

NEW TEAM FACES REAL CHALLENGE – now is the time to liberate passion

Our belief is that a successful organisation is one in which passion flourishes and people feel engaged to contribute. However, as we start what will be an interesting journey as a nation, one in which tough decisions are taken and tough action followed through, passion may well be in short supply. How to achieve success and liberate passion must be high up the “worry list” of Cameron and Clegg.

We have the youngest Prime Minister for nearly two hundred years and he has the opportunity to preside over an entirely new form of politics, which can bring about enduring change in these difficult times. David Cameron recognises this and has already stated in his pre-election contract that Government alone cannot solve the problems:

“For too long, you’ve been lied to by politicians saying they can sort out all your problems. But it doesn’t work like that. Real change is not just about what the government does. Real change only comes when we understand that we are all in this together; that we all have a responsibility to help make our country better. This contract sets out my side of the bargain: the things I want to do to change Britain. But it also makes clear that I cannot do it on my own. We will only get our economy moving, mend our broken society and reform our rotten political system if we all get involved, take responsibility and work together.”

The contract includes commitments to reduce emissions and build a greener economy, control immigration, get Britain working by giving unemployed people support to find work, increase spending on health each year, support families, raise standards in schools, increase the basic state pension, fight back against crime and create National Citizen Service for every 16 year old.

Since the publication of this contract the new Coalition Government has been formed and the Lib Dems have demanded more commitments, in return for which they have agreed that the deficit should start to be cut this year.

The parties agree that a plan for deficit reduction should be set out in an emergency budget within 50 days and ‘modest’ cuts of £6 billion to non-front line services can be made within the current financial year, 2010-11.

So we are making a start, but if ever there was a time for a call to action it’s now. If ever there was a time for people to unite in achievement of a common vision it’s now. If ever there was a need to liberate passion and ask people to give additional discretionary effort, it’s now.

The challenge is to motivate the country’s senior management executives to take action when the axe starts to fall and this is not going to be easy.

Who will willingly unite behind a common vision of pressure on pay coupled with increased income tax, national insurance, capital gains and VAT, which surely must follow? How can we liberate passion and ask people to give the additional discretionary effort when faced with such challenges?

If ever there was a time to use Sensei's passion liberators it's now. See how many you can recognise that have already been deployed and watch for the others as they come into play as, inevitably, they must if the country is to succeed.

The first passion liberator is **'intimacy'**. In the run up to the election campaign, the new PM has set out to ensure we get to know him as a person. He has a young family, a directness of speech, a capacity to listen, a sense of humour, social assurance and a cycling habit. Although he was educated at Eton and Oxford, Cameron may look like a 'toff' on paper, but you would never guess as he never walks or talks like one. Appropriate intimacy is the basis for relationship building. All change leaders have to relate to the change group they are targeting and both Mr Clegg and Mr Cameron played a good hand with this aspect of their campaigns.

The second passion liberator is hitting the **'right bull's eye'**, getting everyone to focus on the priorities, actions and deliverables to ensure success. The bold progressive steps that are beginning to emerge from our new government along with the plans to transform Parliament to make it more visible, accessible and accountable are steps in the right direction. The numbers involved in the financial deficit are beyond even imagination to most of us. The national debt is forecast to reach £1.1 trillion pounds by the end of 2011. Not many of us can comprehend the meaning of such a number, so linking it to the household budget and saying we cannot spend more than we earn for too much longer is a nice simple way to say we have to start now!

The third liberator of passion is **'radical conversations'**. A radical conversation is one that goes to the root of one or more of the important

issues, opportunities or challenges. It seeks to achieve three things, alignment, commitment and a breakthrough. Some have been held in setting up the coalition but the real hard talking has yet to begin. Each time an impasse is reached it's time for a radical conversation. The Cabinet members must become passionate allies and must hold firm if they are to succeed. Time will tell if this liberator will be deployed by the new coalition.

The fourth passion liberator is **'protecting possibility'**, keeping the opportunity for a larger and more exciting future in view while making peace with current reality. This is a real test of leadership, being able to face what is the current state honestly and meet, head on, our collective feelings about this reality. The leadership call is about setting out the path to transformation with hope and excitement whilst recognising the road will be steep and painful.

To apply the fifth passion liberator of **'provoking the future'**, we have to balance letting go of the past and improving the present with inventing the future. Done properly, this can be win-win for everyone by asking "what would this nation look like for it to be the best nation in the world?" What do we need to do to get the "Wow" factor before the next election? By holding shared results conversations we can all make the present and the future more vibrant and in the process forge new relationships, further current ones and help us make manifest abundant new aligned possibilities.

Exciting as it is to have a provocative possibility-rich future, in order to make it real we have to **'claim accountability,'** which is passion liberator number six: understand what must be done, why it must happen and how I can make it happen. Passion and meaning are both linked to relevant engagement. By claiming accountability for results and relationships, we set up conditions for purposeful engagement and help lead ourselves and others powerfully and passionately forward without blame and without barriers.

Liberator number seven is **'living vitality'**. In order for us to radiate passion we need vitality habits like thinking, acting, interacting, spending time on the things that really matter and eliminating the mess, the distractions, the fuzzy communications, the pointless meetings. Relentlessly identify and focus on the critical things that deliver the most value. Those of us who have worked in and / or for the Public Sector know the opportunity to clear the clutter and get focused on what really matters is huge. Maybe, by focusing efforts here, the new Government can deliver real savings, remove frustrations and tap the vein of caring that runs deep in the public service mindset. Let's hope so.

Passion liberator number eight is **'appreciating potential'**. Each of us wants to be known, to be heard and to feel we matter, to share dreams and

not only to be told what to do, but to have the latitude to choose how and where we contribute – in other words we want to volunteer our passion. The way we deploy the changes required is what makes a difference. Not many will argue against the need for change, but there will be many different views of how to make the changes work. One successful approach in all organisations including government departments, hospitals, schools and the like is to let those who know what needs to be done 'do' and stop interfering from afar.

The final passion liberator is **'coaching for success'**. As we all have to work through the challenge that the next few months and years will bring, we should seek out the support we need to ensure that we remain nourished to perform. Now is not the time to cut away support.

What will success look like for UK Plc? How will we know if the Coalition's vision for the future is liberating the passion of the nation? We'll know when we see these three things:

- 1) Our leaders are having authentic conversations with the public and not following the old adversarial charade full of platitudes and gestures;
- 2) The conversations we are having as a nation are brave and hit the mark; and
- 3) There is a heady mixture of appreciation and challenge that galvanises the national spirit.

By liberating passion to work for a shared vision of the future we have the possibility of really embedding lasting change.

Ian Nicholls, Director, Sensei UKE – May 2010



Sensei is an international consulting firm that helps their clients deliver business results by improving human performance and optimising the value of team and leadership interactions.

We focus on areas where companies can raise the bar on performance, productivity and profit. We ensure that any work we do has clear line of sight to specific business outcomes of value to the organisation, so that a solid return on time, energy and investment is realised.

We are experts in the process of unlocking potential and focusing this in the right ways on the right aims; and we excel at emotionally engaging leaders and teams to own the change, take accountability for it and deliver it. In short ... **'We do the really hard part of the soft stuff.'**