



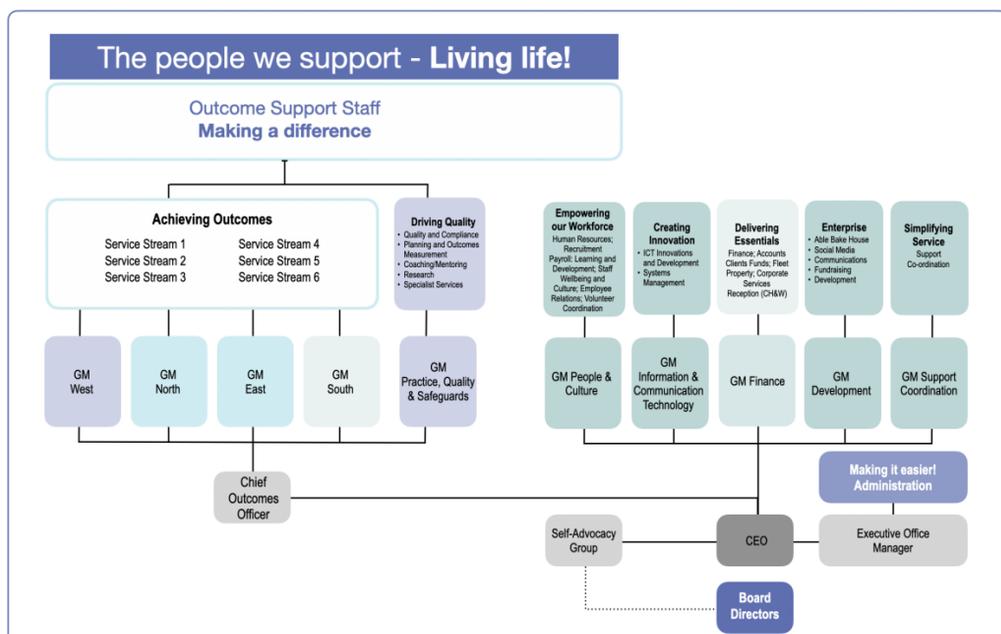
“I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.” Albert Einstein



Upside down

Back in the 70s there was a movement called [servant leadership](#), founded by [Robert Greenleaf](#), who believed that the best leaders observe the following two maxims: “I serve because I am the leader” and “I am the leader because I serve”.

Greenleaf formed this view after reading [Hermann Hesse's](#) 1932 book [Journey to the East](#), in which the protagonist, Leo, is a servant just like all the others. But one day Leo disappears, causing the realisation that things aren't the same without him. In other words, he was far more than a servant; he was in fact their leader.



[Melba Support Services](#) is a disability agency that has taken Greenleaf's ideas and made them real within their org chart. Take a look at how they've upended the [traditional hierarchy](#). Here, support staff, often seen as [fungible](#), have pride of place, as the main “making a difference” interface with customers (“the people we support”).

Secondly, corporate roles have been reframed into their actual value propositions: “Delivering essentials” is the role of finance; “Empowering our people” is people and culture’s aim; “Making it easier!” Is the proposition of administration.

Finally the role of board and CEO are utterly de-emphasised — they act as a fulcrum at the bottom, essential, but ultimately insignificant from the customer’s point of view.

Question: “If you were to up-end your org chart, which are the critical ‘making a difference’ roles from the customer’s perspective?”

Shrink to grow

I guarantee nobody predicted a few years ago that [Tesla would be worth more than Toyota, and Volkswagen](#) — combined. Oh, and add in Ford, Mercedes and General Motors too.

I'm less concerned here with how Tesla did this (and whether we're seeing an inflated bubble), and more interested in what these legacy businesses will do now. The world has already changed dramatically in 10 years, and interest (and investment) in renewable energy hasn't come close to peaking.

BP this week announced its [plan to dramatically cut oil production and instead build massive renewable energy generation facilities](#), a response to its market capitalisation halving in just two years.

Tesla's own renewable energy business is already valued at half that of BP, and 'upstarts' investing heavily in hyrdo, wind and solar, like Danish [Orsted](#) and Spanish [Iberdrola](#), are worth more.

BP intends to invest tens of billions of dollars over the next decade and is likely to see lower returns than it can get from oil, if it's to regain its place as a power generation leader.

Question: “In your organisation, what might you have to shrink, or even divest, in order to grow?”

Meet the future

Wayne Gretzky was almost as famous for a quote as he was for [his hockey prowess](#): “I skate to where the puck's going, not where it's been”.

This was picked up by legions of business leaders and degraded through over-use. Possibly only [Warren Buffett](#) and [Steve Jobs](#), both of whom quoted Gretzky, could boast the commercial equivalent of his sporting acumen.

But it's overused because we all believe in it. In times like these, who wouldn't want to be able to foretell the future, at least some of the time? I'm currently working with several organisations who are wanting to 'future proof' themselves: through a balance of assertive measures, and defensive.

They recognise that success will come from shifting old assumptions in two ways.

Firstly, rethinking the balance between innovative products or services with BAU (business as usual, which might be smaller than previously - see the segment above).

Secondly, looking for much greater agility so that the balance between reactive work and proactive work can be reset. For instance, a regulator with whom I'm working is already looking at how they can expand their high value investigatory capability (proactive work), while reducing the labour intensity of lower value complaints handling (reactive work).

A large public events facility is looking at technologically-mediated events (innovation) replacing as much as 30% of their current physical business, even once restrictions lift and 'normalcy' returns.

Question: “How willing are your leaders to shift old assumptions about the nature of your core business?”

As always, please send me your feedback by email to ww@workwell.com.au. What would you like me to write about next time? Let me know!

Have a wonderful weekend, all.

Andrew



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