

## No more of this personal job alignment! It's not good for the company.

"I'm not sure about this business, Ian," said an MD of a company recently, "The last two people decided to leave."

And, as it happens, both went to better paid and more intensive jobs.

Naturally, getting people to address the Personal Job Alignment question, "How can I thrive at work?" can lead to some people deciding to leave in pursuit of the alignment which I believe we all seek and can benefit from.

It can also lead, as in a conversation I had recently, to some people deciding that the correct alignment for the time being is to see themselves in

the company entirely for their personal benefit rather than for the mutual benefit of themselves and the company.

The attached note for leaders and organisation development professionals looks at this issue.

Although aimed at leaders I hope it also makes sense to everyone at work and perhaps helps to explain some of the tensions and stresses we can all feel.

The note is an abstract of a lengthier consideration of this matter in the forthcoming book [still in production, so comment welcome!]

### May Monthly Meeting: 9 May 2007

The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 9 May at 7.30 p.m. in the Harewood Arms, Nr Leeds. Details of how to find it are on the web site.

This month we'll talk about how we can help one another at work to build community.

I'll be in the bar from 7 p.m. if you'd like a chat.

### Web site update

This month the web site has been updated

- [A new picture of what my daughter thinks is good and bad about work](#)
- [A section for leaders and organisation development professionals \(the attached article plus a prompt for debate\)](#)
- [An updated 'for individuals' page](#)
- [An explicit Personal Job Alignment resource page](#)

**Check it out**

### Helen's story: balance

Helen is a highly capable executive working in a demanding environment where, to continue her trajectory of success, she would need to travel quite widely and be away from home regularly. Her husband also has a demanding job but at least it's close to home. They have two children under five. Currently, Helen works part time so that she can spend goodly amounts of time with the children. Her employer has been very good about this, supporting her because she is such an asset to the company. Helen has at present a balance across the elements of her Personal Job Alignment.

But now the agreed part time arrangement is coming to an end and Helen, like many people in her position, is weighing up her options – what is important to her (in Helen's case both her children and her career), her job and its responsibilities (the right mix of challenge and pay) and the culture of the company (which will probably continue to be supportive but now wants something like a return for its supportiveness). Helen is now working on how to get the right balance for her.

Like much in life, getting Personal Job Alignment is about getting the balance right in situations where perfection may be illusory. Companies and legislation can do a great deal to support women and all carers but in the end we each have our own work to do to get the balance right in the realities of our own worlds.

Remember: The important story is that each of us has our own work to do to make sense of our lives at work and that stress free work can be the outcome.

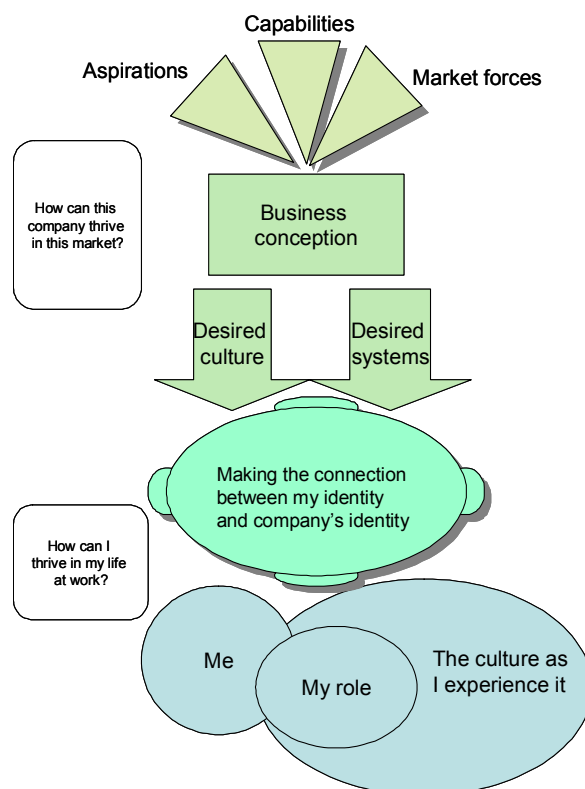
## Some thoughts for leaders and organisation development professionals

In our atomised society it is our separateness and our individuality that tend to be emphasised. And we live in an economic system, where, even for progressive politicians, this uniqueness is reduced to the choices we make, with these choices seen as being made on the basis of self interest. Our sense of community is reduced to a form of aggregated self interest.

There are many reasons for this (we can see how notions of the self have transformed over millennia as man comes to terms with himself in the universe) but for those of us with responsibilities for leading organisations or for supporting those who do, we need to create organisations that thrive as organisations as such AND with people living in those organisations who thrive on their terms too.

Much management theory talks about managing the culture in organisations and the importance of achieving alignment of staff through engaging them in the purposes and values of the company. This is essential but it is only half of the story. As Personal Job Alignment makes clear, we each have our individual work to do to make sense of our lives at work.

This diagram sets out, in simplified form, what is required.



Leaders, who wish their organisations to thrive, need to pay attention to BOTH aspects of thriving – personal as well as organisational – for all staff. We need to answer the question for the company, “How can this company thrive in its market?” AND support staff in answering the question, “How can I thrive in my life at work?”

But beware, when we do this we may find – we almost certainly will find – that we have to change the way the organisation is, in response to how our people are. Don't start this unless you really want to manage the consequences – but do start if you want to realise the potentially huge benefits.

If we pay attention to both aspects of life at work we can play a small but important part in addressing the isolating and anxiety creating aspects of life as too many people experience it.

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