



CUTTINGS...

Number 150 September 2020

Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

Welcome to the 150th edition of Cuttings!! The first Cuttings was created in 1990 and has been published continuously ever since, moving from an irregular printed and mailed schedule to a regular bi-monthly and online version now. Throughout it has followed an editorial policy of quoting from published journals and articles and not engaging in advertorial content, which has been appreciated by its readership - now totalling some 1000 people worldwide.

September 2020 also marks a personal milestone, being 50 years since I started in full time employment - initially at the princely salary of £1,325.00 per annum. There have been many ups and downs during those 50 years, and my mission continues to be to find out the best ideas and practices in organisations that help us survive with the downs and exploit the ups, and to share these with others.

This edition shares three more ideas and practices which will help us through the remainder of the COVID crisis: How to ensure that value is added to the ubiquitous use of virtual classrooms; What to do to make sure online meetings do not fall flat; and a warning about the view - sometimes a subconscious one - that work is a place rather than what you do.

If you would like a downloadable pdf of this edition. it is published on my website, along with copies of all past editions, [click here](#).

Enjoy, and stay healthy and safe...

Geof Cox

In this edition

Adding value to the virtual classroom Ben Johnson shows how the trainer/coach is essential in a follow up to his Cuttings 147 article

Two dimensional meetings don't have to be flat PwC share some tips on making online meetings more effective and fun

Work is something you achieve, not somewhere you go Too many organisations and managers view work as a place, so don't capitalise on the benefits of flexible, remote working

Plus details of **Public Courses**, **Book Sales**, and a collection of **Snippets** to further provoke your thinking and reflection

Adding Value to the Virtual Classroom

The COVID-19 pandemic has enforced a transformation in the world of learning and development. The virtual classroom, which has existed as a limited delivery mechanism for years, has become standard almost overnight, training in the physical classroom having all but disappeared. In parallel a lot of training content has been put online and is available round the clock and at no charge. There are still a lot of highly ineffective and dull presentations, a simple reproduction of what would have been delivered in the physical class, with no contact and no interaction; there is also a growing body of highly professional and engaging content on an ever-wider range of topics, produced by reputable sources. To what extent will this high-quality, no-cost, always available training replace the physical instructor?

Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations...

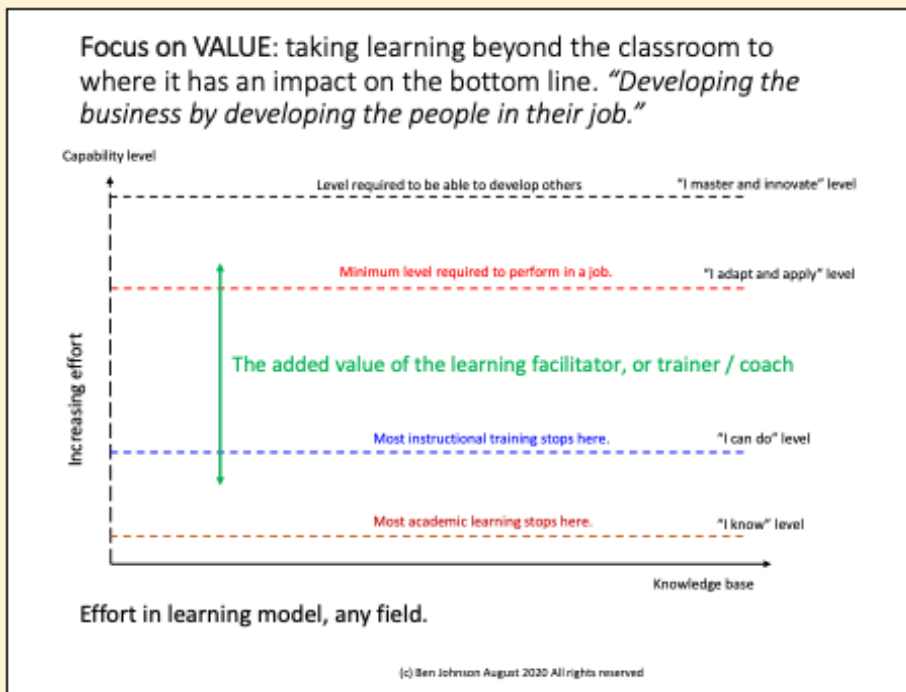
"The great thing in this world is not so much where you stand, as in what direction you are moving."
Oliver Wendell Holmes

"The time is always right to do what is right."
Martin Luther King Jr.

"Start with the customer experience and work backwards to the technology"

First of all, it is useful to refer to the four levels in the Effort in Learning Model. The first is the “I know” level, which requires learning content and being capable of passing an exam. This knowledge is the basis for moving up to the next level: “I can do” which requires physically doing things to transform the knowledge into concrete actions. In training this is done through exercises and simulations which enable the participants to become familiar with the appropriate actions in a safe environment. This is where most instructional training stops.

However, for the learner, the real challenge comes in reaching the third level “I adapt and apply”. The “I can do” level is a minimum requirement to get the job, but not enough to earn a salary. They are no longer in a safe environment answering questions to case studies with little implication. They are face to face with reality and if they mess it up the consequences can be disastrous. This step in the learning process, between “I can do” and “I adapt and apply”, is where the facilitator can make the biggest, and most valuable contribution, with no competition from free online learning, no matter how well it is designed and delivered.



Up to now instructors have been paid essentially for the time they spend in the classroom: a three-day course = three days’ pay. Using today’s technology there is the opportunity to spend the same time differently and add more value. Structuring the learning by using self-paced modules with exercises and free webinars, makes time that can now be used for the higher added-value work of on-the-job coaching, and setting assignments for action learning. As this trend accelerates the instructor will be spending less time preparing input and more learning about the participants’ reality. Less time delivering content, more time checking participants’ understanding. Less time setting questions, more time working with the participants on finding the answers to the “Yes, but...”. Essentially spending time where most

Steve Jobs

“I know for sure that what we dwell on is what we become.”

Oprah Winfrey

“Just keep swimming - just keep swimming”

Dory in “Finding Nemo”

“Creativity comes from a conflict of ideas”

Donatella Versace

“Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

“The longer you're in the game, the hotter you are.”

Bonnie Guterl

“The reward of a thing well done is having done it.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.”

Will Rogers

“If the only tool you have is a hammer, you treat everything like a nail.”

Abraham Maslow

“Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.”

Mahatma Gandhi

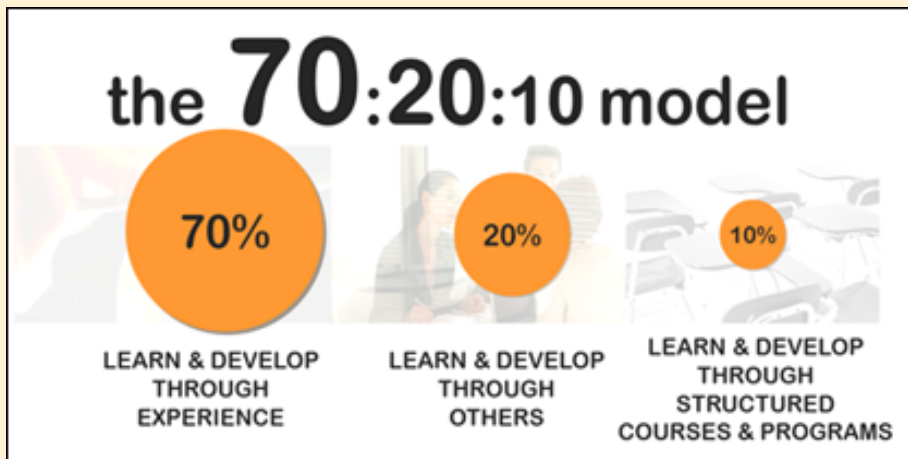
“I always listen for what I can leave out.”

Miles Davis

“He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool... Shun him
He who knows not, and knows that he knows not is ignorant... Teach him
He who knows, and knows that he knows, is a wise man... Follow him
He who knows, and knows not that he knows, is asleep... Wake him.”

Arabic saying

development takes place, as instanced in the commonly used 70/20/10 framework.



Most learning takes place outside of the classroom

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to read the complete article by Ben Johnson

New Directions offer consultancy and training on learning design and facilitation. For more information [Click here](#)

Two-dimensional meetings don't have to be flat

All designers of good meetings have to master the basics: the right objectives, agenda, facilitation approach, participants, materials, and a space that's fit for purpose. PwC's meeting design team have been adapting to the all-on-line environment, and, in addition to getting the basics right, they advise that planners of virtual meetings must overcome additional constraints in three key parameters: attention, tools, and space.

Attention. Because people typically join a virtual meeting via a device that contains every other element of their work lives and access to the internet, the temptation to multitask is even greater than when participants are together in person. It's also usually easier to hide, because the norms that prevent such behaviours in-person are no longer present.

Tools. The infrastructure supporting remote meetings is becoming increasingly robust. But it still suffers from some shortcomings. Most audio lines don't handle people speaking over one another well. Participants may experience lag times if they have a poor internet connection.

Space. Because participants aren't in the same physical space as one another, some of the things that we take for granted at in-person meetings are more difficult in a virtual environment. It can be really challenging to "read the room" and understand the sentiment of participants. We also

"There is nothing so easy to learn as experience and nothing so hard to apply."

Josh Billings

Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other."

Benjamin Franklin

"The teacher if he is indeed wise does not teach or bid you enter the house of wisdom but leads you to the threshold of your own mind."

Kahil Gilbran

"To know yet to think that one does not know is best; Not to know yet to think that one knows will lead to difficulty."

Lao-Tzu

"The facilitator's role is to initiate the learning process and then get out of the way."

John Warren

Work is something you achieve, not somewhere you go

For some weeks now in the UK and elsewhere, where COVID related lockdowns have been in force, there has been a lot of effort to 'get people back to work', despite the fact that most are working, just not in a central office location. Many people, including a lot of managers, equate the concept of work with being at a physical location. They think of work as a place someone goes to. They're aware it's possible to get work tasks done remotely. But many are distrustful of remote working. They believe they can only be sure their team members are working when they're in the office.

In fact, many people are often even more productive when working from home, and being in the office does not guarantee productivity. It's perfectly possible to be at your desk in the office,

lose the ability to physically move to a new space to signify a transition to a new topic or to manage the group's energy.

So how avoid 'flat' meetings in a virtual world?

Scoping matters more than ever. Be clear on what you're trying to achieve and who is essential to make it happen. Make sure each participant has a vested interest in being there. Ensure that you have the right inputs to enable participants to meet the session's objectives. Consider what can happen before and after the meeting, what work is synchronous or asynchronous, and what work requires the full group versus a subset.

Commit to a platform. The technology you use matters less than its features so you can use them wisely. We suggest using a conferencing tool that shows people's faces and lets you move individuals in and out of small groups. A virtual whiteboarding tool is especially beneficial.

Design the experience. If your tools don't enable what you want to do, can you augment them with others? For screen-bound meetings, shorter sessions with many breaks tend to work better. Split that eight-hour session into two shorter work-blocks on two consecutive days.

Once the meeting starts, follow some key ground rules:

Keep the cameras on. Nonverbal communication is important, even with the constraints of the virtual medium it is vital that turning cameras on should be a ground rule.

Mute cautiously. By all means mute to avoid noisy distractions but continued silence sucks the energy out of a virtual "room".

Divide and succeed. Just as with in-person meetings, it makes sense to work in small groups, but to test and align in the large group. We've found that in a virtual setting, even smaller groups than the classic 6-8 are advantageous.

Read the room. Those leading the sessions have to be mindful of the different learning, working, and "showing up" styles on the team. Facilitators must challenge themselves to build in time for individual work as well as collaborative work. A body of research suggests the more a person speaks in a meeting, the more successful they perceive the meeting to be. As facilitator, it is your role to enable more voices.

Have fun! Get creative about replicating the casual contact and natural conversations that happen when we meet in-person.

USEFUL LINKS

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staring at your computer, and not produce a thing.

We've long needed new metrics for productivity. And that need is all the more glaring now that so many people have been forced to work remotely — many for the first time. Managers need to start measuring employees not by the hours they put in, but by how much they get done across a month, a quarter, or any other block of time. When you measure output and provide workers the freedom to organise themselves to suit their personal circumstances, organisations find they are able to work efficiently, avoid many distractions, and power through tasks, sometimes while keeping a non-traditional schedule.

A Boston University study found that "managers could not tell the difference between employees who actually worked 80 hours a week and those who just pretended to." But still, the assumption that long hours make for greater productivity remains widespread. It's preventing businesses from recognising who many of their best employees actually are. It's time to think of work not as a place we go, but as a thing we achieve.

Unfortunately, many managers are finding it too difficult to measure by output rather than input, and therefore many organisations don't seem to be taking the opportunity of the enforced home working situation created by COVID to create flexible working environments where productivity and engagement are enhanced. Some businesses are even turning to surveillance software to track what their employees are up to, thus making things even worse.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to download the original article by Josh Levi in **strategy+business**

Public Courses in SE Asia

New Directions runs a small number of public training programmes in Kuala Lumpur in association with petroEDGE. Click on the course date to access further details. Hopefully we will be back in some form of 'normality' by then - if not they may be available as virtual classrooms!

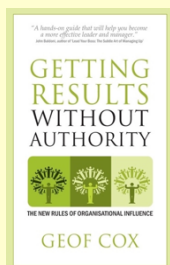
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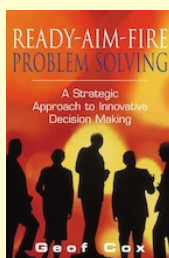
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Cuttings

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It has been published continuously for more than 20 years by *New Directions*, an international network of consultants and trainers who work together to learn, research, design and provide consulting and training in individual, management, and organisation development.

USEFUL LINKS

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