provide an initial view of my research findings at a GSLT event on 30th March and 1st April.

To achieve the above objectives the distribution of the questionnaire had to be between the middle and end of March. The survey and introductory letter were distributed on Friday 19th March and the respondents were given two weeks to respond, the closing date for responses was Friday 2nd April.

I decided that the best way to communicate with the VPs and presidents would be to include a 'to do' item in the CEOs weekly update briefing. In addition, on Friday 26th March, I arranged for the CEO to reference the questionnaire in his bi-weekly leadership team call. This action was particularly impactful as he informed the people on the call that he had completed the questionnaire himself and that he had found it thought provoking. He also reminded people that they needed to complete the survey as pre-work for the GSLT event. Figure 55 on page 173 shows that this had a positive affect.

Two variants of the invite letter were produced, both shown at Appendix K on page 285. One letter, which referenced the questionnaire as pre-work for the GSLT event, was sent to the presidents and VPs, and the second was sent to the remaining members of the GSLT who were not invited to the event.

As a result of utilising two different communications methods I decided to produce two separate, but identical, web sites to capture the two tranches of responses. In this way the effectiveness of the different communications mechanisms could be tracked.

The first web site was used to capture responses from the VPs and presidents and the second was used to capture the responses from the wider GSLT community. The resulting responses were coded as 'VP' for the VP and president responses and 'Leadership' for the other members of the GSLT.

A reporting web site and database was established to capture the responses which were automatically coded against the schema detailed in Appendix N on page 290, and which were captured in a format that could be cut and pasted directly in to SPSS.

The reporting web-site allowed the number and frequency of responses to be monitored and tracked so that I could observe any unusual patterns and develop a first sense of the data (Gilbert, 1993: 110). Using this web site it was also easy to see when the response rate was tailing off and thereby what the optimal timing was for reminder emails to be sent (de Chernatony, 1989).

Once the survey responses started to arrive I realised that an additional date field was needed in order to be able to 'date stamp' the responses so that an accurate record could be made of when the responses were received (de Chernatony, 1989).

The reminder email (see appendix M on page 289) was sent to the leadership team on 29th March, the point at which the number of responses had tailed-off.

8.7 Project 2 Results

This section contains:

- A breakdown of the questionnaire responses.
- A chi square analysis.
- An analysis of the degree of alignment of the response with the top team's constructs of appropriate behaviour.
- An analysis of the degree of alignment of the Project 1 behaviours with the competencies.
- An analysis of the behaviours that indicate a degree of ambiguity and fragmentation.
- An analysis of behaviours that were classified as 'other'.
- Identification of the competency that achieved the highest degree of alignment of responses.

8.7.1 Survey response rate

Figure 55 below shows the timing and number of responses from each of the groups within the target GSLT population. The overall response rate was 40.5% with 122 responses from a total population of 301.

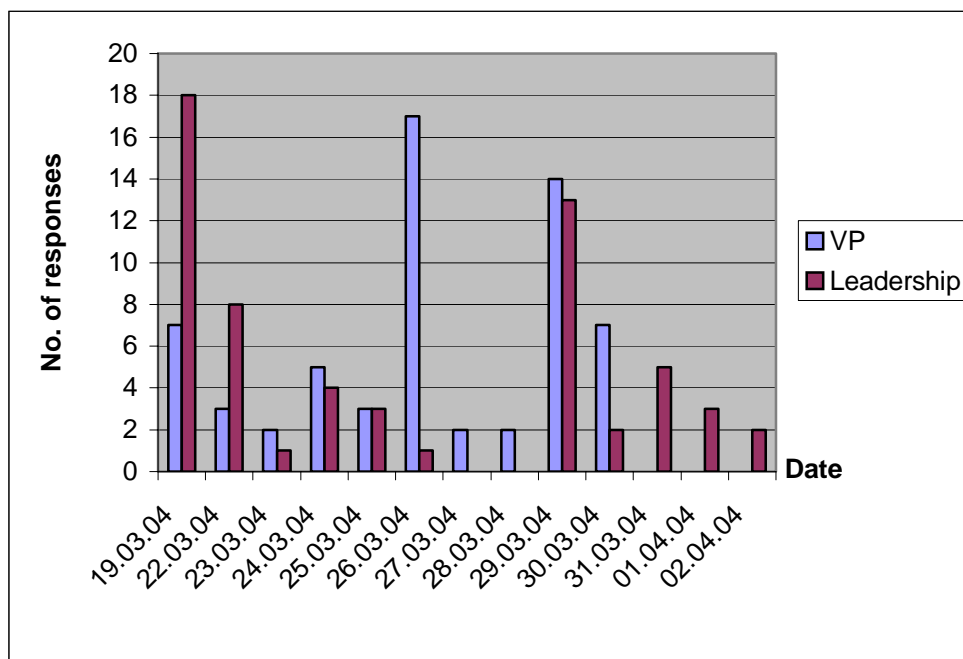


Figure 55: Questionnaire response frequency

Reference to Figure 55 above shows that the reminders, which were sent to the 'VP' group on the 26th and 29th March, were effective in stimulating an increase in responses, as was the reminder that was sent to the 'leadership' group on the 29th March.

Overall Table 26 below shows that the number of responses received can be seen to be relatively evenly spread across the two groups.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
VP	63	51.6	51.6	51.6
Leadership team	59	48.4	48.4	100.0
Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Table 26: Survey response breakdown

Analysis of the responses by function and geography below shows that the responses contain a good spread and representation of the target population (Figure 56 and Figure 57).

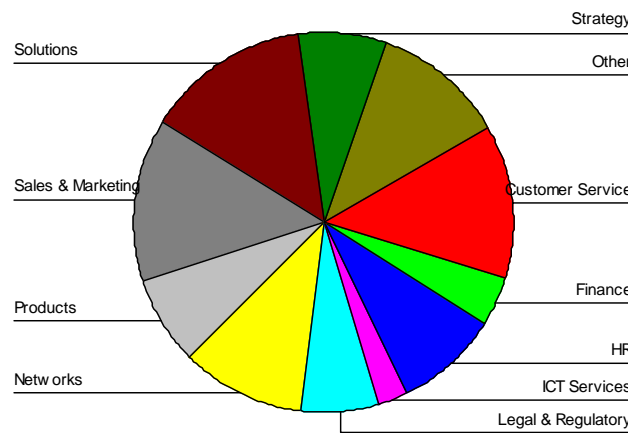


Figure 56: Questionnaire responses by function

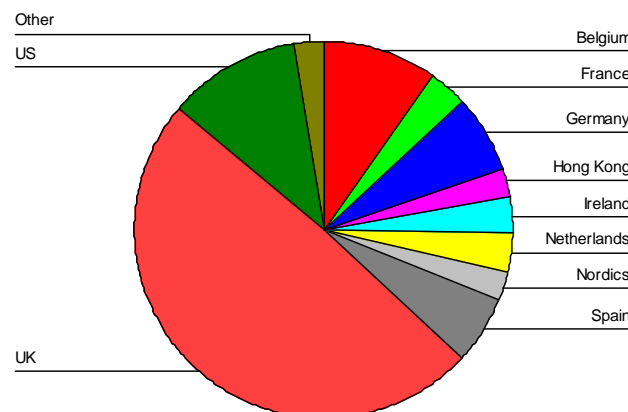


Figure 57: Questionnaire responses by geography

The three responses shown in 'Other' contain two from Japan and one from Switzerland.

8.7.2 Questionnaire results

Each of the individual 122 responses was logged in to an SPSS database in order to enable an analysis to be conducted on the number and percentage allocation of behaviours to competencies. Figure 58 below shows an example of one of the Pareto charts that was produced from this analysis. The chart shows the results for one particular entry in the questionnaire, "B2 - Focuses on cost and revenue" (the Pareto charts for each of the fifty behaviours are included at appendix P on page 292).

The Pareto chart provides data for each behaviour that shows which competencies the behaviour was allocated to, the number of times it was allocated to a particular competency and, on the right-hand axis, the cumulative percentage of responses.

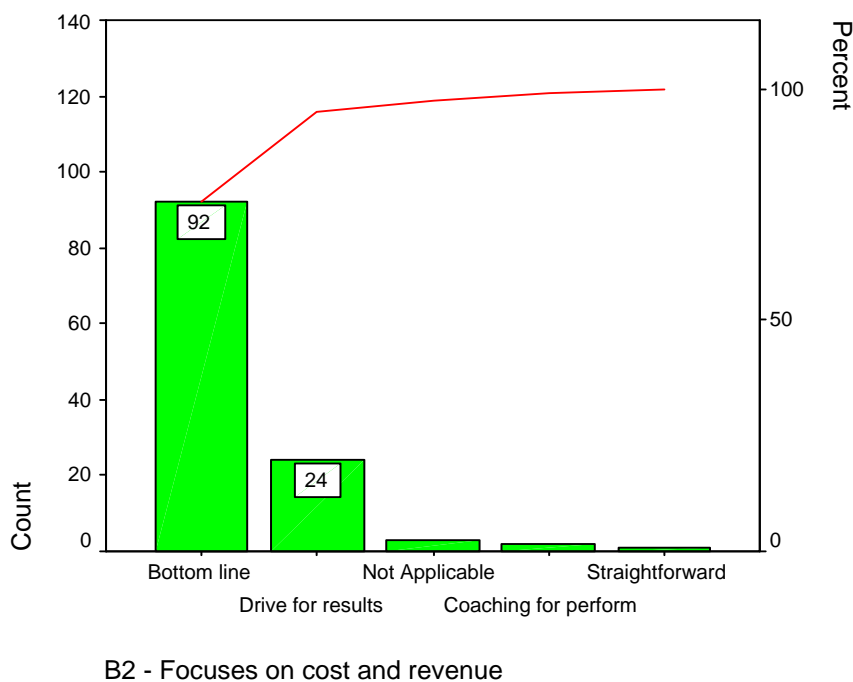


Figure 58: Example Pareto chart

In the example in Figure 20 above it can be seen that 92 respondents allocated this behaviour to 'Bottom line'. 24 respondents allocated it to 'Drive for results'. Three respondents allocated it to 'Not Applicable', two respondents allocated it to 'Coaching for performance' and finally one respondent allocated it to 'Straightforward'.

In total therefore it can be seen that the 122 respondents allocated this behaviour to one of four competencies or the 'Not applicable' category. The results for this behaviour show a reasonable degree of alignment across the GSLT responses with 75% of respondents (92 out of 122) allocating the behaviour to 'Bottom line'.

8.7.3 Chi Square analysis

A Chi Square test was performed on the data to compare the observed frequencies with the expected frequencies (Bryman and Cramer, 2003: 119).

B1 - Articulates goals clearly

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	3	15.3	-12.3
Helpful	2	15.3	-13.3
Inspiring	11	15.3	-4.3
Straightforward	73	15.3	57.8
Heart	2	15.3	-13.3
Coaching for performance	15	15.3	-.3
Bottom line	1	15.3	-14.3
Drive for results	15	15.3	-.3
Total	122		

Test Statistics

	B1 - Articulates goals clearly
Chi-Square ^a	266.066
df	7
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 15.3.

Table 27: Chi Square results for 'B1'

Analysis of the results for B1, "Articulates goals clearly" in Table 27, above shows that the results were categorised against eight options and had seven degrees of freedom, (eight minus one), i.e. any response could have been categorised against any of the other seven competencies.

The null hypothesis would indicate that the number of responses would be the same for each competency, i.e. 15.3 per competency. Table 27 however shows that the expected frequency is significantly different ($p < 0.0005$), from this expectation and that the null hypothesis is therefore invalid.

It can be seen from analysis of the full set of results shown in Appendix Q on page 317 that for all behaviours, B1 to B50, the observed frequencies are significantly different from the null hypothesis. It is my opinion that this analysis shows that the probability of obtaining these results purely by chance is therefore very low.

8.7.4 Not applicable responses.

A full list of the responses shown as 'Not applicable' is shown at Appendix P on page 334. 289 responses (4.74%) out of the total 6100 individual behaviour question responses were shown as 'Not applicable'. Of these, 139 (2.28%), were shown against just two behaviours, B5 "Tries a lot and sees what works" and B30 "Uses anger, frustration and intolerance".

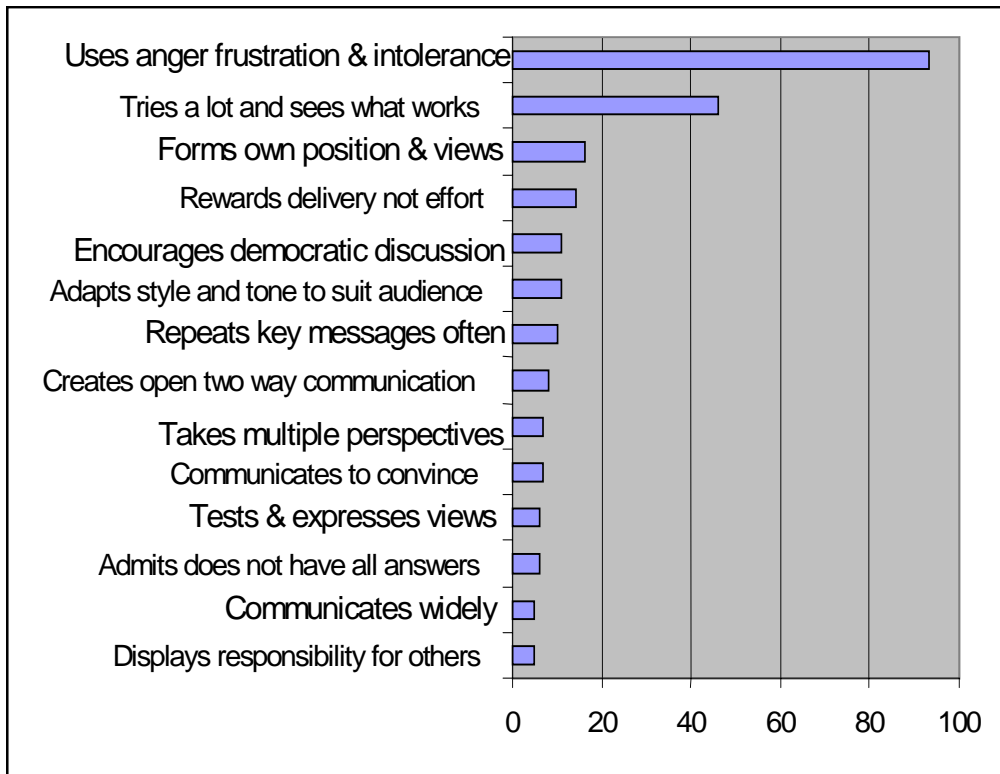


Figure 59: Behaviours selected as 'Not Applicable'

Analysis of the data in Figure 59 above shows that just two behaviours are seen as inappropriate by a significant number of the target population. "Uses anger, frustration and intolerance" is seen as inappropriate by 93 respondents (76%), and "Tries a lot and sees what works" was deemed inappropriate by 46 respondents (38%). Overall therefore the results show a good degree of alignment with the top team's constructs of what constitutes appropriate behaviour with 48 out of 50 (96%) behaviours seen as appropriate.

8.7.5 The degree of alignment with the competencies

Figure 60 below provides a summary chart showing the degree of alignment of responses for each of the fifty behaviours against a particular competency. In Figure 60 the vertical axis refers to the number of behaviours and the horizontal axis relates to the percentage of alignment. This chart can be explained by reference to Figure 58 on page 175, which identified that there was a 75% degree of alignment of responses, with 93 respondents allocating "B2 - Focuses on cost and revenue" to 'Bottom line'. In Figure 60 below this behaviour therefore is included in the results shown in the third bar from the right which is annotated "70%".

The graph in Figure 60 below shows that only four behaviours achieved a degree of alignment, to one competency, of 90% or over. Seven behaviours achieved a degree of alignment of 80% or over, ten behaviours achieved a degree of alignment of 70% or over, 15 achieved a degree of alignment of 60% or over and 20 behaviours achieved 50% or over. The graph shows the results for all fifty behaviours; the degree of alignment ranged from "B38: Adapts style and tone to suit audience", at the low end, with just 16% of respondents allocating this behaviour to 'Straightforward'. Through to "Focuses everyone on customers", at the high end, with 118 out of 122 (97%) respondents allocating this behaviour to 'Customer connected'.

The results show therefore a generally low degree of alignment and understanding of how the Project 1 behaviours support the new competencies.

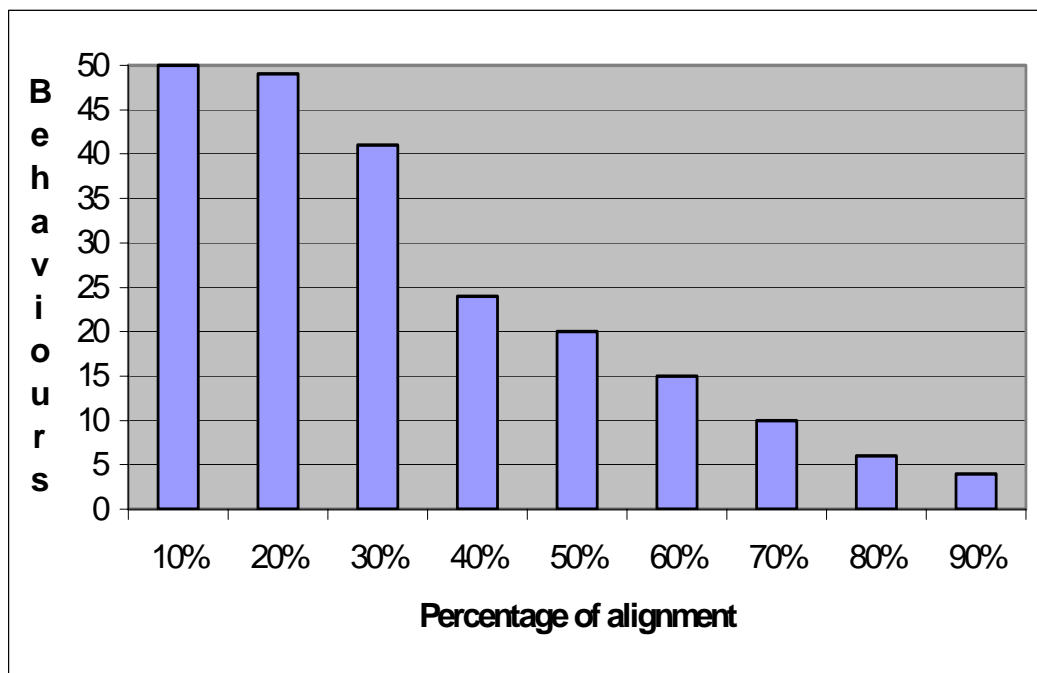


Figure 60: Degree of alignment of allocation of each behaviour to one competency

Breaking these results down provides the following details:

Behaviour	Competency	%
Over 90% alignment		
49 Focuses everyone on customers	Customer connected	97%
34 Thinks outside the box	Inspiring	94%
4 Searches out new ideas and opportunities	Inspiring	93%
3 Puts the customer first	Customer connected	91%
80%		
17 Personally goes after customer complaints	Customer connected	85%
40 Gets out a lot to meet customers & their own people	Customer connected	84%
70%		
30 Uses anger, frustration and intolerance	Not applicable	76%
2 Focuses on cost and revenue	Bottom line	75%
15 Collaborates across BT	Helpful	71%
10 Focuses on execution and delivery	Drive for results	70%
60%		
12 Communicates clearly and effectively	Straightforward	69%
13 Challenges the status quo	Inspiring	66%
33 Gives feedback, both positive & negative	Coaching for perform	66%
16 Deals with poor performance	Coaching for perform	63%
1 Articulates goals clearly	Straightforward	60%
50%		
42 Presents position and argument based on fact	Straightforward	57%
41 Rewards delivery not effort	Drive for results	56%
21 Facilitates others contribution	Helpful	52%
25 Aligns the organisation & people behind targets	Drive for results	52%
6 Sets clear goals and expectations	Straightforward	50%
40%		
20 Sets stretching targets	Drive for results	49%
27 Benchmarks performance externally	Drive for results	47%
9 Celebrates success	Heart	43%
46 Admits does not have all answers	Trustworthy	43%

30%

5	Tries a lot and sees what works	Not applicable	38%
24	Makes time for people	Helpful	38%
35	Creates open two way communication	Trustworthy	38%
48	Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do	Heart	38%
8	Values & uses diversity	Coaching for perform	37%
37	Builds individual success in to team success	Coaching for perform	36%
44	Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives	Drive for results	36%
47	Role models behaviour	Heart	36%
32	Talks to people before escalating	Trustworthy	34%
45	Takes multiple perspectives	Inspiring	33%
18	Rewards risk taking	Inspiring	32%
23	Communicates to convince	Inspiring	31%
31	Develops a broad awareness of company & industry	Customer connected	31%
14	Gets to know & understand people & their feelings	Heart	30%
28	Emphasises positives	Inspiring	30%
39	Positions own targets within bigger picture	Drive for results	30%
19	Displays responsibility for others	Trustworthy	30%

20%

29	Repeats key messages often	Straightforward	29%
22	Forms own position and views	Inspiring	27%
7	Seeks opinions	Trustworthy	26%
36	Formulates well thought out plans & defensible positions	Drive for results	26%
50	Tests and expresses views	Straightforward	26%
11	Keeps people informed	Helpful	24%
43	Encourages democratic discussion	Helpful	23%
26	Communicates widely	Inspiring	22%

10%

38	Adapts style and tone to suit audience	Straightforward	16%
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Taking all of these results together the following allocation to competencies is achieved:

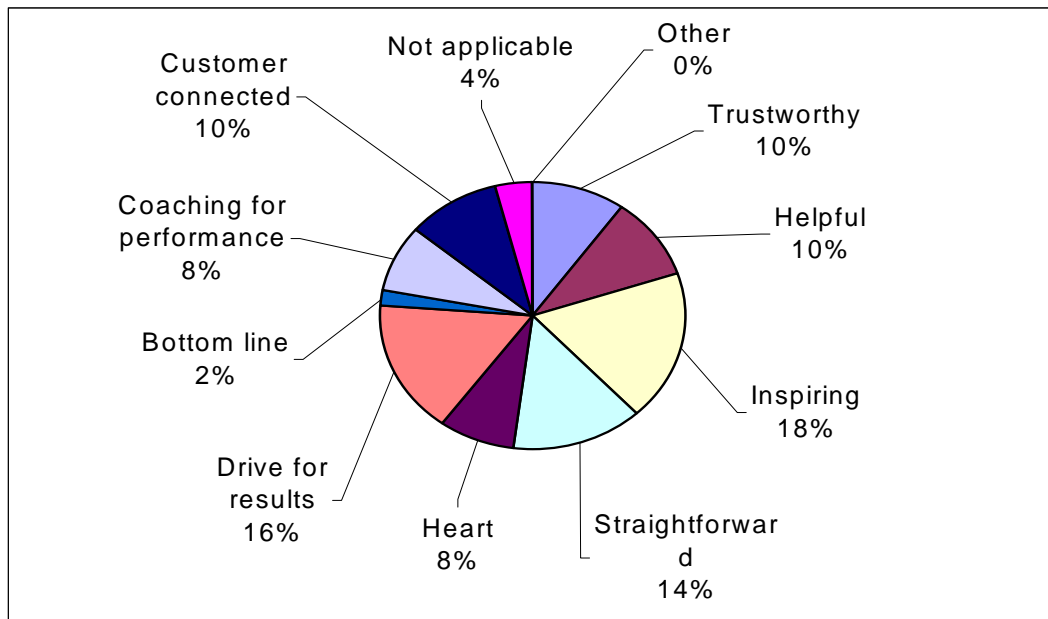


Figure 61: Allocation of "all" behaviours to competencies

Taking only those behaviours that achieved at least a 50% alignment against a particular competency produces the following results:

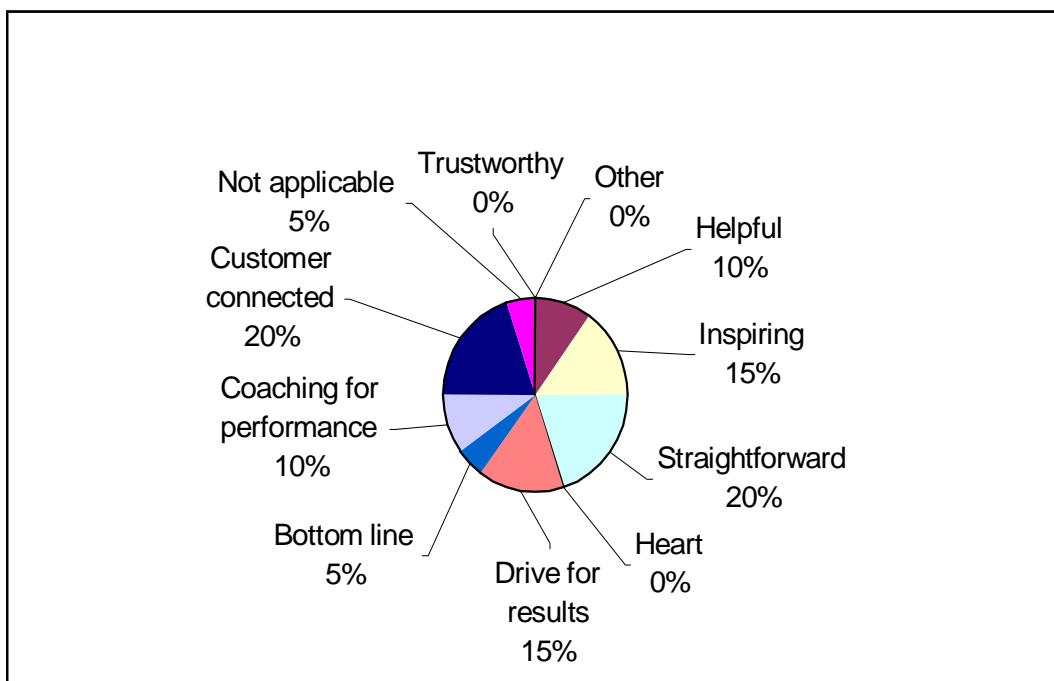


Figure 62: Allocation of behaviours to competency (>50% alignment)

8.7.6 Principal and secondary allocation

Analysis of the 30 behaviours that achieved less than 50% alignment against a single competency shows that of these behaviours there are 20 where 50% or more responses were allocated to just two competencies by the respondents (see Table 28 below).

No.	Behaviour	Primary Competency	Count	%	2nd Competency	Count	%	Combined	
								Count	%
20	Sets stretching targets	Drive for results	60	49%	Heart	31	25%	91	75%
27	Benchmarks performance externally	Drive for results	57	47%	Bottom Line	20	16%	77	63%
9	Celebrates success	Heart	53	43%	Inspiring	22	18%	75	61%
46	Admits does not have all answers	Trustworthy	52	43%	Straightforward	37	30%	89	73%
5	Tries a lot and sees what works	Not applicable	46	38%	Inspiring	19	16%	65	53%
24	Makes time for people	Helpful	46	38%	Coaching for performance	44	36%	90	74%
35	Creates open two way communication	Trustworthy	46	38%	Straightforward	31	25%	77	63%
48	Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do	Heart	46	38%	Coaching for performance	42	34%	88	72%
8	Values & uses diversity	Coaching for performance	45	37%	Trustworthy	18	15%	63	52%
37	Builds individual success in to team success	Coaching for performance	44	36%	Helpful	28	23%	72	59%
44	Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives	Drive for results	44	36%	Bottom Line	39	32%	83	68%
47	Role models behaviour	Heart	44	36%	Inspiring	30	25%	74	61%
32	Talks to people before escalating	Trustworthy	41	34%	Help	34	28%	75	61%
45	Takes multiple perspectives	Inspiring	40	33%	Other	23	19%	63	52%
18	Rewards risk taking	Inspiring	39	32%	Drive for Results	33	27%	72	59%
23	Communicates to convince	Inspiring	38	31%	Straightforward	37	30%	75	61%
31	Develops a broad awareness of company & industry	Customer connected	38	31%	Inspiring	18	15%	56	46%
14	Gets to know & understand people & their feelings	Heart	37	30%	Coaching for performance	36	30%	73	60%
28	Emphasises positives	Inspiring	37	30%	Coaching for performance	30	25%	67	55%
39	Positions own targets within bigger picture	Drive for results	37	30%	Bottom Line	24	20%	61	50%
19	Displays responsibility for others	Trustworthy	36	30%	Heart	21	17%	57	47%
29	Repeats key messages often	Straightforward	35	29%	Coaching for performance	20	16%	55	45%
22	Forms own position and views	Inspiring	33	27%	Straightforward	32	26%	65	53%
7	Seeks opinions	Trustworthy	32	26%	Coaching for performance	24	20%	56	46%
36	Formulates well thought out plans & defensible positions	Drive for results	32	26%	Straightforward	31	25%	63	52%
50	Tests and expresses views	Straightforward	32	26%	Trustworthy	21	17%	53	43%
11	Keeps people informed	Helpful	29	24%	Trustworthy	27	22%	56	46%
43	Encourages democratic discussion	Helpful	28	23%	Trustworthy	26	21%	54	44%
26	Communicates widely	Inspiring	27	22%	Straightforward	26	21%	53	43%
38	Adapts style and tone to suit audience	Straightforward	20	16%	Other	19	16%	39	32%

Table 28: Primary and secondary competency analysis

From the perspective of potential ambiguity, in terms of which competency the behaviour supports, the results show that there are fourteen behaviours where the majority of responses were relatively evenly split across two or more competencies. That is, for a given behaviour the number of respondents allocating the behaviour to one of two competencies was similar (Table 29).

No	Behaviour	1st Competency	Count	%	2nd Competency	Count	%	3rd Competency	Count	%
11	Keeps people informed	Helpful	29	24%	Trustworthy	27	22%	Straightforward	23	19%
14	Gets to know & understand people & their feelings	Heart	37	30%	Coaching for Per	36	30%	Trustworthy	22	18%
18	Rewards risk taking	Inspiring	39	32%	Coaching for Per	33	27%	Coaching for Per	19	16%
22	Forms own position and views	Inspiring	33	27%	Straightforward	32	26%	Trustworthy	17	14%
23	Communicates to convince	Inspiring	38	31%	Straightforward	37	30%	Trustworthy	8	7%
24	Makes time for people	Helpful	46	38%	Coaching for Per	44	36%	Heart	23	19%
26	Communicates widely	Inspiring	27	22%	Straightforward	26	21%	Helpful	20	16%
28	Emphasises positives	Inspiring	37	30%	Coaching for Per	30	25%	Heart	27	22%
32	Talks to people before escalating	Trustworthy	41	34%	Helpful	34	28%	Straightforward	30	25%
36	Formulates well thought out plans & defensible positions	Drive for results	32	26%	Straightforward	31	25%	Inspiring	20	16%
38	Adapts style and tone to suit audience	Straightforward	20	16%	Other	19	16%	Helpful	15	12%
43	Encourages democratic discussion	Helpful	28	23%	Trustworthy	26	21%	Straightforward	18	15%
44	Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives	Drive for results	44	36%	Bottom Line	39	32%	Helpful	21	17%
48	Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do	Heart	46	38%	Coaching for Per	42	34%	Trustworthy	13	11%

Table 29: Behaviours showing fragmented allocation of responses

Investigating the potential for ambiguity referenced in Table 29 above within the full set of results it can be seen that there are six competency pairings where there is a potential for ambiguity in the allocation of behaviours to competencies. Figure 63 below shows where there is a strong degree of correlation between the choice of two competencies for a given behaviour. 'Trustworthy / Helpful', 'Trustworthy / Straightforward', 'Helpful / Coaching for performance', 'Inspiring / Straightforward', 'Inspiring / Drive for results' and 'Drive for results / Bottom line'.

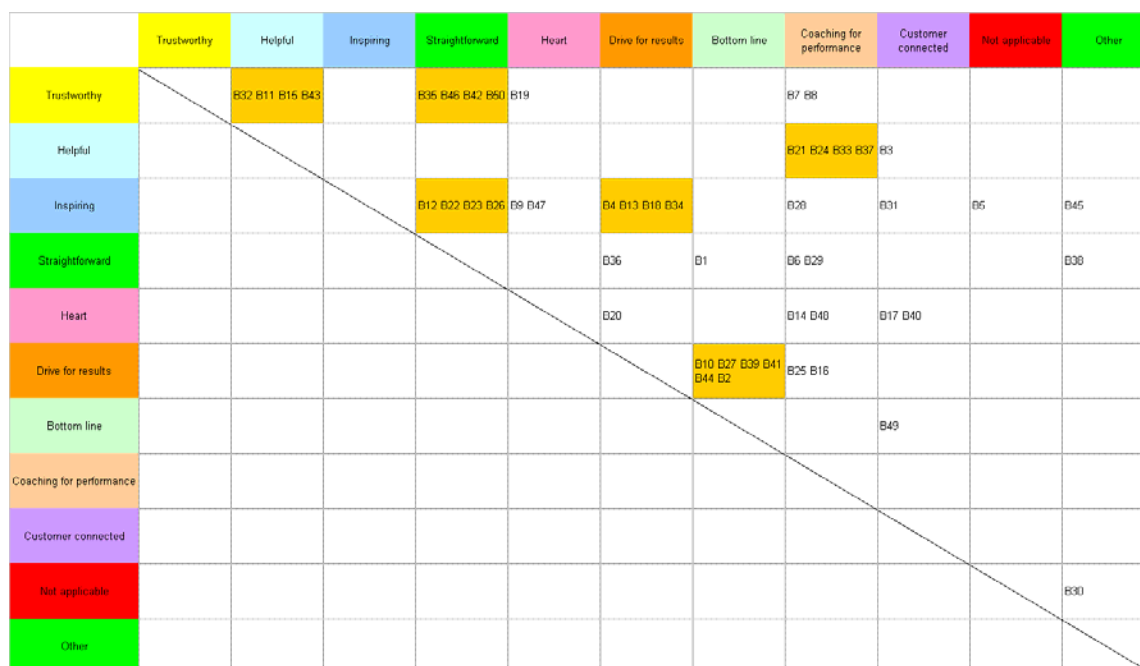


Figure 63: Mapping of primary and secondary competency allocations

Table 30 to Table 35 below show the details behind these behaviour to competency pairings and the number and percentage of responses for each of the behaviours in these pairings.

No	Behaviour	1st Competency	Count	%	2nd Competency	Count	%	Total	
11	Keeps people informed	Helpful	29	24%	Trustworthy	27	22%	56	46%
15	Collaborates across the organisation	Helpful	87	71%	Trustworthy	6	5%	93	76%
32	Talks to people before escalating	Trustworthy	41	34%	Helpful	34	28%	75	61%
43	Encourages democratic discussion	Helpful	28	23%	Trustworthy	26	21%	54	44%

Table 30: Trustworthy and Helpful

By reference to Table 30 above it can be seen that there are three behaviours in this pairing, 11, 32 and 43, where the number of responses against the first and second competency are similar. However it can also be seen that the order of the primary and secondary allocation is not consistent.

No	Behaviour	1st Competency	Count		2nd Competency	Count		Total	
			Count	%		Count	%	Count	%
35	Creates open two way communication	Trustworthy	46	38%	Straightforward	31	25%	77	63%
42	Presents position and argument based	Straightforward	69	57%	Trustworthy	29	24%	98	80%
46	Admits does not have all answers	Trustworthy	52	43%	Straightforward	37	30%	89	73%
50	Tests and expresses views	Straightforward	32	26%	Trustworthy	21	17%	53	43%

Table 31: Trustworthy and Straightforward

No	Behaviour	1st Competency	Count		2nd Competency	Count		Total	
			Count	%		Count	%	Count	%
21	Facilitates others contribution	Helpful	63	52%	Coaching for per	29	24%	92	75%
24	Makes time for people	Helpful	46	38%	Coaching for per	44	36%	90	74%
33	Gives feedback, both positive & negative	Coaching for pe	80	66%	Helpful	13	11%	93	76%
37	Builds individual success in to team success	Coaching for pe	44	36%	Helpful	28	23%	72	59%

Table 32: Helpful and Coaching for Performance

No	Behaviour	1st Competency	Count		2nd Competency	Count		Total	
			Count	%		Count	%	Count	%
12	Communicates clearly and effectively	Straightforward	84	69%	Inspiring	11	9%	95	78%
22	Forms own position and views	Inspiring	33	27%	Straightforward	32	26%	65	53%
23	Communicates to convince	Inspiring	38	31%	Straightforward	37	30%	75	61%
26	Communicates widely	Inspiring	27	22%	Straightforward	26	21%	53	43%

Table 33: Inspiring and Straightforward

No	Behaviour	1st Competency	Count		2nd Competency	Count		Total	
			Count	%		Count	%	Count	%
4	Searches out new ideas and opportunities	Inspiring	114	93%	Drive for Results	5	4%	119	98%
13	Challenges the status quo	Inspiring	81	66%	Drive for Results	11	9%	92	75%
18	Rewards risk taking	Inspiring	39	32%	Drive for Results	33	27%	72	59%
34	Thinks outside the box	Inspiring	115	94%	Drive for Results	3	2%	118	97%

Table 34: Inspiring and Drive for Results

No	Behaviour	1st Competency	Count		2nd Competency	Count		Total	
			Count	%		Count	%	Count	%
2	Focuses on cost and revenue	Bottom line	92	75%	Drive for results	24	20%	116	95%
10	Focuses on execution and delivery	Drive for results	86	70%	Bottom line	10	8%	96	79%
27	Benchmarks performance externally	Drive for results	57	47%	Bottom line	20	16%	77	63%
39	Positions own targets within bigger picture	Drive for results	37	30%	Bottom line	24	20%	61	50%
41	Rewards delivery not effort	Drive for results	68	56%	Bottom line	17	14%	85	70%
44	Balances own unit goals with wider business	Drive for results	44	36%	Bottom line	39	32%	83	68%

Table 35: Drive for Results and Bottom Line

8.7.7 'Other'

A full list of the responses shown as 'Other' is shown at Appendix Q on page 335. Out of a total of 6100 responses 298 (4.89%) were categorised as 'Other' (see Figure 64 below).

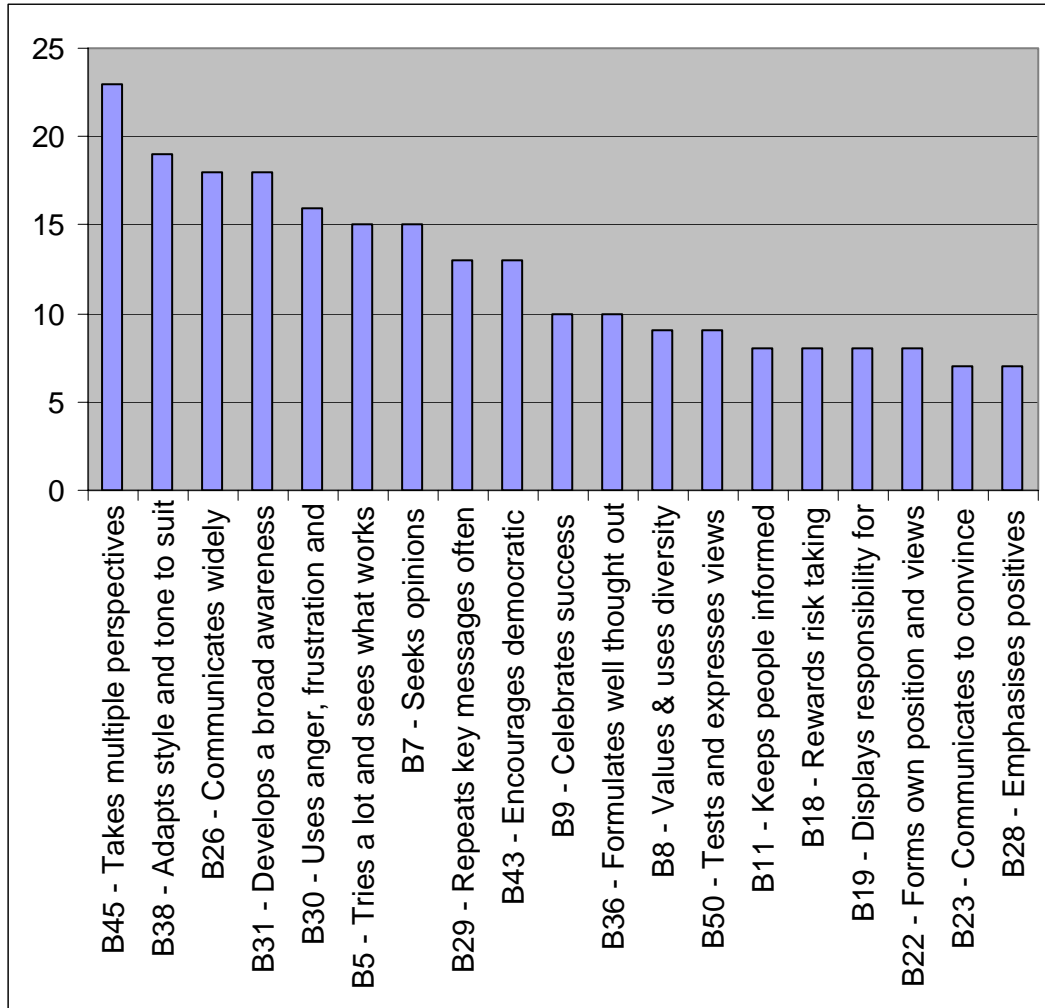


Figure 64: Behaviour responses shown as 'Other'

These results show that there are a number of behaviours that are seen as valid expectations of behaviour but where the respondents could not map these to one of the competencies. These results indicate that either the meaning of the competencies is not clear to some people or there are a number of competencies missing.

8.7.8 'Use the full range of emotional Intelligence' and 'Forms own position and views'

Figure 54, on page 167, shows that 10% of the behaviours selected for the questionnaire in Project 2 were allocated to the category 'Other'. These behaviours represented the two categories in Project 1 that could not be mapped on to the new competencies (see Figure 18 on page 44).

The two categories are B1 “Uses the full range of emotional intelligence” and B17 “Forms own position and views”. The behaviours chosen to represent these two categories in Project 2 are shown below:

Category B1

- B24: Makes time for people.
- B30: Uses anger frustration and intolerance.
- B38: Adapts tone and style to suit audience.

Category B17

- B22: Forms own position and view.
- B36: Formulates well thought out plans and defendable positions.

Table 36 below summarises the responses for each of these behaviours. It can be seen that with the exception of '30', “Uses anger, frustration and intolerance”, the behaviours were seen by the respondents as supporting the new competencies.

The responses for these four behaviours however are fragmented across a number of competencies, indicating that there is a degree of ambiguity as to how these behaviours support the competencies. These results can be taken to support the conclusion in Project 1 that these behaviours represent competencies that are not present in the organization's new competencies.

No.	Behaviour	1st C	Count	%	2nd C	Count	%	3rd C	Count	%	4th C	Count	%	Total %
24	Makes time for people	H	46	38%	CfP	44	36%	Ht	23	19%	T	3	2%	95%
30	Uses anger, frustration and intolerance	NA	93	76%	O	16	13%	Ht	5	4%	I	2	2%	95%
22	Forms own position and views	I	33	27%	S	32	26%	T	17	14%	NA	16	13%	80%
36	Formulates well thought out plans & defendable positions	DfR	32	26%	S	31	25%	I	20	16%	O	10	8%	76%
38	Adapts style and tone to suit audience	S	20	16%	O	19	16%	H	15	12%	I	13	11%	55%

Key:

1st C = Primary Capability	T = Trustworthy	DfR = Drive for results
2nd C = Secondary Capability	H = Helpful	BL = Botton Line
3rd C = 3rd Capability	I = Inspiring	CfP = Coaching for performance
4th C = 4th Capability	S = Sraightforward	CC = Customer connected
	Ht = Heart	NA = Not applicable
		O = Other

Table 36: Analysis of Results for Project 1 categories B1 and B17

8.7.9 Customer connected

Analysis of the data in Table 37 below shows that there is a good degree of alignment of the behaviours seen as supporting the 'Customer connected' competency. These results would indicate that this competency label is self-explanatory and that it provides a clear understanding of the competency-behaviour relationship between these four behaviours and the 'Customer connected' competency.

No.	Behaviour	Responses	
		No.	%
3	Puts the customer first	111	91%
17	Personally goes after customer complaints	104	85%
40	Gets out a lot to meet customers & their own people	102	84%
49	Focuses everyone on customers	118	97%

Table 37 : Customer connected responses

8.7.10 Results Summary

Degree of alignment

Analysis of the Project 2 results show that there is a good degree of alignment with the top team's views (96%) of the behaviours seen as appropriate. The results also show however a generally low degree of alignment of understanding of how the Project 1 behaviours support the new competencies. Only four behaviours achieved a degree of alignment of agreed responses of over 90%. 20 behaviours achieved over 50% alignment and 39 achieved over 30% alignment (Figure 21).

B38, "Adapts style and tone to suit audience", achieved the lowest degree of alignment, with just 16% of responses agreeing that this behaviour supported 'Straightforward'.

'Not Applicable' responses

Analysis of the results shown as 'Not applicable' (Figure 59), shows that of the 50 Project 1 behaviours B30, "Uses anger, frustration and intolerance", was identified by 93 respondents (76%) as an inappropriate behaviour. 16 people classified this behaviour as 'Other'.

B5 "Tries a lot and sees what works" was identified as 'Not applicable' by 46 respondents (38%). 15 people classified this behaviour as 'Other'.

Ambiguous competency pairings

30 behaviours achieved less than 50% alignment (Table 28) and of these, 14 showed a relatively even split of responses against two competencies, indicating a significant degree of ambiguity of how these behaviours support the competencies (Table 29).

Closer analysis of the data in Table 28 and Table 29 shows that there are six competency pairings where a degree of ambiguity exist as to the meaning of the competency (Figure 63).

The ambiguous competency pairings are:

- Trustworthy and Helpful, (Table 30).
- Trustworthy and Straightforward, (Table 31).
- Helpful and Coaching for Performance, (Table 32).
- Inspiring and Straightforward, (Table 33).
- Inspiring and Drive for Results, (Table 34).
- Drive for results and Bottom Line, (Table 35).

'Other' responses

Analysis of the responses coded as 'Other' show that nine behaviours were identified by at least 13 respondents as being behaviours that were expected but could not be allocated to one of the new competencies, (Figure 64).

None of the behaviours achieved a majority primary allocation against 'Other', (Figure 61 and Figure 62).

Missing competencies

Analysis of the behaviours identified in Project 1 as being missing from the organization's new competencies shows “Uses anger, frustration and intolerance” was deemed 'Not Applicable' and that the other behaviours received a fragmented allocation against the new competencies (Table 36). These results indicate a significant degree of ambiguity of how these behaviours support the new competencies and provide support for my conclusion in Project 1 that there are two competencies missing from the organizations new leadership competencies.

Customer connected

The competency 'Customer connected' is the only competency that shows a high degree of alignment with its supporting behaviours, (see page 54). Four behaviours are seen to support the Customer connected competency as shown below.

No.	Behaviour	Responses	
		No.	%
3	Puts the customer first	111	91%
17	Personally goes after customer complaints	104	85%
40	Gets out a lot to meet customers & their own people	102	84%
49	Focuses everyone on customers	118	97%

The results for this competency indicate that this competency label is self-explanatory and that it provides a clear understanding of the competency-behaviour relationship.

8.8 Project 2 - Discussion and Conclusions

In this section I present:

- A recap of the aims of the study and the aspects of extant theory that inform my research.
- Evidence of how Project 2 supports the findings in Project 1.
- The theoretical contribution and implications of this study including a consideration of the way in which my findings can be seen to extend the extant competency literature.
- The practical contributions and implications of this study for the organization.

The primary aims of this study were to investigate and assess the degree of alignment of the top team's constructs of appropriate leadership behaviour with the views and understanding of the GSLT. To assess the degree of alignment of how the top team's construct of appropriate behaviours are seen to support the new competencies and, by inference, to test the degree to which the competency 'labels' provide a self-explanatory sense of the meaning of each of the competencies.

My starting premise for this research study was that "if the leadership team are in agreement as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour then they are more likely to demonstrate consistency in the way in which they behave" (King et al, 2001: 95).

In the introduction to this paper I identified how the original impetus for this research had arisen from a perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused by the top team, the behaviour prescribed in the competencies, and the behaviour that was rewarded in practice. I also perceived that different members of the top team valued and rewarded different behaviour.

At the time that I was conducting my Project 1 research the organization was formulating a new set of competencies and supporting behaviours. The majority of behaviours identified by my research in Project 1 are not contained within this new set of competencies and as such have not been explicitly articulated to the GSLT as representing the top team's expectations of appropriate behaviour.

In producing these new competencies the organization made a conscious deliberate decision not to produce a comprehensive and detailed list of the expected behaviours supporting their delivery. As a result I would propose that the difficulties presented by the diversity of views exposed in Project 1 is likely to be further compounded by the organization's decision not to explicitly articulate what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour.

Evidence from this study lends support to the conclusion from Project 1 that insufficient discussion and engagement has occurred around the competencies in order to create an aligned understanding. It is proposed that these differences in cognition will make it difficult for the GSLT to form an aligned understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour.

The finding from this study have convergent validity with and provide strong support for the findings in Project 1, which indicated that at a top level there was a good

degree of alignment of views of appropriate competencies but no common and agreed understanding of the competency-behaviour relationship. These findings confirm that, in the context of the top team's definition of appropriate behaviour, there is currently no agreed understanding amongst the GSLT of how the top team's defined behaviours support the competencies.

Conducting this analysis can be seen to be an essential step in "helping the organization understand the subsequent strengths and weaknesses that the current degree of shared understanding lends to organizational functioning" (Langfield-Smith, 1992: 352).

In the following sections I elaborate on some of the theoretical and practical considerations of these findings.

8.8.1 Project 2 - Contribution: Implications for theory

I began this study with the assumption that it is possible to centrally define the competencies and supporting behaviours that are needed to deliver the organizations strategic intent, and that people will easily form a shared understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. It can be seen on reflection however that this assumption, and the extant competency literature, takes the lens of the functionalist perspective (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

I also started this study with the assumption that sense making begins with the personal perspectives individuals use to understand and interpret events, and that individuals create their own reality conditioned by their own experiences (Morgan, 1983; Kelly, 1955; Hatch, 1997; Goffin, 2002). This assumption, and extent personal construct theory, takes the lens of the interpretist perspective (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

A consideration of the two perspectives above would indicate that if the organization wishes to create a common and agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour then it will be necessary to explicitly articulate, at a level of granularity, a definition of what constitutes appropriate behaviour.

The functionalist intent of defining and articulating the desired behaviours is supported by a consideration of the effects of the subjective nature of individuals' reality, in that without this detailed articulation, individuals will form their own interpretations and understanding (Kelly, 1955). Furthermore, without this explicit articulation the effects of PCT will lead to a low degree of alignment and a low degree of understanding of the behaviours supporting the competencies.

Evidence from this study also lends support to Langfield-Smith's view (1992) that for newly formed teams, such as the organizations top team and the GSLT, it would be expected that there would be a relatively low degree of cognitive overlap, and hence a heterogeneity of views and conceptions, not only of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour, but also what the competency labels mean, and therefore what behaviours support the new competencies.

It is my view that my findings extend the PMS literature by demonstrating the need to consider the effects of the subjective nature of reality when introducing a competency based approach. It is my proposition that this is not something that is expressly articulated within the competency literature.

Finally, my findings provide support for the importance of developing competency labels that are self-explanatory, and that are aligned with the sense of the behaviours supporting the competency; labels that provide a clear and unambiguous understanding of the competency-behaviour relationship.

It is my proposition that there is a two-way relationship between the behaviours and the competency that needs to be present for the competency label to be truly appropriate. If the competency label is self-explanatory, a good degree of alignment and understanding is achieved. Conversely, if the competency label is not self-explanatory, a degree of ambiguity of the meaning of the competency will exist, and it will be difficult for people to form an agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour supporting the competency.

My results imply that in the case of the 'Customer connected' competency that the competency label self-explanatory and the wording in the 'behaviour' gives a clear link to the competency; in all cases the word "Customer" is used.

In closing, it is my belief that this study has shown that one cannot assume an aligned and agreed understanding and that there is a subjective element to a competency-based performance assessment process that is not referenced in the literature on competencies.

Summary of theoretical contribution

This study has provided support for the view that the creation of a common and agreed understanding is a gradual and dynamic process (Harris, Sparrow, and Brewster, 2002: 16). This gives rise to the consideration that the effective implementation of a competency-based PMS is subject to the effects of PCT in that PCT influences the degree of effectiveness as a direct result of the degree of individual understanding. It is my proposition that the extant literature on competencies does not give due consideration to this - the competency literature is written from a functionalist perspective and fails to take account of the 'subjective' nature of reality - my study can therefore be seen to extend this literature.

8.8.2 Project 2 - Contribution: Implications for practice

From a practitioner perspective the importance of having a common and agreed view of appropriate behaviour is an obvious benefit as "organizations will function more effectively if all of the work force agree on what constitutes appropriate behaviour with respect to the conduct of business" (Finegan, 1994: 353).

My findings show a high degree of alignment of views between the top team and the GSLT with 48 out of the 50 Project 1 behaviours being seen to support the new competencies. Despite this degree of alignment, however, the results also show that there is a significant degree of ambiguity as to how the behaviours support the competencies. The results imply that the current PMS does not provide a 'strong' system (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004: 213) that leads to a situation where everyone 'sees' the situation similarly, and where aligned expectations about what constitutes appropriate behaviour exist.

There is a relatively low degree of consistent alignment of the allocation of behaviours to competencies. Only four behaviours achieved a 90+% degree of alignment, and hence common understanding of how they support the new competencies. 20 behaviours demonstrated a consistency of allocation where the majority of respondents (50+%) aligned the behaviour with one competency, and there are 14 behaviours where the responses were relatively evenly split across two competencies, indicating a degree of ambiguity as to the meaning of these competencies.

One behaviour was deemed inappropriate by the majority of respondents; B30, "Uses anger, frustration and intolerance", and one behaviour, B5, "Tries a lot and sees what works" was seen as inappropriate by 46% of respondents, indicating a degree of uncertainty and ambiguity around this behaviour.

It can be seen from the results therefore that even though the behaviours are taken directly from the top team's constructs of appropriate behaviour, there is a relatively low degree of understanding and alignment of how the majority of these behaviours support the new competencies.

Given this lack of alignment it is my view there is currently a misalignment between the top team's expectations, the organization's new competencies and GSLT members' understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour.

My results imply that this lack of alignment and ambiguity stems from three causes. Firstly, the competency labels are not self-explanatory. Secondly, the organization's new leadership competencies are missing two competencies, identified by the top team in Project 1 as required, and thirdly, insufficient time has been spent discussing the new competencies in order to align understanding.

Evidence from this study also lends support to the view that it is vitally important to complete the competency framework building process from the 'bottom-up'; that is, to identify the full list of behaviours needed to support the business strategy, and then group them in to discrete competencies (Woodruffe, 1992: 21) before giving them labels that provide the best summary terms that can be found to describe these groups of behaviours (Woodruffe, 1992: 21). The labels need to be self-explanatory and

contain meaningful images and messages for users that ensures clarity and understanding of the 'sense' of the competency (Craig, 1992: 115). Ensuring that the competencies have appropriate labels therefore is critical as they will often be used as a standalone 'shorthand' representation of the competency and its supporting behaviours (Craig, 1992: 21).

My findings indicate that the creation of the organization's competencies was completed in a 'top-down' fashion, as the competency labels do not create a common and agreed understanding of the 'sense' of the competency or the competency-behaviour relationship. Importantly, my findings confirm that using the competency labels as a 'shorthand' can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding as different GSLT members had different interpretations of the meaning of the competencies and of how the behaviours defined by the top team supported these competencies.

My findings also show that there is a significant degree of ambiguity amongst the competencies, with the meaning of six competency pairings being ambiguous to the respondents (Figure 63 shows where there is perceived ambiguity). My finding also support the conclusion in Project 1 that the organization's new leadership competencies are missing two competencies defined as required by the top team; 'Uses the full range of emotional intelligence' and 'Forms own position and views'.

Furthermore, it is my proposition that there has been insufficient discussion of the behaviours supporting the new competencies. If this discussion had been carried out comprehensively and effectively, with the GSLT, I would propose that the degree of alignment of the allocation of behaviours to competencies would have been much higher. One significant practical implication of my findings therefore is that without a detailed and concerted level of effort in communication it is unlikely that the GSLT members will hold a common and agreed view of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. My research results show that assuming a common understanding of what behaviours support which competency is hazardous and that different individuals have different constructs and form different understanding.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the results from Project 2 show that there is currently an insufficient degree of understanding of how the top team's expectation of behaviour supports the new competencies. It is my view therefore that without further discussion and clarification, the meaning and individual interpretation of the competencies will remain misaligned. This misalignment is likely to be a barrier to fostering an agreed understanding amongst the GSLT of how their behaviour and their reward are linked. Without this agreed understanding the assessment process will continue to be incoherent and haphazard (Feltham, 1992: 91) and the value of the competency-based approach, with its improved objectivity and consistency, will be lost (Craig, 1992: 116).

Summary of practitioner contribution

By directly engaging with the GSLT, an assessment has been made of the degree of shared understanding. This was an important undertaking because this team of people are key influencers and decision-makers who provide role models of behaviour for the wider management community. It is vitally important therefore for there to be

a good degree of understanding across this group because they are the team of people who are responsible for interpreting and communicating the top team's expectations to lower level managers (Schermerhorn, 1986). If the GSLT members agree on the behaviours required they are likely to behave that way themselves and communicate this agreement to the wider management community (Bourgeois, 1980).

Overall, and taken together, Project 1 and Project 2 can be seen to provide evidence of a lack of common and agreed understanding of how the top team's expectations of appropriate behaviour are seen to support the new competencies. This study has shown a significant degree of ambiguity in terms of the competencies themselves and the meaning of the competency labels. In addition, these studies have shown that the organization's new leadership competencies lack important competencies.

In analysing the results of Project 2, and in trying to use the new competencies in practice, it is clear that the order in which the behaviours are identified, categorised and labelled is one of the most important aspects in establishing a list of competencies and a common and agreed understanding. The Project 2 results indicate that the new competencies were formulated in a 'top-down' fashion, rather than 'bottom-up'.

From a practitioner perspective my research can be seen to have made a number of contributions:

- I have exposed the lack of alignment and understanding of how the top team defined behaviours are seen by the GSLT to support the new competencies.
- I have exposed the fact, by reference to the point above, that the competency labels do not provide a self-explanatory understanding of the competency-behaviour relationship for the GSLT.
- I have identified that there appears to have been an insufficient level of discussion of the competencies and the behaviours supporting them to align individual's constructs.
- The results from my research infer that as things stand the system is 'weak'.

Finally, it is proposed that the approach taken in this study has helped create an improvement in the degree of shared understanding through the process of discussion and communication (King et al, 2001: 97), and that the results of this study have provided the stimulus for the organization to 'stop and think' and ensure that it does not lose the opportunity for improved objectivity and consistency afforded by the introduction of a competency-based PMS.

This is the first time that a study of the GSLT has been conducted to assess the degree of alignment of how the top team defined behaviours are seen to support the organizations new competencies.

---- End of Project 2 ----

Chapter Nine - Project 3

Project 3 abstract

Healthy, self-correcting systems make use of data about the nature of the system's outputs to make corrections and improvements to the way that the system functions (Nadler, 1976: 178). The starting point for my research was a perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused by the top team, the behaviour prescribed in the organization's competencies and the behaviour rewarded by the top team in practice. Project 1 and Project 2 have provided evidence to support the original perception motivating this research study and as such have demonstrated that the 'system' is neither healthy nor self-correcting.

In this, the third in a series of linked research projects, I adopted an approach based on collaborative enquiry and participatory action research principles to gain a close involvement and engagement of the two key stakeholder groups within the organization who have the power to change the system. Interactive feedback sessions were held with each of the individual top team members and the HR team to share the previous research findings in order to stimulate a dialogue of what could and should be done to address the problems with the current competency-based system.

The findings from Project 3 support and extend the previous research findings and show the need for the active involvement of leaders in facilitating alignment and understanding.

The findings also show that the current system contains unrealistic expectations of the applicability or desirability of defining leadership behaviour in the way that is prescribed within the competency literature. It is considered neither desirable nor possible to centrally define and articulate, in a unified way, all of the behaviours needed to function effectively in the face of all of the different challenges and contexts that leaders might encounter. It is proposed that the organization is in need of a new paradigm where the leadership team play an active role in facilitating understanding. A paradigm where the competencies are used as 'interpretative frames' to support a dialogue that facilitates individual and collective alignment and understanding. The findings indicate therefore the need for competency literature to acknowledge and address the need to align competencies and the PMS to the particular challenges and context that individuals face.

The findings also indicate the need for the active involvement of the top team with the leadership team to expose individuals' constructs and thereby confront the subjective nature of reality. It is proposed that through the process of dialogue it will be possible to facilitate shared understanding and alignment - this approach and requirement is not something that is referenced in the competency literature.

Finally, it is proposed that extant competency-based performance literature is overly rational and needs to reflect the duality in the assessment process. The findings support the view that a more fully developed perspective would balance and integrate both analytical and intuitive decision making capacities employed by the top team members.

9.1 Project 3 introduction

Healthy, self-correcting systems make use of data about the nature of the system's outputs to make corrections and improvements to the way that the system functions (Nadler, 1976: 178). The starting point for my research was a perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused by the top team, the behaviour prescribed in the organization's competencies and the behaviour rewarded by the top team in practice; as such it seemed that the 'system' was neither healthy nor self-correcting.

To help address this situation I undertook to try to understand if this perceived misalignment was valid, and if so, why this misalignment existed. Adopting a functionalist approach, my aim was to help the organization obtain a valid image of itself in the present in order to validate my original perception and to help create a positive energy for change. My hope was that in some way my research findings would lead to organizational learning and action.

In conducting this third and final element of my research study, I was also keen to provide some form of closure to my DBA, whilst at the same time delivering some benefit to the organization and making a contribution to theory.

Peter Jackson, the director of the Lord of the Rings trilogy, is reported as saying that the main reason for making the first two films, "The Fellowship of the Ring" and "The Two Towers", was so that he could make the third and most important film, "The Return of the King".

Now that I have completed all three research projects it seems to me that the most important learning and contribution comes from Project 3, but that without conducting the research and capturing the findings from Project 1 and 2 I would not have been able to achieve what I have in Project 3.

At the end of this research study I feel that, to a large extent, I have returned to where I started, but what I now see is very different from what I saw when I was here the first time:

"We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all of our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time".

(Eliot, 1942 Little Gidding. No 4 of 'Four Quartets')

When I began my research it seems that my first view was only partial; it was a view from a very analytical, rational, functionalist perspective. Where I now stand I have a view that is more 'whole', more complete; a view that sees both *'the wood and the trees'*, and a view that acknowledges the subjectivity of reality.

9.1.1 Project 1 and Project 2 - The story so far

I started my research in Project 1 by interviewing the top team members to identify their leadership assessment criteria in use, and to ascertain what the degree of alignment of these views was across the top team. In Project 2 I produced a web-based questionnaire, using the output of Project 1, which was distributed to the Global

Services Leadership Team (GSLT). The key objective of Project 2 was firstly, to ascertain the degree of alignment of views across the GSLT of how the top team defined behaviours were seen to support the organization's competencies, and secondly, to identify the degree of alignment of how the individual behaviours, defined by the top team, were seen to support the organization's new competencies.

The results from these two research projects showed:

Project 1

- A 90% degree of alignment between the competencies identified by the top team and the organization new competencies, with 17 of the 19 top team identified competencies mapping directly to the organization's new competencies.
- A good degree of alignment (80%) of individual top team responses with the organization's new competencies.
- That two top team defined competencies could not be mapped to the organizations new competencies, namely:
 - "Uses the full range of emotional intelligence".
 - "Develops own position and views".
- A wide range of language to describe what constituted appropriate behaviour in support of the competencies, indicating a poor degree of alignment at the behaviour level, and therefore a 'weak' system.

Project 2

- 96% of the top team defined behaviours from Project 1 were seen to support the new competencies.
- There was a generally poor degree of alignment of understanding of how the behaviours supported the competencies, with only 20% of behaviours achieving a 70% commonality of alignment to a given competency.
- The behaviours representing the two missing competencies in Project 1 achieved the lowest degree of alignment against the competencies.
- There was a degree of ambiguity between and within the competencies.
- One behaviour identified in Project 1 was seen by the majority of respondents as inappropriate; this was:
 - "Uses anger, frustration and intolerance".

9.2 Purpose of Project 3

The purpose of Project 3 was to share my findings from Project 1 and Project 2 with the key stakeholders in the organization who have the power to change the way in which the performance management system is enacted. My aim was to stimulate the organization to make changes to improve the effectiveness and strength of the system.

By feeding back the results of my previous research I hoped that the organization's members would obtain a valid image of the organization in the present, develop a

clear picture of the perceived problems, and work collaboratively to create a realistic map to guide it towards improvement (Nadler, 1977: 5).

By presenting a picture to the key stakeholder of 'as is', it was hoped to stimulate energy for change towards 'what should be' and ultimately 'what could be'.

In addition, I was anxious to capture any further learning that could help me understand why there was a perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused and the behaviour rewarded.

In conducting this final project I was mindful that feedback alone cannot produce change, it can only initiate action for change (Nadler, 1977) and therefore my intent for Project 3 was to create a shared interactive learning experience that would help create this positive energy for change.

In addition, I wanted to take the opportunity afforded to formally capture my own personal learning and in so doing, improve my own effectiveness within the organization. Using a pre-prepared self-reflection questionnaire, my approach involved taking action and then consciously reflecting on that action and its outcomes in order to refine and improve my intervention approach and technique.

The motivation for this final research project comes from my desire to obtain a better understanding of the perceived misalignment between the theory espoused and the theory in action, and to explore Barkema's assertion that "emerging trends in strategizing, organizing and managing can only be imperfectly described, understood and managed using traditional conceptions in management scholarship and practice, and that perhaps new conceptions are needed" (Barkema et al, 2002: 916).

9.3 What this paper covers

This chapter starts by setting out the rationale for the methods adopted in this project. It identifies the methodological underpinnings of adopting an approach based on collaborative enquiry and principles borrowed from action research, the practical considerations of conducting research in one's own organization, and outlines the ways in which I have tried to adhere to the characteristics of good action research.

I then present the results of the feedback sessions before closing with a discussion of the implications exposed by my findings for theory and practice.

9.4 Project 3 methodology

In this section I outline the considerations that I made in deciding on my research method and the decision to adopt a research approach based on collaborative enquiry and principles borrowed from action research. I then go on to consider some of the practical issues and implication of conducting research in one's own organization before outlining my choice of research sample and data collection methods. I close this section by outlining the way in which I have tried to adhere to the principles of action research as defined by Eden and Huxham (1996).

9.4.1 Research design

My research design for Project 3 was predicated on the basis that individuals and organizations function on the basis of the information that they receive (Nadler, 1977: 5) but that feedback at best can only initiate change, it cannot bring it about. People in groups making use of feedback can create change (Nadler, 1977: 144). My desire therefore was to adopt a research design that required the active involvement of key stakeholders from the client organization in a process of collaborative enquiry using data based feedback and principles borrowed from action research.

The Project 3 protocol was designed in such a way as to directly engage with members of the organization's key stakeholder groups in a joint exploration of the problems with the performance management systems identified in Project 1 and Project 2. By feeding back and sharing information about *what is* it was hoped to create a potent force to move people towards *what should be* and *what could be*. By creating valid pictures of ourselves in this way we can develop images of where we can and would like to be (Nadler, 1976).

In this context it can be seen that my research protocol was designed in such a way as to support one of the key principles of action research; that of providing a vehicle for organizational learning (Coghlan, 2001; Coghlan and Brannick, 2001). Through my research my intent was to encourage the organization to change (Eden and Huxham, 1996).

The overall structure of Project 3 was based on a pilot session followed by a series of participative data based feedback sessions using a combination of one-to-one and group sessions. Following these feedback sessions the results were collated and dialogued with members of the organization in order to elicit and capture a final further round of feedback which has been incorporated in to the final report. This is analogous to Schon's concept of 'double loop learning' in which the basic assumptions behind one's views are confronted and tested publicly (Anderson, 1997). "An approach that combines articulateness about one's goals and advocacy of one's own position, with an invitation to others to confront one's views" (Anderson, 1997). This is also analogous to Morgan's definition of double-loop learning which he suggests depends on taking a "double look" at the findings (1997: 87).

Alternate approaches considered

A range of approaches were considered for conducting this final project including:

- Producing a written report outlining my Project 1 and Project 2 research findings for dissemination to the top team and the HR community.
- Conducting '1-to-1' feedback sessions with all key stakeholders and contributors.
- Running a series of focus groups.
- Using the Delphi feedback technique.

Selected approach

The selection of the chosen approach was based on a number of theoretical and practical considerations and on my desire to fully engage with the key stakeholder groups in order to create an energy for change within the groups that could effect that change.

In the first instance I wanted the sessions to be interactive so that I could add further richness to the evidence that I already had in order to further contribute to and extend my previous theoretical and practitioner contribution in Project 1 and Project 2. Producing a written report therefore can be seen as inappropriate as it would have been unlikely to elicit the level of feedback that was available from interactive discussions of the feedback. Similarly, as the Delphi process is a cyclic time-delayed non-interactive process (Dick, 2000), this method would not have met my objectives either.

The research protocol selected was interactive face-to-face data based feedback sessions in both one-to-one and group settings.

9.4.2 Action Research

Action research had been traditionally defined as an approach to research that is based on a collaborative problem-solving relationship between researcher and client which aims at both solving a problem and generating new knowledge (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 3). It involves both *action* and *research* (Dick, 1993; Eden and Huxham, 1996; Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

A significant feature of action research is that the purpose of research is not simply or even primarily to contribute knowledge in a field, or even to develop emancipatory theory, but rather to forge a more direct link between intellectual knowledge/theory and action so that each inquiry contributes directly to the flourishing of human persons and their communities.

(Heron and Reason, 1997).

Action research rejects the separation between thought and action that underlies the pure applied distinction that has traditionally characterised management and social research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 8). It uses a 'plan, act, observe, reflect' process to manage the action and learning cycles (Dick, 1997). Because it is based on direct action and involvement with the client organization, action research can therefore be seen to be highly suited to practitioner applications (Dick, 1993) and my research purposes.

9.4.3 Self and organizational learning

From a personal and professional perspective I was particularly keen in Project 3 to adopt a participative enquiry approach, whilst borrowing principles from action research, for a numbers of reasons:

- It involved direct engagement with key stakeholder groups in a deliberate and shared intent to change the organization.

- It helped forge a more direct link between intellectual knowledge / theory and action (Heron and Reason, 1997).
- It extended my learning within my doctorate by adopting a method and protocol that I have not hitherto employed.
- It provided a vehicle for self-review that enabled my self-development and learning in a 'real life' organizational context.

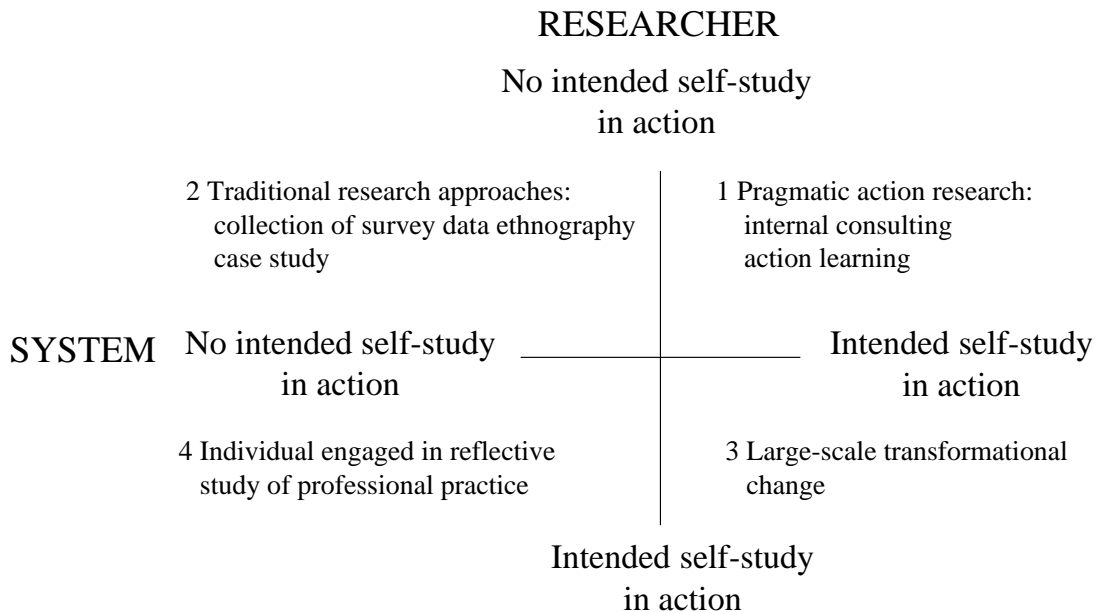


Figure 65: Focus of researcher and system
(Adapted from Coghlan, 2001)

Whilst my approach was not 'cyclic' in nature, it was aligned to the key purpose of action research in that I declared a deliberate intent to trigger a change in the organization (Eden and Huxham, 1996). Whilst this intent may not succeed, conducting this third project has allowed me to demonstrate the value of my research to the client organization and to the wider practitioner community. In addition, Project 3 has provided a vehicle for my personal learning, as well as providing some form of closure, both at a personal and a researcher level, to my research.

My approach can be seen to align with quadrant four in the model in Figure 65 above, in that I was involved in reflective self-study, but there was no explicit intent for self-study within the system, i.e. there was no intent for self-study by the sponsoring organization.

9.4.4 Practical implications of conducting research in your own organization

In conducting research within my own organization I have found that involving the top team provided me as a practitioner-researcher with excellent personal visibility. However this exposure also had the potential down-side that it can be very high risk

as any information about the organization can be intensely political (Kakabadse, 1984).

As a member of the sponsoring organization, the way that I behaved as a feedback consultant, and the way in which the data are presented can have a particularly impactful effect on the degree of resistance to or acceptance of that data (Nadler, 1976: 181). For the feedback to be effective it was important that participants were open and receptive, so I needed to be conscious of any comments or anything in my behaviour that might trigger a defensive reaction.

Augmenting my normal role within the research enterprise in this way was not easy; in fact at times it was very difficult and awkward (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 49). My intent was to continue working for the client organization after completing my research and therefore the whole research process needed to be managed very carefully.

9.4.5 Presentation style

Adopting a non-threatening objective third party perspective and style was important in trying to separate out my researcher and practitioner roles, but in practice this was difficult to achieve (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001). My experience shows however that presenting the data from an informed bystander perspective helped to encourage the recipients to concentrate on the message, rather than the messenger.

The presentation of my data was 'selective' in order to ensure that the audience was not 'over-loaded'. I pre-prepared the key prompts and questions so that I was able to steer the dialogue in the direction of what I perceived to be the key messages and issues exposed by my research and the previous feedback sessions. I was cognisant however that I needed to be able to respond flexibly to respondents' questions and issues as they arose so that I could facilitate the sessions and interactions effectively. The intervention prompts and questions were contained within the notes section of the feedback instrument (see Appendix U starting on page 337).

In conducting this research I was keen to keep Dick's (1993) recommendation in mind that it is important to maintain 'relevancy' for the client organization.

9.4.6 Feedback

As stated earlier, feedback can be seen as threatening and can lead to the creation of anxiety and resistance, leading ultimately to no change (Nadler, 1977: 145). The feedback therefore needed to be done gently so that there was no feeling of blame which might have triggered the defense mechanisms to slip in to place (Borchert, 2002: 2).

My aim in conducting Project 3 was to try to create a positive force for change that was directed towards improving the effectiveness of the organizations' performance management system, and as such, it was important not to create fear and anxiety in either of the key stakeholder groups. To this end I decided to conduct this feedback *face-to-face* as evidence shows that face-to-face meetings are more effective than written reports (Nadler, 1976: 181).

Feedback has the potential to create both energy and direction for change (see Figure 66 below). In order to ensure that this change is in a 'positive' direction the feedback sessions needed to be managed carefully.

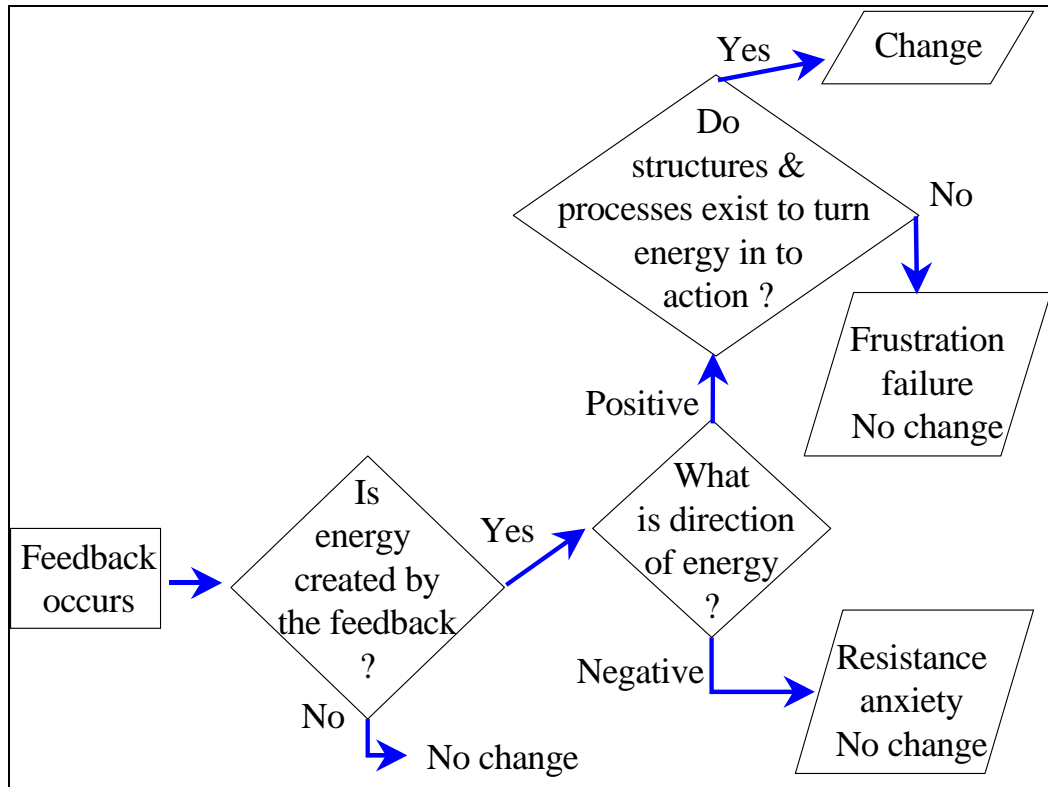


Figure 66: Possible effects of feedback
(Adapted from Nadler, 1977: 146)

The feedback sessions were intended to be conducted as a dialogue using the pre-prepared structure and intervention questions. The feedback instrument was used as a guide for the dialogue, not as a constraint. The aim was to share the key findings from Project 1 and Project 2 in order to encourage the respondents to acknowledge or deny my findings and conclusions such that we created a positive energy for change to address the perceived problems, and to encourage the creation of structures and process to facilitate this change.

In order to be responsive to the respondents' feedback I used the feedback instrument to guide the dialogue. However, if the respondents wanted to go down a particular avenue then I allowed the dialogue to progress down this route until I felt that we had reached a point that was too far off track. As a result of following this approach I did not stick rigidly to the pre-prepared script. Being flexible and responsive in this way allowed me to contextualise my intervention questions and provocations using the words and language of the respondents. In conducting these feedback sessions I was keen to generate a good level of rapport so that I was perceived as non-threatening and so that I was effective in stimulating a good level of dialogue.

In constructing my feedback instrument I tried to adhere to Nadler's recommended guidelines (1977) for effective feedback, shown below:

1. Relevant - In order to create energy for change the feedback information needs to be meaningful to the recipients. For the purposes of Project 3 the feedback audiences were chosen specifically because the topic related directly to an issue that they are currently wrestling with and sat within their sphere of influence.
2. Understandable - The findings needed to be presented in a way that made them easy to understand. The form, language and symbols used were aligned to the norms of language within the organization.
3. Descriptive - The data needed to be presented in such a way as to enable the receiver to relate the data to real-life events. The feedback instrument was structured in such a way as to include examples of both the detail and the affect.
4. Verifiable - Special care was needed to ensure that too much information was not presented, otherwise people would have become overwhelmed. This needed to be managed carefully as my experience in the pilot and the early feedback sessions showed that that too little information left respondents asking distracting questions, whilst too much information left little time for gathering input from the respondents. To overcome these challenges the feedback instrument was limited to a focus on the key messages, and I produced a separate handout containing the supporting data.
5. Impactable - In selecting respondents to receive the feedback I was keen to select people who would feel that they were able to do something with the feedback. The target audiences for these sessions were chosen to ensure that the feedback was seen to largely concern issues that were under their control and that they had the power to do something about; namely, the top team and the HR team responsible for the values and competencies.
6. Comparative - I was aware that when receiving feedback people form their own evaluation of the data. To help facilitate a positive impact the findings were presented in such a way as to enable comparisons to be made between different elements and competencies.
7. Unfinalised - As stated earlier, feedback can only be a stimulus for action. The aim in Project 3 was to present my research findings as a starting point for more in-depth problem identification and resolution. As part of the introduction to each session, I stressed the fact that I was presenting evidence on a number of perceived problems and that the purpose of each of the sessions was to get the respondent's input on whether we needed to do anything about the findings, and if so what were their suggestions for action.

9.4.7 Sample selection

Given that change is most likely to occur in an organization when individuals feel a need to change (Nadler, 1977: 19), and that information plays an important role in motivating change (Bennis, Berlew, Schein, and Steel, 1973), providing information

and awareness of a problem is the first important step toward finding a solution (Morgan, 1997: 90).

Change has to start at the top because defensive leaders are likely to disown any transformation coming from below (Argyris, 1991: 106). On this basis feedback is most effective if it starts at the top and involves those people who have the power to influence to change the organization and its processes (Nadler, 1976: 179). To facilitate this I selected two very important stakeholder groups to receive my feedback. Firstly, I selected the organization's top team, who were the people who I had interviewed in Project 1. This is the group of people who have the most power to change the organization. For my second target group I selected the group HR director and her team, who have responsibility for implementing the new values and competencies. This is a key group of people who have the power to change the performance management system and the supporting processes.

A key objective in Project 3 was to generate a good level of involvement and participation of key stakeholder groups. This rationale was based on evidence that the greater the level of involvement and participation of the organization's members in the feedback process, the greater the awareness of problems in the organization and the more likely that positive energy for change will result (Alderfer & Ferris, 1972 in Nadler, 1976: 182).

To maximise the effectiveness of the feedback I presented my research finding to the HR community as a group and to the top team on a 'one-to-one' basis. The motivation behind these choices related to the lack of access to the top team as a single group and because of the perceived high-risk nature of trying to feedback to all of the top team at the same time. I also wanted these session to be interactive and to get the respondents to offer their opinions and ideas for action. In Project 1 the top team members had been quite nervous about sharing their thoughts and ideas with other members of the organization and they had wanted to keep their views private - I felt therefore that it would be unproductive to run the top team session in plenary.

Conversely, the decision was made to present the finding to the HR community as a group. This decision was predicated on the basis that the HR director, who was responsible for the competencies, felt that presenting the findings to the group in plenary would be the best vehicle for stimulating a good level of dialogue and input from the participants. She also felt that by conducting the feedback session in this way that the group interaction would be synergistic.

Table 38 below shows the details of the feedback sessions that were conducted in Project 3.

Respondent(s)	Duration	Recorded	Transcribed
Group CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
Wholesale CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
Global Services CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
ISP CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
R&D CEO	30 mins	✓	✓
Retail CEO	Excluded -	left business	Jan 2005
HR Group (13 people including the HR Director)	Two hours	✓	✓

Table 38: Project 3 data capture sessions

9.4.8 Feedback instrument structure

The feedback instrument (attached at Appendix U on page 337) is based on the outline structure shown below:

- Introductory section to outline the purpose of the feedback session.
- Summary of Project 1 findings.
- Summary of Project 2 findings.
- Overall summary and conclusions.

9.4.9 Data capture

Each session was recorded and extensive notes taken. The recordings were then transcribed and analysed. Running alongside this feedback and data capture process I maintained a research journal that captured my personal thoughts and reflections on the actions and outcomes. Before and after each feedback session I recorded my personal understanding of the critical issues that I considered relevant and important in the given intervention. After the session I recorded what went well and what could be improved, both within the process and with respect to my personal behaviour using a set of self-review questions (Dick, 2002) (see Table 39 on page 215).

9.4.10 Pilot session

A pilot session was conducted with a member of the GSLT who actively 'role played' the part of one of the top team. He also agreed to provide me with feedback on both my personal style and the effectiveness and ease of understanding of the feedback instrument.

In conducting this pilot session I was keen to check that I was adhering to the 'best practice' guidance detailed previously (page 202), and to ensure that I gained input on what data to include and what data could possibly be excluded. I was also keen to

learn which elements of my facilitation style worked well and which needed to be improved.

This pilot session was recorded and reviewed by my supervisor. Specific feedback was sought on:

- My intervention and presentation style.
- Whether the message was articulated clearly.
- Whether the message itself was clear.
- The suitability of the presentation material.
- The appropriateness and effectiveness of the intervention prompts and questions.
- How well the discussion was facilitated.

The pilot feedback session was extremely useful and provided very valuable feedback on how the feedback instrument and my intervention approach could be improved.

As a result of this pilot session a number of changes were made to the feedback instrument, and these are detailed below. The first change made to the feedback instrument was to add in an extra emphasis to the introduction on the purpose of the session. It was important to ensure that the respondents saw the session as interactive and not as a 'one way' exercise, where I would be providing a set of pre-prepared answers. The aim was very much to stimulate a level of dialogue in order to engage the key stakeholders in thinking and talking about the implications of the findings and about the ways in which they needed to respond to them.

The following statements were added to the session introduction in the feedback instrument:

"My objectives for this session are to present back the collective top team view, to present a top level view of the GSLT survey results and to high-light some of the 'possible problems' with the competencies as they stand - in the context of using them within our appraisal system."

*"A key aim of this session is to **get your suggestions** (said with emphasis) on whether we need to take any action as a result of my findings...and if so what?"*

The second change was to provide a copy of the feedback instrument for each respondent in 'loose leaf' format so that we could easily refer back to any of the slides. It was found to be particularly useful to have slide 2, entitled "The three elements of alignment", in loose leaf format as we referred to this slides several times throughout the session.

The third change involved removing some data and condensing the key findings from the previous research projects on to just two slides; one covering the key findings from Project 1 and the other one covering the key findings from Project 2. The key here was not to overload the recipients and to ensure that the key messages were clear and succinct so that they could be easily understood.

The fourth change was to provide a closing slide that provided a summary of the findings; this was constructed in such a way as to create a final summary

'provocation'. The aim of this final slide was to summarise the key findings in a way that my pilot interviewee described as providing the "so what?". It was felt that the best way to make an impact was to end with a bang rather than a whimper. My pilot interviewee also suggested that by being provocative I would be more likely to get an 'active' response that would lead to further action.

The experience in the pilot session showed that there was a need to have the supporting data to hand but that this was best provided as a separate hand-out that could be referred to as and when necessary. By including this information as a handout it was felt that this would help to maintain the flow of the planned interventions and to help prevent the possibility of getting 'side-tracked' in to explaining the data behind the findings. It was also an important enabler in getting the recipients to trust that the findings were reliable and valid so that they could concentrate their energies on what the organization should and could do about the findings rather than questioning the data.

The final change to the feedback instrument, resulting from the pilot session, involved a number of amendments and additions to the pre-prepared intervention questions and provocations in order to ensure that the interventions were focussed and succinct and encouraged the respondents to speak. Further minor changes were made to the instrument as a result of the some of the post intervention reviews.

9.4.11 Action research characteristics

My research method was primarily one of data based feedback sessions in a process of collaborative enquiry supported by principles 'borrowed' from action research. Whilst my research therefore may not be considered 'action research' in the purist sense, in that it was not cyclical in nature, my purpose was aligned to the core concept of action research of taking action with key stakeholders in the client organization in order to create change. In addition, my approach included 'cycles' of personal action and reflection, leading to personal learning. As such it seemed good practice to try to adhere to the characteristics of good action research defined by Eden and Huxham (1996).

In writing-up this research project I have tried to demonstrate how I have applied these characteristics; in addition the paragraphs below provide an explicit articulation against each of Eden and Huxham (1996) '*ideal*' characteristics in order to expose my thinking and approach:

1) What change in the organization is intended?

The approach taken for Project 3 was based on an integral involvement with the key stakeholder groups to change and improve the way in which the organization's performance management system functions. This action was based on a specific intent to address the perceived problems with the use and application of the competencies identified in Project 1 and Project 2 in order to improve the degree of alignment and the effectiveness of the PMS, and ultimately to improve the strength of the system.

By presenting a description of the findings from the previous research, and steering the discussion and debate, my intent was to help the organization learn and to

stimulate further analysis of the problems identified - in effect to move the target audiences from the *descriptive* to the *prescriptive*.

By including all of the top team members in the research and the HR team responsible for the new competencies, I was addressing the two key stakeholder groups who have the power to change the system.

2) Informing other contexts

The findings from Project 3 emerged as the research process and feedback interventions were conducted and as the data analysis was completed between each feedback intervention. By reference to the results section (9.6 on page 224), it can clearly be seen that the results of Project 3 have implications beyond the domain of this project in relation to the way in which the new competencies have been deployed and employed within the client organization.

The results from this research can be used therefore to inform other organizations introducing new competencies and a competency-based performance management approach. These results can also be used to inform other change initiatives within the Global Services organization where, based on the evidence from Project 1 and Project 2, it is likely that people will have different constructs and understanding on a range of topics.

In writing up and discussing the project findings I have engaged in an on-going process of socialisation with both practitioners and other researchers. I have been keen to try to promote an interest from other practitioners in how these findings could be applied in similar situations that they might encounter. I have also engaged with other researchers in order to help promote both their thinking and mine and to create a dialogue in a way that might help inform their own theory development.

By encouraging this dialogue, and starting what Sandberg refers to as an ongoing "argumentative discourse" (2005: 213), I have found that it has helped me to develop my thinking by providing an opportunity for me to present, defend and refine my knowledge claims.

In writing up this project I have tried to do so in such a way that my findings are accessible, and in a way that demonstrates that they have some implications beyond the domain of the project. I have also tried to ensure that I have provided an evidence trail from the data to the conclusions by including extensive referencing from the individual transcripts in the results section.

3) Valuing theory and theory elaboration

In conducting this research my aim was to try to articulate the way in which my findings have been able to fulfil the requirements of my sponsor, whilst at the same time valuing the theory that informs my research. The emphasis of this research reflects my practical orientation, but I was also keen to demonstrate the generalisability of the ideas expressed, which extend beyond the setting in which they were designed. In doing this however, it was important to remember that when using an action research based approach that there is always a balance to be struck between

'relevance' to the client organization and the ability to generalise the findings (Dick, 1993).

In providing the feedback to the two stakeholder groups I was keen to demonstrate the effects and impact of the way in which an individual's interpretation of events and understanding impacts the effectiveness and degree of alignment of understanding.

Observations about the specific situation have raised broader questions that are of interest to a wider community and a range of contexts. Perhaps most importantly however, my research has exposed issues about the use of a competency-based appraisal system that can be used to develop theory that will lead to a more reliable and more robust development of practice. In this respect my research can be seen to address the need identified by Bowen (2004: 217) for HR practice to be guided by HR theory.

4) Design of tools, techniques, models and methods

The key methodological contribution has been the creation of an intervention protocol, across the three research projects, that has allowed the client organization to obtain a clear and detailed picture of the 'as is' situation with respect to the use and application of a set of competencies within the performance management system. The protocol, at each stage of the research process, has been fully and extensively detailed such that it is amenable to use by other researchers and organizations investigating similar problems.

The research protocol in Project 1 was explicitly designed to address the theoretical considerations expressed in personal construct theory about the subjective nature of reality and the unconscious automaticity of being (Bargh and Chartrand, 1999). The protocol employed was designed to obtain a true and accurate understanding of the top team's assessment criteria 'in use', rather than just their espoused views (Argyris, 1991: 103).

By adopting the prescribed best practice approach for the creation of competencies (Boam and Sparrow, 1992) and by employing the use of repertory grid and laddering, I was able to demonstrate some of the implication for practice of employing such an approach.

The research protocol in Project 2 was designed to address as wide an audience as possible in order to capture input from the multiple cultural environments of the GSLT.

And finally, in Project 3 the research protocol was crafted in such a way as to generate the active involvement and participation of the key stakeholder groups within the client organization.

5) Emergent theory

In conducting this final research project I tried to put aside my pre-understanding about the use and application of competency-based performance management system so that I could be open to other views, and so that I was actively listening for all

perspectives that might support or contradict extant theory. By not being constrained by my pre-understanding I was able to pick-up subtle components of the process that I was not previously aware of, such as the use of 'intuition'.

Putting aside my pre-understanding was particularly helpful during the data exploration and analysis stage and helped me see alternative ways of understanding the data, and in so doing, provided challenges to the extant theory. As the process progressed I reflected back on my pre-understanding as theory started to emerge and checked my findings against areas of theory that I had not previously explored, such as 'intuition'.

Before conducting this analysis I would not have anticipated uncovering some of the key findings.

Through an iterative process and the repeated use of the feedback instrument I was able to make changes to the feedback instrument and the intervention questions in order to 'test out' the finding that had emerged from previous interventions.

The benefit of taking this interactive, iterative, participative approach was that I was able to test out the emerging theory in conjunction with members of the client organization in an explicit manner and to seek direct feedback on my understanding and interpretation of the data. Not only did this allow me to validate my interpretations, but it also helped achieve consensual validity (Sandberg, 2005: 62).

The approach employed allowed me to explore various individual components of the use of a competency-based approach, such as ambiguity within and between competencies, and also the higher level concepts such as the ability of the organization to define all of the behaviours needed, and the way in which much of the assessment process appears to be automatic and unconscious.

By adopting this interactive intervention style I was able to explore the systemic relationships, as well as the detail of the individual components with direct involvement of members of the client organization's key stakeholder groups. My final understanding emerged from a synthesis of the intervention session data, my personal reflection on the process and data and through reference to extant theory.

The HR session was particularly helpful in informing, from a third party perspective, what members of the leadership team are perceived to do within their organizational roles.

The dialogous nature of the interventions has proved extremely useful in providing new insights and perspectives that both challenge and support extant theory. Each intervention provided an opportunity to revisit the theory and to capture further data that helped develop my understanding. Figure 67, below, outlines the steps in this process.

The intervention feedback instrument was used as a guide, rather than as a constraint, so that I could tailor my interventions to the audience and address the individual issues that arose in each session as well as exploring previous emergent findings.

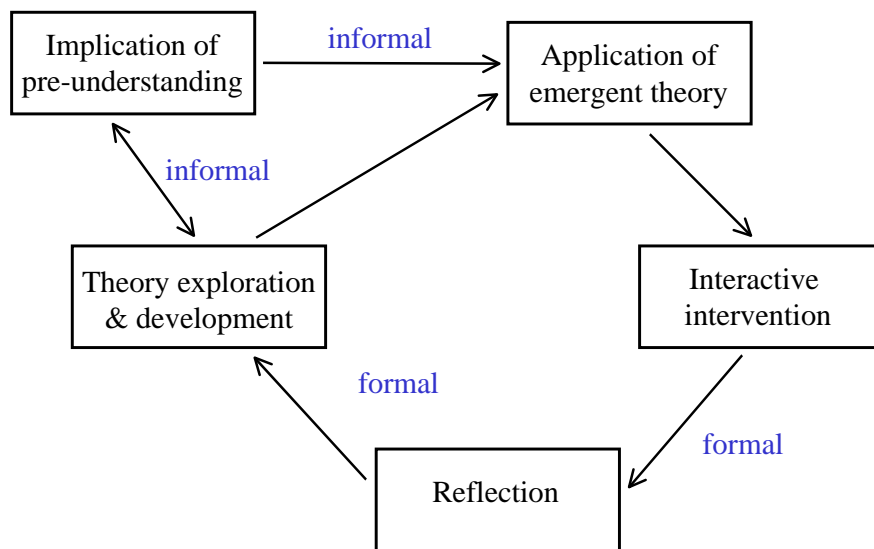


Figure 67: The cyclical process of action research
(Adapted from Eden and Huxham, 2002: 260)

Between each intervention I reflected on the new data and returned to the literature to review and understand the emergent themes.

6) Theory building

My approach to theory development was, as referenced above, based on cycles of *theory-intervention-reflection*. This process allowed me to move from the particular examples captured within the interventions to the creation of general principles.

By sharing the findings from Project 1 and Project 2 interactively with the client organization's key stakeholder groups, I was able to jointly develop theory from practice.

7) What is the consumer intended to take from the intervention?

The outputs of Project 3 are the results of a dialogue with key stakeholders who have the power to change the organization. The interventions were based on a description of the problems, identified in Project 1 and Project 2, with the use and application of the competencies.

My Project 3 research protocol was based on an approach that interactively engaged key organizational stakeholders in an analysis and discussion of the research findings from Project 1 and Project 2. This approach was taken firstly to enable the key stakeholder group members to acknowledge or dispute my interpretation of the research findings, and then secondly, to jointly dialogue what should and could be done to address the perceived problems. In this way the organization's key stakeholders were actively involved in forming a prescription for further action to address the perceived problems.

The key findings that the organization is intended to take from the interventions are presented in the results section starting on page 224. This research approach has enabled the organization's key stakeholder groups to obtain a clear picture of 'as is' in order to develop their thinking about 'what should be' and 'what could be'.

8) Systematic method and orderly approach to reflection

In undertaking this research I managed to negotiate a 'full collaborating partnership' with the client organization's key stakeholder groups (Rowan, 1981 as reported in Partington, 2002a: 262).

In conducting this research intervention, in conjunction with senior members of my own organization, it was extremely important to be seen as a competent interventionist as I wanted to both maintain my professional credibility and to continue my career after the research was completed (Coghlan, 2001). To facilitate this I was keen to demonstrate rigour and thoroughness in my approach, and also to leverage referential credibility of the top team and the HR director by making it very clear who was sponsoring the research and whose input the research is based upon. I addressed the sponsorship and input issues 'right up front' in the introduction section of the feedback instrument.

To help ensure that I displayed a competent intervention style I pre-planned the sessions as well as the questions for my reflection. I also sought feedback on my personal style and practice within the pilot session and the HR session. My aim, during the feedback sessions, was to ensure that I maintained a very high-degree of self-awareness, of not only what I was trying to convey, but also how I was acting during these sessions. I made a conscious deliberate effort to do this by "reflecting in action" (Dick, 2004).

Using a collaborative enquiry approach, supported by action research principles, has allowed me to directly engage with members of the client organization's key stakeholder groups to jointly address an important organizational issue. Adopting this approach has also afforded me the opportunity to focus on my own personal development at the same time. This *intervention-reflection* cycle was particularly useful for developing and refining my intervention style and approach.

At the beginning of the Project 3 intervention process I articulated a very clear intent for the project and I established a process by which I would reflect on the action and my learning both before and after the action.

In setting out the purpose of the research and the individual interventions I was very clear of the research aims. Throughout the whole process and within the interventions especially, I ensured that I kept a focus on these aims at all times. I made the purpose very clear to the participants in the intervention sessions by explaining at the outset that my objectives for the session were to present the findings from Project 1 and Project 2 and to highlight some of the 'possible problems' with the competencies as they stand. I also made it expressly clear that the key aim of the session was to get *their* suggestions on whether we needed to take any action as a result of my findings...and if so what.

The feedback instrument was structured in such a way as to lead the participants through the previous research findings and to encourage a dialogue. As I did not have a precise idea of the outcome of the sessions I used the feedback instrument as a guide, not as a constraint. I was keen to ensure that I was true to my purpose of sharing and engaging with the participants and at the same time being able to respond to their feedback and amend the intervention process in response to the participants input.

This research project provided an excellent vehicle for my personal learning based on personal reflection and seeking feedback from participants on my intervention style. Based on the principle that reflection 'after the event' is helped by careful observation 'during the event', good planning and in the surfacing of assumptions, 'before the event' (Dick, 2004). I completed the self-review questionnaire (Table 39 below), before and after each intervention session. These questions are derived from Argyris and Schon's 'theory of action' (Dick, 2004). The purpose of this activity was to become aware of the assumptions guiding my actions, to identify if the outcomes supported or disproved my assumptions, and to review the effectiveness of my intervention style. The self-review questionnaire asked a range of 'what' and 'why' questions. The 'A' questions relate to practice and the 'B' questions relate to theory.

Throughout the research process I kept a journal in which I recorded my ideas, feelings and questions. Before each of the intervention sessions I read through my journal and all of the previous self-review questionnaires in order to revisit the learning points and previous ideas. Immediately after each intervention I listened to the recording of the session and made notes in my journal of the things that had gone well and the things that could be improved. I actively used my journal at all stages of the research process. Moving forwards I will continue to use it to help facilitate my learning by making entries as I talk about and defend my findings as new ideas and issues will inevitably arise.

Before the feedback intervention:

- 1a What do I think are the salient features of the situation that I face?
- 1b Why do I think these are the salient features? What evidence do I have for this belief?
- 2a If I am correct about the situation, what outcomes do I believe are desirable?
- 2b Why do I think those outcomes are desirable in that situation?
- 3a If I am correct about the situation and the desirability of the outcomes, what actions do I think will give me the outcomes?
- 3b Why do I think these actions will deliver those outcomes in that situation?

After the feedback intervention:

- 1a Did I get the outcomes that I wanted? Or, more realistically, what were the outcomes that I got, and how well do these accord with those that I sought?
- 1b To the extent that I got them, do I still want them? Why, or why not?
- 1c To the extent that I didn't get them, why not?

- 2a In what ways was I mistaken about the situation?
- 2b Which of my assumptions about the situation misled me?
- 2c What have I learned? What different conclusions will I reach about similar situations in the future?
- 3a In what ways was I mistaken about the desirability of the pursued outcomes?
- 3b Which of my reasons for favouring those outcomes misled me?
- 3c What have I learned? What outcomes will I try to pursue when next I'm in such a situation?
- 4a Did I succeed in carrying out the planned actions? If not, what prevented or discouraged me? What have I learned about myself, my skill and my attitudes?
- 4b If I did carry out the actions, in what ways was I mistaken about the effect they would have? Which of my assumptions about the action misled me?
- 4c What have I learned? What actions will I try next time I am pursuing similar outcomes in a similar situation?

Table 39: Self-reflection and learning questionnaire

In summary, by reflecting on the process as I conducted it I was able to make changes to the process and my approach and therefore facilitate my own learning. The ownership of these thoughts and views helped me foster a sense of control whilst processing the multiple, often new, issues that arose. The completion of my journal and the self-review questionnaires were also helpful tools for reflecting on what had gone well and where both the process and my intervention style could be improved.

9) Data exploration and analysis

The basis of the approach adopted for data exploration and analysis was to capture, code and classify the data into key themes as an iterative process.

Each of the feedback sessions were transcribed and reviewed by me. At the start of the data exploration and analysis stage I was not aware of what would be important, so, following Partington's (2002a) guidance I transcribed everything. This process helped me to get up close to the data and to start to see some of the emerging key trends very early on.

The initial structure for the data analysis was mirrored on the structure of the feedback instrument, with each transcript being analysed to identify the specific comments against each of the key stages of the intervention. These data were then transferred into a separate database where the responses to each element of the feedback instrument were collected together. The data from the top team sessions were pooled together but kept separate and distinct from the HR data so that comparisons could be made between the two stakeholder groups.

In order to make the data more manageable it was reduced down through an iterative process of identifying commonality of meaning (Baker, 2002: 226). The key at this

stage was to choose a strategy for data reduction that did not impoverish the information that remained (Hill, 1995) or create categories of meaning that were too broad that meaning was lost (Reynolds and Gutman, 1984: 18).

Using a process of *constant comparison* (Partington, 2002b: 147) I examined each instance of a data element and compared it with the categorisation and codification of previous elements. If the new instance did not fit an existing category then I created a new category. It was often necessary to go back to the original interview transcripts to contextualise the 'words' and make sure that I associated the respondents meaning, not mine, so as to ensure epistemic reflexivity and validity.

Once all of the separate data elements had been coded, classified and extracted in to the database the resulting data was analysed to identify the key themes.

In line with Eden and Huxham's guidance (1996) the data exploration process was begun after the first feedback intervention and continued throughout the series of interventions culminating in the final analysis process described above. By becoming sensitised to the emerging trends early on I was able to go back to the literature between each interventions to identifying potentially supporting or disconfirming literature. In doing this I followed Dick's guidance (1997); I searched for sources that agreed with my interpretations and also sources that disagreed with my interpretations and the underlying reasons to help explain why. In this way I was able to focus and tighten my interpretations as the cycles of *intervention-reflection* progressed.

Careful watch was kept for any outlying data and any surprising responses (Singh and Dickson, 2002: 127). In order to ensure inter-subject reliability and consensual validity I took the opportunity, during the analysis and writing phase, to discuss my interpretation of the data with members of the client organization through a process of 'argumentative discourse' (Sandberg, 2005: 62). This approach also had the added benefit in that it helped strengthen my thinking. Through discussing the findings and my interpretations with the HR director, one of the top team and some of the members of the HR team I was able to clarify my thinking and my understanding whilst at the same time achieving consensual validity.

By taking a multi-intervention approach, theory emerged from the results of the feedback intervention findings and from the process of my own reflection - as such theory development was inductive (Blaikie, 2000: 100). This iterative process proved extremely effective, it is my view that most of the valuable insights could not have been foreseen.

10) Interconnected cycles

In the strictest sense this is where my research approach differs from the classical definition of action research, in that I did not adopt an approach using interconnected cycles of action, but one where I used a series of interventions with each of the top team members and the HR team.

Between each intervention, as referenced earlier, I took the opportunity to review my data and to identify the emerging trends. I also reflected on my personal learning and went back to the literature to test and validate my findings. It was at this point that I

brought in my pre-understanding and questioned my own perspective which showed that the emerging data went beyond and contradicted my existing perspective on the use and application of competencies. It was at this stage that I realised that my perspective was very functionalist in nature and that my pre-understanding predisposed me to see the world through a very rational logical lens.

The data that emerged from my findings demonstrated that there are some weaknesses in this perspective when applied to the 'real world'.

11) Validity

In relation to Eden and Huxham's (1996) recommendation for ensuring validity in action research they major on the issues of validity being 'grounded in action' rather than 'grounded in data'. Because, as referenced above, my approach did not mirror the classical cyclic nature of action research it is at this point that I diverge from their recommended characteristics for demonstrating validity in action research. Instead I have adopted the approach defined by Sandberg (2005) who outlines the ways in which validity in qualitative research can be achieved.

Firstly, communicative validity was achieved by establishing a community of interpretation to form an agreed understanding between me as the researcher and the research participants, in the key stakeholder groups, about the purpose of the research. The letter inviting people to attend the HR group session, which I drafted for the HR director to send out (see Appendix U on page 336) outlined the purpose of the research and the need for the participants' active involvement in dialoguing the previous research findings and in the discussion of what action was needed to address the perceived problems. An extract of this invitation is included below:

Through a process of sharing and discussion I would like for us to explore together the implications of Paul's research findings and what we might want to do about them.

The session will place specific emphasis on:

- Whether or not we currently have an agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour; *what good (behaviour) looks like*.
- Whether it is possible or desirable to try to define all of the leadership behaviours needed.
- Whether the competencies cover all of the competencies needed by the organization.
- Whether it is realistic or desirable to expect there to be a common language to describe leadership behaviour.
- What the implications of the research findings are on the leadership team's ability to role model behaviour.
- Understanding the current degree of alignment between the top team's expectations and the GSLT's understanding.
- Why some of the competencies seem to be better understood than others.
- The implications of the fact that some of the behaviours identified by the top team are seen as inappropriate by the GSLT.
- The implications of the findings on the existing appraisal system.

This is an important subject for us as a leadership team and I would like you to make every effort to attend. The outputs from the session will be determined in the meeting. Firstly, I personally believe *we should be reflecting on where we are and then determine what next from this session*

At the beginning of each intervention I reminded the participants of the purpose of the session and the need for their active involvement in deciding what action was needed to address the perceived problems:

*"A key aim of this session is to **get your suggestions** (said with emphasis) on whether we need to take any action as a result of my findings...and if so what?"*

Secondly, the intervention was conducted in the form of a dialogue because this style of approach helps to convey openness towards the research purpose (Sandberg, 2005: 54). By engaging in a genuine dialogue with the key stakeholders I was able to gradually arrive at a clearer understanding of how the respondents perceived the use and application of a competency-based performance management systems and about the specific implementation and application within the client organization.

Thirdly, when analysing the intervention transcripts I strove for coherence by making interpretations of the respondents' statements that were consistent with both the immediate context of surrounding statements and the transcript as a whole. When I had analysed how each of the top team had understood the problems I shifted the analysis to the top team as a group. At this stage I then compared the top team results with the HR results to identify any similarities or differences. Details of these results and comparisons are shown in the results section.

Finally, I sought to achieve communicative validity by discussing my interpretation of the data with a number of practitioners including one of the top team, the HR director, a number of the HR team members from the HR group intervention session, and finally with a number of organization members who were interested in my research. My findings were also further refined as a result of discussion with my supervisor and my supervisory panel.

Through this process of dialogue a level of inter-subjective truth was achieved, (Gadamer, 1960/1994 in Sandberg, 2005: 56).

From a transgressive validity perspective I was keen to search for differences and contradictions in the data, rather than for coherence. By analysing the responses to each of the intervention questions and provocations I was able to identify where responses had been provided that ran counter to other responses. In one top team session for example the respondent had very different views about the effect and desired action in relation to the behaviour that had been identified in Project 2 as 'not appropriate'. In all but one case the top team members felt that this issues needed further discussion, as they were concerned that this statement could be misinterpreted and could lead to bullying. In one case however the top team member said that he did not think that this was worth worrying about.

By applying both communicative validity and transgressive validity I have been able to provide checks for both coherence and contradiction.

12) Why this approach?

In choosing my research approach for Project 3 I was keen to provide some methodological triangulation to my research and to adapt an approach that I had not

used previously during my research activity in order to extend and to add to the richness of my learning.

By adopting a participative research based approach I was able to work very closely with senior members of my own organization on a problem that was of mutual interest. In addition, adopting this approach allowed me to focus on my personal development and my ability as a practitioner and as a researcher, increasing my value and effectiveness for the organization whilst at the same time achieving my research aims.

Adopting this interactive, participative approach was particularly effective in helping the organization identify its own solutions to its own problems. Through these interactive interventions I was able to assist the organization's key stakeholders develop their own self-diagnosis and prescription for action.

13) Triangulation

In conducting my research using 'multiple-methods' in Project 1, Project 2 and Project 3 I have provided a form of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978). By using different research approaches that have led to the same conclusions, I have been able to demonstrate a level of validity in the conclusions reached.

In Project 1 and Project 2 I chose to adopt different research methods, these methods included qualitative methods (one-to-one interviews and laddering), quantitative methods, (survey questionnaire and SPSS analysis), and 'mixed' methods, (repertory grid). My aim in taking this multiple-methods approach has been to provide evidence and triangulation of the validity of my findings and to provide a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal of the problem under study (Jick, 1979: 603). In Project 3 I extended this triangulation further by employing a protocol based on an interactive, participative approach with the client organization's key stakeholder groups using data-based feedback and action research principles. My hope was that this multiple-methods approach would lead to a synthesis and integration of theories. In this sense my approach closely paralleled Denzin's definition of theoretical triangulation (1978: 295).

Exploiting Elden and Chisholm's perspective (1993) the focus of this triangulation activity has been on exposing the similarities and differences between the individual top team respondents and between the HR and top team stakeholder groups. My aim was to use triangulation as a dialectic device to demonstrate the different and similar perspectives and understanding that people have, and to use this to help generate a level of energy and direction for change.

14) History and context

Probably the most important issue for manager-action researchers, particularly if they want to remain and progress within the organization, is managing organizational politics. Undertaking action research in one's own organization is political and might even be considered subversive (Coghlan, 2001: 52).

Whilst my aim was to generate valid and useful information, in order to facilitate free and informed choice in accordance with the theory and practice of action research (Argyris and Schon, 1996), I needed to be cognisant that what I believed constituted 'valid information' could be intensely political (Kakabadse, 1984), and that neglecting political influences would be a recipe for inaction and exclusion (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001: 81).

As a non-HR person acting as a practitioner-researcher within my own organization I felt particularly exposed to those in the organization who saw my research and my findings straying in to their *territory*. To counteract this I sought and gained senior sponsorship from the top team, for the line element, and from the HR director, responsible for the organization's values and competencies, to address the HR aspect.

To further help minimise any possible resistance I presented my findings from a third party perspective where I 'laid out the evidence' before the stakeholder groups and encouraged them to draw out their own conclusions. My role was as the facilitator of the sessions, steering the discussion through a series of carefully chosen pre-prepared comments and questions. It was important in this process to try to ensure that they focussed on the 'message' not the 'messenger'.

15) Dissemination of results

Throughout the research process I have maintained an active dialogue with practitioners from the client organization, fellow researchers and my supervisor in order to share my thoughts and findings. Through a process of 'argumentative discourse' (Sandberg, 2005) I have shared my Project 3 findings and interpretations with one of the top team, the HR director and members of the HR key stakeholder group in order to help develop and refine my thinking.

The main method of disseminating my findings to the academic community will be within my final DBA thesis; I have also presented and defended my findings at a research colloquium at Cranfield University in March 2005 and I have drafted a paper for the Cranfield working paper series. Once my panel has approved my submission I plan to publish my findings in relevant academic journals. I am specifically aiming to write-up and disseminate my findings in such a way that they will be of interest to an audience wider than those within the domain of the research study.

Summary

In conducting this explication of the 'ideal' characteristics of action research, defined by Eden and Huxham (1996) it appears that a number of the characteristics have a degree of overlap. As a result I needed to look at each characteristic in detail as well as standing back to look at the characteristics and the intervention process holistically.

The standards that Eden and Huxham have set for good action research are undoubtedly hard to achieve, and are probably not achievable (Eden and Huxham, 1996: 268). Against this perspective, however, what was important in conducting my research was keeping these standards in mind and using them as a guide. In doing so I believe that they have helped me to achieve effective participatory research with the client organization's key stakeholder groups that will lead the organization to take

action to change a number of components of its performance management system and in so doing, improve the strength of the system.

9.5 Personal learning

In Project 3 I decided to place extra emphasis on my personal development through the completion of a self-review questionnaire (Table 39 on page 215). This questionnaire is derived from Argyris and Schon's 'theory of action' (Dick, 2004). The purpose of this self-review activity was to become aware of the assumptions guiding my actions before the intervention, and afterwards to identify if the outcomes supported or disproved my assumptions.

This approach was based on Dick's guidance that reflection 'after the event' is helped by careful observation 'during the event', good planning and the surfacing of assumptions 'before the event' (Dick, 2004).

Before each of the intervention sessions I read through my research journal and all of the previous self-review questionnaires in order to revisit the learning points and previous ideas. Immediately after each intervention I listened to the recording of the session and made notes in my journal of the things that had gone well and the things that could be improved. I also completed the second half of the self-review questionnaire.

The *intervention-reflection* cycle was particularly useful for developing and refining my intervention style and approach and for identifying improvements that could be made to the feedback instrument and the intervention process.

The main areas of personal learning from Project 3 were:

Data: I soon discovered that different people have different needs in terms of the level of detail and supporting data that is required for them to understand what I was trying to impart. Specific care was needed to provide sufficient detail but not to overload people. I learned that it is best to 'chunk-up' the data, in order not to overwhelm respondents, and to have the detailed data available in a separate data set as a handout.

I only had thirty minutes with each top team members and it was important therefore to get the maximum benefit from their input by keeping the session flowing and focussing the discussion on the key issues. By keeping the detailed data separate I was able to refer to the supporting information only when specifically needed.

The pilot session identified that it was more impactful to end with a provocation slide. As my pilot respondent articulated, "to end with a bang, not a whimper" by ending with a '*so what?*' slide.

Procedural: In the pilot session I found that the intervention questions did not deliver the responses I expected or needed. I found that I received answers that attempted to try to justify why the results were as they were, rather than proposals for how the results could be addressed.

As a result I concluded that I needed an introductory section that clearly outlined the purpose of the session and that I needed to include relevant supporting exemplars throughout the session. I also produced a slide showing the individual components that needed to be aligned that I used to focus the discussion (see appendix U, slide 2 on page 338). This slide proved very useful as it 'centred' the discussion on the theory underpinning my research, and because it generated a lot of useful input from the respondents.

One session was interrupted half way through when the phone rang; the top team member being interviewed then made some comments about another top team member. When he realised that the recorder was still running he demanded that I delete the recording. I managed to negotiate that I would transcribe the recording before I left and show his secretary the evidence that the recording had been deleted. The key lesson from this incident was that as soon any interruption occurred it was safest to stop the recording immediately.

Rapport: Effective rapport was key to an effective session and when I reviewed and reflected on my experience and the session recordings it appeared that it was easier to establish good rapport with people whom I already had a working relationship. It was also apparent from reviewing the session recordings that where I managed to create a good level of rapport with the respondents they were more open and willing to share their thoughts and ideas.

Where I achieved a good degree of rapport and the top team member was clearly interested in the subject matter this was potentially problematic in that I found that the individual talked a lot, making it difficult to adhere to the planned structure and the time available. I also found that in the sessions where I achieved a good level of rapport that it was really important not to let my enthusiasm over take me, and I was careful to reflect on the process as it was happening and thereby to remain 'self-aware'. In two sessions I found my self tempted to offer my own opinions, as I would in my practitioner role, this was something that I was careful to try to guard against.

It was helpful, in establishing rapport, to know what the respondents 'hot buttons' were and their preferred style for receiving feedback. In two top team interviews I was advised to keep the session with the group chief executive "short, sharp and focussed" so I adopted this approach and the session subsequently worked very well.

My view of the feedback process and approach that I adopted in Project 3 is that it is time consuming and repetitive but it is absolutely necessary to gaining understanding and critical if action is to result.

Listening: When I listened to the recordings it soon became clear that during the session there was quite a lot that I did not hear and listening to the recordings allowed me to get a much better, and more complete, understanding of the respondents' views.

In reviewing the recordings it seems that I was not fully listening in some session and that I had a tendency to talk-over people. Listening to the recordings proved invaluable not only in helping me capture everything that was said, but also in identifying ways in which I could improve my intervention style and approach.

Improvements included the use of silence and the use of targeted provocations using the actual words used by my respondents.

When summarising what had been said it was important to use the respondents exact words not mine as I found that when I paraphrased I was challenged on the meaning of what had been said. It was important to listen for the respondents understanding and I found that a useful phrase to employ was "What is important about ...?". I was then able to target my provocations using their specific criteria words; this helped me increase the level of rapport and led to more productive sessions.

I also found that it was easy to unconsciously indicate some form of approval for what was being said so it was important to only speak when necessary and a useful approach was to use the 'psychiatrist's nod' rather than to use any words at all. I concluded that sometimes "less is more".

One of the difficulties that I faced in trying to fulfil the researcher's objective detached observer role was the conflict that I experienced between me as the researcher and me as the practitioner. One specific example of this was that in a number of the session I was asked to offer my opinions and to propose solutions. I was keen that I did not mix my two roles and not offer opinions in any of the sessions. By 'reflecting in action' I was able to keep a watch out for when I might be confusing the two roles and remind myself that "today I am a researcher, not a manager".

In summary, it is my view that by deliberately focussing on my personal learning the exercise was beneficial to me both in this research study and also in my practitioner role.

Given the hectic pace of work life, and a heavy schedule, self-review and reflection, unfortunately, do not appear to be a normal part of practice. Listening to the recordings was quiet 'painful', perhaps because I soon realised that my theory in use was not as good as my theory perceived - this was a very valuable, if painful, exercise.

Self-review and reflection proved invaluable in helping me to improve the content and structure of the intervention, and perhaps most importantly and particularly my personal effectiveness and intervention style. Reviewing the recordings helped me to develop my listening skills and the use of provocations and silence. The improved listening skills and self-review process are something that I am now trying to carry through to my practitioner role in order to improve my effectiveness and value to the organization.

Overall I learned that conducting insider research with such a high-powered audience gave a very high degree of visibility, but that it was also very high risk given that I wanted to continue my career in the client organization, once the research study was complete. Conducting the research study was very rewarding and as an 'insider' I was able to get access to people and a research opportunity that may not have been available to people outside the organization.

9.6 Project 3 Results

In this section I present a summary of the results and the key findings that emerged from the feedback interventions; I have structured this section in such a way as to provide a synthesis of the combined results. For clarity I have identified where there are similarities and difference within and between the individual top team member responses and the HR group responses.

The six principal findings, summarised in Table 40 below, are expanded on within this chapter supported with a number of example statements taken from the transcripts.

1. The findings support the view that two important competencies are missing from the organization's competencies, and that the respondents believe that they should be included retrospectively.
2. The findings support the inference that there is a degree of ambiguity between and within the competencies and behaviours. The results also indicate however that the top team and HR stakeholder communities believe that it is more important that a particular behaviour is displayed than where or how it supports a given competency. Behaviours are perceived not to be 'mutually exclusive'.
3. The findings support the view that "Using anger, frustration and intolerance", identified by the top team in Project 1 as required behaviour, is inappropriate behaviour and that this needs to be discussed with the top team.
4. The results imply that the organizations current approach to the definition and application of a performance management system based on the use of competencies contains unrealistic expectations of the applicability or desirability of defining leadership behaviour in the way that is prescribed within the competency literature. It is considered neither desirable nor possible to define and articulate, in a unified way, all of the leadership behaviours needed to function effectively in all of the different situations and contexts that they might encounter.
5. The results infer that when the top team are making an assessment of leaders' performance that elements of their assessment process is 'unconscious' and contains 'criteria' of which they are not fully aware.
6. The findings indicate that there has been insufficient dialogue to generate an appropriate level of understanding of the competencies and the supporting behaviours, or to expose the assessment criteria 'in use' by the top team.

Table 40: Key findings

9.6.1 Missing competencies

Two important competencies identified by the top team in Project 1, that appear to be missing for the organization's competencies, were discussed.

The two competencies in question are:

- B1: Uses the full range of emotional intelligence.
- B17: Forms own position and views.

The responses from the feedback sessions confirmed that both groups of respondents believed that these two competencies were important and that they are missing from the organization's competencies.

Uses the full range of emotional intelligence, (EI)

All of the top team respondents felt that these were important behaviours, as did the HR community. Some of the top team example comments supporting these views were: "Emotional intelligence is really important", "I think that these, EI, behaviours are really important", "I think that these behaviours are incredibly important". One top team member also pointed out that, "you cannot find some of these within our current competencies".

Another top team member commented on the importance of emotional intelligence and the reason for some leaders reaching a ceiling in their career because of a weakness in this area, "when they don't quite hack it, its often because of their lack of emotional intelligence".

'Emotion' was considered an important component of the leader's role: "leadership should be clear about the rules of emotion within the organization", "the very best people have phenomenal emotional intelligence", "the best leaders recognise that others thrive in their company because they can trust them, they can talk to them, they can be open with them...it does not mean however that they are going to get an easy ride in their job", "...these behaviours are probably more important than anybody knows!" "They are the ingredients of a *well rounded individual*". "Leaders need to display these kind of emotional attributes in the way they conduct their job, in the way that they deal with individuals and in the tone that they set inside the organization that they are responsible for". "To a large extent this is about setting and communicating a *tone* throughout the organization that makes this clear".

It was felt however that these behaviours were not discussed or openly recognised as important: "no one asks about emotions", "in our current culture no one gets worked-up, we are so polite, we beat around the bush and then go our own separate ways without agreeing". "We all intellectually know these things are important and we expect them to be there". "The next critical step for us is getting everyone to feel 'emotionally' engaged".

The HR community response was similar to that of the top team's views in that it was felt that these competencies are important and necessary for the organization and that "looking at the definition of talent potential these competencies are key indicators and predictors of success".

Like the top team respondents the HR community also felt that whilst emotional intelligence is important this was not made clear within the competencies, "I don't think that there is too much in the competencies that encourages that behaviour". "These are a gap, I don't think that they are articulated in the competencies and using a mixture of these things to good effect is needed". "*Full range* is a good description, because EI is like a tool kit. Its about using fun and using anger on occasions as well".

Overall it was felt that this competency was critical for effective communication.

Forms own position and views

The general consensus from the top team was that "developing your own position and views is really important...and the more senior you are the more important it becomes". "For senior people the one quality that marks them out is that you know what they stand for". Another said "its one of the things that we respect in people".

The HR community had a similar view to the top team that "*forming own position and views* was an indication of what a person stands for". It's about their "fundamental ability to articulate what they stand for". They also said that "this plays to the authentic being, you being yourself and you can hold on to that".

In summary, all respondents felt that insufficient articulation of these competencies had occurred. One respondent said that he felt that "in the articulation of the competencies that the organization has not given enough weight to these two competencies". Another said felt that they felt that "people will have strengths and weaknesses across all competencies and that's why I think that it's important for these to two to be included so that we have a full set".

The whole process that had been employed by the organization to draw-up the list of competencies and behaviour was questioned. "Some staff people did some work, they put them on the table with the top team, we tossed them about. Someone said that I don't like that, another said there's too much of that, too little of that - we came up with this set. Is that a rigorous process? No. This was not fully rigorous so we should not be surprised if there are some competencies missing. We are in mature world where we should recognise that and adapt", "we should articulate the need for these two competencies".

The overall consensus across the two groups was that these are important competencies that have not been explicitly articulated and that they need to be emphasised and communicated to the leadership team as important and necessary behaviours. Some action was needed therefore to ensure that the leaders across the organization understood the importance of displaying these two competencies and behaviours.

9.6.2 Ambiguity within and between competencies

The findings in Project 2 indicated that there was a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty in the meaning of some of the competencies both across the competencies and also within the competencies in terms of how the behaviours were seen to support the competencies.

The two competencies showing the highest degree of ambiguity were "Drive for results" and "Bottom line". When questioned about this apparent ambiguity in Project 3 the respondents' responses ranged from "who cares" through to "I can completely understand that" and "I agree". For those that did care the view from both the top team and the HR community was that these two competencies should be combined, "the organization does not need these two separate competencies". Perhaps more importantly however the over riding view was that the key consideration was that it was more important that "people are focussing on costs" and "doing the right things that support both of these two competencies", than it was about arguing about the meaning of any particular competency. The response from the HR team was that " it is the leaders role to help eliminate that ambiguity by translating for people what good looks like in their unit", " their role as a leader is to clarify what they expect".

When questioned about the degree of ambiguity of how a specific behaviour supported the competencies the consensus from both the top team and the HR community was that "it was not a concern". One typical response was "I do not really care whether you categorise it under A, B or C, so long as you demonstrate the behaviour". One person said, "I would be more concerned that they knew it was a valued behaviour that we are trying to prescribe", and another said, "many of the behaviours do in different circumstances play in to many of the competencies"

Other comments in response to this question related to the fact that they were not surprised as we had had insufficient dialogue on the meaning of the competencies, "we have not talked about them". "These sorts of issues and questions should be living and breathing within the conversations that leaders are having, but we are clearly not having them". "We need to find a way to get leaders to realise its a basic requirement of the leaders role to have this sort of dialogue, we have actually got to embed it not just say it; we need to discuss it, role model it and demonstrate it is important".

9.6.3 Inappropriate behaviour

The results in Project 2 showed that 76% of respondents felt that "Using anger, frustration and intolerance" was deemed inappropriate behaviour.

In the feedback dialogue sessions, within Project 3, the majority of the top team also felt that this behaviour was unacceptable. One top team member, who had suggested in Project 1 that this behaviour was desirable, expressed the view that "if people felt that this was inappropriate that they should voice their opinions and we could then talk about it".

There was a general concern expressed across both the top team and the HR community that using this style and type of behaviour could be seen as threatening and could well lead to the perception of bullying. "I think our people feel very strongly that anger, frustration and intolerance leads to bullying very quickly". "We should actively seek to make sure that we are be clear that this is unacceptable behaviour".

However it was also felt that in some respects "it's the way that you say it" that affects a persons understanding. "The way that it is written down a lot of people interpret it as shouting at people, rather than the way that it could be interpreted as being passionate and emotionally connected and committed". The view expressed was that the written word can be misinterpreted and that if this was to be a 'valid' behaviour that the members of the leadership team needed to discuss it in order to ensure that there was an alignment of meaning and understanding. One respondent suggested that this should be a topic of discussion for the top team at their next meeting. "I'm very interested in the feedback from the GSLT we ought to discuss this at our next meeting whether it's right or wrong".

The HR group held similar views to the top team and reported that they had tried to give feedback to one of the top team members as to how his behaviour was perceived as quite threatening. "We have tried to get across to X how threatening some of these behaviours are – but he does not see it as a threat, to him its about being direct and about being provocative - he sees it as trying to get a response from people. He does it because he wants to get people engaged and to get a two way dialogue going".

One of the HR community commented that "there is a contextual personal perspective to the way that this sort of behaviour is perceived by the receiver", it was felt that "our experiences and background will make me feel whether or not I am being bullied".

Overall however the HR team felt that if these sorts of behaviour are not acceptable and, like the top team, the HR respondents felt that this deserved to be discussed further by the top team and the wider leadership community. In this way the collective community could come to an agreed understanding about the appropriateness of these behaviours and eradicate any misunderstanding in order to ensure that people did not see this as a licence for bullying.

9.6.4 The use and application of a competency-based approach

In each of the sessions with the top team members I asked them if they believed that it was possible or desirable to define and articulate all of the desired leadership behaviours needed to support the competencies. I also asked them whether or not it was realistic to expect there to be a common understanding and language to support this.

The consensus response from the top team was that it was neither desirable nor likely that the organization would ever get to a single unified and agreed definition of what constituted appropriate leadership behaviour. A range of responses that represent these views are included here. "People are diverse", "people are strong in the ways that they do things", "I would expect to get a wide variety of behaviour". "People are different and they are very strong in their own approaches to these things, they have their own ways of doing business". "You cannot realistically I think constrain that diversity of human nature, even if you wanted to". "It would be very unlikely to take somebody from the finance department and expect them to have exactly the same behaviour as somebody from the engineering design department; a sales person and an engineer will behave totally differently".

Because of the natural diversity of people it was deemed unreasonable to demand, or expect, a unified view of what constituted appropriate behaviour. "We cannot expect to have a diverse management team and a huge alignment around exactly my interpretation of the values". "People are very diverse and they will continually re-interpret". "At senior levels we have very talented people with a high level of experience who need to be left to be the experts that they are. They need to be left to drive their own business units - they are a package, you need to take them pretty much as they are".

It was also felt in providing guidance to the leadership team that it was important to ensure that people understood that behaviour needed to match the situation and context and that the contextual and functional effects of behaviour are important. "The interaction between human beings and circumstances is crucial, we must not become robots". It was felt that, particularly in the context of the organization's Global Services business, you would expect to see different behaviours. "In international at the moment there will be contextual differences and that's the important point that I was trying to make". "People are from very diverse backgrounds, they use different language to describe things and they behave differently". "I don't think that we will ever get, or want, a common language".

Diversity was seen as an important and crucial attribute of the leadership team: "It's right and proper to have different diverse people with different styles and I think it's good for people to see different role models role modelling different behaviours". "I think the importance is in role modelling a diversity of styles so that individuals lower down in the organization can see that 'one size does not fit all', this is part of the issue about why it's so important to have senior visible women and ethnic minority leaders". "I actually do think that is very important if we are to retain, motivate and attract the best talent that any organization can attract, we have to get and reflect a diverse set of role modelling behaviours under a framework which is based on our values".

The consensus view from the top team was that what the organization needed was a set of guiding principles, a framework for behaviour that was based on the organizations values but that allowed for diversity of behaviour. A framework that allowed for the effects of context and culture, that allowed for a range of management styles and that, importantly, identified what constituted inappropriate behaviour.

The view was that managing people's behaviour using traditional scientific management principles was inappropriate and that the values and competencies needed to be used as a guidance systems, not as a rule book. "My sense of this is that it is a more loosely constructed thing particularly in an international and complex business". "You have to believe that you are setting up a value set which is a little bit more open weave". "We will therefore have a much wider variety of behaviours going on". "We need to get to a point where we have a language and understanding that sets the tone, direction and style of the organization". "We need to focus on those important words that set tone, direction and style" and we need to "continually test and tighten the language as best you can but don't expect perfection".

The respondents also felt that whilst the values and competencies needed to allow for diversity, there was an important need to make it clear what types of behaviour were unacceptable, such as bullying. One top team member said, "we cannot expect to be able to define all of the appropriate leadership behaviours, but I do expect to be able to destroy the outliers, the ones that are really off pitch in any direction".

The HR community responses centred on whether or not it was realistic or sensible to try to define all of the leadership behaviours needed. In all cases the respondents said that this was not a realistic expectation and that "we could go on trying to define them forever". "If we are not careful we will end up trying to define the perfect person - it's unrealistic".

The respondents felt that the current thinking and desire for a detailed prescription for behaviour "stems from the command and control culture that we are trying to move away from". In the Old World things were more stable and everything was prescribed in advance. Continuing in this prescriptive way was deemed inappropriate; "it is not about providing a detailed list of the way that leaders should behave, its about giving them the guiding principles".

The HR team agreed with the top team on the need to contextualise behaviour and allow people to use their own judgement in a given circumstance, "the competencies do not capture the contextual element, and our context is changing all of the time". "It is about explaining the 'why', explaining the benefits of living the values". "It is more about letting people use their own judgement to decide what constitutes appropriate behaviour in a given context, there has to be some licence".

In a similar vein to the some of the other findings the respondents felt that the organization needed a new way of managing performance, "we need a new way to think about interpreting the meaning of our values and competencies, we need a new leadership paradigm." "This new way of being needs to start with the individual themselves, by questioning themselves; "Who am I being? What am I doing? How am I doing it? Who is helping me be that better person? How am I willing to change and challenge? When am I really going to get it?"

The overall consensus from both communities was that the values and competencies should be used as a set of guiding principles; a framework for action that gave individuals the latitude to agree what constituted appropriate behaviour for their own context. A number of members of the top team expressed this as "I think that it's realistic to have a few words that set tone, direction and style". "The leaders role is to set the tone for the organization, and this tone should emanate from and support the values". "The key is to get alignment, without regimentation. It is not about providing a detailed list of behaviours, but it is about defining the guiding principles". "It is the leader's role to help their people understand what good (behaviour) looks like".

The over riding perception from both stakeholder groups appears to be that the organization needs a new paradigm for managing against the organization's values and competencies.

9.6.5 Leadership assessment is based on the use of intuition

The evidence gathered from the top team feedback sessions identified that when forming their views and making assessments of individuals all of the top team members reported that they based their judgement on the 'sense' of the individual. They also reported that they were often not consciously able to define exactly why they believed what they believed. They used a process of intuition to make decisions rather than employing a deliberate analysis against the competencies.

Some of the ways in which this 'sense' of the individual was articulated are shown in Table 41 below:

Respondent	Language used
CEO 1	My assessment relies on a 'sense' of the individual
CEO 2	You just know what they stand for
CEO 3	They are emotionally well balanced individual
CEO 4	I am looking for the 'intangibles'
CEO 5	You can just see that they are a well rounded individual

Table 41: The language of intuition

Many of the important criteria on which the top team base their assessments were felt to be incapable of explanation as they themselves were not necessarily consciously aware of the criteria that they were using, and therefore they could not always describe the ways in which they conceptualise 'what good (behaviour) looks like'. One top team member expressed this as: "there are some intangibles that we are looking for, and because these are intangibles we cannot pick them up, we cannot define them and we cannot therefore articulate them". Another said: "Many of the important attributes that an individual brings are not measurable", whilst another of the top team said, "you just know what they stand for".

One top team member reported that "in order to get to a senior leadership position you do not just live the values you need to bring a personality". Whilst another reported that "my assessment relies an enormous amount on my sense of whether leaders have the right characteristics". "You need, bright people who know their stuff who are probably experienced enough to warrant being in the position that they are in, at the same time they are emotionally well balanced".

The results from the feedback session with the top team indicates that the assessment of "what good looks like", in terms of leaders' behaviour, encompasses more than just a rational and objective assessment of performance against the competencies. The findings indicate that the top team members formulate their assessments using an intuitive process supported by a post-hoc rationalisation against the competencies when asked to justify and explain their views.

The HR group talked about the use of intuition and the fact that sometimes it is not about providing evidence and making objective assessments but that "sometimes you just know". Their perception was that this knowing comes with age and experience, "because you have lived and breathed experience, we know that something is true". However the HR team also pointed out that within the organization's culture people are uncomfortable with relying on intuition and what are considered subjective interpretations. "We are not comfortable, as an organization, with being subjective, we are not comfortable with trusting people to have their call on something - we are forever trying to prove it".

9.6.6 *Insufficient dialogue*

The final key finding, that underpins all of the preceding findings, is that both the top team and the HR community identified that in their view there had been insufficient discussion of the required behaviours and that this stemmed from a resistance to broach the subject: "Behaviour is never discussed. We don't talk about it, it's a taboo subject and it's all very uncomfortable". One top team member said that his issue was that: "No one in my unit wants to talk about behaviour, they don't want to listen, they don't want to think about it, they are scared by it, they don't like it. We hate discussing behaviour, it's British, it's male - we just don't like discussing it, we don't do it at the top team meeting either. It's a missing element", another said, "...you would not have heard these things talked about".

There was a perception that because people find conversations about behaviour difficult that these conversations were not happening and as a result people had been left to form their own understanding of the competencies by reading the published word. "Individuals have been left to their own devices to interpret the competencies in the way that they want to interpret them, as opposed to having a reasonable degree of tuition, training or discussion about what those competencies actually mean". "Without sufficient dialogue the organization will not achieve a common understanding". "It's not about reading off of a page, I think it's a prompt but it isn't enough, we have plenty of evidence to show that. We have all learnt that just giving someone something to read or putting them on one workshop is not enough".

The top team recommended that the organization should start talking about behaviour both on a 'one-to-one' basis and in groups. "We need to start to talk to people about

what this all means". "We should start by making this something we talk about, we should start at the top and then this discussion should *daisy chain* all the way through the organization, this would help us achieve a common understanding".

Another top team member expressed the view that this dialogue also needs to happen at the leadership team level: "We don't do it collectively though at all, firstly that we should start talking about it, as a group". "Dialogue is key if we are to get a common understanding of what the values and competencies mean".

The HR team held similar views to the top team in that they felt that "it needs to be discussed in a dialogue". "We have not explained sufficiently well that the behaviours are important". "The quality of the conversation is really important". We do not seem to be able to find the time to discuss what is a really important issue, "there's an issue about communications and how much time and attention you give". "The top 400 leaders aren't thinking about this they haven't had the dialogue, they are just not thinking about it". In our current paradigm "it doesn't happen because we don't create an environment for it to happen". "We don't have the space to talk". "We do not show it's important by creating the space and time". "I think that it is true that people are not acting this way mainly because they are not thinking about it".

It was felt that leadership needed to be understood as an active role, "It's a really important part of the leadership role to be *out there*, their role as a leader is to clarify what they expect". The HR team questioned whether or not the organization had made it clear that discussing the competencies and helping people understand their meaning was important, "have we invested to enable them to do it a lot better to understand, to improve?"

The HR team also suggested a number of ways in which the organization could start to stimulate a dialogue on behaviour. "In the discussion of talent it's helpful to ask what's important about certain aspects and what people mean when they say someone is trustworthy", "this will help when it comes to the levelling session and it will help with the understanding and language".

In summary, the general consensus was that the organization had under estimated the level of time, effort and dialogue needed to enable the organization to achieve an aligned understanding. "I think that we have under estimated the deep level of understanding that is required to allow the shift we desire", "I think that we have only touched the top of the iceberg with our understanding"

The HR team was keen to stress that leadership is a "doing role", "the word *leadership* should be treated as a verb, not as a noun". "The leader's role is about active engagement with organization members". "We need to make sure that we know what being part of the leadership team means". "We need to get people to realise that being a leader is a responsibility not just a privilege".

It was also felt that there is a lack of clarity on the understanding of leadership and that this confusion starts right at the top of the organization, "...even the top team do not know what *leadership* means"

Overall the consensus was that the organization needed new conceptions of leadership for the way in which it manages people. "The leadership team need to find a way to

work better, to understand, to shape behaviour, to have better conversations and dialogue together". "They need to be provoked and not get caught in their current paradigm".

9.7 Project 3 - Discussion and Conclusions

In the introduction to this project I identified how healthy, self-correcting systems make use of data about the nature of the system's outputs to make corrections and improvements to the way that the system functions. The starting point for my research was a perceived misalignment between the behaviour espoused and defined in the organization's competencies and the leadership behaviour that was rewarded; as such it seemed that the 'system' was neither healthy nor self-correcting.

Utilising the finding from my previous research in this project I have engaged in a process of collaborative understanding and problem solving with members from the client organization key stakeholder groups to understand the implications of my findings for theory and for practice.

The results of Project 3 provide support for the previous research findings that two important competencies are missing, that there is a degree of ambiguity across and within competencies, and that certain top team defined behaviours are seen as inappropriate.

In addition the findings from Project 3 extend the previous findings and indicate that:

- There has been an insufficient level of dialogue around the meaning of the competencies.
- The organization's competency-based performance management system contains unrealistic expectations of the ability or desirability of defining a unified list of leadership behaviours, which are appropriate for all situations and all contexts.
- When making assessments of leaders' performance the top team members utilise an intuitive decision making process.

9.7.1 Project 3 - Contribution: Implications for practice

In reflecting back the findings from the previous research projects to the top team and the HR group, evidence from this study shows that they recognise and acknowledge the previous research findings. They also recognise that action needs to be taken to address these findings; the missing competencies need to be included, the ambiguous competencies need to be combined and the validity of behaviours that are deemed inappropriate needs to be clarified.

The findings from Project 3 support the previous assertion that as things stand the organization does not have a set of competencies that represent the full needs of the business and that the ambiguity that exists will lead to inefficiency, miscommunication and confusion unless addressed.

Insufficient dialogue

The first new finding from Project 3 is that the key stakeholder groups believe that there has been insufficient dialogue at the level of the individual, team and organization to form an aligned and agreed understanding of what the competencies mean in practice.

The research findings also indicate that there is a 'fear' of discussing behaviour that starts at the most senior level. Discussions of behaviour seems to be perceived as a sensitive and difficult topic, and therefore like other sensitive issues, is not discussed (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999: 300).

Conversation about performance, about what the competencies mean to people and about what behaviour is appropriate do not happen. From an organizational learning and effectiveness perspective this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed, as extant literature and my previous research findings show that simply leaving people to form their own understanding will lead to multiple interpretations and confusion. If there isn't an open dialogue the organization will not learn or expose the assessment criteria 'in use' (Argyris, 1991: 101). As such any feedback on performance or any coaching will be ineffective as people will talk past each other (Argyris, 1991: 102).

The research findings show that the client organization's key stakeholder groups believe that "quality conversations" are critical to creating understanding. The findings show that organization needs to engender a spirit of dialogue at the level of the individual, the team and the organization. It is perceived that the process of dialogue is as important as the end result (Covey, 1989: 139). Because through this dialogue leaders can help individuals gain an understanding of what the competencies mean for themselves, engender a spirit of ownership and commitment, and in so doing increase the likelihood that the required behaviours will be displayed (Faidley, 1996: 23).

To facilitate this process it was perceived that leaders need to 'make the time' to think and to engage with their people. They need to make time for self-reflection and to build their own understanding so that they can help others build theirs. The research findings show that there is a desire for leaders to shift their focus from being predominantly task focussed to one that encompasses a focus on the individual and the wider team. Perhaps a good role model of how things 'should be' is Jack Welch of General Electric who is reported as having spent 50 percent of his time identifying and developing people and ensuring that everyone had an aligned understanding of what good (behaviour) looks like (Byham, 2002: 63).

The result show that there is a predominant perception that being a leader is regarded as a privilege, not as a responsibility. The results also identified however that the key stakeholder groups were very unhappy about this situation and wanted to see a change to one in which leadership is active, in which leadership is something that is conducted 'out there', with people, not from 'up there' on high. It is something that is done with people, not done to people.

The leadership team seems to have avoided having quality conversation and actively engaging with their people to help generate an agreed understanding of how things should be. To address this issue I would suggest that the top team need to make a very

clear declaration that this position is unacceptable and a clear statement that conducting this dialogue is an important part of the leader's role.

To support this I would also recommend that the organization embarks on a comprehensive programme to train and develop the leaders of the organization in a way that will equip them with the requisite skills and confidence to engage in an effective dialogue with their people. In undertaking this I would strongly recommend that all of the leadership team, including the top team, complete this training so that they can be seen to role model the behaviour that they want the rest of the organization to follow. It is extremely important that if the top team want to see change that they do not just pay lip service to this but play an active role in leading this change and introduce process and systems that reinforce and reward the desired behaviour and that penalises inappropriate behaviour.

The results from Project 3 show that there needs to be a significantly increased level of leadership effort and dialogue across the organization to generate a good degree of aligned understanding of the meaning of the competencies. The organization, like many others (Goss et al, 1993), seems to have severely underestimated the level of effort and dialogue needed to embed the new competencies.

Competencies

The second new finding from Project 3 identified that it is unrealistic to assume that it is possible, or desirable, to create a single unified list of behaviours, as defined in the competency literature (Boam and Sparrow, 1992; Woodruffe, 1991). It is simply not possible, or desirable, to define a list of behaviours that can be applied in all situations and in all contexts. There is not just one best way for people to behave (Burgoyne, 1990). Leaders are well educated and need to be allowed to use their brains; they cannot be controlled like a machine part (Maccoby, 1993: 49). They are social beings with intrinsic motivation that must be encouraged (Morgan, 1997; Covey, 1989).

Global organizations operate in complex multi-cultural environments where there is a need for diversity of thinking and behaviour in order to meet the requisite variety of the business environment (Morgan, 1997: 113). The research findings show that the two key stakeholder groups value diversity and that they expect to see a diversity of behaviour within its leadership team that reflects the particular needs of their situation and context.

The results also show that the organizations current system for managing performance appears to be overly rational and mechanistic and that it has a tendency to try over control. It does not deal well with the issue of diversity or situation specific behaviour. The current system appears to be based on an unrealistic expectation that a centrally defined unified set of competencies is appropriate for all contexts. Perhaps as one of my supervisory panel suggested "it would be more appropriate to use the competencies as 'tram lines' and 'guidelines' to facilitate an effective dialogue between those doing the assessing and those being assessed rather than as a '*rule book*'". "To mechanistically apply a unified set of competencies and supporting behaviours is inappropriate and there needs to be a level of effort to operationalise the application of the competencies". In this sense, working with the competencies, leaders can serve as 'interpretative filters' and promote high-quality exchanges that create an aligned

understanding of what behaviour is appropriate and expected (Naumann and Bennett, 2000).

The results also show that the respondents do not expect behaviours to be mutually exclusive; this runs counter to the literature that suggest that to eliminate ambiguity each behaviour should only appear in one competency (Honey, 1992: 86). By examining the behaviours, such as "Makes time for people", it can be seen that this particular behaviour could be equally appropriate for 'Coaching for performance', as it could for 'Heart' or 'Helpful'. What seems to be more important to the respondents, is that the behaviour is displayed rather than which competency it supports.

The top team and HR group are looking to the leaders to help people create their own understanding of what the competencies mean for their particular context and challenges so that they can take this on-board and internalise it. What they are not looking for is a single unified list that forms a detailed prescription for behaviour. In essence what is proposed is a new approach that utilises the competencies as a guidance system, not as a rulebook.

It seems therefore that the organization needs to change its approach to performance management from one that is based on a centrally defined unified list of competencies and behaviours owned by HR to one which is owned by the line but guided by the organization's values and competencies. An approach that encourages people to use their own judgement in applying the behaviour that they see as appropriate to their particular challenges and context. A paradigm where the organization's competencies provide a vehicle for creating shared understanding, the 'tram lines', whilst allowing people to identify for themselves what constitutes appropriate behaviour (Tichy, 1997: 106). The focus of the PMS then becomes a focus on the dialogue between the assessor and the assessed to create an aligned understanding of what behaviour is appropriate and should be rewarded.

In summary, this section has discussed the apparent desire for the organization to move away from a centrally defined unified list of competencies and supporting behaviours. Away from a management control system that stifles diversity and difference to one in which individuals work with their manager to define the behaviour that is appropriate for their particular challenges and context where the competencies are used as guide for dialogue, not as a rule book.

Intuition

The third new finding of importance to the organization confirms the view in extant literature that the top team members make decisions using intuition; they do not solely rely on analytical decision making skills to assess leader's performance. In coming to a view on a leader and making an assessment of his or her performance the top team report that they rely on their 'sense' of the person. In coming to conclusions in this way the findings support the assertion in extant literature that the top team are very often not consciously aware of the criteria upon which they have based their assessment (Senge, 1990: 15; Mintzberg, 1976; Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004).

Reference to literature shows that the use of intuition appears to be inescapable as it occurs at the unconscious level (Bargh and Chartrand, 1999). The top team therefore

need to try to recognise when they are using intuition, accept it, establish ways in which they are comfortable with it, and leverage its potential for success and well-being both for themselves and for those whom they lead (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 78).

The original rationale underpinning my research interest stemmed from the perceived misalignment between the leadership behaviour espoused, the behaviour prescribed in the competencies and the behaviour rewarded. This perceived misalignment may in some part be explained by the fact that "frequently the intuitive decisions made are in conflict with the course suggested by the available facts" (Weston, 1984: 50). And also in part because of the fact that in some cases executives become so personally involved with people, about whom they have to make decisions, that they fail to see people objectively, "*not as they are, but as they would like them to be*" (Weston, 1986: 51).

By taking a view of intuitive judgement as the result of complex information processing skills based on pattern recognition, rather than formal logic, 'what someone stands' for can be seen as a matter of recognising certain patterns.

To help the GSLT and the top team themselves to get a better understanding of the assessment criteria in use it would be beneficial to engage in a dialogue with others. When reaching decisions the top team needs to be encouraged to do so in a 'high touch' manner in order to help them 'take people with them' and to help themselves and others understand why they have reached a particular conclusion (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004). The use of repertory grid in Project 1 is a good example of one tool that can be used to help support this dialogue and that can be used to help expose the assessment criteria in use. A number of the top team reported that they had told me things about their leadership assessment criteria, which they had not been consciously aware of.

The process of dialogue can be seen to be central to the concept of alignment and effective performance management. An effective dialogue between the leader and her people, and between the leader and her peers can help to ensure an agreed and aligned understanding of what is expected and what good looks like. In addition the process of dialogue can help the assessor come to understand the degree to which her assessment is intuitive and the degree to which it is analytical. In this respect the process of dialogue will help her to explore the patterns that underpin her intuitive assessment of an individual's performance.

In summary it can be seen that the top team need to acknowledge the use of intuition in their decision making process. They also need to be encouraged to make decisions in a 'high touch' manner in order to take people with them and to help them understand their own assessment criteria in use.

The organization's current process acknowledges the analytical component but ignores the intuitive component. In this respect the current system is perceived to have an overly optimistic view of the 'rationality' of the assessment process.

Summary of implications for practice

Organizations will function more effectively if there is an agreement of what constitutes appropriate behaviour (Finegan, 1994: 353). Effective communication is a prerequisite for effective organizational functioning and for creating "mutual understanding" (Covey, 2002: 138). It is incumbent upon the leaders of the organization therefore to engage in a dialogue with their people about what the competencies mean for the way that people should behave.

Adopting this participative contextualised approach calls for a different mind-set and thinking style than is predicated in the traditional rational competency model. There are no longer absolute truths, but multiple ways of responding to the particular challenges and context (Legge, 1995: 301). The leader's role in this approach is to work with people to create a shared understanding of their own 'truth' (Senge, 1990: 9) that fits their context and particular challenges.

The key theme underpinning these new findings in Project 3 is that the organization's leaders need to engage in much more dialogue with their people. As one of my respondents put it the organization's leadership team needs to create "quality conversations". This dialogue needs to start at the top and then "daisy chain" all the way through the organization.

The organization needs to break the current paradigm in use and encourage leaders to engage in effective dialogue. My recommendations therefore are firstly to; focus leadership development and training on dialogue; secondly, to make a very clear and explicit statement of the active role that leaders need to play in conducting this dialogue and in creating understanding and alignment; and thirdly, to introduce process and systems to reinforce and reward the desired practice of dialogue and to penalise those who do not play an active leadership role in this activity.

9.7.2 Project 3 - Contribution: Implications for theory

In the section I will focus on the three key findings that emerged from Project 3 that have implication for theory:

- The need for an increased degree of dialogue.
- The use and application of a competency based approach.
- The use of intuition in the decision making process.

In Chapter Two I presented a summary of extant competency literature and the use of a competency based approach to performance management. In this section I have reverted to the literature to try to understand the perspectives exposed by my research findings that appear to run counter to the views expressed in the competency literature.

I start this section by presenting a summary of the key components of this literature before taking a dialectic view to expose some of the perceived problems identified by my research findings with employing a competency-based approach into a complex global environment. I pay specific reference to the inappropriateness of a unified centrally defined list of competencies and behaviours to manage performance, and the way in which extant competency literature fails to take of diversity. I then move on to

look at the implications of the way in which the business environment is changing, before closing with a discussion of the implications of the use of intuition in the assessment process.

The use and application of a competency-based approach

One of the key challenges facing organizations is the need to effectively link the management of human resources to the business strategy (Boam and Sparrow, 1992: 5). Competencies aim to make this linkage explicit by eliciting top management's expectations of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and aligning these expectations with the target population's understanding (Feltham, 1992: 90).

Through a bottom-up process, appropriate behaviours that are needed to deliver the organization's strategy are identified and then these behaviours are grouped together in to similar categories to form competencies. These competencies are then given a label that represents the 'sense' of each of the competencies (Honey, 1992: 86). In this way a single unified list of competencies and behaviours is produced, which is used to guide and control behaviour, and which is used as the basis against which the 'how' of performance is assessed.

It can be seen therefore that a competency-based approach to performance management is based on principles of scientific management in which it is perceived that the whole can be represented by its constituent parts.

Project 3 however has shown that this approach does not acknowledge the complexity and diversity found and needed in the modern organization's environment, and the fact that there is always more than one way of managing (Burgoyne, 1990). As such extant theory appears to contain unrealistic assumptions about the appropriateness of producing a single centrally defined unified list of competencies for organizations operating in complex global environments.

Problems with the competency-based approach.

A review of the literature shows that there are a number of authors who question the appropriateness of trying to produce universal, mechanistic lists of behaviours that appear to have limited value to organizations (Burgoyne, 1989; Jacobs, 1990; Morgan, 1997; Day, 1988).

The literature also shows that some of the prescribed steps and activities required to establish a set of competencies are unrealistic. "The ability to identify clusters of behaviour that are specific, observable and verifiable is unrealistic; managerial behaviour is not like that" (Jacobs, 1990: 31).

The current business reality is that we live in a highly complex environment where we cannot expect to recognise and analyse all aspects of person, events and situations in advance (Cialdini, 2001: 7). Increasingly effective performance involves learning to handle complexity, diversity and ambiguity (Osbaldeston in Devine, 1990: 2).

Scientific management approaches, such as those employed in competency-based assessment systems, have led to an emphasis on 'mechanistic' organizations in which

individual workers and managers are treated as cogs on a wheel (Witzel, 2002: 40). Western management theory has a deeply ingrained concept of organizations as machines (Goss et al, 1993: 107) where the pre-definition of required behaviour in competency frameworks tends to treat humans like things to be made efficient (Morgan, 1997). Many of our modern management practices appear to come from the modernist industrial age and are focussed on control and compliance (Fenner, 2004). This management approach shows a determined effort to force human behaviour in to rigid patterns of conformity (Harvey-Jones, 1994: 12). In many ways whilst we now live in a knowledge worker age organizations still seem to be adhering to management doctrines and theory that encourages the continued use of a controlling industrial age model (Fenner, 2004).

Research and common sense show that even in very specific situations there is more than one way to manage and therefore any performance management approach must be flexible and adaptive enough to be compatible with this reality (Burgoyne, 1990: 24). It is neither realistic nor desirable to try to define an infinite number of behaviours for all contexts and all situations. As such "there is an inappropriateness of the concept of a universal, mechanistic list of managerial behaviours" (Burgoyne, 1990: 25).

My findings provide support for the view that in our postmodernist world universal rules are no longer seen to be relevant or desirable (Legge, 1995: 301). What becomes paramount in this new environment is the creation of an organizational environment where there is an active dialogue amongst the organization's members on what constitutes appropriate behaviour for a given context, and as such extant competency theory seems to inadequately address the needs of the modern business environment.

Diversity

Diversity is a real-life business issue that is not referenced or allowed for in the competency literature, and is another example of where the extant literature provides an inadequate paradigm for managing in a global environment.

If a business unit or team is to be successful in dealing with the challenges of a complex task, or a difficult environment, it is vital that it be allowed to possess sufficient internal complexity and diversity (Morgan, 1997: 113). However the inclusion of a diversity of behaviour appears to run counter to the concept of a single unified list of acceptable behaviours as defined within the competency literature.

Theory indicates that diversity within teams can improve the quality of decision making and innovation (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996; Pitcher and Smith, 2001) and that it can bring a wealth of information and knowledge vital to operating in complex, highly dynamic competitive environments (Barkema et al, 2002: 920). The law of requisite variety postulates that any systems must encourage and incorporate variety internally if it is to cope with variety externally (Goss et al, 1993: 106). As organizations compete and grow globally they will inevitably become infused with new ideas, insights, people, values and behaviour (Morgan, 1997). As a result organizations will face an increasing level and range of diversity that will need to be managed effectively - this issue needs to be addressed in management theory.

An emerging new-world order

A review of the extant literature indicates an acknowledgement that the business world is changing, and that with it comes the need for a new approach, a new paradigm. The world is no longer stable and predictable, and therefore the validity of a performance management system that relies on a systematic analysis and assessment of leadership behaviour becomes questionable (Jacobs, 1990: 35). "Managerial life is becoming more complex and ambiguous and as such competency-based approaches over-simplify reality and present only a partial view of what a leader needs to undertake" (Jacobs, 1990). In addition, the shift from advances in technologies for moving inputs and products to advances in technologies for moving information and knowledge has fundamentally shifted the nature of organizations and the way in which they need to be managed (Barkema et al, 2002: 918).

"The old world was built on control, but the world has changed...You've got to balance freedom with some control, but you've got to have more freedom than you ever dreamed of" (Welch as reported in Slater, 2003: 31). This recognition of the increasingly dynamic nature of business life has led to a search for new ways to assess and develop the performance of leaders (Jacobs, 1990: 34). Organizations are starting to recognise that they must develop approaches that fit their own unique business needs, workforces, corporate and national cultures (Devine, 1990: 3). Management theory must also recognise that organizations' understanding of performance will always be a partial view and therefore concepts and definitions concerning performance must become more flexible and capable of accounting for the dynamic nature of management (Jacobs, 1990: 29).

Management theory can be seen therefore to need to reflect the need for the organization's vision and strategic objectives to set the direction for the organization and the values and competencies to be the guidance system that sets the 'tone' for the organization.

The values and competencies guide and support but do not constrain, only within the absolute limits of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. From a cybernetic perspective the behaviour of intelligent systems requires a sense of the vision, norms, values, limits, or 'reference points' that are used to guide behaviour (Morgan, 1997: 95), otherwise complete randomness will prevail. The key challenge here, for our rational prescriptive model, is that these "reference points" must be defined in a way that creates a space in which many possible actions and behaviours can emerge including those that question the limits being imposed (Morgan, 1997: 95). In this way the organization can allow for the diversity of behaviour that my findings indicate is seen as beneficial for the organization but at the same time set absolute limits that indicate what is not acceptable.

Intuition

The findings from Project 3 provide support for the assertion in extant literature that top leaders do not use a purely conscious rational thought process when assessing leaders' performance (Weston, 1984: 50).

In this context intuition poses a major challenge to the rational decision making process defined in the competency literature because it seems that decision making

operates on two levels: the conscious / deliberate and the unconscious / automatic (Myers, 2002: 44). In other words, decision making has both an analytical component and an intuitive component, with much of this cognition occurring automatically outside of consciousness (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 76).

Traditional management theory and training has heavily emphasised the use of 'rational' analytical techniques almost to the exclusion of other useful skills and methods (Weston, 1986: 52). Organizational and community culture has tended to reinforce this such that highly intuitive executives indicate that they 'keep it a secret' that they use intuition to make decisions (Weston, 1986: 52). In addition the idea that unconscious processes exist that control management action and decision making can be seen as very threatening to leaders who pride themselves on rationality and judicious decision making (Senge, 1990: 19)

Intuition is automatic and involuntary but because of the general conformance to a rational paradigm it is often not publicly acknowledged by the people concerned (Atkinson, 2000). Because of these cultural pressures, employees at all levels may not be predisposed to openly admit to colleagues that they might be basing their actions and decisions on intuition (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 80). As a result top management rely upon intuition privately and covertly (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 80). Because intuitive executives often feel that their colleagues do not, or will not, understand that intuition can be a reliable basis on which to make important decisions, they often engage in elaborate games to legitimate their conclusions. Evidence shows that executives who use intuition often "dress up an intuitive decision in data clothes to make it acceptable to others" (Weston, 1986: 52). Rational explanations are often imposed on decisions *after* they have been made (March as reported in Morgan, 1997: 81).

A key consideration for my research and for management theory, is that this has the potential to mislead practitioners and academics as to the way in which the top team actually make their assessment of members of their leadership team.

Relying on intuition alone however can be problematic as "intuition errs, even the most intelligent people make intuitive errors" (Myers, 2002: 50).

By relying too heavily on intuition our own ego can cloud the intuitive cues as to what we are able to receive as to what is in fact true. It is possible for us to transform reality in to what we would like to be true. This can be particularly problematic in cases where executives become so personally involved with people, about whom they have to make decisions, that they fail to see people objectively, "*not as they are, but as they would like them to be*" (Weston, 1986: 51). This element of self-fulfilling prophecy is particularly acute when the top team recruit or promote someone, as there is a tendency to both consciously and subconsciously make an extra effort to ensure that person's success - in the end justifying their original decision (Hayashi, 2001: 64). Intuition can be seen therefore to have similar 'self-reinforcing' aspects that are present in personal construct theory (Tan and Hunter, 2002).

Another implication of the use of intuition is that when leaders make an appraisal of a situation or a person they do not necessarily understand the basis of the appraisal, as the outcome may be based upon an inarticulable gut feel (Sadler-Smith and Shefy,

2004: 84). Leaders often know their preference among several subjects or items before they can explain the reasons for that preference. The evaluation, good or bad, becomes activated immediately on perception of the subject (Bargh and Chartrand, 1999: 474).

In summary, the implication of this aspect of my findings challenges the basis of much of the traditional management theory that has an analytical bias (Weston, 1986). In traditional management theory the emphasis is placed on rational and analytical approaches, and intuitive approaches are under-emphasised, if mentioned at all (Weston, 1986: 52). In practice however it appears that top team members rely much more on their unconscious intuitive decision making ability than is traditionally acknowledged within management theory and literature.

The implication of this finding, for theory and praxis, is that top team members need to become aware of and acknowledge that many of their decisions are based on an intuitive assessment of the person or situation, rather than on a wholly rational analytical analysis of all of the available facts. Theory also needs to reflect the need for top team members to find ways to identify and expose their criteria in use so that they can achieve alignment with their top team colleagues and so that they can expose and align their criteria in use with those being assessed.

The focus of my research has been on trying to identify what good looks like from the perspective of the top team; in defining the behaviours that go together to form a 'competent' leader. My findings provide support for the view that this is difficult to achieve using traditional investigative approaches as the top team members often find it difficult to articulate the reasons behind their decisions, they may just 'feel right' (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 78).

My research approach and methods have taken a very functionalist stance, and in so doing, have exposed the fact that conducting a rational, objective search for a more detailed and precise definition of 'what good (behaviour) looks like', using traditional investigative techniques, will not necessarily result in a better understanding.

From a competency literature perspective these issues pose a direct challenge to the possibility of being able to effect an objective performance management system based on an assessment of behaviour in the traditional 'rational' sense.

The prescribed approach within the competency literature simply does not address the intuitive component of the decision process that top executives use to make decisions and that they use to form judgements about individuals. To ignore the intuitive component is to deny a significant component of the assessment of people in praxis.

Analysis and intuition are best conceived of as two parallel systems of knowing (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004: 76). Even though different people may bring an analytical or an intuitive dominance to a specific task both are necessary for effective action or problem solving to occur (Morgan, 1997: 76). By considering only the analytical approach one is left with only a partial means of knowing the world. The challenge is to weave the two together (Haidt, 2001) and to find ways of opening thinking styles and decision making that take us beyond the rational model (Morgan, 1997: 81). The implication for management theory is that it needs to recognise this

duality in the assessment process. In this context my findings lend support to Simon's view (as reported in Morgan, 1997: 80) that a more fully developed perspective would balance and integrate both analytical and intuitive decision making capacities.

In closing it is worth reflecting on Sadler-Smith's observation (2004):

"Intuition is a natural component of top management's thinking but one that, although we are all too often aware of it, we may tend to ignore or consign it to the closet, perhaps because it is perceived as unscientific or irrational"

Summary of implication for theory

In summary it can be seen that the findings from Project 3 support and extend the previous research findings and make a contribution by showing that extant theory contains unrealistic assumptions about the appropriateness of producing a single centrally defined unified list of competencies. It is considered neither desirable nor possible to centrally define and articulate, in a unified way, all of the behaviours needed to function effectively in all of the different situations and contexts that the GSLT might encounter.

Secondly, my findings indicate the need for competency literature to acknowledge and address the need to align competencies, behaviours and the PMS to the particular challenges and context that individuals face.

Thirdly, the findings indicate the need for the active involvement of the top team with the GSLT to expose individuals' constructs and thereby confront the subjective nature of reality. It is proposed that through the process of dialogue it will be possible to facilitate shared understanding and create alignment. This approach and requirement is not something that is referenced in the competency literature.

Finally, it is proposed that extant competency-based performance literature needs to reflect the duality in the assessment process. The findings support the view that a more fully developed management perspective would balance and integrate both analytical and intuitive decision making capacities (Simon as reported in Morgan, 1997: 80).

Post script

Throughout my three research projects I have taken a very functionalist stance in order to test-out the appropriateness of applying the prescribed competency based performance management approach in practice. Overall it is my belief that my research shows some serious practical weaknesses in adopting such a mechanistic approach to performance management. It is also my view that my findings support Barkema's views that "emerging trends in strategizing, organizing and managing can only be imperfectly described, understood and managed using traditional conceptions in management scholarship and practice and perhaps new conceptions are needed" (Barkema et al, 2002: 916).

At the turn of the 20th century social engineers sought to substitute rational 'scientific management' for the highly personalised, pre-modern, owner manager style, -

substituting rational procedures for intuition and values (Lessem, 1990: 172). In this post-modern age, at the start of the 21st century, it is perhaps now time for management theory to recognise the need to return to a more personalised, pre-modern, style of management and leadership.

Perhaps as Pascale suggests, management theory needs to recognise that "it is now the age of the gardener, rather than the engineer" (Pascale, 2002 in Flower and Guillaume, 2002: 20), where the role of managers and leaders is to nurture and tend, rather than to dictate and control. This new approach will require a new management paradigm and new skills; it will also require, as Barkema (2002) suggests, "new theory for a new age".

----- End of Project 3 -----

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Appendix A: The new group strategy

Today (April 8th 2002) we start communicating our new strategy externally and internally.

It's an important step as it confirms the choices we have made. We looked at our business, at the development of the marketplace, and made logical choices about the way forward.

We now have clarity about the markets we want to serve, the products and services we intend to supply, about what we will and will not deliver. This clarity will help us focus on delivering outstanding operational and financial results. We need to achieve results that our customers value, that our shareholders recognise and - above all else - that we are proud of.

Each line of business has contributed their ideas to ensure that the plan reflects what the Group – as one company - is going to deliver.

The group's top priorities for the next three years are:

- 1.A relentless focus on customer satisfaction
- 2.Financial discipline
- 3.Broadband at the heart of the company
- 4.New focus for Global Services
- 5.Clear network strategy
- 6.Clear strategy for each customer group
- 7.Motivated people.

We have set targets for each of our strategic priorities, which include:

1. To outperform competitors consistently and reduce the number of dissatisfied customers by 25 per cent each year.
2. To achieve organic profitable revenue growth of six to eight per cent while holding capital expenditure below £3 billion.
3. To launch a new 'direct' broadband product and create a media-enabled network.
4. Global Services to focus on solutions and other value added services for multi-site corporate customers in Europe, with no new investments in the consumer or SME markets outside the UK.
5. To place all UK networks under Wholesale's management. Limit investment in legacy voice and data platforms while migrating operations to new platforms.
6. To use the strength of the brand to expand into areas adjacent to the organization's existing business such as communications solutions and mobility for business

customers; and ICT (information communications and technology) for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

7. To develop motivated people with strong performance orientation and skills to meet market requirements.

I believe the plan is ambitious and challenging with tough - but achievable - growth and financial targets. It is designed to keep us ahead of our competitors, to help win back market share. It will require end-to-end co-operation internally to work.

Every day counts in this business. Every customer interaction counts, every decision counts, and everybody counts.

You can count on me to do my bit - I know I can count on you to do yours

Group Chief Executive Officer

Appendix B: The leadership competencies

What we expect of each other	What this means for us as leaders
Trustworthy	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to others with respect and create an open environment • Stand up for what we believe in • Back up people who do the right thing • Have personal integrity and ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resist feedback and avoid difficult conversations • Let unacceptable behaviour go unchallenged • Tell people what they want to hear
Helpful	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for creating a shared agenda with other leaders across the organization • Be generous in contributing to the success of others • Encourage people to share lessons learned • Know when and where to seek help <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage tribalism • Work independently of the rest of the organization • Be possessive of resources
Inspiring	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a compelling vision for our part of the business • Demonstrate depth and creativity of thought • Challenge existing thinking and embrace new ideas from everywhere and everyone <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume the present predicts the future • Be complacent or assume things can not be improved • Ignore or discourage new thinking
Straightforward	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think through complexity and make hard choices • Communicate priorities and agree clear expectations • Create a climate in which people feel confident to exercise judgement <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on process at the expense of results • Over-complicate messages and issues • Let unnecessary rules get in the way of common sense
Heart	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilise and energise people by making them feel they can make a difference • Set stretching targets to win today and in the future • Give people freedom to apply their unique strengths • Be passionate and confident in making the strategy a success • Act as a role model in stretching our own competency <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fail to recognise or take credit for others' work • Focus unduly on the negatives • Make unrealistic demands on self and others

What we expect of each other	What this means for us as leaders
Coaching for performance	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give fair, accurate and insightful feedback and instil a coaching culture • Clearly differentiate between levels of performance • Value diversity, encourage and leverage people's unique ability • Enable people to accept and learn from mistakes <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blame others when things go wrong • Discourage movement of people across boundaries • Tell rather than ask; see no need to support and motivate people
Bottom line	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive 'profit, growth and value' • Balance short-term efficiencies with long-term commercial growth • Consider the cost and benefit to the organization as a whole • Encourage the use of quality practices to improve business performance <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus exclusively on cost and budget • Accept decisions without a clear commercial rationale • Lack courage to stop things that are not commercially viable
Drive for results	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galvanise action and a sense of urgency • Take considered risks, use initiative and flexibility to deliver • Meet commitments, drive initiatives through to completion • Manage performance robustly and integrate resources to deliver effectively • Take personal responsibility for getting things done <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept poor or late delivery • Be busy without being effective • Lack confidence in the ability of others and try to do everything ourselves • Avoid responsibility by hiding behind position or professional status
Customer connected	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put customers at the centre of everything we do • Understand customer needs and innovate to meet and exceed them • Respond promptly to customer requirements and drive excellent service <p>We won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fail to integrate the customer perspective • Tolerate poor customer service • Allow bureaucracy to hinder delivery
Professional / technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of own work area and appropriate ethical considerations. • Continuously improves professional and technical skills/knowledge. • Achieves objectives through the application of job-related knowledge. • Demonstrates and applies awareness of functional and/or operational policies and procedures. • Uses understanding of business structures and functions to achieve functional/operational objectives.

Appendix C: Appraisal Form

Development & Performance 'End of year' Review

Period ending:

Full Name:

EIN:

Job Title:

OUC:

Before completing the DPR, to ensure performance assessment is without unfair discrimination or bias, please make sure you are familiar with the manual "Reviewing Performance" based on the group policy ("Managing Performance") as well as the Equal Opportunity or local Diversity policy, where it exists.

Overall Performance Rating:

O - Outstanding VG - Very Good G - Good GS - Generally Satisfactory NI - Needs Improvement

Contribution - "What"

Review of objectives, achievements, targets etc and overall contribution to business results, including comments to support your assessment.

Competency Assessment and Review “How”

Using the rating scale below, indicate the individual’s level of performance for each main competency, in the small grey box. Further description can be found attached to this form.

O – Outstanding VG - Very Good G - Good GS - Generally Satisfactory NI - Needs Improvement NA - Not Applicable

Trustworthy		Coaching for performance	
Helpful		Bottom Line	
Inspiring		Drive for results	
Straightforward		Customer connected	
Heart		Professional / technical	

Review of Competency “How”

Comment on the individual’s performance in relation to the Competencies

Development Action Plan

Including business relevance, timescales, ownership and measures of achievement

Development for current job		
<i>Objective & action agreed</i>	<i>By when</i>	<i>Review date</i>
Development to widen experience		
<i>Objective & action agreed</i>	<i>By when</i>	<i>Review date</i>

Countersigning Manager's Comments

On both performance and development

Individual's Comments

Acknowledgement of Development Performance Review

Individual:

Signature	Name	Date
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Reviewing Manager:

Signature	Name	Date
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Countersigning Manager:

Signature	Name	Date
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Appendix D: Top team invitation letter

Margaret Savage
Director, HR Strategy, Policy and
Organizational Design

24 September 2002

Dear _____,

I am writing to you to ask if you can find some time in your busy schedule to talk to Paul Davis. Paul, who is studying for his doctorate at Cranfield University, works in our ISP Business.

Paul's chosen research topic is "The selection of assessment criteria for leaders". This research seems to be very timely and his findings could add an academic perspective to the work that is currently being undertaken on performance management, reward mechanisms and the success criteria for the New Special Incentive Award scheme.

Your insight as the Head of your Business is obviously very valuable and important to Paul's research and so I agreed to write on his behalf to elicit help in finding time in your diary during October or November. He will need about 60 minutes of your time, if that is at all possible.

I have attached an extract from Paul's research proposal below for your reference.

Many thanks for your support.

Yours sincerely

Appendix E: Research abstract

Abstract

The organization has a new group Chief Executive and a new seven-point strategy. After five years operating as semiautonomous businesses this new strategy requires the five business units to work together collaboratively and co-operatively under the banner of 'One organization'.

To support this new strategy there is recognition that we need to instil a performance orientation that focuses on the contribution of the individual; to do this the organization is introducing a new reward for performance scheme which focuses the highest reward on the top 20% of leaders.

Driven from the top this sharpening of the performance management system gives clear messages about the direction and values that the organization wants to instil. Implemented well it will be a positive force for change, handled poorly it may become divisive, drive inappropriate behaviour and become demotivating.

The academic literature identifies how defining competencies that align the business with environmental opportunities, delivers organizational success.

The literature discusses how the focal point of competence development is people, both in terms of *what* they need to do, their 'objectives', and the behavioural competencies they need to display, the *how*.

The questions that my research aims to answer are:

- What are the 'criteria' that the top team will use to assess the performance of leaders in the context of delivering the organization's new strategy over the next 3 years?
- What is the degree of alignment of these views across the top team?

Appendix F: Top team member interview introductory letter

Dear ,

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my doctoral research project investigating the assessment criteria for leaders; I am hopeful that this research will add value both for your business unit and for the organization as a whole as it support the OC action on values and behaviours.

In advance of our meeting next week I thought that it would be beneficial if I could ask you to give some consideration to two points:

- what 'criteria' you expect to see leaders display in delivering the orgnsiation's new strategy*
- the identification of six people; two people who display your criteria, two who do not and two who do in some ways but not in others.*

The interview technique that I will be using will get you to compare and contrast what it is about these people that is important to you. Ideally I would like you to select people within our organization at PCGS, PCGR or CR level that you know reasonably well; if you feel more comfortable choosing people at this sort of level outside of the organization that would be fine too.

Appendix G: Attitudes, behaviours and values

Attitudes	
A1	Knows self (Internal awareness)
	At ease with self
	Can laugh at self
	Can take criticism, both positive and negative
	Highly self aligned
	Knows self
	Reflexive thinker
	Sees own failings
	Self aware
	Self reflexive
	Stand back and be self critical
	Understands own impact and body language
A2	Drive and determination
	Action orientated
	Decisive
	Determination
	Determination to deliver
	Drive, patience and persistence
	Focus
	Proactive
	Relentless focus and determination
	Strength and determination
A3	Displays Humility
	Caring
	Courteous and caring
	Demonstrates care for others
	Fallible
	Honest
	Humility
	Listens
	Not selfish with information
	Open
	Willing to listen
A4	Confident in own abilities (External view)
	Able to eat alone
	Confident
	Confident to go against norms
	Self assured
	Self assured – not arrogant
	Self reliant
	Strength and confidence
	Strength of character
	Strong views

A5 Positive / upbeat; 'Can do' attitude

Courage of own convictions
Displays conviction
Displays passion and emotion
Displays positive energy
Hard working (not lazy)
High energy
Not risk averse
Optimistic upbeat
Positive 'can do' attitude
Sincere
Upbeat
Warm

A6 Enquiring mind

Clarity of thought
Clear thinker
Curious
Good judgement
Inquisitive
Learner
Naturally enquiring mind
Not introspective
Open to new ideas and change
Outward looking
Very bright

A7 Analytical

Detail orientation
Logical structured
Proactive
Rational
Objective

Behaviours (Instrumental values)

B1 Uses the full range of emotional intelligence

Adapts style and tone to suit audience
Argues strongly
Demonstrates care for others
Laughs
Makes others feel good about themselves
Makes people feel safe
Makes time for people
Makes work fun
Observes sensitivities of individuals
Puts people at ease
Reduces unnecessary stress and tension
Shares experiences
Shout, pray and laugh
Shows care for others
Uses anger, frustration and intolerance
Uses appropriate body language to build rapport
Uses body language
Uses empathy to build rapport
Uses humour
Uses language of mutual respect
Uses the full range of intellectual emotions

B2 Sets bold and stretching targets

Sets and agree targets
Sets BHAG's (Big hairy audacious goals)
Sets bold targets
Sets clear goals and expectations
Sets stretching targets

B3 Involves and listens; Doesn't own wisdom

Brings people in to discussion
Builds rapport
Admits he does not have all answers
Consults others
Creates open two way communication
Doesn't own wisdom
Encourages democratic discussion
Encourages discussion of "so what"
Explores others point of view
Fully engages people
Generates involvement
Gets to know and understand people and their feelings
Gets to know people on a personal level
Invites participation
Involves others
Keeps people informed
Listens and garners input
Listens to others points of view
Seeks opinions
Shares information
Takes care to talk to people
Tests and expresses views

B4 Shows a deliberate focuses on delivery through team

A good manager acts like a stage manager, he is not the star
Builds a team, (recruits and trains) for success
Coach team to strive towards numbers
Coaches, trains and supports
Delivers through the team
Drives teamwork
Facilitates others contribution
Focuses self and team on beating targets and milestones
Galvanises their team
Gives people a sense of ownership and direction
People orientated
Recognises success is due to people around them
Talks in terms of "We"
Turns team to implementation
Works towards team goals

B5 Takes a firm hand

"Almost there" is not good enough
Challenges mediocrity
Challenges the mediocre the easier, the comfortable or the safe.
Confronts key operational boundary issues
Deals with conflict constructively
Deals with non-delivery
Deals with poor performance
Does not shy away from taking a decision
Doesn't accept excuses
Doesn't duck the issue
Doesn't let people get away with vague answers
Firm and fair when things need to improve
Intolerant of sloppy expenditure
Manages conflict constructively
Persistently dissatisfied
Rewards delivery not effort
Treats people fairly and firmly
Will fire or move people on

B6 Values and uses diversity

Looks for diversity
Recognises people for who they are, not just what they do
Recruits for diversity
Recruits from different backgrounds
Sees and values differences
Shows understanding of and for others
Values and utilises diversity

B7 Communicates clearly and effectively

Articulates goals clearly
Communicates clearly and effectively
Communicates to convince
Communicates widely
Persuades others
Persuasive about persuading
Repeats message

B8 Focuses on customers

De-prioritise everything below customer
Engages with customer issues
Focuses everyone on customer
Passion for customers
Personally go after customer complaints
Puts customer first
Relentless and daily focus on customers
Servant of the customer
Treating and seeing customers in the specific reality, not the abstract aggregate

B9 Works with fact, not opinion

Benchmarks performance externally
Deals in fact not opinion
Deals in fact not politics
Drives detailed understanding
Fact based
Focuses on cost and revenue
Identifies issues
Identifies issues and opportunities
Presents argument based on fact
Presents position based on fact

B10 Searches out new ideas and opportunities

Asks lots of questions
Constantly searching for new ideas
Develops broad awareness
Good grasp of the industry
Good market knowledge
Identifies issues and opportunities
Knows what other have achieved
Learns
Networks widely at home and abroad
Open to new ideas
Outward looking
Reads a lot
Reads widely
Scans the market
Searches out new ideas
Searches out new ideas and opportunities

B11 Pushes the envelope

Challenge existing assumptions
Challenges the "ideal" situation
Challenges the status quo
Continually questions what we should be achieving
Does not try to be safe
Doing things differently for customers
Encourages risk taking
Explores boundaries of what is possible
Prepared to fail
Rewards risk taking
Stimulates people to take risks
Takes risks
Thinks outside the box
Tries a lot and sees what works

B12 Leads by example

Accepts personal responsibility
Creates a sense of sureness and confidence
Displays responsibility for others
Engenders ownership
Gets out a lot
Gives direction and leadership
Inspires people
Instils confidence
Leads by example
Role models behaviour
Sets the tone
Stomps around
Walks the talk

B13 Gives praise and feedback; Cheers at others

Behaves magnanimously
Cheers at others
Congratulates the results of others
Gives away praise
Gives credit where credit is due
Gives feedback, both negative and positive
Gives praise and feedback
Gives praise and thanks
Promotes (sells) their own contribution
Promotes (sells) their team's contribution
Says thank you / good job
Sells the quality of their team upwards and sideways

B14 Aligns and dovetails outcomes

Aligns organisation and people behind targets
Argues from company perspective
Aware of wider community
Balances own unit goals against business objectives
Builds individual success in to team success
Collaborates across the company
Creates clarity
Creates harmony
Dovetails outcomes
Dovetails with other units
Drives for alignment and clarity
Eradicates conflict
Forges alignment
Looks for alignment
Looks for common ground
Makes trade offs
Manages across different cultures
Manages organisation politics
Puts company above self
Puts their heads and minds inside other peoples subjective interlocks
Sees own targets within bigger picture
Steps back to review
Takes big picture perspective
Takes multiple perspectives

B15 Builds a story

Creates a vision
Emphasises positives
Tells a good story
Celebrates success
Good at presenting journey
Creates a positive view
Positions department well
Selects facts selectively

B16 Engages people at all levels

Close involvement with people and targets
Engages with people too identify their skills
Escalates, well thought out position, when needed
Partners with front-line
Reviews results and progress regularly
Talks to people before escalating

B17 Develops own position and views

Can articulate why their view is correct
Creates an "original sense", not emulating
Defends own position
Forms world view / beliefs
Formulates own position
Formulates well thought out defensible positions
Identifies and backs ideas
Persuades others to own position

B18 Adopts a solution orientation

Focuses on closure
Looks for solutions
Nails and defines point of closure
Solution orientated

B19 Focuses on execution and delivery

Don't let targets out of their sight
Drives forward
Fixes issues
Focuses on delivery
Focuses on execution
Focuses on implementation and execution
Implements new ideas
Keeps things under control
Moves fast
Plans for success
Sets the agenda

Terminal Values

V1 Maximise individual contribution

Encourage people to give of their best
Engenders high level of performance
Getting the best out of people in to day to day practice
High performance individuals
Leverages different skills
Maximises individual contribution
Motivated people
Sweats the assets (People)

V2 Community; Shared purpose

Common shared purpose
Community; Shared purpose
Create a cause
Creates a bond
Creates a sense of belonging
Engenders a spirit of involvement
Feels part of collective
Generates sense of involvement
People feel that they are making a constructive contribution
Respect and value for people
Sense of security

V3 Team work

A sense of democratise discussion (democracy)
Build team work
Builds cross company team work and success
Builds overall success through "chunks"
Maximises collective results
Maximises team [output] effort
Team spirit

V4 Be the best; Deliver

Accept responsibility for driving high level of performance
Aim high
Be number one
Beat the competition
Create 'win win'
Deliver all we possibly can
Deliver results
Deliver results above the average
Deliver the business results
Drive a high level of performance
Engender a high level of performance (Business & team)
Hit the numbers
Look for the best results for the company
Optimise output
Perform better than the competition

V5 Deliver for customers

Aligns everyone towards customer
Customers are our bread and butter
Focus on external world
Meet customer needs
Remain competitive for customers
Satisfy customer needs

V6 Innovate and grow

Believing the market is changing and we have to change with it
Believing that we can't stand still
Creates new business
Evolve constantly with market and customer needs
Growth and increased shareholder value
Innovates
Keep abreast of market trends and opportunities
Not get overtaken or leap frogged
Refresh the business

V7 Provide business and organisational leadership

Allows focus on external world
Efficiency and reduced cost
Internal alignment
Internal alignment for efficiency
Lead the way
Leadership
Leadership: that's what we pay people for
People need clarity and confidence
Provide team with a sense of confidence, direction and leadership
Provides leadership of task and people

Appendix H: The 50 behaviours used in the Project 2 questionnaire

- 1 Articulates goals clearly
- 2 Focuses on cost and revenue
- 3 Puts the customer first
- 4 Searches out new ideas and opportunities
- 5 Tries a lot and sees what works
- 6 Sets clear goals and expectations
- 7 Seeks opinions
- 8 Values & uses diversity
- 9 Celebrates success
- 10 Focuses on execution and delivery
- 11 Keeps people informed
- 12 Communicates clearly and effectively
- 13 Challenges the status quo
- 14 Gets to know & understand people & their feelings
- 15 Collaborates across the organisation
- 16 Deals with poor performance
- 17 Personally goes after customer complaints
- 18 Rewards risk taking
- 19 Displays responsibility for others
- 20 Sets stretching targets
- 21 Facilitates others contribution
- 22 Forms own position and views
- 23 Communicates to convince
- 24 Makes time for people
- 25 Aligns the organisation & people behind targets
- 26 Communicates widely
- 27 Benchmarks performance externally
- 28 Emphasises positives
- 29 Repeats key messages often
- 30 Uses anger, frustration and intolerance
- 31 Develops a broad awareness of company & industry
- 32 Talks to people before escalating
- 33 Gives feedback, both positive & negative
- 34 Thinks outside the box
- 35 Creates open two way communication
- 36 Formulates well thought out plans & defensible positions
- 37 Builds individual success in to team success
- 38 Adapts style and tone to suit audience
- 39 Positions own targets within bigger picture
- 40 Gets out a lot to meet customers & their own people
- 41 Rewards delivery not effort
- 42 Presents position and argument based on fact
- 43 Encourages democratic discussion
- 44 Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives
- 45 Takes multiple perspectives
- 46 Admits does not have all answers
- 47 Role models behaviour
- 48 Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do
- 49 Focuses everyone on customers
- 50 Tests and expresses views

Appendix I: Pilot team letter

Pilot team member letter

Dear

The purpose of this email is to ask for your help in piloting a questionnaire that I intend to send to the leadership team within Global Services.

I am currently studying for my doctorate (DBA) and I have been working with Janet Blake in HR to align my research with the various programmes that are currently underway.

The aim of this work is to help create a common view and understanding of what 'good' leadership behaviour looks like in the context of the new values and competencies.

This is a 'try-out' study and I would like you to be critical, to ask about things that you do not understand and to help me make this a better questionnaire.

One of my team, or myself, will be in touch over the next few weeks to walk through the introductory letter and questionnaire, in the mean time please find attached a draft copy of the introductory letter,

Many thanks Paul

Appendix J: Pilot issues log extract

A Survey Letter		Issue / concern	Suggestion for Improvement	Commentor	Action
1	Content & Message	No issue			
2	Format	No issue			
3	External Party hosting	The words "Hosting by an external Party" are listed in the Letter, while this will be hosted by us.	it is not currently and do not seem to be in the future hosted by an external Party : this has been erased on the Web page and to be checked in the Survey Letter.	Boyd Ringrose	Paul Davis
4	Confusion of hosts names	Andy is the signer of the Survey letter but at the end of the WEB application, Sally thanks people	Get one name only	Ellen Clifford Wolfgang Breithaupt	Paul Davis
5	Next steps	What will happen with the results of this survey ?	To clarify if this will be published or not, and which real action will come out of this.		Paul Davis
B Web page		Issue / concern	Suggestion for Improvement		Action
1	Overall Presentation	No issue			
2	Web pages Formatting	Header Values fonts size very small : hard to read	Get greater fonts size format where possible : Boyd has provided a click option to it.	Claude Beck	Boyd Ringrose
3	Introduction page clarity	Introduction page could be more clear	Show in a 3 items list the recommendations. Boyd has implemented it.	Claude Beck	Boyd Ringrose
4	Lengths of Behaviours list	90 behaviours seems to be a very long survey. The number of answers might be very low.	Check if some can be merged with others without reducing the scope. A recommended number of 50 questions would be advised.	All	Paul Davis
5	Columns : "Other Capability" and "Not important"	Those namings are not listed like this	Please keep it short and turn back to those namings. Also, please color those two header columns as they are exceptions	Claude Beck	Boyd Ringrose
6	Errors & change	Is it possible to store the results and come back later on ?	Not in the recommendation and would require more development. Decided not to do it -	Claude Beck	Boyd Ringrose
7	Confidentiality	There are no statements at the end of the submission. Confidentiality statements should be the same in the Survey Letter as in the Welcom page.	To add a statement similar as the one into the survey letter.	Claude Beck	Paul Davis/Boyd Ringrose
8	Behaviours meaning	Some Behaviours are unclear (like 4 and 79)	To clarify the statement	Heyly Leung/Claude Beck	Paul Davis
9	Relationship behaviour / values	Some of the Behaviours are not easy to relate to the values	No suggestions	Heyly Leung/Victor Bravo	Paul Davis
10	Survey purpose unclear	What is the final purpose of the Survey : to assess the leadership profile of the manager in the company ?	Within the "Header" : to remind people with the purpose of the survey	Heyly Leung	Paul Davis
11	Survey purpose unclear	Is this set of questions/behaviours used to tests Company managers understanding of the leadership capabilities ?	Header : to remind people with the purpose of the survey. What will be done with this Survey, which outcome ?	Heyly Leung/Wolfgang Breithaupt	Paul Davis
12	Negative behaviours	There are a list of negative behaviours (ie. 22 & 31) that do not really fit with the expected Values we want to be used.	Remove Negative behaviours as this cause confusion OR add an additional column about "NO opinion" for them to be taken on.	Ellen clifford/Victor Bravo	Paul Davis
13	Progress bar	Progress bar is not showing the number of questions answered, but the set of sections	To set the percentage of the bar related to the number of questions effectively answered.	René Markerinck	Boyd Ringrose
14	Tasks versus Behaviours & duplications	List is displaying tasks and behaviours.	Suggestion to distinguish tasks and behaviours and remove the duplicative information	Ellen Clifford	Paul Davis
15	Multiple options in the behaviours list	No means to appoint a behaviour to several values	To do this Boyd would need a one week development more.	Mark Allen	Paul Davis
16	Behaviour definition	There is no definiton of what Behaviours means	To provide a 5-10 words definition of Behaviour, including that the behaviours should be consistently demonstrated (not a one shot).	Ellen Clifford/Mark Allen Ellen Clifford/Claude	Paul Davis
17	Target audience	It is not defined who's is targetted	Define target audience in the Introduction page ? Do you have your own weightings or those behaviours and classifications in the values ? This had to do with the comment about whether the person who 'exhibits the behavior' does it all the time, some of the time or rarely. This would address the concern that respondents would think well, this person does this sometimes, but not consistently, etc.	Beck	Paul Davis
18	Weighing of behaviours	There is no weighing of Behaviours		Ellen Clifford	Paul Davis

List of behaviours (version 4 - 27.12.03)				
C	Issue / concern	Suggestion for Improvement	Commentor	Action
1	Focuses on execution and delivery			
2	Takes multiple perspectives			
3	Admits does not have all answers			
4	Role models desired behaviour	Meaning: "the manager shows the right behaviour to his colleagues" ?		Claude Beck/Wolfgang Breithaupt
5	Reviews results and progress regularly	This is a task, not a behaviour	Reorganise	Ellen Clifford Wolfgang Breithaupt
6	Tests and expresses views		Clarify meaning please	
7	Makes others feel good about themselves			
8	Talks to people before escalating			
9	Shares information			
10	Plans for success			
11	Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do			
12	Creates open two way communication			
13	Gets to know & understand people & their feelings			
14	Presents position and argument based on fact			
15	Displays relentless & daily focus on customers			
16	Focuses on cost and revenue			
17	Celebrates success	Could be quoted as close to 78 ?		Claude Beck
18	Persuades others to own position			
19	Reads widely	This would be hard to define in someone (Ellen)	Clarify meaning please (Wolfgang)	Ellen Clifford/Wolfgang Breithaupt
20	Sets clear goals and expectations			
21	Develops a broad awareness of company & industry			
22	Uses anger, frustration and intolerance	This is so negative, why would this be listed?		Ellen clifford/Victor Bravo
23	Keeps people informed			
24	Searches out new ideas and opportunities			
25	Doesn't let targets get out of their sight			
26	Asks lots of questions	This would be hard to define in someone		Ellen Clifford
27	Reduces unnecessary stress & tension			
28	Shows understanding of and for others			
29	Emphasises positives			
30	Facilitates others contribution			
31	Shouts, prays & laughs		Clarify meaning please	Wolfgang Breithaupt
32	Fixes issues			
33	Values & uses diversity			
34	Seeks opinions			
35	Talks in terms of "WE"			
36	Does not accept excuses			
37	Communicates clearly and effectively			
38	Challenges mediocrity			
39	Sets stretching targets			
40	Rewards delivery not effort			
41	Balances own unit goals with business objectives			
42	Challenges the status quo			
43	Drives a detailed understanding			
44	Observes sensitivities of individuals			
45	Articulates goals clearly			
46	Coaches, trains and supports people			
47	Argues from a company perspective			
48	Tries a lot and sees what works			
49	Identifies issues & opportunities			

Appendix K: Survey invitation letters

Version A

Andy Green
Global Services

Dear (Name of leadership team member)

Subject: Aligning behaviour with the new values and leadership competencies

Over recent weeks I have been thinking about our role as individuals and as a leadership team in role modelling the values for our people; recent discussions have highlighted to me that we are not aligned in our own understanding of what actions and behaviours reflect the values and leadership competencies.

Until we have clear understanding and are aligned around these topics we cannot effectively make the step change that we need within our business: Until we embrace the change, we cannot expect our people to do so

To address this misalignment I have commissioned a programme of activities to support continued leadership change. Within this programme I am supporting an e-survey and a series of focus groups to be run across Global Services to identify how our people rate the leadership team's behaviour and to ask about specific examples of what they see as actions/behaviours that do or do not reflect the values. This together with important feedback from CARE, on whether the leadership team is perceived as living the values, will help us develop our action plans around coaching, development and reinforcement.

Please join me in this straightforward and inspiring approach to leading change by taking a few minutes to complete the e-survey. The survey is easy to complete and should take you no more than 15 minutes. Your responses will be treated as confidential, i.e. the survey results will be reported in aggregate only and no individual details will be disclosed.

Your views are very important to me and will help make sure that as we move forwards everyone within the leadership team is clear as to what is expected of them.

Please click on the URL below to start the survey:

http://solutions.intra.com/esolutions/projects/values_survey/start.cfm

Thanking you in advance,

Andy

Version B

Andy Green
Global Services

Dear *(Name of leadership team member)*

Subject: [Aligning behaviour with the new values and leadership competencies](#)

Over recent weeks I have been thinking about our role as individuals and as a leadership team in role modelling the values for our people; recent discussions have highlighted to me that we are not aligned in our own understanding of what actions and behaviours reflect the values and leadership competencies.

Until we have clear understanding and are aligned around these topics we cannot effectively make the step change that we need within our business: Until we embrace the change, we cannot expect our people to do so

To address this misalignment I have commissioned a programme of activities to support continued leadership change. Within this programme I am supporting an e-survey and a series of focus groups to be run across Global Services to identify how our people rate the leadership team's behaviour and to ask about specific examples of what they see as actions/behaviours that do or do not reflect the values. This together with important feedback from CARE, on whether the leadership team is perceived as living the values, will help us develop a really engaging session for the April 1st GSLT event, and help us focus our action plans around coaching, development and reinforcement.

Please join me in this straightforward and inspiring approach to leading change by taking a few minutes to complete the e-survey. The survey is easy to complete and should take you no more than 15 minutes. Your responses will be treated as confidential, i.e. the survey results will be reported in aggregate only and no individual details will be disclosed.

Your views are very important to me and will help make sure that as we move forwards everyone within the leadership team is clear as to what is expected of them.

Please click on the URL below to go to the survey:

http://solutions.intra.com/esolutions/projects/values_survey/start_vp.cfm

Thanking you in advance,

Andy

Appendix L: GSLT survey questionnaire

Section 1

Aligning behaviour with the values and leadership competencies

Thank you for participating in this important survey – please submit your response by April 2nd 2004.

The questionnaire contains a list of behaviours that I would like you to read and then allocate against the leadership competencies.

Please do not spend a lot of time deliberating over each response.

If the behaviour is something you would expect to see the leadership team display then please select the leadership competency that you believe provides the 'best fit', if you do not feel that it supports any of the leadership competencies then please select 'Other'.

If the behaviour or action is something that you feel does not support the new leadership competencies then please select 'Not applicable'.

The whole survey should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Before you begin here is a reminder of the leadership competencies

HYPERLINK 1

HYPERLINK 2

Note: All survey responses will be treated as confidential and all results will be reported in aggregate only, no individual details will be disclosed.

Set font size to a larger font

Please click on the arrow when you are ready to begin



Section 2

Please select just one box on the right hand side that best represents your view for each item

	Trustworthy	Helpful	Inspiring	Straightforward	Heart	Coaching for Performance	Bottom Line	Drive for Results	Customer connected	Other	Not applicable
BEHAVIORS											
No 1: Articulates goals clearly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 2: Focuses on cost and revenue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 3: Puts the customer first	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 4: Searches out new ideas and opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 5: Tries a lot and sees what works	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 6: Sets clear goals and expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 7: Seeks opinions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 8: Values & uses diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 9: Celebrates success	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 10: Focuses on execution and delivery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 11: Keeps people informed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 12: Communicates clearly and effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No 13: Challenges the status quo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Continue to next section ...	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

etc.

Section 3

Finally I would like you to tell me something about your self:

Your OUC

In which country do you work:

In which functional area do you work:

Are you: Male / Female

If you would like to speak to a member of the project team about your response or be included in the focus groups please enter your email address: _____@.com

Section 4

Thank you for your time and effort, your contribution will be very valuable in helping ensure alignment and understanding of the behaviours that support the leadership competencies,

Many thanks, [Andy](#)

Appendix M : Survey reminder letter

Keep up with the news at <http://globalservices.intra.com/>

This message has been sent to all Global Services key influencers for action. There is no need to distribute further.

You will have received an email broadcast from Andy Green on Friday, 19 March, about the leadership team's roles in demonstrating the values for our people.

Within this message, you were asked to complete an e-survey which has been introduced to help identify how the leadership team's behaviour is perceived.

If you have not already done so, could you please complete this esurvey via the URL below, by Friday, 2 April.

http://solutions.intra.com/esolutions/projects/values_survey/start_leadership.cfm

This message has been issued by Global Services Internal Communications (megan.brown@com)

Sent using Teamconnect Enterprise Messenger

<<http://teamconnect.intra.com/pas/m/em.htm>>

Appendix N: Coding schema

Answer ID	Competency / category
0	No response
1	Trustworthy
2	Helpful
3	Inspiring
4	Straightforward
5	Heart
6	Coaching for performance
7	Bottom line
8	Drive for results
9	Customer connected
10	Other
11	Not applicable

Answer ID	Location
1	Australia
2	Belgium
3	France
4	Germany
5	Hong Kong
6	Ireland
7	Netherlands
8	Nordics
9	Singapore
10	Spain
11	UK
12	US
13	Other

Answer ID	Function
1	Customer Service
2	Finance
3	HR
4	ICT Services
5	Legal & Regulatory
6	Networks
7	Products
8	Sales & Marketing
9	Solutions
10	Strategy
11	Other

Appendix O: Survey response data

Function

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Customer Service	16	13.1	13.1	13.1
	Finance	5	4.1	4.1	17.2
	HR	11	9.0	9.0	26.2
	ICT Services	3	2.5	2.5	28.7
	Legal & Regulation	8	6.6	6.6	35.2
	Networks	13	10.7	10.7	45.9
	Products	9	7.4	7.4	53.3
	Sales & Marketing	17	13.9	13.9	67.2
	Solutions	17	13.9	13.9	81.1
	Strategy	9	7.4	7.4	88.5
	Other	14	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

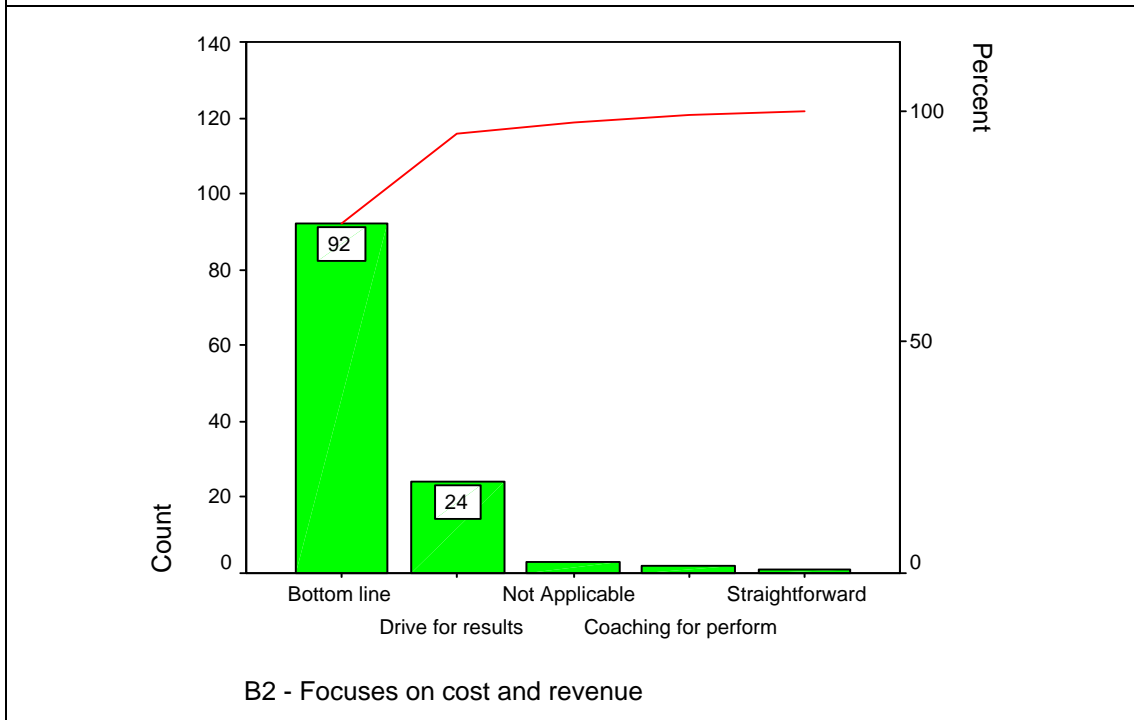
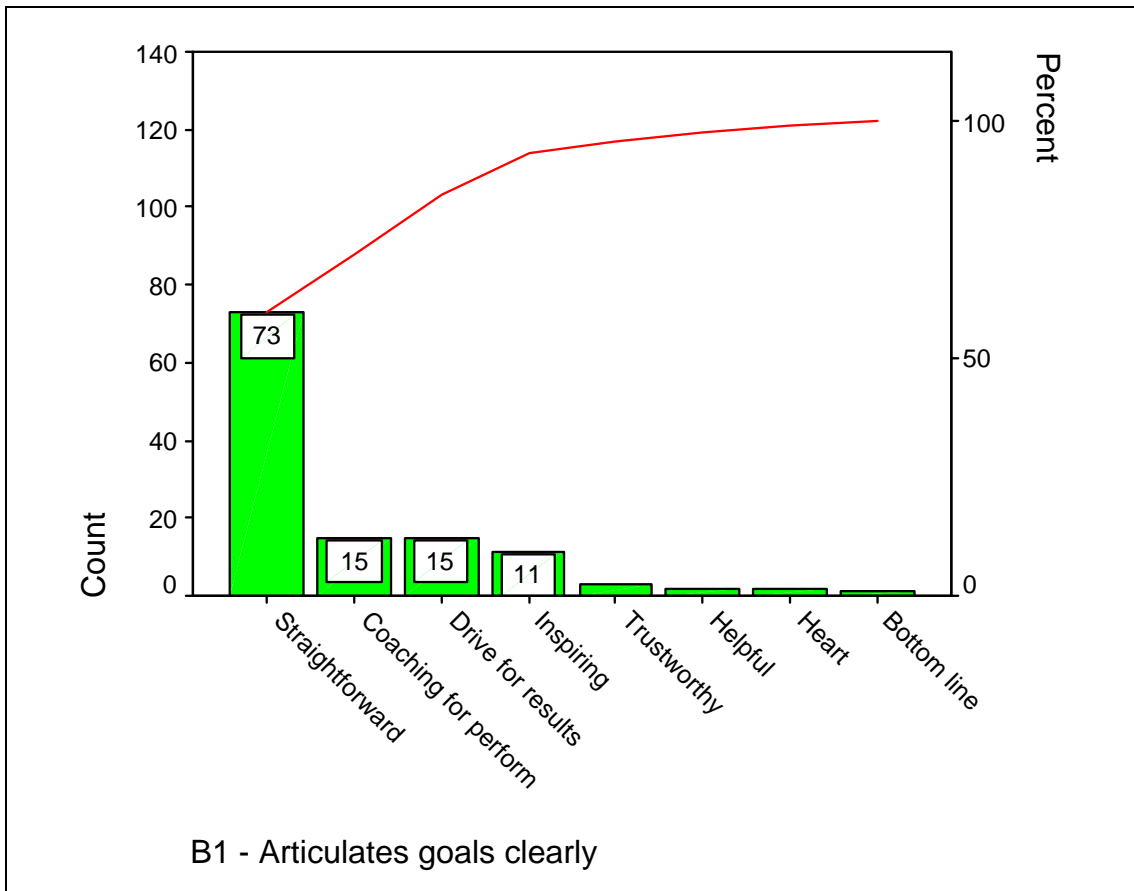
Location

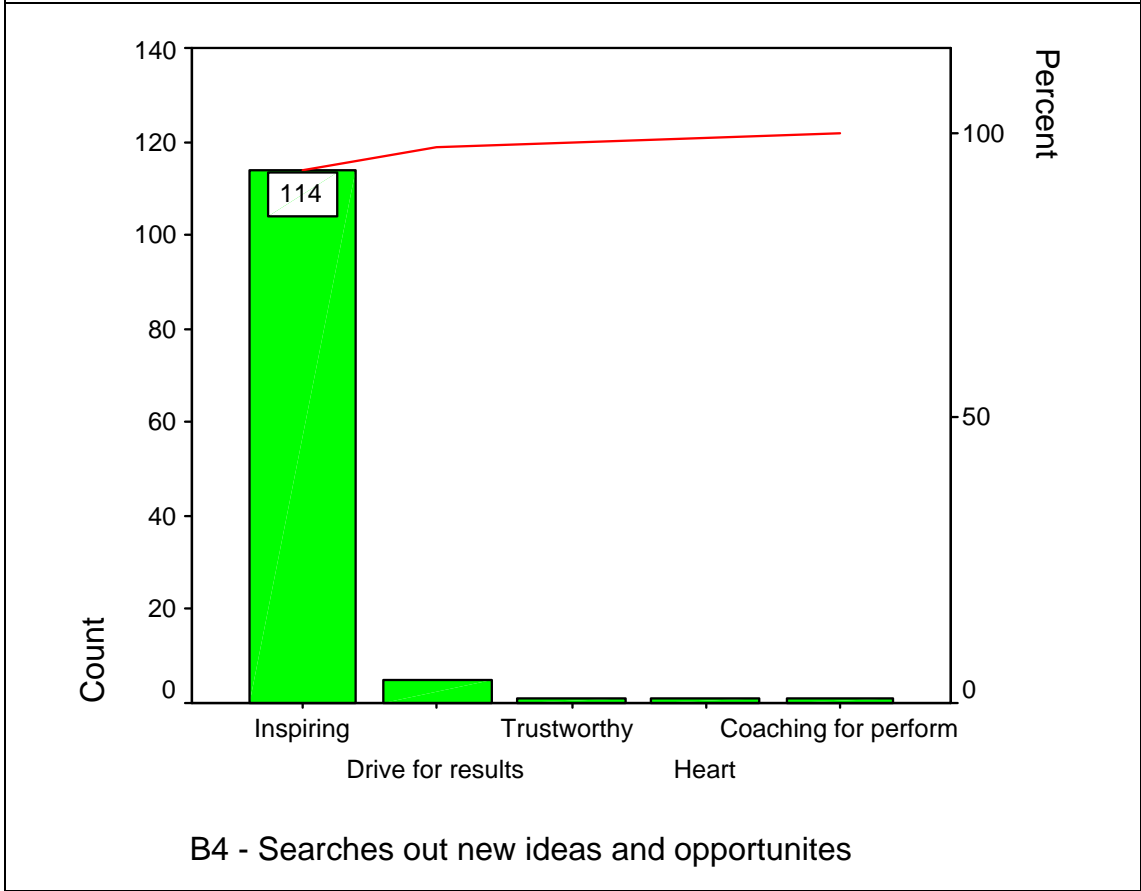
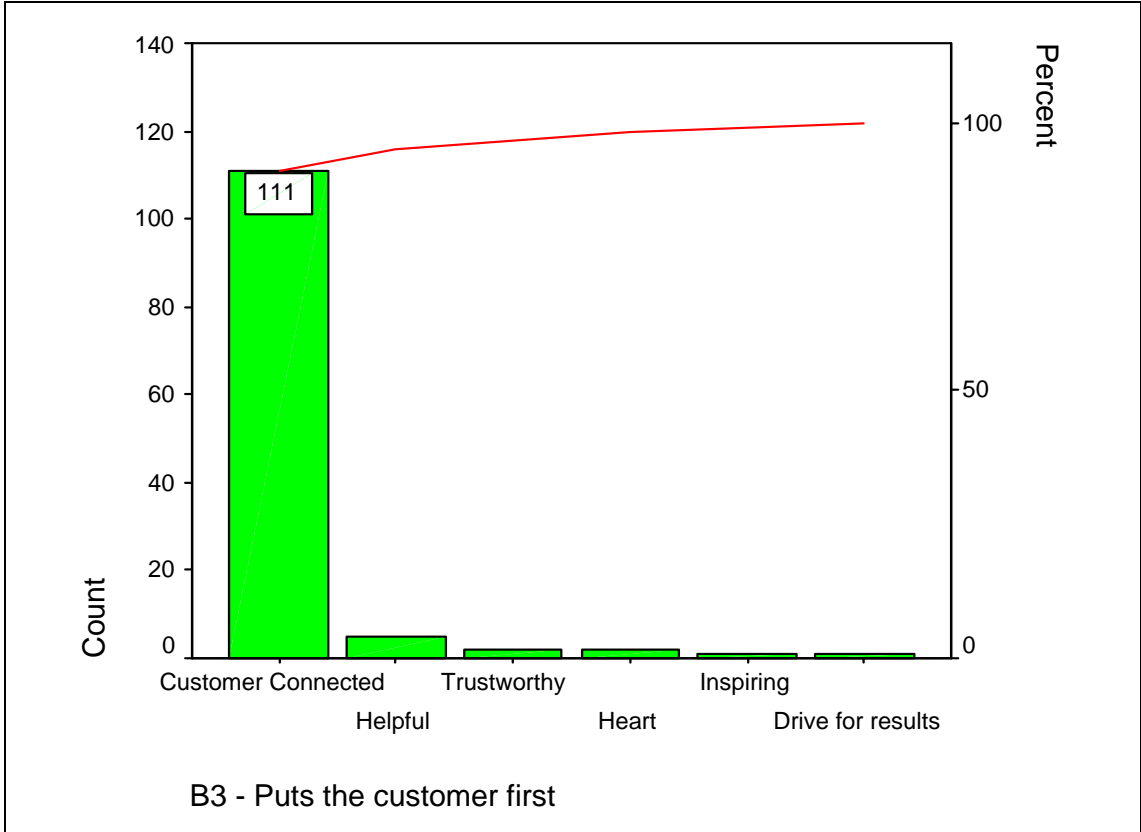
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Belgium	12	9.8	9.8	9.8
	France	4	3.3	3.3	13.1
	Germany	8	6.6	6.6	19.7
	Hong Kong	3	2.5	2.5	22.1
	Ireland	4	3.3	3.3	25.4
	Netherlands	4	3.3	3.3	28.7
	Nordics	3	2.5	2.5	31.1
	Spain	7	5.7	5.7	36.9
	UK	60	49.2	49.2	86.1
	US	14	11.5	11.5	97.5
	Other	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

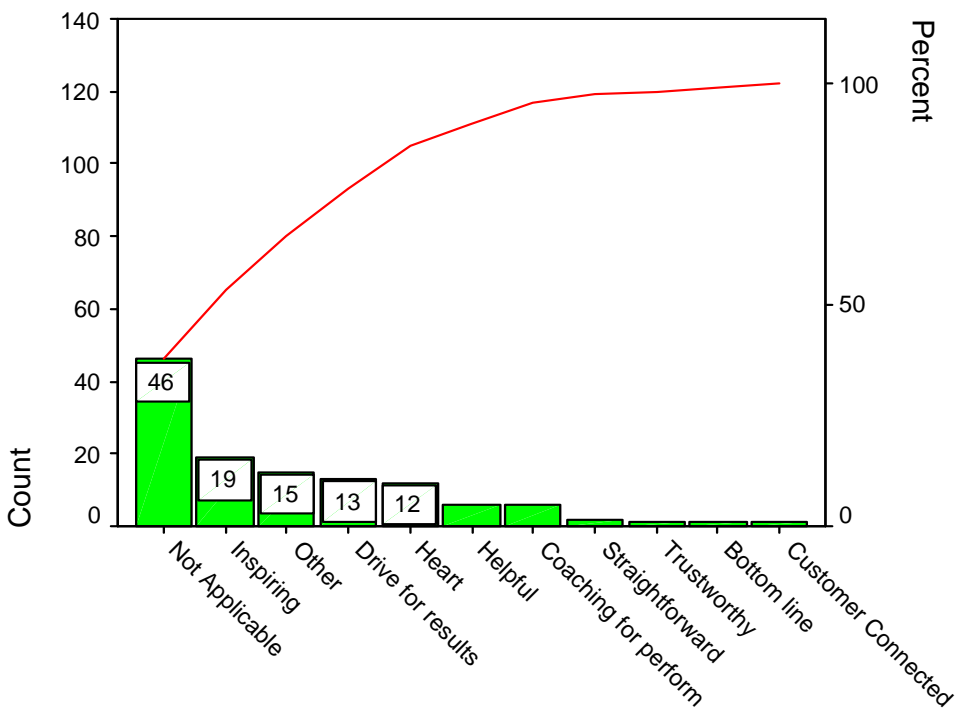
Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	96	78.7	78.7	78.7
	Female	26	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

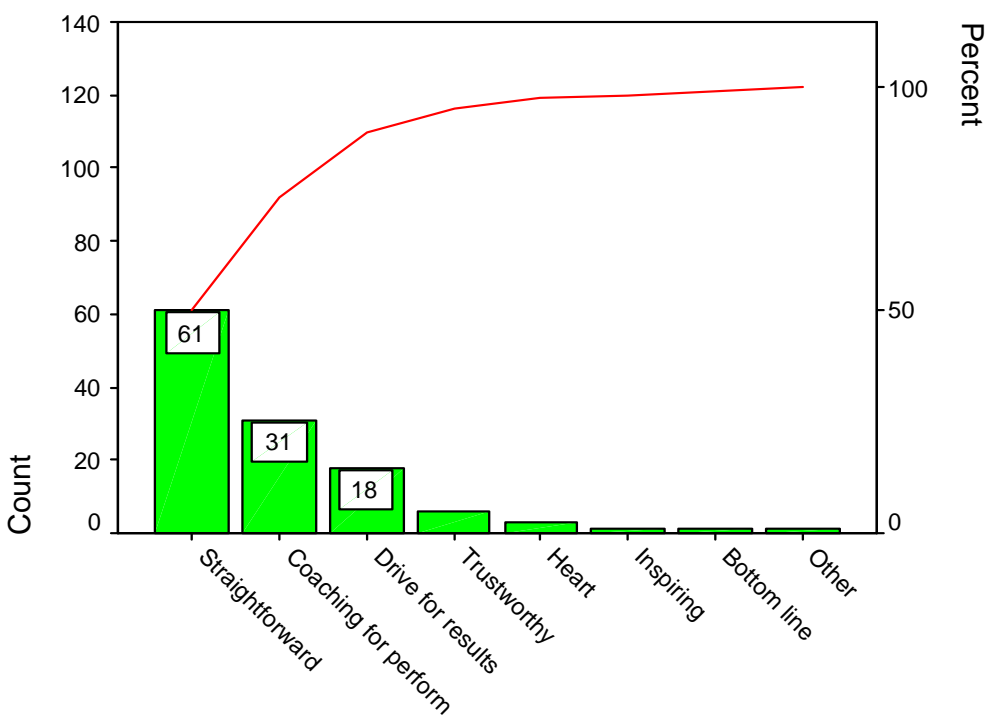
Appendix P: Pareto charts



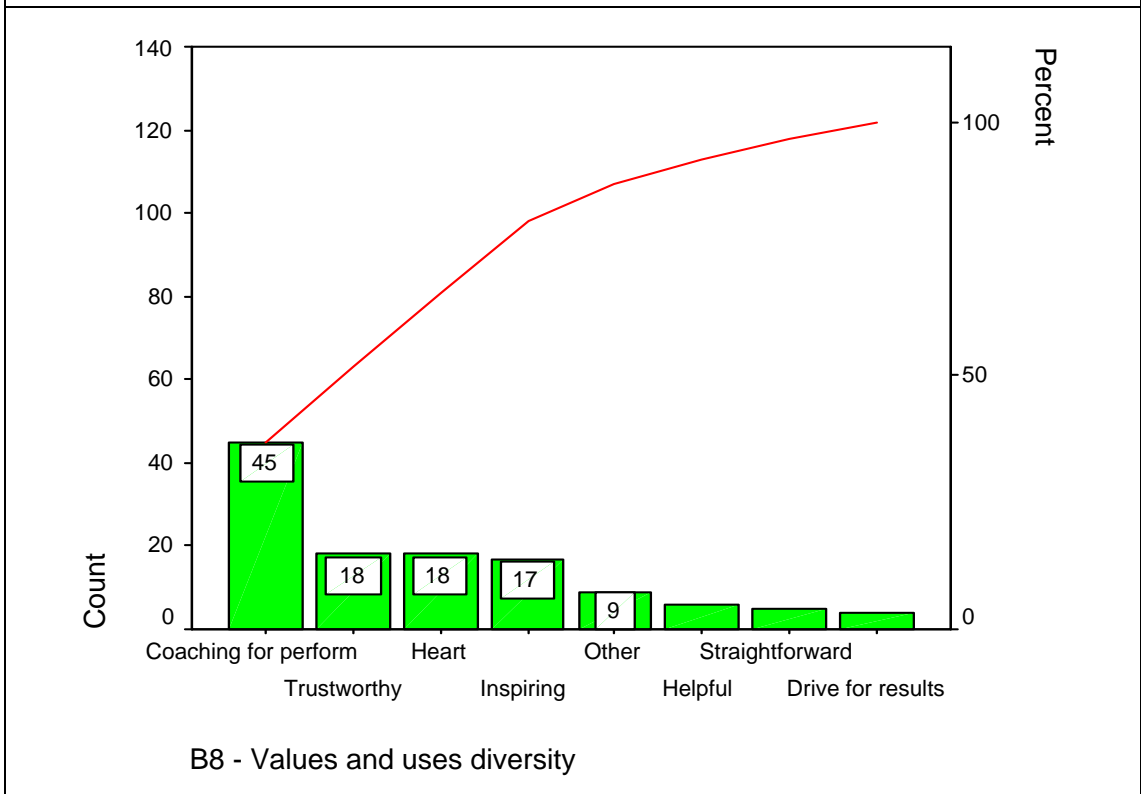
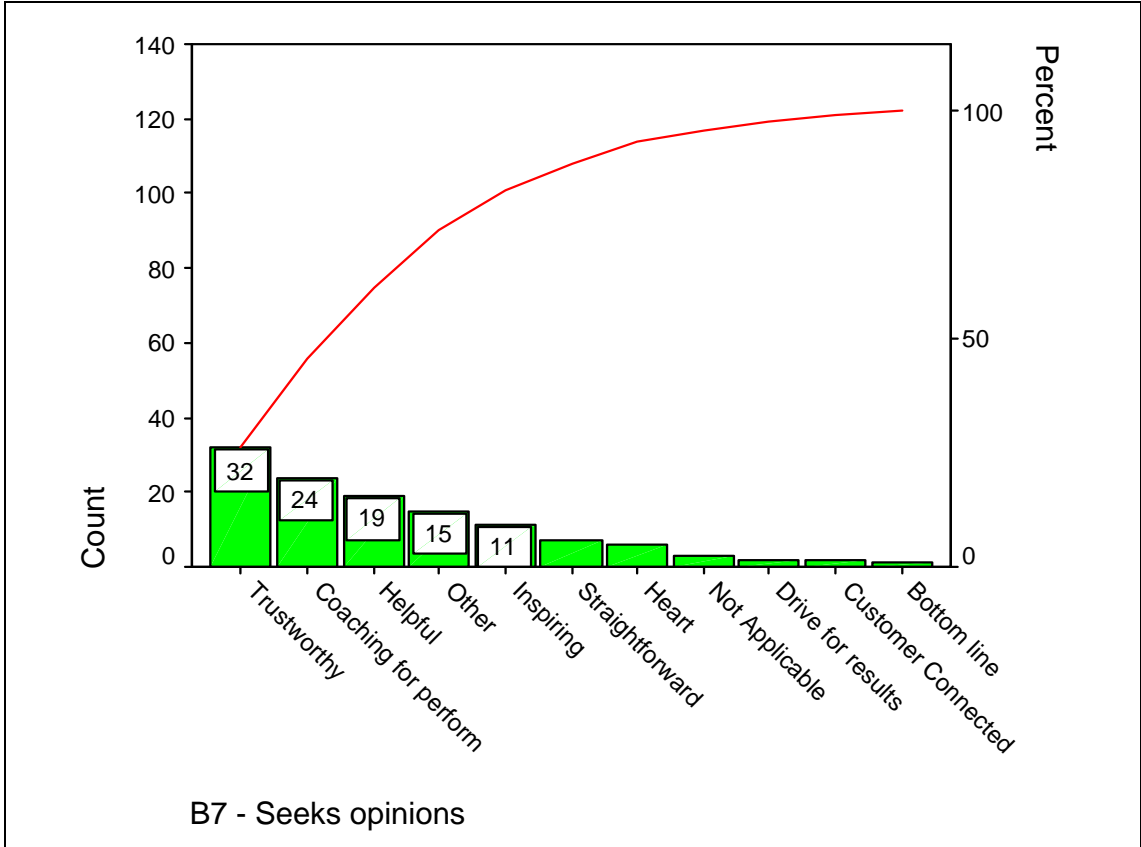


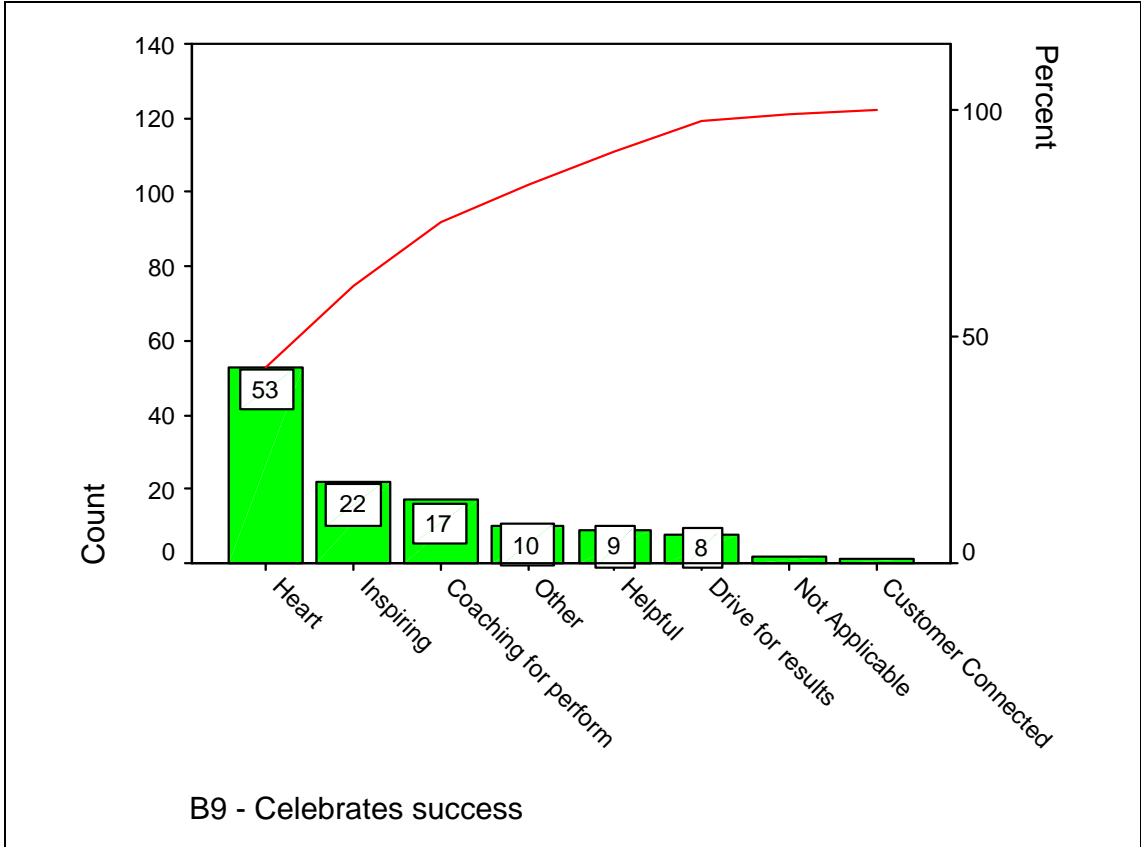


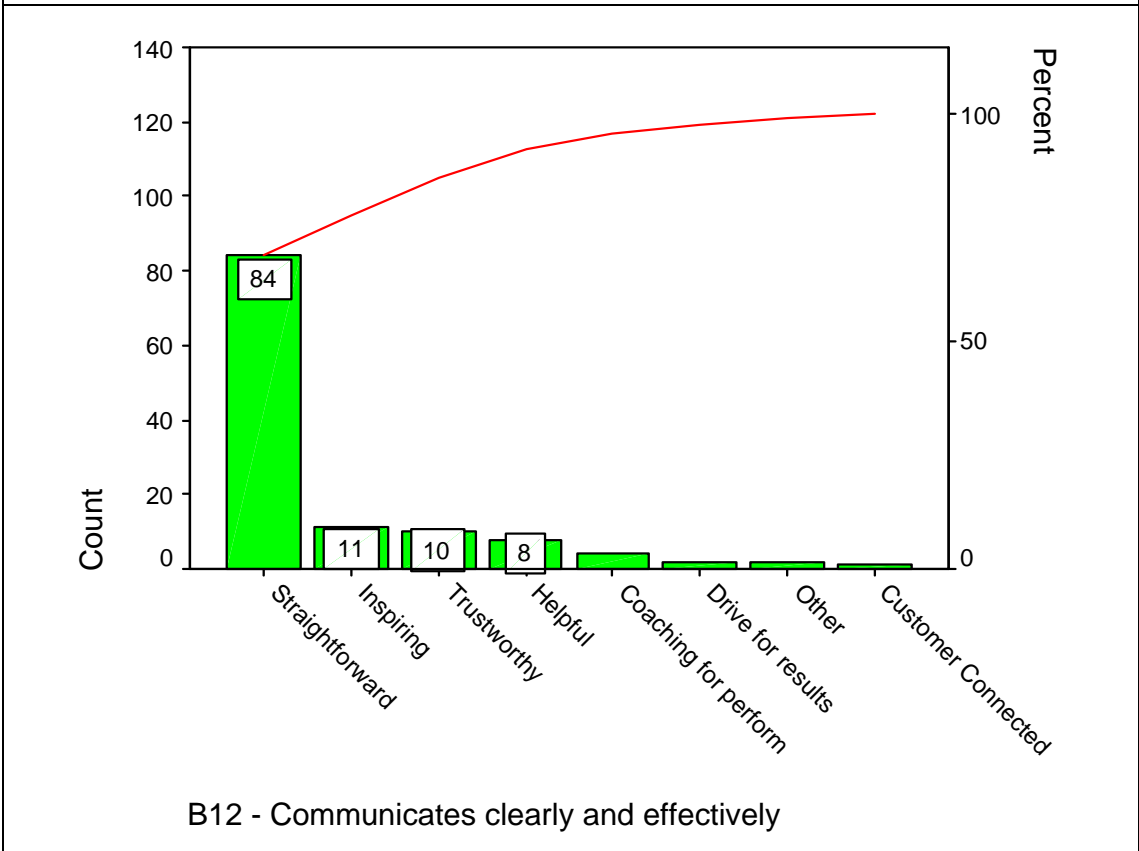
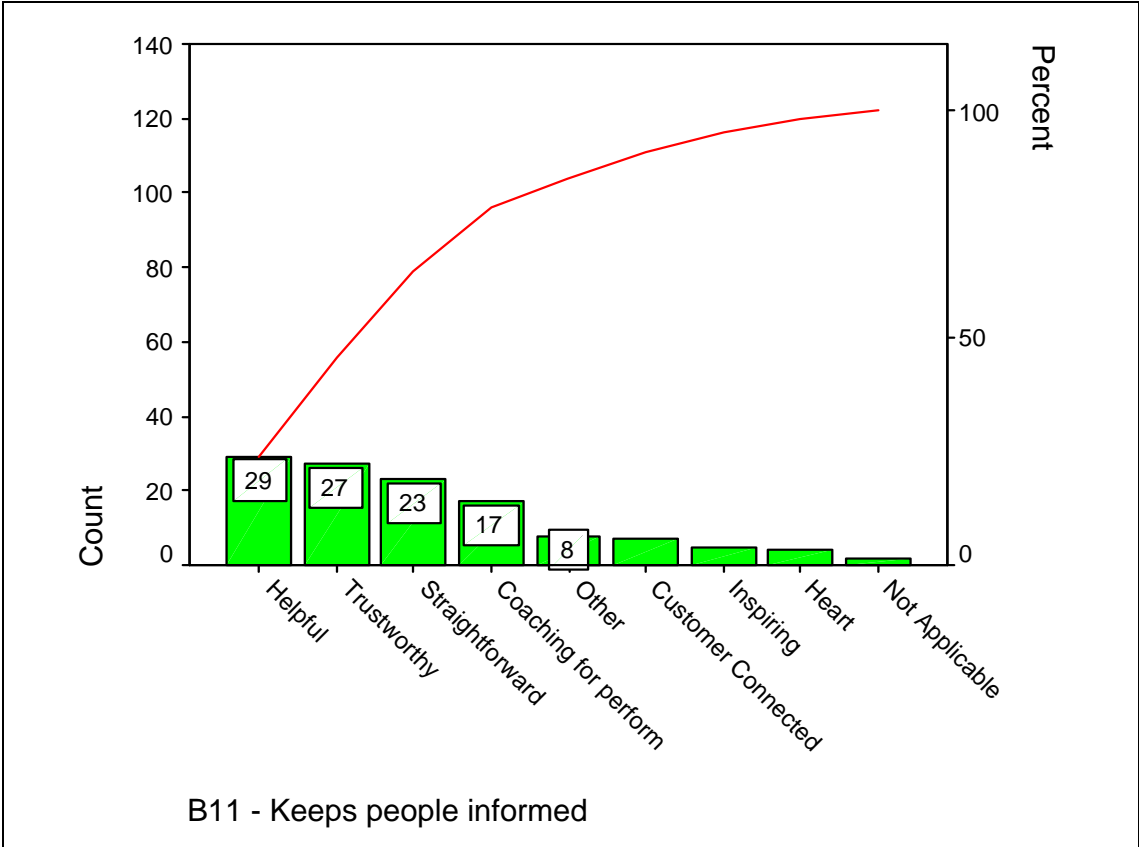
B5 - Tries a lot and sees what works

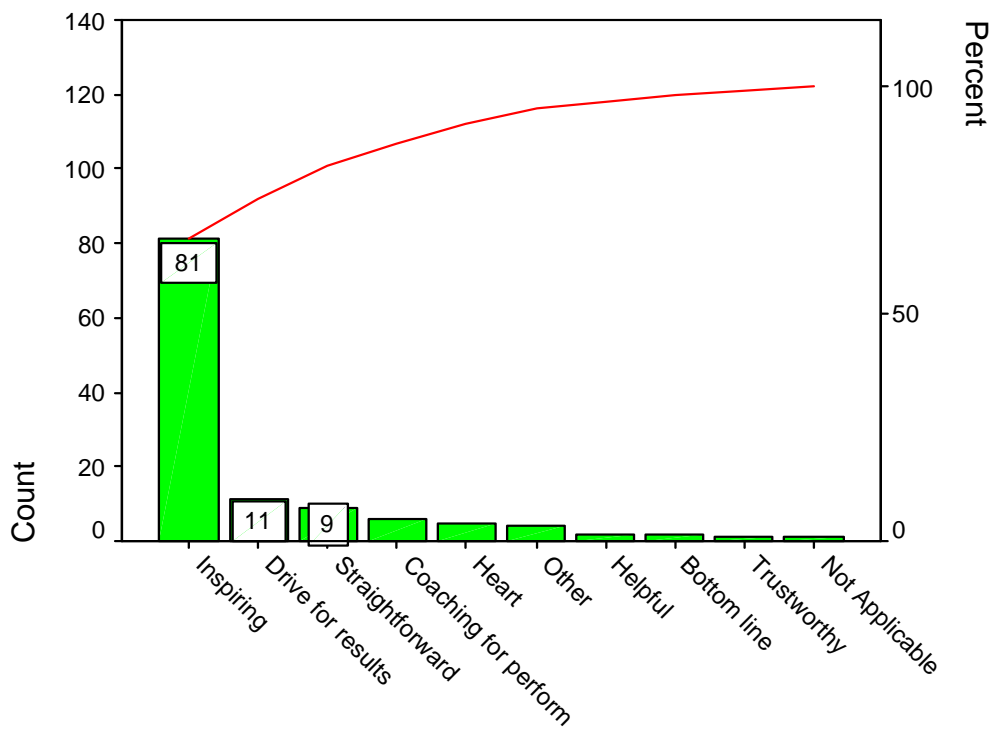


B6 - Sets clear goals and expectations

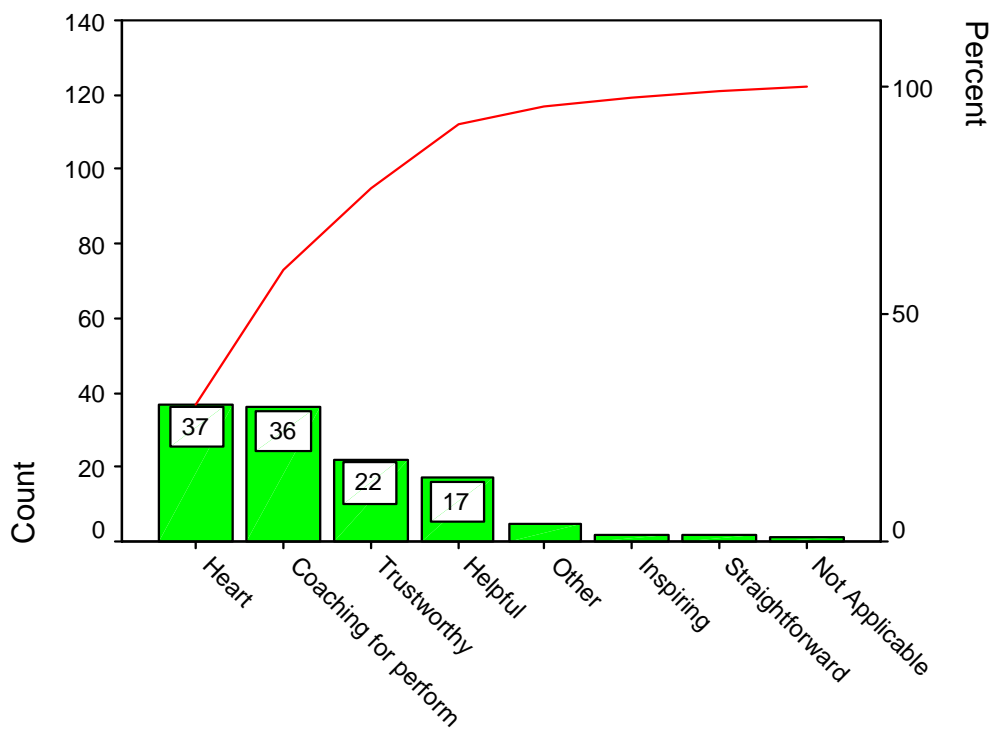




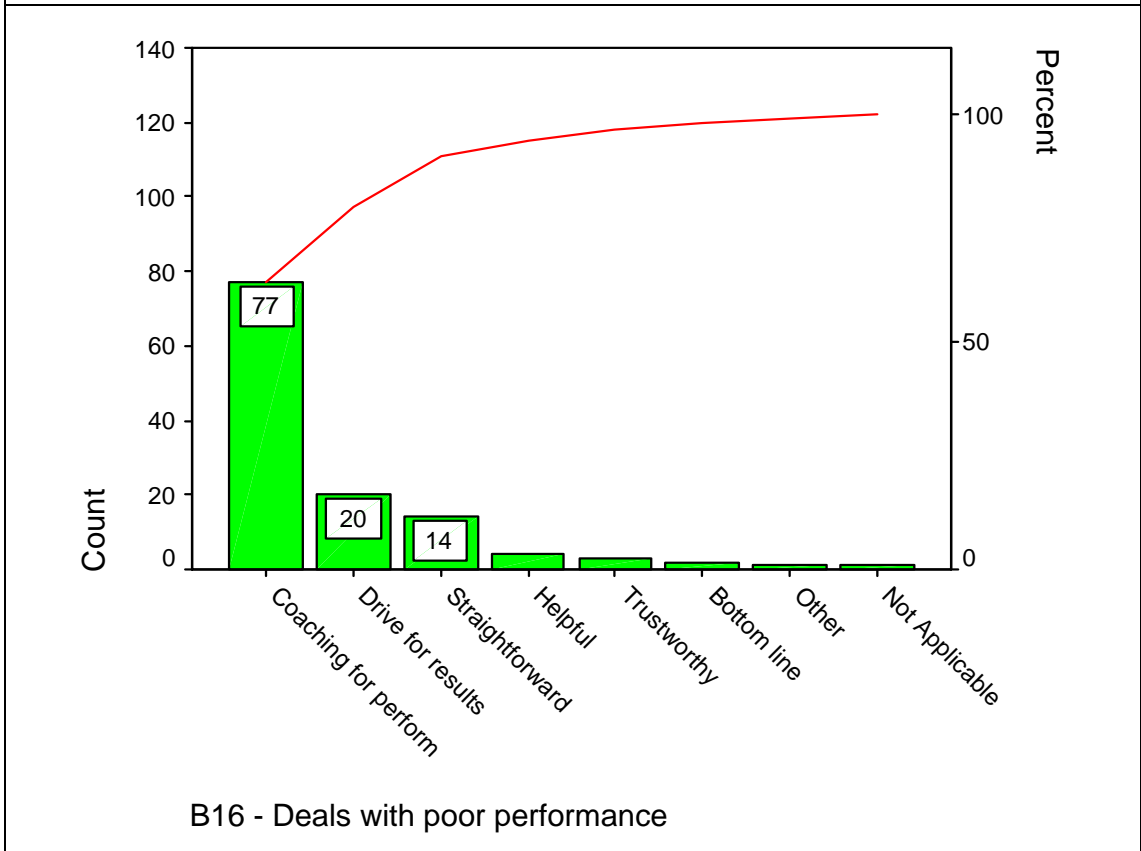
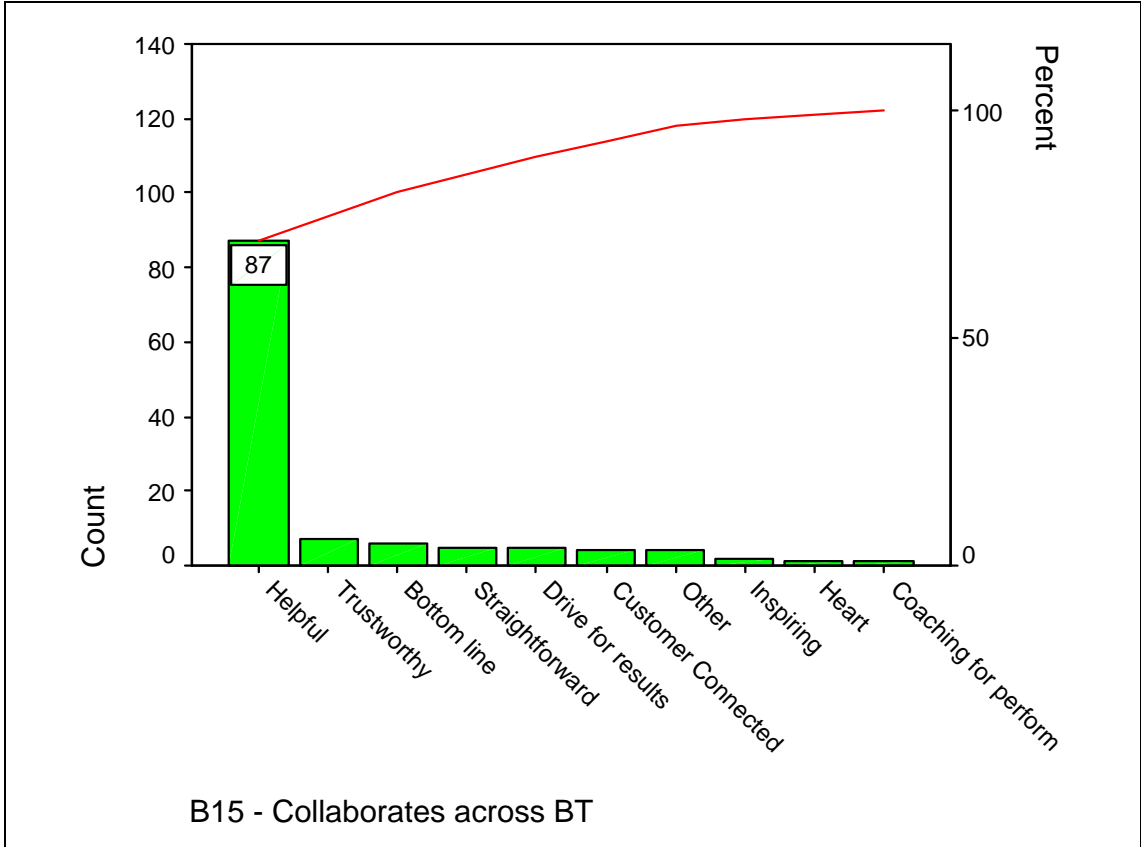


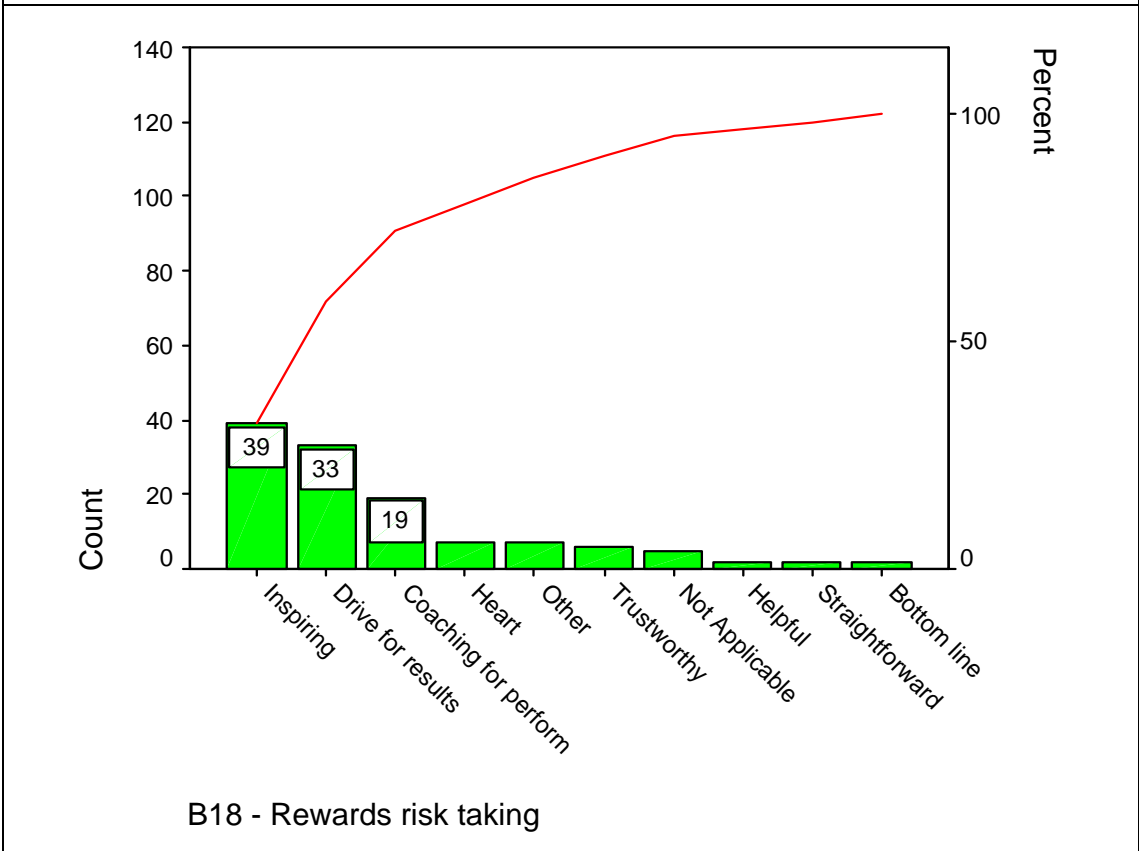
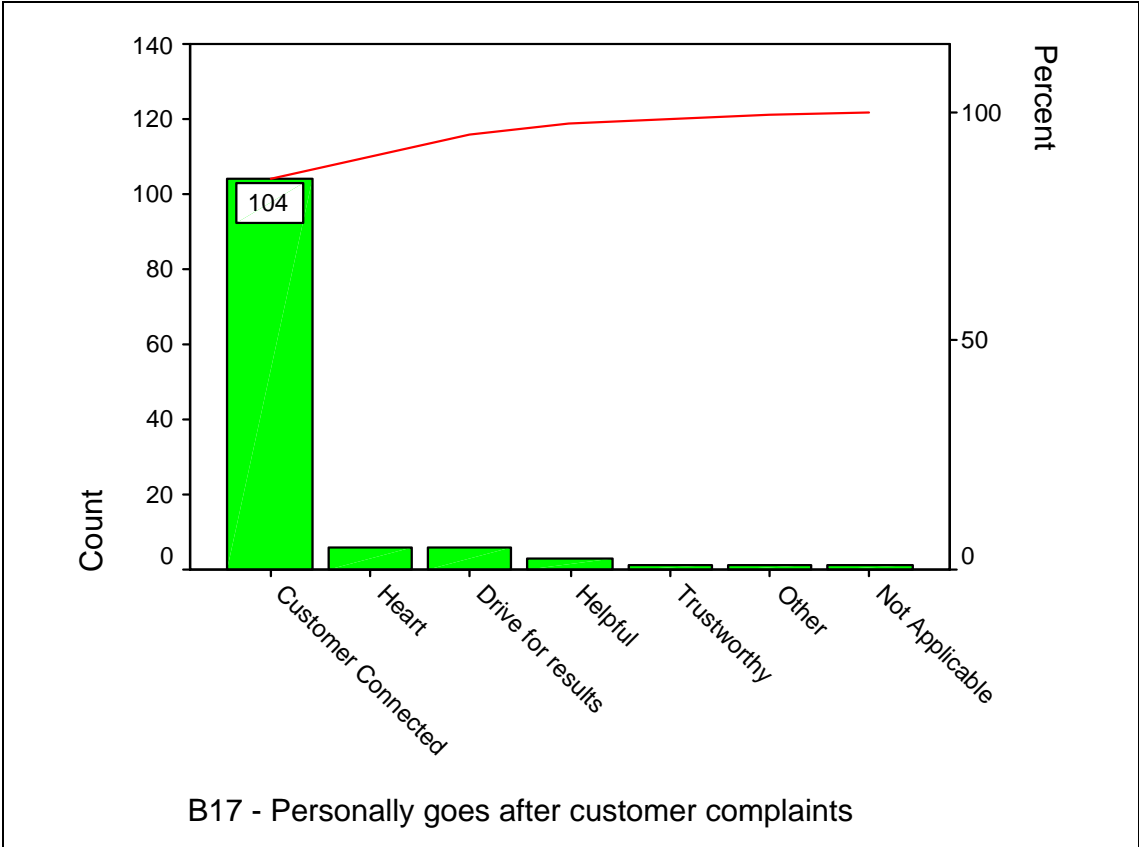


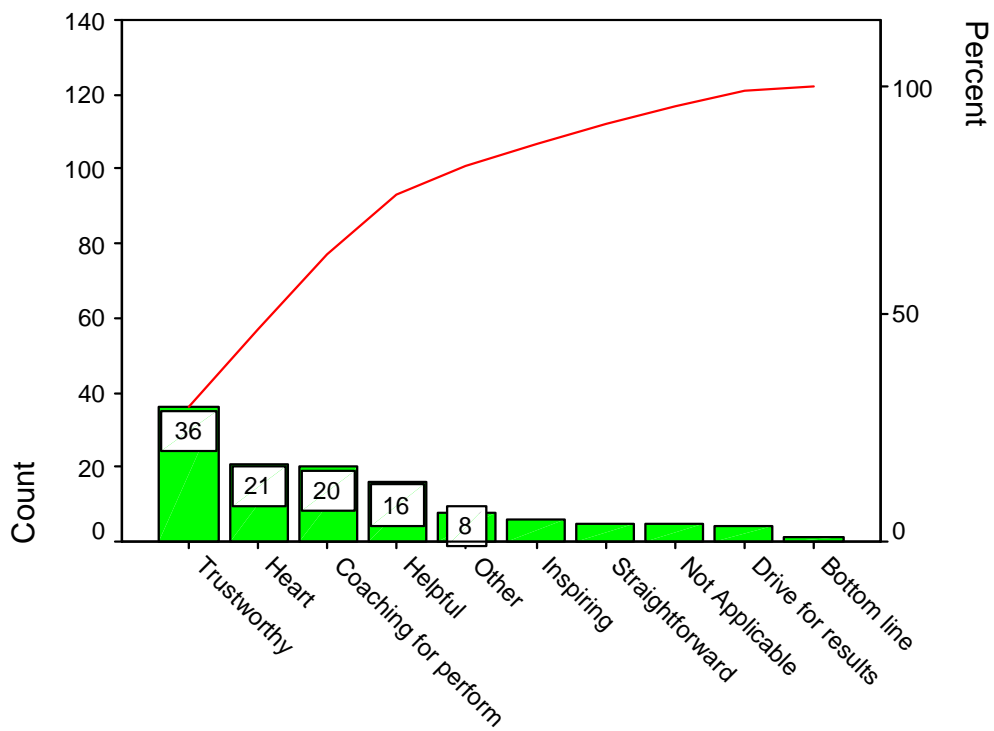
B13 - Challenges the status quo



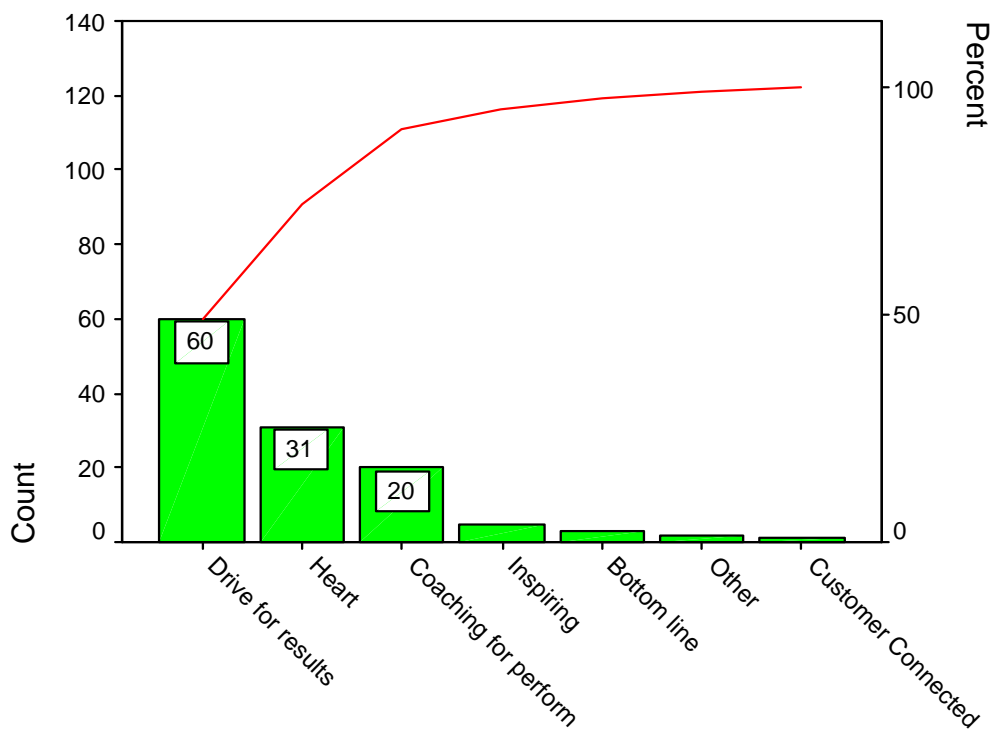
B14 - Gets to know and understand people and their feelings



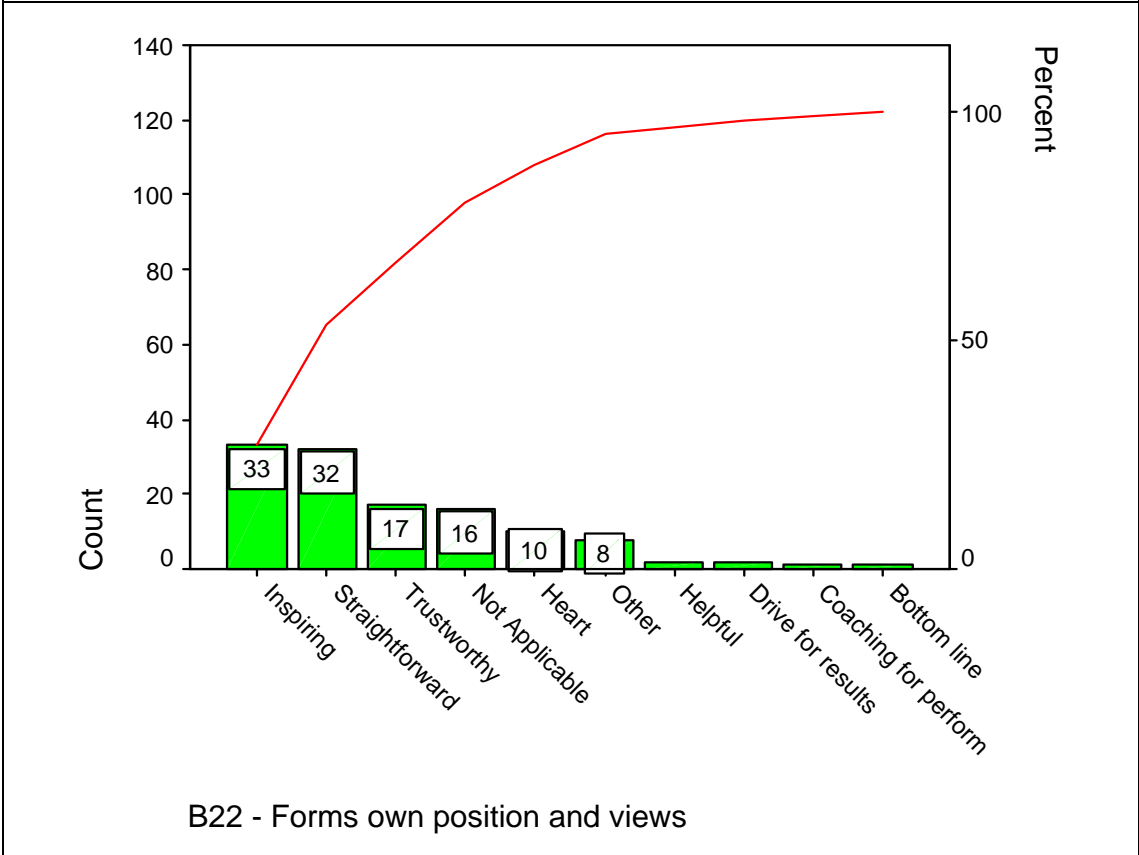
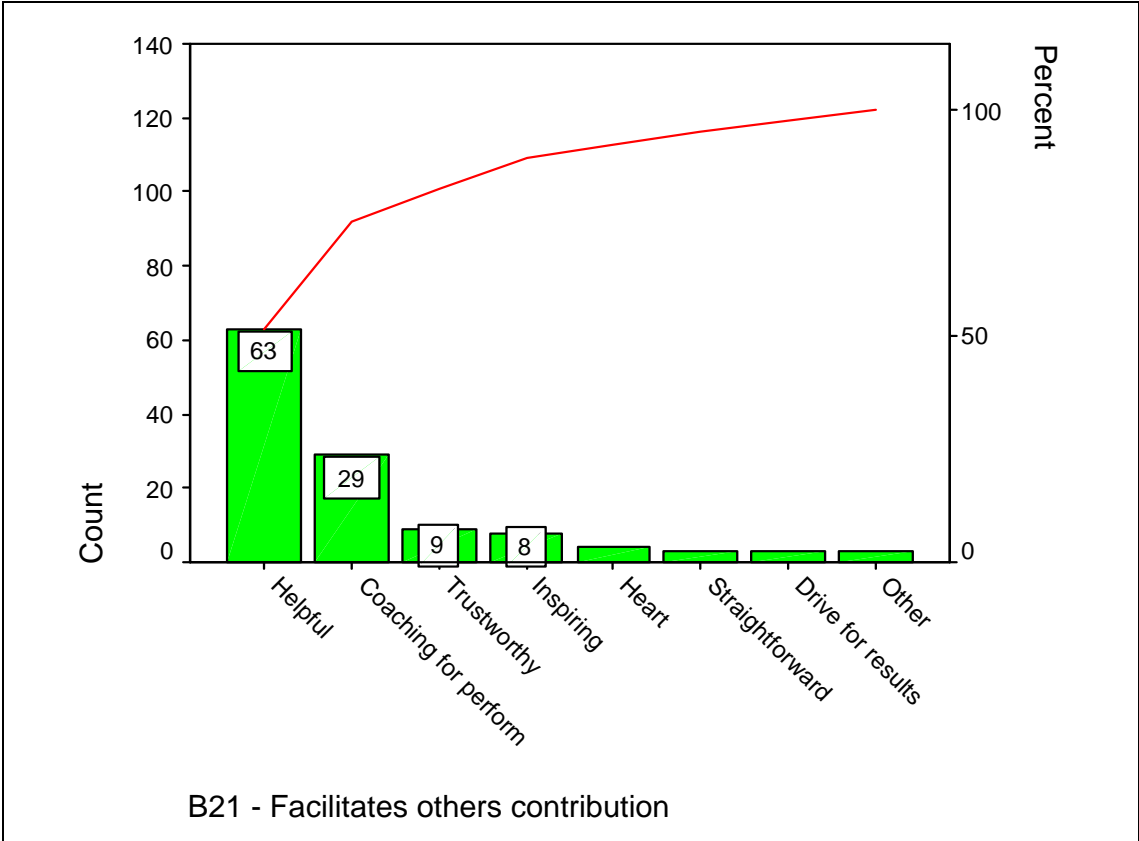


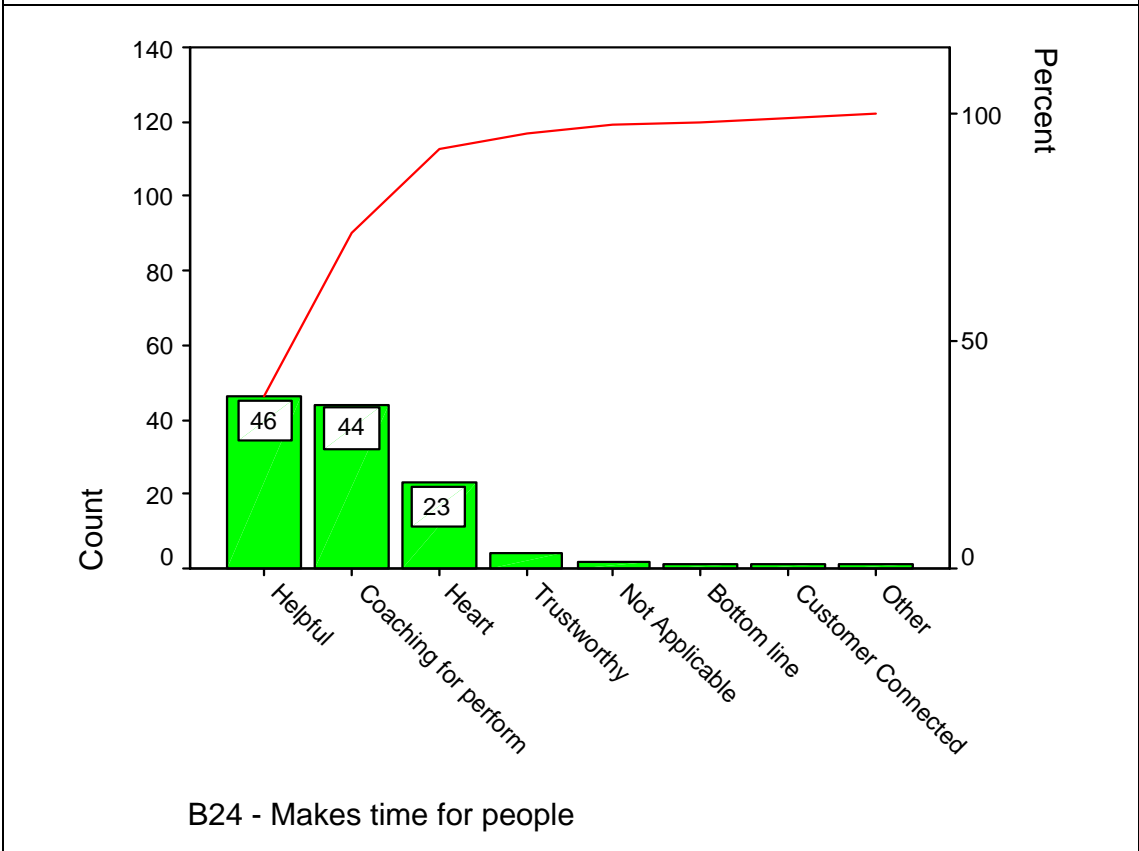
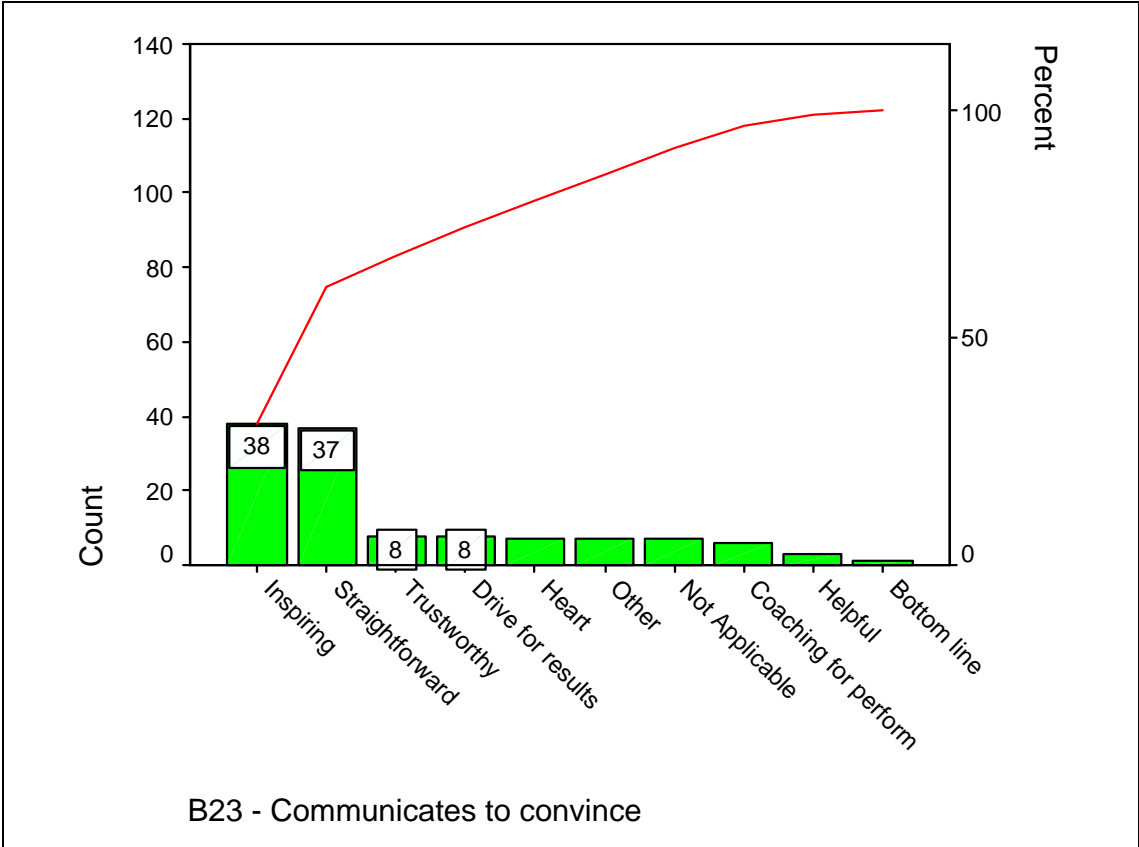


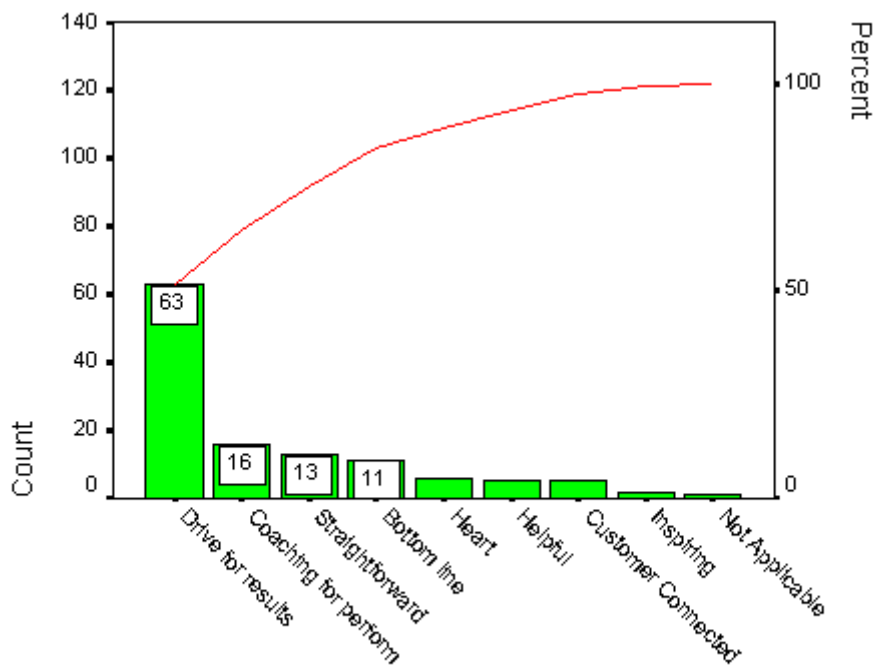
B19 - Displays responsibility for others



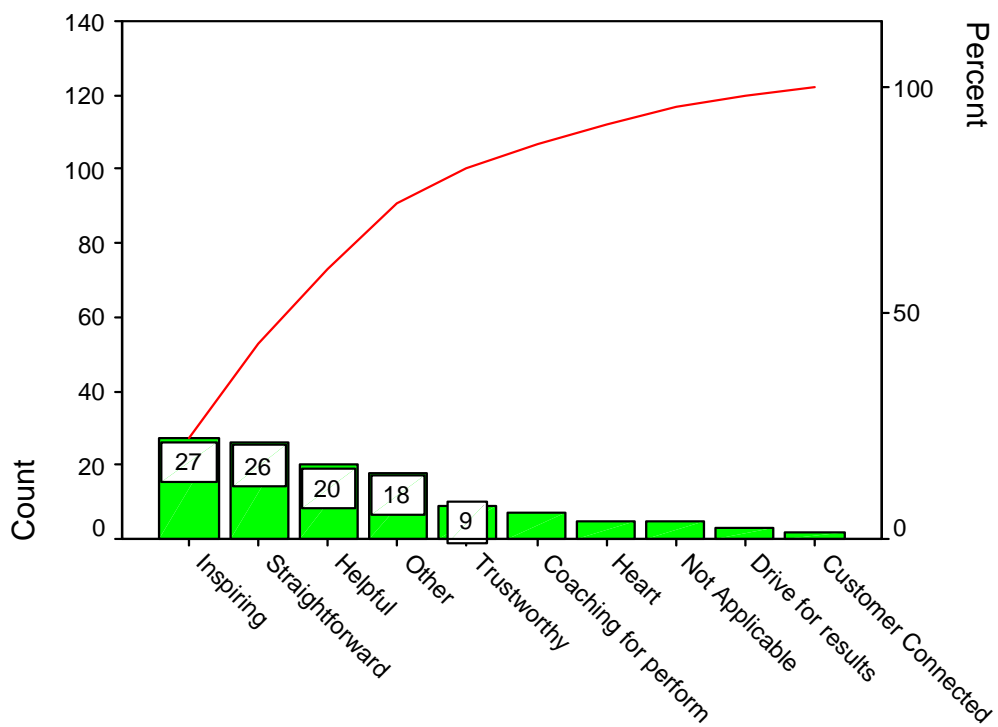
B20 - Sets stretching targets



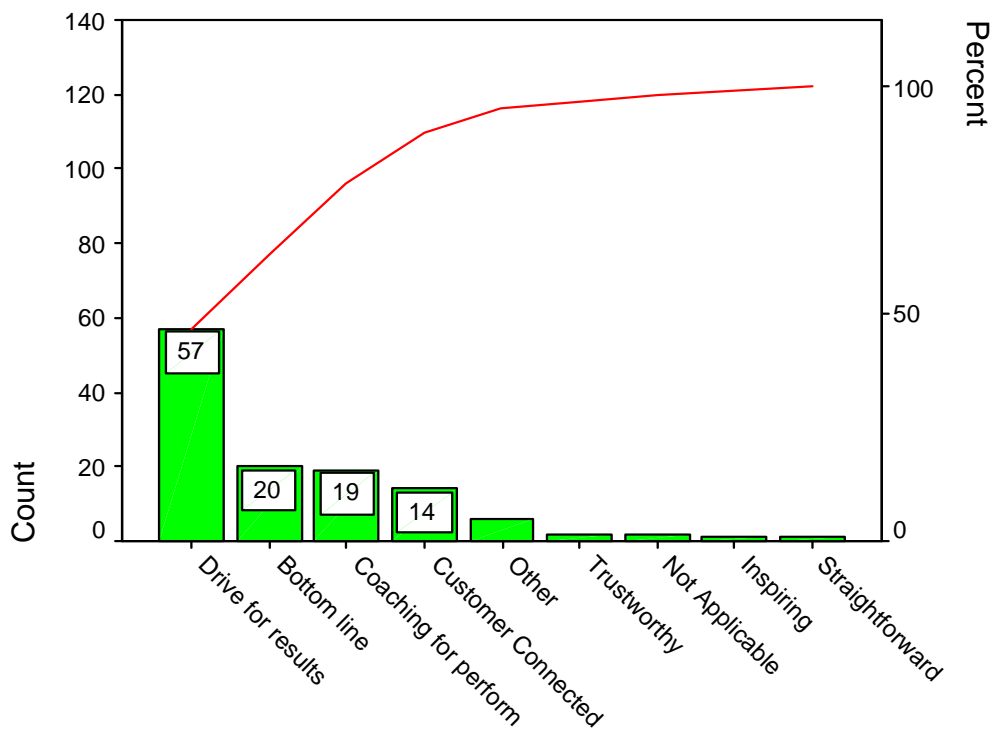




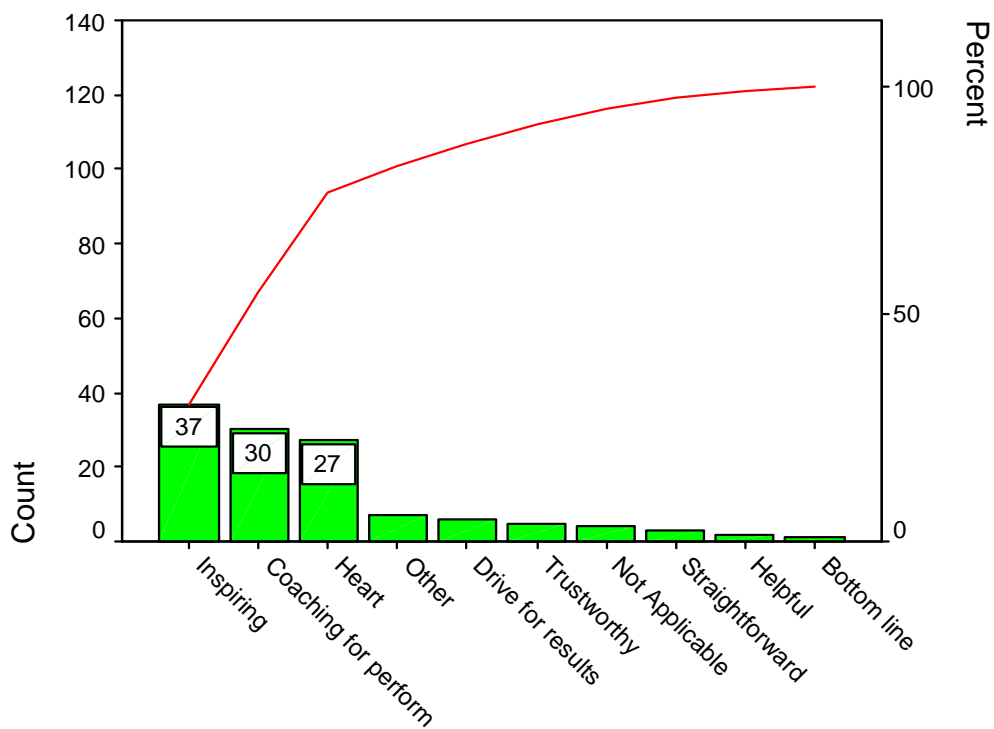
B25 - Aligns the organisation and people behind targets



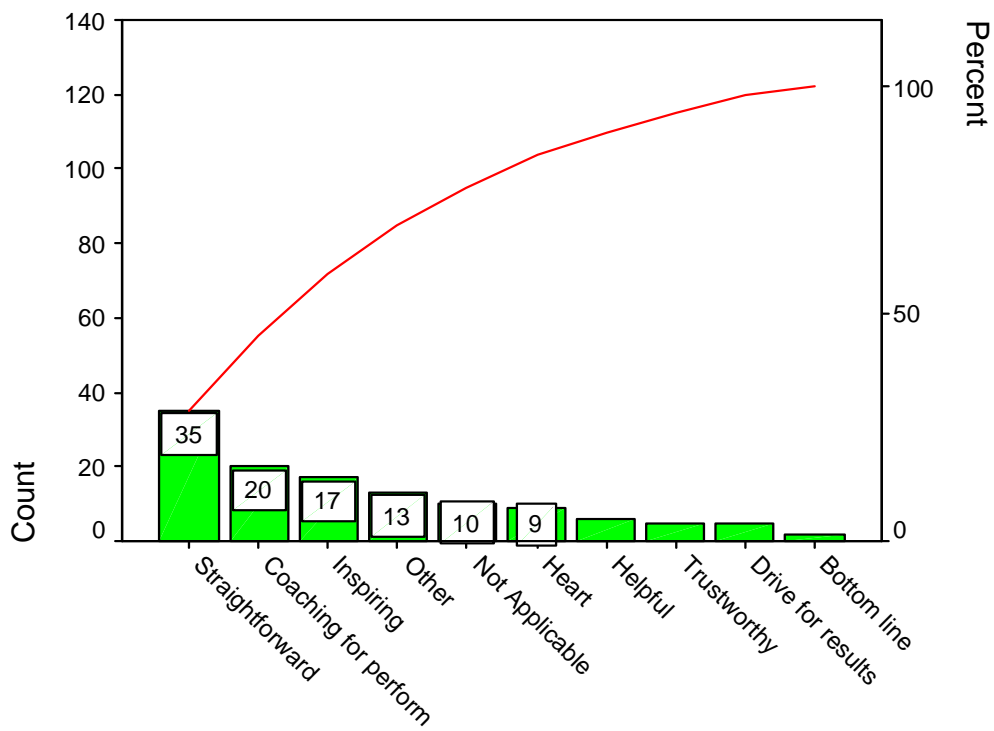
B26 - Communicates widely



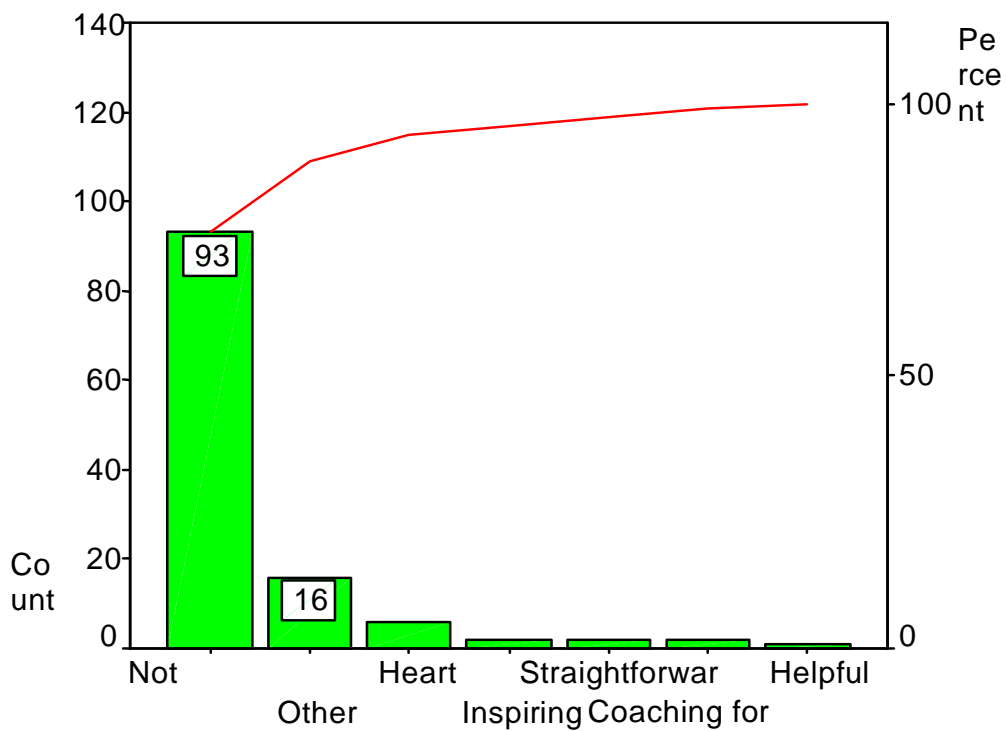
B27 - Benchmarks performance externally



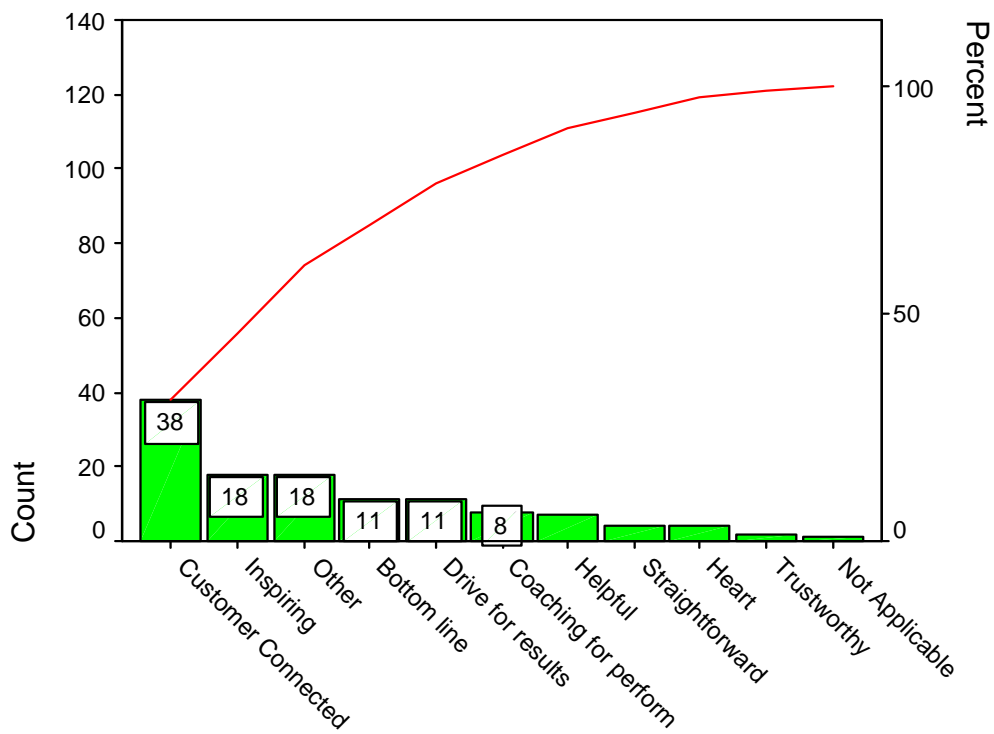
B28 - Emphasises positives



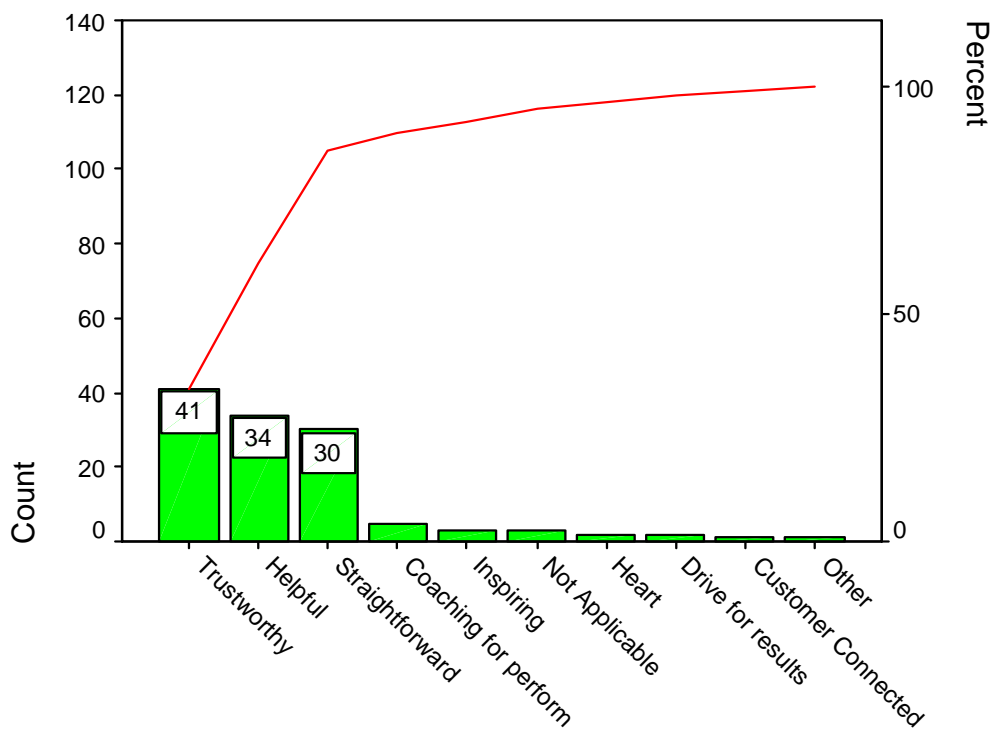
B29 - Repeats key messages often



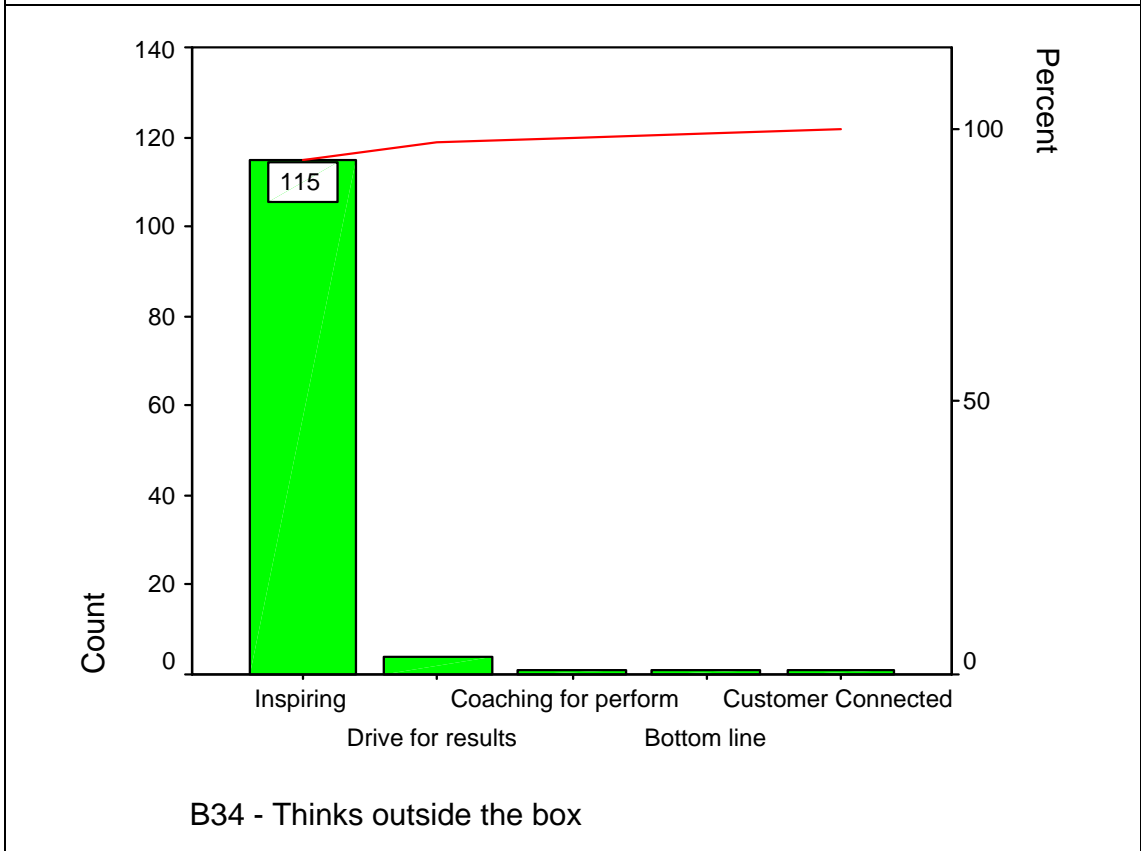
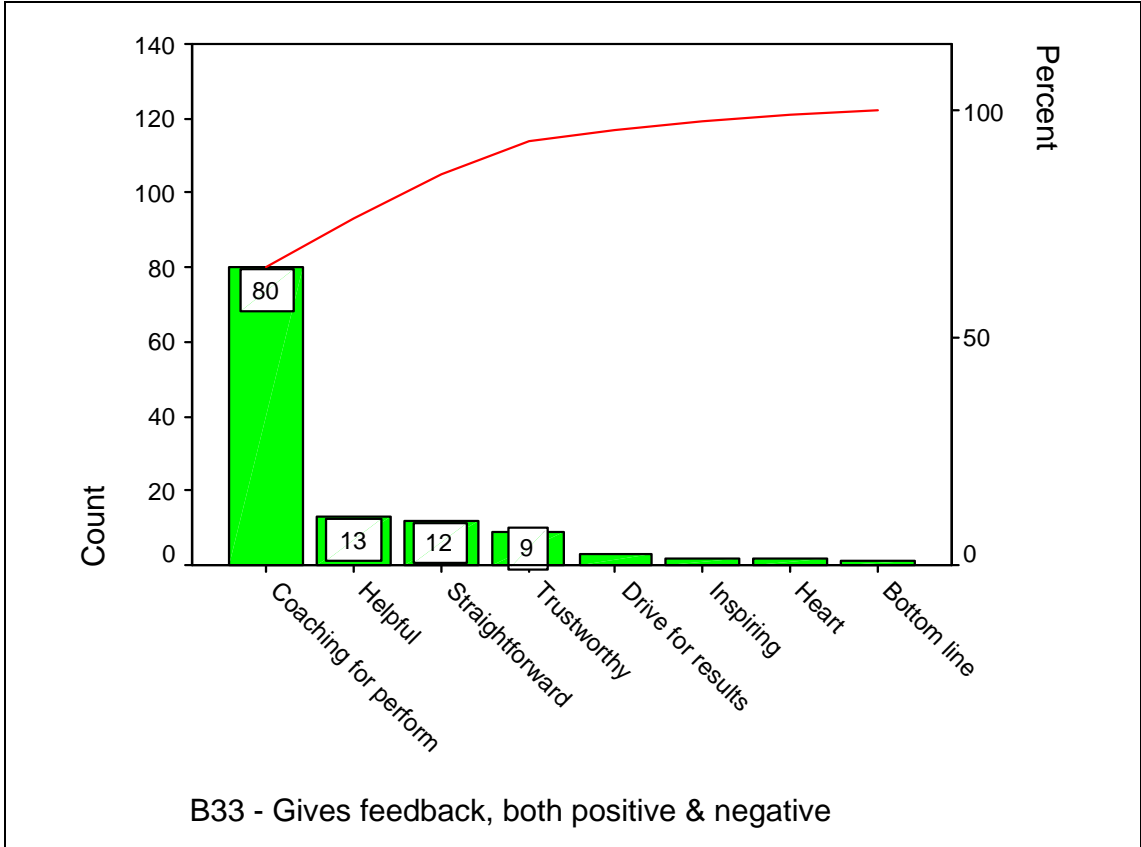
B30 - Uses anger, frustration and intolerance

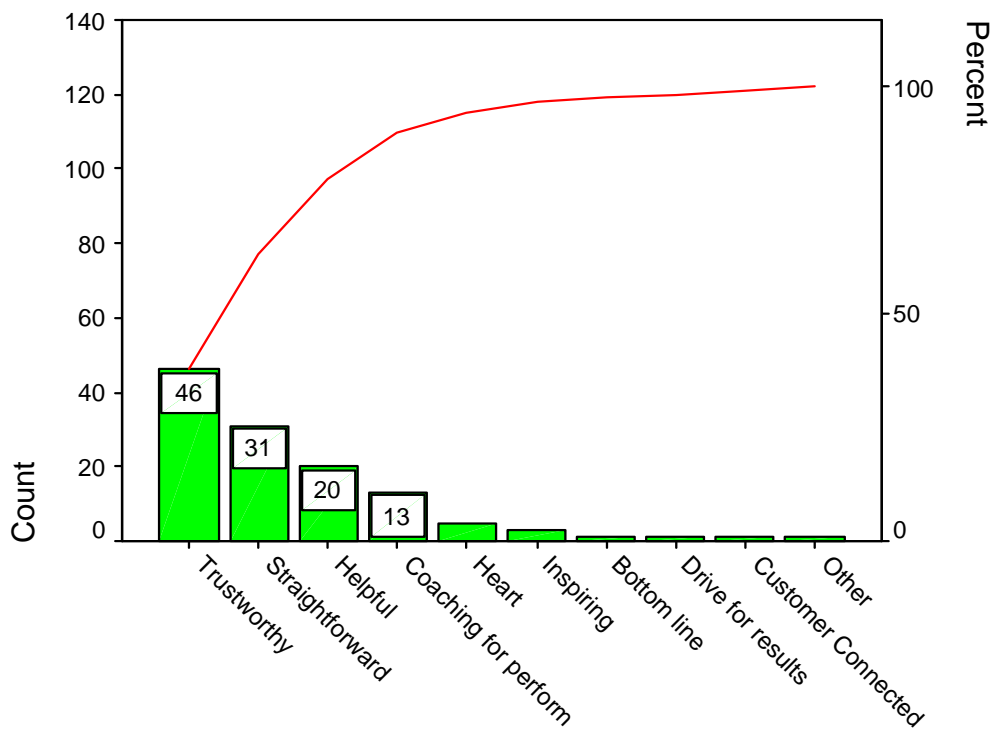


B31 - Develops a broad awareness of company and industry

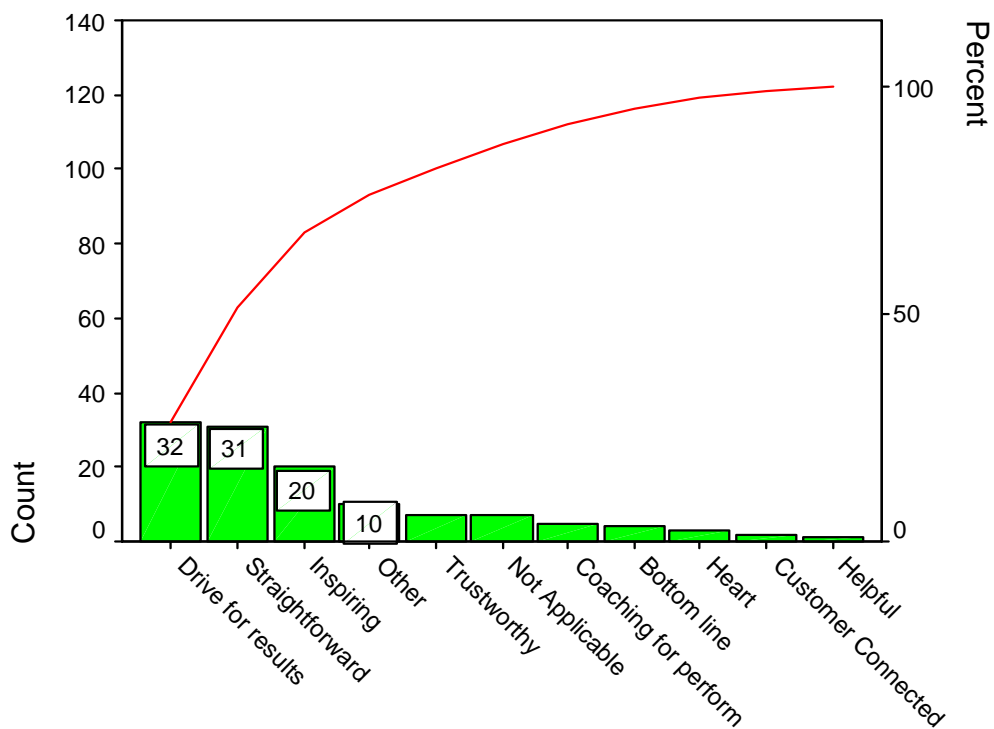


B32 - Talks to people before escalating

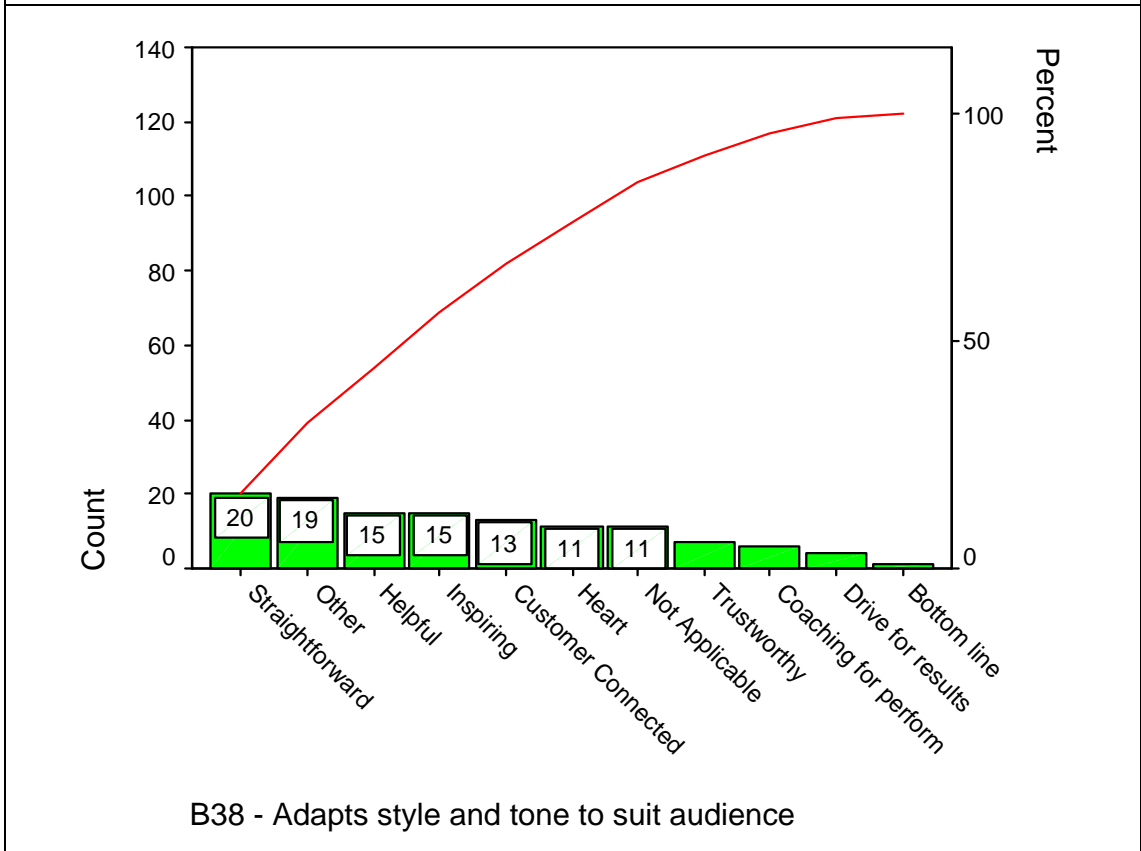
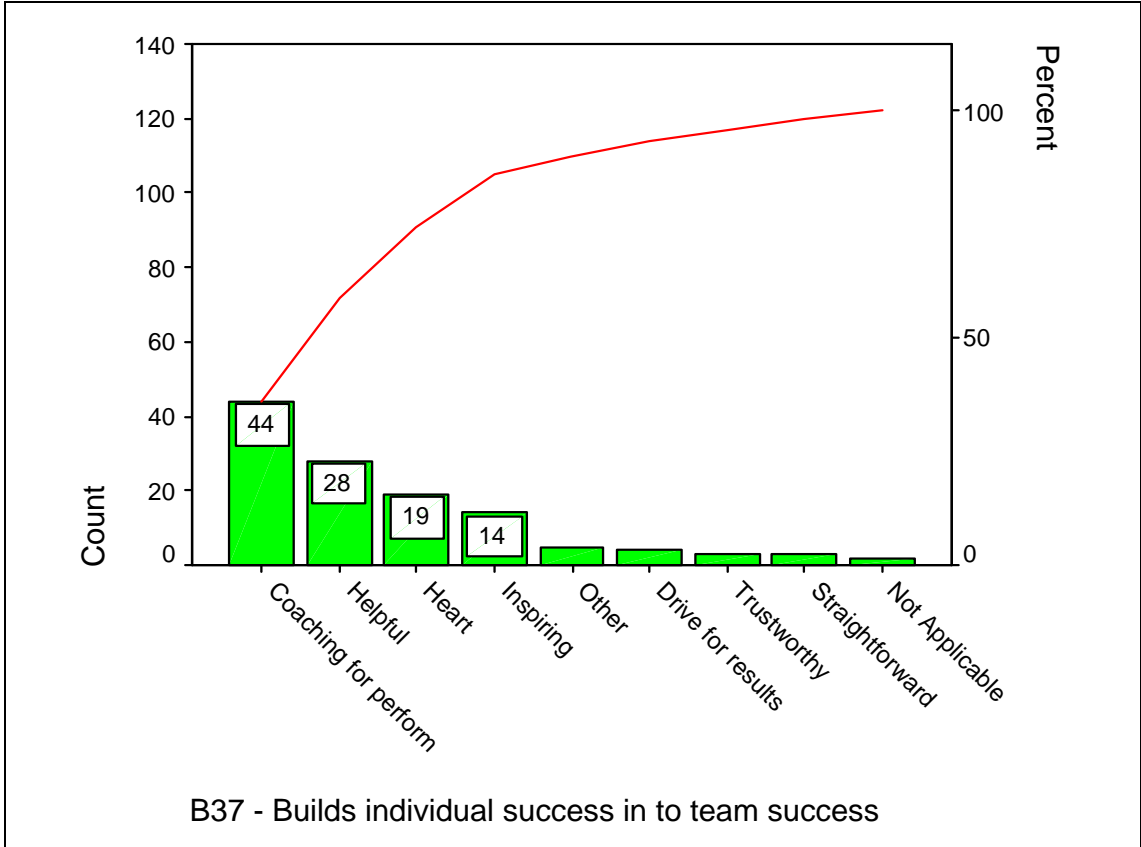


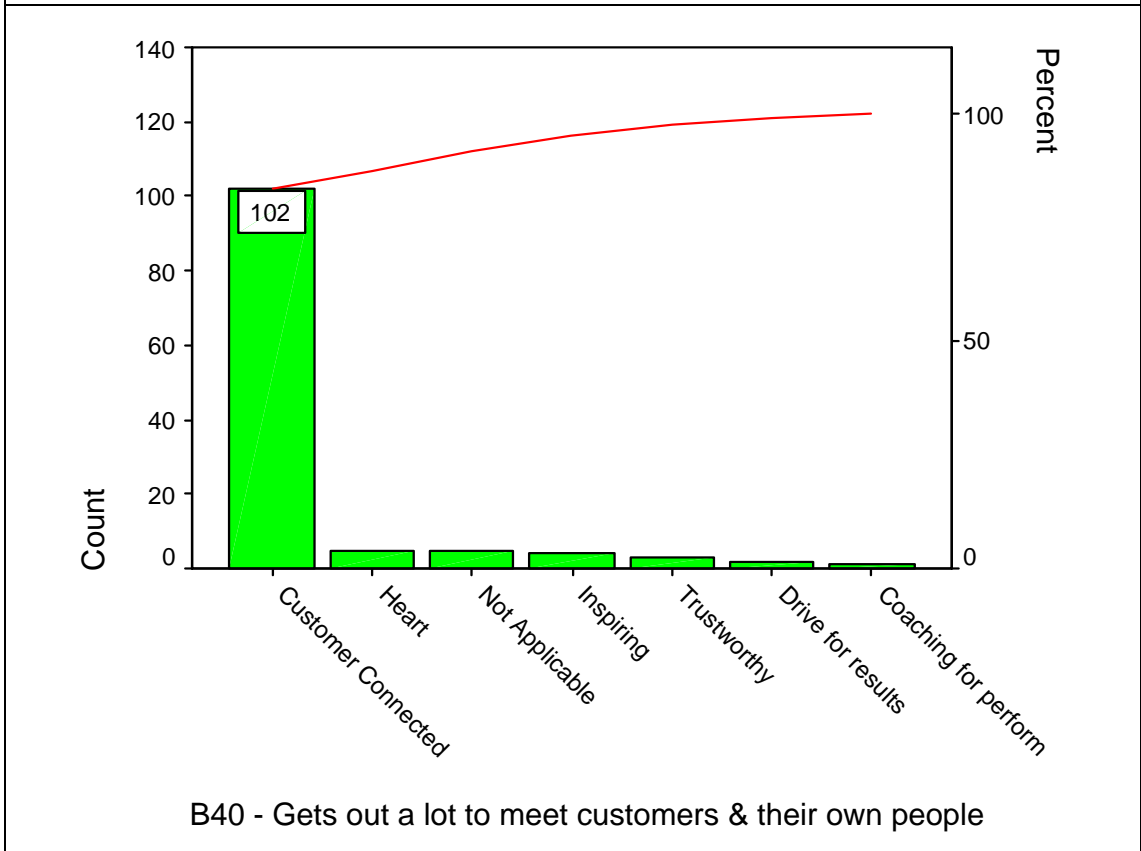
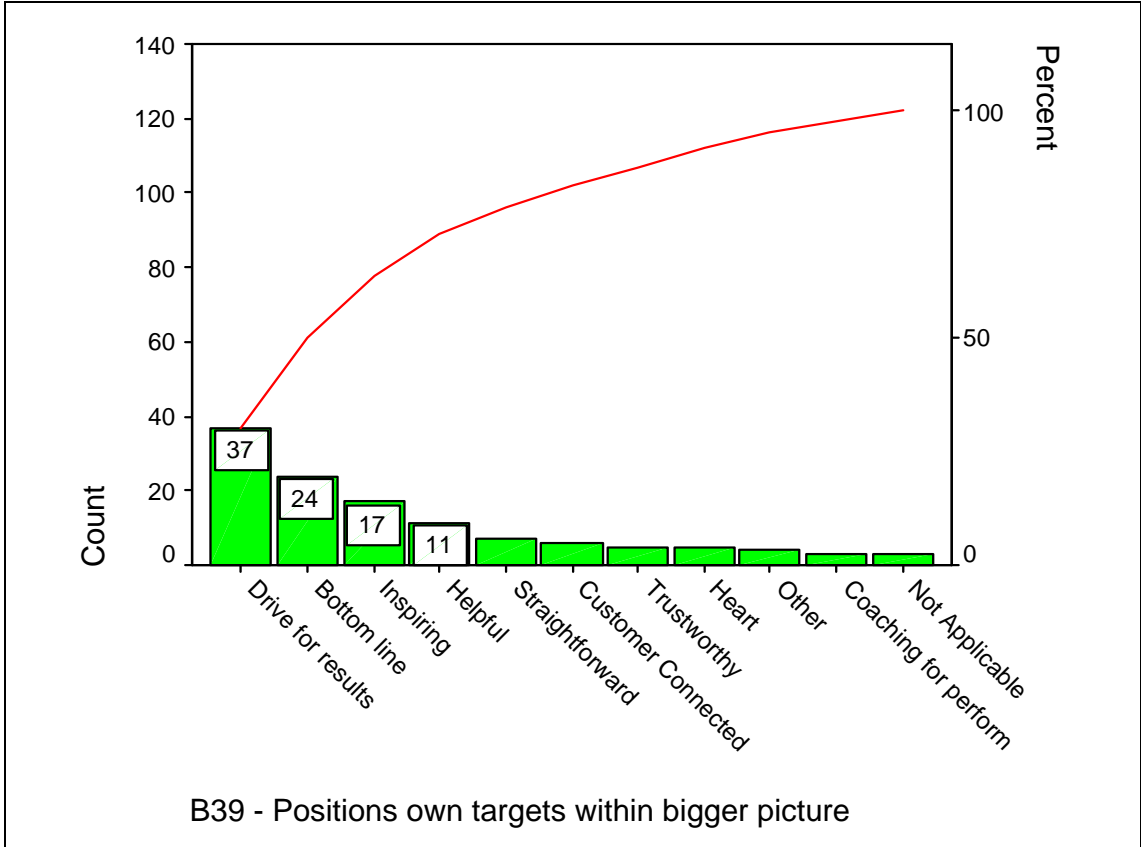


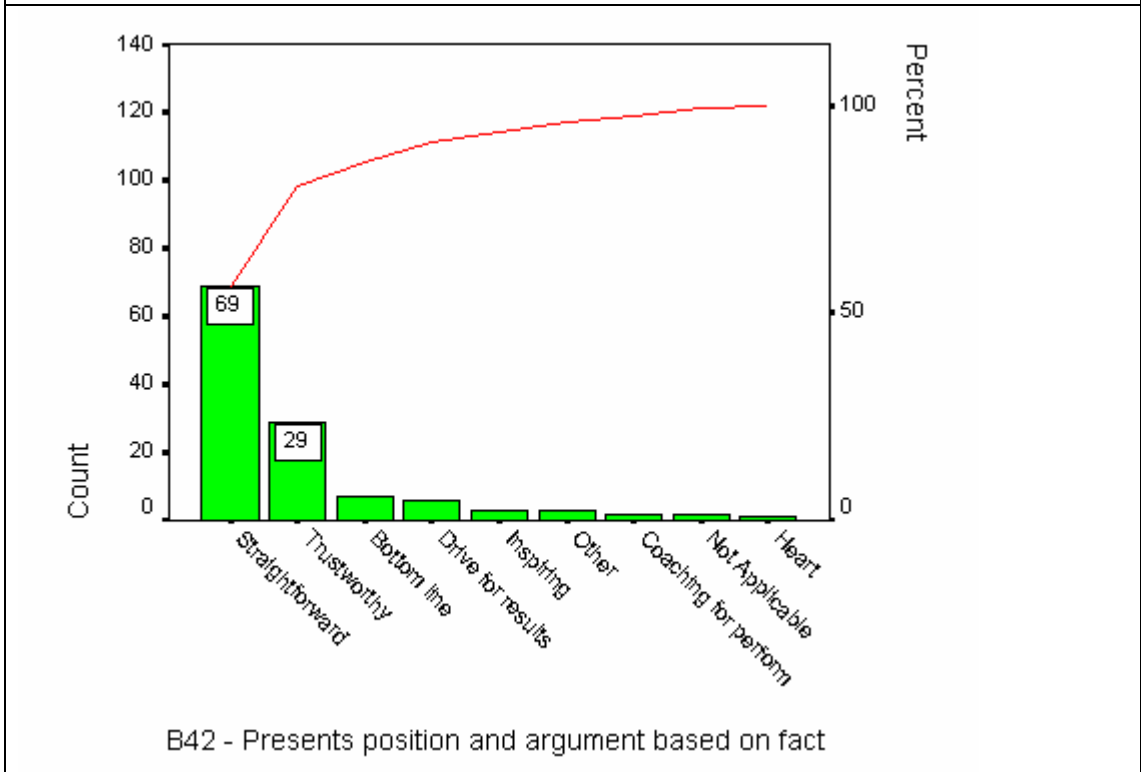
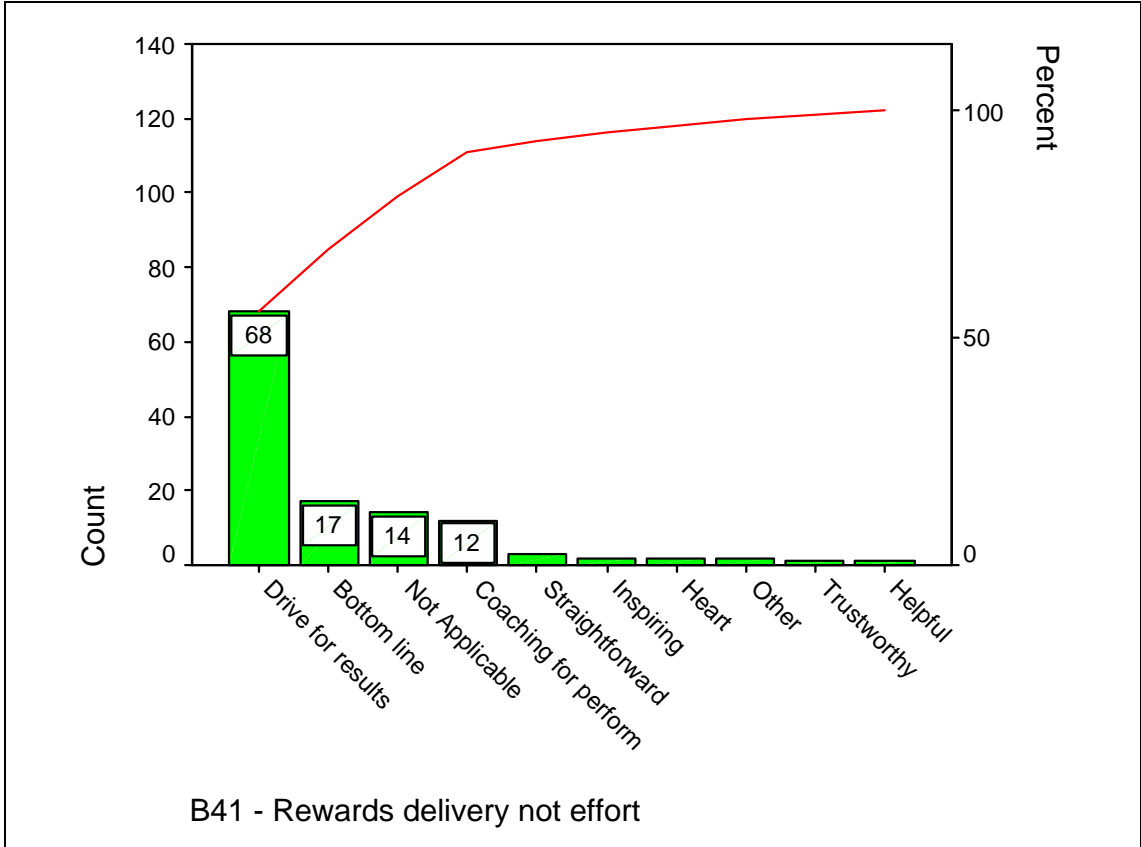
B35 - Creates open two way communication

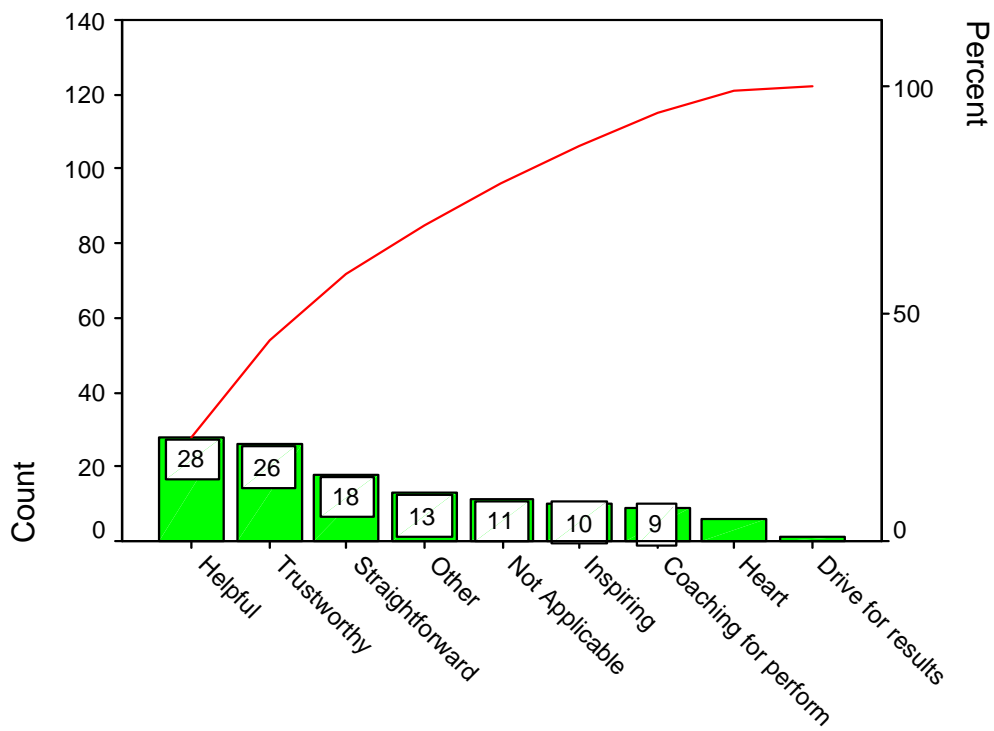


B36 - Formulates well thought out plans & defensible positions

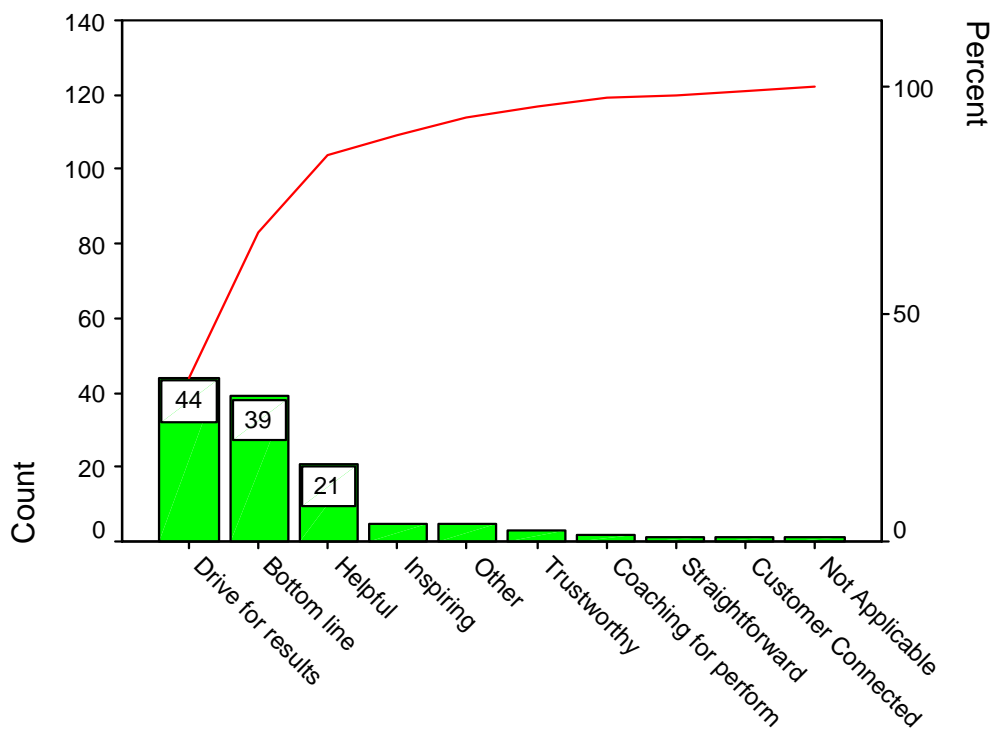




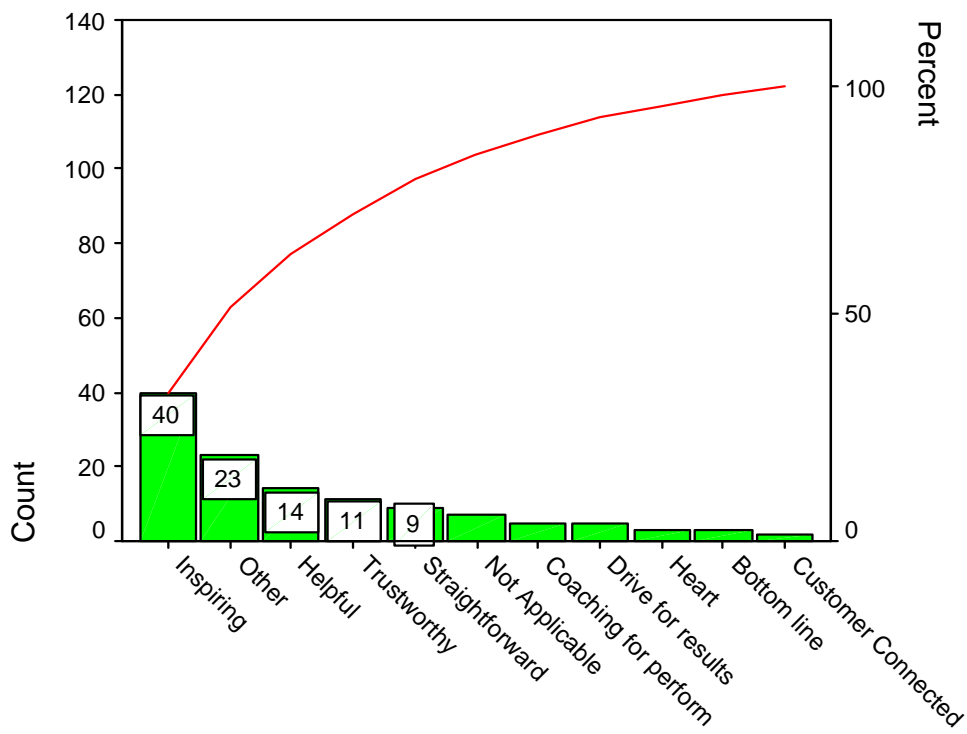




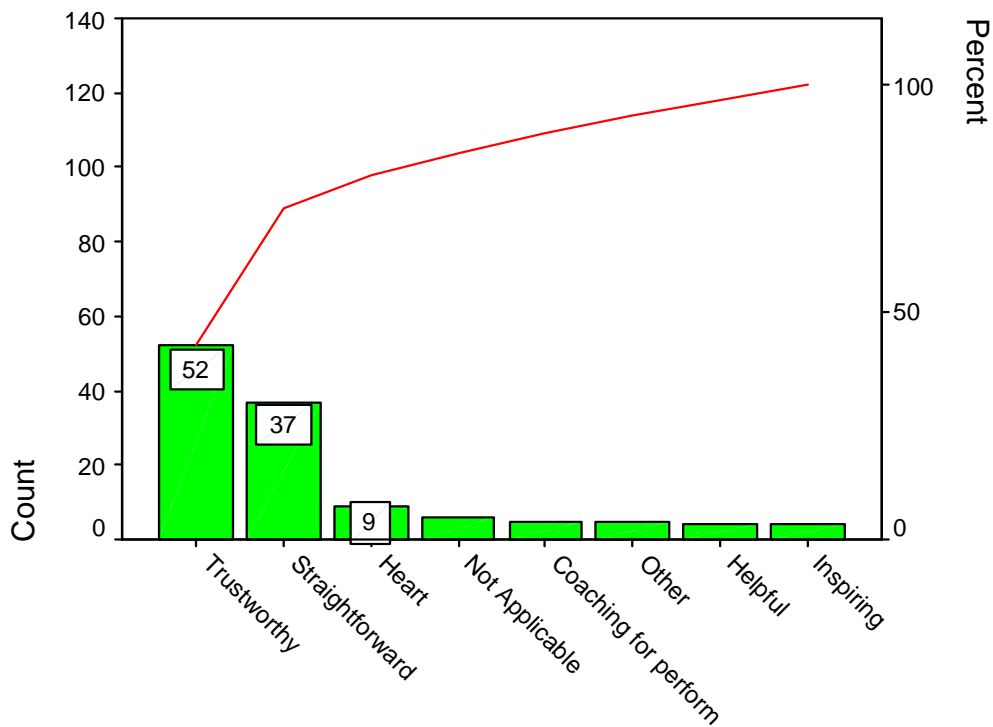
B43 - Encourages democratic discussion



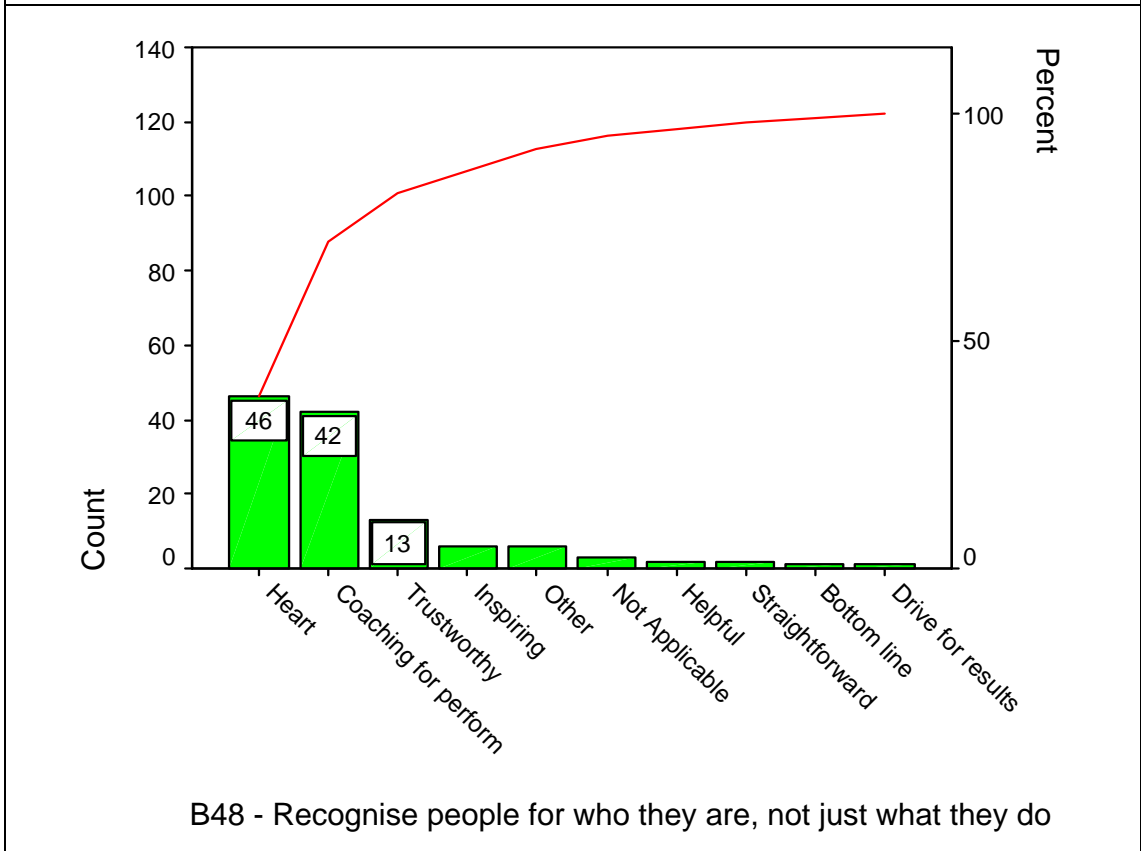
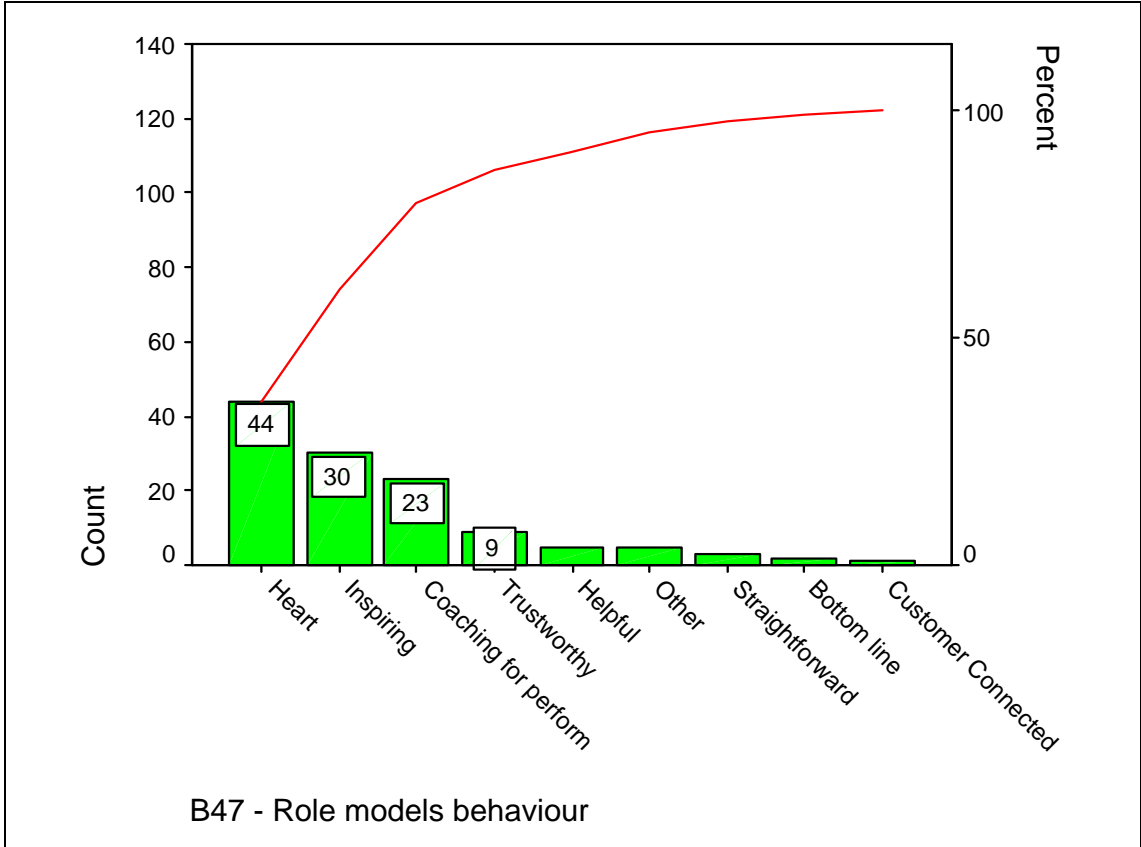
B44 - Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives

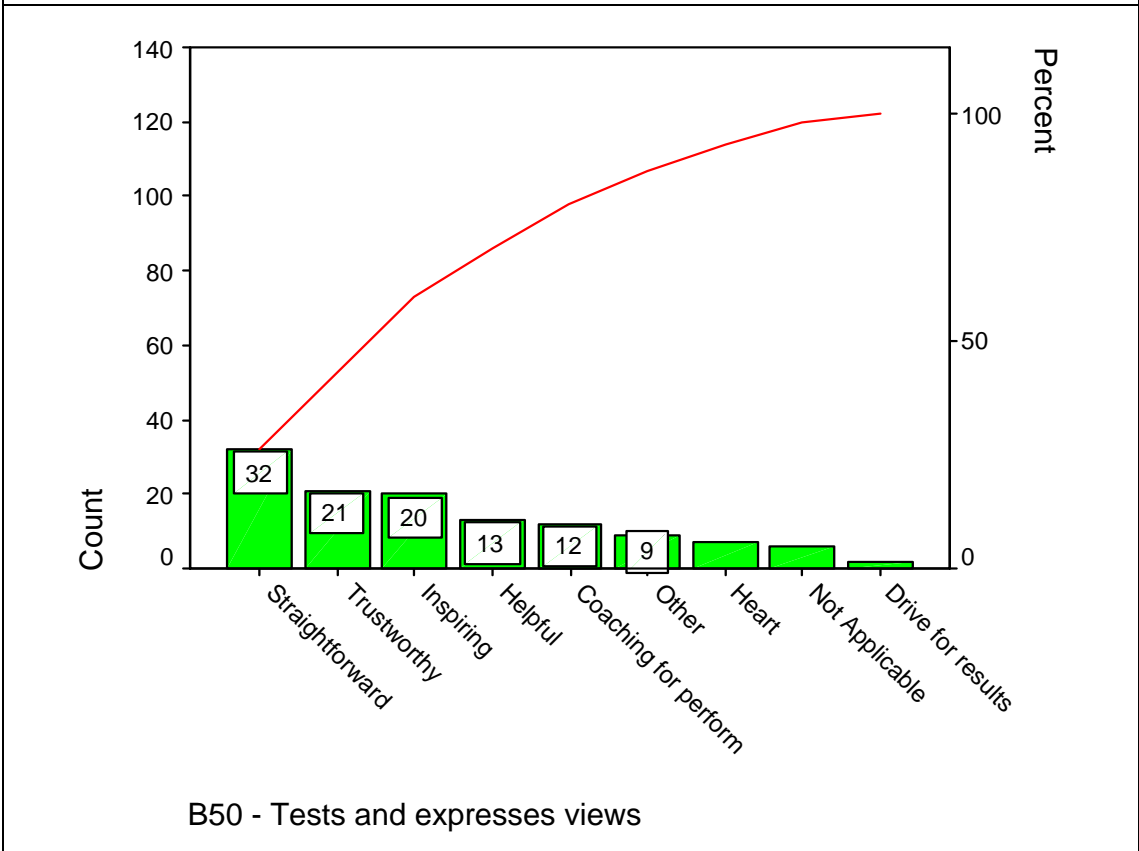
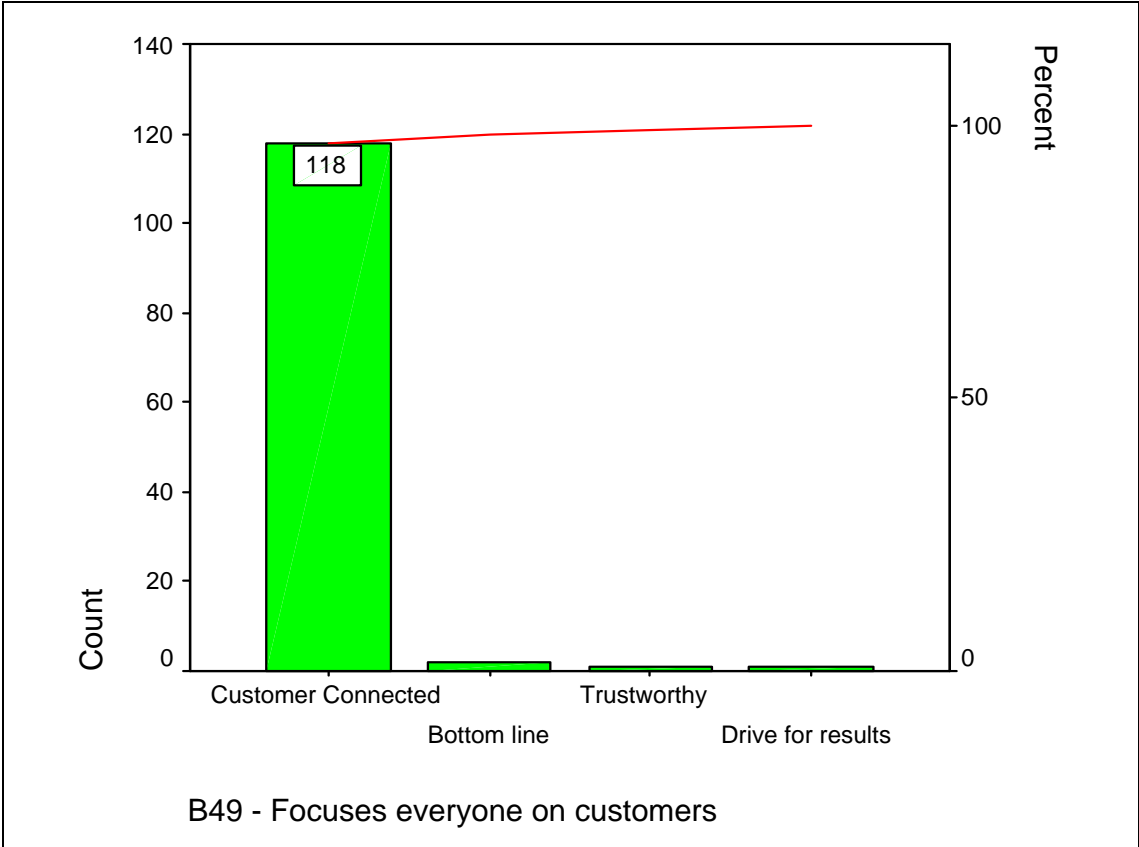


B45 - Takes multiple perspectives



B46 - Admits does not have all answers





Appendix Q: Chi Square analysis

B1 - Articulates goals clearly

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	3	15.3	-12.3
Helpful	2	15.3	-13.3
Inspiring	11	15.3	-4.3
Straightforward	73	15.3	57.8
Heart	2	15.3	-13.3
Coaching for performance	15	15.3	-.3
Bottom line	1	15.3	-14.3
Drive for results	15	15.3	-.3
Total	122		

B2 - Focuses on cost and revenue

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Straightforward	1	24.4	-23.4
Coaching for performance	2	24.4	-22.4
Bottom line	92	24.4	67.6
Drive for results	24	24.4	-.4
Not Applicable	3	24.4	-21.4
Total	122		

B3 - Puts the customer first

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	2	20.3	-18.3
Helpful	5	20.3	-15.3
Inspiring	1	20.3	-19.3
Heart	2	20.3	-18.3
Drive for results	1	20.3	-19.3
Customer Connected	111	20.3	90.7
Total	122		

B4 - Searches out new ideas and opportunities

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	1	24.4	-23.4
Inspiring	114	24.4	89.6
Heart	1	24.4	-23.4
Coaching for performance	1	24.4	-23.4
Drive for results	5	24.4	-19.4
Total	122		

B5 - Tries a lot and sees what works

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	1	11.1	-10.1
Helpful	6	11.1	-5.1
Inspiring	19	11.1	7.9
Straightforward	2	11.1	-9.1
Heart	12	11.1	.9
Coaching for performance	6	11.1	-5.1
Bottom line	1	11.1	-10.1
Drive for results	13	11.1	1.9
Customer Connected	1	11.1	-10.1
Other	15	11.1	3.9
Not Applicable	46	11.1	34.9
Total	122		

B6 - Sets clear goals and expectations

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	6	15.3	-9.3
Inspiring	1	15.3	-14.3
Straightforward	61	15.3	45.8
Heart	3	15.3	-12.3
Coaching for performance	31	15.3	15.8
Bottom line	1	15.3	-14.3
Drive for results	18	15.3	2.8
Other	1	15.3	-14.3
Total	122		

B7 - Seeks opinions

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	32	11.1	20.9
Helpful	19	11.1	7.9
Inspiring	11	11.1	-.1
Straightforward	7	11.1	-4.1
Heart	6	11.1	-5.1
Coaching for performance	24	11.1	12.9
Bottom line	1	11.1	-10.1
Drive for results	2	11.1	-9.1
Customer Connected	2	11.1	-9.1
Other	15	11.1	3.9
Not Applicable	3	11.1	-8.1
Total	122		

B8 - Values and uses diversity

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	18	15.3	2.8
Helpful	6	15.3	-9.3
Inspiring	17	15.3	1.8
Straightforward	5	15.3	-10.3
Heart	18	15.3	2.8
Coaching for performance	45	15.3	29.8
Drive for results	4	15.3	-11.3
Other	9	15.3	-6.3
Total	122		

B9 - Celebrates success

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Helpful	9	15.3	-6.3
Inspiring	22	15.3	6.8
Heart	53	15.3	37.8
Coaching for performance	17	15.3	1.8
Drive for results	8	15.3	-7.3
Customer Connected	1	15.3	-14.3
Other	10	15.3	-5.3
Not Applicable	2	15.3	-13.3
Total	122		

B10 - Focuses on execution and delivery

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	3	13.6	-10.6
Inspiring	2	13.6	-11.6
Straightforward	9	13.6	-4.6
Heart	1	13.6	-12.6
Coaching for performance	3	13.6	-10.6
Bottom line	10	13.6	-3.6
Drive for results	86	13.6	72.4
Customer Connected	5	13.6	-8.6
Not Applicable	3	13.6	-10.6
Total	122		

B11 - Keeps people informed

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	27	13.6	13.4
Helpful	29	13.6	15.4
Inspiring	5	13.6	-8.6
Straightforward	23	13.6	9.4
Heart	4	13.6	-9.6
Coaching for performance	17	13.6	3.4
Customer Connected	7	13.6	-6.6
Other	8	13.6	-5.6
Not Applicable	2	13.6	-11.6
Total	122		

B12 - Communicates clearly and effectively

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	10	15.3	-5.3
Helpful	8	15.3	-7.3
Inspiring	11	15.3	-4.3
Straightforward	84	15.3	68.8
Coaching for performance	4	15.3	-11.3
Drive for results	2	15.3	-13.3
Customer Connected	1	15.3	-14.3
Other	2	15.3	-13.3
Total	122		

B13 - Challenges the status quo

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	1	12.2	-11.2
Helpful	2	12.2	-10.2
Inspiring	81	12.2	68.8
Straightforward	9	12.2	-3.2
Heart	5	12.2	-7.2
Coaching for performance	6	12.2	-6.2
Bottom line	2	12.2	-10.2
Drive for results	11	12.2	-1.2
Other	4	12.2	-8.2
Not Applicable	1	12.2	-11.2
Total	122		

B14 - Gets to know and understand people and their feelings

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	22	15.3	6.8
Helpful	17	15.3	1.8
Inspiring	2	15.3	-13.3
Straightforward	2	15.3	-13.3
Heart	37	15.3	21.8
Coaching for performance	36	15.3	20.8
Other	5	15.3	-10.3
Not Applicable	1	15.3	-14.3
Total	122		

B15 - Collaborates across BT

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	7	12.2	-5.2
Helpful	87	12.2	74.8
Inspiring	2	12.2	-10.2
Straightforward	5	12.2	-7.2
Heart	1	12.2	-11.2
Coaching for performance	1	12.2	-11.2
Bottom line	6	12.2	-6.2
Drive for results	5	12.2	-7.2
Customer Connected	4	12.2	-8.2
Other	4	12.2	-8.2
Total	122		

B16 - Deals with poor performance

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	3	15.3	-12.3
Helpful	4	15.3	-11.3
Straightforward	14	15.3	-1.3
Coaching for performance	77	15.3	61.8
Bottom line	2	15.3	-13.3
Drive for results	20	15.3	4.8
Other	1	15.3	-14.3
Not Applicable	1	15.3	-14.3
Total	122		

B17 - Personally goes after customer complaints

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	1	17.4	-16.4
Helpful	3	17.4	-14.4
Heart	6	17.4	-11.4
Drive for results	6	17.4	-11.4
Customer Connected	104	17.4	86.6
Other	1	17.4	-16.4
Not Applicable	1	17.4	-16.4
Total	122		

B18 - Rewards risk taking

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	6	12.2	-6.2
Helpful	2	12.2	-10.2
Inspiring	39	12.2	26.8
Straightforward	2	12.2	-10.2
Heart	7	12.2	-5.2
Coaching for performance	19	12.2	6.8
Bottom line	2	12.2	-10.2
Drive for results	33	12.2	20.8
Other	7	12.2	-5.2
Not Applicable	5	12.2	-7.2
Total	122		

B19 - Displays responsibility for others

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	36	12.2	23.8
Helpful	16	12.2	3.8
Inspiring	6	12.2	-6.2
Straightforward	5	12.2	-7.2
Heart	21	12.2	8.8
Coaching for performance	20	12.2	7.8
Bottom line	1	12.2	-11.2
Drive for results	4	12.2	-8.2
Other	8	12.2	-4.2
Not Applicable	5	12.2	-7.2
Total	122		

B20 - Sets stretching targets

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Inspiring	5	17.4	-12.4
Heart	31	17.4	13.6
Coaching for performance	20	17.4	2.6
Bottom line	3	17.4	-14.4
Drive for results	60	17.4	42.6
Customer Connected	1	17.4	-16.4
Other	2	17.4	-15.4
Total	122		

B21 - Facilitates others contribution

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	9	15.3	-6.3
Helpful	63	15.3	47.8
Inspiring	8	15.3	-7.3
Straightforward	3	15.3	-12.3
Heart	4	15.3	-11.3
Coaching for performance	29	15.3	13.8
Drive for results	3	15.3	-12.3
Other	3	15.3	-12.3
Total	122		

B22 - Forms own position and views

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	17	12.2	4.8
Helpful	2	12.2	-10.2
Inspiring	33	12.2	20.8
Straightforward	32	12.2	19.8
Heart	10	12.2	-2.2
Coaching for performance	1	12.2	-11.2
Bottom line	1	12.2	-11.2
Drive for results	2	12.2	-10.2
Other	8	12.2	-4.2
Not Applicable	16	12.2	3.8
Total	122		

B23 - Communicates to convince

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	8	12.2	-4.2
Helpful	3	12.2	-9.2
Inspiring	38	12.2	25.8
Straightforward	37	12.2	24.8
Heart	7	12.2	-5.2
Coaching for performance	6	12.2	-6.2
Bottom line	1	12.2	-11.2
Drive for results	8	12.2	-4.2
Other	7	12.2	-5.2
Not Applicable	7	12.2	-5.2
Total	122		

B24 - Makes time for people

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	4	15.3	-11.3
Helpful	46	15.3	30.8
Heart	23	15.3	7.8
Coaching for performance	44	15.3	28.8
Bottom line	1	15.3	-14.3
Customer Connected	1	15.3	-14.3
Other	1	15.3	-14.3
Not Applicable	2	15.3	-13.3
Total	122		

B25 - Aligns the organisation and people behind targets

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Helpful	5	13.6	-8.6
Inspiring	2	13.6	-11.6
Straightforward	13	13.6	-.6
Heart	6	13.6	-7.6
Coaching for performance	16	13.6	2.4
Bottom line	11	13.6	-2.6
Drive for results	63	13.6	49.4
Customer Connected	5	13.6	-8.6
Not Applicable	1	13.6	-12.6
Total	122		

B26 - Communicates widely

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	9	12.2	-3.2
Helpful	20	12.2	7.8
Inspiring	27	12.2	14.8
Straightforward	26	12.2	13.8
Heart	5	12.2	-7.2
Coaching for performance	7	12.2	-5.2
Drive for results	3	12.2	-9.2
Customer Connected	2	12.2	-10.2
Other	18	12.2	5.8
Not Applicable	5	12.2	-7.2
Total	122		

B27 - Benchmarks performance externally

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	2	13.6	-11.6
Inspiring	1	13.6	-12.6
Straightforward	1	13.6	-12.6
Coaching for performance	19	13.6	5.4
Bottom line	20	13.6	6.4
Drive for results	57	13.6	43.4
Customer Connected	14	13.6	.4
Other	6	13.6	-7.6
Not Applicable	2	13.6	-11.6
Total	122		

B28 - Emphasises positives

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	5	12.2	-7.2
Helpful	2	12.2	-10.2
Inspiring	37	12.2	24.8
Straightforward	3	12.2	-9.2
Heart	27	12.2	14.8
Coaching for performance	30	12.2	17.8
Bottom line	1	12.2	-11.2
Drive for results	6	12.2	-6.2
Other	7	12.2	-5.2
Not Applicable	4	12.2	-8.2
Total	122		

B29 - Repeats key messages often

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	5	12.2	-7.2
Helpful	6	12.2	-6.2
Inspiring	17	12.2	4.8
Straightforward	35	12.2	22.8
Heart	9	12.2	-3.2
Coaching for performance	20	12.2	7.8
Bottom line	2	12.2	-10.2
Drive for results	5	12.2	-7.2
Other	13	12.2	.8
Not Applicable	10	12.2	-2.2
Total	122		

B30 - Uses anger, frustration and intolerance

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Helpful	1	17.4	-16.4
Inspiring	2	17.4	-15.4
Straightforward	2	17.4	-15.4
Heart	6	17.4	-11.4
Coaching for performance	2	17.4	-15.4
Other	16	17.4	-1.4
Not Applicable	93	17.4	75.6
Total	122		

B31 - Develops a broad awareness of company and industry

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	2	11.1	-9.1
Helpful	7	11.1	-4.1
Inspiring	18	11.1	6.9
Straightforward	4	11.1	-7.1
Heart	4	11.1	-7.1
Coaching for performance	8	11.1	-3.1
Bottom line	11	11.1	-.1
Drive for results	11	11.1	-.1
Customer Connected	38	11.1	26.9
Other	18	11.1	6.9
Not Applicable	1	11.1	-10.1
Total	122		

B32 - Talks to people before escalating

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	41	12.2	28.8
Helpful	34	12.2	21.8
Inspiring	3	12.2	-9.2
Straightforward	30	12.2	17.8
Heart	2	12.2	-10.2
Coaching for performance	5	12.2	-7.2
Drive for results	2	12.2	-10.2
Customer Connected	1	12.2	-11.2
Other	1	12.2	-11.2
Not Applicable	3	12.2	-9.2
Total	122		

B33 - Gives feedback, both positive & negative

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	9	15.3	-6.3
Helpful	13	15.3	-2.3
Inspiring	2	15.3	-13.3
Straightforward	12	15.3	-3.3
Heart	2	15.3	-13.3
Coaching for performance	80	15.3	64.8
Bottom line	1	15.3	-14.3
Drive for results	3	15.3	-12.3
Total	122		

B34 - Thinks outside the box

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Inspiring	115	24.4	90.6
Coaching for performance	1	24.4	-23.4
Bottom line	1	24.4	-23.4
Drive for results	4	24.4	-20.4
Customer Connected	1	24.4	-23.4
Total	122		

B35 - Creates open two way communication

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	46	12.2	33.8
Helpful	20	12.2	7.8
Inspiring	3	12.2	-9.2
Straightforward	31	12.2	18.8
Heart	5	12.2	-7.2
Coaching for performance	13	12.2	.8
Bottom line	1	12.2	-11.2
Drive for results	1	12.2	-11.2
Customer Connected	1	12.2	-11.2
Other	1	12.2	-11.2
Total	122		

B36 - Formulates well thought out plans & defensible positions

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	7	11.1	-4.1
Helpful	1	11.1	-10.1
Inspiring	20	11.1	8.9
Straightforward	31	11.1	19.9
Heart	3	11.1	-8.1
Coaching for performance	5	11.1	-6.1
Bottom line	4	11.1	-7.1
Drive for results	32	11.1	20.9
Customer Connected	2	11.1	-9.1
Other	10	11.1	-1.1
Not Applicable	7	11.1	-4.1
Total	122		

B37 - Builds individual success in to team success

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	3	13.6	-10.6
Helpful	28	13.6	14.4
Inspiring	14	13.6	.4
Straightforward	3	13.6	-10.6
Heart	19	13.6	5.4
Coaching for performance	44	13.6	30.4
Drive for results	4	13.6	-9.6
Other	5	13.6	-8.6
Not Applicable	2	13.6	-11.6
Total	122		

B38 - Adapts style and tone to suit audience

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	7	11.1	-4.1
Helpful	15	11.1	3.9
Inspiring	15	11.1	3.9
Straightforward	20	11.1	8.9
Heart	11	11.1	-.1
Coaching for performance	6	11.1	-5.1
Bottom line	1	11.1	-10.1
Drive for results	4	11.1	-7.1
Customer Connected	13	11.1	1.9
Other	19	11.1	7.9
Not Applicable	11	11.1	-.1
Total	122		

B39 - Positions own targets within bigger picture

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	5	11.1	-6.1
Helpful	11	11.1	-.1
Inspiring	17	11.1	5.9
Straightforward	7	11.1	-4.1
Heart	5	11.1	-6.1
Coaching for performance	3	11.1	-8.1
Bottom line	24	11.1	12.9
Drive for results	37	11.1	25.9
Customer Connected	6	11.1	-5.1
Other	4	11.1	-7.1
Not Applicable	3	11.1	-8.1
Total	122		

B40 - Gets out a lot to meet customers & their own people

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	3	17.4	-14.4
Inspiring	4	17.4	-13.4
Heart	5	17.4	-12.4
Coaching for performance	1	17.4	-16.4
Drive for results	2	17.4	-15.4
Customer Connected	102	17.4	84.6
Not Applicable	5	17.4	-12.4
Total	122		

B41 - Rewards delivery not effort

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	1	12.2	-11.2
Helpful	1	12.2	-11.2
Inspiring	2	12.2	-10.2
Straightforward	3	12.2	-9.2
Heart	2	12.2	-10.2
Coaching for performance	12	12.2	-.2
Bottom line	17	12.2	4.8
Drive for results	68	12.2	55.8
Other	2	12.2	-10.2
Not Applicable	14	12.2	1.8
Total	122		

B42 - Presents position and argument based on fact

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	29	13.6	15.4
Inspiring	3	13.6	-10.6
Straightforward	69	13.6	55.4
Heart	1	13.6	-12.6
Coaching for performance	2	13.6	-11.6
Bottom line	7	13.6	-6.6
Drive for results	6	13.6	-7.6
Other	3	13.6	-10.6
Not Applicable	2	13.6	-11.6
Total	122		

B43 - Encourages democratic discussion

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	26	13.6	12.4
Helpful	28	13.6	14.4
Inspiring	10	13.6	-3.6
Straightforward	18	13.6	4.4
Heart	6	13.6	-7.6
Coaching for performance	9	13.6	-4.6
Drive for results	1	13.6	-12.6
Other	13	13.6	-.6
Not Applicable	11	13.6	-2.6
Total	122		

B44 - Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	3	12.2	-9.2
Helpful	21	12.2	8.8
Inspiring	5	12.2	-7.2
Straightforward	1	12.2	-11.2
Coaching for performance	2	12.2	-10.2
Bottom line	39	12.2	26.8
Drive for results	44	12.2	31.8
Customer Connected	1	12.2	-11.2
Other	5	12.2	-7.2
Not Applicable	1	12.2	-11.2
Total	122		

B45 - Takes multiple perspectives

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	11	11.1	-.1
Helpful	14	11.1	2.9
Inspiring	40	11.1	28.9
Straightforward	9	11.1	-2.1
Heart	3	11.1	-8.1
Coaching for performance	5	11.1	-6.1
Bottom line	3	11.1	-8.1
Drive for results	5	11.1	-6.1
Customer Connected	2	11.1	-9.1
Other	23	11.1	11.9
Not Applicable	7	11.1	-4.1
Total	122		

B46 - Admits does not have all answers

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	52	15.3	36.8
Helpful	4	15.3	-11.3
Inspiring	4	15.3	-11.3
Straightforward	37	15.3	21.8
Heart	9	15.3	-6.3
Coaching for performance	5	15.3	-10.3
Other	5	15.3	-10.3
Not Applicable	6	15.3	-9.3
Total	122		

B47 - Role models behaviour

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	9	13.6	-4.6
Helpful	5	13.6	-8.6
Inspiring	30	13.6	16.4
Straightforward	3	13.6	-10.6
Heart	44	13.6	30.4
Coaching for performance	23	13.6	9.4
Bottom line	2	13.6	-11.6
Customer Connected	1	13.6	-12.6
Other	5	13.6	-8.6
Total	122		

B48 - Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	13	12.2	.8
Helpful	2	12.2	-10.2
Inspiring	6	12.2	-6.2
Straightforward	2	12.2	-10.2
Heart	46	12.2	33.8
Coaching for performance	42	12.2	29.8
Bottom line	1	12.2	-11.2
Drive for results	1	12.2	-11.2
Other	6	12.2	-6.2
Not Applicable	3	12.2	-9.2
Total	122		

B49 - Focuses everyone on customers

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	1	30.5	-29.5
Bottom line	2	30.5	-28.5
Drive for results	1	30.5	-29.5
Customer Connected	118	30.5	87.5
Total	122		

B50 - Tests and expresses views

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Trustworthy	21	13.6	7.4
Helpful	13	13.6	-6
Inspiring	20	13.6	6.4
Straightforward	32	13.6	18.4
Heart	7	13.6	-6.6
Coaching for performance	12	13.6	-1.6
Drive for results	2	13.6	-11.6
Other	9	13.6	-4.6
Not Applicable	6	13.6	-7.6
Total	122		

Appendix R: Behaviours identified as 'Not applicable'

No.	Behaviour	%	No. of responses
30	Uses anger, frustration and intolerance	76%	93
5	Tries a lot and sees what works	38%	46
22	Forms own position and views	13%	16
41	Rewards delivery not effort	11%	14
38	Adapts style and tone to suit audience	9%	11
43	Encourages democratic discussion	9%	11
29	Repeats key messages often	8%	10
35	Creates open two way communication	7%	8
23	Communicates to convince	6%	7
45	Takes multiple perspectives	6%	7
46	Admits does not have all answers	5%	6
50	Tests and expresses views	5%	6
19	Displays responsibility for others	4%	5
26	Communicates widely	4%	5
28	Emphasises positives	3%	4
40	Gets out a lot to meet customers & their own people	3%	4
2	Focuses on cost and revenue	2%	3
7	Seeks opinions	2%	3
32	Talks to people before escalating	2%	3
39	Positions own targets within bigger picture	2%	3
48	Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do	2%	3
9	Celebrates success	2%	2
10	Focuses on execution and delivery	2%	2
11	Keeps people informed	2%	2
24	Makes time for people	2%	2
27	Benchmarks performance externally	2%	2
36	Formulates well thought out plans & defensible positions	2%	2
42	Presents position and argument based on fact	2%	2
13	Challenges the status quo	1%	1
14	Gets to know & understand people & their feelings	1%	1
16	Deals with poor performance	1%	1
17	Personally goes after customer complaints	1%	1
25	Aligns the organisation & people behind targets	1%	1
31	Develops a broad awareness of company & industry	1%	1
44	Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives	1%	1
		4.74%	289

Appendix S: Behaviours categorised as 'other'

No.	Behaviour	No. of responses	%
45	B45 - Takes multiple perspectives	23	19%
38	B38 - Adapts style and tone to suit audience	19	16%
26	B26 - Communicates widely	18	15%
31	B31 - Develops a broad awareness of company & industry	18	15%
30	B30 - Uses anger, frustration and intolerance	16	13%
5	B5 - Tries a lot and sees what works	15	12%
7	B7 - Seeks opinions	15	12%
29	B29 - Repeats key messages often	13	11%
43	B43 - Encourages democratic discussion	13	11%
9	B9 - Celebrates success	10	8%
36	B36 - Formulates well thought out plans & defensible posit	10	8%
8	B8 - Values & uses diversity	9	7%
50	B50 - Tests and expresses views	9	7%
11	B11 - Keeps people informed	8	7%
18	B18 - Rewards risk taking	8	7%
19	B19 - Displays responsibility for others	8	7%
22	B22 - Forms own position and views	8	7%
23	B23 - Communicates to convince	7	6%
28	B28 - Emphasises positives	7	6%
27	Benchmarks performance externally	6	5%
46	Admits does not have all answers	6	5%
37	Builds individual success in to team success	5	4%
48	Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do	5	4%
13	Challenges the status quo	4	3%
14	Gets to know & understand people & their feelings	4	3%
15	Collaborates across BT	4	3%
39	Positions own targets within bigger picture	4	3%
44	Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives	4	3%
47	Role models behaviour	4	3%
21	Facilitates others contribution	3	2%
42	Presents position and argument based on fact	3	2%
12	Communicates clearly and effectively	2	2%
20	Sets stretching targets	2	2%
41	Rewards delivery not effort	2	2%
6	Sets clear goals and expectations	1	1%
16	Deals with poor performance	1	1%
17	Personally goes after customer complaints	1	1%
24	Makes time for people	1	1%
32	Talks to people before escalating	1	1%
35	Creates open two way communication	1	1%
		298	4.89%

Appendix T: HR feedback session invitation letter

Achieving alignment of expectation and understanding

Evidence shows that organizations function more effectively if there is an agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and that this effectiveness is greatly aided by having an agreed language to describe 'what good looks like'.

As a key member of the HR team leading and driving the leadership agenda in your business, I would like you to join me in a session to discuss the leadership competencies and to explore a number of issues and potential problems exposed by a doctoral research project that has been undertaken by Paul Davis of Global Services in conjunction with Cranfield University. A few of you have also had conversations with me questioning what else we need to be doing in whole area of leadership style and behaviour. This therefore seems like a timely opportunity to have this conversation.

Paul's research study was stimulated by the perceived misalignment between the published leadership competencies and the leadership behaviour that was rewarded. Over a three year period Paul has conducted a detailed investigation that has involved interviewing the top team and surveying the Global Services Leadership Team (GSLT) in order to understand how well aligned the organization is in terms of its expectations for leadership behaviour.

Through a process of sharing and discussion I would like for us to explore together the implications of Paul's research findings and what we might want to do about them.

The session will place specific emphasis on:

- whether or not we currently have an agreed understanding of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour; *what good looks like*
- whether it is possible or desirable to try to define all of the leadership behaviours needed
- whether the leadership competencies cover all of the competencies needed by the organization
- whether it is realistic or desirable to expect there to be a common language to describe leadership behaviour
- what the implications of the research findings are on the leadership team's ability to role model behaviour
- understanding the current degree of alignment between the top team's expectations and the GSLT's understanding
- why some of the competencies seem to be better understood than others
- the implications of the fact that some of the behaviours identified by the top team are seen as inappropriate by the GSLT
- the implications of the findings on the existing appraisal system

This is an important subject for us as a leadership team and I would like you to make every effort to attend. The outputs from the session will be determined in the meeting. Firstly, I personally believe we should be reflecting on where we are and then determine what next from this session,

Regards June.

Appendix U: Feedback instrument

Slide 1

**Achieving alignment of understanding and expectation:
A doctoral research study**

Paul Davis

Introduction:

- Paul Davis
- thanks; doctoral research findings to you
- Project 1 interviewed Ben and his top team
- Project 2 used Project 1 results in a survey of the GSLT. To identify the degree of common understanding of what constitutes appropriate leadership behaviour.

This session is part of a series of feedback session to the HR community and the top team and provides the third element of my executive doctorate (DBA).

My objective for this session is to present back the collective top team view, a top level view of the GSLT survey results and to highlight some of the **possible problems** with the competencies as they stand in the context of using them within our appraisal system.

A key aim of this session is to get your suggestions on whether we need to take any action as a result of my findings and if so what.

The session is programmed to last 30 minutes

I will be taking notes throughout the session and I also plan to record the session in order to ensure that I do not miss anything.

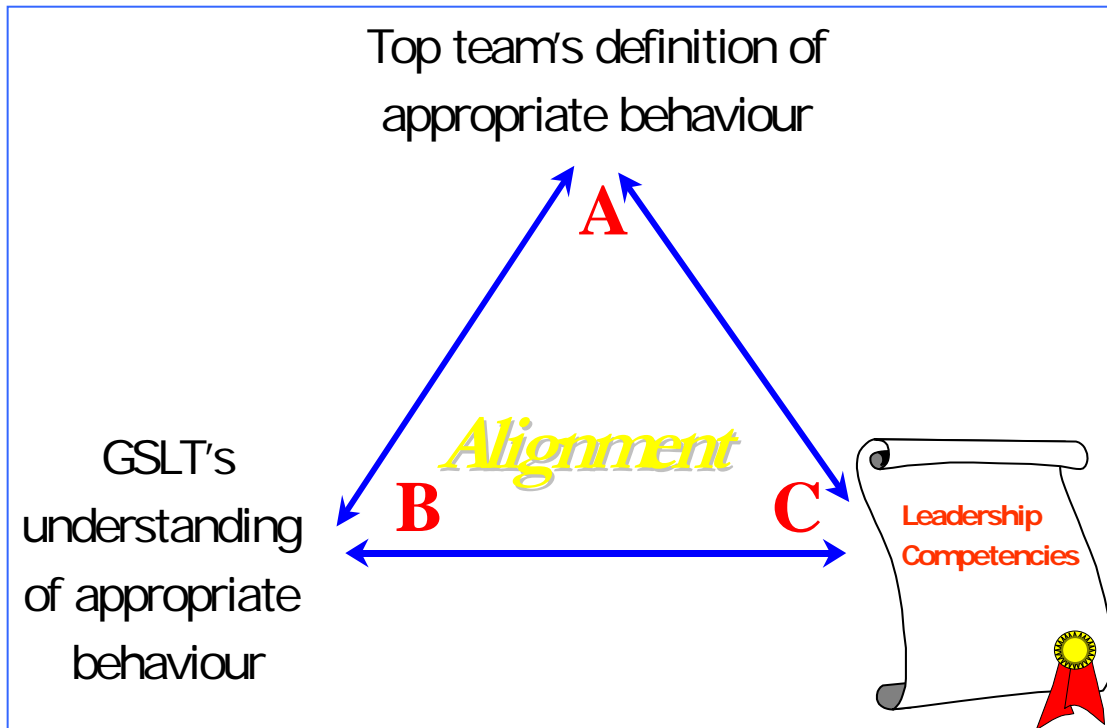
I am happy to take questions as we go - the aim is to stimulate discussion in order to get your input and ideas

I will focus my feedback on providing an overview of the research process and the key findings with particular emphasis on the similarities and differences.

If you, or any of your people, would like a more detailed discussion then I would be happy to oblige.

If you are happy we can start.

Slide 2



Theory:

- ▶ The basis underpinning this diagram and my research is that the alignment and coherence lead to effective performance - in this model all three elements need to be aligned.

Motivation for my research:

- ▶ Perceived misalignment between the published competencies and the leadership behaviour rewarded
- ▶ Desire to understand why this was the case
- ▶ Keen to understand if each top team members uses the same assessment criteria

In Project 1 I interviewed each of the top team to obtain details of what they deemed appropriate leadership behaviour.

Slide 3

Project One findings

- Project one identified that within the top team there is:
 - (1) A high level of alignment between the categories of behaviour identified and the new leadership capabilities with seventeen of the nineteen categories mapping directly on to the new leadership capabilities.
 - (2) A good level of alignment of individual responses against the capabilities - 77.5%
 - (3) Two categories of behaviour that could not be mapped to the capabilities:
 - B1 “Uses the full range of emotional intelligence”
 - B17 “Develops own position and views”.
 - (4) A wide range of language to describe the behaviours supporting the new capabilities

(1) When the categories were mapped to the competencies there was a good match.

(2) There was a good degree of alignment of the categories, however...

(3) Two categories appear to be missing from the competencies: **(see handout)**

?Is this something that we should be concerned about?

?What do you feel about the two categories that could not be mapped to the competencies?.....?Do you feel that we need to do anything about this?

? What do you think that we should do about the omissions?....if anything?

(4) There were 198 different behaviours identified by the top team and these did not align with the descriptors in the leadership competencies.

These results imply that, at the time that I conducted this research, there was no common language to describe the required behaviours and no common understanding of what good looks like.

?Do you think that it is possible to define and articulate all of the leadership behaviours needed? ...is this desirable?

?Do you think that it is realistic to expect there to be a common language?

?What implications do these results have for leaders 'role modelling' behaviour? ... and for generating a common understanding and language?

Slide 4

Project two findings

? How are the behaviours, identified in P1, seen to support the new leadership competencies?

- (1) **96% of behaviours seen as supporting the competencies**
- (2) **20% of the behaviours achieved a level of alignment of 70% or more**
- (3) **60% of behaviours achieved less than 50% alignment of responses**
- (4) **All behaviours seen as supporting 'Customer connected' achieved over 84% alignment of responses**
- (5) **The nine behaviours with the lowest level of alignment represent those two categories from P1 that could not be mapped to the competencies**
- (6) **Analysis of the responses show six competency pairings where there was a level of ambiguity**
- (7) **Two behaviours seen as inappropriate**

In Project 2 I distributed electronic web based questionnaire to the GSLT. The majority of people had no trouble allocating each of the behaviours to one of the competencies. However certain problems were exposed: GSLT response rate 41%

(1) 96% seen as appropriate. *? What do you think about these results?*

(2) & (3) The results infer a poor degree of understanding of a) How the top team defined behaviours support the competencies and b) By inference, the meaning of the competencies. *? What do you think about these results?*

(4) Customer connected >84%. All of the behaviours seen as supporting 'Customer connected' included the word 'Customer'
? Why do you think that I not get a 100% response for the customer connected behaviours?

(5) The nine behaviours with the lowest degree of alignment represent those two categories that could not be mapped to the competencies.
*? What does this indicate to you?
...do you think that this is significant? ...or important?*

(6) A number of competencies appeared to be 'ambiguous', i.e. there were two popular responses which made up the majority of all responses, in some cases A preceded B and in others B preceded A.

'Drive for Results' & 'Bottom line' was the pairing with the highest number of ambiguity. *?What do you think are the implications of this?.... ?How might we address this?*

96% of respondents see "Uses anger frustration and intolerance" as 'Not applicable' *?What do you think about this?*

(7) 50% of respondents think the 'Tries a lot and sees what works' is 'Not Applicable'

?What do you think that this indicates? ...does it have implication for the management culture ? ...and the propensity for risk?

Slide 5

Summary

- CEO interviews showed a good level of alignment at the level of competencies but a poor degree of alignment of required behaviour
- My findings infer that:
 - some key behaviours and competencies are missing
 - a lack of a common understanding of how the CEO defined behaviours support the new leadership competencies
 - the competency labels are not self-explanatory in that they do not create a common understanding for the GSLT
- Overall my findings indicate that there has been insufficient dialogue around the competencies and the behaviours supporting them to align individual's understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour
- My research has shown that the organisation is in danger of losing the benefit afforded by the introduction of an objective performance system based on the definition of what constitutes appropriate behaviour

1) Good degree of alignment with categories identified and with competency mapping. Little commonality of language to describe behaviour and hence implications for true degree of alignment.

2) My results infer that:

- some behaviours & competencies missing
- lack of common understanding of how top team defined behaviours support the new leadership competencies
- my finding also infer, by reference to the point above, that the competency labels are not self-explanatory and that they do not create a common understanding for the leadership team of what constitutes appropriate behaviour

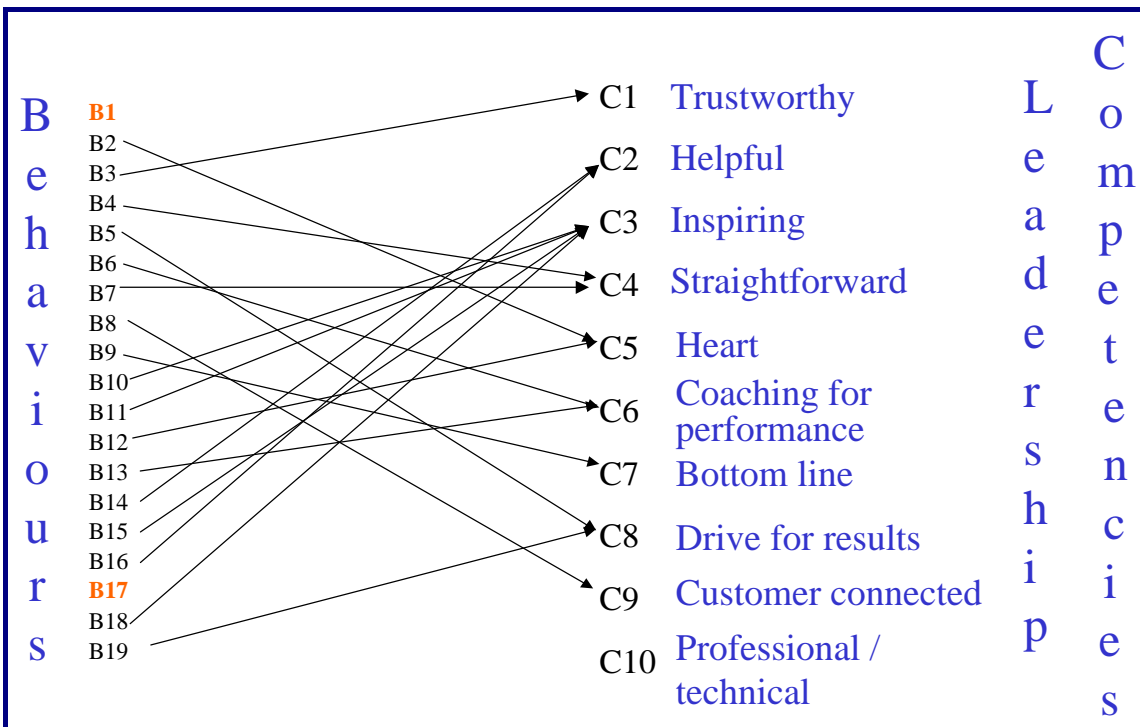
3) Results indicate that there has been insufficient dialogue around the competencies and supporting behaviours

4) Fact based analysis has shown that the organization is in **danger** of continuing to 'miss each other' & lose the benefit afforded by the introduction of an objective performance system, based on the definition of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, if we do not take some action.

Supporting data handouts

Frequency of competencies in CEO responses

	N1	N2	N3	N4	N5	N6	N7	N8	N9	B1	B17
		X	X			X				X	
	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
	X		X	X	X	X	X				X



Missing competencies & behaviours

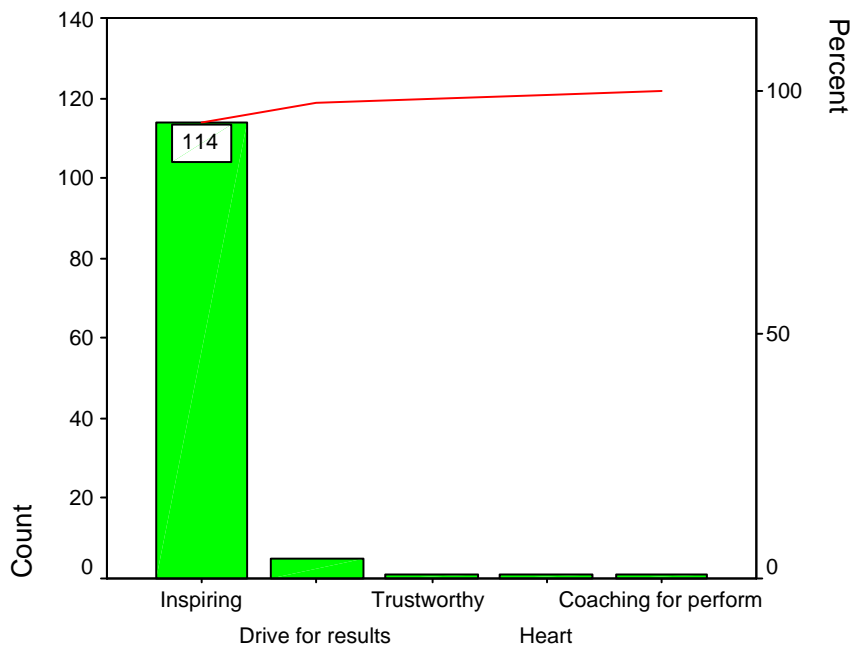
B1 Uses the full range of emotional intelligence

Adapts style and tone to suit audience
 Argues strongly
 Demonstrates care for others
 Laughs
 Makes others feel good about themselves
 Makes people feel safe
 Makes time for people
 Makes work fun
 Observes sensitivities of individuals
 Puts people at ease
 Reduces unnecessary stress and tension
 Shares experiences
 Shout, pray and laugh
 Shows care for others
 Uses anger, frustration and intolerance
 Uses appropriate body language to build rapport
 Uses body language
 Uses empathy to build rapport
 Uses humour
 Uses language of mutual respect
 Uses the full range of intellectual emotions

B17 Develops own position and views

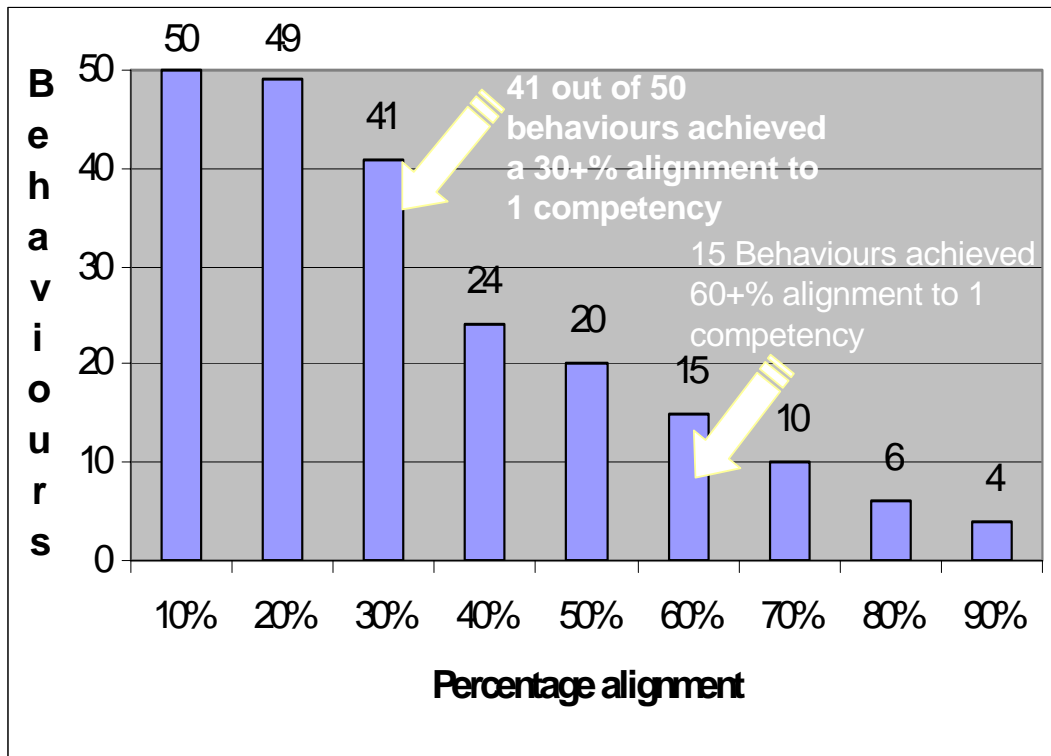
Can articulate why their view is correct
 Creates an "original sense", not emulating
 Defends own position
 Forms world view / beliefs
 Formulates own position
 Formulates well thought out defensible positions
 Identifies and backs ideas
 Persuades others to own position

B4 - Searches out new ideas & opportunities



B4 - Searches out new ideas and opportunitites

Percentage alignment of behaviours



Behaviours with >70% alignment

Over 90%

No.	Behaviour	Principal capability	%
49	Focuses everyone on customers	Customer connected	97%
34	Thinks outside the box	Inspiring	94%
4	Searches out new ideas and opportunities	Inspiring	93%
3	Puts the customer first	Customer connected	91%

80%

17	Personally goes after customer complaints	Customer connected	85%
40	Gets out a lot to meet customers & their own people	Customer connected	84%

70%

30	Uses anger, frustration and intolerance	Not applicable	76%
2	Focuses on cost and revenue	Bottom line	75%
15	Collaborates across BT	Helpful	71%
10	Focuses on execution and delivery	Drive for results	70%

60%

12	Communicates clearly and effectively	Straightforward	69%
13	Challenges the status quo	Inspiring	66%
33	Gives feedback, both positive & negative	Coaching for perform	66%
16	Deals with poor performance	Coaching for perform	63%
1	Articulates goals clearly	Straightforward	60%

50%

42	Presents position and argument based on fact	Straightforward	57%
41	Rewards delivery not effort	Drive for results	56%
21	Facilitates others contribution	Helpful	52%
25	Aligns the organisation & people behind targets	Drive for results	52%
6	Sets clear goals and expectations	Straightforward	50%

40%

20	Sets stretching targets	Drive for results	49%
27	Benchmarks performance externally	Drive for results	47%
9	Celebrates success	Heart	43%
46	Admits does not have all answers	Trustworthy	43%

30%

5	Tries a lot and sees what works	Not applicable	38%
24	Makes time for people	Helpful	38%
35	Creates open two way communication	Trustworthy	38%
48	Recognise people for who they are, not just what they do	Heart	38%
8	Values & uses diversity	Coaching for perform	37%
37	Builds individual success in to team success	Coaching for perform	36%
44	Balances own unit goals with wider business objectives	Drive for results	36%
47	Role models behaviour	Heart	36%
32	Talks to people before escalating	Trustworthy	34%
45	Takes multiple perspectives	Inspiring	33%
18	Rewards risk taking	Inspiring	32%
23	Communicates to convince	Inspiring	31%
31	Develops a broad awareness of company & industry	Customer connected	31%
14	Gets to know & understand people & their feelings	Heart	30%
28	Emphasises positives	Inspiring	30%
39	Positions own targets within bigger picture	Drive for results	30%
19	Displays responsibility for others	Trustworthy	30%

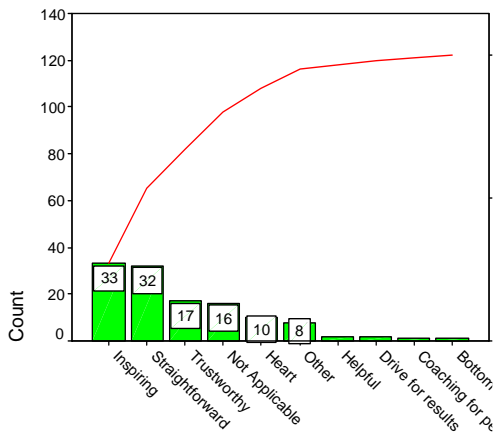
20%

29	Repeats key messages often	Straightforward	29%
22	Forms own position and views	Inspiring	27%
7	Seeks opinions	Trustworthy	26%
36	Formulates well thought out plans & defensible positions	Drive for results	26%
50	Tests and expresses views	Straightforward	26%
11	Keeps people informed	Helpful	24%
43	Encourages democratic discussion	Helpful	23%
26	Communicates widely	Inspiring	22%

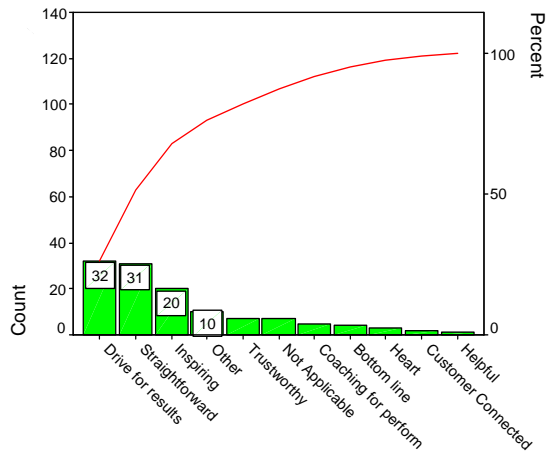
10%

38	Adapts style and tone to suit audience	Straightforward	16%
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Behaviours with lowest level of alignment



B22 - Forms own position and views

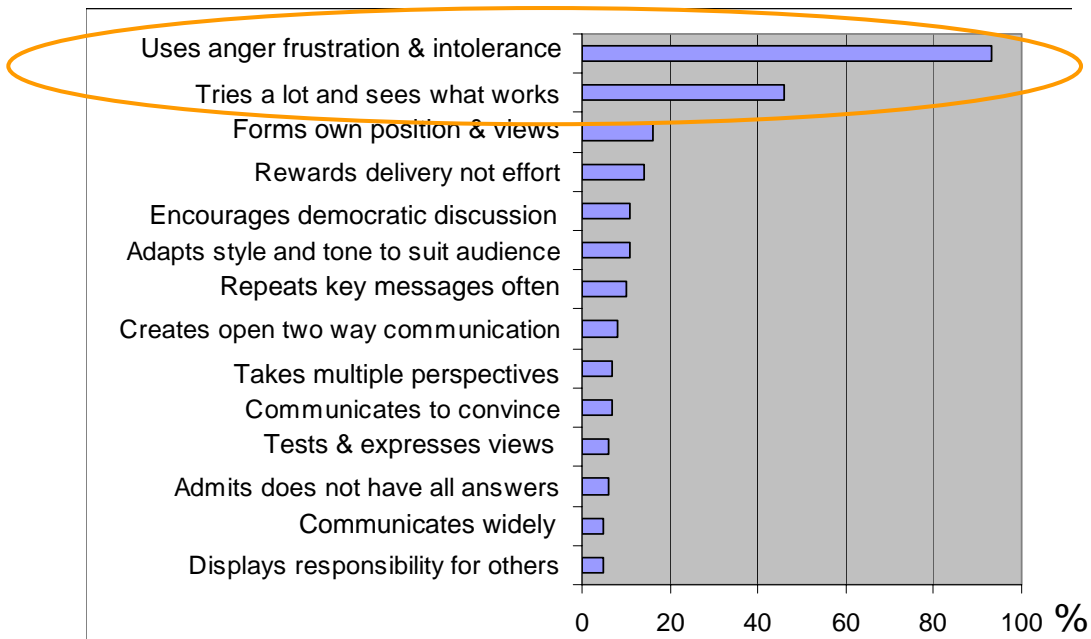


B36 - Formulates well thought out plans & dependable posi

Ambiguous competencies

	Trustworthy	Helpful	Inspiring	Straightforward	Heart	Drive for results	Bottom line	Coaching for performance	Customer connected	Not applicable	Other
Trustworthy		B32 B11 B15 B43		B35 B46 B42 B50 B19				B7 B8			
Helpful								B21 B24 B33 B37 B3			
Inspiring				B12 B22 B23 B26 B9 B47		B4 B13 B18 B34		B28	B31	B5	B45
Straightforward						B36	B1	B6 B29			B38
Heart						B20		B14 B48	B17 B40		
Drive for results							B10 B27 B39 B41 B44 B2	B35 B16			
Bottom line									B49		
Coaching for performance											
Customer connected											
Not applicable											B30
Other											

Behaviours seen as 'Not applicable'



--- End ---