

The use of film making in Organisation Development

Film Making and Organisation Development

I have practised as an organisation development consultant for over 30 years and over the past 10, have become increasingly excited by the use of film making as a valuable part of the organisation development process. I am not talking about corporate promotional films but instead, home grown, team, DIY film making with a little help. It is this key feature that makes the activity a part of the overall development process.

As a process, it is engaging and creative. It draws people into an act of self expression and sharing, which at its best, is stimulating, provocative and inspirational. A film can bring alive business propositions and provide a stimulus for further action; it can be used to share innovation and ideas and disseminate learning; it can promote work and achievement to build corporate confidence; it can keep people in touch, to motivate and develop identity. It can chart history, log progress and set challenges. But to be developmental, it has to be part of a broader process.

The broader organisation development context

The context will vary. The overall development effort may be part of creating new organisations, as in start ups or mergers; the focus may be on understanding and working with cultural change; the context may be specific performance issues leading to innovation and change in services and products.

The organisation development process

Film making sits within an overall process bound by particular phases and comprising tools and methods for both analysis and engagement.

For phases of change I mean moving from the need to engage in a change process at all, to understanding and exploring current situations, experimenting with change, learning, dissemination and then further experimentation.

The analytical tools may encompass formal methodologies used in the development of strategy, organisation design and process

Some Examples

A film to celebrate achievement and inspire (Iraqi health service reconstruction)

<http://youtu.be/LHeLEvWdEo>

A film to aid understanding and provoke engagement in culture work

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raxveD6vZtY>

A film to inspire the next set of changes (New healthcare organisation in Hackney, London)

<http://youtu.be/l4afzg LH44g>

A film to reflect on learning and state of development (team development in ReSPA in Montenegro)

<http://youtu.be/KRVgYQ4JoZw>

A film to provoke thinking on innovation (use of Multi-disciplinary teams in Harrow, London)

<http://youtu.be/LEdRevtAckM>

A film to launch to brief and engage on next process (End of phase one in Integrated Care in Tower Hamlets, London)

<http://youtu.be/rqAz8x3m0IM>

A film to promote reflection on the use of Action Research

<https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=FVCEhav71ts&feature=voutu.be>

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improvement (Six Sigma, Lean et al) and project management (Prince et al).

The processes of engagement are likely to involve surveys and research, large group engagements, project groups and focus groups. Increasingly social media is being used to engage larger internal and external audiences in the exploration of problems and the shaping of solutions.

So where does film making make the contribution?

Films can be used at different stages of the change process:

- Early stages of change to provide not just the context for change but also to convey the critical mass of views that subscribe to the need to address issues (customers and internal leaders)
- Key stages in work to disseminate progress and to build collective confidence in change.
- Key creation stages to stimulate broader engagement in the shaping of solutions.
- Post implementation of change to chart progress, to garner feedback, to recognise progress and to stimulate further changes.

Film making as a Process

Film making has certain disciplines and ways of engaging others.

Like other communication media there is a need to think hard about the the targeted audience and the key messages and content. More specific to film though, there are also the disciplines of design; for example the use of a range of visual images, real and virtual, and auditory stimulants to impact on the rational and emotional.



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People are engaged as recipients of the film as members of a real or virtual audience. But just as interesting and formative is the potential engagement of people in designing and making the film itself.

I have found that the engagement of others in the initial concept, participation in interviews, the filming of action and even editing, elevates individual and collective consciousness of the issues themselves. This can lead to fierce but constructive debate, reflection and further creativity, impacting on behaviour outside of the film production process.

For example in working with clients I have found:

- Engagement in the design of the film concept pushed the leadership team into reflection on whether they have gone far enough with the case for change
- Being interviewed on how change was achieved provoked immediate thinking on how to promote the process
- Interview on film solidified the commitment made to change by key leaders
- Engagement in the editing process provoked reflection by the team on

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the need for an immediate follow up process to harmonise service offers

So the act of designing, shooting and editing becomes a part of the change management process, an intervention in its own right.

Film making as corporate DIY

We live in an age where the technology of film making in terms of cameras and editing software, is so much more accessible.

Through social media we are also growing accustomed to the creative outputs of everyday observers of life with their smart phones and tablets. Film making has become a great part of our private lives but it has the potential to play a much more formative part in change at work.

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