The Development and Application of a Bespoke Organisational Learning Competency Framework in a Global Organisation

- APPENDIX E -

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17 APPENDIX E: STUDY 1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

17.1 Interview 1: Management (People)

Interviewer  
*I want to look at the area of communication for organisational learning and it includes the sharing of information and openness of communication.  
Give me an example of an occasion when information was shared by you or a colleague.*

Participant  
Management meetings. Is almost always the way in which I and colleagues share information. Do you want me to give you a specific example?

Interviewer  
*Yes please.*

Participant  
When I’ve got information to share and I’m thinking about business information and some difficult information had last week wasn’t in written format because it was seen as sensitive, so very specific facts and figures were not to be passed on, just supposed to pass on the gist to give a feel or a flavour of what was going on in the business, so because the information was given without any written backup a lot of the detail was lost in the time scale that we had, so it was very much just a general piece of information, so general I can’t even think of any specifics to share.

Interviewer  
*Was this information shared with you or you to the rest of the team?*

Participant  
It was like a cascade. Information had been given to that person, I’m talking about a general manager, he got it from the executive team debrief. He did actually have it written down by somebody. Somebody’s precis of what was supposed to be passed on and then he again precis that but gave to us in a spoken format and told us to go back and communicate in an oral way with colleagues. It’s as simple as that.

Interviewer  
*Was the sharing of this information done well or poorly by this individual?*

Participant  
Difficult to say, I suspect poorly because he kept reading from the piece of paper and stopping and saying “No I can’t tell you that” so it was very difficult to keep a thread of what he was saying and come to any conclusion about it.

Interviewer  
*How effective will it be for you to now share this information with members of your team?*

Participant  
Very ineffective. As I said I wasn’t able to write anything down and in fact I was told to destroy the notes that I made because I know I need to refer to something particularly as I knew I couldn’t pass the information on to the colleague I needed to share it with.
until the next day. It was... all the detail had gone so...

*Interviewer*  
*Give me an example of when you, or a colleague, gave feedback to someone or to a group of people.*

*Participant*  
*I can think of an example when I’ve given feedback about a selection decision to someone, is that what you mean or do you mean feedback about something more general?*

*Interviewer*  
*Feedback can be about anything. It can be personal feedback. Feedback about the selection process that someone might have proposed or performance feedback, whatever you have fed back.*

*Participant*  
*Well it’s performance feedback on someone who had done an assessment centre for an internal role that there had been a promotion we had arranged the time, we had a private room booked and that’s in the context of the person working in an open plan office so feeling a little sensitive that people would know what had happened and what the circumstances were, I explained that what we were going to talk was confidential to the pair of us and not disclose it to anyone. We needed to agree what we both said afterwards about the outcome to this meeting I proposed how I would feedback the information and I suggested explaining why the assessment centre was designed as it was to let him get an understanding of what skills and qualities had been looked for and how he was assessed against those measures, he thought that was a good idea. I started by asking him for his general impressions of how we’d done and what he’d thought had gone on, on that day and then we got into the nitty gritty detail of what exactly happened so going through for example exactly what he said and what, how we judged him in the interview, group exercise, fact finding, so everything and it was a two way conversation - we both referred to notes and checked each others understanding.*

*Interviewer*  
*What was effective about your communication during your feedback?*

*Participant*  
*Because at the end of the session, it took about an hour and a half, that person said he had a real understanding of why he was unsuccessful and thought it was fair and he realised he had gone away with that impression himself that... what feelings he probably left with the assessors. And from feedback I gave him that was right and he felt he had something to work on to help him for the next time*

*Interviewer*  
*What could have been done differently?*

*Participant*  
*The candidate hadn’t had any information prior to going to the assessment centre of what the nature of the assessment centre was going to be and I think that would have helped him not only prepare for it but also prepare for the feedback so we did spend quite a bit of time going through that. Perhaps it would have been more effective to actually concentrate on his performance. It would have been really helpful if he could have had the feedback from the other assessor because it was only my view at the end of the day*
although it was based on written documentation at the time. And if I would have been in his position I think I would have liked to have got feedback from the other person as well because there were two different managers from two different business areas and that person was male, maybe that had an influence as well... I don’t know.

**Interviewer**  
What does continuous development mean to you?

**Participant**  
Recognising that I will always be in a situation where I need to change or improve skills, attitudes, behaviours that I exhibit at work, because not only do I need to change but the business and the organisation objectives change over time as well. So you can never be in a state of being in absolute perfect fit for the job that you are doing and no matter how long you had been doing that job because things always change.

**Interviewer**  
Give me an example of such an occasion (of continuous development)

**Participant**  
A very obvious one is a psychologist dealing with selection methodology is keeping up to date with new psychometric tests. Work on how they are put together, adverse impact, all that sort of thing.

**Interviewer**  
Why is that continuous development important?

**Participant**  
So I can continue to be professional, show best practice in what I’m doing, and also continue to be effective and meeting the objectives of my role.

**Interviewer**  
How do you pursue your continuous development?

**Participant**  
With difficulty I understand I’m given five days a year to be able to go and pursue some sort of development and that’s on top of any formal training courses I might do at work. In twelve years I’ve never had an opportunity to do that. If I want to do something I use my free time, it’s even difficult to find time to go on formal training courses.

**Interviewer**  
Is there anything you could have done better as far as your own continuous development...at British Airways?

**Participant**  
Yes making sure that I planned that in and gave it the same priority as say recruiting somebody or following through on a recruitment project so making sure, that not only, I but the person I worked with understood that that was as important as perhaps delivering somebody towards a vacancy that was urgent.

**Interviewer**  
Do you pursue continuous learning?

**Participant**  
Not sure if I do or not. What do you mean?

**Interviewer**  
Do you continue learning? Do you attend these courses? What do you do what sort of courses are they?

**Participant**  
I’ve done one course, formal course, since I came back in November form maternity leave I’ve done some work based around that. But apart from that formal course, I think just everyday I probably do something that can be put under continuous
learning because I perhaps adapt my behaviours or my decision making some way as a result of constant feedback from my day to day activities.

**Interviewer**

You mention this continuous learning as a daily activity. Why is that important?

**Participant**

I think, particularly in HR, when you’re working with a lot of people and it’s the culture to get feedback, even if only very subtle ways. Perhaps facial expressions of people at meetings when you’ve presented something or you and you’re penny worth in to some argument or debate in a management team you very quickly pick up cues and signals. And I, particularly, at the end of the day if I feel something has gone well or not well, think it through and think well… what would I do next time? It’s partly a survival mechanism as well.

**Interviewer**

How effective are you in doing that?

**Participant**

I don’t know, because it’s done probably covertly, not overtly, so in terms of objectives I’m working towards, they’re implicit rather than explicit so it would be very difficult to judge or to measure.

**Interviewer**

Tell me about the last time you, or a colleague of yours, empowered an individual of a lower grade.

**Participant**

Can you elaborate on what you mean by empowered?

**Interviewer**

What’s your understanding of the word empowered, or empowering others?

**Participant**

Giving somebody the responsibility and the freedom to do their own thing, pursue their own agenda, instead of keeping lots of rules and regulations on them. Letting have their head.

**Interviewer**

Tell me about the last time you, or a colleague of yours, empowered an individual of a lower grade.

**Participant**

Yes, a colleague was asked to design an assessment centre and I suppose because it was for a different business area a different geographic location there was some risk because I hadn’t seen this individual put anything together, and if it had gone wrong it could have been disastrous. I still let that person take the brief, and work through it on his own. Offered some support but kept hands off, and… and took the subordinate role almost as if our grades had been switched round.

**Interviewer**

What was the result of this action?

**Participant**

It was very positive. The client’s been pleased in fact the candidate I spoke about had been part of that process and been very pleased and didn’t have any hang ups about it. I had participated as an assessor and from my point of view it had gone well. So if it had been a risk, it was one worth taking because it was win-win all round.

**Interviewer**

Do you think it is an effective method for managing others?

**Participant**

Yes! Because it gave me… From a selfish point of view it gave me a break so although I might have thought… I wondered what the outcome of this was going to be, I suppose another part of me
knew I had some trust and at some stage you have to decide to let someone have ago, and that’s what I feel a manager ought to be doing that you should be helping and encouraging people to reach, in the level of the hierarchy, the level you’ve got to. Its also good for the other person. I’ve always felt more valued if someone has shown that sort of trust and given me responsibility in that way. And it’s also a cultural thing in our organisation that people should be given that opportunity. If it goes wrong, well lets find out why and what support we can give and not just shoot that person down and blame them. So it’s not a blame culture it should be a helping culture

**Interviewer**  Is it a practical method that you would use again?
**Participant**  Yes! I think the art of that is in judging... having a good match between where you think the individual is and their capabilities and having a piece of work that’s a good match so it’s stretching. So someone feels they’ve been valued and trusted and not just patronising them by making up a piece of work when it really doesn’t matter or if it was done or not it wouldn’t matter. So those opportunities don’t always come along when that person you feel is ready for it and can then meet that opportunity, but yeah.

**Interviewer**  Tell me about a time when you or a colleague of yours tried out a new idea for example of working, implementing a new system or using a new product.
**Participant**  That was when I was managing flight operations we brought in a new PC based system of checking out spatial co-ordination; hand-eye-foot co-ordination that sort thing. It was a very different system not only because of use of technology but the way in which those skills were checked out we had... no other airline had used it in quite the way we were going to use it. So it was very new.

**Interviewer**  Why did you try the idea?
**Participant**  Because I had done a lot of research and I felt that best fitted what we needed to do. That there was an opportunity. The budget was available and I was also in the position where there was no one really to challenge me when I came up with the business proposal. Although I still had to make a business proposal there was no one perhaps who had the same expertise or knowledge that I had to challenge that in any way, if it needed to be challenged.

**Interviewer**  Did it add value when implemented?
**Participant**  Yes. It’s still being used nearly four years on. There has been some work done to check it out and by and large it’s seen as successful.

**Interviewer**  What have you learnt from trying out a new idea?
That it takes an awful lot of time and effort just from having the bare bones of the idea to putting it into practice. I got involved in things like the wiring, the carpeting, temperature control, using outside contractors, licenses, purchasing contracts, all sorts of things and I hadn’t realised how complex it would be as well as the more obvious things like training people to use the new system,
documenting what we’d done, putting it into a selection process. So it was really complex.

*Interviewer*  
*In the future, if you are going to experiment with a new idea would you take a different approach to it?*

*Participant*  
I wouldn’t take a different approach, I would, if I could, build in more time or make sure I had some more back up or resources because looking back that’s where the problems came. For example, we hadn’t anticipated that when we took up the carpet to lay the new one we’d find holes in the floor. Then you have to find out gosh what do I do, where do I go. It might seem a very silly example, but I now know perhaps to think through… do more of risk assessment if you like and not just fly it like I did before.

*Interviewer*  
*Give me an example of a time when you would say you were creative.*

*Participant*  
I don’t think I am creative, I don’t think I come up with particularly novel or radical solutions but I’ve had feedback that I was creative in the way I put together the assessment process for flight crew because we did try some very different ways of assessing looking at new tests, at new selection methodologies so I didn’t think it was particularly extraordinary but my colleagues gave me feedback that it was very new and different for our organisation.

*Interviewer*  
*How effective do you think that was?*

*Participant*  
Well it certainly made people see me in a different light and I think that’s what I found surprising about it because I didn’t think what I was doing was different or creative but by the standards of other people using it was. So it certainly has contributed to the overall feeling that was a very good piece of work. And something for which I am still remembered by.

*Interviewer*  
*How creative would you say you are compared to your colleagues?*

*Participant*  
I find that really difficult to answer. I think because of my background as a psychologist perhaps things in my personal life, I might sometimes be coming from a different place from my colleagues but that’s only supposition I haven’t got any evidence from that. It’s just based on where I find myself in management meetings, group discussions and suchlike. I’m out of sync sometimes.

*Interviewer*  
*I want to go back a moment, you mentioned earlier in the question that you don’t think that you are creative, what is your understanding of being creative?*

*Participant*  
Creative to me is coming up with something new, something different…if…yeah something new, something different. Something that is perhaps not tried and tested, something unusual maybe.

*Interviewer*  
*How does that differ to being innovative?*

*Participant*  
…*participant hesitated*

*Interviewer*  
*If you believe that there is such a difference.*
Pin down like that I’m not sure I can easily explain that there is a
difference I suppose I’ve always thought innovation is when you
come up with something really that no one has ever thought of
before, but perhaps a very similar being creative and innovation are
perhaps just very slightly different ends of the same spectrum.
Difficult that.

Interviewer  Tell me about a time when you or a colleague have used your
knowledge of competitors in your role.

Participant  Going back to for example the recruitment process for flight crew
we were aware what our competitors did to recruit flight crew and
that was almost irrelevant. And that was because we still followed
through what we felt we needed to do for the business to make sure
our flight crew were the best available. But having said that,
because of the group of people we would be dealing with as
candidates, we had to aware of the processes, for example they
might have had to go through to get the jobs that they were in then
and the fact that they would probably compare and contrast and
would be asked questions about what we were doing what we were
doing so it was fundamental if only in terms of candidate care.

Interviewer  How useful was this knowledge of your competitors to you?

Participant  Quite useful because I think we had the feeling we wanted to be
the best, to be leading edge, try something different and not just do
something because someone else had done it. It certainly added to
the feeling that gosh we might be putting people through lots of
hoops and it was difficult but it bought buy in into the Company
and the feeling that someone got through all that and they were
going to be a valued employee and really were perhaps the best in
their field.

Interviewer  How effective were you in using this knowledge?

Participant  I had to justify why we had perhaps a more complex process which
is... were more costly and time consuming. Why we were pulling
pilots off the operation which is a very expensive thing to do to
justify using them for all these different processes and I was asked
about what our competitors do. And I put that into context of what
we wanted to do so it was really necessary.

Interviewer  What made it effective?

Participant  Added to the credibility that I knew what I was talking about
because I could refer to what other people did and why they did it.
It added to that feeling that I’d really thought it through and wasn’t
just doing it for the sake of it because it looked good. Taking it at
face value.

Interviewer  With reference to the last answer, about knowledge of your
competitors, was this information used to the Company’s
advantage?

Participant  I’d say yes and I’d say because we very rarely had anyone turn
down our offers and the work we’ve done since on how the people
we’ve recruited have got on in the business means that we
generally have picked really good quality candidates who fit into the business. That’s the only measure that I would have I think.

**Interviewer**  
Tell me about a time when you or a colleague challenged a way of working.

**Participant**  
When I was first given the responsibility for the test administration unit in our building I, as part of getting to know what I was taking on and the way the systems and processes worked, I did come across some areas when I thought well why are we doing this? What value does it add? What’s the point of doing this? And ask those questions.

**Interviewer**  
Why did you question it?

**Participant**  
Because I really couldn’t tie it up to what it was adding value to. How it was helping us achieve objectives. It just seemed to be doing it for its own sake because it had always been done like that even though circumstances had moved on. For example, the test administrators we were employing were never told more than at a days notice what work they would be doing and yet we told people in the business they had to give us at least ten days notice of wanting to book a test. So the schedules were there easily in advance and I just couldn’t understand why we couldn’t pass this information on. There probably were personal reasons for the person who was doing it not to pass it on. All to do about control, secrecy, perhaps having one over on other people. But no other reason.

**Interviewer**  
What alternatives did you suggest?

**Participant**  
I did suggest that it would be much more open and honest. Improve communication if we did let people look at the bookings as they came in. Answer their questions about what sort of work they were being allocated. I was told that it was not possible.

**Interviewer**  
Were your ideas used at all?

**Participant**  
Not until that person who had other ideas moved on because although she was asked and it was a management order to do as I suggested she always chose not to and in the end because it got so confrontational I decided it was best left and all the other people in the team knew what she was doing and why she was doing it and I think you used to just go and look but we decided not to tell that other person what was going on. So formally no we carried on with old process, but informally no we went round it but didn’t communicate that.

**Interviewer**  
How effective was that in terms of running that aspect of the business?

**Participant**  
The original situation was very ineffective and that’s why I questioned it because it had always caused a lot of personal inconvenience and was a real cause for conflict time after time. People used to think they were getting less work or getting the more difficult jobs and there was no way showing that wasn’t the case it was more ad hoc than that. Really difficult.
Interviewer: I want to look at the area of team orientation. Describe a recent opportunity that you had to learn something from someone else in the Company.

Participant: I had to find out about a new series of tests that had been introduced whilst I was on maternity leave. I had seen what little technical information was available. I'd gone through that but still left with me with some unanswered questions about its use, its effectiveness, some sort of technical aspects I thought weren't covered.

Interviewer: What lead you to learn about that particular test?

Participant: It was said to be much more useful to our business than anything we had used before. I felt I needed to know about something that was new in the specialist field in which I worked. I'd make sure I knew as much as possible about it.

Interviewer: How did this affect relationships in the team?

Participant: It made me consider that perhaps we hadn't effectively briefed each other on this. We hadn't got an agreement about how effective it was going to be. What some of the down sides were going to be introducing this new test might be. We really hadn't, as a group of specialists, really made sure we knew what we were doing and why with this. Someone had introduced it but it was... that was it. I think there were pit falls being uncovered as time went on.

Interviewer: How effective do you think that made that individual in the team?

Participant: You mean the fact that something had been introduced and we thought perhaps there were some problems with it?

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant: It made me question just how much knowledge that person really had because I thought the questions I was coming up with were fairly fundamental. They weren't rocket science, were very obvious ones to ask about something new and the fact that - not particularly there weren't answers to it but they hadn't been thought of before made me really question that perhaps we'd introduce this particular test too quickly without thinking it through and because it was causing me some difficulties with clients that was causing me concern about our standing in the business and our credibility.

Interviewer: Give me an example when it was important for you or a colleague to show awareness of the role and function of other departments.

Participant: All the time, because every time I'd ask for advice about recruiting somebody for a vacancy in another area of the business I need to know more than just have a list of tasks they would be doing in their job. I want to know for example, how big is the team they are going to be working in; what's that atmosphere in that team; is it a new role; has someone left?; what are the circumstances in which someone might have left and are there any other personal issues,
difficulties going around in that area that might have an impact on that individual and soft factors like that.

**Interviewer**  
Give me a specific example when you worked with other functions.

**Participant**  
Yeah. I was asked to advise on a selection method for avionic engineers in the engineering business which was geographically remote to us. I was asked to advise on something that would help recruit people that were going to be supervisors. And I was told they’d had problems in the past and they needed to get it right this time and that really made me wonder what the problems were before. So I felt I had to do a lot of digging to uncover what the issues were and they weren’t what they appeared on the surface what was being presented to me as the issue at the time.

**Interviewer**  
How did you show your awareness or understanding of the role and function of the other department?

**Participant**  
I... they told me there was a lot of union involvement particularly the unions would get involved in looking at who was recruited to this vacancy so I was aware that there were some office politics involved. I made sure I contacted the line managers with my suggestions and ask for their feedback before I committed anything to writing. Just made sure I kept in the loop and was more closely involved than I might have been otherwise... for example I suggested a personality measure and that the profile interpretation I gave as a result of the candidates filling in that measure should be given to the candidates and talk through with them. There was initially a lot of reaction that wasn’t the best thing to do because what would the unions think about it. They did actually decide to take the risk and it turned out well but I had to justify why I felt that was a risk worth taking and link it to a business measure.

**Interviewer**  
Why was this awareness of the other department helpful in getting your or your team’s work done?

**Participant**  
They approached us because they had a problem they didn’t think they could solve by themselves. They were looking for outside advice; they wanted what they perceived as a neutral third party and I felt when I found out the nature of the problem when it was more clearly expressed that we could help but only because eventually I became aware that absolutely everything covert as well as overt about that.

**Interviewer**  
How effective do you think it is to show an awareness of other roles and functions of other departments?

**Participant**  
Absolutely essential. No man is an island, no individual working in the company is an island; its all about relationships, teams. Not only the ones that are on the organisation chart but the ones that form informally as well.

**Interviewer**  
What makes you effective in that regard?

**Participant**  
I don’t know, I genuinely like to make contact with people and helping and I don’t get personal satisfaction from getting something over on someone. I think you can get to win win without damaging or compromising the other person. I think that
eventually comes over so you get trusted and be thought of someone who will do their best for everyone and not just for their own personal selfishness.

**Interviewer**

*With reference to the previous question, how important is it that departments work together?*

**Participant**

Absolutely key to the effectiveness of both departments.

**Interviewer**

*Do they work together as a system?*

**Participant**

Not very often. By a system I would think of it being smooth, working towards mutual objectives, being very well oiled, no hidden brakes or gaps and I think in our organisation, because we separate budgets and your always worried about what you’re spending always becomes a factor that hinders you working as a system. It can be difficult.

**Interviewer**

*Are the departments linked together?*

**Participant**

No and it can be sometimes very difficult in our organisation event to be aware of what other departments might be able to help you; who is the most appropriate person to contact; you can go around the houses can be really difficult to get those links.

**Interviewer**

*Should departments be linked together?*

**Participant**

Yes because we are all working for the same end. Which is Company profits, shareholders, so yeah.

**Interviewer**

*How important is it that different business functions work together?*

**Participant**

Very important. We should all be contributing to the same overall business goals. We should all be aiding and abetting each other. In our department we’ve got problems with our infrastructure, our laptops, our telephones. We’ve bought some outside software products and I’ve heard it said at management meetings that our own information management department recons we are not making best use of one of them which is incredibly expensive but I’ve also heard it said that because they weren’t involved with purchasing decision and they advised against it and now don’t want to be involved and make the best of it. So it means a lot of money is being spent on the outside contractor and its causing huge problems processing applications which seems ludicrous to me.

**Interviewer**

*What is your understanding of organisational learning?*

**Participant**

I have absolutely no idea. I could guess and say is it something in which at a very high level organisations adapt and change in a cultural way as the world in which they operate and the businesses in which they operate change. I see it as a much more higher level than the level of individuals. Its how a company changes its products and services to adapt to needs outside. It’s very high level stuff. But I’m only guessing.

**Interviewer**

*What would a learning organisation look like to you?*

**Participant**

One where I would feel things would change over time. That would be encouraged and that you wouldn’t be looking to get
promotion or get advancement just based on the role on which you came in to do. You knew that perhaps when you joined as a school leaver... perhaps when you came to leave at retirement age you could probably have had three or four different careers. They’d also support your personal growth and development as well. Be just much more than the little bit of technical knowledge or skills that you need to do your job at the moment.

END
17.2 Interview 2: Management (Strategy)

**Interviewer**  Can you give me an example of a situation when information was shared by you to other people

**Participant** Team meeting last week. The nature of the information is all sorts of initiatives and changes which have been going on within Recruitment. We’re going to have a big communications session this week so its kind of like briefing on that, some of the things which are going to come up there, so about the Budget information that we’re going out to get, how I’m actually going to be trying to tackle our budget, trying to make that transparent so the whole team can help and support me with it and understand what our budget is, why we’ve got this number, because obviously they’ll be managing the individual projects within it, so giving them the overall picture about the budget strategy was part of it. That was part of the team meeting

**Interviewer**  How do you think you were effective in delivering it?

**Participant** Relatively effective I think. I gave the information to start with gave them opportunities to ask questions, tried to start with the bigger picture and say how it was relevant to us as a team and how I wanted to try and take it forward with them.

**Interviewer**  Give me an example of when you or a colleague gave feedback to an individual or a group of people

**Participant** Feedback by myself to a colleague when we were going through performance appraisals. She actually specifically asked me for feedback (colleague on same level) as part of a performance appraisal and there was an area which was communication which she knew she was having difficulties with. It was quite difficult really because of the nature of character, she’s very sensitive and she has been given feedback along these lines before and knows that it is an area of weakness, so it was really trying to be encouraging but also point out that yes, there is still a problem, that needed addressing and again its difficult, I don’t know and I’m not sure if I was that effective in that situation

**Interviewer**  Why do you think that you weren’t effective?

**Participant** Because the behaviours don’t seem to have changed that much in this individual. She was very receptive to it, I think I was pleased with the way that I managed to do it in that I was as direct as I could because its never easy to say actually no the communication is different, you’re trying to hard, its confusing etc when you know that that person has tried before to put that right and gets quite irritable about it. But its difficult in that sense and I’m not sure if it actually did get through. She was very receptive at the time but that’s the trend that you tend to see is that she’s very ‘yes, I know’ but then nothing happens
Interviewer: You say that there wasn’t much difference in the behaviour after that, do you think maybe you could have done it differently looking back, given that feedback.

Participant: With this individual problem no. I think you’ve got to be direct but in a very supportive way with her, so no I must admit I think I came up against a bit of a brick wall.

Interviewer: Have you got an example of a time of when you think you were effective at giving feedback....more so than the last example.

Participant: Yes, the situation where we’ve had one of my colleagues who was standing in as a plant for a group exercise so I gave them some feedback afterwards on their behaviours that we had observed and I think they were probably quite useful because the individuals said that they hadn’t had a lot of experience with group exercises and there were a number of really positive points to put across about the way that he came across and a couple of behavioural traits, mannerisms if you like were quite off-putting though easy to point out and say ‘Did you realise you were doing this?’ and ‘this is how it cam across.’ That was well received. I think, I don’t know obviously until we see the group exercise but I think because of the nature of the feedback, it was important to say ‘OK try not to do that’ it probably should help and also give the individual some insight into group dynamics what we’re looking for etc etc, which should stand them in good stead for other situations.

Interviewer: What does continuous development mean to you?

Participant: I first heard about it through the IPD. It’s a way of monitoring and measuring your own career development or putting the pieces of work that you do throughout your everyday life, into a context, so that this piece of work that you’re managing here, this project, looking at it, the skills and learning that you’re getting out of it and actually recording it for yourself, trying really just like making a mental note ‘OK, I did this piece of work here, I learnt that and I can put that into use over here’ rather than just going through the usual, do this piece of work, do that piece of work and not actually taking the time to sit back and reflect on what the learning was for you, so its kind of like a structure if you like, almost like a log, categorising your skills and development and actually getting them, which might not be through specific courses, they might just be through the everyday, usual bits of work that you’re doing.

Interviewer: Do you do that at the moment?

Participant: No. I know I should do. I kind of make a mental note but don’t record it formally.

Interviewer: Why not?

Participant: I don’t have time. I’m too lazy. I’m being realistic.

Interviewer: How important is it to have continuous development?

Participant: I think it is important, because if you’re going to find yourself in a situation which shouldn’t just be important when you’re thinking about going for the next stage, I guess its something which we
should be doing all the time, but if you are going for a promotion or another job, you really need to be able to prove what you’ve been doing and if you’ve been religious about writing these things down accordingly, it makes it much easier to sit down and scrubble round before your interview or what have you. But I guess, that’s one point, that’s a very personal side of things but also from the point of view of within the organisation when you come for appraisal and you come to thinking of taking this piece of work on, it might help to you to understand what skills gaps you’ve got....and you can look back and see what you’ve done. If you find that you’re tending to stay within a certain area of skills, for example with myself I’d probably be quite happy with the communication style of things at presentations, but if you ask me about budget exercises etc, etc, I know I’ve got a skills gap there, which is going to be closed very shortly because I’m going to have to do it, but if you find you’re focusing on the same types of learning experience and neglecting others there might be a reason for that which might indicate that you really need to balance yourself out a bit.

**Interviewer**

*What do you think continuous learning means?*

**Participant**

It’s difficult to distinguish that from continuous development. I would say to me, they sound like the same thing, I’m sure they’re not.

**Interviewer**

*Tell me about a time when you or a manager/colleague of yours empowered an individual*

**Participant**

Empowered an individual.......it sounds like it should be a very big thing. I can talk hypothetically about what I hope would happen, because I’m just coming into the management role. I hope there will be more opportunities for that. What I’m hoping to do, going back to the budget again and basically managing all the projects is trying to make what I’m being asked to do as transparent as possible, so that the team don’t have to keep referring back to me. You know. ‘Have you got the budget for this? Have you got the budget for that?’ If they’re working on a project and have the documents relating to the budget for that project accessible for everybody, so that they can come back and say ‘right OK let’s make a decision on that, yes I can spend that there, but that leaves me with this here, so I hope to be able to empower them in that sense, so that we all have responsibility and ownership for that part of the process.

**Interviewer**

*Can you think of a manager colleague of yours who has done that - empowered someone*

**Participant**

I guess, when I was running the last project the management style I had was very hands-off, if that’s the same type of thing, I guess it is. My management style is where people are expecting a high degree of involvement, a high degree of ‘yes this is OK’ and ‘that’s not OK.’ I haven’t experienced a lot of that here actually so I guess
most of the management style I’ve experienced has been very empowering in that sense, that we’ve been very much left to run a project and the support is there if you need it.

*Interviewer*  Sounds like a big thing, why did you say that?

*Participant* I suppose the word empowerment sounds -- if you empower somebody, it sounds like its giving them the knowledge or the decision making ability to do something big where as it could be a small things like we’ll pay for the candidate food on this one but we’ll charge it back to the client, those kinds of things. The word ‘empowerment’ does sound quite sort of major, for want of a better word.

*Interviewer*  Just a moment ago you mentioned that you haven’t seen a lot of that here. Why do you think that is?

*Participant* I wouldn’t say there’s a shortage of empowerment here.....I think what I’m saying is that I haven’t seen a lot of managers who really have to know the ins and outs of things and quite control it, I have to experience that. So I guess I have experienced managers, who, by the fact that they’re hands-off do empower people. Other than that I don’t think it necessarily means being kept just because it doesn’t necessarily mean that you’ve been empowered because it could mean people are just going off and doing their own thing but I’ve felt the way I’ve interpreted or felt by it is that I’ve got the free run on this and have been trusted to make decisions around this.

*Interviewer*  Tell me about a time when you or a fellow manager tried out a new idea.

*Participant*  Well I suppose when we brought in the new way of assessing, the new approach for the Finance Analyst campaign, I brought that in. What we were doing before, I inherited the project and for various background reasons we were just doing a very slow trickle of assessments, the momentum had really gone, we didn’t have support from the line, because there was disillusionment about the number of candidates that were coming through. The market really wasn’t in our favour and we just weren’t keeping up with filling the pipe that was leaking out the other side, if you like, moving out of the company into other parts of Finance, so we needed a quick fix, an injection of activity and momentum on the project so just basically racked the whole thing up and started bringing through ten times the number of candidates we’d been seeing in a week, so I was leading that project from the point of view of leading a small team of assessors on it, liaising with the Finance clients, trying to get support from the line managers which hadn’t been there before and had been one of the key problems.

*Interviewer*  What was the outcome of trying the idea out?

*Participant*  It was really successful. I don’t see how it couldn’t have been because there was nothing miraculous about it. It was just that we weren’t really doing things quickly enough, so we thought let’s
speed things up, so yes it worked. But also because we shortened the process we found it gave us a competitive advantage on these candidates, by getting back to them very quickly, taking just a day to assess them, whereas before we were seeing them over two weeks. So because we were getting very quick with the assessments and making offers the next day, if necessary, we were finding that we were being more effective and more quick than other companies who they were going to see and so by virtue of that, obviously pipping some of the other offers at the post you find these candidates have two or three offers in the pipeline so there was a number of different things and because the candidates were coming through more quickly, the morale kind of lifted the momentum and we got more support from the line because they actually saw a tangible result. They found their vacancies were being filled.

**Interviewer**  
*You mentioned about a group of you that worked on ‘New Ways of Working’ and you were a part of that group. Can you tell me a bit about that?*

**Participant**  
Obviously it’s trying to have some communications forums for everybody to take them through the massive change processes from going to fixed desk working in small offices to hot desking in a new building, new technology and everything that was around that so I was part of a group of people that got involved in facilitating these forums, taking peoples ideas and listening to them, capturing the information, publicising and communicating it afterwards and then really from the information, drawing up some sensible guidelines, protocols, to actually trial to see if that formed the basis of how we were going to work in the new environment.

**Interviewer**  
*You said you trialled it and experimented it as well. Why did you do that?*

**Participant**  
Because I think none of us knew what it was going to be like when we were over here and it’s difficult to say, ‘yes these are going to be the problems’ when you just don’t know if it might be something completely different that you haven’t thought of that’s going to be a problem, so giving people the airtime to say ‘yes I think we’re going to lose team spirit here and we should be doing x,y and z here’ and we can say ‘OK, well why don’t we try doing that but because we don’t know if that’s going to be an issue, let’s not tie ourselves up in red tape......we find we come over here and those aren’t the problems at all, it’s these problems here. So, it was very much, we didn’t really want to say ‘you must do x,y and z’ partly because we never needed to work like that before. We really wanted to hopefully have common sense as the main...sort of...guide, rather than a set of rules but recognise that we need rules, some simple rules just to make sure that behaviours were acceptable for everyone to start with.

**Interviewer**  
*What was the outcome of that?*
Participant: Mixed, I guess. I think, initially when we got over here it took a lot of getting used to. I was surprised, it took me longer to get used to than I thought it would. I thought, you know, I've been really in the thick of all of this hot-desking stuff, advocating it, really involved in the change process and yet I'm finding it very difficult, you know, missing my photographs on the wall and thinking, god, oh dear, twenty minutes to sort of plug their computer and find all this, but I think its shaken out, plus I think that other events have overtaken us like the restructuring has probably meant that people have put those other issues to the back of their mind. In a lot of ways, very successful. We've had a couple of forums here and I think the sorts of problems that came up were very small, practical things like nowhere to hang your coats but the communication for everybody has been so much better, so the really big things have been trivial. There's still an issue about team spaces, the perception that it might be better if teams could hot desk together, so I don't know if people still feel that they have lost some of their team identity. By and large it was successful.

Interviewer: *Give an example of a time when you would say you had been creative*

Participant: Yeah I guess the 'Recruitment Reunion'. I had this wacky idea, we sort of wanted to have this event following on from the 'You First' program that we did. We really wanted to look back and capture some of that and everything that we'd achieved over the year. We'd started to collect photographs etc that we knew we would, either as we left Meadowbank or when we came here, have them all displayed ... and we were sort of a bit lost as to what we were going to do with it all, so I just suddenly had the idea that ... videos of creating a pop video, with just showing the events over the year, the kind of motivational video, because morale had already started to get a bit low because of news of the new structure coming through, so something just to sort of say look what we've actually done, we've come a long way.... and I think it worked, it captured the moment and we looked forward to seeing it again.

Interviewer: *Why do you think it was creative?*

Participant: That's a very difficult question. I love the word creative. I think.... well I know, people have told me that I have an enthusiasm and I did this preferential insight, you know a questionnaire and enthusiasm is just one of the things there. I am more of a people person and a sort of shapes, colours person than a sort of numbers person and I think I'll always have a lean more towards that way. When you get team building days and they start of doing the stuff like give you a box of paper and scissors and everything, I'm just in there. It's just something in me, I just have to get in there and be creative, you know at You First I was getting up singing and dancing.

Interviewer: *Not so much why you like it but why do you think you are creative?*
Participant: Meaning what am I good at.

Interviewer: *How does that differ to being innovative?*

Participant: I think innovative, to me, seems to mean that you are thinking of new ideas, new ways of doing things, creative, you could be looking at something that has been happening for a while, which is doing it differently. I was often thinking about it when I have been in situations where that happens. I find that somebody might come up with an idea and I might build on it, they can have ideas as well but yes often I can build on other peoples ideas, so I would say that’s probably creative as opposed to innovative.

Interviewer: *Tell me about a time when you have used your knowledge of competitors in your role*

Participant: In Finance, I didn’t know or experience that. When I was working in Pilot Recruitment we used to collaborate, I think Swissair came over and there was more of a sharing of information there as to how they would select pilots and we would select pilots. I don’t think we actually changed anything or right about anything, they were more in a situation where they were coming to us because they perceived us to be the benchmark that they wanted to emulate.

Interviewer: *How important is it to have a knowledge of competitors?*

Participants: I think it’s really important. I did some benchmarking for these MBA salaries, just last week so yes I suppose in that sense, we tried to match others. Those are the sorts of areas where it is very useful to find out whether you’re keeping up with the market place….paying too much, not paying enough, etc, etc. That’s in terms of pure recruitment, in terms of the wider business sense, because you’ve got to know what competitors are doing. I suppose in British Airways we’ve always been the ones leading the market place but now we’re getting caught up the whole time, so it’s more and more important for us to sort of you know, look to what our competitors are doing, Virgin, etc, etc who are sort of overtaking us now and bringing things in much more quickly than we are. I hope we’re not working in an enclosed market place.

Interviewer: *Tell me about a time when you questioned or challenged a way of doing things or a way of working*

Participant: It’s hard to think of specific examples because when you are going through your working life, you move from one thing to another without actually looking back and thinking, ooh that was a challenge that.

Interviewer: *Would that confound your learning? You go from one to the other without stopping, do you think that would confound learning?*

Participant: I don’t think it helps learning. There have been moments when you have asked for an example where I have actually thought, ooh I’ve learnt something there, so yes I have been able to stop, but that’s not structured it’s just kind of like you know something’s happened or I’ve tried something. Yeah I suppose when I first came to
working in Finance, a very different style of people and culture within the department, very direct, very focused on numbers and figures, the complete opposite in a way, that I perceive myself to be. It’s quite intimidating to start with and initially the way I communicated with them was the way I communicated with anybody, you know quite chatty, etc, etc, and my manager at the time suggested try doing this, you don’t need to do that and I found myself mirroring sorts of behaviours that I was getting from finance clients, being more direct, thinking OK if I’m getting that, that, that and that, you know, I disagree kind of e-mail, its not a personal thing, it’s just the way they are and that actually worked very well, realising that you know there’s a point where you have to go in and take orders before you can sort of influence, you’ve got to sort of earn the credibility of the ground force so yes, that has been very important and I did stop and think OK, and I’ve used that since.

**Interviewer** Describe a recent opportunity that you had to learn something from someone else in the company.

**Participant** Yes I suppose at the moment, in the role of manager, just trying to pick up everything really, from budgeting process to sort of how to tackle everything. Its probably hasn’t been as easy as it could have been because peoples time has been taken up with the restructuring, etc, etc and actually that’s something else that I’ve learnt to put into practice, is asking a lot and not being afraid to ask stupid questions and I’ve found out within the management population, I have sought out people and said look, I’ve been asked to do this but I don’t have a clue, can you help me? And they’ve been really helpful in that sense, so for instance Jackie has sat down and gone through the budget with me, and we will continue to go through it and work together on that, so I feel comfortable...and think yeah, I don’t have to know it all know, it’s impossible for me to know it all now, but I will pick it up, it will be right, you won’t find me run out of money, but there won’t be a budget for it.

**Interviewer** Give me an example of a time when you’ve had to show an awareness of a role or a function of another department.

**Participant** Every day with your clients, you’ve got to try and make the effort to understand what their purpose it. I can think back to an individual, I understand one of the directors, who is quite challenging to work with and hasn’t really wanted to concern himself with people which is HR issues and consequently, it has made life quite difficult to recruit individuals for him. I understand it, that its because his brief is to come in and do a specific function of a new company around communications and that is what he was good at and that is what he’s here for...and that understanding he’s not here, his first priority is around fixing the communications
Interviewer: *How did you show your awareness or understanding?*

Participant: By being more flexible around our processes, going in with the sorts of language as well as that we were using, saying you know not saying 'you must do this', you know, 'if you'd had done this'... which isn't the sort of language I would use anyway, but going in and saying 'this is what we can do for you' and we can support you on this, we can shorten the process here for you, all of these things we have to do together, you know to protect the company etc, etc, so its kind of like striking a deal with him – 'yeah, I understand why you need x, y and z; we need to do x, y and z here and you know, this is how we can work together.

Interviewer: *How effective was that in getting your...*

Participant: It's on going... I think we reached an understanding and hopefully we will be involved in processes earlier than we will before – we need to work together and need to be included at the early stages of projects and not just an after thought.

Interviewer: *With reference to the previous question, how important is it that various functions and area of the business work together?*

Participant: It's vital. The functions are there because they are necessary for the business and everything they've got to contribute, you know the business would fall apart without it. And if you don't understand what the other functions are doing and they don't understand what you've got to do – they're all pulling in different directions. So it's vitally important.

Interviewer: *Do they work together as a system?*

Participant: Within BA. They should do yes. I think there's so much to know because of the size of the Company. I wouldn't claim to know everything in our own function or systems etc. you know within the one function of strategy, all the different things that we do, the different departments – I think it's the size of the Company that makes it difficult.

Interviewer: *How could it be optimised to make things easier?*

Participant: I think having open plan in places like Waterside, it functions here because you see each other more – it does help - it's communication; it's the only way you are going to do it. I think processes that are consistent – the technology, the websites, intranet where you can go in and look things up; some people prefer to talk to human beings and others prefer to be able to find the information themselves. Having lots of different ways to enable that communications.

Interviewer: You've spoken about the systems side of it - What about the people side of it?
Participant: Well, now we have the new structure and working with our PODs\(^1\) we’ve had two different PODs with two very different styles in both – one POD manager we went round to her house for the afternoon and learnt about our preferential style of working; I was a little bit sceptical about that to start with because I thought ‘here we go again – HR being all fluffy’ – it was really useful because we really focused on the best way to communicate amongst ourselves as a team and the fact that someone takes you into their house it instantly creates a bond an open invitation to their team meetings – you know that ‘s is like the ideal and consequently there is a tremendous feeling of support there and that you know if you don’t understand what everybody else does you won’t be afraid to pick up the phone and say ‘what are you doing here and what do you want to achieve?’; ‘oh right ok’. The other side of it is more individual who... and mirrors the style of the client very well and she is very direct and focused but you don’t hear anything back from her; she is very effective with the client and relates very well to them, but hasn’t met the people in her team at all yet. So you don’t know who’s doing what etc etc. A real contrast there.

Interviewer: What is your understanding of organisational learning?
Participant: Organisational learning. Oh my god.
Interviewer: What does it mean to you?
Participant: I don’t know what it means to me. Organisational learning – I suppose it would be how... an overview of what training and development is going across the Organisation, what capabilities we’ve got, what succession planning should come in there. So you can see what skills and capabilities you’ve got within the Organisation and how they are developing and planning how you might account for short falls and skills gaps so that the Company has all it needs to be able to continue.

Interviewer: What would the learning organisation look like?
Participant: A learning organisation. One where training and development is part of the norm and not one where it is a luxury or ok you’ve got this meeting to go to so you have to cancel that training course. One where people have responsibility for their own learning as well as managers supporting the individuals who are going out there managing their own learning, but being supported by the policies in the Company so ‘yes you have half a day you set a side, sacrosanct in stone to go and do some training and development’. The facilities aren’t bad – you’ve got the Quest Centre etc etc. centres that you know support that. However, people might not have the support from the managers to do so. Our operational planning needs to accommodate this.

END

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\(^1\) POD – People and Organisation Development
17.3 Interview 3: Manager (Purchasing & Contracts)

Interviewer  
*I want to look at the area of communication.*

Participant  
*Give me an example of an occasion when information was shared by you or a colleague.*

Participant  
Being the training manager now it’s about communicating the training plan. I send e-mails to the department and I also do it face-to-face. Face-to-face tends to be for business reviews. The business review is to communicate what has come out of the meetings at senior level affecting the business, how it affects our department and what we need to do.

Interviewer  
*Would you say this was done poorly or well?*

Participant  
Patchy to be honest. You need to be selective but then you’re accused of not communicating. If you give too much they will say ‘I don’t need to know that, what a waste of time’. Another example is what is on the intranet for self-help pages and tools to help your work. It’s an excellent tool but how many people use it. We provide tools for people and tell them about it but they still need to be spoon fed. We’ve lost face-to-face communication. Corporate communication is limited now. The previous director here preferred face-to-face communication but when we were spread out over different sites it made communication difficult.

Interviewer  
*Give me an example of when you, or a colleague, gave feedback to someone or to a group of people.*

Participant  
I see feedback as ongoing, not once a month. I do it day-to-day. My colleague who doesn’t directly work for me is leaving at the end of this month. He is good at doing the things he enjoys. The things he doesn’t he doesn’t perform well. I say we need to look at what we do well and we where and how we can tackle things differently. Doing it formally helped to raise the issue of his performance in what he enjoys etc and hopefully would state the importance of the issue. Whether it would be done daily or weekly basis. What’s best I don’t know. Some say I do it too much. I prefer the way I do it. I follow this format with everyone and helps you keep tabs on things and issues and they are not allowed to fester. I do this for both positive and negative feedback.

Interviewer  
*What could have been done differently?*

Participant  
I could be more focused when giving formal feedback for example formal reviews. I do it formally because you can stand back from the personal relationship and you’re in a better position to give difficult messages. This person takes things personally so doing things informally was not appropriate and as I said earlier its best to be consistent.

Interviewer  
*I want to look now at the area called Progressive.*
What does continuous development mean to you?

Participant
Development occurs in everything you do in your work, in every meeting and every supplier. It’s about seeking ways to learn and develop. It’s not about a course. It’s about trying to learn and looking for opportunities. You need to understand feedback from your manager. You adapt the way you do things. For example when a meeting was handled badly I think about what I could have done differently. We don’t reflect on those things we need to review. It’s brushed under the carpet. For example in sales and marketing training I did an interview and recorded it. You think it went ok. On my way home I listened to it in the car and it really helps you reflect on what you’ve done because inadvertently I reviewed what I was saying and how I was questioning. It was really powerful. I wonder if I hadn’t listened to it whether I could have improved what I was doing.

Interviewer
How important is continuous development?

Participant
It’s critical. In terms of formal training it’s important. People have to take on responsibility for their own development. Managers must understand and encourage that they have responsibility in terms of development. In formal training we need to get better at understanding what I can learn and do differently. We have too much formal training.

Interviewer
Do you pursue continuous learning?

Participant
Learning is about knowledge awareness. Development is about putting it into practice. It’s going out and reading an article, about being coached. Development is using that and putting it into practice. Continuous learning tells me something about education rather than something tangible and role or job related. You learn first then develop the idea and explore different ways of using what you’ve learnt. For example you learn to drive but then you develop as a driver. Development is not just about education but about developing in different ways. Learning sounds more like academia – theoretical. Development is practical. Learning can be for learning sake and development for specific goals. Learning is in certain areas. You learn about it but you realise you don’t want to develop in the area. You know about it but you don’t build on that knowledge if you don’t want to – ‘it doesn’t work for me’ approach.

Interviewer
Do continuous development and continuous learning differ?

Participant
Learning is part of development. Development is the umbrella under which learning takes place together with mentoring, coaching, shadowing and secondments. Development then becomes knowledge.

Interviewer
Do you pursue continuous learning?

Participant
I do but no as much as I would like to be honest. As part of my role I learn new things to apply them in the work place. But learning things that would be useful around the airline no so I don’t
learn to broaden my knowledge and career portfolio. I don’t learn as effectively as I would like.

**Interviewer**

*I want to look at the area called Competitive.*

**Participant**

I have that current dilemma. In Purchasing and Contracts I support the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS). We’ve done distance and modular learning. We spend up to £80k per year to get 12 people through per year. I said we need to support this – we pay for everything except their books. A colleague did some analysis and less than 50% of what they were doing is relevant to their role and I thought ‘well why spend the money?’ I decided I wanted this reviewed. I’ve empowered someone to review it and come up with recommendations. We did the project plan in October, myself and the individual taking on the project. It’s now January and I am still waiting for the report and recommendations. I feel he has been empowered to do it. He was a supporter of CIPS and its not working. Whether it’s because he’s leaving in January I don’t know. He’s had a lot of time and flexibility to do the project. Maybe I should have manage it more closely.

**Interviewer**

*What could you have done differently?*

**Participant**

When empowering you need to know you’re level of involvement. On reflection this person may not have the skills to do it and hasn’t said he needs help. Maybe I should have said ‘you need to do a project management course’ etc. I would still empower people though. I think as a manager you need to be aware who it suits and who it doesn’t. I have high standards and if things aren’t done to that you think ‘I should have done that myself’. Empowerment is no the abdication of responsibility that is ‘here’s something crap I don’t want to deal with’.

**Interviewer**

*What is it?*

**Participant**

It’s about making sure people have the right knowledge, ability and capability to do it or whatever. It so that they can have a challenge and a way of giving recognition. It’s about people understanding they have a certain amount of responsibility or ownership and no one else is going to make it happen but they should be offered support. We’re not good at it but we’re good at dumping.

**Interviewer**

*Do you think it is an effective method for managing others?*

**Participant**

Yes I do but as I said you need to recognise who it suits.

**Interviewer**

*Is it a practical method that you would use again?*

**Participant**

I’ve learnt from this experience and it hasn’t put me off.

**Interviewer**

*Tell me about a time when you or a colleague of yours tried out a new idea for example of working, implementing a new system or using a new product.*
Participant: I'm in the middle of trying out a new idea which is action learning. We don't have admin support. Historically people have been spoon fed about courses. I would have to physically list them on the courses. I've now put the courses on the Lan system so they can access it and place their names on the courses. It was about doing something themselves and not being spoon fed. I've caused myself more work because I get all the IT questions to get at it. Trying out a new idea is all very well but we need to get people more systems aware. It should be easier for them to do it than for me to e-mail me and me e-mail them to confirm them on the course. The idea I had should have made it a on stop shop. The idea I had has added value particularly as I don't have any admin support. I don't have time to do course lists and see if it's available for 0 or 30 people. It saves Company in terms of my time.

Interviewer: What have you learnt from trying out a new idea?
Once implemented it benefited everyone and despite teething problems it now works.

Interviewer: Give me an example of a time when you would say you were creative.
Participant: In my development programme in Purchasing my training has been traditional - you know in legal, finance and technically focused and based on what you need to know to get he job done. It's not broader development, people don't look around or think outside the box. I want incorporate action learning into shared learning and I think that's creative.

Interviewer: How creative are you compared to your colleagues?
Participant: Compared to those in training I'm average but compared to those in Purchasing I'm very good. I'd like to be more creative but you have to be realistic about what's feasible in the environment in which you work and remain credible.

Interviewer: How does that differ to being innovative?
Participant: Creative about your approach - you take something current and you do it differently, you use it in an original way. Innovation is doing new things; completely different and being creative is with what you already have.

Interviewer: Tell me about a time when you or a colleague have used knowledge of competitors.
Participant: Interesting question. I'm not sure in this role.

Interviewer: Is it useful in your role?
Participant: Yes it would be. I would look at what other companies are doing but not competitors. I look at banks, oil and supermarkets.

Interviewer: Why don't you look at other airlines?
Participant: In terms of purchasing and you talk about it you don't see other airlines as up there leading the purchasing arena.

Interviewer: Is that an advantage or disadvantage?
Participant: Probably a disadvantage because although small they may be
doing things that work. There wouldn’t be any reason to look at smaller airlines because they need to influence. We have the advantage that our orders tend to be very big so we get large discounts. In our section we influence less. I thought Shell were very good and we could learn from them, but it turned out that their programme wasn’t creative and were raving about it. Maybe we don’t talk about it enough. Shell had nothing that stood out, which I found them disappointing given that they are such a large branded company.

**Interviewer** Tell me about a time when you or a colleague challenged a way of working.

**Participant** When I moved into purchasing we used to... when people lost team members they just did the recruitment themselves. When I moved in they were 23 heads down. I was asked to run a recruitment drive. No one wanted to be involved and we set up a terms of reference on how it was going to work and got everybody’s agreement. Once offers were made to candidates managers wanted to be involved and wanted to conduct a second interview which was not in the Terms of Reference and we didn’t do it. This was something they used to do but has now stopped. I guess we changed something. Doing it the old way was so time consuming.

**Interviewer** How effective was that in terms of running that aspect of the business?

**Participant** It was quite effective as we got people in a short space of time with the confidence they could run their projects and perform well. The department has since taken on more projects, finished them ahead of schedule and become more effective and efficient in delivering our part of the business.

**Interviewer** I want to look at the area of team orientation.

**Participant** Describe a recent opportunity that you had to learn something from someone else in the Company.

**Participant** Working with my former boss. She spent time in training and development as well as commercial and operational roles. She was excellent at coaching. When I was running a session at the conference we went through the principles in the design of my piece. I found I had a star in terms of support. I learnt a lot from presentation skills, how to pitch the information at the right level for my audience and how to design the talk.

**Interviewer** Give me an example when it was important for you or a colleague to show awareness of the role and function of other departments.

**Participant** Currently we are doing a joint negotiation with sales. When people buy from us (Purchasing) we are selling. We set up a negotiation skills course which involved sales for a large Company initiative.
coming up. We did the course with sales and we reversed our roles. In this way both teams learnt about the other side of the fence. I learnt a lot about the different sales divisions. Although I have a background in sales I realised I didn’t know everything there was to know. When I work with other departments and they need equipment from aeroplanes to a desk I need to understand fully their business, their role and their department so that in the negotiations with our suppliers I can present a coherent and cohesive case.

**Interviewer**

*Give me a specific example when you worked with other functions.*

**Participant**

A lot of departments came together to work together on Learning Explorer. All departments pitched something in that would be useful and what they would expect from it. How many now actually use it or what’s happened to the project is another matter. It’s one of those things where planning wasn’t there.

**Interviewer**

*How did you show your awareness or understanding of the role and function of the other department?*

**Participant**

I go and visit them and listen to what they need. I ask questions and depending on the nature of the operation I shadow to observe how they are working and get an understanding for what their need is by directly seeing the problems or issues without it. There is a site on our intranet to find out more about other departments but I don’t use it much. I ought to use it more.

**Interviewer**

*Why was this awareness of the other department helpful in getting your or your team’s work done?*

**Participant**

It’s about understanding and working together. It avoids unnecessary mistakes and cock ups. It should ensure the correct delivery of work. The reality unfortunately is not always like that but that’s down to individuals.

**Interviewer**

*How important is it that departments work together?*

**Participant**

Very. If we are not careful we end up running as mini companies. Every department has their own budget and targets to meet. The whole is not cohesive. We are not cohesive in this department. We should stop thinking about my department but my organisation. You need to think ‘what is good for the Company as a whole?’.

**Interviewer**

*Do they work together as a system?*

**Participant**

No not really. Here the idea of system is IT not people or departments hence the fragmentation and you end up with the situation of not knowing what the left and right foot are doing.

**Interviewer**

*Are the departments linked together?*

**Participant**

They are linked in mind and words. For example I know that sales and marketing are linked – well you’d think so. Is it the case? Sometimes it is and others no. It’s difficult to answer. The instinctive answer is no they are not and they ought to be so you don’t get repetition. I think sometimes people don’t wait for another department to help or don’t like another’s suggestion or they don’t hear the answer they want so they go and do their own thing rather than trying to understand each other.
Interviewer: Should departments be linked together?
Participant: Yes because we are all working for the same end. It’s vital, more so now than the past as our competitors are not just other airlines and they are catching up. I don’t think we’d like to admit it but may be ahead in some cases.

Interviewer: What does organisational learning mean to you?
Participant: Very patchy understanding. We talk about learning organisations. We talk about learning and weaving it into the fabric of the organisation. Understanding what it can do. It is something that is second nature and integral to what we do. Review projects and share your findings with other departments. We never share what went well or badly and get input from other people to improve things for next time. We always think that ‘our way is best’ and seldom swallow our pride and take on advice. We’re not even close to being close to learning like that.

Interviewer: Why?
Participant: The Company has provided resources like Quest. At an individual level, managers are different when it comes to this and so you get inconsistencies. Some managers are keen others feel it’s a waste of time. Similarly for supporting lower grades. It must be two-way. How often do you hear about what the top team is doing. The only example is the Leadership project but that lost it’s way. That sort of thing should not remain at that level but should cascade down to everyone so we know what they are doing it for and serve as an example to everyone. Inform everyone should be part of a manager’s KPIs* and should be measured. We are provided with hardware (the internet, intranet, Quest* ) but it is down to individuals to make it happen. There is no commitment to it and we are short term focused on its benefits. The other thing of course if you go there you’re probably deemed as skiving depending on who your manager is.

Interviewer: What would a learning organisation look like to you?
Participant: Speedy. Efficient. Spending a lot more time encouraging people on their own learning. Review projects – integrate what can be passed on; identify common principles and make them the norm. The question is how do we integrate what we have learnt. I think from the things you’ve asked me like empowerment, sharing information and challenging the way of doing things would build more trust and openness and we might be a bit more ahead. You can ahead with innovations and products but people are also our product. When people join there should be good practices like ‘tell me what you have learnt today’ – this must be integral to the

* KPIs – Key Performance Indicators
* Quest – Quest is a resource centre for development. It is a library with books, journal and documents relating to various aspects of business. It also has computers for people to train on various software packages and or learn languages.

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induction. How often does Bob Ayling say 'this is what I’ve learnt today/month/year'... never! Not once, and nor do you hear any other director say it include the People* director. How often does anyone in a meeting start with 'I have learnt...'. I think the things we’ve spoken about are not developed in people and is something we need to do. Learning hard systems and processes is all very well, but you must have the softer stuff to go with it. That can and should be developed. The things we talked about barely happen. If they did we might see a different picture.

END

* People – In October 1999 British Airways consolidated it’s Human Resource (HR) department and took in other employee services and related HR functions under one umbrella term – People.
17.4 Interview 4: Management (Customer Services Manager Terminal 4 LHR)

**Interviewer**  
*Give me an example of when you shared information with a group of people.*

**Participant**  
All the time due to the nature of the environment. It is so fast moving that you have to be in touch and receive and pass on information all the time. I run meetings throughout the day because of the operation. Information is shared every am and pm - officially. But also shared all the time - every minute of the day. I have an open door policy as you can see, and it has to be because it’s a live environment.

**Interviewer**  
*Can you tell me a bit more about the meetings.*

**Participant**  
Yes. The am meeting is about how the operation is going and it’s with duty managers and some check-in staff. There are staff briefings for the A3 and A4 and that is mainly to pass on any information they need to know for the day. In the afternoon I have a meeting with the customer service managers to discuss any issues that have arisen during my shift. I also have one to ones with CSAs\(^2\) on my shift. Every 3 months there is a meeting with the DMs\(^3\) to discuss issues on a quarterly basis including budgets and any major events like forthcoming products. The CSM\(^4\) meeting is monthly. Depending who is on shift we have a weekly operations meeting. Everyone knows what is happening.

**Interviewer**  
*Give me an example when you gave feedback to someone.*

**Participant**  
I give a lot of feedback. I’m trying to introduce performance management. There blocking of it at present. The performance management we deal with at the moment is either recognition or dealing with particular issues like a CSA being rude to a passenger. I wouldn’t call that feedback. Also, I give feedback when a CSA does something well, for example when there has been a death on board and the CSA had to deal with it on the ground. A lot of this job relies on the good will of the team. For example on Saturday the terminal was a nightmare. We had to queues going out the main doors of the terminal. Flights were oversold by 200 people. We had delays and the terminal shut down in order to cope. It was all due to the rugby and half term. I gave feedback to CSAs that did really well and to those who coped well. I also gave feedback to the whole team and sought to give them an explanation as to why there was so much chaos. That makes them feel involved. I also ensure that I’m visible to help in these situations; being an extra pair of hands. The other thing I do is recognise people for the work they have done and it’s not

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\(^{2}\) CSAs - Customer Service Agents (check-in staff)  
\(^{3}\) DMs - Duty Managers  
\(^{4}\) CSM - Customer Service Manager
just about giving them a bottle of wine.

**Interviewer**

*What does continuous development mean to you?*

Continuous development. Development in your existing role. That role should remain interesting - in some cases people are happy to stay there. We seek to develop them in the role. It's about development career wise - know where they want to go. In the terminal it's difficult because of the nature of the operation. We have family tree meetings to discuss various issues including development. We try to give experience in other areas, for example in Compass. This helps everyone gain experience of other areas and gain a greater understanding of the Airline. I've worked in different areas of the airline and so have a broader experience.

**Interviewer**

*What does continuous learning mean to you?*

It overlaps with continuous learning. Well it does in the terminal. In the terminal you are learning all the time. Everyday is different and you learn everyday. No situation is the same. I think continuous learning is by experience at work. We try to offer shadowing for half a day in other areas - but that's continuous development - also people from other areas shadow us. I'm continuous learning all the time especially for disciplinaries processes - I go on courses for these.

**Interviewer**

*Tell me about a time when you empowered an individual.*

All the time - it's the nature of the operation. For example Neil is running the shift today and is making decisions in my place. On Saturday Neil felt empowered enough to print £4 refreshment vouchers for 200 staff as a result of the chaos. He knew it would be ok. The DMs feel empowered enough to run the operation; they may call me for back up, but they can and make decisions. Also as part of development I empower less experienced people so they learn - often through mistakes, but I ensure that they won't impact on our service. I have to empower all the time. In an office like Waterside the manager controls everything. Here Neil will make decisions that I don't need to know about. On Saturday we all had our heads together and I needed everybody's experience to get through the day. The teams helped me make decisions. Teams worked better together as the disruption went up.

**Interviewer**

*Tell me about a time when you, or a colleague of yours, tried out a new idea.*

I am trying to run a meeting at 16.15 in different locations for the DMs. Just for the outgoing shift to handover to the incoming shift. So far it has worked and made handovers easier and ensures that we do our best to communicate. The other thing...there is constant change here in the terminal and no one day is the same. I tried the unique queue system that we use on our international flights on our Euro services. It was purely to alleviate the queues and reduce the time it
took to check-in. So far it has worked ok but still needs development. The other thing is we always trial new brands and initiatives and feedback to marketing how it worked. Most things we do add value and improve the experience for passengers and helps us too - sometimes.

**Interviewer**

*Give me an example of when you would say you were creative.*

**Participant**

I'm constantly creative in this role. Last Saturday I was trying to get as many staff from all the areas of the terminal to help. There was total chaos. I had to come up with the best way to use everybody to meet our customers' needs; get the premium passengers dealt with as soon as possible. I separated staff who were travelling to a separate queue for them and shortened the queue for premium passengers. Today I'm being creative with the staff numbers we have available. The operation drives you to be creative - how you deal with the situation what resources you have. I had the idea to run 'road shows' for staff. I asked them what would interest them. We had a well-being road show so that staff could experience what the premium passengers have available. It was to inform staff about well-being in the air and so they were more attune with the products. There was massage and manicure for example as well. It helps morale and make things better for them with the small budget that we have.

**Interviewer**

*How is that different to being innovative?*

**Participant**

There's no difference to be honest. That's just fluffy speak really.

**Interviewer**

*Tell me about a time when you have used your knowledge of competitors in your role.*

**Participant**

In terminal 4 we are shielded from competitors to a certain extent. There are competitors here, but not to the extent of terminal 1, 2 or 3. Passengers tell us 'Virgin do this...' and 'Singapore do that...' - 'why don't we get it. It can either help us or hinder us. If Virgin do something that we don't then we can only say 'we don't'. We do think though 'we know - you wont get it here'. However, we have hearsay and not facts. No one from head office comes and tells us. The communication from other departments is poor. Brands are launched, new products are launched and we aren't told. It's then difficult to relate to the customer sometimes when they make enquiries of our products. We may tell other departments, particularly Marketing and Brands if there's anything going on or new in the terminal. That's because they never ask anyone. They come up with brilliant ideas of new products in 1st at check-in but don't always work - one reason is that they don't consult us for our input. After all we have the most contact with passengers and have to work using the product. HQ communication is poor - often we read about new products and stuff that will affect us when we read BA News.

**Interviewer**

*Tell me about a time when you questioned a way of working.*

**Participant**

Saturday we had queues out the door and staff who were travelling
were also in the queue, which is normal. However, I had passengers with J class priority\(^5\) which we have to check-in with everyone else. I suggested we pick up firm staff and give them a dedicated check-in area away from premium traffic. There were 200 staff travelling. I questioned why there were so many staff travelling as so many passengers were booked, it was half term weekend and it was international rugby weekend. In the terminal everybody challenges everybody. Trying to get the best ideas out really. I try to foster an environment where people can challenge each other. Sometimes it’s awful as morale is low, but it’ll never be high. We grumble over our working conditions. However, for those who leave the terminals often want to come back. They like the flexibility, everyday is different and it’s not 9 - 5. Sometimes we talk ourselves into low morale, but that helps us raise questions to improve things.

**Interviewer**

Describe an opportunity you have had to learn something from someone else.

**Participant**

All the time. Constantly. There are 4 CSMs working on a shift basis. If I’m stuck I’ll call one of the others. It’s difficult to give you an example here as I constantly learn. You have to. As I’ve said, everyday is different. No one day is the same. Saturday I had to deal with off-loads and I hadn’t really dealt with that being a CSM. I had to learn the procedure off the DMs and quickly too. I literally had to learn quickly and on the job. I had to learn the procedure, how many we offer alternatives to, what compensation we normally give.

**Interviewer**

Give me an example when it was important for you to show an awareness of the function or role of other departments.

**Participant**

You always need to know what other departments are doing. Connections, who deal with transfer loads, have to inform us of disruptions overseas so that we can prepare and know how we are going to load the outbound connection. It was important for me to know the developments of the new Club World seat/bed and the trialling of it. The trial was called Project Dusk and I had to know from Marketing what they wanted. I often work with HR Assist for disciplinary matters, attendance management, sickness, fraud cases and gross misconduct. So for that I need to know what HR do and how they work with me. I work with Finance for budgets. So as well as knowing about them I’ve had the opportunity to work with them - which is a form of learning and increases my awareness of the other departments in the airline.

**Interviewer**

How important is it that departments work together?

**Participant**

For us in the airport it is very important. We need to know what Connections, Special Services, Terminal 1 and Brands and Marketing are all doing. Apart from Brands and Marketing the departments are pretty much connected. Brands and Marketing’s relationship with us

\(^5\) J Class priority - business class
is pretty disjointed - theoretically there's a link but in reality it is pretty disjointed.

*Interviewer*  *What does organisational learning mean to you?*
*Participant*  It doesn't really mean anything. Learning through people in the organisation. Things we need to learn outside the operation - in other departments.

*Interviewer*  *What does the learning organisation look like to you?*
*Participant*  The learning organisation for us here would be shadowing in other areas. Doing cross-company visits to other areas. It’s great to broaden our outlook.

**END**
17.5 Interview 5: Management (Corporate Communications)

Interviewer  
Give me an example when you shared information with someone or a group of people.

Participant  
I do it all the time. The best way is I run forums in operations and I ran the business exchange briefings. I allow for questions which I answer there and then or I’ll try and get back to them by the end of the day. It is the most effective way.

Interviewer  
What did you do well?

Participant  
Probably open enough for them to ask questions especially when it’s a change in strategy and everyone gets nervous about their jobs. A lot of communication is down to who runs the department. Maisy is a really good leader and cascades the information down to her manager. For me, I have found that the best thing is openness. I even invite colleagues from other departments to join my team meetings so they can get an understanding of my section and saves time booking time with them to brief them.

Interviewer  
Give me an example of a time when you gave feedback to someone.

Participant  
I gave feedback to a communications executive in my team on her performance. I discussed how she did, her strengths. She was new to the role and so we covered transferable skills. Performance review was about her capabilities and examples when she demonstrated them. I got her to speak about what she wanted and what she needed to develop. We also discussed what she wanted to develop. I asked her if there was anything she could do better and then I told her my perceptions - fortunately they matched. I’m lucky I’ve never had anyone difficult to feedback to. With my experience in the terminals and in the office I’ve found that in the office they welcome feedback but in the terminal they see as ‘checking up on them’.

Interviewer  
What do you do well?

Participant  
Fair and honest. I say fair - I find it difficult to give formative feedback. If people have strengths I build these up and development of their weaknesses but don’t go on about them too much. I’ve been on the receiving end on what needed to be developed and I just came out focusing on my weaknesses. Build strengths and you feel more confident and want to tackle the weaknesses.

Interviewer  
What could you improve?

Participant  
I should try to stop being to be too prescriptive in giving solutions and get the appraisee to come up with solutions. My role should be more one of facilitation.

Interviewer  
What does continuous development mean to you?

Participant  
Well having a plan is the first thing. Without one you don’t do any of it. It’s a mixture of things; appropriate things that would be helpful though. It includes sharing best practice with other companies.
Having an environment where you can practice your new skills - we don’t have that here. It would be nice to have after-training support. I found that people put their books away after a course and don’t go back to them. I’m guilty of that. However, recently I got my Consultancy Skills course notes out after a year. Continuous development means setting targets throughout the year and putting a percentage of time aside for training. I never get round to it either due to lack of self-discipline or overtaken by things. You need to be encouraged and get yourself into a situation and putting yourself into scary situations to practice the training, for example with presentations training I put into practice when I presented to the leadership team. Here the team of Communications managers decided we needed training and development so we I designed a course for us. We spoke to training and development and delivered it ourselves - it was really useful. I did the same in service and development in the terminals. I did project management skills course for them - it was really useful and an enjoyable day. I normally don’t do that as I hate training. It’s nice to have an expert trainer and someone from the line.

**Interviewer**

*What does continuous learning mean to you?*

**Participant**

Continuous learning? Networking and communication. Making and creating opportunities to meet with those of your peers in other departments and to know what they are doing and learning. I think I’m guilty of not doing enough computer based training - I don’t go to Quest for that. However, I use the library a lot and it’s most useful for my learning. I find it useful to nominate a mentor for myself. My mentor was an SM and I had a buddy who was a manager so I could get an objective view on what I was doing. I went to my mentor to check how I was doing and getting on. She was the sort of person I would most like to be. I use her as a role model. We talk about how I’m developing and my buddy is just a general chat. I encourage my colleagues to do this as well.

**Interviewer**

*Tell me about the last time you or a fellow manager empowered an individual.*

**Participant**

The best example is when I ran a communications team. I set up communications champions and these are A’ scales who have no experience of communications including presentation and writing skills. With my team we did the ‘Communications for Results’ course. I wanted them to go back to their departments to tell their departments to tell their managers about the course and to go on it. Empowerment is about equipping people before empowering them for example observe or working with me as we expect a lot from people and don’t support delivery. I empowered them to be representatives for their departments by having had the training and equipping. It gives them credibility, confidence and deliver what is being asked of them for example writing and presentation skills. It was very
rewarding because they would say proudly ‘that’s my article’ – I helped them stylise it for publication in BA News. I operations it was
to give the team credibility. I went with them to their managers to
derend what they are doing – ‘this is what we intend doing and I’m
going to support it’. In Contracts they did it on their own and I did get
the manager on board as well. I left them to it too much. I made
the assumption they could do it. I gave no training and that was a real
mistake.

**Interviewer**
Is this an effective way of managing people?
**Participant**
Yes. Definitely, as long as you support them and be there so that you
can catch them if they fall. It signals an element of trust and ‘there if
you need me’. If there’s not trust you haven’t got a department that
works in view.

**Interviewer**
Tell me about a time when you tried out a new idea.
**Participant**
The successful one was – I got a lot of calls from Corporate
Communications when I was on the Line. I set up an employee panel
and said what do you think of this by phone and e-mail and so I had a
test bed on a particular issue I would give the feedback to Corporate
Comms with commentary and quotes. I introduced ‘Talking point’ –
an info kiosk which had an interactive touchscreen kiosk on which
you could leave questions and people could answer (all
anonymously). It also had a news area. Lovely and glossy expensive
idea that completely bombed. I started the work before I researched.
People didn’t want to leave their desks in the Compass Centre which
is open to crew. The kiosk was on the top floor only so people didn’t
really do out of their way to go up there.

**Interviewer**
What did you learn from this?
**Participant**
I learnt that the best way is to research before hand and what people
would use and what they wanted. What is it trying to achieve with
other communications channels? I developed a communications
exchange which worked well but it was based on your pc – it was
anonymous though. But it served its purpose and worked well.

**Interviewer**
Give me an example of when you would say you have been creative.
**Participant**
It’s the prerequisite of this job I think. The example I can give is I
produced a video on CD. The creative bit was coming up with the
idea to get your ideas across and it was a user friendly system. This
job is hinged on the creativity to come up with solutions that the
leadership team want to communicate their key messages internally
and externally. They should generate excitement, ensure it’s a two-
way tool and ensure they got something back from employees and the
City. I came up with an initial idea on something done in another
company. Just the product, interviewing and filming and as far as
possible in few takes – ‘What the content was, we have 5 minutes to
do this’ and having scripts so that we didn’t have to edit afterwards.

**Interviewer**
Why do you think you’re creative?
**Participant**
Everyone is born with that gift. I enjoy the job I do – the
communications and the writing. You can give people tips on creativity and opening your mind and freeing yourself. There is no such thing as not being creative. You can go on courses. Insights is really useful – it tells you your preferred style at work. People come back and say you’re this red, blue. It should be made explicit that it’s not about being one type or another.

**Interviewer**  
**Participant**  
*How does creativity differ to innovative?*  
I think creativity is inherent and therefore you tap into it. Innovation is about action and delivering an idea. You can innovate without being creative. This is really difficult. I’m not sure. Creative is drawing ideas from surroundings and what you’re doing. Innovative is doing something new – but that creative is more to do with applying it.

**Interviewer**  
Tell me about a time when you used your knowledge of competitors in your role.

**Participant**  
That’s tricky. In communications competitors tend to be other airlines. The evidence of that is Virgin. Virgin’s marketing is very good. We don’t tend to find out about their internal communications. Microsoft and Nike are not competitors but I know that they are very good. In Contracts Handling I spoke to one of the girls working for Virgin about their internal communications for example what info do they get from their forums. They had weekly briefings and operations groups have daily morning briefings and flyers. I wanted to find out if they did anything different. I don’t think I have used knowledge of competitors.

**Interviewer**  
*Do you think you should know about competitors?*

**Participant**  
Yes I do definitely. Thinking about it now it would be useful to find out a company with well motivated staff to find out what they do. That ought to be a competitor. I’ve used competitor information for informing decisions. So if a company has an announcement of a product launch then I would find something to communicate internally and intensely to focus away from the competitor and also to communicate externally to take away their limelight. I tend to do internal releases.

**Interviewer**  
Tell me about a time you challenged a way of working.

**Participant**  
My job is around this as I go in and say this isn’t working. In Ops I was brought in to unite the department and bring people together and went around and found out what wasn’t working and find out why. I interviewed both managers and non-managers. With the World Sales Team – overseas they say they don’t get enough support from HQ so Dale Moss (GM for Sales) does his world tour to find out information. People in out stations question him and we get leaders in teams do this. We’ve got Dale role modelling it and benefits coming out – we’ll sell the benefits and get it implemented. If I want my team to do it I’d have to do it myself – role modelling and empowerment. The way things are done are e-mails – it should be face-to-face for
example walk abouts. My idea was to do Dale’s tour should be worldwide and managers to do their regions for example the Asia-Pacific. I’ve put in a plan together of how we might do this. Newsletter and low tech and high tech option; match channels to needs without duplication and make it applicable locally.

**Interviewer**

**Participant**

*Describe a time when you learnt something from someone else.*

Loads. Dale is a good example. The reason for his world tour is visibility. I learnt he’s able and supportive of his team, talks strait and cuts through the business jargon and makes the message more meaningful for people. He leads by example and probably the most critical thing for managers and directors to do. Scilla. She’s so successful – she leads by example and knew costs. She knows how to empower. She is a remarkable person to work for. She’s good at setting direction and knew what she wanted and collaborated with colleagues. She had me all along to her management meetings. She met once a week and a big meeting every month. She allowed a forum of ideas when someone put forward a problem or idea.

**Interviewer**

**Participant**

*Where have you applied what you have learnt?*

I try to follow Scillas’s example. I try to be open and honest. I apply what I’ve learnt at meetings and around the office.

**Interviewer**

**Participant**

*Give me an example of when it was important for you to show awareness of the role and function of other departments.*

It is important to have an understanding of all departments. For example, in Ops Control I take care of three areas. If there was a delay with an aircraft I needed to know who I had to communicate with. I had to know the roles and what and where information was for example I had to know where there was fuel backlog on the tarmac. I have to understand Finance, IM and their processed.

**Interviewer**

**Participant**

*How do you show awareness of them?*

By recognising their needs as much as your own. For example from corporate communications I would be aware through the close relationship with departments and knew what their priorities were. Having an awareness can make your job 90% effective... definitely.

**Interviewer**

**Participant**

*How important is it that departments work together?*

It’s critical.

**Interviewer**

**Participant**

*Do they operate as a system?*

Some are. Some don’t. It is very unbalanced and not consistent and depends on personal relationships. If there are good relations between senior teams like Dale and Beverley their departments work well together. For the People department it is vital that it works well with every other department as it provides a service to other departments. As does Finance. Elsewhere it’s fairly ambiguous with informal links. Indeed where there should be links there aren’t any like Brands and Strategy.
**Interviewer** 
*Why is it important?*

Participant:  
It is absolutely important. Firstly to reduce duplication and fill in the gaps. For example, if specific departments are called in late to deal or get involved with specific issues they don’t have planning time and it’s all done ad hoc and often there’s a lot of confusion. We’ve had some real cockups and have resulted in competitive disadvantage overseas. Competitors have launched something and we’ve had no strategy to compensate. There’s a hot issue that’s going around and that is that one of our competitors was doing something and while we were communicating with each other (our own depts) one of our European alliance partners was missed off the communications and were not informed because she wasn’t here and was missed out of the loop so our alliance partner didn’t have any information on the competitor and could do anything to counterbalance the competitor’s actions. It was a bad distribution list on e-mail and nothing else. That simple.

**Interviewer** 
*What does organisational learning mean to you?*

Participant:  
It says for me – as the whole employee base constantly in a culture of development and training with strong connections with companies outside to benchmark. It is ingrained in the culture and routinely encouraged rather than just an individual’s thing.

**Interviewer**  
*Do you think BA does this?*

Participant:  
What is espoused is very different to the action. Our Training & Development facilities are second to none but the line fail to support that effectively. People get snide remarks about going on training or doing courses. Other areas may be better but in Ops – no. Empowerment and role models would help. We did help with work on Good People Management in the last two years but we’ve reversed it all. For example we launched fairness in recruitment and selection – it lost credibility because people were lost into jobs during the restructuring. Good People Management simply went out of the window. The Employees Opinion Survey resulted in initiatives but now we’ve restructured those plans are no longer relevant and out of the window.

**Interviewer**  
*What does the learning organisation look like to you?*

Participant:  
It would be like when I worked in Ops with a powerful leader. It was and should be accepted that people need time out to train people. People work with departments not directly relevant to their department so an element of development in some cases is necessary. We need to see more facilities locally. The learning organisation would be colourful and lively. You would get a sense where it’s working – people are talking and there’s dialogue.

END