



FOCUS ON FRIDAY 2014

How much expertise can you fit into 140 characters? Every month a member of the Year One Consulting team or one of our guest tweeters tweets on a different subject related to personal and organisational development. This booklet brings together a year's worth of tweeted reflections, ideas, tips and questions.

Follow [@yearoneteam](#) on twitter for more insight and inspiration every week when we **FOCUS ON FRIDAY**.



Tim is Managing Director of Year One Consulting and heads up our Team Development and Executive Coaching services. A highly experienced facilitator and coach, he specialises in leadership development, creative thinking and teamwork and works with clients in higher education, the creative industries and central and local government.

THE ART OF FACILITATION

People & purpose are the two fundamental ingredients for successful group working, whether it's a meeting, workshop or conference.

People: get the right people in the room. Involve the knowledge & authority you need for real decisions. "Everyone" isn't always helpful.

Purpose: keep it clear & realistic. Make sure the group have a shared & consistent understanding of why they are there.

Environment: not crucial to success but it can make a difference. You can manage bad environment but you shouldn't have to fight it.

Process: match with purpose & people: informal dialogue can work for close-knit team. Larger, unacquainted groups may need more structure.

Self-awareness: understanding & managing yourself will help you do the same for a group. What assumptions & biases are you bringing with you?

Being present: as a facilitator 100% of your focus is in the room; fully immersed in the words, interactions and dynamics of the group.

Interventions: not speaking is as important as speaking. A focused & present facilitator is sometimes enough to help a group succeed.

Always scout the environment beforehand. Double check (never assume!) access, facilities & what equipment will be there on the day.

Scale up your post-its. Use A5 for quickly gathering questions or ideas from everyone to begin a discussion from a common starting point.

Presenting slides? Stay engaged with the group & avoid repeated trips to a keyboard by using a wireless controller to click through.

For a thought-provoking introduction to self-awareness, personal development, mental models & team learning: Peter Senge The 5th Discipline

For an excellent, very accessible reference book with an overview of inter- and intra-group psychology: Rupert Brown's Group Processes

For an introduction to advanced facilitation with detailed conceptual frameworks & useful exercises: The Art of Facilitation by Dale Hunter

For a detailed exploration of the philosophy & practice of dialogue: Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together by William Isaacs

MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

Don't take work relationships for granted. Understanding, considering & looking after them will benefit you and the people you count on.

Make time for an organised approach to relationships & start by asking: why bother? What do you expect from better relationship management?

Think about the 10 most important relationships for your role at work. How healthy are they? Is there one that could use some attention?

Identify your most important work relationships & take a systematic approach to keeping them effective: focus in depth on each in turn.

What is the world like at the other end of a relationship? Develop real CLARITY on your stakeholder's context, priorities & concerns.

Understand your point of ORIGIN for relationship management. What is your approach now? Is it working? Is this based on assumptions or data?

FOCUS is crucial to creating a real improvement in a relationship. Be absolutely clear on what you want in return for your invested efforts.

FLEX your approach: use your work on CLARITY, ORIGIN & FOCUS to engage stakeholders in a way that works for you, them & the relationship.

Use regular EVALUATION to ensure an up to date understanding. When was the last time you asked how things were going?

EVOLUTION is key to keeping relationships healthy. Be alive to changes in context, outlook & priority for you and your stakeholders.

If you don't have time to think about CLARITY, ORIGIN, FOCUS, FLEX, EVALUATION & EVOLUTION **just grab a COFFEE with the people who count.**





Mary Ann heads up our In-sourced People Management offering. Combining over 20 years' worth of people management experience with a keen awareness of related policy, legislation and academic theory, Mary Ann specialises in advising senior teams on preparing for and managing change. She works mainly with clients in the arts, creative industries and higher education.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing professional development's not just about paid training courses & prompts from managers; it can be self-managed & self-taught.

"How can we do this better?" was a mantra Mary Ann learned from a former WMA colleague who asked it even about areas that worked well.

Pick one task you've been doing since you started your current role. Still doing it the same way? How could you do it better?

Pick one question you couldn't answer confidently at work recently. Spend 30 mins researching the answer to give if asked again.

Using tech the same way you were 3 years ago? Find online tutorials to learn about an application that's available to you but not yet used.

Identify someone who's better than you are in a particular skill; could they spend 20 mins over a coffee explaining how they developed it?

Choose one skill that you'd like to improve, seek out web tutorials & online guidance, and book time in your diary to attend & practice.

Read up on the history, economics and past personalities of the sector you work in & sign up to blogs to keep track of current developments.

Stay curious; seek out open lectures on topics you've never considered before, watch a documentary about something you've never heard of.

Aligning your CPD to an employer's objectives improves the chances of the employer covering any costs but don't limit yourself to that.

Don't accept that this is as good as you're ever going to be in your profession, and don't let others choose what you learn next.

Take responsibility for your own CPD, map out what you need to learn to be the best you can be now but also in your future dream role.

THE INESCAPABLE TRUTHS OF MANAGING PEOPLE

Inescapable truth no.1: you will always feel like you don't have enough time to "do" people management.

Having regular ten minute, focussed conversations with the people you manage helps break big issues down into manageable chunks.

Treat meetings with your team as if they were recruitment interviews; what impression do you create if you cancel, are late or distracted?

Inescapable truth no.2: sometimes going through all those HR processes seems just a little bit... dull. Why bother?

Following the same HR processes for all means everyone knows where they stand, and helps avoid productivity-blocking confusion/resentment.

But if a process blocks authentic dialogue or neither party sees the value in following it through, then it's time to reassess & streamline.

Inescapable truth no.3: if you have direct reports you're part of HR, even if you don't actively engage with it.

Avoiding those pesky HR issues and processes doesn't mean you're avoiding managing your people, but you're missing a trick.

Inescapable truth no.4: you are not alone. Whatever you're most worried about when it comes to managing people, other people have been through it – read, ask, listen, google it.

People management advice is out there (@acasorguk & @CIPD in UK) & look internationally too. Laws differ but issues are generally the same.





Esme is our Project Manager. Esme works across a variety of client projects including, HR process review and recruitment. She organises and runs our regular "purposeful party" FizzBuzzJazz™. CIPD-qualified, Esme is also a key member of our In-sourced People Management team and runs our work placement and internship programmes.

SPRING CLEANING YOUR WORKSPACE

Start with your desk. For some a messy desk is essential, for others it's a distraction. Either way a thorough sort out can be useful.

Take everything off your desk. Only put back what you need to have in easy reach on a daily basis. Ruthlessly rid your desk of anything else.

Gather scraps of paper & business cards. Find a more useful place for information to be - phone nos in contacts & actions on your to-do list.

What's under your desk taking up leg room? Do you need to keep it? If yes, is there a better place to store it? If no, get rid of it!

"Do you really need that?." Do you honestly need every single file, piece of IT equipment or other clutter you see?

What do you need to keep legally & what is useful to keep? If it doesn't need to be kept, shred it, sell it, recycle it or give it away.

If you have to keep docs, do you need them in their physical form? Do you already have electronic versions? If not, can you scan?

If you have stacks of paper to shred, consider spending money rather than time and bring in a secure data destruction company.

Don't forget halls and walls. With desks and storage cleared out it's time to look at the often over looked places in your office.

De-clutter entrances & hallways for 3 reasons:
1) Safety 2) Make a good impression on visitors
3) Create an uplifting environment for staff.

Don't let hallways become dumping grounds. If something has no place to go, do you need to keep it? If yes, find a proper home for it.

Enter your building or office as if you are visiting for the first time. What do you notice? Not just on the floor but also on the walls.

Old signs and peeling posters may not take up physical space, but do create visual clutter & distraction. Not needed? Get rid!

Spring clean your bags! Your bag or case (& contents) is your workspace on the move, but how much of the office do you need to take with you?

Remove everything from your bag, throwing away rubbish as you go. Clean the bag outside & in, get the vacuum cleaner out if necessary!

What really needs to go back in the bag? How many pens/lip balms/half used packs of pain killers do you need to be carrying with you?

Use pencil cases or make up bags to keep similar items together. You're less likely to lose them in your bag or when swapping between bags.

BEING CULTURALLY ADVENTUROUS

**BE CULTURALLY ADVENTUROUS BY:
TRYING OUT A NEW VENUE...**

Cultural adventuring doesn't need to be a leap into the unknown. A new venue can give fresh perspective to familiar & favourite experiences.

This summer Esme saw @ENBallet @GlastoFest - refreshing to see ballet in such an informal setting with a more diverse audience than usual.

**BE CULTURALLY ADVENTUROUS BY:
SEEING SOMETHING YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT...**

See whatever is on, rather than whatever you want to watch. Don't do your research, just pick a date, venue & friend and enjoy (or not)!

@edfringe is a great place for stepping into the unknown by picking at random from the programme or a handful of flyers from the Royal Mile.

**BE CULTURALLY ADVENTUROUS BY:
SEEING A WORK IN PROGRESS...**

Scratch nights & warm up shows are a great way to expand your cultural comfort zone, see performers experiment & sometimes give feedback.

Go with patience & an open mind - it's not polished performance. Find scratch nights at sites e.g. @IdeasTap venues e.g. @battersea_arts

**BE CULTURALLY ADVENTUROUS BY:
TAKING PART...**

Don't just look or watch, actively participate! No "I'm not creative" excuses. Get involved in making art or making culture happen.

Take part in: a making or performance workshop, a flash mob, or an artist's work like Alex Hartley's 'Vigil' @FstoneTriennial.





San is our Project Assistant, providing a wide range of project and administrative support for our team of consultants. A recent graduate, she has been involved with a range of theatre projects including planning and managing a student performing arts festival and taking a devised theatre show to the Edinburgh Fringe.

JOB HUNTING

Keep a routine. Set yourself targets. Do at least one task per day towards your job hunt.

Sign up to mailing lists and follow companies you're interested in. You'll be notified of vacancies & get a sense of how they operate.

Found a company you really want to work for? Look at their website: how do they hire? Who'll read your application? Tailor your approach.

Some companies may be open to speculative applications, especially if they're expanding. Be specific about what & where you can contribute most.

Be smart about the jobs you apply for. Do your research: prioritise roles & companies that you're excited about & can see yourself in.

Keep a reference sheet detailing roles, companies applied to & what attracts you to them - easy to check if you get a call for an interview.

Keep a checklist of things to do for all applications: match skills to JD; research company; understand how job will progress career.

Whilst job hunting, list work skills you want to learn to enhance your CV. Focus on improving one at a time & make a plan to achieve this.

Keep a master list of everything you have done. Include your hobbies, consider what you have gained from them & use it in your application.

Don't forget your careers service. If you're a grad, use your university careers service. It's free & can help to improve your applications.

Learn to deal with rejection. Don't beat yourself up about it, everyone goes through it. Remember: not every role is right for you.

Take every opportunity to get feedback. Make it easier for the employer by asking specific questions about things you are unsure of.

Remind yourself of all the positive things you've done. This will come across in your attitude which will be reflected in your application.





Helena is an experienced coach, mediator and change management consultant. As a Year One Consulting Associate, Helena brings her expertise in designing and leading organisational development programmes and informing our coaching process and framework. She works with clients in aviation, financial services, central government and higher education.

GETTING A MAJOR PROJECT OFF THE GROUND POST-RECESSION

Recovering from recession & finally having the commercial confidence to commission large projects again? Look out for these common pitfalls.

It's been some time since you could implement a major project. Be wary of piling all your desired improvements into a single programme.

Simply identify the project's overall purpose, emphasising targeted operational improvements and tangible objectives. Give the team context.

Post-recession teams might be wary of committing to big new ideas and nervous/mistrustful of investing time and energy in a project.

Clear planning. To avoid gossip & intrigue, maintain a simple high level plan, freely available to all who are interested ... & stick to it.

We all want a chance to shine. Reward & broadcast individual contributions so organisational improvements also boost personal reputation.

The recession may be ending, but that doesn't mean a return to the good old days: managing time and money is more important than ever.

Be courageous: invest time & plan post-milestone pauses to regroup and review vs. objectives. Recovery to plan reinvigorates delivery.

Don't hide your husbandry: explicitly managing the money sets the culture & enables the project; ultimately attracting more money.

Avoiding overspend is crucial. Sponsors who were burnt in the recession might be less keen to bail out projects that don't stay on track.

Be realistic about the resource requirements and potential changes at the outset of the project. Regularly report against financial targets.

Keep hold of the edges. Design out disintermediation (helpful project team members recruiting and purchasing using their own technology).

Avoid activity addiction. Being part of a successful project feels great but don't be tempted to keep things going longer than they have to.

Track & validate the benefits. The desire to join large projects may exceed current capability in some; it's about outcomes not activity.

Project failure. If (heaven forefend) you realise that all this activity will not achieve the desired objective – the time to stop is NOW.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Governance, as described by OECD, is "the system by which business is done competently with integrity & regard for stakeholders' interests".

Governance is sometimes seen as esoteric & elsewhere, a bunch of red tape and fretting that only the board needs to worry about.

In fact governance is the vital, fascinating and fertile area of corporate endeavour where doing the right thing meets doing things right.

Ultimately good governance keeps your organisation legal; it encourages doing things right BEFORE being found doing them wrong.

Governance is an element of corporate self-respect, confidence & wellbeing; it sets a culture of thinking beyond the here & now.

Putting good governance in place can mean facing up to failures which are so ingrained that they are overlooked & forgotten by executives.

Severe failures need radical changes, not just structural tweaks: culture & tradition shouldn't be granted protected status unchallenged.

Good governance needs active, commercially aware non-exec directors capable of robust oversight. Retraining the current crop may not suffice

Governance is everyone's responsibility but guidance tends to focus on holding only the Board responsible, accountable and liable.



Defaulting to a top-down, paternalistic approach produces 'comply or explain' codes without relevance or interest for the broader system.

Encourage & reward shared ownership: without it, establishing good governance as a priority will be tough and/or temporary.

Employ longer horizons and measures of success beyond immediate personal £ reward to envision what successful governance will look like.

The reporting of near misses has to be welcomed within a corporate culture, not condoned, if good governance is to be put into practice.

Good governance requires responsibility beyond the organisational & awareness of a multiplicity of stakeholders, priorities & timescales.

Good governance requires muscular removal of any goody-2-shoes turning worthy but blind eyes to poor levels of trust & courage in the Board.



Dan is a spoken word poet, event producer and workshop facilitator. He is currently Poet in Residence at Canterbury Roman Museum and has previously held the positions of Canterbury Laureate and Poet in Residence at Waterloo Station. His poetry deals with love and literature, science and stars, people and Pac-Man.

@dansimpsonpoet

TURNING INSPIRATION & IDEAS INTO INNOVATION

Know your own industry / practice / area of expertise. What are other people doing? Why? Can you respond? Build on? Challenge?

Consume voraciously. Read Twitter and novels. Play videogames. Binge on boxsets and Netflix. Go to performances and galleries.

Write down the obvious idea you're not going to do because it's been done before. How can you subvert it? Approach it from a new angle?

Inspiration is the spark – seeing something and thinking “huh, that might be interesting”. How do you get from that to something tangible?

Put down words onto paper. Research your topic. Follow links on Wikipedia. Free associate. Let your mind wander.

Stop trying to force that spark into a fully-formed idea. Give the brain downtime. Make some tea. Have a shower. Jog. Talk to your friends.

Start pulling these bits of idea together. Delete what doesn't work. Add to what does. Redraft and refine. Give yourself a deadline.

You've turned inspiration into an idea and made something! Excellent. Time to show it off and put it into practice.

Identify how complete your creation is: first draft? Beta test? Final polish? What would make it finished & successful? Can you test this?

Regardless of your expertise in a field, 2nd, 3rd & 4th opinions about your work can be useful. Seek them out from people you trust.

Eventually, this new thing needs to be put in front of the people it was designed for. Present with conviction, be prepared for criticism.

From inspiration spark to realised idea to public display – but your creation isn't finished yet. It's time to review it & get better.

Does this new thing compare favourably to the rest of your successful work? What can you do to make it up to that standard – or even better?

Judge your creation as an audience does: not as something that's been worked on & made better over time, but as a 1st encounter.

Repeat the launch prep for the next version of the work. Iterate, refine & re-launch. Assess what has been improved & weakened.





Cassy has worked in the arts and creative sector for over ten years and currently works as Programme Coordinator for Ideas Test. She has managed projects, conferences and festivals and served as a trustee for a number of arts charities. Cassy is a style blogger, music reviewer and cultural cheerleader who has been blogging about style, vintage fashion and the arts since 2011.

@cassyfry

PURPOSEFUL BLOGGING

1. MAKE IT PURPOSEFUL

You might have a big message you want to share with the world or a more general theme. Either is fine and will change as your blog evolves.

Daydream about potential readers. What are they like & what do you want them to think about your site, posts, organisation or yourself?

Who's visiting? Your peers, clients, friends, customers or like-minded souls? Think about, or better still, ask them what they want.

Great examples of blogs with a clear purpose are: @ArtistThink to unleash creativity @atlumschema to inspire reluctant leaders/ gentle rebels.

2. FIND YOUR VOICE

Who's writing? You or a team? Throw some adjectives around: erudite, friendly, candid, positive? Make sure everyone knows what tone to use.

Sometimes it is easier to define your voice by what you don't want to sound like. What do you want to avoid? Rants, snarkiness, insincerity?

Using her recent rebrand to reinforce her blog voice @jessicasays___ has made her fierce and fabulous message stronger than ever.

Posts by @pjrvs are consistently good. His writing is insightful, helpful and direct. The perfect balance of personality & professionalism.

3. MAKE IT AMAZING

Stock up on ideas: keep a list of clickable blog titles based on what is inspiring you, catching your eye, making you stop and think: "Wow!".

Don't overthink: just type & see what happens. Sometimes it's easier to start rambly, see where you end up & sharpen things up afterwards.

The number one secret to successful blogging? Just keep writing, it gets easier the more you do (I promise) so keep doing it!

The content on @Creative_Boom is perfectly pitched, using image-led inspiration alongside longer written 'how to' posts and useful lists.

4. DON'T BE SHY

Don't limit your audience. Share posts on multiple platforms: @twitter @tumblr @facebook @instagram @pinterest & keep doing it!

Make your titles fun to forward and your content easy to share. Add social media buttons to your blog posts and web pages.

Encourage connection. Link to other blogs, share articles you love or curate a list of posts that might help or interest your readers.

I'm not into weddings or planning one, but @RocknRollBride always tempts me to click on links to see pictures of colourful & quirky brides!



Year One

+44 (0) 1227 811 777
@yearoneteam
yearoneconsulting.com