



South West

Regional Network Meeting: South West

Host: John Lewis, Bristol

Date: 11 December 2017

Facilitator: Garry Davis

Meeting Notes

EOA Update - Oliver Smith covered the following

- Annual Conference
 - 690 delegates.
 - Extensive two day programme for all businesses in the employee owned sector.
 - If attended please complete the survey.
 - 19 & 20 November 2018.

- The EO Hub
 - Support networking between members
 - Form groups & communities
 - Identify featured topics & offer solutions
 - Engage a greater number of people in the network
 - Sector News
 - Link – [EOA Member Platform Trial](#)
 - Contact Harvey Fremlin your Membership Council representative via the EO Hub

Presentation: Chris Hooper (Head of Branch John Lewis Cribbs Causeway)

Chris gave an engaging account of the John Lewis journey to employee ownership, its democratic structures and the challenges the business faces in today's trading climate; key issues and questions posed included whether being an EO business enabled or hindered the business in its need to make rapid decisions at difficult times. Effective engagement is about employees sharing in the ownership of problems.

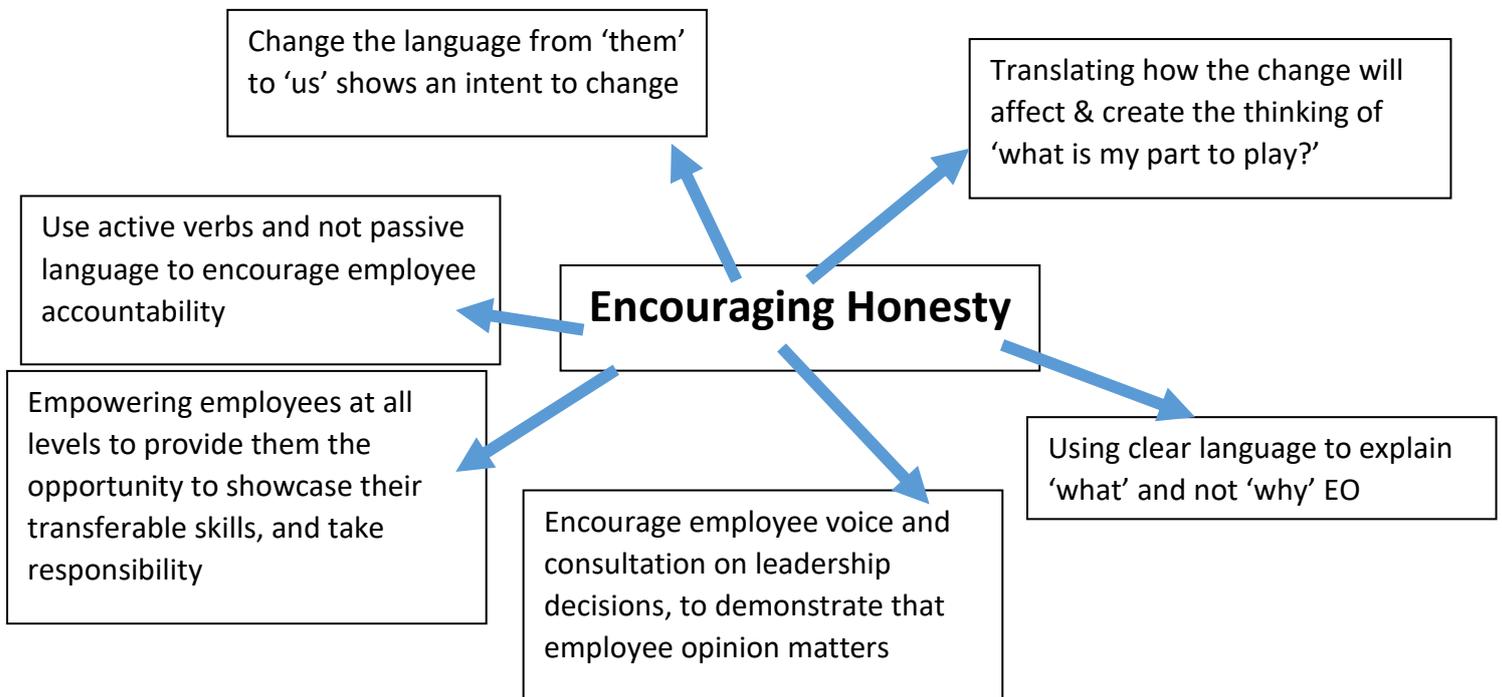
In the follow up q & a session, Chris was joined by three democratic representatives who provided a real insight into the ways in which JL Partners are given a voice and how opinion is conveyed to leadership.

Host Presentation; accompanying slides from John Lewis.

Open Space;

The notes below were recorded by the attendees during their discussions on the topics listed.

1. The role of language in gaining buy in and engagement



2. How to tailor communications across generations;

- Using social media channels and have a social media strategy, including consideration of a brainstorming website
- Identify the applicable content and subjects
- Find a matrix of creative methods such as visuals and text so individuals may absorb information easier
- People engage in different ways – some may be Reviewers and some may be Responders (aware and engaged or just aware)
- Find the right channels of communication

3. EO – Who decides?

- Depends on the current ownership – current owners cannot be forced either way
- A key person can be an influencer
- Are the future leaders already in the business?
- Consider third party investors who can support moves to EO
- Market forces may decide if EO is right now for the business or in the future
- Employee voice is crucially important to ensure the viability but employees are influencers rather than ultimate deciders

4. The role of the Trustee in the EO business;

- Ensure the business is run in the best interests of the beneficiaries
- Represent the employees
- Hold the Senior Management accountable
- Set the rules – the principles of the company
- Need for training for the role
- Interact with the employees
- Legal obligation

5. What does world class employee engagement look like?

- Define what engagement means to you
- Strong governance structure to raise and respond to questions by the employees at the right time
- Define individual responsibility – have you played your part?
- Respond clearly and quickly to employees
- Structure to engage employees
- Effective employee engagement encourages people to be solution orientated
- People whose role it is to re-enforce the values / ethos of EO – give people a clear voice
- Publish meeting agendas beforehand so correct issues can be raised, publish the action points
- Some local issues can be resolved away from meetings

- Think about the language you use and how the financials are clearly communicated – enough information to be useable
6. When do owners actually start to talk about EO with the employees?
- Form a project plan that may include time to think, getting a shareholder agreement in place, researching the right model of EO, and then bringing in the employees.

Date of next meeting; Tuesday 13 March 10.30am to 2.30pm at Penny Brohn UK, Chapel Pill Ln, Pill, Bristol BS20 0HH