**BU Leadership and Management Essential Programme Case study on motivating teams**

**1. Background and overview**

All participants on the BU Leadership and Management Essential (LME) programme were asked to undertake a case study that would help develop our teams through cross-service collaboration, support our professional development as managers and align with BU Vision and Values. I knew I would have plenty to learn having started the programme less than a month into my first management role following restructuring of Educational Development and Quality which created my new role, Quality and Enhancement Manager, Policy and Committees (see departmental structure diagram in Appendix A).

**2. Scope and purpose**

I decided to use the case study as an opportunity to explore how I could help motivate the new team in a meaningful way. I was paired up with Jacqueline McCaffrey who also wanted to examine team motivation in the context of recent re-structuring. We met several times to discuss the project and decided to explore how positive communication could be used as a motivational tool. Jacqueline intended to consider how we use language to send and receive messages whilst I wanted to consider the impact this has on staff motivation. As participants could choose between joint or individual case studies, we opted for the latter with a specific emphasis on our individual teams. Whilst we worked relatively independently, the meetings were helpful in terms of defining and scoping the project.

The course included two sessions that turned out to be particularly relevant to my thinking. LME Session 6, *Motivating Your Staff*, was always going to be relevant but LME Session 2, *Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Awareness*, was also critical in terms of developing my understanding of the team as individuals and how this underpins their motivational values. As the course progressed, my ideas also developed and my case study took a number of turns during the process. The final write-up made me realise that instead of a clearly defined project, my case study had, unintendedly, become a more holistic and longer term piece of work. This summary provides a snapshot of progress to date.

The University's Vision and Values acknowledges the need to engage staff at all levels in order to deliver excellence through creating sharing and inspiring as outlined in the 2012-18 Strategic Plan. BU 2012-18 includes people as 'strategic enablers' and supporting and inspiring staff to realise their full potential as a 'strategic theme'. It is therefore inevitable that staff motivation is to play a significant part in the success of the Plan (see Appendix B, extracts, BU 2012-18 Aims).

**3. Overview of methodology**

Jacqueline and I had intended to choose a common theory as a basis for our individual projects but partly due to time constraints and partly due to our different interests, we opted for individual approaches. My chosen methodology developed loosely around three aspects; theoretical assumptions about motivation, understanding individuals through the Skills Deployment Inventory (SDI), and short practical exercises with my team and a sub-group of the Academic Services Management Team.

Whilst I took motivational theories as my starting point for the case study, Jacqueline considered communication theories. Both of us chose to utilise SDI to help us understand

individual factors specifically in relation to communication within teams and more generally to understand motivation at work. It has been interesting to share our initial findings and we will be able to identify good practice and discuss in more detail any lessons learned when we put together our poster presentation next month.

## 4.    Case study summary

### *Theoretical considerations*

There are of course several interesting theories on motivation some of which were discussed in LME Session 6, 'Motivating Your Staff', including Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* and Frederick Herzberg's *Motivation and Hygiene Factors*. These theories consider intrinsic motivators (e.g. self-fulfilment or sense of achievement) and extrinsic motivators (e.g. salary or praise) in specific ways and establish models which can be used to determine motivational factors, levels of motivation and barriers to motivation ('de-motivators').

Of the above theories, I preferred Hertberg's model for two reasons. Firstly, it was concerned directly with people's well-being at work and, secondly, it identified that motivators and de-motivators act independently of each other whereby psychological factors such as achievement, recognition and personal growth act as motivators whilst 'hygiene' factors such as working conditions and pay are not true motivators but when unsatisfactory, they lead to job dissatisfaction and therefore act as de-motivators. These ideas diverted my project away from concentrating on communication alone which instead of being a focus of the case study became one aspect I would consider.

### *Skills Deployment Inventory (SDI)*

The SDI toolkit is used for self and relationship awareness. It allows people to identify through self-assessment what factors underpin their self-esteem and what is important to them when relating to others. SDI was developed by Elias H Porter who argued in his relationship awareness theory that people attribute motive to all behaviour and that our motivational value systems act as internal filters through which life is interpreted and understood. Therefore, understanding others' behaviour through their (rather than your own) motivational value system allows us to understand people better (LME Session 2 hand-out).

The LME Session 2 *Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Awareness* was so engaging that I asked my team members to attend the University-wide day long workshop in April. I then arranged a tailor-made team follow-up session with the LME Programme Leader in June to consider what our group SDI results meant for us as a team. This was the day before the LME Session 6, 'Motivating Your Staff' and helped formulate my thoughts on motivation further in terms of linking motivation to individuals' motivational value systems also in the context of team communication. The SDI exercise is therefore a very useful tool for managers and I wanted to use it to help us understand our individual differences better as a team in order for us to be able to communicate with each other more successfully and, ultimately, to work better as a group (see Appendix C for the team's Group SDI Results and Appendix D for an Interpretative guide to SDI motivations).

### *Team discussion on motivation*

We held a team session to discuss what work factors motivate us and why, how motivated we felt in our job roles and to consider any current barriers to motivation. The session started with the team watching a cartoon about Daniel Pink's *The surprising truth about what*

*motivates us* (Daniel Pink, 2009, RSA Animate, 2010). We then borrowed an exercise from the LME Session 2 hand-outs and each wrote down on post-it notes three things that motivate us about our roles and jobs and also identified three factors that we find demotivating. We then discussed our thoughts on motivation and what we can do as a team to create the right environment and conditions to foster motivation on an ongoing basis.

The result of this exercise can be summarised as follows:

| Positive motivators | Challenges, barriers and de-motivators |
|---|---|
| 👍 Helping and supporting others to gain new skills and knowledge, working together on projects | 👎👎 High workloads (stress, impact on work-life balance, BU 'rewarding hardworking staff with more work') |
| 👍👍👍 Small supportive team, helpful friendly colleagues, nice colleagues and friends | 👎👎 Insufficient time to do the job well (prepare, reflect and understand), having to settle for 'fit for purpose' rather than high or even good standards |
| 👍👍 Achieving good results and completing tasks well | 👎 Achievements, not being recognised outside the team |
| 👍 Independent work and being left 'to get on with the job' | 👎👎 Split EDQ teams (reduced work/social interaction and an increasing sense of being 'separate' departments) |
| 👍 Professional development opportunities | 👎👎 New office base at Lansdowne (distance from home, open plan, seating arrangements) |
| 👍 BU benefits (annual leave, Xmas closure, pay and sickness benefits) | |

Having discussed each of the above in turn, we were able to identify some potential improvements for the October team meeting agenda for further discussion and action. We also agreed to continue our discussion around how we can foster motivation on the one hand and to remove barriers to motivation on the other hand in the longer term.

***Management team sub-group discussion on motivating staff***

I met with three middle managers I work with to discuss our approaches to motivating teams and the challenges we face in terms of finding time to do this and being able to offer the right motivators to individuals (See Appendix E, questions 1-4). We also identified what we perceived to act as barriers to motivation both from management and team perspectives. Additionally, colleagues completed a short questionnaire to rate management behaviours into order of importance and how often they use these. However, from feedback it became apparent that the first part of the questionnaire (rating behaviours) was meaningless as they were all deemed important but I have nevertheless included the individual questionnaire

responses in Appendix E. The qualitative exercise was therefore far more meaningful as discussed below.

The meeting was very interesting and helpful but we ran out of time having only scratched the surface. We therefore agreed that we would arrange a cross-team away-day with our teams before the Christmas break which the four of us would facilitate around team building, motivation and workload management exercises such as 'stop-keep-start'. This links to the fact that work-life balance was high on the agenda in terms of motivating staff whilst high workloads were seen as the greatest single de-motivator as summarised below:

Embedded management behaviours

👍👍👍👍 Open dialogue

👍👍👍👍 Saying thank you and showing appreciation

👍👍👍👍 "The basics"

👍 Common job focus which creates a sense of belonging

Desired management behaviours

👍👍👍👍 Fostering a supportive, transparent and blame-free management culture at all management levels

👍👍👍👍 Ensuring frequent team building exercises to nurture emerging team cultures and help break barriers

Current challenges

👎👎👎👎 High management workloads act as a barrier to embedding behaviours that support team and individual staff motivation

👎👎👎👎 Individual team members' high workloads are seen as one of the greatest de-motivators both for the managers, individuals concerned and the broader team

👎👎👎👎 Ongoing vacancies and the knock-on effect on other team members have both a direct and indirect negative impact on motivation

👎👎 Lack of transparency in communicating higher-level decisions and the rationale for these to teams in certain areas is deemed demotivating

## 5.    Further activities and planned initiatives in the autumn

In addition to identifying and considering motivating and de-motivating factors, the exercises with my immediate team and management team colleagues confirmed that communication plays a substantial part in team motivation, not only in terms of positive communication but also in terms of recognising the need for different communication styles when we relate to individuals and the importance of communication as a linking factor in the workplace (Cupas and Suarez, 2010):

➢ Transparent, frequent and open communication acts as an effective enabler which can help underpin staff motivation both directly and indirectly;
➢ Lack of communication acts as a barrier to identifying motivational factors and, at worst, can act as a  direct de-motivator in itself;

> ➤ Ill-thought communication generates demotivation and can destroy staff motivation which might otherwise be maintained.

The project therefore ended where it started in terms of its intended outcomes around communication and open two-way dialogue which helped us identify the following further activities:

> ➤ The next scheduled team meeting will be used to accommodate a further discussion on motivation to collective identify how we can best foster motivation within the team and what part other factors play outside the team.
>
> ➤ Bid for staff development money to hold a cross-team away-day away from the University to hold an open and transparent session with the teams to help strengthen team culture, consider ways to reduce team workloads and to improve staff motivation and positive ownership of what we do by breaking down barriers to motivation. The away-day would be modelled on a recent away day held by one of the managers to build team culture which was very successful (submitted).

Sylvester and Patel (2014) talk about continual re-engagement and the same applies to motivation. I will therefore continue to make efforts to foster existing good practice but more importantly, try and to take conscious steps towards embedding the desired management behaviours identified above into day-today practice. We have had some success of considering individual team members' differing motivational value systems through appraisals (e.g. discussions around better support for part-time staff and delegation of further responsibility to team members to help support their professional development). It was recognised at management team level that having a common purpose and job focus creates a strong basis for team motivation and whilst the roles in our team are more varied, we will continue to share and discuss our appraisal objectives to help support understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities and to further strengthen our team identity.

## 6. Case study reflections and tips for other managers

SDI is a great way for team members to get to know each other better and team building is a definite motivating factor. Attending a BU–wide workshop which was followed up by a tailored session with the facilitator worked well and feedback confirmed that team members benefited from these sessions and found them thought provoking. External SDI staff development days such as the one offered at BU cost several hundred pounds per person so it is a great opportunity.

The team session to discuss staff motivation and the subsequent management team session confirmed that keeping communication channels open is vital to our roles and we do not clear enough diary time to do this. However, small steps are better than no steps and the case study has established the question how to motivate the team as an important one in my mind. Motivating staff is not a one-off case study but rather an ongoing project that need to be incorporated into our daily management behaviours at all levels. Here are some tips to help us think how we might move this important agenda forward:

1) <u>Give yourself and your team time to get to know and understand each other better</u>. Trust and good working relationships take time to develop but are essential to a

**productive dialogue** that in itself is motivating and can be used to identify further factors to help motivate your team and to remove any barriers to motivation.

2) Keep up with what's going on in your team outside work. We are not robots and finding time for a **coffee and chat** that is not all work-related is important even when you are busy.

3) Not everyone is motivated by the same things as you. Take time to **talk to your team frequently** and find out what motivates them and consider what you can do to meet their needs to foster motivation.

4) Remember that you cannot overestimate the importance of recognition. **Use positive communication** to make sure your team know you appreciate them and ensure that senior management are made aware of individual and team achievements.

5) Accept that you cannot achieve everything. However, be transparent in your management style, **genuinely listen** to your staff and take time to explain the reasons for your decision if you cannot offer them what they would like to use positive communication as a barrier to de-motivation.

6) Talk to other managers about their experiences. Creating a support network with other managers who face the same challenges as your team enables you to **share good practice** and exchange tips and experiences**.**

## 7. Appendices

Appendix A – Departmental diagram

Appendix B – Extracts, BU 2012-18 Aims

Appendix C – Team SDI Group Report

Appendix D – Interpretative guide to SDI motivations

Appendix E – Management team meeting and short questionnaire

## 8. Resources

BU Strategic Plan 2012-18 (Bournemouth University, 2012)

Engagement and motivation (John Sylvester and Ruth Patel, www.trainingjournal.com, 2014)

The surprising truth about what motivates us (Daniel Pink, 2010, http://www.thersa.org/events/rsaanimate/animate/rsa-animate-drive)

Motivation and communication (Catherine Cupas and Michelle Siarez, http://www.slideshare.net/katwinah/motivation-communication, 2010)

LME course materials:

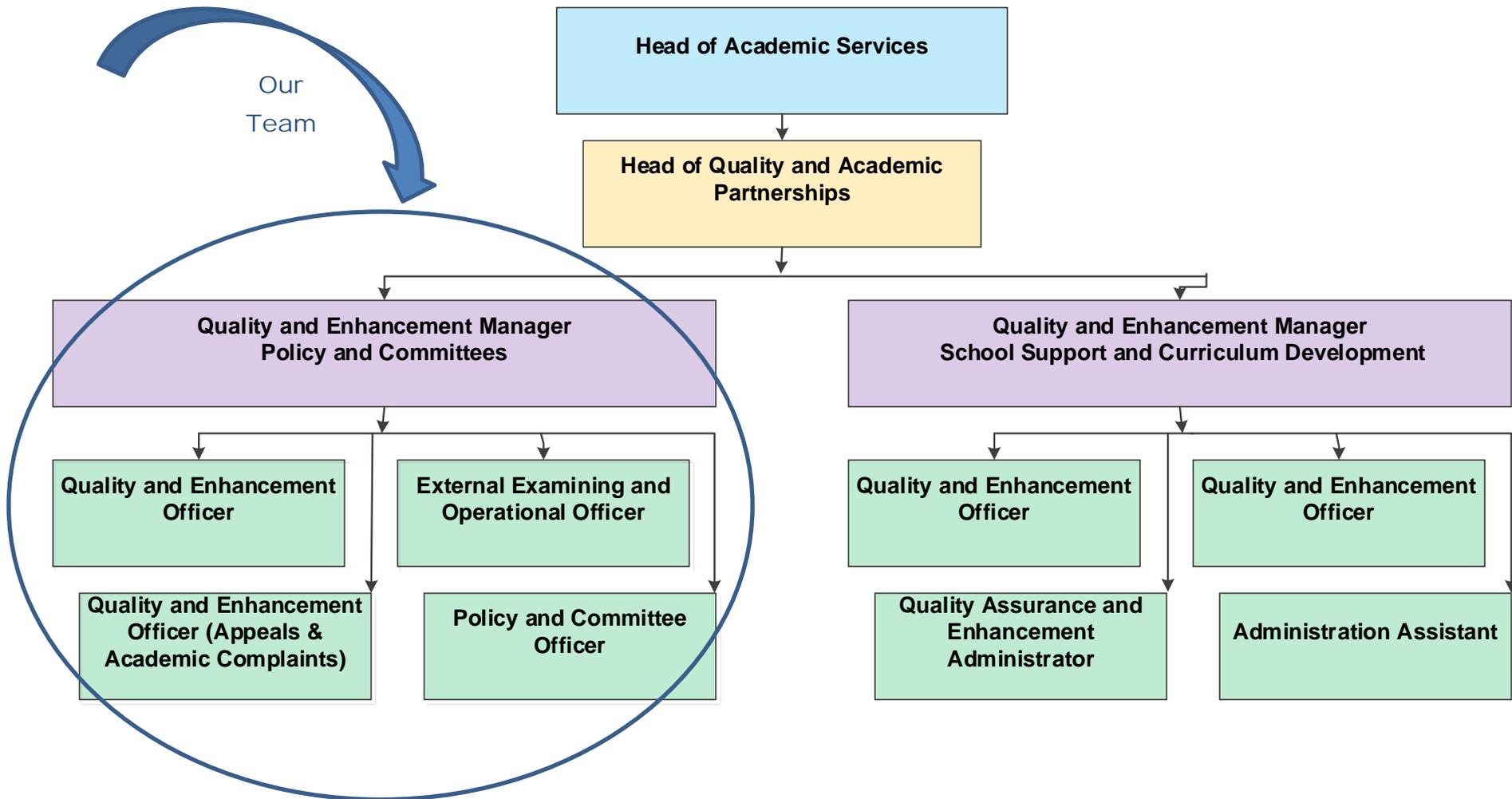LME Session 2 – 'Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Awareness'

LME Session 6 – 'The Motivational Manager'

Netta Silvennoinen, Quality and Enhancement Manager, Educational Development and Quality, Academic Services, September 2014

**Appendix A: Structure diagram – Educational Development and Quality**

# ACADEMIC SERVICES

**Educational Development and Quality - September 2014**

**Our Team**

**Head of Academic Services**

**Head of Quality and Academic Partnerships**

**Quality and Enhancement Manager Policy and Committees**

**Quality and Enhancement Manager School Support and Curriculum Development**

**Quality and Enhancement Officer**

**External Examining and Operational Officer**

**Quality and Enhancement Officer**

**Quality and Enhancement Officer**

**Quality and Enhancement Officer (Appeals & Academic Complaints)**

**Policy and Committee Officer**

**Quality Assurance and Enhancement Administrator**

**Administration Assistant**

**Appendix B: Extracts, BU 2012-18 Aims**

P01: Recruit, retain, recognise, and develop a high performing workforce

➢ **Inspire and develop all staff** to ensure our workforce has the capability to deliver our Vision and the opportunity **to maximise their potential** and that of their team (P1B)

➢ Develop pay, reward and recognition structures that **recognise high performance**, potential and delivery (P1D)

P02: Engage and inspire staff to deliver an outstanding student experience and to fulfil their potential

➢ **Enable staff to be engaged** in, and committed to, the development of an excellent student experience and BU (P2A)

P03: Be an excellent place to work

➢ Be widely recognised as an excellent place to work, where **staff satisfaction is comparable to the best employers in the UK** (P3B)

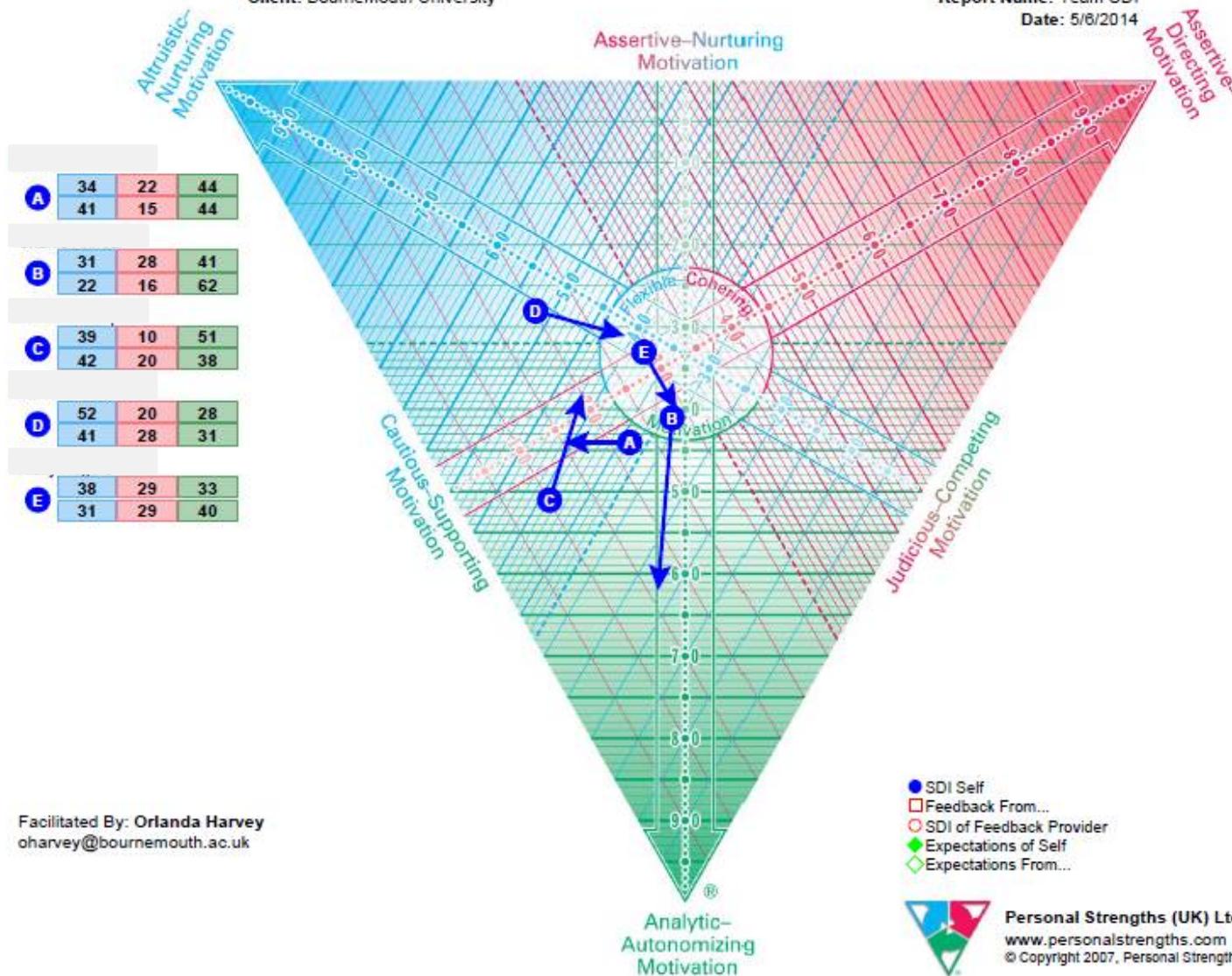➢ Maintain and **enhance a working environment that enables and supports staff well-being** (P3C)

(Bournemouth University, 2012)

# Appendix C: SDI Group Report for the Policy and Committee team



SDI - Group Report

Client: Bournemouth University

Report Name: Team SDI
Date: 5/6/2014

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 34 | 22 | 44 | |
| | 41 | 15 | 44 | |
| B | 31 | 28 | 41 | |
| | 22 | 16 | 62 | |
| C | 39 | 10 | 51 | |
| | 42 | 20 | 38 | |
| D | 52 | 20 | 28 | |
| | 41 | 28 | 31 | |
| E | 38 | 29 | 33 | |
| | 31 | 29 | 40 | |

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SDI Self
Feedback From...
SDI of Feedback Provider
Expectations of Self
Expectations From...

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## ALTRUISTIC-NURTURING - BLUE

**VALUED RELATING STYLE**

➤ Being open and responsive to the needs of others
➤ Seeking ways to bring help to others
➤ Trying to make life easier for others
➤ Trying to avoid being a burden to others
➤ Ensuring others reach their potential
➤ Ensuring others are valued
➤ Defending the rights of others

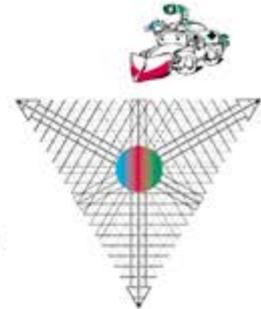⚓ **Concern for the Protection, Growth and Welfare of Others**

## FLEXIBLE–COHERING - HUB

**VALUED RELATING STYLE**

➤ Being curious about what others think and feel, open minded and willing to adapt
➤ Experiments with different ways of acting
➤ Proud to be a "member"
➤ Likes to know a lot of people
➤ Likes to be known by a lot of people
➤ Likes to be known as flexible

⚓ **Concern for Flexibility, the Welfare of the Group the Members of the Group and belonging in the Group**

## ASSERTIVE-DIRECTING - RED

**VALUED RELATING STYLE**

➤ Competing for authority, responsibility and positions of leadership
➤ Exercising persuasion
➤ Being alert to opportunity
➤ Claiming the right to earned rewards
➤ Accepting challenges
➤ Accepting risk-taking as necessary and desirable
➤ Demonstrating competitiveness
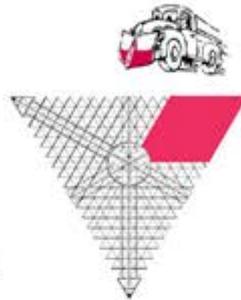
⚓ **Concern for Task Accomplishment, the Organisation of People, Time, Money and any other Resources to Achieve Desired Results**

## ASSERTIVE–NURTURING - RED-BLUE

**VALUED RELATING STYLE**

➤ Actively seeking opportunities to help others
➤ Persuading others to ensure maximum growth and development of others
➤ Being open to proposals for creating welfare and security for others
➤ Creating enthusiasm and support in tackling obstacles to success
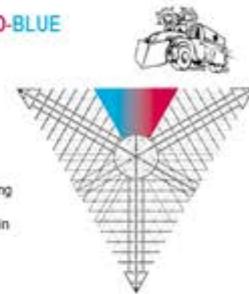
⚓ **Concern for the Protection, Growth and Welfare of Others Through Task Accomplishment and Direction**

## ANALYTIC-AUTONOMISING - GREEN

**VALUED RELATING STYLE**

➤ Being objective
➤ Being right
➤ Being principled
➤ Being in control of emotions
➤ Being practical
➤ Being cautious and thorough
➤ Being fair
➤ Being resolute
➤ Being serious
➤ Being their own "judge and jury"
➤ Being their "own person"
➤ Thinking things through before acting
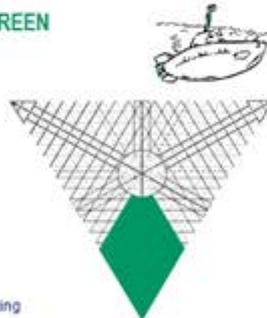
⚓ **Concern for Assurance that things have been properly thought out, meaningful order being established and maintained; Individualism, Self-Reliance & Self-Dependence**

## CAUTIOUS–SUPPORTING - BLUE-GREEN

**VALUED RELATING STYLE**

➤ Building effective processes and resources to protect or enhance welfare of others
➤ Offering assistance for greater self-sufficiency and independence
➤ Supporting activities that lead to growth
➤ Fighting for principles that are fair
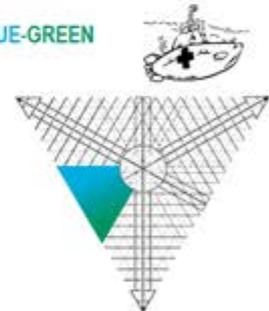
⚓ **Concern for Affirming and Developing Self-Sufficiency in Self and Others, Thoughtful Helpfulness with regard for Justice**

## JUDICIOUS–COMPETING - RED-GREEN

**VALUED RELATING STYLE**

➤ Providing rational direction that can assess risks and opportunities
➤ Being decisive and proactive when all the facts are in
➤ Challenging opposition through thoughtful process and strategy

⚓ **Concern for Intelligent Assertiveness, Justice, Providing Direction, Order, and Fairness in Competition**

# Appendix E – Management team meeting and short questionnaire

Questions for managers in the same situation:

1) How do you as managers motivate your teams, how successful you think your approach is, and what you think you could do differently/better
2) Are there any barriers to motivation and if so, what are these
   a. from management perspective
   b. from employee perspective
3) What can we do to increase motivators and remove de-motivators to help foster team motivation on an ongoing basis
4) What is the role of team meetings and how often do you hold these

Questionnaire for managers on team motivation

Task 1
Rate the following management behaviours into order of importance 1-12 (1 being the most important one and 12 the least important one)

Task 2
Indicate whether you use the below behaviours by scoring each 1-5 (1 being not at all and 5 being always)

| Management behaviours[1] | Importance (1-12) | Use (1-5) |
|---|---|---|
| Respond in a timely manner to employee requests and enquiries | 1/5/6/7 | 3/3/3/4 |
| Follow through and do what you will say you will do | 2/4/4/6 | 3/3/4/4 |
| Be patient, and truly listen to understand, when an employee comes to you with a concern | 3/4/7/9 | 3/4/4/5 |
| Give constructive feedback and coach to correct the issue: always in private | 5/7/9/10 | 3/3/4/5 |
| Share information with the team | 2/2/5/12 | 3/4/4/5 |
| Allow and assist employees in finding their own solutions | 1/6/8/11 | 3/3/3/4 |
| Provide ongoing positive feedback for behaviour and work well done | 1/4/8/8 | 4/4/4/5 |
| Ensure that staff are recognised both inter-departmentally and across the wider community for their efforts | 7/10/12/12 | 1/2/2/4 |
| Allow an individual to take time off or leave early as a reward for productive work that has involved long hours | 1/2/9/9 | 1/2/3/3 |
| Map out a development plan with each employee | 3/8/10/12 | 2/2/3/4 |
| Ensure the employee feels able to attend development opportunities | 5/11/11/11 | 4/4/5/5 |
| Seek employee input on plans and issues you are tackling | 3/3/6/10 | 3/4/5/5 |

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[1] Questionnaire adapted from LME Session 6 course materials.