



**third sector  
leadership centre**

**The Third Sector Leadership  
Centre's  
Regional Leadership Forum  
In partnership with East  
Midlands Learning and Skills  
Consortia  
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## **Introduction**

Nick Jerome from The Work Foundation gave a presentation looking at workplace trends. The changing nature of work is leading to an environment where employees are seeking meaning and value in the work they do. As we move to a Knowledge Economy, knowledge workers are finding that their skills are more and more transferable, and a buoyant job market means that employers have to find better ways to attract and retain staff. Important to this is leadership and leadership development. There was a strong sense of a need to develop self-confidence in leaders in order to make organisations run more effectively. Furthermore, leaders need to be supported and challenged as to how they can become better leaders.

Nick noted a common trend within the voluntary sector whereby young people were not often tempted into working in the third sector because of low salary. Whilst younger people cited the want to work for a good cause they also cited that low salaries were not encouraging.

### **Nick posed the question does this reflect your experience as leaders and how do you attract people?**

The comments made were, yes, the voluntary sector did not appear to be particularly popular to young people because salary won out over working for a good cause. Rather, the voluntary sector appealed to older people with quality skills.

### **Other points raised**

- Short term funded
- Long track record of delivery of projects
- Credibility and qualifications
- Careers marketing - Productive conveyer belt - Challenge to balance economy ? agenda with social strength
- Expectations can be artificially raised in small organisations
- Image of the VCS – self perpetuating – reinforced by external stereotyping
- Recruiting trustees not just employees
- Recognise that VCS has Board of Trustees that have a roel in leadership
- Role of trustees in leadership – help or hindrance
- Trustees – informed or infamous? Need to provide more effective leaders
- Strong sense of developing self confidence in leaders
- Personal support & development for leaders
- Bad news needs to be able to travel as fast as good news
- Encourage the workplace to be fun and challenging
- The more effective the governance the more successful the organisations
- Higher productivity with less stress
- Start with the end in mind
- Open transparent culture
- Leading by example – living the values
- Creating a thinking culture

### **What's worked?**

In order to raise the effectiveness of leaders and develop leadership skills several important points were noted. This would mean leadership could be developed to be more effective and beneficial. These included:

- Working from intuitive. Approaching challenges with common sense.
- Learning from mistakes. Using mistakes positively to increase knowledge and change approach.

- Respect. To be a good leader one must be respected and show respect.
- Networking and being good at liaising with people.
- To be well organised.
- To be able to provide new ideas and agendas.
- Observing and learning from others.
- Thinking positively.

Whilst these points were noted as working to increase leadership development a problem to leadership training that was noted was how often formal training within organisations is only really applicable to the organisation that you are working for. Therefore in moving forward leadership training should not be isolated.

### **Astrid Kirchner, ACEVO: Leadership development**

Astrid presented some of the research conducted by ACEVO around leadership. Findings included:

- Leaders spend more time on staff than themselves.
- 80% of leaders are from outside the sector.
- More professionalism needed within the sector.
- Lack of robust governance implications for accountability
- ACEVO provided peer-to-peer learning, writing code of conducts for CEO's and creating a fund for bursaries.

### **Murphy Brown: Northamptonshire Third Sector Office : Business Development Director**

Murphy covered the following issues for the sector -

- A need to constantly change and evolve.
- Leaders as installers of confidence.
- Rapid change and so more need for leadership.
- Negative of the idea of 'sitting at desks.' What is needed is to meet build, build local relationships and knowledge of what is happening.
- Trustees can cause bottlenecks.
- In the voluntary sector there are lots of volunteers without there being enough staff.
- Lost opportunities/lack of productivity through too many meetings and not enough doing.

### **Neil Lambert : Neil Lambert, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Charnwood**

Neil emphasised the following -

- Leaders need followers.
- Long-term pay off.
- Need to empower beneficiaries.
- Need active citizenship.
- Need to influence delivery of public services.

### **Roundtable Discussion:**

Within the group discussion one of the main points that came up was funding within the third sector and how it is a problem for its development.

- Funding was identified as a barrier to taking up leadership development

- The learning and skills council has put money into Train to Gain and the voluntary sector wasn't able to bid. They gave brokerage to an organisation created from Business Links
- Many providers don't have the expertise to train the voluntary sector
- As a leaders its about retaining staff and quality of delivery. Staff also deserve to be developed but development is often under valued by funders. They have responded to requests for funding by suggesting that staff with the right sills should be recruited in the first place
- Voluntary sector leaders experience the pressure of great demands and constant change, problems of funding, resources etc and could in fact be selling change management services to businesses
- There is a very high demand for development in the sector. Courses for social entrepreneurs have been oversubscribed
- The voluntary sector does want formal qualifications. Many people work at the required level but have not had it formalised. They want something to recognise their abilities e.g ILM qualifications should not be underestimated
- It is also recognised, however that support can be delivered in a variety of ways for example the support form being part of a network.
- As well as funding time is a major barrier.

From a political perspective the voluntary sector is seen as being a multiple layer organisation but there is a sense of frustration at frontline delivery methods. Again there is an issue with funding as funding and resources are needed to sustain all these organisations and there are doubts as to whether these are all necessary. Universities have great links to businesses and the private sector and it is therefore suggested to promote the third sector that voluntary organisations should have more influence on the content of their courses.

Other points on how the third sector could benefit from leadership development programmes noted from the roundtable discussion include:

- Support of third sector organisations at a national, regional and local level. For support to be successful it is important to note the links between each level and how they influence each other.
- A distinction has to be made between leading the sector and leading an individual organisation
- To increase performance within the third sector we should work with an end in mind. We should know the outcome we expect to get.
- Improved engagement throughout the workforce through catalyst organisations, infrastructures, mentors, good Samaritans etc.
- In order to increase organisations development it is important to ensure leaders think like leaders, conduct good practice, have secure and eclectic networks and finally provide support and be aware.

**Our Work**



**Event Organisers:**



**Event Partners:**



the work foundation



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