

'If you can dream it, you can achieve it'

(Ysgol Bae Baglan, 2018)

A people practitioners guide to understanding the external environment that impacts on YBBs goals and services, and the importance of organisational culture and change management.

(AC 1.1)
External influences

According to Waite K, et al (2021) the business environment can be referred to as operating on two levels - Micro (internal and immediate environment) for example, school staff, children, parents and wider community. And Macro (societal and major uncontrollable forces level) for example, social factors such as Poverty. Political factors such as new Welsh curriculum and Economic factors such as recession. There are many tools available to help us assess our business and familiarise ourselves to possible environmental influences in order to be proactive and better prepared in the face of change. A Swot (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is useful to identify what a business is doing well or not so well in the internal and intermediate environment while a PESTLE analysis can inform us on wider areas of impact (Waite et al 2021). Here we will look at a brief example of a PESTLE analysis of our school.

Political= New Welsh curriculum strain on teacher's workload. Free school meals for all primary age children strain on budget and workload of kitchen staff. Union impacting on pay, workers employment rights, etc.

Economic= Recession impacting government budget.

Socio cultural= We are situated in a deprived area with high number of free school meal children which impacts pupils' wellbeing and is a high indicator of underachieving.

Technological= Staff and children's access to technologies both inside and outside of school.

Legal= Transgender rights and the implication on children's wellbeing.

Environmental= Weather= historically having to close the school for a day at winter time where there is a threat of snow that would put staff at risk if they travelled to school.

Our schools mission statement 'If you can dream it, you can achieve it' is at the forefront of our minds when we consider our aims and goals for the quality of education we strive to deliver. We believe that "Through hard work and application all our pupils will have the opportunities to reach their potential and achieve their goals' (Ysgol Bae Baglan 2018)

In order to work towards achieving our goals and objectives, we must have a structured action plan that will motivate us and keep us focused on the right direction (Waite et al 2021). A SMART plan is a useful tool to inform planning and avoid drifting into tangents. For example, if we take our aim 'to have high expectations and aspirations for all pupils' (Ysgol Bae Baglan, 2018), one of our objectives might be to target pupil attendance. A SMART goal in this case might look like this.

Specific = Aim for 95% and above attendance for all pupils

Measurable= This will be measured by SIMS system and monitored by admin staff.

Achievable= unless in cases of chronic illness or unforeseen disaster all children on our register should be able to attend school.

Relevant= Attendance in school is in direct correlation to success in school.

Time bound= Measures would start on the day of the first absence, reviewed monthly and yearly.

It is vital to our school that our goals are congruent with our vision. But it is not enough to print out our mission statement in a prospectus without properly embedding it in school culture (Keating and Morecroft 2006). We will take a look at how People Professionals can foster a positive culture later.

(AC 1.2) **Business goals**

(AC 1.3) **Products, services and customers**

Businesses are known for their products or services (Waite et al 2021). As a school our main services is to deliver a quality education to pupils age 3 to 16. Our main customers are children and parents. Additionally, we have responsibilities to stakeholders and it is imperative we contribute effectively to the wider community. The main feature of our newly built (2016) school that set us apart from other schools in the area was the investment in new technologies such as Microsoft surface pro's for all staff and secondary students, and the ambition of the paperless school (The Education Foundation 2019)

The benefits of these new technologies are to equip children from a deprived area who may not otherwise have access to such devices, to have opportunities to thrive in the technological world. With the paperless school contributing to supporting Environmental issues such as carbon footprint and climate change. According to Waite et al (2021), a product has a lifecycle of 5 stages, Development, introduction, growth, maturity and decline. Customers (in this case children and parents) also have a lifecycle, Awareness, acquisition conversation, retention and loyalty. In order to retain our customers loyalty, we might need to be mindful that our branding as a technologically advanced school might quickly be outdated due to cost of replacement. As new tech is rapidly innovating and quickly becoming obsolete, and the need for devices etc. having to be replaced, we might consider a proactive approach of updating and /or rebranding our services which might focus on a more traditional form of education for example language and literacy, which is currently below UK average (Estyn 2019).

Technology has a major impact on the workplace. According to Waite et al, (2020) 'Technology has brought us more and more opportunities to learn, share knowledge, engage with peers and collaborate with colleagues' (p.20). Wi-fi and Bluetooth has allowed us to connect and share information wirelessly. The amount of data that can be stored and shared has increased dramatically and communications have evolved to a point where people can meet and collaborate from all over the world (Waite et al 2021). HR systems have been designed to simplify and optimise HR processes. Our Current HR system ITRENT can assist in Payroll, HR workforce management, talent management, learning and development, recruitment, analytics, and employee engagement (ITrent 2020). The potential for communication, collaboration and sharing information has never been so great, however it takes a wide range of skills and well-trained individuals to cope with the challenges that face them on a day-to-day basis (Keating and Moorcraft (2006). Additionally, to get optimal results from these technologies, individuals will need to possess excellent communication and information sharing skills. Chung et al (2016) state 'in most companies, many managers still believe that once the right technology is in place, the appropriate information-sharing behaviour will inevitably follow'. However, information sharing behaviour can greatly depend on organisational culture. For example: If the culture of an organisation is bureaucratic and hierarchical, employees tend to be closed to sharing information as they may see it as their personal valuable asset that must be protected (Chung et al 2016). It is the role of the people professional to assist in creating a positive, open culture, where employees feel safe enough to trust colleagues and management in order to collaborate and share information.

(AC 1.4) Technology

(AC 2.1) Organisational culture

'Culture is how people behave when no one is looking' Razzetti, (2022). It is influenced by traditions, habits, leadership and shared values and can be evidenced in the way people interact with each other and respond to certain events (Waite et al 2022). It is all good and well to have an inspirational mission statement and published values, but without good leadership, these visions may not reflect in the school culture. The culture will be reflected in what people repeatedly say and do (Keating and Moorcroft 2006). According to Razzetti, (2022) 'An MIT Slan study found no correlation between a company's expressed values and how employees felt they lived up to them'. Then how can we foster a positive workplace culture? If we are to believe that it is the 'behaviors that an organisation rewards or punishes bring its values to life' Razzetti, (2022). Then we must take a close look at how organisations leaders influence the behaviour of our employees. According to Nanayakkara, (2021) 'Public sector organisations continue to emphasise the values of a bureaucratic or hierarchical culture with strong emphasis on regulations, standards, uniformity and consistency'. Our school culture also reflects Charles Handys (1993) theory of the sub culture Role (or bureaucratic). This describes the organisations structure as 'hierarchical, and staff are expected to work to their job description and follow laid down rules and procedures' Waite et al 2022 (p.29). Although this culture allows leaders to have great control over the organisations internal efficiency, it can create a culture that lacks trust, and can stifle employee's creativity and innovation and even confidence to speak up when there is a conflict of interest between their values and the organisations values (Razzetti, (2022). To foster a positive workplace culture in our school, we must strive to have open communication and a safe place where employees feel heard, employee involvement in planning and collaboration, opportunities for progression within the company and support for individual and teams (Waite et al 2022).



(AC 3.1) Change management

Change is inevitable, as the external world constantly changes, we must expect that our organisation will change. According to Cheese, P (2022) 'Emerging from the pandemic, we are now experiencing the most significant geopolitical crisis in a generation' (p5). In these times of turbulence, it must be expected, that our school will undoubtedly be faced with changes that may be incremental (continuous improvement) and/or transformational (A significant shift) (Waite et al 2022). Change may be expected by staff, for example a planned intervention scheme, or may be sudden, as in the case of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic where rapid changes were enforced by law. However, people are generally reluctant to change. We find comfort in routine and dislike uncertainty, so will often resist changes suggested by senior management (James and Lewis, 2022). There are many theoretical models of change available to guide us in planning for change. There's The Lewin Model: Unfreeze (Take apart the existing way of doing things), Change (make the change), Refreeze (Put the pieces back together in a new way). While Lewin's Model provides some structure to managing change, it requires elaboration that often cause managers to fail (James and Lewis, 2022). The Kotter's 8 Step Change Model is 'a proven process that many project managers and change agents have used successfully to implant change projects' (Waite et al 2022 p38). Kotter's model extends Lewins model creating additional detail and guidance (James and Lewis, 2022). There are many Models to choose from including PROSCI "ADKAR" and Three-Phase Model, McKinsey 7-S Model and Senge and Systems Thinking. Giving that any model can succeed or fail, James and Lewis, (2022) suggest that rather than sticking rigidly to one model, a manager might take a few important guidelines from each model that may include: 'employing a systematic approach, understand that a natural resistance to change exists in all organizations, understand how the pieces fit together as well as how they interact, make sure that you correctly understand the nature of the problem that your change initiative seeks to solve' (p16). Although we cannot prepare precisely for every change, it is important that people professionals are proactive in scanning the internal and external environment for possible cues, and have an understanding of human behaviors in the event of change.

Any organisation can be seen to have many different teams and functions. For example, our school is a public organisation. It's run by the current Conservative government who dissolves its powers to the Local Education Authority. We have teams of financial, administration, HR, senior leadership teams, wellbeing teams, teachers, teaching assistants, canteen staff, caretakers and cleaners (just to name a few). Although our school has many different and distinct structures and functions, they must operate as a whole system through a culture of clear communication, understanding systems and procedures, leadership style and shared values, as aspects of one part of the organisation will affect the other (Waite, et al 2020). For example: Information about a child's health condition and procedures in case of emergency need to be passed through all teams as failure to do so could be fatal and/or have serious legal implications as we have a duty of care to all children. In this case, people professionals have the responsibility of ensuring policies and procedures are up to date, fulfil legal requirements and that information accessible to all staff. Another example is if on recruiting new staff, where HR or management are unfamiliar with the values and culture of a particular team, they may not select the person with the characteristics and attributes required for the role which could impact on work relationships and ultimately affect the wellbeing of staff and children. Keating and Moorcraft, (2006) state 'In the case of a school, which has the development of people as its purpose, fair and effective management of human resources is critical, as the value it places on its staff will impact on the young people in its care' (p59). Therefore, it is vital that People Professionals foster and facilitate by way of example and through policies and procedures an open culture that communicates clearly and respectfully to all its staff.

(AC 2.2) Organisations
are whole systems

(AC 3.3) People's
response to change

People like what is familiar, change makes them uncomfortable, discomfort leads to concern and uncertainty, uncertainty can lead to fear (James and Lewis 2020). As people Professionals we must be aware of how change can impact people as a whole and also how change effects people as individuals. There are many models of personality that can be used to try to understand how individuals might act in certain situations. A popular model used by businesses is The Myers-Briggs Type inventory (MBTI).

Building on the work of Carl Jung, it seeks to organise personalities by 16 types depending on Extraversion, Introversion, Sensing, Intuition, Thinking, Feeling, Judging or Perceiving. Using this model as a guide we might expect a person high in extroversion to prefer to deal with change by talking it out in meetings or with colleagues whilst an introvert might need time alone to process how they feel internally (Waite et al 2020). Although this model is useful for us to gain insight into different personality types, many have contested the validity of its claims. Haslam (2018) states, 'By conventional psychometric criteria, the MBTI is highly suspect. In failing to measure what it purports to measure, it has low validity and in failing to elicit consistent responses across testing contexts, it has low reliability and little predictive power'. The Big 5 and Five Factor Model are models that are more accepted by the psychology community as they have an extensive range of empirical evidence. The five personality traits are: Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience (Widiger, 2015). Understanding that change in our organisation will not only affect people not only collectively, but uniquely as individuals, and having insight to how different personalities may react in different ways to the same situation, will help us deal thoughtfully and empathetically when managing change and build the resilience that can withstand future changes (Nowak, 2021).

According to Keating and Moorcraft (2006) 'Human Resource (HR) is without a doubt the most valuable resource any organisation can possess, undeniably the key to its success or failure' (p59). In order to look after a business's greatest asset (its people) people professionals are required to fulfil and be responsible for the implementing and delivery of many tasks. For example: Policies and procedures, recruitment and selection, grievance and discipline, staff absence, termination of employment, Employee relations (including dealing with trade unions), rewards and benefits, legal requirements, and developing staff. In relation to change agendas, and because of the varied tasks they manage and the different personalities of the people they represent or assist, People Professionals will need to undertake a number of roles in order to facilitate a smoother transition. According to Waite et al, these include: 'gate keeper, liaison person or representative, driver of change, facilitator, expert witness, consultant, adviser, side line witness, critical friend, compliance guardian, communicator, and recording and monitoring process' (p39). For example: In assisting a manager in a grievance procedure, a People Professional may take on the role of a liaison person to a trade union. They may facilitate staff development programs, be a critical friend delivering candid feedback to managers, they may be a consultant sharing human resource knowledge, they may be a trusted adviser, listening and challenging thinking and suggesting different perspectives (Filice, 2020). Given People professionals unique position in an organisation, it is imperative that we use our skills to influence, by offering valuable insight that assists in making the right decisions for the organisation and its greatest asset: it's people.

(AC 3.2) Roles of People Professional

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