

Perspectives on human behaviour and why it matters in the workplace

One of the reasons that our clients appoint Agents2Change is that we bring insights into human behaviour alongside the practical knowledge of how to improve performance. Again and again we demonstrate the power of helping you to change behaviour (yours and others) in order to deliver results.



Some useful questions to consider in bringing about behavioural change

What compels a person to take an action – or to avoid an action?

When working with people we can sometimes see them do something which is unexpected, or even unwanted. Similarly if we see them avoiding an action – despite prompts and encouragement, we need to delve into the underlying motivations that are creating these phenomena. Motivation is the internal driver that determines our actions. Unseen, often unconscious and sometimes quite unpredictable, its manifestation will be unique to every individual.

“Understanding the behaviour of others and oneself is a valuable tool for working with people. It increases the chances of a real understanding of the dynamics of many interactions and also of responding appropriately.”

Eric Berne 'Games People Play'

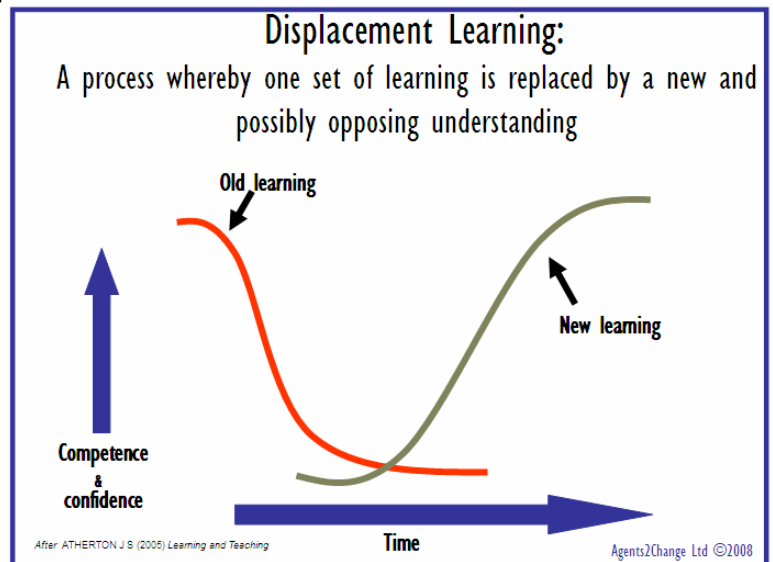
So next time you observe something surprising in a colleague's or even your own behaviour – see if you can find out what it was that compelled the action. What reward was expected or what was the consequence you were trying to avoid?

Motivation can be shaped and developed through the right mix of reward and consequences. By tapping into the underlying motivation we have the raw material for behavioural change.

How open is the person to learning & reflecting on new ideas / situations?

Learning and understanding is made up of a mixture of cognitive processes - memory and the mental process of reviewing and interpreting information. Learning that is associated with behavioural change (i.e. deep learning) requires a period of de-stabilisation. It is only when we are 'knocked off' our path or train of thinking that we come to a new stage of understanding. We call this displacement learning – as it replaces an original learning with a new and quite different state of understanding.

Once we reach a stage of new understanding, it is not possible to behave in a way that was consistent with our 'old' world view. Therefore behavioural change is often the best indicator that deep and sustained learning has occurred.



Does the person act differently in a team situation, or in front of a person of authority?

One of the reasons that humans have been so successful is that they are able to adapt to their situations. This is not only an evolutionary skill in terms of the terrain and environment, but a deeply embedded social skill as well. We will therefore show a range of different behaviours according to the situation and the people that we are with. We will visibly relax and become more jovial with long time friends, yet become formal and quite constrained in front of a person in authority.

This range of interactions and how they manifest themselves is referred to as dynamics. It provides useful input to understand what else might be impacting on a person's behaviour. No man (or woman) is an island and their behaviour will be influenced by those around them.

Observing these differences could provide some useful clues as to how they are feeling, or what they see as their role. Testing these out with the person directly can lead to some interesting insights into how they see themselves and others.

Where do I go for more information?

Agents2Change has been created to deliver significant improvements in key business results: profit; production; reliability; safety; to large scale process industries. Typical client engagements focus on delivering targeted changes to processes, systems and the behaviours of the operators and leaders. Our team of highly experienced consultants have the knowledge and skills to help you tackle the most daunting of behavioural change agendas informatively and effectively.

For more information about how Agents2Change can help you visit us at www.agents2change.com

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