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In a seemingly never-ending and depressing cycle, 2015 brought more high-profile organizational scandals to the public eye. Most of the organizations named and shamed have corporate values, missions and governance policies that should preclude such corporate bad behavior, but they aren't working. Paul Ballman, in our viewpoint for this issue, fears that many other organizations might be marching toward their own cliff edge and asks a simple but fundamental question – did no one know of the potential skeletons in the corporate closet? His answer? They did, of course, but no one asked them. Could your organizations be heading for trouble and, more importantly, what can you do to avoid it?

Leaders shoulder the bulk of responsibility when things go so awry. Perhaps the “heroic” and “control” models of leadership need to be abandoned at a more urgent and speedy rate? You might think that policing would be one of the exceptions, operating as it does in a context that includes “life and death” situations and the need for rapid responses/decisions. Mark McKergow and Chris Miller disagree. Drawing on evidence from the UK College of Policing Leadership Review, they propose the metaphor of a “host” leader, where there is a balance in leadership style to also allow for empowerment and engagement. Their practical suggestions for how this might work at each leadership level are particularly useful.

Another leadership model is offered by Anita Sarkar. She sets out a definition for “responsible leadership” as an effective way to deal with the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, chaotic and ambiguous) organizational world in which we all now operate. Pulling together strands from transformational, servant and authentic leadership frameworks, the proposal here is that a leader's focus should be on the quality and depth of their exchanges with followers, teams, organizations and society at large.

The language leaders use to communicate can have a significant, either positive or negative, impact on their followers. William Holmes invites us to take a look at Motivating Language Theory (MLT), but more specifically, the antecedents that might be necessary for it to be effective. The detail behind his proposed formula ($BI + C = T$) provides sound practical advice on how to most successfully harness the power of MLT.

The communication choices we make in mentoring relationships are also crucial. As the use of “virtual” methods increases, what do you need to look out for to ensure the richness of face-to-face communication is not lost? If your organization is looking at moving the mentoring offering to a more online basis, or if you are exploring the possibilities of mentoring for the first time, Stephanie Merritt and Lyndsey Havill provide the results of some useful research into the consequences of using “low richness” vs “high richness” methods of communication.

The dilemma of how open organizations should be when getting involved in massive open on-line courses (MOOCs) is addressed in “Opportunity or threat? The pros and cons of open courses for professional development”. Organizations, such as Microsoft, are increasingly attracted to MOOCs due to their many advantages; flexibility, sector

collaboration, etc. However, the article also identifies the kinds of structures companies might need to use to protect their more commercially sensitive information.

“Being mindful of managing emotions” proposes that practicing body–mind methods can have a positive impact on peoples’ levels of emotional intelligence. It seems that “mindfulness” (aka meditation), yoga, tai chi and other body–mind activities may not just relieve internal stress and tension, but might also help to increase peoples’ abilities in building effective working relationships with one another. With so much current attention on well-being in organizations, these methods could, perhaps should, form part of any organizational offering. And if it’s the office politics that are adding to your stress levels, take a look at the book review – HBR Guide to Office Politics.

An intriguing case study on the impact of taking seriously the need for reflection in an organization is outlined in “On reflection, we’re all in this together”. Researchers concluded the following five roles of performance management can help to develop reflective practices that have a positive impact on organizational performance:

1. making reflective work practices visible;
2. supporting reflective dialogue;
3. creating a favorable measurement culture;
4. clarifying the goals at all organizational levels; and
5. motivating employees to use reflective work practices by means of compensation and rewards.

Finally, while much attention (and not a little *angst*) is being given to how organizations better facilitate the 70 and 20 per cent of the 70:20:10 model, we should not lose sight of the importance of high-quality provision for the more formal 10 per cent. In “Engaging the learner to increase training effectiveness”, we are offered a succinct reminder of the capabilities and practices that can enable a trainer to create the most effective learning environment.