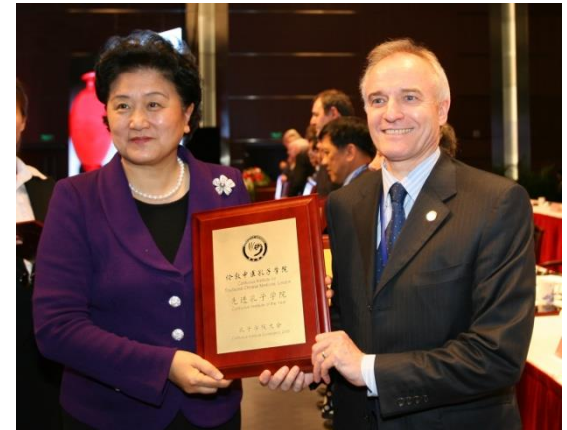


Developing Leadership Capacity in Modern Universities

19th April 2012

Dr Mike Wilkinson

Deputy Vice Chancellor



Leadership Agenda Today

- Research originated jointly with the National Academy of Education Administration (NAEA), Beijing, China as part of comparative research across international borders into leadership capacity
- Can leadership capacity be developed in Higher Education (HE)?
 - (NAEA Journal, pending - presented at 2008 International Leadership Conference in Beijing)
- Research extended through case studies in two modern UK Universities
- Extraordinary pace of regulatory change in UK HE: student at the centre
- Reference point to recent Leadership Foundation (LFHE publications)
 - Change from public sector ethos and human resources terms and conditions to....
 - A new 'ecosystem' where the 'undifferentiated centre' ⁽¹⁾ perishes
- Needs differentiated and agile HE institutions:
 - Implies the need for agile, different leaders

(1). Kennie and Price, LFHE, February 2012

New Ecosystem in UK Higher Education

- Disruptive Innovation and the higher education ecosystem post-2012 ⁽¹⁾

- “I found this comparison between service sectors and higher education most interesting. What particularly struck a chord with my higher education experience to date (8 years now in two institutions) were the themes of the increasing needs for **differentiation** and **agility**. The other point that occurs with my ICI experience is that collaborative working between parts of the sector (in this case public-private) is becoming more normal and that will continue and may well accelerate as the market becomes more competitive”

Dr Mike Wilkinson

(1). Kennie and Price, LFHE, February 2012

2003 on

- Re-entered the sector from the chemical industry after 22 years
- Many changes to absorb, e.g. focus on ‘customer’ or ‘client’ and higher education as an engine for skills and economic growth
- Particularly:
 - Interesting climate for industrial relations!
 - National central bargaining of pay rises in return for nothing
 - Lifelong learning **not** core for typical staff members
 - Appraisal systems poorly implemented
 - ‘Managerialism’ a new term for me
 - High on administration, low on leadership
 - Systems and processes not **agile** and make **differentiation** difficult
 - Requires many of the leadership skills of the commercial world, adapted to the cultural requirements of the sector and organisation
 - Governments legislating towards a **market**, but:
Highly regulated and monitored sector!

Opportunity

- Leadership development in Higher Education:
 - Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, 2004
 - Drucker (1974):⁽²⁾ ‘leaders do the right thing, managers do things right’
 - McCaffery (2004):⁽³⁾ ‘individual post-holders will be proficient in both’
- Develop leadership capacity to spearhead the change towards a market:
 - UK Government-imposed agenda
 - Need to take competitive advantage from the situation
 - **Differentiation and agility** are now key
- Little choice: governments of all colours are heading this way, and to varying extents across national boundaries within and outside the UK
- Government must make new policy and laws - political necessity - so we cannot hope that they will stop: education is always on their agenda
- Leadership at all levels of the organisation must make the best of the situation!

(2) Drucker, P., ‘Management Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices, Heinemann, London, 1974

(3) McCaffery, P., ‘The Higher Education Manager’s Handbook’, Routledge Falmer, London and New York, pp 56-62, 2004

Approach

- **Borrow** from other sectors, and **tailor** implementation to the organisation:
 - Private sector
 - Other public sector, changing to mixed economy
- How?
 - Bring in key individuals as change agents from other sectors where these challenges have already been faced:
 - Recruit to key posts from outside the sector
 - Organisational Development experts from banking/insurance, museums
 - Change agents from outside the organisation with various experiences
 - Mentors and coaches from inside and outside the HE sector - public and private sector, but used to change management and supporting people
 - Engage as many layers of leadership as possible in the organisation
 - Communicate, communicate, communicate
 - Use external funding wherever possible through bids:
 - HEFCE Strategic Development Fund
 - HEFCE Rewarding and Developing Staff monies

Advances

- Novel approaches at the time in the HE sector
- Judicious mix of initiatives **tailored** to the organisation and strategy

University 1 (2004-2009)

- Large ex-polytechnic in metropolitan situation: teaching-led
- Common leadership development for senior management team:
 - IOD Certificate, Diploma and Chartered Director qualifications
 - Coach/mentor if desired
- OD Managers from banking/insurance then public sector (museums)
- Very **managed** and **integrated** approach:
 - Investors in People 2007 (new standard: first university in UK)
 - Organisational values defined
 - Job role analysis at all levels and single transparent pay spine
 - Wider management group of ca. 100 senior staff (of 2000)
 - Leadership and management competencies defined and measured
 - Remuneration of senior managers linked to performance appraisal!
 - Staff experience survey (repeats)
 - Recruitment to specific roles from outside the sector

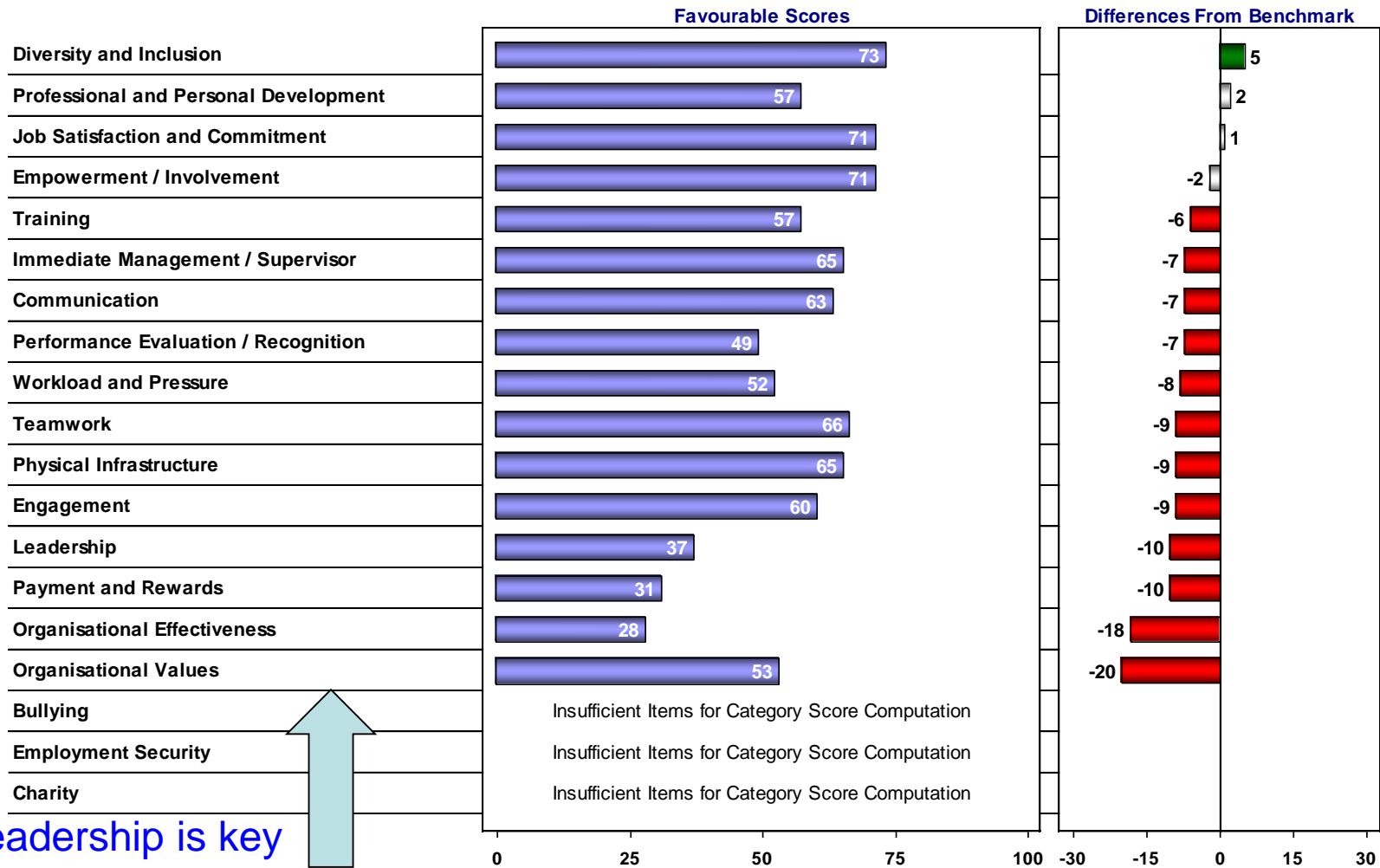
The Investors in People Standard (2007) - 10 indicator themes

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk

Indicators 4 & 5 refer to leadership



Category Score vs. UK National Norm

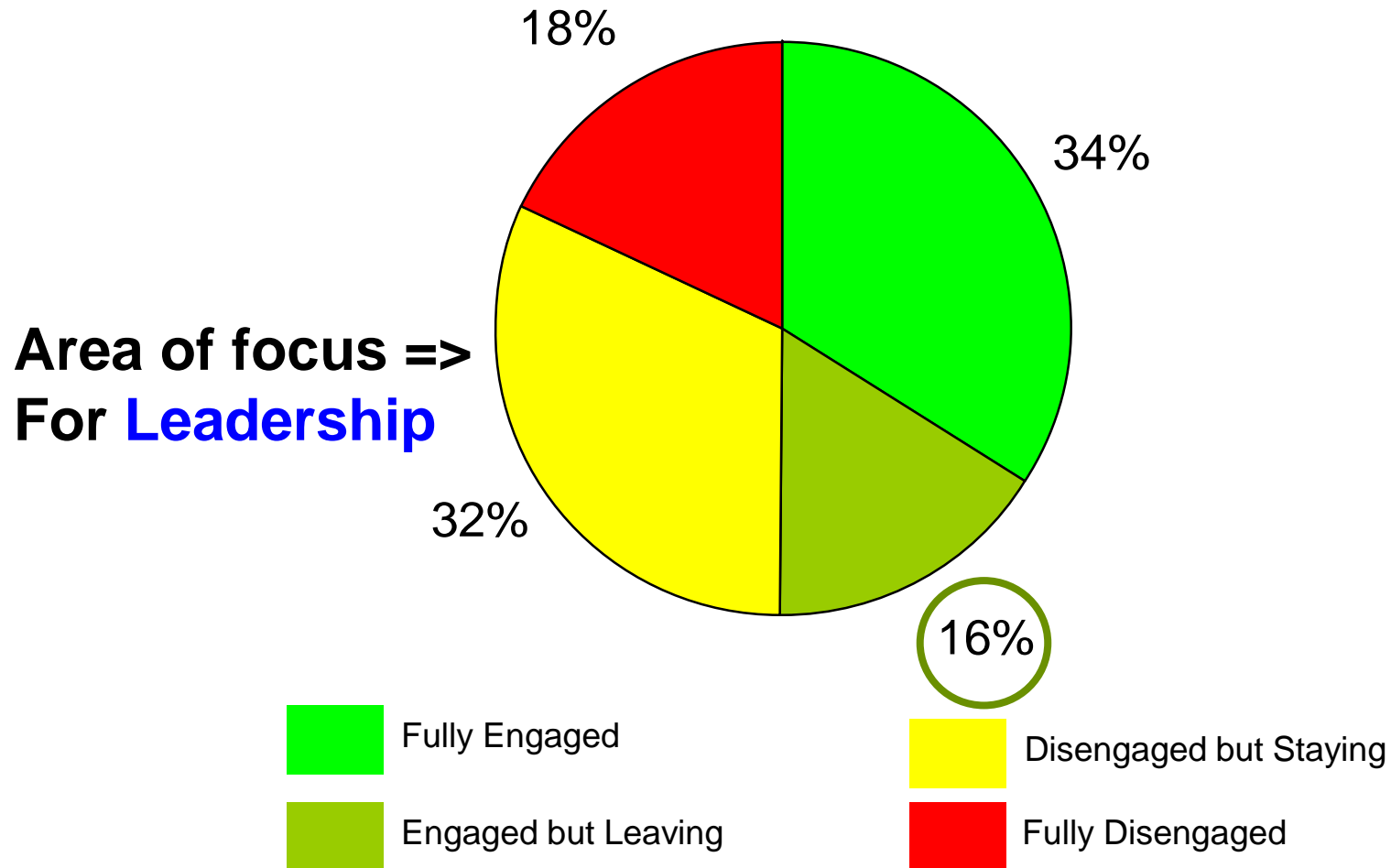


Leadership is key

UNIVERSITY 1 2007 OVERALL (858)
 ISR UK NATIONAL NORM (151690) / MORI-IPSOS

Coloured Difference Bars indicate a statistically significant difference

University 1 - Cluster Analysis: Engagement



Leadership Deficit in Higher Education?

- Unpublished research 2008:
 - On-line survey of senior managers coming into higher education from outside the sector
 - Respondents (214) viewed the sector as performing **worse** with respect to senior leadership, management skills, management of performance and management training
 - Viewed the sector as performing **better** than other sectors for genuine consultation, fair treatment of staff and the levels of pressure and stress

Harper, M., unpublished research for the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, 2008.

University 1: Competencies for Managers

- Commercial orientation
- Communication
- Complex analytical reasoning
- Customer service excellence
- Decision making
- Initiative
- Leadership effectiveness
- Management effectiveness
- Teamwork

4 levels defined; top leadership roles require level 1

Extensive comparison of definitions with other sectors

Language adapted to higher education roles: align to organisational culture

University 1: Leadership Effectiveness

This competency is defined as:

“Moving others towards a stated goal or objective. Demonstrating high standards of integrity and honesty for others to follow. Leading by example, showing a sense of loyalty and commitment to the organisation, its corporate objectives and to the welfare and development of others. Providing a focus and direction for others to follow, motivating and inspiring them to achieve by utilising appropriate interpersonal skills. Influencing others through persuasion and personal example rather than through assertive/authoritarian direction”.

At the highest management level in the organisation the role holder:

“Demonstrates an excellent level of leadership. Formulates strategic goals in line with the organisation’s overall long-term objectives into an understandable and consistent set of plans and objectives. Builds multi-skilled teams of managers to meet long-term business needs, restructuring as required”.

University 1 (2007-10)

- Large ex-polytechnic in metropolitan situation: teaching-led
- Repeated staff survey: significant improvement in results
- Succession planning group:
 - ‘Prince-lite’ project management training: common language and techniques for problem-solving
 - Specific projects of a leadership nature, e.g.
 - Senior Management Team sponsor, but team members lead
 - Individual coach/mentor if desired - internal or external
- Developing more agile leaders at middle management level:
 - ‘Lack of training and grumbles that they undermine the collegial ethos have made many academics wary of the role’ ⁽⁴⁾
 - Introduced Chartered Institute of Management level 2 and 3 diplomas, respectively, in Team Leading and Management

(4) Tahir, T., ‘The In-betweenies’, Times Higher Education, p 33, 10 July 2008

University 2 (2009-2012)

- Recent university title in smaller city: teaching-led
- No Organisational Development function
 - Using external change agents/facilitators as necessary
- Staff development - building capacity of leaders and improving internal management: aimed mainly at **middle management** layer
- Less **managed** approach, more **facilitated** and **organic**:
 - No Investors in People initiative
 - Organisational values **not** defined
 - Job role analysis **only** at levels represented by unions
 - No formal wider management group
 - Instead use an informal 'Exchange' group around annual conference
 - Leadership and management competencies **not** defined or measured
 - Remuneration **not** linked to performance appraisal for senior staff
 - No staff experience survey
 - Informal 'conversation' held for staff feedback at all levels

University 2: Business School

- Change management in Business School
- Modify top team
 - External recruits to key posts
- New talent at lower levels too
- Clarify expectations of roles and responsibilities:
 - Principal Lecturers, Course Leaders and tutors
 - Support Associate Lecturers more/better
 - Better use of appraisal
- External Organisational Development adviser and change agent
- Principal Lecturer Support - Junior Management: Academic Leaders
- Look at individuals
- Mentor/coach
- Select according to individual, e.g.:
 - ‘Manager, not leader’; not ‘leader or manager’; ‘never a leader’.....
- Support Academy for persistent exceptional units
- Improve internal communications: blogs, face-to-face

Possible Advances That Did Not Work

- Open, transparent, structured systems work well with a leader of that nature
- Work less well when the leader changes and does not share the value system
- Application of wider management and leadership concepts to roles that ranked highly in role analysis (HERA), but did not require leadership of people:
 - E.g. research and teaching professors who were not Heads of Department
- Tendency to over-complication:
 - E.g. too many levels of leadership competency defined and rated in the first iteration. Later simplified to use competencies only for development
 - E.g. performance appraisal paperwork too long and complex. Simplified after feedback.
 - Wide-ranging action plans rather than targeted interventions
- Tendency to apply ‘fairness’ in a bureaucratic manner:
 - Complicated appeals process for performance ratings!

Where Opinions Varied

- Investors in People (IiP) used as a journey to drive change, (not specifically to achieve the award), BUT
 - Views varied on amount of ‘bureaucracy’ versus desired change
 - Opinions of some private-sector Governors (including HR professionals) against IiP as too ‘public-sector’ in nature, i.e. resisting the leadership changes that were sought (N.B. IiP now tailored)
 - Decision made not to proceed to the more advanced and complex ‘Profile’ model or seek re-accreditation (N.B. IiP model now modified)
- Institute of Directors training:
 - Three individuals (of ca. 12) proceeded to full IoD Chartered Director⁽⁵⁾ status
 - Others from the Senior Management Team participated in the training sessions to varying degrees, but found some areas less relevant

(5) See ‘The Effective Director’, Edited by Chris Pierce, Kogan Page Limited, 2001

Advances That Worked

- Facilitated interventions for middle managers through:
 - Mentoring and coaching
 - Targeted staff development
 - Project-management methodology and joint work on important transformational projects
 - Change-management methodology, including the people elements
- Use of Staff Surveys / 360 feedback / Staff ‘Conversations’ to reveal leadership deficits
 - Enabling targeted interventions
- Use of focus groups of staff to improve processes in an iterative fashion:
 - E.g. senior staff appraisal process at University 1
 - Resulted in better process and improved ‘buy-in’

How Advances Were Implemented

- University 1: systematic approach, linked to Investors in People and the annual planning and appraisal cycle.
- University 2: more fluid approach, linked to the Strategic Development Programme, aiming to make the organisation as a whole more agile.

Key Problems Overcome

- Resistance to change, particularly in middle management layers
- Typically manifested as a 'blame culture', disengagement and/or a 'permission culture'

How?

- Use of Investors in People processes as 360 degree diagnostic (University 1)
- Communication processes and meetings
- Consultation and feedback loops
- Improved performance appraisal processes
- Targeted development activities, especially coaching and mentoring and support

General Principles

- Context is very important - organisational system and culture
- Approach must be tailored to the organisation and strategic challenges
- Personalities matter - especially Chief Executives (Vice Chancellors) and Governors (Board Directors)

Implications of the Advances for Others

- Organisational development and leadership advances from the private sector can work in universities, if the approach and language are adapted to the organisational system and culture
- It is the precise mix of initiatives and interventions that define the advance
- The mix needs to vary with the organisational system, values and culture
- The mix will probably change if the Chief Executive or key Board members (e.g. Chair of Governors) change
- Current need for agility and speed in leaders requires a flatter organisation (c.f. delayering in industry in the 1990s) and less bureaucratic/structured implementation of leadership interventions
- However, advances in leadership capacity for the organisation and individuals remain valid

Next Steps & Possible Further Advances

- Continue research with National Academy of Education Administration, Beijing
- Looking to correlate with Systems Thinking and develop model
 - New Ecosystems
- Will study different universities in China and how they have developed leadership capacity:
 - What lessons can be learnt for UK universities?
 - What lessons can Chinese universities learn from the UK?
- Aiming to categorise organisations according to the Miles and Snow (1978) organizational type framework
 - Applied in the literature to leadership and leadership development
 - Also related to the Chinese concept of ‘Guanxi’ (6)

(6) Guanxi and organizational dynamics: organizational networking in Chinese firms, Seung Ho Park, Yadong Luo, Strategic Management Journal, Volume 22, Issue 5, pages 455-477, May 2001

Thank You - Questions?

