

Developing managers' communication ability

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**COMMUNICATION IN A
CHANGING WORLD**

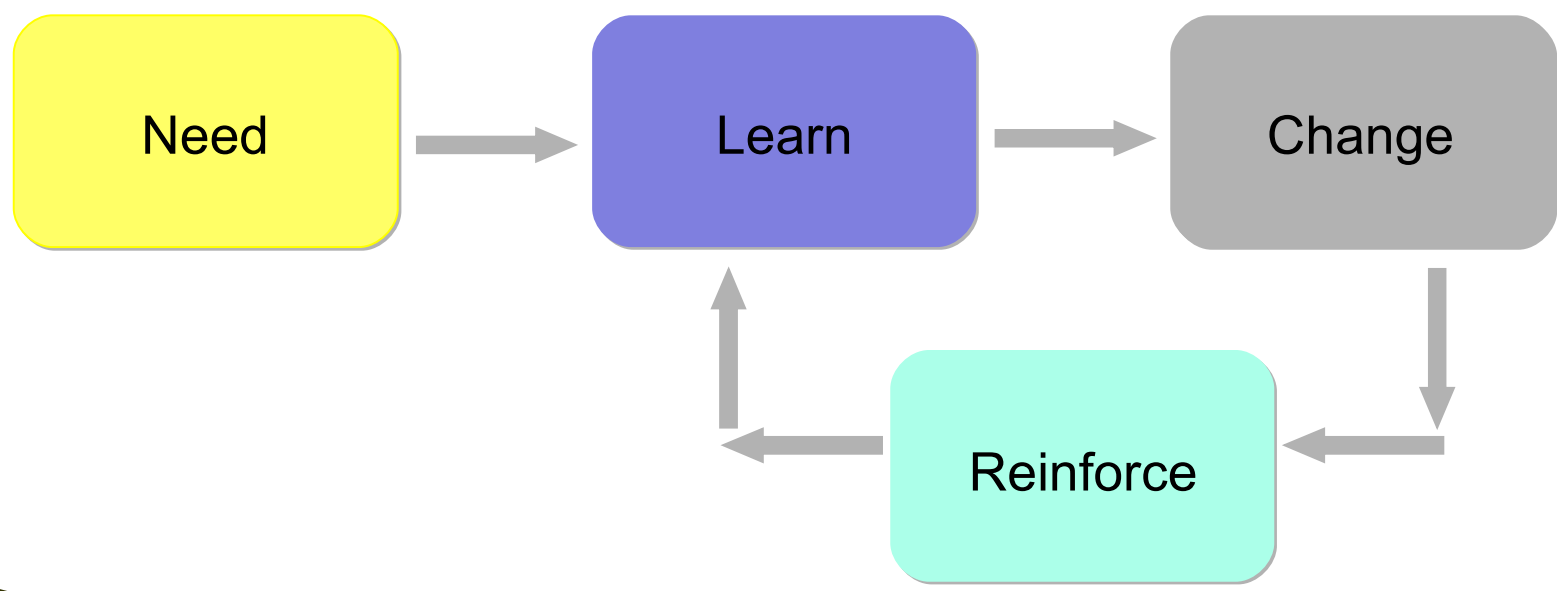
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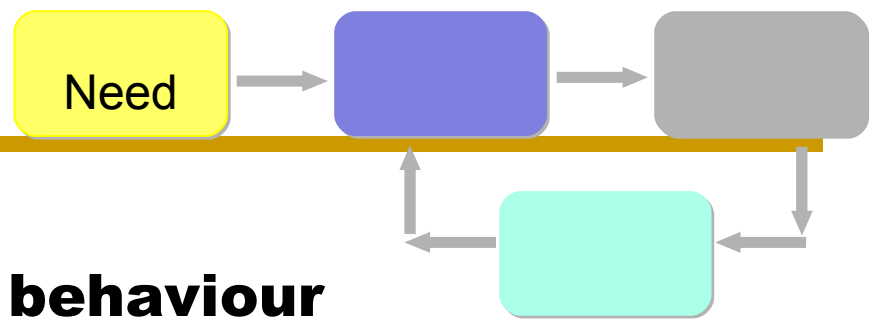
- ▶ • An employee communication and change management consultancy that helps organisations to get through periods of change as swiftly and as constructively as possible
- Current and recent clients include
 - Virgin Atlantic Airways
 - The Department of Trade & Industry
 - Royal&SunAlliance
 - Deutsche Bank
 - Morgan Crucible
 - British Airports Authority
 - The NSPCC

► **Contents of this session**

- Four key steps
- What organisations are currently doing
 - Creating the perceived need for developing skills
 - Training contents
 - Re-inforcement
 - A comprehensive approach
- Summary

Changing communication behaviour

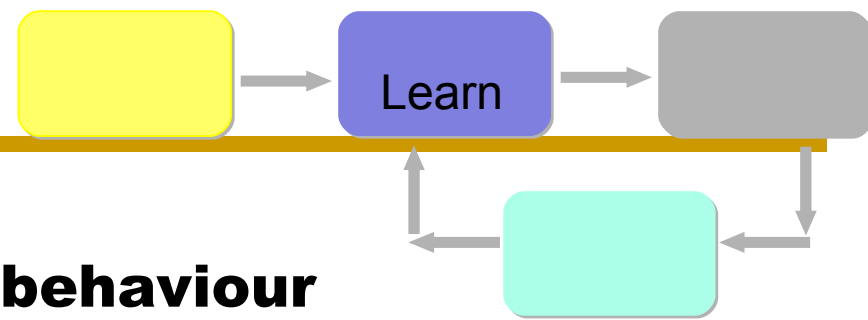




Changing communication behaviour

► *Need*

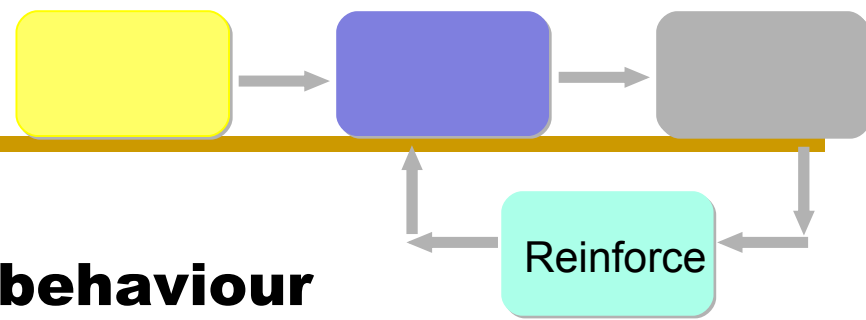
- People need
 - a reason to change
 - to see the benefits at a personal level
- The organisation
 - must articulate the organisational need for change
- The communication training and coaching programme
 - will be even stronger if it creates both personal and *team* motivation to change



Changing communication behaviour

► *Learn*

- People need to make decisions about how they change their behaviour *in the context* of their daily working lives
- Personal exploration and insight ('the private') balanced with reflection, decision-making and public commitments with colleagues to change ('the public')
- Balance of reflection and practising



Changing communication behaviour

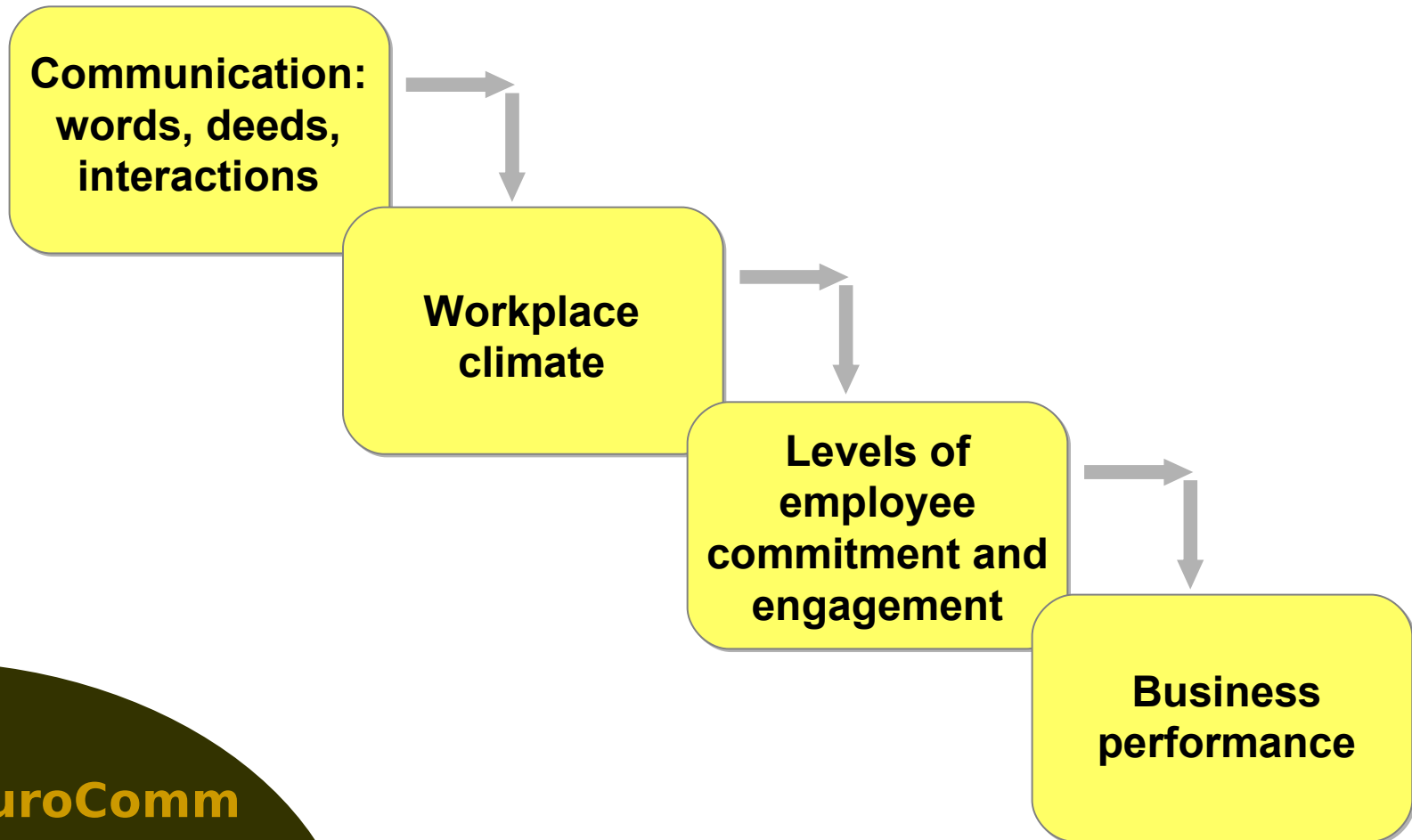
► Reinforce

- Learning has to be reinforced and progressively integrated into day-to-day practice
- Feedback
- Job description/competency framework
- Performance management system

Without reinforcement, training will be seen as 'programmes' that are 'done', rather than journeys that are undertaken

▶ ***So, what are organisations currently doing to develop line managers' communication ability?*** ◀

Creating the business case (at the organisational level)



Creating the need (at the team and individual level)

- ▶ • Employee surveys
- 360° feedback
- Coaching/personal identification of the need
- Change in role
- A significant challenge on the horizon

Not because the boss told me to...

Examples of creating the need

- ▶ • Survey identified management communication as an issue for a customer services management team
- Bank: team-based survey against 10 communication criteria
- Museum: employee survey identified leadership communication as an issue
- High Street bank branch survey correlated good customer service with good management at each branch
- Pharmaceuticals: CEO new into his role
- Insurance company moving from cost-cutting to growth: a new mode of communication required from managers

Some of the key factors for learning

- ▶ • Leadership
- Group of people with similar challenges or shared goals
- Best based on maximising strengths rather than eradicating weaknesses
- Focused and tailored to managers' needs ie about the *real* challenges they are facing
- A balance of reflection and experimentation

The Fifth Discipline: Senge

- ▶ “Taking in information is only distantly related to real learning. It would be nonsensical to say, ‘I just read a great book about bicycle riding – I’ve now learned that.’ Through learning we become more able to do something we were never able to do...we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it.”

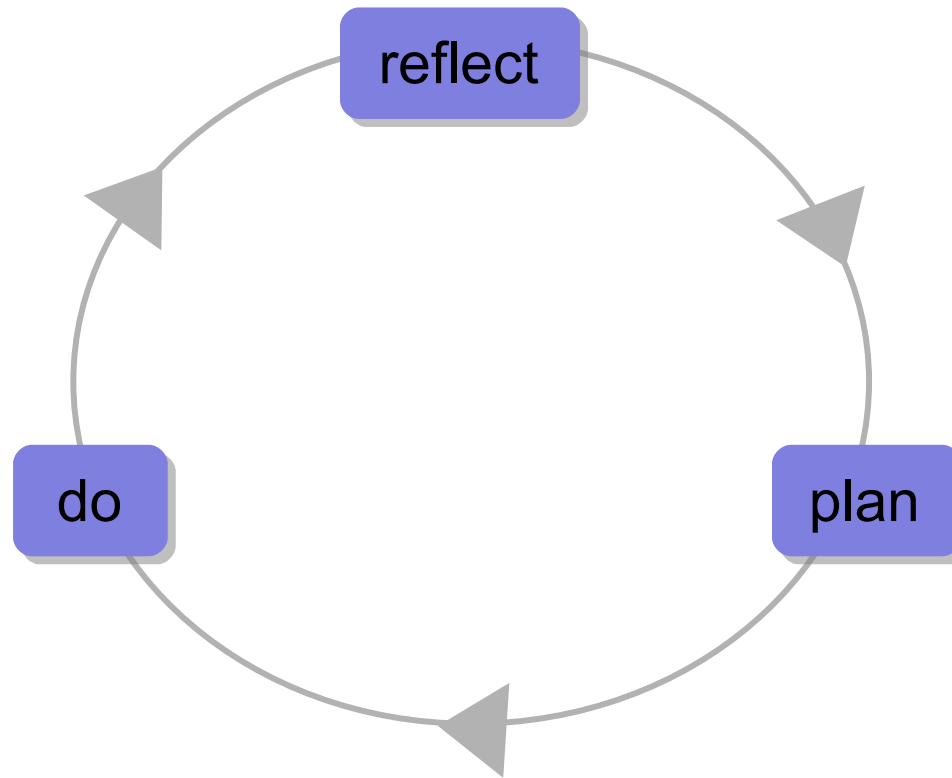
People have to *experience* the issues

- ▶ “I hear and I forget
I see and I remember
I do and I understand”

Some of the methods for learning

- ▶
 - Individual coaching and planning
 - Training modules
 - Team planning sessions
 - Peer review and sharing
 - Learning sets
- Others?

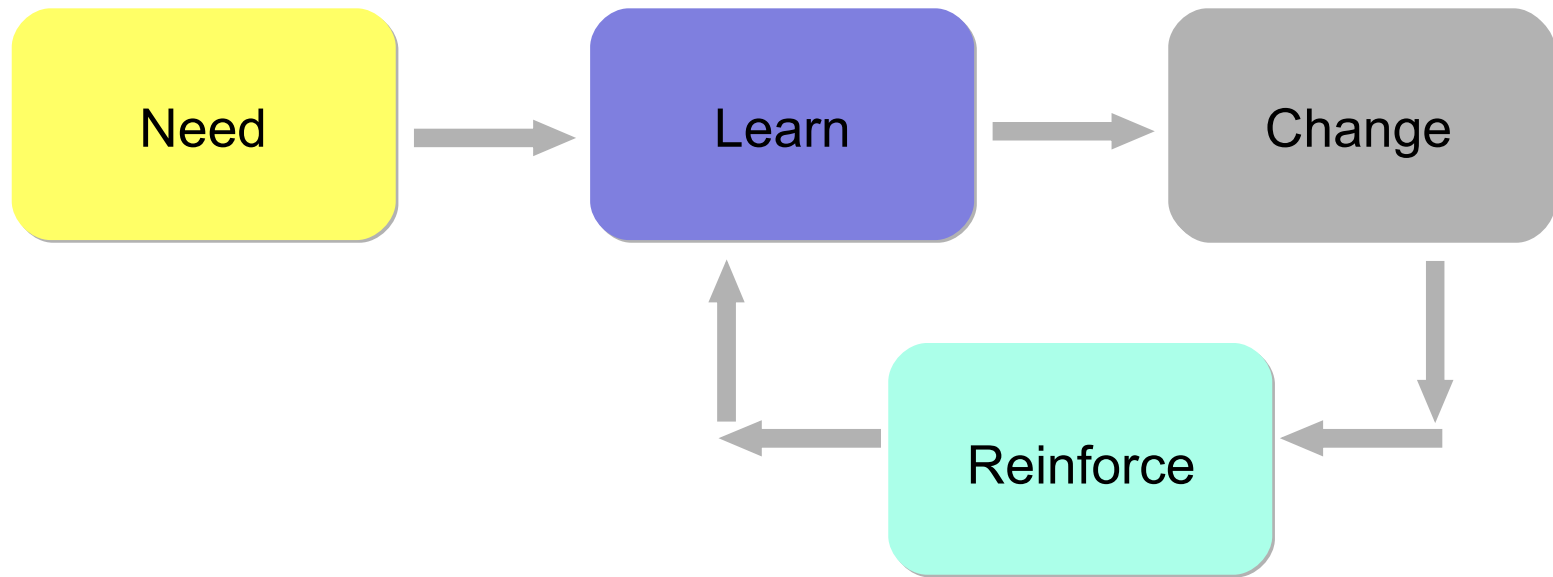
Learning is cyclical



Typical communication skills required by managers

- ▶ • Team meetings
- Planning communication
- Making information meaningful
- Listening skills
- Communicating during change
- Building Adult-Adult relationships (transactional analysis)
- Dealing with difficult conversations
- Organisation moving into a different mode eg shifting into creating a climate for growth (tone and style of communication)
- Communicating to support high performance

Practise the skills and then reinforce

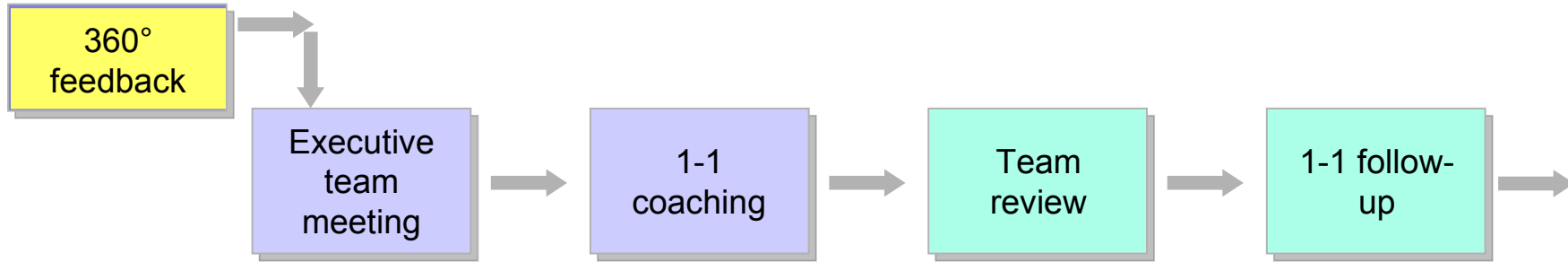


Some of the methods of re-inforcement

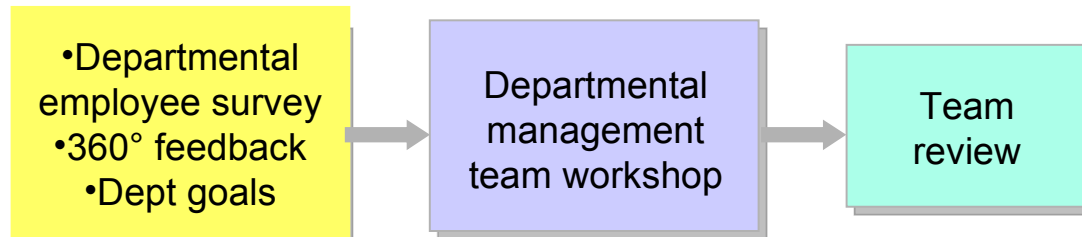
- ▶ • Ensuring managers use the skills immediately
- Learning by doing
- Follow-up meetings to review what's working and what's not
- Feedback and measurement: surveys, appraisals, feedback from colleagues
- Learning sets
- Peer support/buddying
- Recognition and reward

A comprehensive process

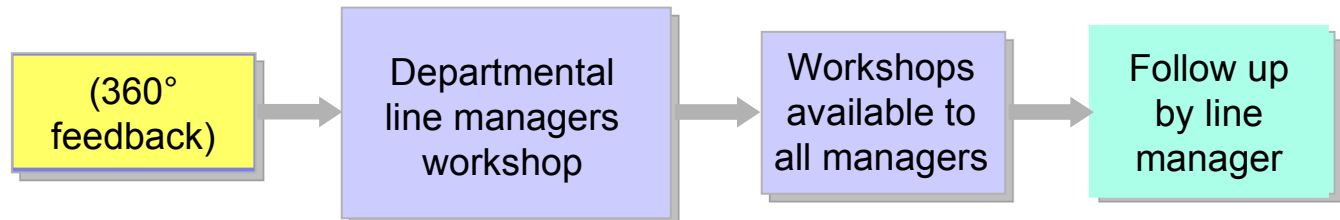
Executive team/leaders



Departmental management team



Line managers



▶ **To sum up, effective communication training:**

- Requires real leadership support
- Is much more powerful when rooted in specific information about the team and the individual: the *need* to change
- Is more meaningful when planned and conducted both at team and individual level – grounded in shared team as well as personal objectives
- Provides positive and ongoing reinforcement
- Recognises that one size doesn't fit all
- Is best based on how 'I maximise my strengths'
- Is provided 'just in time'
- Must be connected to *real* business challenges and day-to-day work

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