

CARL ENNIS

CEO of Siemens UK



“ When you have no other option, you find ways to make things work. ”

So recounts Carl Ennis, CEO of Siemens UK, who faced the challenge of managing and leading an organisation with over 16,000 staff in the UK - many of whom could not work from home - when the UK's covid-19 lockdown was announced. Learning and acting with agility became key in order to deliver business outputs while keeping staff safe.

INPUTS V OUTPUTS

Carl explained that the challenges of remote leadership have required them to learn trust-based management and shift from measuring inputs to measuring outputs. “People were sceptical about how you can do that. And it's more difficult, they're right - but it's an important principle to maintain to ensure we can continue to motivate our staff. It's a massive change and we haven't quite nailed it, but we're trying to build on progress and embed what we have learnt. **For example:** using net promoter techniques to provide qualitative feedback rather than just quantitative.” He acknowledges that, despite being necessary, “it does take a leap of faith from management to give staff the clear sense of direction and purpose but also space to get the job done.” Carl also emphasises that managers and leaders should “lead from the front” and be aware that their own work habits can be read as examples by their staff.

THE FUTURE OF CHANGE

“ Most of what we've seen has worked pretty well and challenged a lot of our norms. But the past 6 months has not been a normal situation of what the future holds. ”

Carl talks about remote working bringing several benefits - particularly efficiency and better work life balance (if done properly - “one colleague said it was a bit like ‘sleeping in the office’ rather than working from home - so we have to be strict about working time and breaks.”) However, the company recognised quickly that they wanted to provide a face-to-face environment to support people to do their work.

“ You don't go to the office to work but to meet people, share ideas, and you work from wherever you need to work from. I've shown staff I'm working from the garage (when my car was being serviced - of course!) to help normalise that remote working culture. ”

There are other benefits to remote and flexible working too: Carl highlights that money saved from reduced travel costs, and lowered carbon emissions “are all benefits we should keep hold of - good reasons for not going 'back to normal' beyond business.”

MANAGING CHANGE

For me, Covid is a Trojan Horse to shock organisations into changing - but change is happening to us all the time.” Carl advises that, “it's not about getting from A to B, because as soon as you've got to B, C is just around the corner. It's about how you build organisations. Strong organisations will use change to thrive and the process of change to bring out something beneficial - it's not simply about surviving a change, but about riding the change.” How do good organisations ride the change? “Make sure you learn lots of good techniques, evaluate what was good, what was bad, what have you learnt, and hone your skills.

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