

Behavioural Digest

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Hearts and Minds Through Behaviours

By Alan Kane

Behaviourally speaking, the things people think about a lot tend to be aligned with their behaviours. In fact, to go deeper; they are thinking those things because they have done them. The people who think a lot about climate change, for example, are often people who recycle a lot. Maybe they're vegetarian; maybe they drive an electric car. Because of this, whenever they think about the environment, they derive reinforcement from knowing that they are acting. The pattern of thinking about climate change is reinforced by their behaviours, which leads to more behaviours in the future, and so the cycle continues.

People's minds tend to focus around things which are occurring nearby. If your people don't currently recycle much, and there isn't a reinforcing contingency in place for them to recycle more, they likely aren't thinking too much about recycling when on the job. It might counter-intuitive, but if you want to change what someone thinks about, you should first attempt to change their behaviours. Thoughts follow behaviours, and behaviours follow reinforcement.



[Click here](#) to join the BMT group on LinkedIn.

Is Your Survey Designed To Fail?

By John Smith

Every month at work, people are 'invited' to pick from a selection of smiley or not so smiley faces that appear on their computer desktop. Completing this impromptu workplace engagement survey is the only way to make the pop-up go away. Of course, people definitely never feel aggrieved by this and will always give responses which are untainted by the unannounced intrusion... Not that it matters in the end, because hardly anyone is looking at the output, never mind doing something with it.

Dogs Behaving Badly

By Paul Sellars

I recently found myself watching a TV series called Dogs Behaving Badly. The format was simple: A behavioural expert arrives to help dog-owners solve the problems they're experiencing with their out-of-control pups. It quickly becomes apparent, of course, that it's not really the dog that's the problem. You guessed it: It's the owner.

They are reinforcing unwanted behaviours, desired behaviours go unnoticed, unclear instructions, no instructions... The TV edit makes it really easy to spot all these behavioural pitfalls. Of course it takes the expert an incredibly short period of time to fix the behavioural issues (mostly working on the owner rather than the dog) and wouldn't you just know it, there's an incredibly compliant dog just waiting to be given a chance.

In a high-pressure world, it's sometimes so easy to blame everyone else but, as leaders responsible for creating the right work environment, perhaps we could take a good look at ourselves first.

Foreword to 'The Adaptive Strategy'

By Alasdair Cathcart

Howard Lees' latest book, *The Adaptive Strategy*, is designed to help you devise a strategic approach to work that takes account of the inevitability of change. Managing that change is baked into this approach to strategy, which leans upon work by strategy gurus such as Dr Michael E Porter and Margaret Mead. The book's foreword was written by Alasdair Cathcart, the President of Bechtel Oil, Gas & Chemicals:

"What?" you may be asking yourself as you pick up this book. Maybe you are someone who is interested in what strategy is, or maybe you have this book because you simply have a passion for learning. Whatever your reason, you probably hope that it will help grow your knowledge, maybe challenge you to consider trying new approaches, and perhaps support you in finding success in today's competitive and evolving business climate. The ideas in this book are simple, the reflections are honest, the examples are relevant and all are communicated clearly. If you are looking for a scientific analysis of strategy, then this book is not for you. Don't worry; you will be given the references that permit further study should you wish; however, I suspect this book will provide everything you will need on the topic.

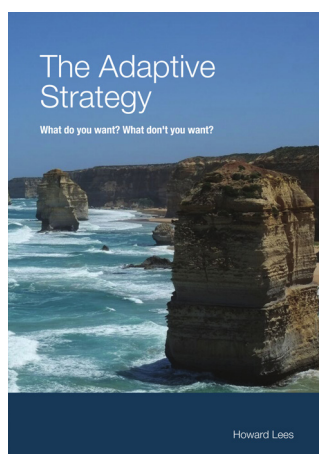
So what? Well, many businesses or projects operate without a clear strategy. Howard helps us to understand our and our colleagues' frames of reference in order to create an environment that will support a strategy. He challenges us to make tough decisions on what we are and are not going to do in the process. He asks us to keep things simple, balanced even, to support effective communication. He emphasizes that leading and trailing measures are equally important to ensure we deliver to our strategy, while giving us the leeway to adapt.

Howard inspires us to do better by providing examples of attributes that great leaders exhibit in the development and delivery of their strategy. Staying strategic is hard and it requires focus. People need to stay in their ideal zone of involvement, and leaders need to maintain the separation of the consumers and the producers. As someone who mirrored, at various times in his career, at least two of the stereotypical bad leaders that Howard identifies, it is reassuring to note that leadership and strategy development can be learned! His feedback has been instrumental in my leadership development over the twenty years I have known him.

Howard is unique, just like our strategies should be. If you left a copy of your business strategy on the bus, and your competition got on at the next stop and picked it up, would they be able to understand it, but unable to replicate it? That's the true test of an adaptive strategy.

Now what? Read and enjoy this excellent book.

Visit www.hollin.co.uk/shop to order your copy of *The Adaptive Strategy*.



The Best Treatment?

By Rachel Edwards

'Watchful waiting' is a medical term – closely observing the development of symptoms in conditions that typically progress slowly and then deciding the next course of action. It is also used when the risks of treatment are greater than the possible benefits. I like it as a transferable idea into the business world – a leader does as much as they can to understand the environment in which behaviour occurs before deciding what to do next. Of course, it's counter-intuitive, but doing nothing can sometimes be the best treatment of all.

Shades of BMT

- The only way companies with similar resources and expertise than their competition can be significantly better than them is by creating an environment that delivers discretion from its employees. The more discretionary effort, the merrier!
- Leadership is not a 'too busy' role. Leaders that are 'too busy' are busy doing other people's jobs.
- Companies can see what their clients are actually doing and what their competitors are actually doing. But when it comes to their own behaviours a number of them only see the aspirations of what they should be doing and not what they are actually doing.

Upcoming UK Events

Learn how to use behavioural science to improve your own performance and your workplace results:

BMT for Leaders Conference,
Manchester: **15th May 2019**

BMT for Leaders Workshop,
Manchester: **16th May 2019**

Behavioural Leadership course: **5/6th
and 19/20th June 2019**

For more information, visit www.hollin.co.uk/events, email nicola@hollin.co.uk or call Nicola on +44 (0)7788 252410.