

4 working magic

Working Magic In Companies

[Total 1½ pages of 'easy read' providing an introduction to the idea of 'working magic', excluding process. Key point is this (second page): It's not enough that someone works some magic. We need more than that. We need to build capacity to work magic time and time again. A capacity of people, teams and companies to shift patterns at will, to become generative of new futures and not just adaptive to crises or changes in circumstance.

"That's magic!" they said.

Just what did people mean? A great result? Things coming together in a good way? A special experience? Something they'd like to see repeated if they could? Imagine people saying of your company:

"Their customer service was magic!"

"What she did was magic, it made such a difference to the project."

"It's magic being part of this team."

"That was a magic meeting!"

Now I know for many of us it can only be a magic meeting when it's cancelled! And I know they'll be a rush of skeptics shouting: **Get real!** Yet even meetings can sometimes be surprisingly good, magic even. Times when we accomplish a lot, see things differently, leave both inspired and inspiring, in some way we're transformed. Rare perhaps, or could we make these more frequent?

Many organisations, teams and people settle into a routine or rut, an established pattern of relationships, habits and practices, including ways of seeing and thinking, that 'regularise' performance. Often referred to as our comfort zone, it permits or allows for a certain range of performance and no more. Beyond this range and it is outside of our comfort zone. The thing about this zone is that it is known, it is within our experience, and, darn it, it's comfortable! Added to this it's predictable, we feel we're in control and there's limited risk. All quite highly prized attributes of "capable management". And that's ok.

Thing is, if you want to surprise yourself with a different result, or simply move from how things are, then this pattern has to be interrupted and shifted. But why would anyone want to 'surprise' themselves with a different result? There can be many reasons:

- the established pattern may no longer be producing the result it once did
- other people have changed their game
- the world's simply moved on
- more is wanted from less
- something different is wanted from what once was.

In short, whatever the context or circumstance, business-as usual is no longer enough.

It is times like these that we need to work some magic and generate a pattern shift. Trouble is that patterns are often very well established, interconnected and difficult to shift: People and processes are well entrenched! Common wisdom has it that patterns only shift, people only change, when there's a crisis that shakes things up. The trouble with this view is that people and companies often don't survive the crisis – they go extinct!

Rather than phoenix from the ashes, can't we give life to phoenix before the s-curve turns into diminishing returns?

So how do we change patterns when there's no immediate or pressing crisis? Our view is that it is much better to stimulate pattern shifts through the release of creative energies, passions and commitments that are the result of self-generated challenges.

When people know that they can't get there (the desired result) from here (the existing pattern) they get clear – either to go for it or not! We get to powerful self-generated challenges.

The power of choice is then at work rather than force majeure: Will replaces must. Wizards with their transformational potential, rather than victims of circumstance, start to emerge. People are at their best not when driven by circumstance but when being their passion for something, when driven from the inside-out rather than the outside-in.

This trick of changing things before the s-curve slips is increasingly relevant in today's fast paced world. It's not enough that someone works some magic. We need more than that. We need to build capacity to work magic time and time again. A capacity of people, teams and companies to shift patterns at will, to become generative of new futures and not just adaptive to crises or changes in circumstance.

Working magic is creating a shift in pattern that helps great results to flow. In a sense it's releasing brilliance.

The difference? It is people working magic not just at work but in their lives; seemingly ordinary people accomplishing quite extraordinary things. Not just doing different but being different. Inspired and inspiring, developing their capacity to shift the spell of previous patterns.