

Purple Your People

Find out about Jane Sunley's new book and how you can get your hands on learnpurple secrets!

The other side

Learnpurple Launches in the United Arab Emirates

Read about learnpurple's new office in Dubai and its managing director, Lynne Zarbhanelian..

This side

The story on Julia Edmonds - in 60 seconds!

Julia Edmonds, Managing Director of Lexington Catering shares her experiences.

The other side

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HARNESSING TALENT TO DELIVER BUSINESS GROWTH

People make or break a business. The right people, in the right roles, doing the right tasks, excellently. The talent and will of individuals combined drive business success. Whether you are a small to medium sized organisation (SME) or large organisation, optimising all talent is business critical. However, at a time when input is needed most, in many cases, this has slowed due to lack of resource. Quite often the all important 'people stuff' simply falls off the bottom of the list. However there's plenty that can be done without the need for heavy investment in the form of money or time.

Our latest report, 'Harnessing Talent to Deliver Business Growth', takes a closer look at these challenges and the impact they have on SMEs and fast-growth businesses. We asked key questions of our purple revolutionaries (www.learnpurple.com/purple-revolution), clients and networks associated with Lancaster Management University and Cranfield Business School to find out the issues they've faced in challenging times and, more importantly, how they manage talent to support business progression. The findings were very enlightening and the full report will be available via our website in April. Here's a preview:

Challenges

Looking at the retail, creative, technology and hospitality sectors, it is clear to see that the challenges faced by SMEs and fast-growth organisations are the same across all walks of life. Although financial reasons (70%) and lack of time (66%) emerged as main issues and the dominant reason why compromises were made around people development; organisations in this bracket are also facing challenges around:

- change management
- communications
- managing people
- roles and responsibilities

Managing change

As an SME grows it will inevitably experience change and this must be managed well. Communication, defining key messages and goals, as well as the deployment of change champions, are key. Time spent planning will show a major return on investment down the line.

Communications

Growth organisations often continue with the methods utilised when the company first started, meaning people end up receiving sporadic communications, miss important information or hear half the story. All of these pose the risk of demotivating your people and causing unrest and distrust. Many companies are investing in text messaging systems to get messages out simultaneously and consistently and the need for an internal communications review is clear.

Managing people

86% of respondents agreed that managing and developing people in order to support business objectives is difficult in a fast-growth organisation. Interestingly, for the online retail and technology markets, attracting talent proves less difficult than retaining. They tend to hire people from a larger business background who then find the challenges and culture of an SME difficult to handle, ending with them leaving, often within six months of joining. Inspiring values also fell into this bracket. Start-ups tend to live their values by 'osmosis' but as they grow it is forgotten that people no longer 'think they way they do' and the culture of the organisation begins to dissolve. Defining, refining, communicating and, of paramount importance, leaders (at all levels) walking the talk are absolutely vital.

Roles and responsibilities

Often the responsibility of managing and developing people lies in the hands of managing directors and chief executives, using up valuable time which could be spent on seeking new business opportunities



or exploring ideas. Our survey backed this up with 38% stating the managing director and 19% the chief executive with the responsibility of establishing performance and people development / talent strategy. If systems can be implemented whereby individuals can drive their own progress and development this will free up executive time and make for a more vibrant learning culture.

Achieving success through your people

In order to overcome these challenges, SMEs and fast-growth organisations must plan for people management, development and achieving business success. This is always far easier said than done, which is exactly why our report also outlines steps to support success based on our unique approach to joined up talent management - 'The Purple Plan'.

Supporting planning

To create solutions, establishing a simple yet robust people management strategy in manageable chunks will deliver the support needed to ensure people a managed consistently in the business. This should begin with your cultures and values to ensure they continue to be instilled as your business grows. Once you have sorted this out, then you can design your 'people promise' and 'how we do things around here'. Your plan will then be based around how you can deliver, monitor and measure these two key features.

Maintaining competitive advantage

With growth, the need to maintain competitive advantage escalates. Aside from brand and product offering, people are the reason why customers choose to do business with you. Recruiting the right people into your business to begin with will help ensure you are ahead of the game. It's vital to look at cultural and values fit, not just skills and experience when you are hiring. Hire for attitude and train for skill.

Once every single individual knows and is living and breathing your values, the next step is to focus on managing and developing talent within your organisation.

Robust, yet simple talent management processes are vital, be it online or otherwise. Consistently tracking and managing individual performance throughout growth ensures people can work towards their potential and remember to treat them as individuals because one size does not fit all.

This article was based upon the new learnpurple 'Harnessing Talent for Business Growth' report which will be available at the end of April. For a hard copy, please contact emilyperry@learnpurple.com alternatively a PDF version will be made available on the website.

By Emily Perry

LEARNPURPLE LAUNCHES IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Organisations across the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are now able to access our expertise in talent management, learning and development, employee engagement and people retention through our fabulous new office - learnpurple UAE.

Based in Dubai, this Middle Eastern 'Purple Palace' will be headed up by managing director, Lynne Zarbhanelian. Lynne has enjoyed a highly successful career spanning more than two decades both within and recruiting for the five-star hotel industry and is dedicated to helping organisations attract, engage, develop and retain the talent they need to prosper and grow.

The concept for learnpurple UAE was originally discussed over two years ago when Lynne was introduced to learnpurple and talenttoolbox. Lynne comments "When I met with Jane (Sunley, CEO) and Jo (Harley, Director) and was introduced to the 'purple' world I quickly recognised the opportunity to bring learnpurple to the UAE. With a fast-growing tourism industry across the UAE, the talenttoolbox family of solutions, along with the participant-led learning and development, can really help change organisations and create best places to work."

Jane Sunley, founder and CEO of learnpurple adds "With learnpurple products and services now transforming businesses in 22 countries across the world and with a growing number of internationally based clients, expanding learnpurple globally has always been in our agenda. The success of our learnpurple Scotland office assured us that learnpurple UAE is the natural next step."

Born in England, Lynne has worked in the Gulf since 1992, initially in Bahrain and then Dubai, working for companies such as Forte and Starwood Hotels. She was also part of the opening team at the One&Only Royal Mirage where she led the human resources and training department in the successful launch of this prestigious property.

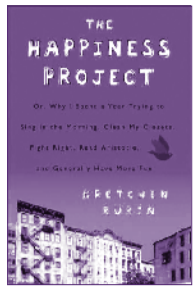
Prior to joining learnpurple, Lynne founded The Hospitality Company in 2002. This leading Dubai-based organisation provided hospitality and recruitment consultancy services to the world's most renowned international five-star hotels, restaurants, airlines, leisure and retail companies. In addition to this, Lynne also provided strategic HR consultancy to senior hospitality clients.

Michael Scully, Managing Director of Hospitality at the Dubai based SevenTides Group, welcomes the addition of learnpurple UAE to the purple family "For organisations across the UAE, the opening of this office couldn't have come at a better time and will certainly help us as an industry deliver real benefits and excellent customer service."

Back in the UK, we are all really excited about our new office and can't wait to tell you more in our next edition of 'Purple'. In the mean time, if you would like more information about learnpurple UAE and how it can help your organisation, please contact Lynne on tel: +971 50 625 1582 or lynne@learnpurple.com

THE HAPPINESS PROJECT BY GRETCHEN RUBIN

Reviewed by learnpurple training director, Mary-Jane Flanagan



Something I spend a lot of time on for myself, my team and the people we deliver development to is how to be the best 'you'. This is what 'The Happiness Project' is all about. Gretchen Rubin looks to uncover the meaning of happiness in order to discover the small and simple steps which help people become more fulfilled.

Whilst this sounds like a 'fluffy piece', this is no lightweight book. It considers theories from Aristotle and the Dalai Lama together with philosophy, scientific research and real life experiences in order to delve deeply behind 'What makes people happy and why?'

The book is written around a year of Rubin searching for satisfaction and happiness. Interestingly though she isn't unhappy, unlike Elizabeth Gilbert author of the bestselling book and film 'Eat, Pray, Love'. Conversely, Rubin openly attests that as a successful author, wife and mother living in a great house, she does, in fact, have the perfect life.

Each chapter is devoted to one month of the year with an overall resolution theme. Rubin highlights resolutions rather than goals because whereas goals end once achieved, a resolution hopefully lasts forever. In each chapter she talks about why she chose that specific area for her project and how she tried, succeeded and even sometimes failed to achieve her 'happiness' resolution.

Themes include in January – boost energy; in March – aim higher, in September – pursue a passion; right through to December – boot camp perfect.

By the end of the year Rubin has resolved to achieve 48 separate resolutions; everything from going to bed earlier through to launching a blog, and my favourites – singing in the morning and being silly sometimes. Because the types of resolutions she sets herself are so simple, throughout the book I found myself thinking 'I can do this too' and as a result have embarked upon my own 'happiness project'. The book is also filled with lots of fantastic nuggets of wisdom which Rubin refers to as 'her secrets of adulthood'. They can easily be actioned and do make a big impact in an individual's life.

I found the book very easy to dip in and out of because each chapter is so clear. It can also act as a great reference text to revisit over time for areas which you would like to change or develop in a really simple way.

So although this is not strictly a business book, I believe it can have a great impact on individuals, teams and organisations. In order to inspire people to give their best it's necessary to take a holistic approach to their development, wellbeing and happiness levels. Using the advice outlined by Rubin you can help your teams relish in the small ripples of change that 'The Happiness Project' principles make.

How happy are you and your people right now?

NEW LOOK FOR LEARNPURPLE AND TALENT TOOLBOX

After almost ten years of perfecting our talent toolbox online talent management solution, together with various technological advancements from the Chief Purple Wizard and his talented band of developers over in Ireland, we're delighted to reveal our exciting and innovative new talent toolbox family. These solutions will make joined up talent management simple for organisations of all sizes:

- **tt¹⁰⁰** – a 'plug and go' system for organisations with less than 100 people (which, because we all started somewhere, will be available free of charge for those employing less than ten people)

- **tt²** – the ever-popular, best practice system; choose content from our 'toolbox' menu of options and customise (can include 360 feedback induction reviews and exit interviews online)

- **tt³** – the completely flexible, bespoke people solution for those who need something very different and specific

- **q-box** – employee opinion surveys made simple and cool (available via our website for free if you employ less than 100 people)

The entire talent toolbox family is straight-forward and fun, providing an advanced approach to engaging, retaining and consulting your people, whilst improving morale, motivation and productivity.

To make things even more robust, we are also redesigning our website – www.learnpurple.com. We've improved navigation and the customer journey so you can find what you need even more quickly and easily. Purchasing courses online also couldn't be easier as we have developed a fantastic new shopping system. And in addition to some of the solutions above, there is a whole section of 'free stuff' for you to use; informative articles, ROI and labour turnover calculators and the latest learnpurple reports. The new site is due to launch in April and we'd love your feedback!

COMING UP...

We have lots of exciting, high impact public learning bites and purple leadership programmes being held over the next few months. For more information, and to book, please visit www.learnpurple.com

Events of interest...

Best Employers in Hospitality Awards (May)
Caterer.com are for the first time running the Best Employers in Hospitality Awards for England and Wales which culminates at a glittering award ceremony in May www.bestemployersinhospitality.com

Caffe Culture
18th and 19th May, Olympia London. This is the UK's leading event in the cafe and coffee bar industry. learnpurple will be running sessions on how business owners can get the best out of their people so they can focus on running the organisation. For more information please visit www.caffeculture.com

PATH Conference
16th and 17th June, Renaissance Manchester Hotel, Manchester. This year the conference will focus on the critical role of networks for recruitment, development and retention of talent and in particular, how to ensure students, employers and educators derive maximum value from work placements. For further details, please contact Edward Gallier edward.gallier@ufloorish.com

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to...

Lexington Catering for achieving 11th in the 'Sunday Times Best Places to Work' listing...

... And The Cavendish London for 35th place in the list for small companies

Michel Roux Jnr and Fred Siriex for 'Michel Roux's Service' – raising the profile of excellent service in the hospitality and inspiring young people to have careers in the industry. We're looking forward to the next series!

Isle of Eriska for 'Best Hotel Restaurant of the Year' and Hotel Du Vin at One Devonshire who were highly commended in the same category at the Scottish Restaurant Awards.

... And to Cucina at Missioni who won 'Best Italian Restaurant of the Year' at the same ceremony.

From further afield, congratulations to Nader El Kari, Chief Concierge at InterContinental Abu Dhabi Hotel and Arul Murugan, Concierge Manager at Taj Palace Hotel in Dubai who were awarded the distinguished Les Clefs D'Or (The Golden Keys)

Our very own Fiona Bradley for achieving black belt second dan standard in kickboxing. She's in charge of finances and credit control...

And finally... to all our purple friends who were awarded Michelin stars this year!

PURPLE INTERVIEW: JULIA EDMONDS



Julia Edmonds
Managing Director, Lexington Catering

1. Julia, firstly congratulations on the Sunday Times Best Places to Work listing, fantastic news! Could you give us a brief introduction to Lexington?

Lexington delivers delicious food to people at work – we offer everything from stylish artisan delis, coffee bars and staff restaurants serving modern, gastro style food to fine dining and canapés for executives and their clients. Our food ethos is all about fresh, natural, seasonal ingredients sourced as locally as possible from reputable farms and producers. We have a strong people culture at Lexington and we've built an outstanding reputation for quality of service and for being the sector's best loved employer.

2. How did you become the Managing Director there?

I joined the team at Lexington in 2007 as Sales and Marketing Director to focus on growing the business. Three years later, Lexington had tripled in size with 20 new clients and we needed to strengthen our senior team which resulted in the opportunity for me to become Managing Director. My background in operations has been key to my success in sales as well as leading to my role within Lexington.

3. What was your first ever job?

When I was still a student I worked as a waitress and bar person in a local hotel. My first full time role was working with the owners of a small, boutique hotel in Cape Cod, USA which provided me with an amazing insight into running a business.

4. What advice would you give to people aspiring to work in hospitality?

A good college education can provide solid grounding and open up some great opportunities. Aim to gain as much experience as possible working with people that inspire you and look to work with an organisation that has a strong culture of developing it's people.

5. What are the key characteristics that Lexington looks for in the people it brings on board?

Enthusiastic team players who are eager to succeed – we look for people who sparkle!

6. Could you share some of your life lessons with us?

Be professional, learn from experience, look forward and most importantly, have fun!

7. What are you reading at the moment?

One Day by David Nicholls – a really good, entertaining, easy read.

8. What is the importance you place on learning and development?

Our success is purely as a result of the amazing people that work with us, so learning and development is essential in ensuring that our people have all the right tools to enjoy a great career with Lexington. We've developed a unique suite of learning programmes that everyone can progress through. This not only helps to keep our culture alive and kicking and helps to engage our people but also has a significant impact on the consistency and quality of the service we provide.

9. What is your philosophy on leadership/ recipe for success?

For me it's all about our people, engaging with our teams and creating an environment where people feel inspired. We look to draw out their natural talent and involve everyone in the success of the business.

And last but not least...

10. Can you share your experience with working with learnpurple so far?

learnpurple have supported us through our online talent toolbox system which underpins everything we do when it comes to our people. They're also on hand to help with strategic advice. Working with learnpurple has provided expertise in supporting our learning and development and has played an essential part of our growth plan to ensure that we retain all of our core values as we grow. Most recently, we have worked with learnpurple to upgrade our existing bespoke learning and development programme that clearly defines our values and re-engages with the teams to live these every day at work. This involved facilitated sessions with our Lex Star team which then led to a successful roll out to all of our sites.

See www.learnpurple.com for information on our comprehensive talent management and learning and development solutions.

PURPLE YOUR PEOPLE LEARNPURPLE – THE BOOK!

Exciting news alert! Our talented CEO, Jane Sunley, has been extremely busy over the last few months putting pen to paper for her first book – Purple your People – The secrets to inspired, happy, more profitable people.

And we're giving away the secrets...? Sounds like an opportunity not to be missed!

To pre-order your copy of the book, or to find out more please email emilyperry@learnpurple.com!

This practical, fun and easy to digest guide to 'the people stuff' is for all organisations who want to create exceptionally talented, high performing teams and will be available in shops and online in September, to coincide with our 10th birthday.

Jane says "Purple your People works through our unique 'Purple Plan' step by step, in a very down to earth and friendly way. We know there's a void between what organisations should do and the reality so felt it was the right time to write down a way of attracting, engaging, developing and retaining talent people which we know works in practice for busy businesses."

We believe that 'purple' companies are able to wow customers and have the potential to make super-profits. They are recognised as 'best places to work'; enjoy a great reputation in the job market; people aspire to work there; they employ – and retain – motivated, productive, engaged people who drive their own progress. In recognition, they win prestigious awards and accolades for their people practices. All of which boosts the bottom line, their reputation and enhances the value of their organisation.



"Remarkable! A new, innovative approach to HR practice and the people stuff"

JANE SUNLEY