

Alumni Focus: Jannine Williams

Jannine Williams is an equality and diversity practitioner who is currently undertaking research into disabled academics at Newcastle Business School.

Jannine first became involved with NBS in 1999, when she was invited to deliver a session on teaching partially sighted, blind and deaf students, at the CIPD Professional Standards conference. She then went on to study the Managing Diversity module with Prof. Sharon Mavin. Having continued her studies at NBS

by undertaking her CIPD Diploma with the school, this sparked an interest into further research in her chosen field of equality and organisations.

Jannine was awarded a scholarship to study towards her PhD at NBS in 2005, which has provided valuable support for her studies. In addition to studying for her PhD Jannine began working with young deaf people in 1997, developing a regional programme of events, projects and training and development activities for deaf, hard of hearing and hearing young people to

encourage partnership working and personal development. Jannine has worked in a range of Higher Education institutions developing services for deaf students, disabled staff and diversity and equality initiatives and was Convenor of the CHES (Consortium of Higher Education Support Services for Deaf Students) Planning Group. She has recently contributed to a book, Deaf Students in Higher Education: Current Research and Practice with L Barnes, F Harrington, J Williams, M Atherton. The details of the book are as follows:

No single book currently available in either the UK or the US brings together such a blend of theory, research and practice in relation to the support of deaf students in Higher Education. The range of contributors, their national and international reputations in this field, and the innovative nature of the diverse materials gathered here will ensure this volume's place as an indispensable resource. Focusing predominantly on the UK, this book will also be relevant to a wider international audience in a field seeking to establish global networks.

The model of support developing in the UK and described in these chapters, represents a significant shift in practice, from that founded on the now widely discredited medical perspective, to one reflecting a social framework.

In the US, the catalyst for this change has been the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, whilst in the UK, this shift is mirrored in the Disability

Discrimination Act, 1995, most notably within Part IV (Special Educational Needs and Disability Act :2001, enforced 2002), which requires educational institutions to monitor entry, progression and outcomes for deaf students. In the wake of this, it is expected that deaf students will enter a wider range of institutions in increasing numbers. The consequent demand for these establishments to become inclusive, proactive, consultative and anticipatory in their support for deaf students will ensure that this book is welcomed as comprehensive and essential reading.

With contributions from researchers and practitioners, and including personal testimony from undergraduate and postgraduate deaf students, this volume offers illuminating and fresh perspectives on the many elements of good practice and quality provision.



Higher Level Skills Needs: Newcastle Business School Meeting Regional Priorities

One NorthEast recently commissioned a study to inform how to take a sectoral approach to the development of higher level skills in the North East's workforce. As a result of the study, it was recognised that greater alignment of Higher Education institutions provision to the skills needs of specific sectors would support the higher levels skills agenda. The following sectors were identified as having leadership development requirements: Knowledge Intensive Business Services, Health, Defence, Marine and SMEs. Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University successfully acquired funding to support leader development needs for leaders in these sectors and they have been offered the opportunity to engage in fully funded Executive Coaching.

There has been an overwhelming response to this leader development opportunity with a total of 26 company leaders from the priority sectors across the region currently engaged in the process. There has been particular interest from the engineering sector in the North East as a result of the Engineering Employers Federation contacting their members on behalf of Newcastle Business School. The Business School has offered an Executive Coaching Service for the last 18 months and also use coaching to support senior leaders who are studying

executive leadership programmes at the Business School. This creates a unique personally tailored learning experience, as leaders use the coaching process to embed their learning and skills development back into their respective organisations. All coaches employed in the Business School have a Masters level coaching qualification, coaching expertise and strong corporate backgrounds.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Executive Development Portfolio at the Business School, or are interested in finding out more about our Executive Coaching, please contact:

Jane Turner, Associate Dean: Executive Development Portfolio
Tel: +44 (0)191 243 7495
Email: jane.turner@northumbria.ac.uk

NBS to host UFHRD Conference

In collaboration with the University Forum of Human Resource Development (UFHRD) and the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD), Newcastle Business School are delighted to announce they will be hosting the 10th International Conference on HRD Research and Practice in 2009.

The conference, which will be held in NBS's exciting new premises at City Campus East will be host to academics and practitioners from around the globe.

The conference will be an opportunity for practitioners, academics and students to share the latest research findings, best practices and theoretical developments in HRD.

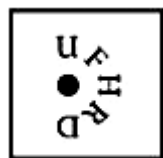
The conference will be an opportunity for practitioners, academics and students to share



We expect to attract over 300 delegates from over 25 countries across the globe including the USA, Canada, Malaysia and China.

The conference will consist of seminars, workshops and lectures over a two day period from 10-12 June 2009.

Further details about how to book your place will be featured in a forthcoming edition of *Talking Point*.



Contacts

Newcastle Business School can help develop and enhance your business through a range of courses, specialist programmes and networking opportunities. If you would like to know more about NBS, or any of the topics covered in this newsletter, or if you would simply like additional copies we would be delighted to hear from you.

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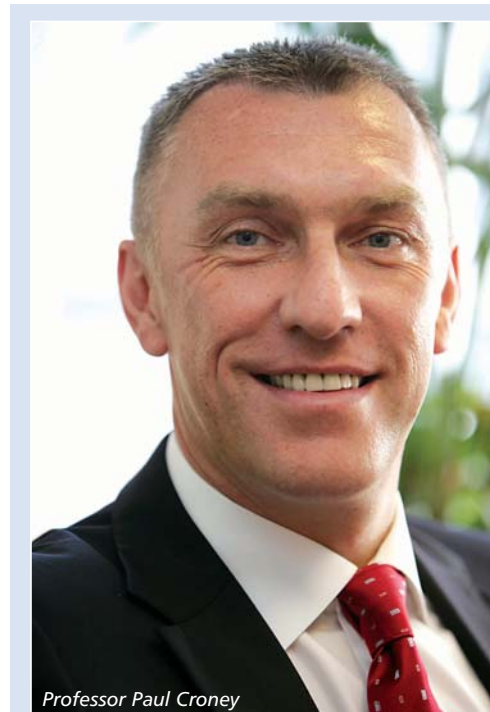


Talking Point

SPRING 2008

THE LATEST HR NEWS FROM
NEWCASTLE BUSINESS SCHOOL

northumbria
UNIVERSITY
Newcastle Business School



Professor Paul Crony

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of *Talking Point*, Newcastle Business School's Organisation and Human Resource Management newsletter.

This edition focuses on the School's continued commitment to CIPD activity with four colleagues having work published in *People Management* magazine. In addition we celebrate further research funding success in the field of absence management demonstrating our commitment to practice-based research.

Newcastle Business School are also proud to announce that we will be hosting the University Forum for Human Resource Development and the Academy for Human Resource Development international conference in 2009. We also celebrate the upcoming CIPD awards, which Newcastle Business School are proud to sponsor.

Professor Paul Crony
Dean, Newcastle Business School

NBS wins research funding from CIPD Ireland

Paul Banfield and Fiona Robson have been awarded funding from CIPD Ireland to explore how absence is managed, by conducting research across a number of Irish organisations.

This will build upon the existing work on absence management that has been carried out in Newcastle Business School and further enhances our reputation in this field. Paul and Fiona will begin carrying out their research in the near future so that they can disseminate their findings at CIPD Ireland's prestigious Annual Conference in May. A summary of these findings will be featured within a future edition of *Talking Point*.

For more details on research and consultancy services in the area of absence management, please contact Fiona at: f.robson@northumbria.ac.uk

CIPD AWARDS 2008

Newcastle Business School is proud to sponsor the upcoming North East CIPD awards which proved to be a prestigious event following on from the success of last year's ceremony. The awards will take place at the Marriott Gosforth Park Hotel on Tuesday 4 March 2008.

Building on last years inaugural Awards, the North East branch have now agreed to a five year association in promoting these Awards with the Evening Chronicle.

There are eight categories in total which will be judged on the evening and these are as follows:

- Developing People Award sponsored by Cintra HR & Payroll Services
- HR&D Excellence Through Innovation or Technology Award sponsored by Pertemps
- HR&D Business of the Year Award sponsored by Dickinson Dees
- HR&D Practitioner of the Year Award sponsored by Newcastle College
- HR&D Interim of the Year Award sponsored by Solutions Recruitment
- Innovation in Recruitment and Retention Award sponsored by Hays Human Resources
- Employee Engagement Award sponsored by Nigel Wright
- Equality and Diversity in the Workplace Award sponsored by Newcastle Business School, part of Northumbria University

These awards are designed to recognise the efforts of HR practitioners and organisations across the north east. Newcastle Business School are proud to sponsor the Equality and Diversity in the Workplace Award highlighting our continued commitment to CIPD activities in the region.

Leading Strategically? Earn recognition for your hard work

The MA in Strategic Human Resource Leadership – designed for HR professionals who wish to build on their existing CIPD qualification and move to Masters level – was launched in Ireland in October 2007. New cohorts are being recruited in Dublin and Newcastle in autumn 2008. This part-time block programme offers a highly interactive teaching environment, a strategic focus on HR leadership, the management of change and business performance. It also employs advanced diagnostic models and learning methodologies. For those who aspire to a leading position in HR, this programme provides a challenging and rewarding contribution to your career development.

If you would like further information on the programme or would like to apply please contact our Admissions Team on: (0191) 227 4433.

How to...

study for a CIPD qualification whilst working in HR at the same time!

Fiona Robson, Graduate Tutor at Newcastle Business School and Lynne Powell, Senior Lecturer have published an article in *People Management* magazine detailing how to achieve a balance between working in HR and achieving your CIPD qualifications, drawing upon their expertise.



Fiona Robson

Increasing numbers of people are now studying HR part-time whilst juggling it with their full-time jobs. The end results can be very rewarding, when your skills and knowledge are recognised both academically and professionally though at times in the middle it can feel as if you don't have any time for a life. Unfortunately there is no miracle solution to this, but there are steps you can take to try and manage both and achieve a work-life balance.

Think strategically and see the bigger picture

If you are able to choose from different HR subject options, give this careful consideration and see where you could potentially combine your day job with your studies.

Build a support network

Studying part time can at times be a lonely experience particularly if you are a distance learner or if you only attend your institution one day a week. In addition to support you receive from your tutors, you can also gain a lot from your peers. Many institutions are using learning sets so that students can share their knowledge and support each other.

Keep your manager in the loop

If your manager knows what you are working on it may be that they can provide support in terms of getting you involved in relevant projects. They may also be able to offer you support in terms of flexibility when you have that big assignment to hand in.

For more information on this article please contact Fiona Robson at: f.robson@northumbria.ac.uk or Lynne Powell at: lynne.powell@northumbria.ac.uk

Be organised

Remember that there are some times of the year when your tutors may be away from the University for several weeks so you need to build this into your planning. There is also a clamour for the key textbooks about three weeks before assignment deadlines so bear this in mind and be prepared. Make the most out of sessions that are delivered on writing good assignments, research skills and examination techniques.

Manage your time

There will be some fixed deadlines such as hand-in dates or assessed presentations, though it is likely that there will be other tasks and occasions where there is more flexibility. As soon as you receive details on when your assessments will be you could be planning out your time. Remember to try and make some time for fun activities and a life outside of work and studying! You will definitely reap the benefits and may be more productive when you are working as a consequence of this.

Commitment to key study skills

Time spent on some of the key skills at the start of your course can save you a lot more time in the long run. For example, if you learn to reference your work in the first semester this will help you with all future modules and helps you to get good marks.

Links with Continuing Professional Development

Investigate whether your organisation can support you as part of your personal and professional development.

Make the most of IT

The internet has made a huge difference to studying and is invaluable for self-directed learning and research. Many institutions may also offer a VLE (virtual learning environment) with a range of supporting resources to help you. It is definitely worth investing some time at the start of your course to find out how using it could enhance your studies.

Keep your end goal in mind

Remember why you decided to enrol on the course; for some people it may be about evidencing existing knowledge and skills and for others they may be seeking a career in HR for the first time. Looking at the bigger picture and the opportunities available to you at the end can balance out the feelings of having a lot of work to do.

New text book for HR students

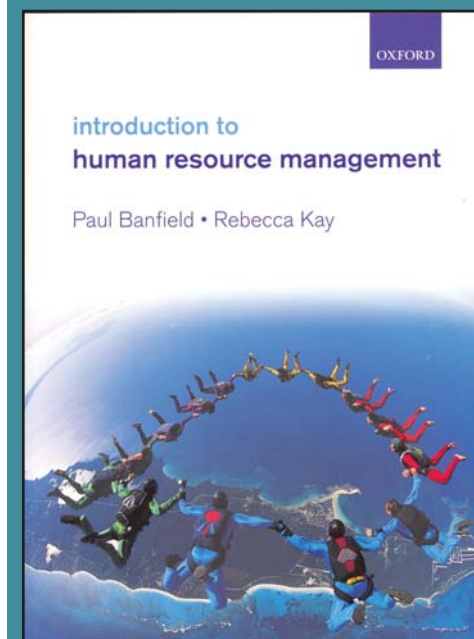
Paul Banfield, Programme Director of HRM and International Development at NBS and Rebecca Kay, HR Director at Cooper Lighting and Security Ltd have recently written *introduction to Human Resource Management*, a new introductory text book for students on academic and professional programmes, published by Oxford University Press, which combines an academic with a practitioner perspective on Human Resources.

This text takes a truly holistic approach to the subject, avoiding the presentation of HRM as a separate management function, and instead seeing HR processes and challenges as an integral part of any business.

An analytical viewpoint is taken throughout which encourages students to think critically about the issues. Reference to academic debates helps tie together the practical and theoretical aspects of the subject.

Three chapter-long, real life case studies provide detailed insights into the role of HRM in three different business scenarios: the opening of a new hotel, the closure of a factory, and the reform of the HR function within an NHS hospital. By examining HR in action in a real life scenario, students can understand the application of the theories and avoid an over-simplistic understanding of the subject.

To order copies of the book please contact Oxford University Press on +44 (0)1536 741727



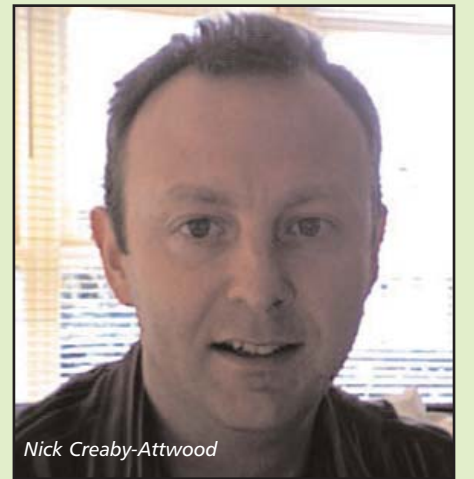
Research forum partnership between unions and management doesn't always result in just rewards

It has often been suggested that reward is the 'fundamental expression of the employment relationship'. It should follow that a more positive employment relationship should provide the basis for mutually beneficial changes to employee reward. In this research, however, it was found that despite management and unions having positive partnership-style attitudes towards their relationship, the rewards on offer were a long way from what either desired. This example of rewards as the dysfunctional expression of the employment relationship provides insight into the importance of employment relations processes and practices over and above good intentions. The idea that partnership-style employment relations can contribute to organisational success has gained ground in recent years. Much of this idea rests on the ability of managers, staff and unions to transform conflictive, competitive bargaining over fixed resources into co-operative problem-solving approaches that increase the resources available.

This study asks three questions. First, what is it about an employment relationship that constitutes 'partnership'? Second, to what extent does an organisation's context set the boundaries to the type of relationship the parties can build? Finally, the overall shape of the reward system is considered, along with the desired rewards expressed by management, employees and unions.

To answer these we compared organisations with various employment relationship characteristics across different UK sectors. In food manufacturing we found several partnership features: a well-established relationship between management and a strong union that supported its vision. However, bargaining was hard and shrewd, joint problem-solving was limited, information sharing was top-down only, and employee involvement was traditional union consultation. When considering reward, a very traditional system was found. Comparing these reward 'outcomes' with the reward 'preferences' of the parties found that almost all were dissatisfied with the rewards on offer. This raises two conundrums. First, why are the co-operative attitudes between management and union not expressed in the way

they do business with each other? Second, why are the desires for a different rewards system not realised? Tracing the connections between the various elements of the relationship and reward-setting process suggests that the form of bargaining is at its centre. In this case, the hard and shrewd nature of the bargaining process undermined the positive aspects of the relationship. This, in turn, seemed to lock the reward system into outcomes that were not what the parties wanted – in this instance; reward became the dysfunctional expression of the employment relationship. Perhaps the most striking finding was that mutual good intentions in reforming the employment relationship did not affect employee rewards. More fundamental restructuring of the nature of bargaining may be required to achieve this.



Nick Creaby-Attwood

Key Points

- Partnership in employment relations is often seen as key to organisational success
- Employee rewards are thought to be the expression of the employment relationship
- Hard bargaining processes seem to overrule the positive intentions of parties, reinforcing the winners and losers in reward systems and minimising the potential for mutual gains
- Rewards are shaped by the nature of bargaining

Contact Nick at: nick.creaby-attwood@northumbria.ac.uk

Karen Keith a Graduate Tutor at NBS, who is researching 'The impact of emotional meanings on perceptions of 'being managed' for improved performance: employees' perspectives' has had an article published in *People Management* magazine entitled:

Emotional meanings and perceptions offer insights into employment relationships and the 'H' in HRM

Interest in the role of emotions at work is growing rapidly, with the emphasis tending to be more on issues of emotional demands at work or strategies designed to elicit positive employee emotions. This can be seen in intensive training initiatives in many service organisations and through 'fun at work' initiatives.

Recent research however, has focused on the concept of emotional meanings in order to highlight the importance of the interplay of (often mixed) emotions with the appraisals or judgements which people constantly make at work. Such meanings and perceptions are a central element of relationships at work and are implicit in concepts such as the psychological contract. Complex interpersonal interactions are involved, including how emotional meanings and perceptions emerge in response to behaviours and how such considerations influence judgements, motivation and psychological involvement.

When organisations focus simply on eliciting positive employee emotions or 'managing' negative emotions, the risk is that managers are perceived as seeking to suppress open discussion about issues which may be causing employee frustration. Given that people often experience mixed emotions, their responses may not always be as expected, particularly if their personal values, hopes or anxieties are involved. In these situations, open, two way communication and constructive debate can be crucial to resolution of problems and real employee involvement.

In a current in-depth case study of a UK retailer, Karen adopted an employee-centric perspective within a stakeholder approach. The aim is to gain insight into the emotional meanings employees construct in response to how they are line managed during the implementation of a new performance strategy.

The findings suggest that over emphasis on 'positive' approaches, particularly during organisational change can have unintended consequences in terms of employee responses, generating cynicism and frustration. Emotion research and people management strategy risks portraying employees as passive recipients of management initiatives; people whose emotions and responses can be 'managed'

in line with organisational strategy. By contrast many managers would agree that putting such ideas into practice is often fraught with challenges.

An understanding of the emotional meanings constructed by the individuals concerned helps to explain why. The biological purpose of human emotions is to enable people to respond and adapt to changing environmental circumstances. They are survival instincts and are both powerful and culturally influenced generating more activity than moods or feelings. For example, in anger the judgement is of having been wronged, therefore a moral evaluation is involved. Emotions can have long-term effects on attitudes as can be seen when mixed emotions of hope and anxiety harden into disappointment and cynicism.

Cultural norms and organisational context influence relational interactions at work including how and which emotions are expressed or suppressed. This can be clearly seen in the intensification of emotions which takes place during industrial disputes. However, responses are often much more subtle than this and managers who do not have close enough relationships with employees may be unaware of the emotional meanings and perceptions being constructed by their staff.

This research suggests that people's behaviours are influenced both by their emotional meanings which are based on perceptions, values, as well as other factors such as career ambition. Managers appraise employees but they in turn are also 'appraising' them and indeed their colleagues too. Relationships at work may not be evenly balanced but these findings suggest high importance for mutual respect, honest two-way communication and fairness.

Employees are stakeholders in organisations because of their potential contribution to organisational success – a contribution which they may offer or withdraw. Co-operative working environments rely to a considerable extent on good relationships, sufficiently shared values and broadly positive perceptions. To understand such perceptions we need to seriously consider the emotional meanings which underpin them, for issues which damage working relationships to be addressed effectively.