

Feedback Report

Relational Health Audit - Version I

Delia Demonstration

Introduction

Relationships are an essential ingredient in the success of any organisation. This includes such relationships within organisations as those within teams, between departments or business units, and the vertical management relationships. Key relationships with other organisations typically include those with customers, suppliers, partners, investors and regulators.

Weak relationships entail risk and can incur costs. Strong relationships offer competitive advantage. Your performance depends not only on what goes on in your own relationships, but may also be affected by other relationships in which you are not directly involved.

This report summarises your relationship with Peter Jones in terms of the responses you gave to the questions in the Relational Health Audit. The questions were divided into five general dimensions as follows:

- Directness (quality of communication process)
- Continuity (shared time over time)
- Multiplexity (breadth of knowledge)
- Parity (use and abuse of power)
- Commonality (valuing similarity and difference)

The results section of this report shows your detailed responses to the questions in each area and also gives an overall score (out of 6) for each area. The overall score can be taken as an indication of how satisfied you feel about this aspect of the relationship. Finally, a score for the relationship as a whole (also out of 6) is given and this shows your level of satisfaction with the relationship as a whole.

You can use this report to consider ways in which you might yourself work on developing or improving your relationship with Peter Jones. If Peter Jones has also completed the Relational Health Audit in relation to you, it might be productive to spend some time going through the two reports to see where your perceptions of the relationship are the same and where they differ.

Directness

Directness influences the quality of communication in the relationship. The medium of communication affects the amount and quality of information exchanged. Face-to-face communication, for example, allows non-verbal signals to be picked up and immediate responses to be made, so enabling better understanding. It is perhaps of particular importance around difficult or particularly significant issues. It is, however, resource intensive so it is important to ensure that the right medium is used at the right time.

The channel of communication influences both the quality and efficiency of information exchange. Both can be reduced if channels are blocked or if information and decisions are too often received second-hand, via messages or through several levels of bureaucracy. Accessibility and responsiveness are key issues here. Communication style and skills are also significant. The structure of the communication must be complemented by the right behaviour. For instance, a lack of openness can impede trust and undermine partnership. A cycle operates here: openness can create trust, and trust can encourage openness, but a downward spiral of decreased trust and impaired communication can also develop.

Overall rating of this area of the relationship: 3

Medium Too little of our communication is face-to-face. Misunderstandings sometimes result.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	The amount of face-to-face contact between us is sufficient to build trust, understanding and effective communication.
Access It is difficult to contact my counterpart. Communication is delayed and messages are distorted as a result.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	The lines of contact through to my counterpart are open, work quickly and can be relied on to get messages through.
Responsiveness Getting a response from my counterpart is difficult. Poor communication and/or decision making-processes hinder our work.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	Requests and queries are dealt with promptly.
Style Our communication is characterised by hidden agendas and evasion. It is difficult to be open and honest. My counterpart doesn't listen properly.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	We can be open and honest with each other, and listen to each other, even when addressing difficult or sensitive issues.

Continuity

Time can be seen as the currency of relationships. The continuity of contact, over a period of time, provides the opportunity for both individual and organisational relationships to develop, although difficult decisions may need to be made about which relationships to invest time in. A relationship is affected by past experiences of working together whether good or bad. This could be your own experience or that of others in your organisation.

When time is invested in a relationship is also important: time invested up front at the start of a relationship can avoid time-consuming problems later. The length and stability of the relationship over time creates the opportunity for individual rapport and improved mutual understanding to develop, as well as providing a context for long-term issues to be addressed at an organisational level. Where staff turnover is high, locking in the benefits of individual and informal relationships to create an organisational history and overview of the relationship is often important. Managing change in the relationship is important if the benefits of change, such as career progression and bringing in new people, are to be achieved without undermining the quality and effectiveness of existing relationships.

Overall rating of this area of the relationship: 3

<p>History</p> <p>I have little, or only negative, experience of working with my counterpart. The relationship is either new or there is no positive legacy to build on.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</p>	<p>We have worked together for some time. Where necessary we have invested time at the outset to increase trust and confidence. Our relationship also builds on the legacy of other people working well in this relationship.</p>
<p>Amount</p> <p>Contact with my counterpart is either so limited or so excessive that the effectiveness of the relationship is significantly impaired.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</p>	<p>We are in contact often enough, and at the right times, to maintain and improve the quality of our working relationship and its outcomes.</p>
<p>Stability</p> <p>The parties to this relationship change frequently. I do not expect to work with my counterpart for long. We have few longer term plans for this relationship.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</p>	<p>The relationship with my counterpart is likely to be long-lasting. We look to the future and are willing to invest in it.</p>
<p>Managing change</p> <p>Changes in personnel and the way we work are poorly planned. Relationships are destabilised as a result.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</p>	<p>Changes in personnel and the way we work are well planned. Business knowledge and effective working relationships are maintained.</p>

Multiplexity

Multiplexity looks at the breadth of the relationship. This can enhance mutual understanding and enable a broader appreciation of the range of skills and experiences that individuals or organisations can contribute. It helps avoid strategies that ignore the realities of the underlying relationships and may open up new opportunities that arise from unsuspected common ground or unrecognised resources. Knowledge of a counterpart's organisation or department is important to identify shared objectives, to develop appropriate ways of joint working and to appreciate the constraints under which they work. Knowledge of role or skills is important for the effectiveness of joint work. It helps avoid flawed assumptions and misunderstandings, missed opportunities and inefficient use of resources. Knowledge of the person (such as his or her interests, values or personal circumstance) can strengthen the relationship and aid its management.

Overall rating of this area of the relationship: 4

Challenges								
Limited knowledge of what else each other does, how they work and the issues they face has led to unrealistic expectations.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Our work together is based on a good understanding of each other's work and organisation.
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Role								
We have a vague and often inaccurate knowledge of each other's roles in this relationship and in their organisation.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Our good understanding of each other's roles enables potential contributions to be fully utilised.
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Skills								
We have a vague and often inaccurate knowledge of each other's skills and the experience each can contribute.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Our good understanding of each other's skills and experience enables potential contributions to be fully utilised.
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Personal understanding								
We have little or no informal contact (in or out of work) and little or no knowledge of each other's circumstances, interests or values.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	The conduct of this relationship is aided by our understanding of each other's personal interests, goals, values and circumstances.

Parity

There are many different kinds of power in a relationship (e.g., financial control, regulatory authority, superior knowledge, political influence, control of delivery, or exit and veto rights), and, because different parties in a relationship are likely to have different kinds of power, parity rarely presents a simple picture. However, whilst authority, influence or rewards in a relationship may rightly vary, it is important that differentials are infused with mutual value and respect, and are not abused

Parity requires, and is fostered by, participation and involvement that ensures that people have some real say in decisions that affect their work. Lack of participation may mean that strategic objectives are not owned, stifle innovation, and lead to less investment in the relationship. Inadequate influence in a relationship with respect to tasks or responsibilities is a frequent source of frustration and can result in disengagement and ill-informed decisions. The fairness of benefits can engender co-operation and foster commitment to a relationship from which both parties can benefit. Fair conduct in the relationship is necessary for trust and respect. Double standards, prejudice and favouritism are extremely corrosive.

Overall rating of this area of the relationship: 2

Participation								
One or both parties is not fully committed to or involved in this relationship.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Both we, and our organisations, are fully committed to and involved in this relationship.
								
Influence								
One party has little influence in the relationship and is not consulted before decisions are made. Suggestions or inputs that are made are often ignored without discussion or explanation.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Our contribution to each other's decision-making processes on issues affecting us is valued.
								
Fair benefits								
One or both parties often feels used. The arrangements do not represent a fair distribution of risk and reward.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	The fair distribution of credit, blame, risk and reward within this relationship fosters commitment and involvement.
								
Fair conduct								
People are not treated with respect and integrity. Double standards apply within the relationship.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	People are treated fairly, with respect, integrity and without discrimination. Both parties keep to the standards we expect of each other.
								

Commonality

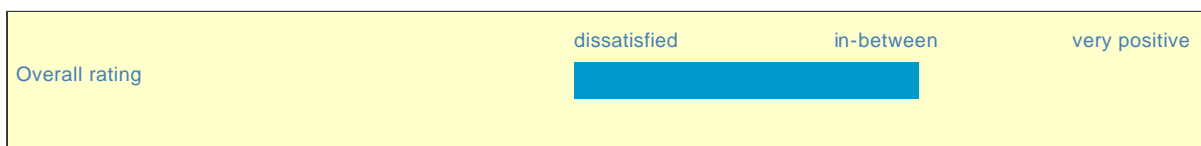
Commonality enables individuals and organisations to work together towards shared goals. While tensions can be creative, and there may be differences in roles and responsibilities, if these are not set in the context of some shared objectives and understanding, then the likelihood of performance-hindering conflict may be increased. Common objectives provide the basis for working together. Without real, shared, defined objectives (as opposed to generalised goals) organisations or teams may end up pulling in different directions or come into conflict over priorities. Commonality is also expressed in shared responsibility for these objectives and joint ownership of the problems encountered in achieving them. When difficulties arise commonality can dissolve into blame and avoidance of responsibility, or be reinforced through mutual support.

Understanding the culture (social, organisation or professional) that your counterpart works within reduces the risk of misunderstandings. Effective relationships may establish some common culture and shared values, or they may develop working practices that take account of different cultures rather than just working round them or simply ignoring them. Commonality does not require uniformity. Differences can add value to a relationship though it is important that they are seen as enriching the relationship and not just as obstacles to be overcome. The way in which disagreements are handled is also important: their resolution can strengthen commonality or may only serve to reinforce the differences.

Overall rating of this area of the relationship: 5



Your overall perception of the relationship



On a scale of 1 to 6, your overall rating of the relationship was 3.45. This can be taken as an indication of how generally satisfied you are with those aspects of your relationship with Peter Jones which were covered by the Relational Health Audit.