Transcription - Management Buzz Words 2021

Welcome back. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today, at the beginning of 2021, we are going to talk about the management buzzwords for 2021. These are phrases that I read about at the end of last year and I thought it'd be interesting for us to talk about it in terms of our experience and whether we've seen buzzwords be introduced for each year in terms of management.

Certainly, we've seen repetition of management principles and management approaches over our extensive years of experience. So the buzzwords/phrases that I read about for 2021, the first one is leading with emotional intelligence. Second one is care and accountability. The third one is powering up virtual communications. None of them, to me, are groundbreaking.

No, they're not even new. Let us talk about leading with emaotional inteeligence first of all. In a previous couple of podcasts many years ago, 2016 I think, we did a couple of case studies on an emotional decision making. I think that really, this is just an extension of that. For me it seems to be a reflection of the fact that you have to be mindful of people situations now because their work and home life, balance and responsibilities have changed in terms of what they can and can't do with the restrictions that are still in place for many, many countries, about how they work and how they live.

I think with emotional intelligence, its been one of the key ingredients for success as a leader, forever. Really. I think the words, emotional intelligence, came in a few years back when we were talking about being empathetic, listening to people, thinking about this situation and not just an order, an execution, that's not leadership at all. And I believe that there's been many examples where you could differentiate a leader by their emotional intelligence.

The leader with emotional intelligence is able to have followers. Those people will follow, because they understand, they feel part of the decision-making, they feel their contribution matters and they are making a difference in whatever they contribute. To me, yes, I very much support emotional intelligence and it does make a big difference and it's going to be a buzzword, if you like. It's more than a buzzword, it's an actual behavior and actions taken by consciously by people who maybe not as strong as it, to go ahead and practice it more and find out more about it, then see the difference it makes to leadership.

For me, emotional intelligence is about the person, the leader themselves, being

aware of their own emotions, of being intelligent about their emotions in any situation. So it's not just about the touchy-feely stuff, but it's about the fact that you intelligently understand that in certain situations, you react a certain way. So you feel a certain emaotion in certain situations and you know what you need to do to manage so that you maintain your leadership in that situation. Obviously being emotionally intelligent is understanding your team and your co-workers and your boss and anyone else that you interact with, your customers, your clients, your strategic partners. You bring intelligent understanding into all of those relationships.

I think the word emotion (and emotional) is one that could be misused, misinterpreted and can be quite negative in some situations or perceived as being a negative thing. It engenders some emotion in the person that you are talking about or talking to. So emotional intelligence to me is a much broader phrase than anything that I would like to pinpoint specifically. But in terms of leadership, I think what it means for me, is it that when you are in a position where you are leading and you are self-aware, so you understand how you're going to feel, not only in the situation, but afterwards which we've talked about many times. You broaden out your understanding of any situation, of any activity, of any work that you do, so it encompasses everyone involved in that and that's what all I see is leading with emotional intelligence. It's that you are situationally aware. I would like it to put it in those terms rather than talk about emotional intelligence which to me sounds like you would really be able to go down the path of "I understand how you feel, but just do it anyway". So rather than emaotional intelligence, I would like to talk about situational awareness.

You had two other buzzwords. I want to add another three because I've been hearing them. So we'll cover yours and then we'll keep going.

Next one is care and accountability. I don't see any difference. If you're emotionally intelligent or situationally aware, then you will show care and take accountability. Once again it's not just in the leadership role, it's in the team member role, any role that you're in, that framework of thinking about what you're doing is care and accountability. So again for me, it comes back to situational awareness.

I agree. I think that with care and accountability, every single person, you have to be accountable, whether you're doing something, you know, or the way you're doing it or not doing something or not doing anything and the impact that has. You can't sit back and say it's not my issue, it's not me, that's not in my position description. You have to be accountable with the effect you have on the team,

even if you don't turn up for work, the impact of that is that somebody else has to pick up your bits and pieces. So caring about yourself and others. And with others, I mean everyone, whether it is your colleagues, your friends, your family, your shareholders, your customers, you have to care and be accountable or otherwise, you're not an effective member of anything.

The next one is powering up virtual communications. And I will say that I wrote down these buzzwords at the end of last year and I thought, isn't that what happens now that everyone has had to take on different ways of communicating and doing things virtually? It wasn't until, in fact, last Saturday, so a few days ago from when we're recording this, that it came home to me what it really meant. I was involved on a committee in a decision that had to be made about an activity that was to have been a physical activity that we had to make the decision to cancel. Without thinking about it, I offered the committee the opportunity to have the activities virtually and I thought this was a natural progression of what was being done. But I could see, by the looks on the faces through Zoom that the eyes glazed over and the confusion about how are we going to do this and part of it was that they would have to give me the power to run the activity online on my own and they're not a group that are good at handing over power or delegating. So there was some hesitation about that, not verbally but I could see in their back of their minds by the expressions and reactions. It's not that they don't want me to do it because they do, they just don't want to hand over the control.

It was interesting to me because over the past 12 months, obviously, they've taken on some of the virtual stuff, they've had to cancel all of their activities for the past 12 months and that's a big change for them. They rely on that personal interaction with the people that come to these activities but they haven't had that. They've had to work out a way to be able to do that. Some of the things that they've tried haven't worked because they wont take on the technology to make it work. But my challenge in this virtual powering up of their virtual communications, is to make it work better for them. Not to make it work perfectly, but you just make it work enough so that they can take the next step. And so, I think that for me, the powering up of virtual communications is really beeing solidified by that experience of having to think specifically for an organization that has dragged itself (and they said it themselves last year that I have dragged them into the 21st century) just a little bit further.

I think with a group like that, it's almost that you have to do it by saying the advantages is one thing, but the fun and the flexibility and all those points. For a group that is more reluctant to acknowledge technology, show them more and

more about how it's easy and it's fun and it is convenient. All of that will work but my biggest concern and the thing that I have to address, is that loss of control. I think that is probably something that happens in organisations across the board. The powering up of the virtual communications does change the control. We talked about it in previous podcasts, we talked about change in the leadership role because there's not the physical reinforcement of hierarchy in an organization because you're not all in the one place. So I think the virtual communications falls in to that category as well because there's not the same reinforcement of power and control and so I need to be able to address that changing control by showing them that they are not losing control. All I'm doing is their bidding. They want to interact with these people, I'm going to provide them a way that they can do that even though they wont be there in person. That's all that's changing, they wont be doing it in person. All I'm giving them, by powering up this virtual communication, is the means to do the things that they would have done had they been there in person. They're not losing control of the activity, they're handing over the process of communication to me.

So it's the method of delivery that changed not their input and power. In terms of any organisation, that's an interesting approach to take. Look at what is it that they feel, what emotion is driving them to object and how can you minimize that emotional reaction? So we talked about emotional intelligence and situational awareness, here the issue is the loss of control - I address that.

So we are up to your phrases now.

One is pain point, then pivot and agile. So with the pain points, it's a problem in a business that they're talking about or customer experience which is hurting the business as a result of it. Referring to issues as pain points is emphasising that it is an issue but we can solve it. We can find a solution. In conversations, in corporate, I'm hearing that and it's probably been said well before the last 12 months and going into the next 12 months. Pain point - I can almost feel it and that's the idea I think.

It's an emotion, painting the picture of an emotion. My concern with it is that the focus seems to be from the customer's pain point. It's not necessarily a problem for us even though it affects us in some way. We're not feeling the same emotions as they are and so there's less commitment from the organization. If it's a customer pain point in a process, there may be less commitment from the organisation because they don't feel the same way. Depending on how focused they are on customer relations, on improving that process, they can identify it. But identifying it doesn't give them any commitment to fixing it. If you use that

word, if you used pain point, it's like saying I've got a headache, there's no fixing, no sharing of the responsibility and so there's less commitment to seeing it as an issue for both sides.

I think the way I'm hearing it, it's a bit more about, we know it's a pain point and so we've identified something. That pain point could be within our employees, which could be internal or external. The pain point is taking us to what's causing it and what's the effect it's having and then what's the solution? So it's more saying like in the past, it's the "hot" button.

The other one is agile (and pivot). Agile in business is being flexible enough, literally what it means and move around to get things done. So at the moment, this is our plan, our long term plan, this is what we're going to do. This is a marketing strategy. This is the opponent's strategy etc. But guess what? With Covid, in particular, we're seeing something totally unexpected happened. And now you have to be nimble enough, agile enough, to work on what is here and now and how we need to fix it. I think with that one, it's internal and external. An example is, our people can't come to work so technology is needed to work from home, our customers are buying things differently, their priority has changed. My whole plan for the business was to create income and reach the target byselling X. Y &, Z. Guess what? There's no customers going in for that. That's the agile.

The word pivot is another way. Again, it's saying being able to pivot, not completely change directions, but maybe pivot to the left or to the right. To move again and again and it's all driven by what happening and the customer or shareholders and staff. So I need to be quick to respond, I need to be flexible and I need to constantly change in a short period of time.

Situational awareness, I rest my case. I think it's throughout eternity, these words people can identify. So these are the buzzwords at the moment. It's a good thing to have a look at them and have a think about them certainly. In the floral art world we have every year, a color comes out. It's called the Pantone color of the year and it's supposed to be the trending color for that year. It's the same thing - it's not that we don't know that particular colour, what it does is focus our thinking on that particular color. The same with these buzzwords in management, it focuses your thinking about how it affects your organization. What was that mean for us? What does that mean for our work day, for our long-term plan, for any of those things? It's a good exercise to go through and to have a look and do some research to see what people are saying about the buzzwords. Have you and your team, think about them, what it means to them and the organisation and to be situationally aware.

We've covered buzzwords for 2021. You need to know nothing more. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.