

# 7 Principles to Shape the Workplace of Tomorrow

Developing the  
workplace of tomorrow  
when people and planet  
really matter



**oasis**

School of Human Relations



Our thanks go to all the people who generously gave of their time, insights and wisdom through interviews, focus groups and written contributions.

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Trust more; control less

***'It always seems impossible until it's done.'***

Nelson Mandela

## Preface

***'Every few hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp transformation. Within a few short decades, society rearranges itself – its world view; its basic values; its social and political structure; its arts; its key institutions ... We are currently living in such a transformation.'*** Peter Drucker\*

The workplace has a critical and unique role for people. It is where most of us spend most of our lives and where we shape our livelihoods. The workplace is an emergent setting that is being called to go beyond 'business as usual'. What we know, how we use it, what we believe in, how we want to organise ourselves and, above all, the nature and quality of our relationships, will underpin the autonomy and connectivity that frames the workplace of tomorrow.

Oasis is a radical learning organisation committed to inspiring and developing relationships for the 21st century. We see the workplace as a crucible and a servant for creating life-affirming activity. As we asked our own questions about the potential transformations facing the workplace, we wanted to learn from people across all walks of life, from business to third sector, from arts to technology, from public to emergent, representing a dynamic cross-section of backgrounds, ages, contexts and ways of looking at the world of work. This research brings together the findings from these learning conversations.

There are numerous dependencies and interdependencies in the workplace that affect how people lead and work together – systemic constraints can hinder the most authentic organisations. Education and development (in its broadest sense) are fundamental building blocks to creating and taking responsibility for our own future.

\* Peter F Drucker, *Post-capitalist Society*, Routledge, 1994

This requires an awareness of our own and others' wellbeing, and the capacity to be accountable and responsible to self and others in ways that are counter-cultural in many sectors at present. It is challenging, uncomfortable and will become more so as more becomes uncertain. However, it is heartening to find that more and more people are awake to the understanding that the world is changing.

Although sustainable practices in the workplace and beyond can and must be legislated for, real change will come when people and organisations live more sustainably from the inside out: maintaining a nurturing connection with the planet; creating space for reflective and value-based practice; holding awareness of possibilities and technologies for the future whilst remaining in touch with present realities; and making conscious decisions in life and work based on core values.

We are in a time of fundamental change and the future remains uncertain. This was the context in which we raised a key question to deepen our ongoing inquiry into the workplace of the future: **'What are the requirements for the workplace of tomorrow if people and planet really matter?'** We hope this work encourages and supports your journey to developing what is needed.

**Nick Ellerby, Claire Maxwell, Chris Neligan, Marion Ragaliauskas**  
Oasis Co-directors

*'In times of change  
learners inherit the Earth...  
while the learned find  
themselves beautifully  
equipped to deal with  
a world that no longer  
exists.'* Eric Hoffer



## Introduction

At Oasis, we believe all good development begins with a good question, and that the responses to a good question can encourage further and deeper exploration with a wider group of people than those directly involved. We hope this paper will facilitate and promote ongoing dialogue and meaningful action. Its sections are as follows:

**Section 1** outlines the **purpose, background and methodology**.

**Section 2** summarises **13 paradoxes affecting the workplace**. These may offer a path to the hidden truths that unlock the heart of the issues and can guide our focus for the future to emerge.

**Section 3** identifies **7 principles that seek to respond to the paradoxes**. They are not intended to be exhaustive but rather are intended as a stimulus for further dialogue and engagement. This section also considers two emergent themes that go beyond the principles.

**Section 4** conveys **possible actions**, gathered from the contributions of all those who participated, and aims to encourage meaningful action.

**Section 5** lists the **contributors and acknowledgements**.

### Purpose

We hope this project helps to encourage engagement in developing the workplace of tomorrow; certainly the call for change is loud and clear. This work offers signposts but most importantly the encouragement to be bold. If we are to be bold we need to be prepared to make mistakes and learn from them, to bridge new collaborations, to take risks, to innovate and to be prepared to not have all the answers. Not only will that be bold, it will also be liberating.



The Workplace of Tomorrow project aims to:

- discover through dialogue the changing nature of the workplace
- identify what development is required for the future
- provide opportunities for stimulating, engaging and catalysing individuals and organisations towards actions and ideas for shaping the future
- share the findings with a wider audience.

## Background

In 2004, the Oasis School of Human Relations were initiating partners in a global inquiry, founded by the EFMD and supported by the UN Global Compact, into how to develop the next generation of globally responsible leadership. In the same year Oasis embarked on a UK collaborative inquiry into the nature and role of leadership in the 21st century.

Our findings identified collaborative approaches as central to many emergent leadership practices.\* In 2009, aligned with a number of Oasis and global initiatives, and a question about our own future, we launched a UK project to explore the requirements for developing the workplace of tomorrow if people and planet really matter.

The workplace of tomorrow of course is no longer defined by place. Big Data, cloud computing, mobility and internet technologies are shaping and changing how we work, how we organise and how we build our organisations. As a relational species, we have a need to connect with others and our workplaces have traditionally been a source of community, and for many, meaning. So for this work, we define the workplace as the context in which we connect to our work and those we work with.

\* *Working Relationships for the 21st Century: A Guide to Authentic Collaboration*, Oasis Press, 2010

## Methodology

The Oasis School of Human Relations commissioned an independent author and researcher, Audrey Birt, together with a small internal team, to conduct interviews and discussion groups. This built on the seminars and written submissions undertaken previously.

The project comprised three stages:

### 1. Revisiting the research question

- a. A review of the original findings including written submissions from guest and specialist contributors.
- b. Interviews with fifty leaders and developers across a range of sectors in person or by telephone, to hear transformational perspectives in response to a series of future-orientated questions considering the state of the workplace of the future and identifying the requirements.
- c. Interviews with the directors group at the Oasis School of Human Relations, who have facilitated deep culture change and global initiatives and over decades have been committed to developing more whole person approaches to influence the future.
- d. Identifying examples of organisations and individuals open to deeper engagement with the questions.

### 2. Checking and refining

- a. Consultation to shape a first findings paper to communicate with interviewees the 'paradoxes of the workplace'.

- b. Consultation and feedback from interviewees and new contributors in workplaces to consider the validity of the first findings.
- c. Facilitated discussion groups and second phase interviews focusing on the requirements of the workplace.

### **3. Disseminating and engaging**

- a. Shaping principles for practice to bring the recommendations for developing the workplace into a suitable message for wider communication.
- b. Maximising opportunities for people across sectors to consider the findings, connect with engaged workplaces and create impact.

## Initial findings

The biggest surprise was the consistency of the themes across all contexts and sectors. The call that stood out from the initial phase of the research was for more connectedness, more collaboration, more trust, and simply more humanity in the workplace of tomorrow. These can all be stymied by control, attachment to old models and the application of single solutions to complex issues. Engagement of the workforce was identified by all to be vital to success. It's about human needs being met. And what was clear was that in the main people felt ill-prepared for the workplace of tomorrow. Feelings related to unpreparedness, uncertainty and unpredictability can influence people's potential for moving forward, trapping them in the present. All those we engaged with shared an enthusiasm for the future but many were stuck in the present.

The differences that emerged related to the global or local nature of the work and particular economic circumstances. Paradoxically the opportunities brought about by change, uncertainty and crisis engendered a palpable excitement in many and brought a dynamic energy to the dialogue.

We heard diverse perspectives on the future and people's capacity to perceive the opportunities in change – ranging from those feeling trapped in the present and its daily toil, others hovering on the brink of change and a third group recognising the power that fundamental change can bring in the workplace.

We noted that the process of the interview itself enabled some people to step back and view the potential for the future in a different and more empowered way.



In comparison to 2009, participants emphasised the impact on people more than planet. Where environmental issues were mentioned, they tended to be in connection with legal or contractual requirements. However those who are actively embracing the interconnectedness of people and planet in their work consistently reported significant benefits at both people and organisational level.

One interviewee stated that being a leader for our time is really about ***learning to sit with paradox***. For us this was a Eureka moment. We recognised that the interviewees were sitting with a number of paradoxes and conflicts, which they identified as impacting hugely on the workplace of tomorrow.

# **13 paradoxes in the workplace when people and planet really matter**

## More with less

The pressures and stresses linked to doing **more with less** were evident in all of the settings we explored, with very few exceptions. The once powerful approach of doing more with less has, for many innovative and resourceful interviewees, now outlived its applicability. For many there is no more slack in the system, and the cost is on the person and the planet. Many acknowledged that people can't go on as they are, causing increased sick-leave in most sectors. Another concern is that those pressures result in less creativity and innovation. A perfect storm, creating a potential paralysis in the system.

## Growth of extreme wealth alongside the growth in poverty

Evidence is building that an **increasing number in our society are paying the price of growth for a few**. The unprecedented spread of food banks across the UK was identified as a powerful example of this. As the growth in numbers of working poor is linked to zero hours contracts, part-time hours and the lack of a living wage; the pattern of bonuses for the wealthy remains the norm. Although there is mounting dialogue around this concerning reality, the existing paradigm remains largely unchallenged.

It is well documented that in times of recession compassion for others declines. There is evidence that this recent recession is no different. Although there are signs across all four nations of increased need, we have also witnessed an increase in the use of language such as the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor and the blaming of those most vulnerable; the sick and the poor, for their own plight. A concern about how this manifests in society was frequently mentioned in interviews.

*'What we need is a drive towards unity of the separated.'*

Andrew Lyon

## Control, creativity and humanity

As pressures grow in the work environment, **trust is the casualty of increased control**. Many identified that increased controls caused the demise of the quality of the service they sought to improve. Linked to this is an externally-driven target culture, which in the perception of many sits alongside a decrease in the quality of human relationships and humanity. Where external targets have been reduced, for instance in housing, systems continue to imitate the control paradigm. Somehow the focus on externally-set or poorly-owned targets has detached the very people they are intended to motivate. We identified an implicit requirement for more self and peer approaches to be shaped and developed. These approaches require more self-awareness and personal accountability and a shift from a hierarchical system of control to a greater emphasis on individual and mutual responsibility. As the future calls for even more creativity, flexibility and entrepreneurship, a counter force for greater and more centralised controls emerges. This too is affected by an aversion to stepping away from 'business as usual' and the dominant paradigms that in turn lead to less experimentation and collective sleepwalking.

## Technology both connector and isolator

While technology was recognised as **part of the solution**, to the issues created by changing demography for example, it was **invariably also described as one of the problems**. Although technology can offer solutions, many were concerned that it also created distance and barriers to human relationships in the workplace. Flexible working continues to be a growing trend but so too is the recognition of the need for relationship, connection and a sense of community, which is leading to people seeking more relational workplace opportunities. This is not to be confused with bringing people back into workplace settings as a means of control.





Technology creates structures. Structures shape our relationships. Where those structures enable aloneness and isolation the risk of loneliness is increased. Despite people having more connections through social media than ever before, we are seeing an increase in loneliness in our society. Respondents recognised that the trend to remote working could have an impact on wellbeing in the longer term. When isolation leads to loneliness it has the same impact on health as obesity and smoking 15 cigarettes a day.\*

### Information, communication and wisdom

Technology, the internet and social media allow us **instant access to vast amounts of information, but the emergence of knowledge, and even wisdom, is challenged by lack of time** and a reduction in opportunities for, or valuing of, dialogue, discussion and reflective practice. The shift in the nature of sources of information means that people are receiving more but may have less opportunity for making meaning. However the trend towards increased blogging and access to communication channels gives voice to alternatives to the dominant culture. Linked to information technology, cyber-security is becoming a significant concern for all organisations.

### Simplicity and complexity

Time is a stretched resource for many with **less time available to deal with more and more complex issues**. This is in part linked to the **more with less** paradox but is also the contradiction of trying to find simple solutions to complex or 'wicked' issues.† Expending more effort to try to fix a problem using outdated approaches and tools was seen as very common and a huge source of frustration.

\* See <http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-research> † Rittel and Webber, 1973

## Growth and sustainability

The ongoing **commitment to economic growth was seen by many to risk rather than secure the future of our children and our planet.** The need to serve shareholders and investors is frequently at odds with the need to serve people, community and planet. So moves to co-operative and collaborative working, which interviewees saw as viable alternatives to the dominant paradigm, are perceived as very demanding when compared to existing models reliant on the primary motivations of growth and competition. Such models are significantly challenged by the need for a sustainable relationship with the planet, particularly felt by large corporations under pressure to achieve ever-greater profits and market dominance.

## Knowing and uncertainty

It was recognised that many in leadership roles tend to believe and feel pressure that they need to have all **the answers and certainty, despite often having to manage not knowing.** Although many recognise that complex issues need a different style of leadership, there is still a tendency to recruit heroic leaders in times of uncertainty. The paradox is held within this tendency to ignore what experience is teaching us – that traditional forms of leadership need to change. When we are under pressure we revert to the familiar, even when the evidence suggests it doesn't work.

## Global and local

Governments are investing in research and creating new markets on a global scale, whilst large businesses are stretching their markets, especially to emerging economies like Africa and South America, to become globally competitive. Alongside this global trend, interest is soaring at community level for locally-sourced goods, including food. Those we interviewed

suggested both **markets call for different skill sets than are currently the norm.**

The traditionally-trained leader is expected to become a global collaborator, working in partnership with other cultures, although often with insufficient focus on ethics and values. At local level the entrepreneurship, global awareness and flexible ways of working required are not necessarily being developed in school or even college or university. Students continue to be prepared for linear rather than multifaceted careers.

### Walking the talk

Many pointed out the gap between an organisation's stated policies, values or intentions and its behaviour in practice. For example, **policies of co-production sabotaged by control mechanisms and contracting arrangements.** Interviewees acknowledged that it is not organisations that change, it is the people within them. There was a recognition of the potential potency of change starting with each person, and that moving from a culture of individual to global citizenship requires both an individual and systemic shift. The world needs to change, but for that to happen, so do each of us.

### Demography: valuing youth and experience

Organisations are finding they must strive to meet the needs of a young and developing workforce who communicate differently and have different expectations of their workplaces. By contrast, an older generation, who remain longer in the workplace than in the past, have different needs and skill sets. **Flexible working and work/life balance** are the clarion calls for both generations. But as work lives and life expectancy extend, we heard a new call to move to what we term work/life blending that adds a third aspect reflecting a desire for meaningful contribution across life and work activities. This will require at the very least a different psychological contract with work in the future.

*'We are the traffic jam.'*

Andrew Lyon,  
Associate Consultant,  
International Futures  
Forum

*'I do believe in people's ability to adapt and change, create new things, but going through this time of change will have an enormous impact on health, especially causing mental health problems.'*

Catherine Devitt

## Health and wellbeing

Stress and depression were mentioned by everyone interviewed as the modern epidemic. Although recent years have seen an **increased focus on health and wellbeing in the workplace, there has also been an increase in mental health issues especially linked to longer-term sick leave** that may demonstrate the impact of our changing times and the contradictions that shape our daily work. One interviewee stated: 'the old world is dying but has not yet been replaced by the new'; encapsulating a wider sense of us living through a transitional time that may be significantly influencing our mental health. In addition, while many are calling out for change, the signs are that many others are actively resisting it, creating almost a cultural 'cognitive dissonance' which is impacting on us all.

## Willingness and willpower

In considering the management of change, interviewees talked of the perceived need to apply willpower to shape the future, whilst others referred to bringing an openness and willingness to work with the emergent. People most successful in effecting change started by prioritising the future requirements of the workplace of tomorrow; most importantly by keeping an open mind. **Being willing and open was found to be a much more successful approach than trying to exert willpower** to achieve change. By bringing curiosity to the workplace and paying attention to where paradoxes live, interviewees discovered the innovations, creativities and generative images required for transformational change.

***'If people and planet mattered we would create organisations that were focused on building social and environmental capital, where power was distributed and responsibility and benefits shared more.'*** Rick Cross, The Riversmeet Community Network

## Learning to work with paradox

Perhaps the most encouraging paradox of all is that the growing consciousness of the contradictions and paradoxes suggests that there is a greater recognition of the need to move forward in a different way. There was tangible optimism that the time has come to not only acknowledge the reality of the significant issues, but also to recognise the need for change and address the challenges, through learning to sit with the fundamental challenge of the paradoxes. We need to learn from them to deepen our understanding, get in touch with what we value, take meaningful action and through this the opportunity for a better and more conscious future will emerge. This means a more connected, more collaborative world and a relational economy based on more co-operation and less competition, whilst ensuring a workplace that is viable and sustainable.

### Why paradox and what makes it important?

A paradox is defined as a seemingly absurd contradictory statement, which when investigated may prove to be well-founded. In the second phase of the co-research project we found the paradoxes resonated for people. They spoke to their current, and more importantly, future context, providing the landscape from which the principles and requirements for the workplace of tomorrow emerged.

***'The ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think.'*** Søren Kierkegaard

***'And that's where we are now as human beings; a beautiful, difficult period in between, a grand metamorphosis.'***

Marcel Dekker,  
Director/Owner,  
Elementaal/Mindconnexion



## **7 principles to shape the workplace of tomorrow**

These principles contain a call to embrace radical thought and action. We recognise that for many such radical approaches will be already living in practice and for others, will be more difficult to comprehend, synthesise or implement. This paper seeks to hold the creative tension between the call for radical change and the need to remain in dialogue with those open to listening but not yet ready for significant action. We encourage you to be inspired to **think big, act small, be bold** and most importantly **start now**.

## 1. Connect people with their passion, their purpose and their planet

At its core this principle encourages the engagement of hearts and minds in finding the most effective ways forward. Consider the analogy of the forest. When we invest in the whole forest and not just the thriving trees, everything grows stronger and benefits from a flourishing and generative ecosystem. Similarly, shared ownership models, co-operatives, globally responsible practices and peer approaches can seed stable, thriving, high production workplaces that ensure the rich resources are fully utilised and the rewards are shared. Local communities then thrive as opposed to wealth being held in the hands of the few. This aligns people with passion, purpose and planet in a way that holds the potential to benefit all. Moving towards models such as shared ownership and implementing a living wage could transform communities, support sustainable growth and reduce poverty.

The first step in this process is awareness. As we build awareness of the way we operate we create greater awareness of others, of diversity, of our interconnectedness and of the effect of all we do on all others on the planet. Rather than seeing building self-awareness as self-indulgence, we recognise that it is a fundamental component of the healthy complex societies, organisations and communities in which we hope to exist.

***‘Could the pursuit of a common good be sufficient to awaken the will, talents and spirit of individuals in greater abundance than the pursuit of “me” ever did? What would working energetically for the common good look like? Would it enrich the spirit sufficiently to compensate for the material loss?’*** Jonathan Wild, former CEO, Bettys & Taylors Group

***'What we need is  
emergent, dynamic  
self-governance.'***  
Edinburgh Focus Group

## 2. From leadership to leaderful

***'The challenges that we as a society face demand courage, flexibility, innovation, resilience, robust relationships and dogged determination to make a difference...and to keep trying. This requires new and different ways of working. No one person or small group of people has all the answers.'***  
**Angela Lockwood, CEO, North Star Housing Group**

The workplace of tomorrow calls for a move from hierarchy towards flatter organisational structures. Our research confirmed the need to reinvent leadership as well as organisations. Leaders already feel unprepared for the environment in which they function, even questioning the future of leadership in its existing form.

Interviewees favoured a future in which it is recognised that each of us is capable of affecting change and bringing about positive outcomes. Whilst recognising the fundamental necessity for survival, and with financial viability and day-to-day operations a given, a distributive style of leadership which enables power to be shared was felt to be the way forward for stepping effectively into the workplace of tomorrow.

Generally those we interviewed recognised that a model of leadership is required but that the future requires emergent forms of leadership that move beyond the individual image to one that reflects a more collaborative consciousness, within a more connected and interdependent context. Leaders at local, national and global level will need to be connectors and collaborators. Their knowledge base will include cultural understanding, value-based working and cross-cultural collaboration as well as an understanding of and commitment to sustainability. Their core skills will include empathy and coaching; their style will be enabling and relational.



In practice the move through the turbulent spectrum from hierarchy to shared leadership approaches is a demanding one and is easier said than done. This requires a shift from a leader who holds all the authority to one who enables leadership in all. So the leader of tomorrow will need to give up power and control, enabling leaderful behaviours that allow each of us to take responsibility for ourselves, our part in the workplace and in our wider environment.

For each of us to be accountable and leaderful we will all need to be equipped with the skills and attitudes that have previously been more associated with leaders than with followers. The workplace of tomorrow will call for each of us to find our leadership capacities within.

***'Can you allow the natural connections to self-organise around a common purpose? Privilege social connection rather than purpose... creating a shared sense of contribution.'***

Edinburgh Focus Group

### 3. Create authentic organisations

***'In the workplace of tomorrow we will need clearer values that will attract the right people, along with different ways of working to facilitate flexibility, a sense of shared responsibility and accountability, a shift away from materialism (although generous benefits are important), ethical behaviour, leaders "letting go" to encourage collaboration in decision making, a change from employers as "parents" to employers and employees enjoying an adult relationship.'***

**Lesley Wild, Pro-Chancellor, The University of York and Chair of Bettys & Taylors Group**

Interviewees recognised that authentic leaders are value based, open, transparent, relational and even willing to be vulnerable, to acknowledge the 'not knowing'; self-aware at their core. But if we sit this work in the context of the evolving needs of complex, demanding organisations, both public and private, we must also acknowledge that it is not just individuals who need to be authentic, the system in which they function also needs to be value based and authentic.

What does that mean in practice for interviewees? It means an open culture, where values are aligned and shared. It's an organisation that as part of its expressed values, welcomes and responds to honest, respectful challenge, where passion and purpose are aligned and where there is a shared responsibility to affect action.

Values and the authentic practice of them need a shared, consistent and unwavering commitment from board to front line. Diagnosing and understanding areas of tension and dysfunction is also essential to enable appropriate focus for development. It can often identify unknown stressors such as in this example from a housing association:

***'The diagnostic work undertaken at the outset was crucial to plan the focus of the work. It identified that a source of stress for housing managers was increasingly, as the recession and welfare changes were biting, having clients with no food or money for electricity on a Friday afternoon. It's hard to be faced by such hardship and feel powerless.'***

#### **Towards Authentic Organisations**

- 1.** A more autonomous workplace.
- 2.** Connectivity in society (not just the workplace).
- 3.** The search for meaning and identity as the planet gets more fragmented, complex and insecure.

While this approach needs the investment of time and commitment, as organisations became more authentic they reported a resulting increase in wellbeing and productivity. Reductions in stress, mental ill-health and sick leave were other notable impacts. When organisations ask if they can afford to work differently, those outcomes demand the reply: can you afford not to?

***'We have adult-to-adult relationships that strengthen our commitment to fairness, honesty, transparency and personal responsibility. We are all encouraged to be involved within the business, to provide challenge and feedback and are all influential. We are confident in trying new things and we all contribute towards improvements.'***

Angela Lockwood, CEO,  
North Star Housing Group

***'The challenge for me when I am working is how to open people's mindsets to the possibility that anything could happen, to staying curious and being open to letting go of having to do it their own way and enabling them to be free to co-create something different with others.'***

**Jane Senior**

#### **4. Approach complexity with inquiry**

***'I work in the NHS and like most of my colleagues I want to make a difference to the lives of the people and the communities we live in. It is no longer good enough just to get the job done, to focus on our functional objectives. The job needs to be done in a way that in itself can contribute to the idea of personal and social wellbeing (and perhaps nowadays environmental wellbeing too).'***

**Andy Crawford**

Challenging and reinventing traditional linear structures and decision-making processes will be commonplace in the workplace of the future, turning on its head the convention that knowledge lies with seniority and that the function of leadership is to have all the answers.

Learning from the workplace of tomorrow research project reinforced the need for organisations to have mechanisms that respond to complex interconnected systems at all levels while also trying to function and effectively work with uncertainty. The shared experiences of respondents pointed towards heroic leadership styles tending to fail in this context. Leadership approaches need to engage curiosity and questioning to be able to respond to complex issues. Enabling a safe, honest and genuine dialogic inquiry approach within an authentic culture helps to access the deeper wisdoms of all of those involved and creates openness to learning.

Inquiry processes are many shapes and sizes according to context but all need to start with a good question; the question that gets to the heart the issues. Bringing inquiry to issues can create shared understanding of the subject and also shared responsibility for seeking a resolution. Inquiry moves us from fearing failure to committing to the future, even when there is increasing unpredictability.



From small community-based organisations, to complex public services and global collaboratives, inquiry approaches are releasing energy and potential and building the platforms for connection and collaboration.

***'In collaboratories, which are essentially a new form of global inquiry, learning is spurred when diversity of experience and knowledge is present and the head, heart, hand and will are engaged. All are essential for the workplace of tomorrow.'***

**Claire Maxwell, Co-director of Oasis School of Human Relations and Board Member, Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative**

***'We have learned from trying to find simple solutions to complex issues that we need to use a collaborative inquiry approach. The technique works but needs time to get to the right question.'***

**Mary Godfrey,  
Bettys & Taylors Group**

## 5. Develop relational innovations

***'There is a move to virtual services for vulnerable people, this means vulnerable people will be expected to be experts – or have a good knowledge of IT. This can be quite detrimental to their wellbeing as they will not have the human contact – a trend which is already creating isolation.'*** Yasmin Khan, Director, Staying Put

It is a shared view that the possibilities and impact of emergent technologies are as unknown as they are immense. Ensuring that technology aligns with human values will be part of the ongoing challenge and inevitable debate over the coming decades. We must remain awake and responsive not only to the benefits of the development of technology but also to the emerging unintended consequences.

In the near future the paradox of technology which both connects and disconnects is real and impactful. With the increase in single households and an aging population, with the consequent crisis in dependency ratios, we have both an impending care crisis and a loneliness epidemic. If technology is to be part of the solution then systems need to be relational in their design. We need to ensure that technology and social media enable and enhance face-to-face relationships, which we know create more depth, breadth, empathy and commitment. The risk to our individual and societal wellbeing is when technology replaces real social contact.

Demographic changes and global networks require technology to support connection. Families and businesses connected across the globe through digital technology create a template for flexible working practices, even at a more local level. Technology can allow a diverse workforce to contribute and enable all to play their part. But we are social beings, with a deep-seated desire for connection, and our systems need to offer relational choices to avoid a path to long-term isolation.

Relational innovations are beyond technology. They relate to each person taking more responsibility than before for influencing and shaping the future, whilst working with others to dream, co-create and harness ideas. The creative power of technology has a place in this process and can enhance flexible and person-centred ways of working, rather than stifling them. Innovation in an interconnected world will be through and out of relationship.

***'A company has only to put one foot wrong (think about the BP oil spillage) and within minutes opinion is being expressed all over the on-line channels. There is no room to hide from poor customer service, faulty products, angry employees, and a shoddy approach to the environment.'*** Zoe Whitby, ZW Coaching

***'Whereas safeguarding children is clearly essential, in the interests of protecting them from physical or sexual harm, we run the risk of creating a different type of harm to their relational view of their world.'***

Ruth Shakespeare,  
Wellbeing Consultant

## 6. Trust more; control less

The dynamic of controlling less and trusting more is not a fixed one; it is a subtle relational dance which responds to context.

The successes we found in the research were in organisations that had moved to support leaderful behaviours across all levels. With a shared compelling vision and a clear purpose in place, employees are encouraged to self-organise and self-manage to reach common objectives. In these cases, working from a set of guiding principles and shared values, not controls or indeed targets, has increased both quality and productivity.

Success requires commitment at all levels in the organisation; from governance to shop floor. Building organisational and individual resilience is a fundamental component of sustaining trust and encouraging active citizenship.

One consequence of more trust and less control is that change will happen from the grassroots up and will have impacts beyond the workplace. It will call for schools to be more connected through a massive re-think of education and a new emphasis on interpersonal skills, creativity, communication and what it means to be a human being on a shared planet. This principle requires people to exercise their democratic power to influence a pro-active and connected government. In the workplace global responsibility will grow through the younger generation's awareness of planetary issues and ease with communicating across cultural boundaries.

***'In the NHS there is a dissonance between the person-centred approach and the traditional hierarchies of control...when under pressure there is often a default to command and control.'*** Hazel Mackenzie, Head of the National Leadership Unit, NHS Education for Scotland



## 7. Pattern hope to help the future emerge

In this project we have time and again heard the need for hope. A sense of hopelessness, even more than powerlessness, has a negative impact on the health of individuals and organisations. The loss of predictability and breakdown of trust in outer authorities has engendered a more self-responsible stance in some, while others grasp for more certainty via fundamentalism or corporate paternalism. The media continues to promote consumerism, the cult of the personality, and the old ideologies.

There is a desire for authenticity, work/life blend and more meaning and hope. While there is a small minority who can articulate this shift there are millions more who are simply feeling disaffection, disempowerment and despair without being able to identify a way forward, and even among the more informed denial is rife.

Among those who are patterning hope, there is a great sense of urgency to make changes yesterday and maybe not enough acknowledgement that real change takes time and is a slow, deep process. This creates a danger that rather than creating something new, makeshift solutions will be built on old foundations, creating more of the same and sabotaging the opportunity for sustainable transformation.

To achieve a pattern of hope we have to move from an emphasis on deficit, to valuing our assets in all their forms, including social, economic and environmental. Our current paradigm tells us that certainty helps us to feel hopeful; or at least safe. This principle emphasises the need to be bold about the future and embrace uncertainty, something which is countercultural in our current political and economic systems. Learning to live with uncertainty is becoming one of the most important skills. Research shows that people faced with disaster who can respond in a new and spontaneous way, rather than trying to apply learning from the past, are more able to survive.

***'Help people see they can blur boundaries between life and work so work is less delineated.'***

Gill Coombs

*'My ongoing challenge is finding ways to effectively and meaningfully embody the values in personal practice.'* Andy Crawford

It's important to change the conversations from what we can't do, to what we can. We need to focus on our strengths. We need to equip ourselves with the abilities to adapt into the future. We need to build into our practice mechanisms that enable us to face up to the current challenges. It's the job of all of us, from practitioners to organisational decision makers and indeed global leaders to inspire people to shape the future with courage, resilience, honesty and hope.

***'To convince individuals to engage more in the wider world, you have to make them see what positive impact such engagement could have on their immediate quality of life, and perhaps what impact not doing anything may also have. Unless people and communities and business see this link, many will not make the effort to get out of their parochial comfort zones.'*** Susan Ralphs, CEO, The Ethical Property Company



## Beyond the principles

In developing the principles, two complementary themes arose; one relating to a deeper sense of meaning, the other to the levels of consciousness required for the future.

### Love and resilience

Love and the workplace are uneasy bedfellows. When love is translated as 'seeking to understand' or 'deep interest' it seems more palatable. Within the interviews we broached the topic gently. Many stumbled when it came to exploring the role and nature of love in the workplace of tomorrow. This reaction is not unfamiliar; a quiet discomfort descending, a kind of cloud of embarrassment. Yet the need for love in our working lives was recognised. In a world where traditional approaches to seeking meaning are shrinking, it is likely that many will seek personal meaning through the workplace, and in turn hope that more of their whole person will have a place at work.

As the relational nature of work increases, it may require some relationship to love as part of its foundation. In this context of love at work, the Dalai Lama explores whether leaders can create positive change for all. He believes they can by creating organisations with a warm and strong heart, which in turn results in much more life satisfaction and happiness:

***'The task of leaders who want to create positive change for all is among the most challenging and yet rewarding in the world. If the result is companies with a warm and strong heart, much more satisfaction with life and happiness will be the result.'*\***

\* *The Leader's Way: The Art of Making the Right Decisions in Our Careers, Our Companies, and the World at Large*, The Dalai Lama and Laurens van den Muyzenberg, Crown Business, 2009

***'We embrace love by putting "people before process".'*** Mary Godfrey,  
Joint CEO/Director of  
Change and Performance,  
Bettys & Taylors Group

***'Managing the scarce resources of money and carbon will be the touchstone of all business management in the next generation. But so too will managing demographic change, as more of us have long-term responsibilities to care for friends and family.'***

Julia Unwin CBE,  
Chief Executive, Joseph  
Rowntree Foundation

Linked to this, resilience was the quality that interviewees identified as most needed by all of us in the workforce. Relationships are at the core of successful business and effective leadership at all levels, but traditional systems and policies as well as technology can fracture them. The need now is for 'love to be a driver for policy', as one participant described it.

### **I, We, All of Us**

The planetary question remained elusive. Our frame of reference tends to start with a limited view of the self, without a strong sense of interconnectivity with our planet, and our worldview is shaped by that. People we spoke to recognised that planetary responsibilities were crowded out by immediate challenges or priorities. And yet there was also a frisson of guilt, of discomfort, of recognising the dissonance that resulted. Even those with a strong planetary commitment in their stated values experienced the challenge of making that a reality when budgets are stretched.

As a consequence, to fully embrace the workplace of tomorrow we need to evolve beyond 'I' and 'we' to fully include 'all of us'. Perhaps this is the ultimate challenge not just in our workplaces but also in our societies. We witness political unrest around the world that often results in distrust of the other, manifest in talk of controlling immigration and increasing border controls. At the same time we also acknowledge the importance of our rich and interconnected world. A factor may be that as we increase our ability to connect, it seems our sense of self, of our workplace, of nationhood has an increased need to be recognised.



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As fully responsible individuals we recognise the need for the ability to influence our own futures within our lives and our workplaces, to find our own voice and agency. It is our view that as such a state is developed we release the capacity to embrace the 'I', 'we' and 'all of us'. So local vs. global is less of a paradox and more of a continuum of interconnectedness, where each element needs to support the other to thrive.

For the 'I', 'we' and 'all of us' to be a reality in our workplaces and in our world we need to develop our whole selves, authentic organisations and a commitment to global wellbeing. No small ask, but if people and planet do really matter then the resulting impact benefits us all.

***'Boldness has genius,  
power and magic in it.  
Begin it now.'***

## Actions

	Individual	Organisational
<b>Connect people with their passion, their purpose and their planet</b>	<p>Be clear what you stand for.</p> <p>Find out what's really important to your colleagues.</p> <p>Commit to working with a small group of others to promote what you stand for.</p> <p>Find ways of sharing ideas and actions that value the planet.</p> <p>Experiment with a daily practice that improves your wellbeing over time.</p>	<p>Build awareness of planetary issues, human relations and earth relations.</p> <p>Use fewer resources.</p> <p>Design to connect passion, purpose and planet.</p> <p>Consider and prototype alternatives to growth.</p> <p>Revisit your purpose with a view to incorporating sustainability for the planet.</p> <p>Provide development opportunities that encourage the whole person at work.</p> <p>Encourage new forms of organisation that manifest shared ownership.</p>
<b>From leadership to leaderful</b>	<p>Seek to align what you say with what you do.</p> <p>Find something you would like to change and get help to change it.</p> <p>Volunteer for something that you think will make a difference.</p> <p>Voice the positive suggestion that's on the tip of your tongue.</p> <p>Develop your own self-assessment for how you are doing and share it with someone you trust.</p> <p>Ask for feedback from someone you trust.</p>	<p>Empower the workforce to find some of the answers.</p> <p>Develop managers as facilitators and developers as others.</p> <p>Prototype reward systems that recognise leadership rather than leaders.</p> <p>Offer development that encourages eco-leadership rather than ego-leadership.</p> <p>Stimulate discussions at board level about distributed leadership approaches.</p> <p>Prototype joint and collaborative CEO models.</p>
<b>Create authentic organisations</b>	<p>List your values, what you really want to live by.</p> <p>Notice when are you most yourself – this might give clues to what is important to you.</p> <p>Consider which actions support and demonstrate what you value.</p> <p>Find the ways that enhance your own wellbeing – be the change you want to encourage.</p> <p>Become more of who you are and find a workplace that aligns with what's important.</p>	<p>Question core values; develop shared values; communicate vision and values.</p> <p>Decide to be ethical and be clear what that means.</p> <p>Find ways to be even more transparent.</p> <p>Be open to feedback and learning.</p> <p>Actively encourage empathy, integrity and creativity.</p> <p>Practise responsible purchasing.</p> <p>Deliver messages consistently and listen to what people say.</p> <p>Create accountability with customers and suppliers.</p>

	Individual	Organisational
<b>Approach complexity with inquiry</b>	<p>Good development starts with a good question – find yours.</p> <p>Be curious rather than always being sure.</p> <p>Learn something new.</p> <p>Find a challenge that engages you and requires others to be involved.</p> <p>Ask questions to trigger change.</p> <p>Remember – sometimes it is simple.</p>	<p>Focus on the questions for which your organisation doesn't yet have an answer.</p> <p>Establish an inquiry process – appreciative, collaborative, co-operative – and discover what a difference it can make.</p> <p>Find ways to work with the unexpected partner.</p> <p>Work on a future picture; encourage people to visualise what the future might be.</p> <p>Start conversations with local partnerships about changing the way you work together.</p>
<b>Develop relational innovations</b>	<p>When you communicate, consider how the message and the medium can develop the relationship rather than diminish it.</p> <p>Take time to meet in person. Walk over and talk.</p> <p>Get comfortable with technology – be ready.</p> <p>Experiment with random ways of connecting with people you wouldn't usually meet.</p> <p>Practise empathy.</p> <p>Remember – it is possible to disconnect.</p>	<p>Check the extent to which the technology being utilised serves your values as well as the economics.</p> <p>Trust in your organisation will be linked to the security of your information, embed integrity in its implementation.</p> <p>Support technology that enhances the person, their relationships and their wellbeing.</p> <p>Encourage innovation through the many rather than the few.</p> <p>Encourage community intrapreneurship.</p>
<b>Trust more; control less</b>	<p>Join a peer group – learn, do, develop.</p> <p>Meet the other as an equal and start from there.</p> <p>Trust yourself more.</p> <p>Be clear what the boundaries really are – we often impose more than are required.</p> <p>Celebrate workplaces that extend trust.</p>	<p>Prototype new forms of organising.</p> <p>Try self and peer approaches.</p> <p>Encourage opportunities for more people in more places to influence the future.</p> <p>Treat people as adults; tell them the bad news.</p>
<b>Pattern hope to help the future emerge</b>	<p>Get engaged in a life-affirming community activity.</p> <p>Allow yourself to imagine a future you could create.</p> <p>Set yourself some clear and realistic goals.</p> <p>Establish your own small group of supporters and advisors.</p> <p>Look for role models.</p> <p>Do three things that would be better for the world.</p>	<p>Invest in being the best for the world, rather than the best in the world.</p> <p>Move from economic to multiple bottom line measures.</p> <p>Make explicit what is being lost, and what the potentials are for the future.</p> <p>Consider human-sized ambitions.</p> <p>Tell stories of change and provide examples of the workplace of tomorrow where people and planet really matter.</p> <p>Wake people up and harness the will for change.</p>

## Appendix

This paper captures the learning journey to this point. It's our hope that it does justice to all those who shared with us their thoughts, ideas, passions and hopes; thank you all so much.

All those who contributed generously gave their time and insights and participated individually rather than on behalf of their organisations. Their views are not necessarily the views of their organisation. Their names, job titles and organisations are listed below – accurate at the time of writing although some have changed roles between being interviewed and publication. Those who took part in both cycles are marked with an asterisk.

### Interviewees

Steve Allan, Deputy Chief Constable, Police Scotland  
 Sam Anderson, Manager, The Junction  
 Miranda Ash, Chief Community Evangelist, WorldBlu  
 Doug Bate, Treasurer, United Bank of Africa  
 Jules Bevis, IT Communications and Events Co-ordinator, Gatwick Airport  
 Karen Birch, The 3rd Director, Co-operative Business Development Consultancy  
 Martin Bjerregaard, Co-Owner, Rainmaking ApS  
 Paul Bradbrook, Director, Positive Return  
 Steve Brooker, Director, SCAN HR  
 Andy Brown, Managing Director, Taylors of Harrogate  
 Phillip Burnett, Team Lead, Microsoft  
 Joanna Causon, CEO, Institute of Customer Services  
 Charline Collard, Independent International Business Developer  
 Gill Coombs, Writer, Coach and Facilitator  
 Andy Crawford, Head of Clinical Governance, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde  
 Rick Cross, Community Leader, Riversmeet Community Network\*  
 Marcel Dekker, Director/Owner, Elementaal/Mindconnexion  
 Catherine Devitt, Director of People and Organisations, Breakthrough Breast Cancer  
 Mark Drewell, Chief Executive, Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative  
 Martyn Evans, CEO, The Carnegie Trust  
 Kerry Falconer, Managing Director, Adam & Company  
 Jim Finlayson, Director of Employee Relations and Engagement, Thales UK  
 Mary Godfrey, Joint CEO/Director of Change and Performance, Bettys & Taylors Group



Steve Hearsum, Development Consultant, Roffey Park Institute  
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 Ruth Ibegbuna, CEO, RECLAIM  
 Dr Aled Jones, Director, Anglia Ruskin University  
 Geoff Jukes, Founder Trustee, Meridian Trust  
 Yasmin Khan, Director, Staying Put  
 John Knights, Chairman, Leadershape  
 Angela Lockwood, CEO, North Star Housing Group  
 Andrew Lyon, Associate Consultant, International Futures Forum  
 Jim McCormack, Consultant Associate in Scotland,  
 Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
 Hazel Mackenzie, Head of the National Leadership Unit,  
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 Paul Martin, Vice Principal, University West of Scotland  
 Ed Mayo, Secretary General, Co-operatives UK  
 Monica Merson, Head of Health and Wellbeing Team, NHS Health Scotland  
 Andrew Muirhead, Executive Vice Chairman, Asian Venture  
 Philanthropy Network  
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 David Pickard, Group Director of Operations, Thirteen Group  
 Angela Portz, former Chief Executive, York CVS, Independent Consultant  
 Cath Purdy, Chief Executive, Vela Group\*  
 Susan Ralphs, Managing Director, Ethical Property Company\*  
 May Redfern, Freelance Museums Advisor  
 Jonathan Smith, Leadership Development Manager,  
 Devon & Cornwall Police\*  
 Jan Sobieraj, Managing Director, NHS Leadership Academy

Mick Stanley, Museum and Heritage Consultant  
 Bill Tate, Director, The Institute for Systemic Leadership  
 Andy Wood, CEO, Adnams Brewery  
 Chris Worts, Head of People Support, Skipton Building Society\*  
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 Maggy Barnes, Finance Manager  
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