



Planning Under
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CAPABILITY BUILDING IN PLAN MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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KEY CONTENT

Relevant literature-a brief review
Relevance of Bessant (2003) to PUCM capability building
A Capability Building Training Framework

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide some initial background on Capability Building, to serve as a platform for its development within the research programme *Planning Under Cooperative Mandates, or PUCM*. This work contributes to Objective 4, Practice Development Programme, or PDP.

Capability Building Defined

The research programme *Planning Under Cooperative Mandates* has drawn some important conclusions on the subject of *capability building*. Resulting from Phase 1 and 2 research, the term “Capability” has been considered in two parts: “capacity” and “commitment”, as follows:

- Capacity: the degree of resources, expertise, and time available to each council, hapū, and iwi, group or individual to fulfil various functions
- Commitment: the willingness of participants to avoid adverse environmental effects, and to show responsibility towards the environment
- Capability: comprised of capacity and commitment (Glossary in *District Plan Implementation Under the RMA: Confessions of a Resource Consent.*).

¹ The *PUCM Objective 4 Research Memorandum* series is intended for ‘work in progress’ to facilitate a continuing discussion on topics relevant to the purpose of the Practice Development Programme (PDP) objective. Each issue has the status of a draft paper which means it has not undergone the usual peer review and editing for PUCM publications. Unless otherwise stated, Dr Tom Fookes takes responsibility for each issue. Comments are welcome by email: t.fookes@auckland.ac.nz

While the concept of capability building has been used in the context of *plan making and implementation*, and the definitions above related to that context, it is possible to ask, “Is there a wider body of literature that could contribute to the question: “*How do we improve institutional and individual capability for the tasks involved in plan making?*”

RELEVANT LITERATURE – A BRIEF REVIEW

The private sector has incorporated the idea of capability building into the business literature, but it is often disguised in other terminology such as “adoption of innovation”. One company has even registered the term “Capability Building” (see www.imparta.com).

Imparta

Imparta’s website defines “capability building” as “an approach to *accelerating* the development and application of new skills deep into the organization.” This approach is broken down into five steps:

1. Aligning Processes
2. Capability Diagnostic
3. Accelerated Learning
4. Reinforcement
5. Maintaining Momentum

The first step refers to the need for the departments of an organisation to apply the principle of *co-ordination*. The Capability Diagnostic step serves to identify opportunities for this co-ordination to be built, including key improvements such as removing barriers to learning. This second step provides results that can be used as benchmarks for monitoring performance. The third step, Accelerated Learning, applies the principle of “Learn by doing” (i.e. “developing skills through experience”), and the use of a mentor to “extract the maximum benefit from our experiences.” The importance of “learning by doing” in conjunction with knowledge is acknowledged by Imparta. Step 4 refers to the need to apply new skills back on the job, reinforcing the lessons on how to do things. Finally, there is a need to maintain momentum, which means there should be encouragement “to use and continue to use the tools and approaches...”

Australian Public Service

The Australian Public Service (APS) has addressed a key aspect of capability building through the issue of “a framework for managing learning and development in the APS” in *Building capability: A framework for managing learning and development in the APS* (www.apsc.gov.au/publications03/capability.ht). This framework is:

Principle 1: Align learning with the business

Principle 2: Integrate learning with HR and other business processes

Principle 3: Create a learning culture

Principle 4: Provide appropriate learning options

Principle 5: Manage learning effectively

Principle 6: Support application of skills in the workplace

Principle 7: Evaluate learning and development

The framework has also provided a list of possible learning interventions which are classified as “on-the-job suggestions”, “formal development”, and “professional and community interventions” (Table 1).

Table 1: Possible Learning Interventions for Capability Building

On-the-job suggestions	Formal development	Professional and community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-the-job learning with projects that stretch staff ● Coaching by supervisors, peers and subordinates ● Shared information at staff meetings ● Sharing work knowledge such as internet research with colleagues ● Discussion at work 'over the partition' ● Formation of 'knowledge networks' or communities of learning across the organisation ● Participating in a steering committee or working party/taskforce ● Participating in an interdepartmental committee ● Team-building retreats ● Mentor programs - formal and informal ● Reading ● Internet research ● Rotations ● Secondments ● Acting in a more senior position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tertiary courses (studybank) ● Accredited courses ● Classroom training - short-term or longterm capability programs ● Leadership programs ● Seminars, forums ● Conferences ● Awareness sessions ● Work-based projects associated with coursework ● Blending of elements of formal and on-the-job process ● Virtual learning online - group online ● Online learning (interactive tutorials) via intranet or internet ● Distance education online ● Online coaching ● IT 'roaming and coaching' at the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Membership of professional and community bodies such as the Institute of Public Administration, Toastmasters, community bodies ● Refreshment of professional skills such as IT, legal, accounting, HR, engineering ● Professional networks such as Canberra Evaluation Forum, <u>Leadership Development Network</u>

Source: www.apsc.gov.au/publications03/capability.htm.

Bessant (2003)

Capability building can also be found connected to the business innovation literature (e.g. Bessant 2003). Bessant's book is sub-titled "Building and Sustaining Competitive Advantage through Continuous Change". His research has resulted in the formation of a five-stage model, with each stage being a step along the way to achieving 'high-involvement innovation'. Each step is called a 'level' for which he provides 'archetypes' (pp.58-64). While his emphasis is on high-involvement innovation the explanation of this uses associated terms such as "high-involvement practice" and "high-involvement capability". A close study of his approach to achieving "a culture of continuous innovation" suggests that this work can be read equally from the perspective of Capability Building. When this is done, some key ideas emerge. One of these is suggesting a structure for the discussion of capability building in the context of *practice* as a hierarchy where:

- Capability building is the outcome
- Key abilities are achieved, along with
- Constituent behaviours (which are within each of the key abilities)

The key abilities expressed as components of capability are (Table 4.2, pp. 65-67):

- Understanding – the ability to articulate the basic values of [capability building]²
- Getting the [capability building] habit – the ability to generate sustained involvement in [capability building]
- Focusing [capability building] – the ability to link [capability building] activities to the strategic goals of the organization [or the empowering legislation?]
- Leading [capability building] – the ability to lead, direct and support the creation and sustaining [capability building] behaviours
- Aligning [capability building] – the ability to create consistency between [capability building] values and behaviour and the organizational context (structure, procedures, etc.)
- Shared problem-solving – the ability to move [capability building] across organizational boundaries

² Where Bessant uses high-involvement innovation or HII in his text I have replaced it with [capability building].

- Continuous improvement of continuous improvement – the ability to strategically manage the development of [capability building]
- The learning organization – generating the ability to enable learning to take place and be captured at all levels.

One application of this structure of key abilities is to relate the component behaviours from Bessant to the two part structure of capability building (capacity and commitment) as defined in PUCM (see Glossary in Ericksen et al, 2003) (Table 2, following pages)

In Table 2 the eight clusters of behaviours have been distilled from studies of high-performing innovation organizations, on the basis that these organizations behave in these ways extensively. The case studies made by Bessant have also shown that “the development of high-level innovation is essentially an evolutionary process involving gradual learning and embedding of an increasing number of behavioral attributes (ibid, p.67).

Table 2: Merging Key Abilities (Bessant 2003) with PUCM C-B Categories (continues over several pages)

Key Abilities	Capacity	Commitment	General
Understanding – the ability to articulate the basic values of [capability building]			<p>People demonstrate a shared belief in the value of small steps and that everyone can contribute, by themselves being actively involved in making and recognizing improvements</p> <p>When something goes wrong the natural reaction of people at all levels is to look for reasons why etc., rather than to blame individuals</p>
Getting the [capability building] habit – the ability to generate sustained involvement in [capability building]	<p>People make use of some formal problem finding and solving cycle</p> <p>People use appropriate tools and techniques</p> <p>People use measurement to guide the improvement process</p>	<p>People (as individuals and/or groups) initiate and carry through C-B activities – they participate in the process</p> <p>Closing the loop – ideas are responded to in a clearly defined and timely fashion – either implemented or otherwise dealt with</p>	
Focusing [capability building] – the ability to link [capability building] activities to the strategic goals of the organization [or the empowering legislation?]		<p>Individuals and groups use the organization’s strategic goals and objectives to focus and prioritize improvements</p> <p>Everyone understands (i.e. is able to explain) what the strategy, goals and objectives are</p> <p>Individuals and groups assess their proposed changes (before embarking on initial investigation and before implementing a solution) against departmental or organizational objectives to ensure they are consistent with them</p> <p>Individuals and groups monitor/measure the results of their improvement activity and the impact it has on strategic or departmental objectives</p> <p>C-B activities are an integral part of the work of individuals or groups, not a parallel activity</p>	
Leading [capability building] – the ability to		Managers support the C-B process through allocation of time, money, space and other resources	

<p><i>contd</i></p> <p>lead, direct and support the creation and sustaining [capability building] behaviours</p>		<p>Managers recognize in formal (but not necessarily financial) ways the contribution of employees to C-B</p> <p>Managers lead by example, becoming actively involved in design and implementation of C-B</p> <p>Managers support experiment by not punishing mistakes but by encouraging learning from them</p>	
<p>Aligning [capability building] – the ability to create consistency between [capability building] values and behaviour and the organizational context (structure, procedures, etc.)</p>			<p>Ongoing assessment ensures that the organization's structure and infrastructure and the C-B system consistently support and reinforce each other</p> <p>The individual/group responsible for designing the C-B system designs it to fit within the current structure and infrastructure</p> <p>Individuals with responsibility for particular company processes/systems should ongoing reviews to assess whether these processes/systems and the C-B system remain compatible</p> <p>People with responsibility for the C-B system ensure that, when a major organizational change is planned, its potential impact on the C-B system is assessed and adjustments are made as necessary</p>

<p>Shared problem-solving – the ability to move [capability building] across organizational boundaries</p>			<p>People co-operate across internal divisions (e.g. cross-functional groups) in C-B as well as working in their own areas. This is also extended to inter-organizational relationships</p> <p>People understand and share a holistic view (process understanding and ownership)</p> <p>People are oriented towards internal and external customers in their C-B activity</p>
<p>Continuous improvement of continuous improvement – the ability to strategically manage the development of [capability building]</p>		<p>Senior management make available sufficient resources (time, money, personnel) to support the ongoing development of the C-B system</p>	<p>The C-B system is continually monitored and developed; a designated individual or group monitors the C-B system and measures the incidence (i.e. frequency and location) of C-B activity and the results of C-B activity</p> <p>There is a cyclical planning process whereby the C-B system is regularly reviewed and if necessary, amended (single-loop learning)</p> <p>There is periodic review of the C-B system in relation to the organization as a whole, which may lead to a major regeneration (double-loop learning)</p>
<p>The learning organization – generating the ability to enable learning to take place and be captured at all levels</p>			<p>People learn from their experiences, both positive and negative</p> <p>Individuals seek out opportunities for learning/personal development (e.g. actively experiment, set their own learning objectives)</p> <p>Individuals and groups at all levels share (make available) their learning from <i>all</i> work experiences</p> <p>The organization articulates and consolidates (captures and shares) the learning of individuals and groups</p> <p>Managers accept, and where necessary, act on all the learning that takes place</p> <p>People and teams ensure that their learning is captured by making use of the mechanism provided for doing so</p> <p>Designated individual(s) use organizational mechanisms to deploy the learning that is captured across the organization</p>

Bessant develops the behavioural descriptions into a staged development model (ibid, p.68, Table 4.3). In the list below [C-B] replaces ‘high-involvement innovation activity’ and the stages or levels are:

0. No [C-B] innovation activity
1. Trying out the ideas
2. Structure and systematic [C-B] innovation
3. Strategic [C-B] innovation
4. Autonomous innovation
5. Strong [C-B] innovation capability

If, in the case of Bessant’s model, the “agent” (e.g. a manager or an employee) is moving on from Level 1 (“Trying out the ideas”) to Level 2, there are several impediments that have been identified which any PUCM 3 application should take into account (ibid, pp. 79-80):

1. Lack of awareness or outside ‘normal experience’
2. Lack of skills/knowledge
3. Lack of space/time
4. Lack of real management commitment/paying ‘lip service’
5. Lack of recognition
6. Need to know “what’s in it for me?”
7. Lack of feedback
8. Lack of continuity
9. Lack of leadership
10. Lack of implementation

In order to answer the question, “How to deal with these impediments?” Bessant draws out the following themes (pp.81-87):

1. Developing and helping awareness and understanding
2. Enabling involvement and participation in problem finding and solving
3. Leadership

4. Ensuring a good fit between the way the organization works and [C-B] innovation
5. Enabling learning
6. Enabling focus and direction in [C-B] innovation
7. Enabling cross-boundary [C-B] innovation activities
8. Supporting and developing the [C-B] innovation system towards higher levels

Reflection on this work by Bessant suggests that PUCM 3 could make a useful training framework by marrying the key abilities in Bessant's Table 4.2 as used above in Table 2, and the impediments experienced when moving from one level of capability building to another. This idea of combining Bessant's ideas into a training framework is explored next.

A CAPABILITY BUILDING TRAINING FRAMEWORK

As shown in Table 3 that follows, an incipient training framework has been developed by combining:

- Key abilities
- Impediments to a wish to move from one level to another
- The eight clusters of component behaviours (by cell)

Table 3: An Incipient Training Framework based on Bessant (2003)

Key Abilities	Impediments to moving from one level of C-B to another							
	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
<p>Understanding – the ability to articulate the basic values of C-B</p>	<p>General: People demonstrate a shared belief in the value of small steps and that everyone can contribute, by themselves being actively involved in making and recognizing improvements</p>	<p>General: When something goes wrong the natural reaction of people at all levels is to look for reasons why etc., rather than to blame individuals</p>						

Table continues over..

Key Abilities	Impediments to moving from one level of C-B to another							
	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
<p>Getting the C-B habit – the ability to generate sustained involvement in C-B</p>	<p>Capacity: People use appropriate tools and techniques</p> <p>People use measurement to guide the improvement process</p>	<p>Capacity: People make use of some formal problem finding and solving cycle</p> <p>Commitment: People initiate & carry through C-B activities – they participate in the process</p> <p>Closing the loop – ideas are responded to in a clearly defined and timely fashion – either implemented or otherwise dealt with</p>						

Key Abilities	Impediments to moving from one level of C-B to another							
	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
Focusing C-B – the ability to link C-B activities to the strategic goals of the organization [or the empowering legislation?]	Commitment: Everyone understands (i.e. is able to explain) what the strategy, goals and objectives are	Commitment: C-B activities are an integral part of the work of individuals or groups, not a parallel activity				Commitment: Individuals & groups use the organization's strategic goals & objectives to focus & prioritize improvements Individuals and groups assess their proposed changes (before embarking on initial investigation and before implementing a solution) against departmental or organizational objectives to ensure they are consistent with them Individuals and groups monitor/measure the results of their improvement activity and the impact it has on strategic or departmental objectives		

Key Abilities	Impediments							
	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
<p>Leading C-B – the ability to lead, direct and support the creation and sustaining C-B behaviours</p>			<p>Commitment: Senior management make available sufficient resources (time, money, personnel) to support the ongoing development of the C-B system</p> <p>Managers recognize in formal (but not necessarily financial) ways the contribution of employees to C-B</p> <p>Managers support experiment by not punishing mistakes but by encouraging learning from them</p>		<p>Commitment: Managers support the C-B process through allocation of time, money, space and other resources</p> <p>Managers lead by example, becoming actively involved in design and implementation of C-B</p>			

Key Abilities	Impediments							
	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
<p>Aligning C-B – the ability to create consistency between C-B values and behaviour and the organizational context (structure, procedures, etc)</p>				<p>General: People with responsibility for the C-B system ensure that, when a major organizational change is planned, its potential impact on the C-B system is assessed and adjustments are made as necessary</p>		<p>General: Individuals with responsibility for particular company processes/systems should ongoing reviews to assess whether these processes/systems and the C-B system remain compatible</p>		<p>General: Ongoing assessment ensures that the organization's structure and infrastructure and the C-B system consistently support and reinforce each other</p> <p>The individual/group responsible for designing the C-B system designs it to fit within the current structure and infrastructure</p>

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	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
Shared problem solving – the ability to move C-B across organizational boundaries	General: People understand and share a holistic view (process understanding and ownership)						General: People are oriented towards internal and external customers in their C-B activity People cooperate across internal divisions (e.g. cross-functional groups) in C-B as well as working in their own areas. This is also extended to inter-organizational relationships	

Key Abilities	Impediments							
	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
<p>Continuous improvement of continuous improvement – the ability to strategically manage the development of C-B</p>	<p>General: The C-B system is continually monitored and developed; a designated individual or group monitors the C-B system and measures the incidence (i.e. frequency and location) of C-B activity and the results of C-B activity</p>				<p>General: There is a cyclical planning process whereby the C-B system is regularly reviewed and if necessary, amended (single-loop learning)</p> <p>There is periodic review of the C-B system in relation to the organization as a whole, which may lead to a major regeneration (double-loop learning)</p>			

Key Abilities	Impediments							
	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
<p>The learning organization – generating the ability to enable learning to take place and be captured at all levels</p>	<p>General: People learn from their experiences, both positive and negative</p> <p>Individuals seek out opportunities for learning/personal development (e.g. actively experiment, set their own learning objectives)</p>	<p>General: Individuals and groups at all levels share (make available) their learning from <i>all</i> work experiences</p> <p>People and teams ensure that their learning is captured by making use of the mechanism provided for doing so</p>	<p>General: Managers accept, and where necessary, act on all the learning that takes place</p>		<p>General: The organization articulates and consolidates (captures and shares) the learning of individuals and groups</p> <p>Designated individual(s) use organizational mechanisms to deploy the learning that is captured across the organization</p>			

CONCLUSION

At this stage of the C-B project the focus has been on the model developed by Bessant (2003). From the components of Bessant's model and related principles an incipient training framework has been developed (Table 3). The same type of exercise can be done for other works on C-B (e.g. Incarta and Australian Public Service).

At this stage the matrix in Table 3 has served two purposes:

1. It has matched Bessant's "Key Abilities", "Impediments" and "Component Behaviours"
2. It has identified the gaps across the matrix; the cells where component behaviours have not been developed through Bessant's model.

The latter raises the question whether there are no pertinent component behaviours, or is it possible to extend the work of Bessant and identify for the vacant cells additional behaviours or actions to be taken in training for C-B. This idea of extending the behaviours is illustrated for one Key Ability – "Understanding" – in Table 4. In this case the intersection of "Understanding" and the impediment "Leadership" suggests the addition of "Developing understanding through the example provided by the leader's practice (or behaviour)". Another way of expressing this is "The Manager taking the lead and working according to the basic values of C-B, and being an example to his or her staff." A second example is with the intersection of "Understanding" and the impediment "Enabling learning". An additional action could be "Providing opportunities to develop confidence in people's understanding of the values of C-B, through purposeful formal and informal interaction."

Once this additional extension of the matrix has been completed the C-B project can continue by marshalling the behaviours/actions into appropriate training modules that can utilize the exemplars provided by PUCM.

Table 4: Examples of Additional Behaviours or Actions

Key Abilities	Impediments to moving from one level of C-B to another							
	Awareness & understanding	Participation in problem finding & solving	Leadership	The innovation & C-B fit	Enabling learning	Focus & direction in C-B learning	Cross-boundary C-B activities	Development of C-B to higher levels
<p>Understanding – the ability to articulate the basic values of C-B</p>	<p>General: People demonstrate a shared belief in the value of small steps and that everyone can contribute, by themselves being actively involved in making and recognizing improvements</p>	<p>General: When something goes wrong the natural reaction of people at all levels is to look for reasons why etc., rather than to blame individuals</p>	<p><i>“Developing understanding through the example provided by the leader’s practice (or behaviour)”</i></p>		<p><i>“Providing opportunities to develop confidence in people’s understanding of the values of C-B, through purposeful formal and informal interaction.”</i></p>			

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Websites

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