

#### Who's Getting it Right?

Read about the companies who are using culture and values to help build their success  
This side

#### Private Sector Should Beware of Blinkered Approach to Public Sector Hires

The other side

#### The story on Sarah Jackson - in 60 seconds!

Sarah Jackson, HR Director of Links of London shares her experiences.  
The other side

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE AND VALUES



Ever been puzzled as to why a top performer in one organisation bombs in another? Or why despite investing in development, people aren't delivering? The answer – culture and values. In our experience, these vital pieces of the jigsaw are something which leaders often underestimate the importance of in their business. If the CEO and every single person can't clearly articulate what the organisation stands for, where it's headed and what the non-negotiables are then there's no way it, not its people, can fulfil potential.

Defining and communicating a culture is simple, it's just not always easy. There are many executives who, when asked what their company values are, can't remember (we know, we ask them all the time). In this case, what hope is there for those on the front line?

Some people say they're not into all of this nonsense. Yet having clear culture, vision and values is business critical and not simply 'fluffy HR stuff'. Values are so important to an organisation because the context within which business operates is changing; rapidly. Who you are, how you do things and what you stand for, are becoming just as important as the products and services you provide. Take you for example, customers not only work with learnpurple because of the purple magic and our products and services but also because of what we stand for. And if you're still unsure, even Apple co-founder and CEO, Steve Jobs, famously said "the only thing that works is management by values. Find people who are competent and really bright, but more importantly, people who care exactly about the same things you care about."

So how does it work?

1. Values define a company's culture. They form a framework for 'the way we do (or want to do) things around here'; a shared vision and set of beliefs for how the organisation lives and breathes.
2. They need to be relevant, attainable, inspirational and inclusive; in line with the purpose (mission, vision) of the organisation.
3. Values impact every facet of the organisation and are supported and nurtured and people can see their impact on the organisation.
4. Leaders at all levels must live them day in, day out with no exception and always lead by example.
5. Everyone must be able to remember them to live them – so keep them simple and find a way to remember them- one way is to use an acronym.

6. Only recruit people who can (and do) commit to the values – values should always form part of the selection process so people know exactly what is expected and important to the employer – if they choose to work with you there are no excuses for not living the values. People love to work within an organisation that can clearly say what it's about.
7. Existing people must also understand and commit to the values (with no exceptions). Anyone who can't do this (given the necessary support) will need to be redeployed elsewhere. Sounds tough but even one dissenter can sabotage the whole dynamic.
8. Values are discussed and brought into daily life for example, when setting goals and strategy, making decisions, in meetings (particularly when giving feedback), interpersonal interactions, when planning and prioritising and socially.
9. People match and mirror the values in their behaviours and the values become self-policed by everyone in the organisation.
10. Different people can be tasked with making individual value

At learnpurple we created our values on day one (almost ten years ago) and since then have modified them only one; making sure that everyone who joins can commit 100% to living by them during their time with us. The one time we changed them we swapped 'innovation' for 'improvement with originality' which is more of a mouthful but less of an overused word. And this all happened because a bright Gen Y-er said he couldn't commit to an overused word! We talk about our values all the time and everyone is charged with living them. They give structure to the way we do things. In our appraisals we measure how 'purple' our people are i.e. how well they live our values. A marketing guru recently described learnpurple as a tribe because we are all so bought into the way things are done here. So we know leading by values works, isn't fluffy HR stuff and continues to breathe vibrant life into our organisation. If you're still to commit – do it today.

by Jane Sunley

## WHO'S GETTING IT RIGHT??

Getting your culture and values right from the off is vital to achieving business success. Here is a sample of companies we applaud for doing it well...

#### Portico

Corporate reception management provider, Portico, aimed to recruit the very best high calibre individuals from day one and needed to understand the talent situation in their business to find those ready for promotion. They worked with learnpurple to define their culture and values, identifying the type of people they needed within the organisation. This information was then fed into the development of their talent toolbox™ talent management system. They've recently been awarded Investors in People Gold Standard...

#### Apple

Apple believe computing isn't about boxes or things, it's about people and interaction. Which is why they make sure the organisation is known for its values just as much as its technology. They only hire people with a passion that can change the world for the better. It's no doubt this value has played a huge role in winning them the 'World's most admired company award' for the last three years.

#### Lexington Catering

Lexington knew it was imperative for its core values and beliefs – which made the contract caterer the great business it is today – to be the company's strength and point of difference in the marketplace as

it grew. Amongst other core initiatives, it implemented 'LexDNA' – a programme which uncovered the make-up of Lexington and its key values; turning it into a 'reality checklist' which each individual completed once a week and chose something they could personally improve. This then fed into their talent toolbox. This year Lexington was recognised with 11th place in the Sunday Times 100 best companies to work for and also awarded IIP Gold.

#### John Lewis Partnership

The JLP culture is based around a 'virtuous circle': look after the partners and the partners look after the customers. In this scenario, the partners are made up of each of the organisation's 69,000 employees. Owned by a trust which is made up of all employees, John Lewis is viewed as a great company to work for. Its culture and values are lived and breathed by all employees. In return it has seen operating profits up by 20% during the recession and bonuses received by all in the region of 9 – 22% of salary.

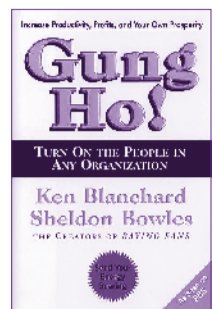
#### Coworth Park

Part of the luxury Dorchester Collection, Coworth Park opened its doors earlier this year to rave reviews. General manager, Zoe Jenkins, and her team at the hotel have worked hard to recruit the right personalities who match the collection's culture and can live by its values, then developed and empowered them to provide very special and memorable guest experiences.



## GUNG HO! BY KEN BLANCHARD

Reviewed by Marketing Manager, Emily Perry



This oldie but goodie is from the co-author of management short stories 'The One Minute Manager' and 'Who Moved My Cheese'; Ken Blanchard (along with Sheldon Bowles).

The book works through the story of Peggy Sinclair, who was sent to turn

around a failing manufacturing plant, Walton Works #2; apparently set up by 'Old Man Morris' as a plot to close the plant and cultivate Peggy's departure at the same time.

On arrival it seems there is little Peggy can do to improve the situation in such a short time; people expect mass headcount reductions as one of her first moves. One of these employees, Native American Andy Longclaw, managed the finishing department – the only section which consistently produced above average results; his team of 150 were the plant's 'hidden gems'.

Peggy meets Andy by the river and learns the reason why his department is so productive – it has Gung Ho! His team have high levels of motivation and morale. Instead of trudging the daily grind and dooming the department with failure, they go to work feeling inspired; have masses of energy and a real drive to achieve success.

From this point onwards, Andy and Peggy become a force to be reckoned with; working together

to change the company culture and make the entire plant 'Gung Ho!' using three powerful concepts which were passed onto Andy from his Grandfather. These ideas ensure that employees can visualise and are committed to success:

- **Spirit of the Squirrel** – making the work carried out worthwhile to those who are doing it
- **Way of the Beaver** – putting people in control of achieving the shared goals
- **Gift of the Goose** – cheering others on both actively and passively but always TRUE (timely, responsive, unconditional, enthusiastic)

This short book takes only a couple of hours to read yet provides really clear and concise messages around the need to create and communicate a really compelling vision. To agree and work to a number of shared goals, empowering and giving control so people can achieve and shout about successes along the way (and of course providing extra support when things go awry). There's also a plan at the end as to how these concepts can be introduced and used in other organisations.

The one and only downside to the book is that at points I became so engrossed in the 'will Peggy and Andy save the factory?' story that I missed out on some vital messages; a quick backtrack and I'd picked these up again easily but would suggest careful reading! Overall I would recommend this book to anyone who has people reporting directly into them and wants to learn about motivation in their organisation; putting in place the Native American concepts which worked so fantastically for Andy and his finishing department. I won't, of course, reveal whether Peggy did save the plant... That's one to find out for yourselves!

## PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD BEWARE OF BLINKERED APPROACH TO PUBLIC SECTOR HIRES

Full article originally featured online at [www.hrmagazine.co.uk](http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk) – June 2011

According to a recent survey of 500 companies carried out by Barclays Corporate and the Financial Times (February 2011), more than half (57%) of private sector companies in the UK say they're not interested in hiring people who have lost their jobs through public sector redundancies.

Their reason? They say they simply do not believe public sector employees are equipped to join their businesses. Why is this perception held? Firstly negative media headlines don't help; they create the impression that the public sector is inefficient and ineffective. Secondly, and having conducted a quick straw poll ourselves, it also seems there is some resistance because it is believed these individuals are less likely to put in the hours, more likely to take time off sick and less likely to be flexible when it comes to doing what it takes to reach the goals. By taking this attitude, private sector employers run the risk of losing out on talent which could be critical to business success.

As a private sector organisation, we firmly believe that talent is talent and there are high-performers and low-performers in both private and public sectors and at every level. The all important factors that should be witnessed are whether the individual will fit the organisation's culture and whether they show willingness to adapt.

When recruiting, private sector employers should make it perfectly clear as to what is expected of the applicant and 'how things are done' in that business; this ensures there are absolutely no surprises. It's also about having an open mind and being prepared to trade some time and effort in exchange for accessing new skills and good experience. Recruit for attitude and train for skill; this saying is often branded openly but it does serve organisations well who have done just this. The common thread is all hires are 100% committed to the company's purpose and values and play by the rules.

However it's not just a case of private sector employers opening their eyes; there are a number of things public sector workers can do to make themselves more attractive at recruitment stage. It's important to show how skills, knowledge and attributes honed in the public sector can be translated to the private. For example, what innovations were introduced in the public environment and how would similar ideas benefit a private business? It's also important to be aware of basic priorities, such as generating profit, taking risks, commercial and entrepreneurial skills and demonstrating they are open a prepared to adapt to fit this very different culture.

The public sector invests in its people; as a result, many are highly qualified and transferable skills – like MBAs – are commonplace. In this situation, it will be the open-minded employer, who's prepared to work on cultural alignment and invest in retraining, that will create a competitive advantage through its people and achieve ultimate success.

## PURPLE INTERVIEW: SARAH JACKSON



Sarah Jackson  
HR Director, Links of London

**1. Can you give us a brief introduction to Links of London?**  
Links of London captivates customers with striking jewellery collections, statement watches and a selection of exquisite gifts. We really believe in nurturing our people and have some fantastic talent on board who are integral to the brand today. It's certainly an exciting place to be!

**2. How did you become HR Director there?**  
I joined Links in August 2006 to focus on shaping the HR function and support the rapid growth of the business. Just over a year later I was promoted to HR Director reporting to current CEO, Andrew Marshall.

**3. What was your first ever job?**  
Picking asparagus on my uncle's farm (I grew up in rural NZ)! My first job in retail was for an Australian homewares company (Bed Bath N' Table) as a part-time sales assistant –later becoming National HR & Operations Manager for the brand.

**4. What advice would you give to people aspiring to work in retail?**  
Ensure you genuinely like people and that part of your motivation is providing an exceptional experience for customers. Don't be afraid to try new areas of the business and communicate openly about where you see your career going.

**5. What are the key characteristics that Links looks for in the people it brings on board?**  
Cultural fit is very important to us –our people need a "can do" attitude; have high energy levels and are prepared to embrace our core values. We're a very dynamic company and need to make sure our people want to be part of the journey.

**6. Could you share some of your life lessons with us?**  
Don't sweat the small stuff; keep a firm eye on the big picture. I try not to take things too seriously and have learnt to adapt and move on when necessary. Lastly, if you don't enjoy what you do – change it; be where you actually want to be in life.

**7. What are you reading at the moment?**  
Influence – The Psychology of Persuasion by Robert Cialdini; it was recommended to me by someone I greatly admire.

**8. What is the importance you place on learning and development?**  
It's extremely important for us as we strongly believe in our people; it's thanks to them the company has been such a success. There needs to be relevance and context to all learning and development and anyone delivering has to be incredibly engaging and competent. Follow up with attendees is also crucial to see how they have translated any development into their day job.

**9. What is your philosophy on leadership/ recipe for success?**  
I think it's vital that you lead from the front and agree with your people what great leadership looks like. An aspirational culture certainly assists in providing a strong platform but you also need to be creative about opportunities.

And last but not least...

**10. Can you share your experience with working with learnpurple so far?**  
Sam and Sally have been instrumental in assisting us to put in a bespoke talent toolbox online system for both Links of London and Folli Follie. It was a big ask helping us design one programme for both brands within a very tight deadline.

It was very instrumental to me that the company we chose truly understood us as a brand and could help in articulating our core values and performance development plans into an online tool. It's been a pleasure working with the learnpurple team. We have been delighted with the outcome and thrilled to have more structure in terms of managing talent across our businesses.

See [www.learnpurple.com](http://www.learnpurple.com) for information on our comprehensive talent management and learning and development solutions.

## COMING UP...

As always, we have lots of exciting public learning bites and purple leadership programmes taking place over the next few months. For more information, and to book, please visit [www.learnpurple.com](http://www.learnpurple.com)

Events of interest:

### HR Performance Event

04th – 05th October, Olympia London.

This free event with a difference is for anyone with day-to-day HR responsibilities – from HR professionals working in middle management within private and public sector organisations, to line managers within SMEs with HR responsibilities. Visit [www.hrbusinessnetwork.com/members/events.php](http://www.hrbusinessnetwork.com/members/events.php) to register and book.

### Best Employers in Hospitality Awards Scotland September

Caterer.com is again running the Best Employers in Hospitality Awards for Scotland supported by learnpurple. Entries are invited now with the winners revealed in September. [www.bestemployersinhospitality.com/scotland](http://www.bestemployersinhospitality.com/scotland)

### Purple your People September

Last month we told you about our first book entitled 'Purple your People: the secrets to inspired, happy, more profitable people'. This practical, fun and easy to digest guide to the 'people stuff' will be hitting bookshelves in September. You can pre-order your copy now via Amazon (<http://amzn.to/iHyDSr>)

### Best Employers in Hospitality Awards UAE November

Caterer.com is, for the first time, running the Best Employers in Hospitality Awards for the United Arab Emirates, supported by learnpurple. Winners will be announced in November. For more information contact [sam@learnpurple.com](mailto:sam@learnpurple.com)

## INTRODUCING... THE PURPLE PALACE UPDATE!

This year is already proving exciting for the three purple palaces – London HQ, Scotland and UAE.

In London, we were extremely excited to see our new website go live in June ([www.learnpurple.com](http://www.learnpurple.com)) which has a crisper look and feel. We've also made it much easier for you to access free stuff and book and buy development online (with discounts available for online transactions). Why not take a look and let us know what you think. As we've continued to grow, over the last few months we also increased our workforce by 20%.

After a successful launch in April, learnpurple UAE is in full swing, amongst other things supporting the first ever Best Employers in Hospitality UAE awards in conjunction with Caterer.com (see coming up for more details...). Although she's been very busy promoting the purple word to a wide variety of organisations across the region, managing director, Lynne Zerbanelian, has also just been announced as a judge at the Hotelier Middle East Awards. Visit [www.hoteliermiddleeast.com/awards](http://www.hoteliermiddleeast.com/awards) for more information.

Finally to learnpurple Scotland who are busy planning their first 'Purple Breakfast Club' event for September. The Purple Breakfast Club is for senior HR professionals, business owners and executives who want to hear about the latest thinking in their field. By invitation only, attendees come together to hear from award winning speakers, access research, best practice tools and techniques, as well as meeting like-minded people. If you're a senior professional interested in talent, contact [linda@learnpurple.com](mailto:linda@learnpurple.com) for more information.



## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to...

**Burberry**, who were honoured at the Opportunity Now awards for promoting female talent – they have the largest proportion of women on its board in the FTSE 100 with 38% female...

**T(n)S** who have been accredited with 'Ones to Watch' in the 2011 Best Companies...

**Assia Riccio**, guest services manager, from Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Oxfordshire who won this year's prestigious Savoy Gastronomes' Olive Barnett Award...

**The Cavendish London** for their silver award at the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence for its eco-friendly qualities

... and **The Glassblowing House** for their number one placing at the Best Employers in Hospitality Awards (England and Wales) and to all others category winners...