When Two Tribes Go to War:

Keys to Successful Outsourcing

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When two tribes go to war

Lauren Tennant and Eleanor Winn
• Technology Director - OCS Group
• Masters; outsourcing relationships
  Doctorate - ongoing…

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Our people combine a fresh approach with an old-school work ethic to drive positive sourcing relationships and client advocacy. We are passionately committed to listening, questioning and collaborative problem-solving. We have been here since 2003 and our advisors average over 20 years of experience. As a client, you benefit from our unique combination of creative innovation and analytical insight.
Agenda

- Outsourcing relationship characteristics
- The “tribes” hypothesis
- Research findings
- Tribal behavior in outsourcing
- The role of leadership in bringing tribes together
A quick poll: what words would you use to characterize your outsourcing relationships?
Do the words that we are hearing in the room sound more like this…
...or like this
The “tribes” hypothesis: origins

- In the beginning: the story of 'them’ and us

- Chapter 2: something’s fishy about outsourcing

- Chapter 3: search for the holy grail
  - Aim; to discover if outsourcing relationship failure is replicated across the outsourcing industry
  - Objective; collect reflections from individuals associated with outsourcing relationship on the cause of this unexplained failure
  - Method; an abductive approach to incorporate interpretations and intentions that people use in their everyday lives and direct their behavior
Results of the research
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Relationships between humankind tribes commonly focus their self-interest, tribal behaviour towards each other instead of their desired outcome.
Does real life bear out the hypothesis?

What is tribal about outsourcing relationships?

- Common language
- Defined boundaries
- Shared experience
Leadership anomaly

- **What?** Outsourcing relationships fail to produce acceptable outcomes because they are made up of two or more separate humankind tribes.

- **Why?** Because the tribes direct their self-interest tribal behaviour at each other instead of the objective. What really needs to happen is they behave as one tribe that can have its own self-interest and direct it at achieving the desired outcome.

- **How?** Making two tribes behave as one tribe might be impossible due to the very separate nature of the tribes. A leader, or leadership strong enough to bring the two tribes into one with some concentrated effort on the activity might achieve it.
Leadership to bring tribes together

How do we apply leadership to create a single tribe in outsourcing relationships?

• Create a common language

• Define the boundaries and meet there

• Create and celebrate shared culture and experience
When two tribes go to war

- Relationships between humankind tribes commonly focus their self-interest, tribal behaviour towards each other instead of their desired outcome.

- Leadership could create a single humankind tribe that directs their single self-interest behavior to achieving their desired outcome making them more likely to achieve it.
Contact information

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# Recommended reading

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Price and Shaw</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Patterned interactions of unwritten and unspoken rules that influence behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashknasy et al</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Organisational culture and climate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keupers</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Organisation as a form, leader and follower-ship</td>
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<td>Senge</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Accidental adversaries</td>
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<td>Pech and Slade</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Memetic engineering</td>
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<td>Carpenter and Kennedy</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Conflict spiral</td>
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<td>Rebernik and Bradač</td>
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<td>Transformational outsourcing</td>
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<td>Weeks and Galunic</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Memetic context of the organisation</td>
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<td>Suddaby</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>What grounded theory is not</td>
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<td>Goulding</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Grounded theory</td>
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<td>Dawkins</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Darwinian evolution, natural selection and evolution</td>
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<td>Bohm</td>
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