

## How to cope when the goalposts keep shifting

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Companies operating in today's business market have to contend with many things to stay afloat and relevant, and the fact that the goalposts keep shifting does not help much. This phrase refers to the reality of how what worked yesterday is being quickly replaced with new ways, making the old ways obsolete. In many business circles, it is referred to as the edge of chaos. As one would suspect, this has disrupted business models and has left many having to rethink the way they have always done things. Innovation is being forced to come from every office, in every company, in every sector. Business leaders and organisations, in general, face the challenge of navigating their way around and keeping up with the edge of chaos. Systems, plans and models have to be revisited to ensure organisations remain relevant, and innovative, to ensure they retain top performers.

Systems and people are one of the essential resources for any organisation in any industry to survive. But how many organisations know which employee or employees can efficiently build cross-boundary teams; can allow new employees to know and get used to the organisation fast; which employees are likely to stay or leave the organisation and will that attrition leave the organisation at risk of losing knowledge, skills and connections; which employees fit into the team(s) and how does informal communication move around the organisation. How many organisations understand which informal team that may not necessarily be represented on the organisational structure exist within their organisation? In this article, we will discuss some of the data-driven techniques that organisations can use to build sustainable organisations with the focus being on teams.

From the start of the 21st century, many organisations have realized great value from the application of data analytics techniques to grow their organisations in different departments. Human Resources department is no exception. Although many HR managers have heard about data analytics, a few have actually applied it to a greater extent. When most Human Resources managers are asked why they are not applying people analytics in their everyday use, common responses are that they don't have sufficient data or the necessary expertise. The truth is, there is a vast amount of data sitting in HR departments and some of the data can be collected directly from the employees. Moreover, the techniques required to perform some of the analytics are not special. With the advancement in technology these days, any HR person can carry out most of the analysis after just a simple training with an expert.

Building and understanding teams within an organisation is very important for organisational success. There are many techniques that can be used and data can be gathered from many sources. Data can be collected through surveys, employee record, emails, etc. One of the methods for understanding and building teams is through analyzing networks that are within the organisation.

Analysing networks allows the organisation to understand who is influential both positively or negatively. When an organisation wants to drive change within the organisation they have to use people

who are influential to make sure everyone accepts that change. After analysing networks of communication either via emails, calls or face to face, the organisation will understand who is at the centre of every communication and is highly likely to influence others in both negative or positive ways.

Understanding who is turning to who for information within the organisation help to enhance learning and development for both new hires and people within the organisation. Instead of using old methods of learning, an organisation can identify hidden experts in different areas and allow them to train and mentor all the other team members that need capacitation. This is more effective not only because the experts will be able to explain and mentor effectively, but because the other employees or team members will be able to listen and absorb the knowledge since they trust and are used to getting all information from them. Motivating these employees at the centre who may be high performers will likely push engagement for the whole team upwards.

In terms of preparing people for succession, analysing networks will enable an organisation to identify which of the employees' potential new leaders are basing on influence and knowledge. These people will then be coached, trained and rewarded to allow them to pull more team members with them hence building a strong team.

Organisations are able to use past employee data to predict who is likely to leave the organisation in the future. Who will leave the organisation has an impact on the organisation in terms of information flow, driving change, knowledge transfer and organisational revenue. Ways of retaining these employees if they are good performers may then be implemented.

Using data to build networks unveil a number of issues that are hidden within the organisation. These data-driven insights will help organisations build strong teams that can allow them to survive this edge of chaos. There are many ways to build a strong organisation but definitely using data-driven insights from your employees and building a strong team gives a competitive advantage to the organisation.

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