

Performance Enablement 2022

in partnership with
Professor Nick Kemsley

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Introduction by Anna Rasmussen, Founder & CEO, OpenBlend



When you work in the field of performance management, you're constantly forced to challenge your own assumptions.

We know that conversations improve performance. We know that if managers understand their people better, and vice versa, they'll develop a more constructive and effective working relationship.

But in our work with our customers, we see the ways that businesses implement and execute a conversation-led approach. We see the effect this has on their people, their competitiveness, and their bottom line.

We can also see how the workforce evolves and how we need to stay abreast of what really enables performance. So, we decided to conduct some research and test a new hypothesis – both to inform our evolution and challenge our own assumptions about how we support people to perform.

Hypothesis to test; a high performing culture is not the result of a top-down process based on evaluation of individuals' performance against a set of objectives; but rather an outcome of varying factors, which in combination, enable individuals to perform at their best.

We knew we needed to partner with an expert in the world of performance to add validity and credibility to our research, so we approached Professor Nick Kemsley. Not only did Nick jump at the chance to partner with OpenBlend to conduct this research, but he found the findings fascinating!

This document is the full version of the research written by Professor Nick Kemsley.

We've pared it down to some key insights which are available to download on our [website](#) or via our [walk-through video](#).

I'd like to thank the OpenBlend team and some of our valuable customers for their contribution in capturing the data and insights.

I hope this report – and the research it refers to – is a helpful guide for anyone looking to shift their own performance culture away from the legacy of process and box-ticking, and towards something which recognises that people will always be the organisation's most valuable asset... as long as it's able to treat and respect them as individuals. Over to you Nick

Professor Nick Kemsley biography

Nick Kemsley is a Visiting Professor and Executive Fellow at Henley Business School in the UK, where for many years he has been involved in HR research, consulting, the design and delivery of HR development programmes and as Co-Director of Henley's Centre for HR Excellence.

Nick consults with a wide range of organisations around the world on topics relating to organisational and people performance, with a particular focus on talent management, OD and HR effectiveness. He is known as a global thought leader on Strategic Workforce Planning.

An engineer originally by qualification, Nick spent the first part of his 20-year multi-sector career in design and programme management for companies including Rolls-Royce Aerospace, GE and Alstom before moving into Supply Chain and then OD and Talent for Mars Inc. In the decade that followed Nick set up and ran talent, recruitment, performance, L&D and OD functions at regional and global levels for organisations including BOC/Linde Group, Prudential and Travelport. He also spent a period as a Senior Partner in KornFerry HayGroup's People Advisory business.

When it comes to performance enablement, he has had many years' experience designing and implementing approaches to improve effectiveness, including supporting organisations in overhauling their approaches during the pandemic.



Professor Nick Kemsley

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An introduction to the research and its approach

The driving force behind this research was linked to a desire to think about performance, not through the traditional lens of ‘management’, but through the lens of ‘enablement’. In other words, testing a hypothesis that a performance culture is not so much the result of a top-down process-driven approach geared around the simple evaluation of individuals’ performance against a set of objectives; but rather an outcome of an ecosystem of factors which in combination enable individuals to perform at their best. You will see these factors referred to in the report as ‘enablement dimensions’.

Beyond understanding what these factors might be, there was a deep curiosity around what it was that either helped or got in the way of these enablement dimensions and where organisations were making progress: what was it that they were doing?

But it would have been completely inappropriate to ignore what has been going on in the world for the past couple of years in terms of the Covid pandemic and its impact on the relationship that individuals and organisations have with their work. So this had to be built into the research somehow, in order to gain an appreciation of how and where we had evolved in this respect. To this end, the research was designed not just around what organisations were experiencing right now, but contrasting it against where they were two years ago in order to surface any insights as to the nature of the shift.

Lastly, it was vital that we move past the process layer and again test a hypothesis that the ability for people managers to be able to engage in meaningful dialogue with their team members around different factors potentially impacting their ability to perform at their best was key to enablement. In the report you will see this ability described as ‘manager confidence level’, in other words, the level of confidence that an organisation has that managers are indeed engaging in effective and regular dialogue with their teams on these issues.

The research itself was conducted in two phases. The first phase was a relatively short one in which a number of participating organisations were interviewed with the aim of understanding what they felt was key to supporting a healthy performance culture. The outputs of this initial phase were used to identify common themes which might represent our enablement dimensions. You can see a full description of the resulting seven enablement dimensions in the next section.

In the second phase of research, a further 20 diverse organisations were involved in structured and detailed interviews around a consistent set of questions relating to the seven enablement dimensions. In these interviews, each organisation was asked to rate its level of success against each enablement dimension both now and two years ago. They were asked to do this in both cases using the following rating scale:

Not on agenda	Starting out	Doing OK	Driving real value
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This allowed us to gain a simple appreciation of any shift in focus and achievement, positive or negative, for any particular enablement dimension for each and every organisation surveyed. The results of this were used to define an indicator named ‘value added’ to describe the scale of any shift.

To understand why any shift may have occurred, organisations were asked what it was that had helped or hindered progress over this time period. These verbatim comments would help

form the basis for understanding what an organisation might consider doing in order to improve its success on any particular enablement dimension.

The final interview area was related to the topic of 'manager confidence level' mentioned earlier. For each enablement dimension, organisations were asked to rate their confidence level that managers were holding effective dialogues with their team members on the topic. This was rated on the scale below:

High confidence	Medium confidence	Low confidence	No confidence	Don't know
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Having conducted the 20 interviews using the format described, what then began was a considerable period of data analysis, codifying and aggregating data, looking for correlations, examining overall versus organisation-specific results and forming a view as to the key insights yielded from the exercise. The results of this analysis are summarised in the front of this report and described in more detail in its main body.

So hopefully this gives you a good understanding of what the research was trying to do and how it was undertaken, so that you are able to put the findings into context. I personally found this to be a fascinating piece of research, yielding some really interesting and powerful insights and questions. My hope is that you find it equally thought provoking.

Professor Nick Kemsley

The enablement dimensions

As stated in the introduction, the initial phase of the research was designed to explore the hypothesis that a range of different factors influenced an individual's ability to perform at their best. This first phase research indeed confirmed this hypothesis and also yielded significant consistency in the themes identified. From these themes a set of seven relatively distinct 'enablement dimensions' were developed. These are shown below, along with a brief description of what each one means. You will see that they are not just one-dimensional so it was important to articulate exactly what was meant by each enablement dimension in order to avoid varying interpretations of the phrase in respondents' answers.

Enablement dimension	Abbreviation	Meaning
My Delivery Expectations	MDE	I am enabled to perform at my best by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarity of expectation in my deliverables ▪ Realistic deliverables taking into account my skills and workload ▪ Confidence that my performance will be fairly evaluated
My Self (being myself)	MSE	I am enabled to perform at my best by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working in an organisation which cares about my wellbeing ▪ Recognition of my individual circumstance ▪ Being allowed to be myself
My Interaction with Work	MIW	I am enabled to perform at my best by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A tailored and flexible working pattern which suits my situation ▪ Being able to perform irrespective of location, contracted hours etc ▪ Being able to manage my wider responsibilities in addition to my work
My Manager	MMA	I am enabled to perform at my best by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My manager coaching me and providing valuable feedback ▪ My manager caring about me ▪ Regular conversations about my objectives and performance
My Purpose	MPU	I am enabled to perform at my best by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the purpose, vision and objectives of the organisation ▪ Understanding how my contribution impacts these ▪ Having visibility of others' objectives relevant to my work
My Development	MDV	I am enabled to perform at my best by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having access to effective training relevant to my objectives ▪ Having access to effective development to support my growth and progression ▪ Having access to relevant career advice and career discussions
My Tools	MTL	I am enabled to perform at my best by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having the right software and technology to support performance ▪ Having the right hardware and equipment ▪ Working in an environment that gives me what I need

It's worth spending a moment to reflect on these themes. Perhaps the first thing to mention is that some of the more traditional elements which we may have historically associated with performance management processes are still present. For example, clarity of what it is I am

expected to deliver and do I have access to the development I need? But these are just a small proportion of what it is that organisations feel is needed in order to really enable individuals to perform.

There are a number of 'softer' dimensions which are seen to be of at least equal importance to go alongside the 'harder' elements of clear objectives, tools and training. These include a need to believe that the organisation cares about me and my wellbeing and that it allows me to be myself. Also, that I need to understand how my contribution is connected to the overall vision and purpose of the organisation. There is a need for me to be able to discuss my career aspirations and my own personal growth.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the past two years, an expressed need to be able to undertake my work in a way that works best for me plus a sense of 'fairness' around the achievability of objectives and evaluation of my performance.

And sitting clear and proud amongst these dimensions is that of My Manager; not just in the role of task-setter and performance manager, but as someone who has my best interests at heart, and who actually cares about me as an individual and who is regularly in dialogue with me, offering feedback and coaching.

Even at this very early stage in the research, armed with only these seven enablement dimensions to consider, our organisational minds are already beginning to ask questions about our approaches to performance!

Executive Summary - Headlines and key findings

The research identified a number of key insights into the topic of performance enablement. The key headline is an Equation for Success as follows:

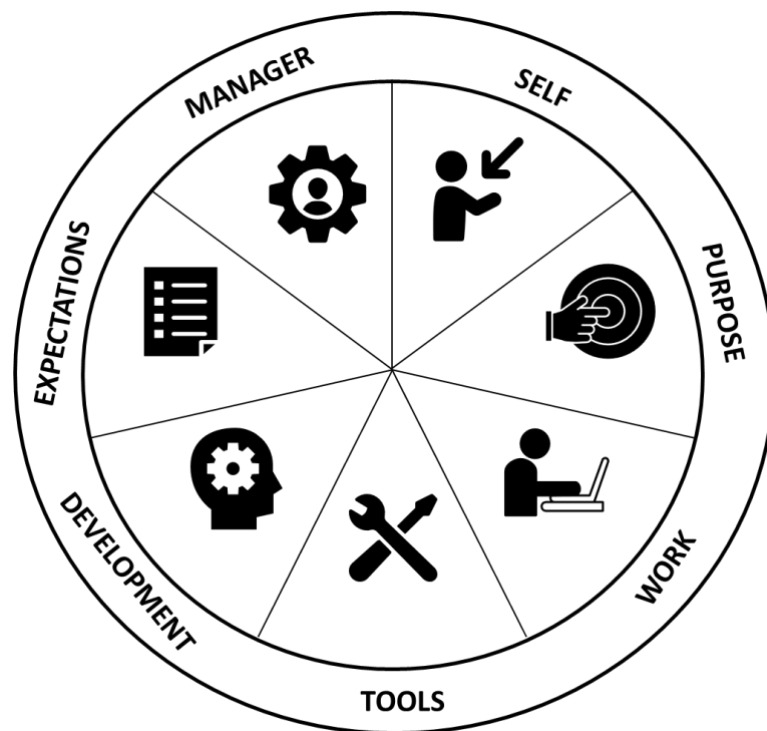
$$PE = 7D \times M$$

PE (**P**erformance **E**nablement)

D (enablement **D**imension)

M (effective **M**anager dialogue)

1. There are seven key dimensions driving individual performance enablement which organisations should consider when looking to improve a performance culture.



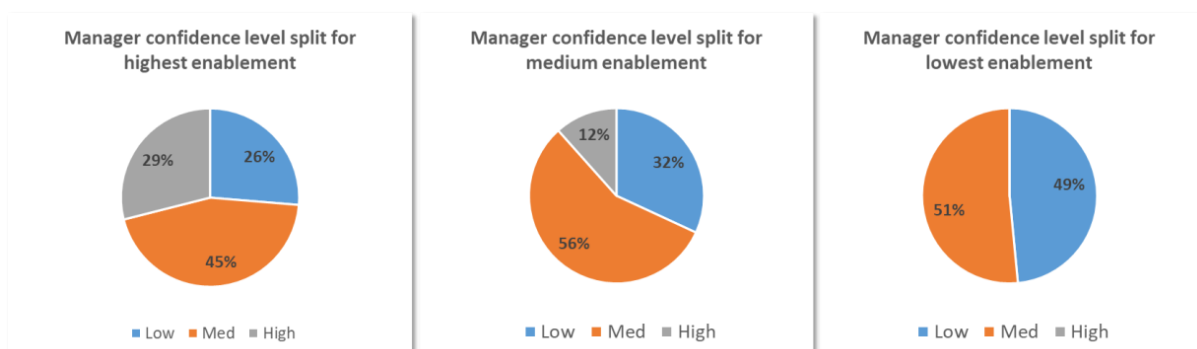
2. Effective and regular grass-roots level manager dialogue around these dimensions is the most powerful factor in an organisation's ability to leverage these seven dimensions into performance.
3. Managers in general find it easiest to talk about more formal dimensions such as setting delivery expectations and ensuring the right tools are available; and hardest to engage around more informal dimensions such as connecting individual and organisational purpose and supporting wellbeing.

4. The last two years have catalysed organisations into driving an improvement in all enablement dimensions. This shift is unsurprisingly greatest in relation to interaction with work itself. Development appears to be the area where organisations have struggled most to drive real value.
5. Whilst showing an overall improvement, the scale of value added for the various dimensions over the past two years has varied greatly from individual organisation to organisation, with some even showing a backward step in certain dimensions such as tools.
6. There is a risk that a focus on 'traditional' diversity and inclusion streams may overpower a broader consideration of 'individual personal circumstance' when looking at performance enablement, focusing effort into narrower populations and potentially impacting performance enablement on an organisation-wide basis.
7. There are certain consistent factors which characterise an organisation's shift from lower overall enablement to higher overall enablement. These have been developed into a framework and maturity model and accompanying guidance (see next section).

These key findings significantly challenge more traditional and historical approaches to performance, which have focused strongly on more process-driven and top-down mechanisms as the drivers of individual performance.

This research strongly indicates that, although some of the enablement dimensions are 'led' from L&D functions or broader organisational processes, around 50% of them are manager and individual-led, and ALL are won or lost depending upon the quality and frequency of manager dialogue.

The pie charts below illustrate this well. When we look at organisations that report the highest levels of success or organisational performance against the various enablement dimensions, we can see that there is a powerful correlation with confidence levels that managers are engaging in effective grass-roots dialogue around them.



For organisations reporting the highest levels of performance against the dimensions, manager confidence levels were equally high, with 74% reporting medium or high levels of confidence around effectiveness and frequency of manager dialogue, with 29% at the highest confidence

level. For organisations reporting medium levels of performance against the enablement dimensions, we see a significant drop in high manager confidence levels and for organisations reporting low performance we see a complete absence of high manager confidence levels, with around half reporting low levels of manager confidence.

We shouldn't be surprised by this because for the last two decades we have had a strong process bias to our approaches to performance. There is a constructive tension between process and capability and between top-down and bottom-up. If we get this balance right then performance feels 'owned' in the right places (by individuals and their managers) and 'supported' by capability development, processes and tools.

If we get the balance wrong then it can allow ownership of performance to migrate to the organisation or to the HR function, for processes to feel heavier and more prescriptive, for the accountability and capability of managers to be pushed to the background, and for the individual to feel that they are an uninvolved passenger with little influence over their performance.

This tension is best described by the relationship between the three elements shown in the diagrams below. These elements are:

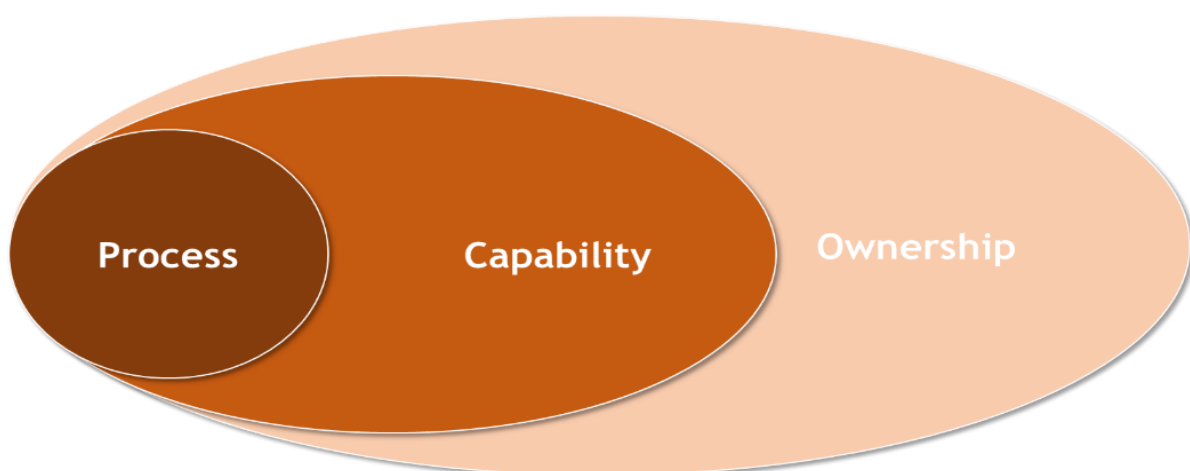
Process (the way in which we administer performance approaches)

Capability (the skills and behaviours we bring to it)

Ownership (the accountability and engagement we feel with it).

A good balance is one which, supported by this research, sees individuals and managers feeling high levels of ownership and engagement in performance and where they are equipped with the skills, tools and behaviours needed to approach it effectively. In this scenario, the process element can be lightweight, focusing only on the areas required to administer the approach consistently, connect into wider processes, provide aggregation, and check and balance - and in a timely manner.

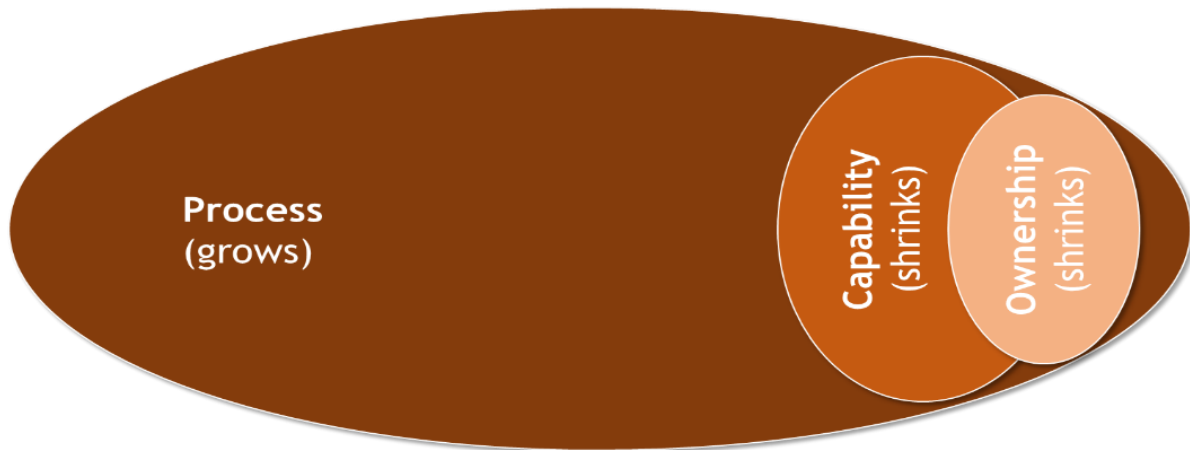
Healthy balance



In a healthy balance, the 'weight' of a performance culture is shared, with capability and ownership holding most, allowing the process to be as much as is needed and no more. This

creates a virtuous circle where ownership is felt at grass roots level whilst process and capability building play supporting roles.

Unhealthy balance



We find an unhealthy balance when either an under-investment in capability and ownership means that the process element must expand to take the weight, or when over-heavy processes are implemented, lessening the freedom to act or perceived importance of capability and ownership between managers and individuals.

This second scenario is a vicious circle where lack of sustained focus on capability and ownership has the result that the processes expand in an attempt to fill the gaps needed to support the outcomes. This in turn lessens the perceived importance and involvement of managers and individuals. Over time, managers develop a belief that performance is in fact something which is owned by HR and not a core element of their roles. Equally, individuals feel increasingly remote from both support for and implications of their own performance.

If we reflect on these two diagrams we will perhaps recognise this somewhat unhealthy evolution in our own organisations. What this research is reinforcing is that approaches which do not put the capability and ownership of managers and individuals at the centre of approaches to enable performance are destined to drive much lower organisational and individual value.

There is another topic that emerged which is also worthy of mention upfront in this report. It relates to the difference between, and potential tension between, organisational approaches to diversity and inclusion (D&I) and what is termed 'Individual Personal Circumstance'. Let's just clarify what is meant by this latter phrase and how it may be subtly different to D&I.

Individual personal circumstance describes a broad range of specific factors which can impact ANY individual's ability to perform at their best

For example, it may be that my individual personal circumstance is that I am a carer for an elderly relative or that I have school-age children. It may be that I have a shared workspace which does not provide ideal working conditions (this was a key insight gained during various 'lockdowns' where company employees were sharing houses for example). Although there *may* be some correlation with a specific D&I focus population, individual personal circumstance applies to all in a wide variety of ways and an understanding of this has proved vital to many organisations' ability to enable performance during the pandemic.

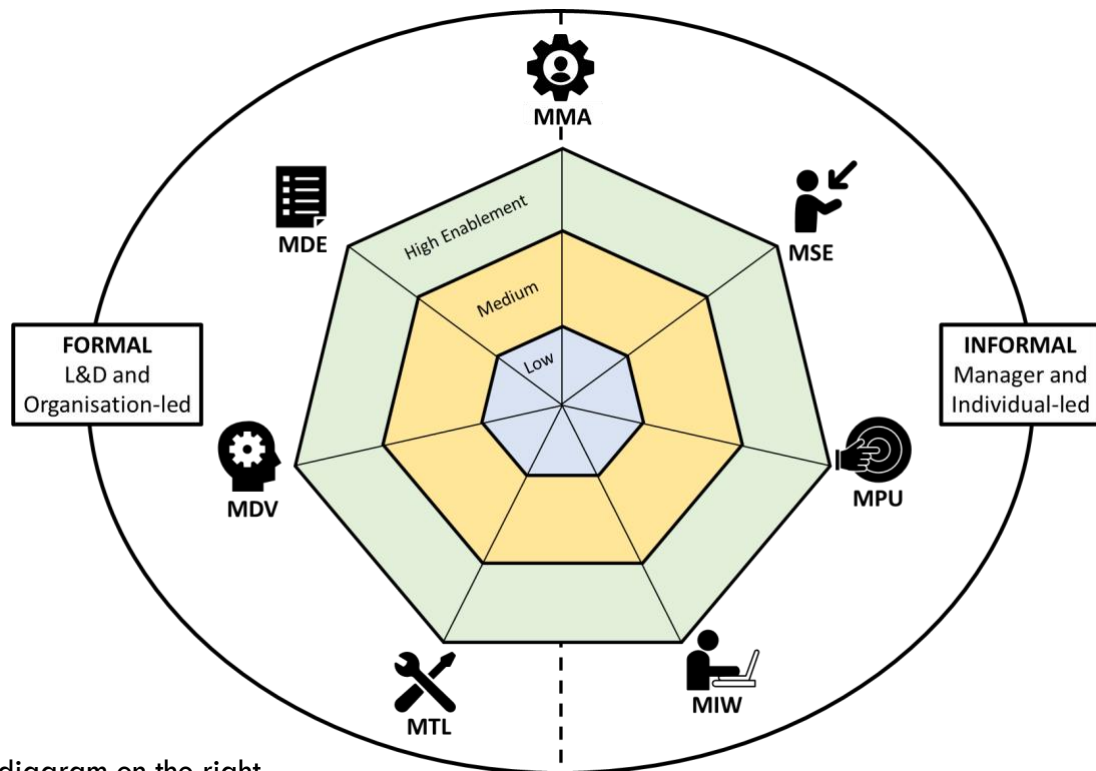
What is clear from the detailed verbatim responses to the survey is that, although the enablement dimension of 'My Self/Being Myself' is clearly positioned to address both D&I factors *and* individual personal circumstance, the majority of responses relate in the main to D&I and wellbeing activity. As a result, the results for 'My Self/Being myself' may have been unduly influenced by respondents' perceptions of progress with regards the specific areas of focus as opposed to a broader view of individual circumstance.

Whether this has flavoured results for this one dimension or not is less important than the wider question it raises. What performance enablement research is telling us is that, catalysed by the rise of hybrid working, we *need to extend* our view of diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing to consider the wider multiple and individual-specific influences on people's ability to perform at their best. Failing to do so may risk them being over-shadowed by more focused initiatives.

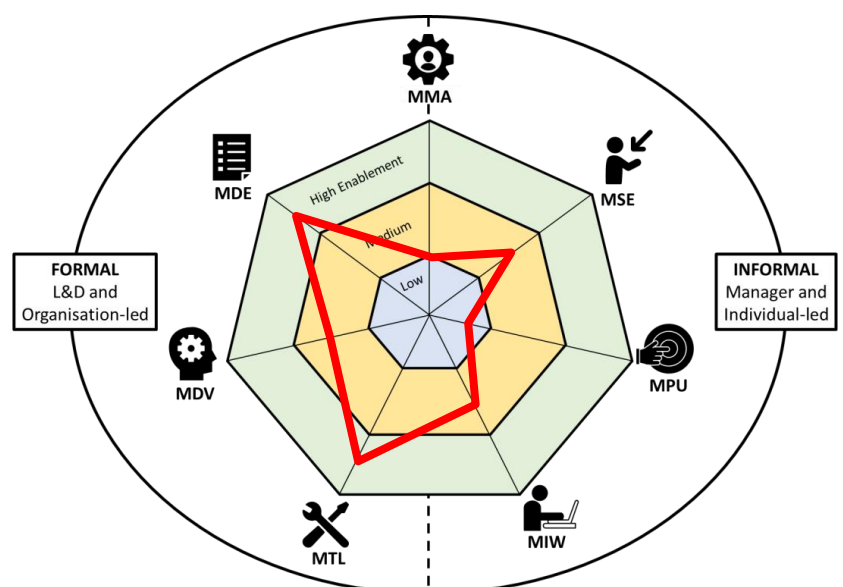
This doesn't mean that we need to change our D&I or wellbeing approaches at organisational level but that we need to ensure that line managers are sympathetically curious about, and recognise, the different individual circumstances of their team and the impact that these may have on both individual and team performance.

The Performance Enablement Maturity Framework

The findings of this research allow us to identify not just the different dimensions of performance enablement, but also what characterises different degrees of success or overall enablement maturity against these dimensions. Together, these allow us to develop a means for organisations to understand where they currently lie in terms of the various dimensions but also to have some clear guidance as to what to focus on (and watch out for) in trying to improve their level of maturity and attainment against each dimension.



On the diagram on the right, using the guidance and dimension personas accompanying the maturity framework, an organisation can develop a spider plot of its current level of attainment against each performance enablement dimension. This also allows them to see the relative balance between those more formal and less formal dimensions. This can then lead to more focused activity around improving the level of performance enablement.



Maturity Framework Guidance and enablement dimension personas

Using the more detailed research findings, the maturity framework can be underpinned by clear guidance which supports an organisation's ability to diagnose its current level of performance enablement and plot a path for improvement. This is achieved through a set of seven 'Enablement Dimension Personas'.

Each persona describes what it means and what increasing levels of performance are driven by. Beyond this, it yields suggestions as to what to focus on in order to drive improvement and also what to watch out for along the way.

As such, these personas are intended to be helpful reference tools in your organisation's journey to improved levels of performance enablement and can also be used to identify and prioritise various activities in support of a performance culture, and in particular, the upskilling and equipping of managers to enable performance in their teams.

The enablement dimension personas are shown below:

My Manager (MMA)		
What it means...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach my performance and provide valuable feedback My manager cares about me Regular conversations about objectives and performance 	
	Medium performance	High performance
Typically characterised by...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic manager training Feedback mechanisms Coaching skills development Regular connects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear/formal manager expectations Clarity around what good looks like for manager role Dialogue-based continual review
On the journey...		
Focus on...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager capability development, Setting clear expectations and measures of what good management looks like Moving to a continual dialogue based around feedback and coaching skills 	
Watch out for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-developed manager capability Lack of manager buy-in to role No consistent view of what good looks like Lack of consequences for poor management 	

My Delivery Expectations (MDE)		
What it means...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of what is expected of me Realistic deliverables based on skills and workload Confidence that my performance will be fairly evaluated 	
	Medium performance	High performance
Typically characterised by...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reviews More structured processes A connection to business goals Manager training in objective setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More regular reviews or continual performance dialogue Clear accountabilities Complete overhaul of process
On the journey...		
Focus on...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating connections between business goals and individual contribution Clear targets and measures Regular dialogue 	
Watch out for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of consistency in approach, lack of strategic clarity, patchy manager ownership and capability 	

My Development (MDV)		
What it means...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to effective training to support my objectives ▪ Access to effective development to support my growth and progression ▪ Access to relevant career discussions and advice 	
	Medium performance	High performance
Typically characterised by...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ L&D-led ownership and processes ▪ Career discussions every 12 months ▪ Career frameworks ▪ Some digital enablement of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manager-led career dialogue ▪ Clear development needs analysis ▪ Appropriate and needs-driven funding
On the journey...		
Focus on...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear ownership ▪ Career frameworks/architecture ▪ Regular dialogues 	
Watch out for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient manager capability and buy-in ▪ Lack of clarity ▪ Challenges accessing learning (eg due to remote location, work type, technology etc) 	

My Tools (MTL)		
What it means...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The right software and technology to support performance ▪ The right hardware and personal equipment ▪ A work environment which meets my needs 	
	Medium performance	High performance
Typically characterised by...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HR Information Systems ▪ Degree of pre-existing technological enablement ▪ A strong focus on remote working capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on effective work space (in and out of office) ▪ Removal of obsolete technology ▪ Comfort/ease of use and access ▪ Well-funded
On the journey...		
Focus on...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technological enablement of different styles of working ▪ Effective recording/enablement of performance dialogue ▪ Making things flexible and easy to use 	
Watch out for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technological issues and obsolete systems and tools ▪ Equipment shortages and compatibility issues ▪ Issues accessing or leveraging tools (eg internet access, bandwidth, work style etc) 	

My Interaction with Work (MIW)		
What it means...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailored and flexible working pattern which suits my situation ▪ Allows me to perform irrespective of location, contracted hours etc ▪ Allows me to manage my wider responsibilities in addition to my work 	
	Medium performance	High performance
Typically characterised by...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some choice in working pattern ▪ A flexible implementation of working pattern choice ▪ Hybrid working capability balanced with work needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trust culture around outcome-based work ▪ Evolving and flexible policies ▪ Strong technological enablement
On the journey...		
Focus on...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing flexibility and evolving balance ▪ Technological enablement ▪ Building trust 	
Watch out for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inconsistencies creating new divisions ▪ Technological issues ▪ Meeting overload 	

My Purpose (MPU)		
What it means...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the vision, purpose and objectives of the organisation Understand how I contribute to the business and beyond Visibility of others' objectives relevant to my work 	
	Medium performance	High performance
Typically characterised by...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership cascades of business strategy and objectives Regular business updates Leader-led x-functional goal alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement sessions to link individual contribution and purpose to business Goal transparency across the business A connection to, and advocacy of, the brand and identity of the organisation
On the journey...		
Focus on...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity and visibility of vision and objectives across areas Regular updates Making links between individual objectives and contribution and bigger picture 	
Watch out for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-developed leader capability in communicating vision and purpose Inconsistent communication of strategy and a lack of space to reflect Poor visibility of goals in other areas 	

My Self / Being Myself (MSE)		
What it means...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in a business that cares about my wellbeing Recognition of my individual circumstance Feeling free to be myself 	
	Medium performance	High performance
Typically characterised by...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing focus on wellbeing and flexible benefits Data and measurement Awareness through events, awards etc Strong D&I focus at org level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong wellbeing culture Listening Role modelling from the top Manager-led focus on individual circumstance
On the journey...		
Focus on...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness and measurement Flexibility Manager-led wellbeing discussions 	
Watch out for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual circumstance being drowned by D&I initiatives on gender, ethnicity etc Inconsistent messaging Insufficient manager capability or will to explore wellbeing 	

More detailed findings

Overall performance against the enablement dimensions

As stated in the introduction to the research, organisations were asked to rate their level of progress on each enablement dimension from a datum of two years ago and at present day. The idea of doing this was driven by a desire to recognise and explore the impact of the pandemic on people's ability to perform and to understand how it had shaped approaches to performance enablement.

Organisations were asked to rate their status (at each time period) against each enablement dimension on a four-point scale using one of the following headings:

- *Not on agenda* – recognising those situations where for whatever reason, no real organisation focus had been placed on a particular enablement dimension. It was important to include this option to recognise the degree of upheaval and tactical business performance focus that many organisations were forced into as a result of the pandemic and lockdown.

- *Starting out* – where an organisation was perhaps in the progress of implementing an approach or at an early point in their experience in addressing a particular dimension.
- *Doing OK* – representing the situation where the impact of activities focused around a particular dimension was delivering to an acceptable level or where results were generally positive but perhaps inconsistent.
- *Driving real value* – where the impact of activities focused around a particular dimension where having a very positive impact on the organisation.

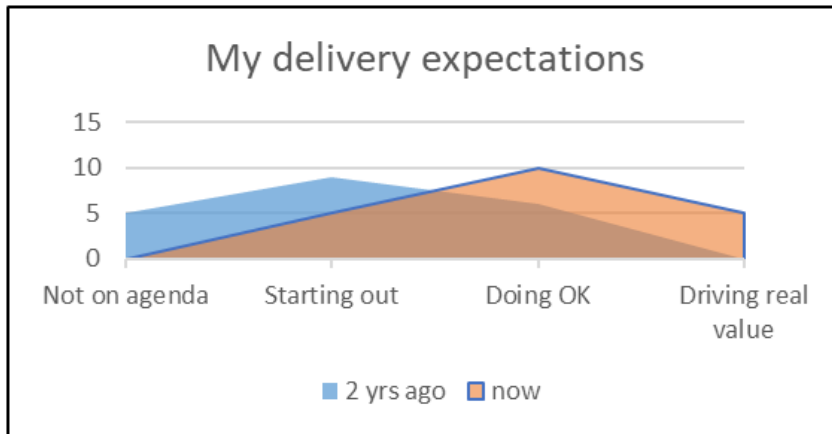
The results from this part of the research were then initially used to understand any shifts that had been made over the past two years for organisations as a whole. The results are shown in the series of graphs in the following section. The graphs illustrate, for each enablement dimension, the number of organisations selecting each status level as a distribution curve. The results for current state and two years ago are plotted separately to illustrate any shifts.

Overall headlines:

1. The overall status of all enablement dimensions has seen a ‘move to the right’ – i.e an improvement in focus and impact over the past two years.
2. The biggest single shift indicated is related, perhaps unsurprisingly, to the enablement dimension ‘My interaction with work’.
3. The smallest shift related to the dimension ‘My tools’ although, in any case, the majority of organisations considered their status to be ‘Doing OK’ or above two years previously.
4. The dimension where organisations felt they were, in general, doing best currently was that of ‘My self/being myself’, with nearly half of all organisations surveyed feeling they were ‘Driving real value’ and 75% indicating a level of ‘Doing OK’ or above. This result will be addressed in more detail in the discussion since the detailed data indicates.
5. In general, organisations felt that where they were driving least value was the dimension of ‘My development’ - only around 10% of organisations felt that they were driving real value.

In the section below we look in a little more detail at each enablement dimension and what, according to our respondents, have driven the shifts in status.

My Delivery Expectations (MDE)



My delivery expectations – this dimension shows a clear positive shift over the past two years, with organisations making reasonable progress to the point where they have in general moved from ‘starting out’ to ‘doing ok’, with around 25% saying that they are driving real value.

When we look further into some of the things which respondents cited as either helping this evolution, or getting in the way of an improvement in this dimension, we see the following:



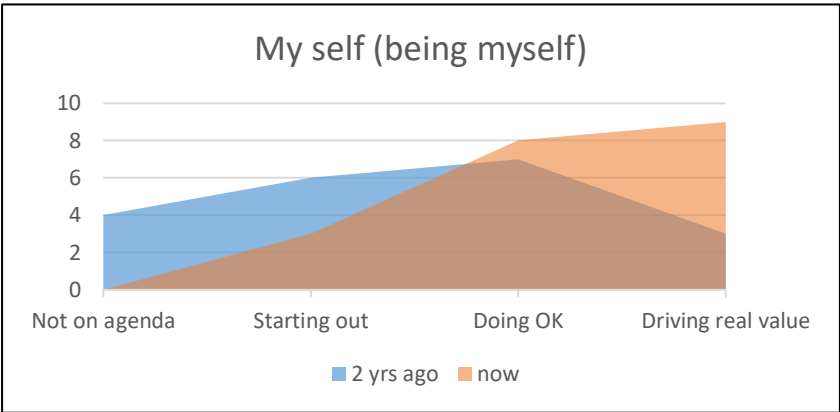
This is a topic that we have been trying to address for some years, so it should come as no surprise that we see regular reviews, clear success measures and supportive tools and systems toward the top of the list. **What is interesting though is that the most powerful factor driving success is to make a solid line of sight between the contribution of an individual and the overall objectives of the organisation. In other words, the emotional connection between what I am asked to do and its value to the organisation that makes me feel that my delivery is both important and valued.**

In many cases this was achieved through system-driven objective cascades where individual expectations were entered against broader organisational level goals. In some cases it was the manager or leader themselves who made the connection. This latter point is noteworthy when we discuss the capability of managers to hold dialogues around ‘My Purpose’. This is exemplified well when we look at what was seen to have got in the way of progress on this dimension (x axis = relative volume of mentions)

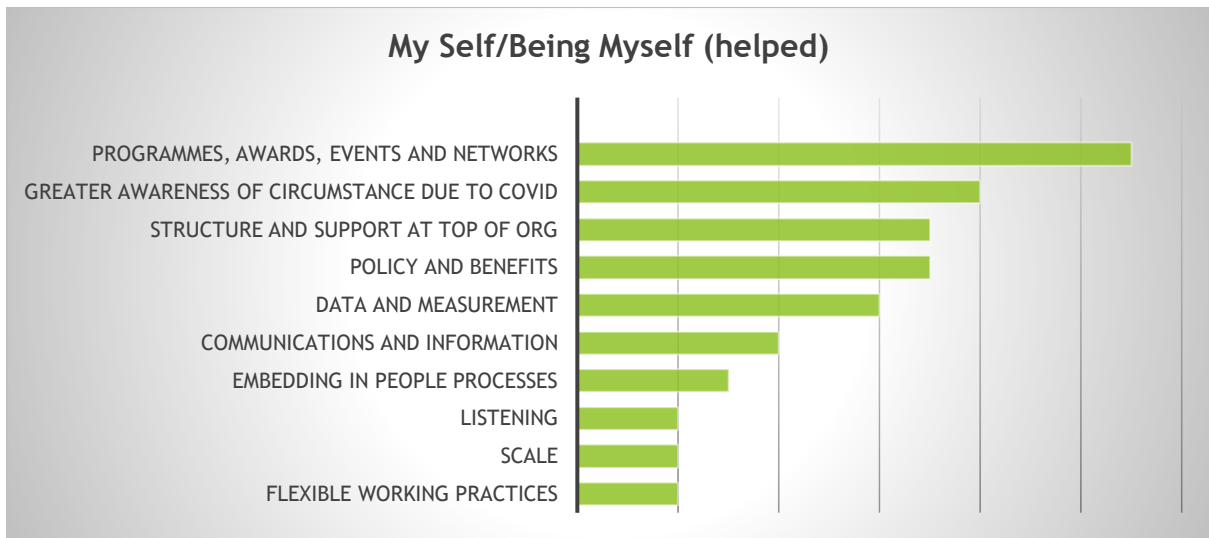


Here it is the quality of management and leadership which is the dominant factor. In some cases the cause was that the organisation itself was unclear as to its own delivery expectations, but in general this was about managers – a view further supported by some organisations citing a change in leadership as the driver for progress in this dimension.

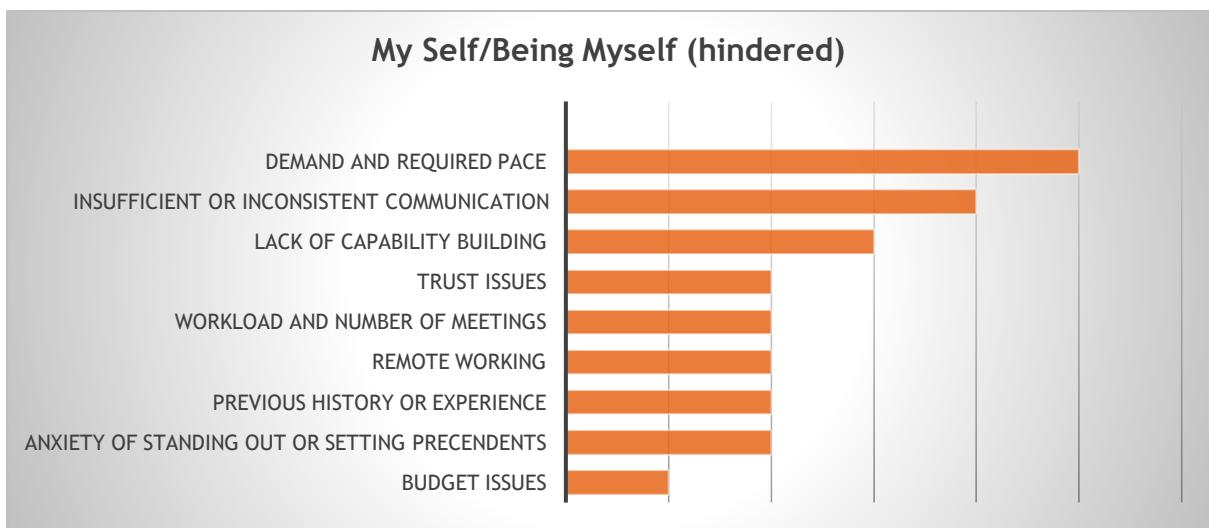
My Self/Being Myself (MSE)



My self/being myself – this dimension shows possibly the highest levels of perceived value currently, from a lower position two years ago. There is also a clear move from inaction to action, with the majority of organisations reporting significant progress.



Although we see Covid as an important catalyst for driving progress in this dimension, even that is over-shadowed by a multiplicity of very tangible things relating to driving increased awareness of, and support for, specific D&I populations in the organisation. This is the point mentioned in the report headlines section where **the vast majority of responses related not so much to a consideration of individual circumstance of all team members by managers, but focused organisational-level activity around specific D&I populations.** This activity comprised a combination of D&I networks, recognition, awareness training and senior committees. Data was also understandably high on the list, but again only in so far that it supported understanding around specific populations of D&I focus.

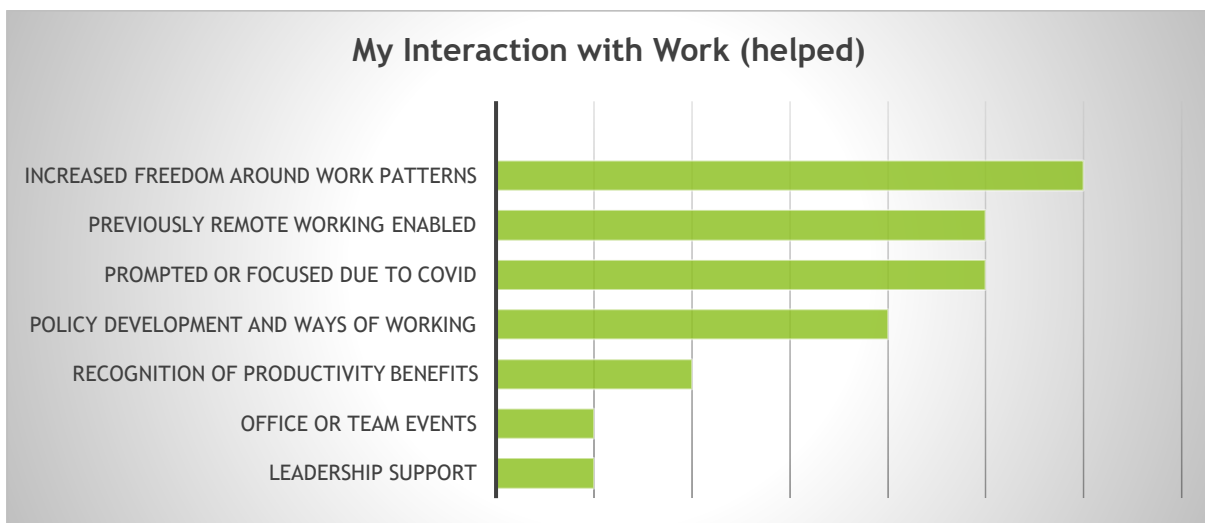
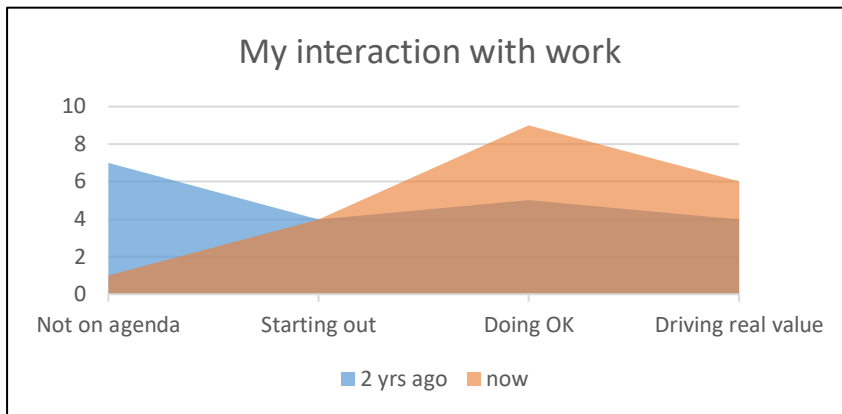


The things that got in the way of progress revolved principally around the pace and scale of shifting to new ways of working, inconsistent communication, and once again, manager capability. An increase in meeting quantity and remoteness were also blockers.

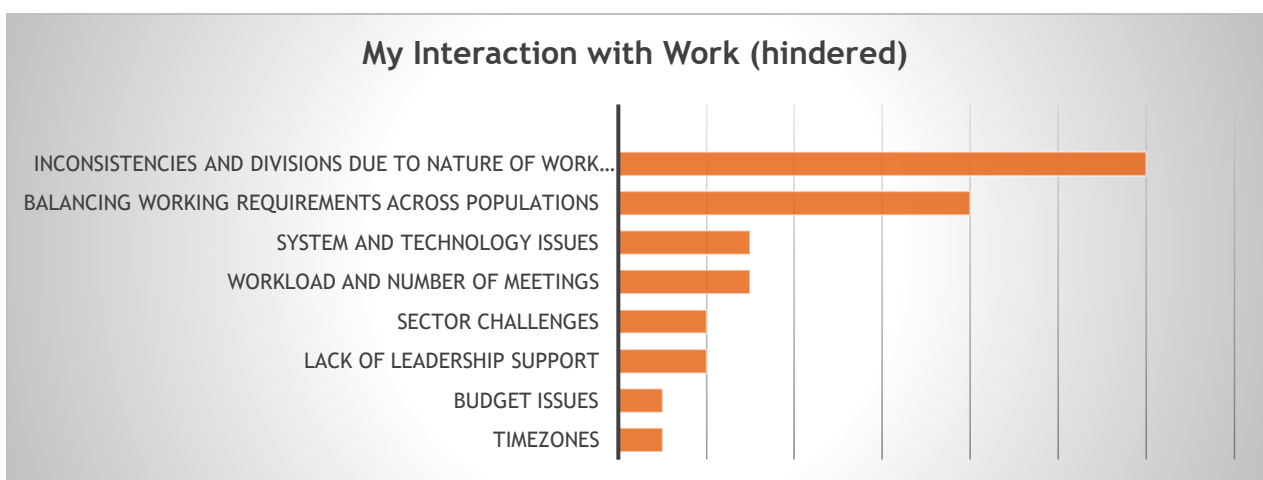
A key point of interest is the importance to some organisations of both trust and the anxiety of setting precedents based on individual circumstance. The trust angle came from the individual being uneasy with their perception of how the organisation would react to them being more themselves. The anxiety angle was related more to managers perceiving how other team members might react to another being treated differently.

My interaction with work – this dimension shows possibly the most significant shift over the past 2 years. Perhaps this is no

My Interaction with Work (MIW)



Understandably increased work pattern freedom was seen as key to progress against this dimension, given advances in hybrid working as a result of the pandemic. Organisations reported that being able to lean on or scale pre-existing capabilities in this area really helped with the speed of remote working capability being put in place. The more successful organisations were also quick to invoke or develop policies and ways of working to support a sudden and seismic shift in working pattern. These systems and policy-led solutions may explain the lower scores for leadership support. However, this progress has not been smooth and has not been without its implications.



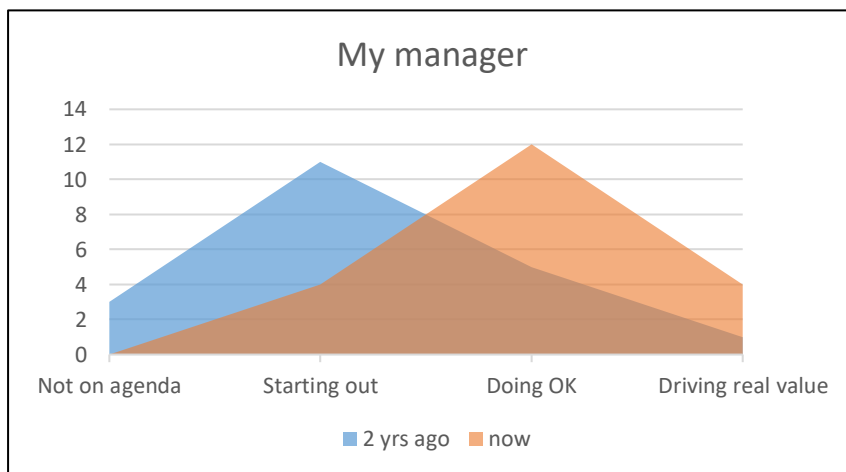
The organisations surveyed in this research echoed the emerging sentiments of many others being reported and experienced elsewhere. There was enormous pressure for many to reinvent working practices in impossibly short timescales in the early weeks of the pandemic. Overall, organisations did an incredible job and achieved in days or weeks what had been only talked about for years. Following this great peak of work many entered a well-deserved period of celebrating this achievement and could be perhaps forgiven for not thinking too far into the future implications of this major shift in approach to work.

What we are now seeing is an evolved reality. We have been unable to put all of these circumstance-driven changes back in the box and the term ‘hybrid working’ is now being used not to describe the way we worked through the worst of the pandemic, but to describe the way that work is now undertaken. There will always be employees who worked like this before all of this happened, and there will always be some sectors and organisations that have returned, through virtue of the kind of enterprise they are, to how they were pre-pandemic; but the majority of organisations are coming to terms with a potentially permanent re-balancing of different types of work interaction compared to what existed before.

In line with this are some challenges which equally did not exist before. The most prevalent of these, also reflected here in this data, is the challenge of balancing the impact and needs of different populations working in different ways. There has always been a degree of need for this, but the numbers of people now working, or wanting to continue working, in a more flexible and location-independent way means that these challenges are now enterprise-relevant rather than locally-specific. This is creating a lack of consistency and perceived inequities which organisations and managers alike are struggling to get their heads around.

What we should perhaps realise is that the solution to this, like the issue from which it came, will require us to change our mindsets. There is a mad rush in many quarters to try to throw a rope around this through updating processes and policies to ‘manage the issue’, but this feels more like a means of locking the gate after the horse has bolted than a long-overdue modernisation of how we interact with work. **The real solutions here will lie in how we come to accept and live with a more heterogeneous model of work for the benefit of the majority, rather than focusing on the challenge for the minority to manage it.**

My Manager (MMA)



My manager – remember, this dimension focused on the 3 Cs – Coaching, Care and Conversations. These represent the ‘softer’ side of the manager role rather than the ‘harder’, more process-driven elements. There is a clear shift to the right in status over the past 2 years but the best that most can say is that they are ‘Doing OK’

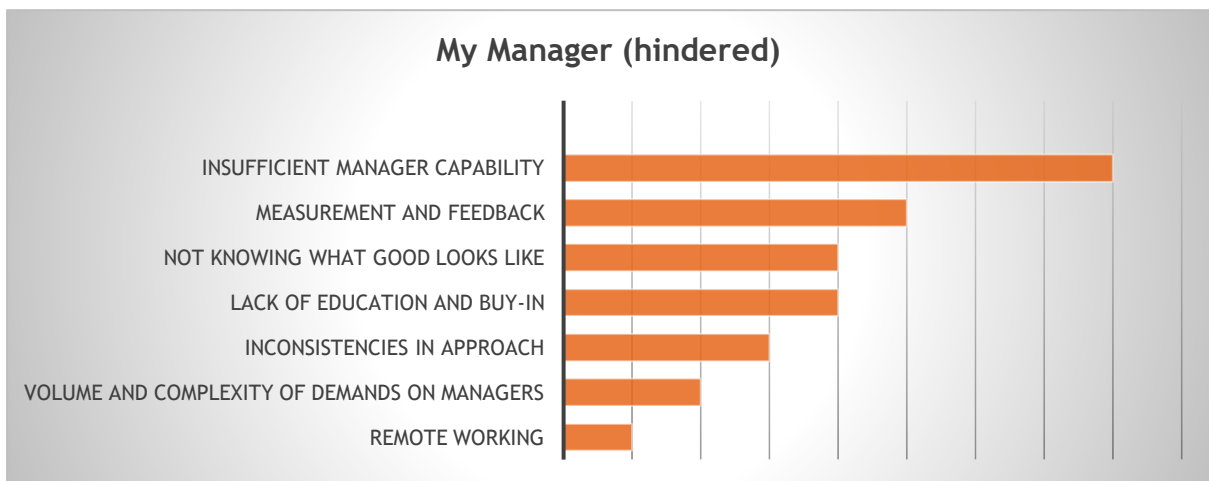


By far and away the biggest influence, both positive and negative, on progress in this dimension was the capability of the manager themselves, and their ability to hold dialogues with team members in ways that supported performance enablement. We will see again later in this report that where confidence is high that managers are delivering in this area, performance enablement is also doing well at organisational level.

Infrastructure such as system enablement, tools and metrics was seen as very positive, along with regular connects and feedback; but the critical elements acting alongside manager capability building were three-fold:

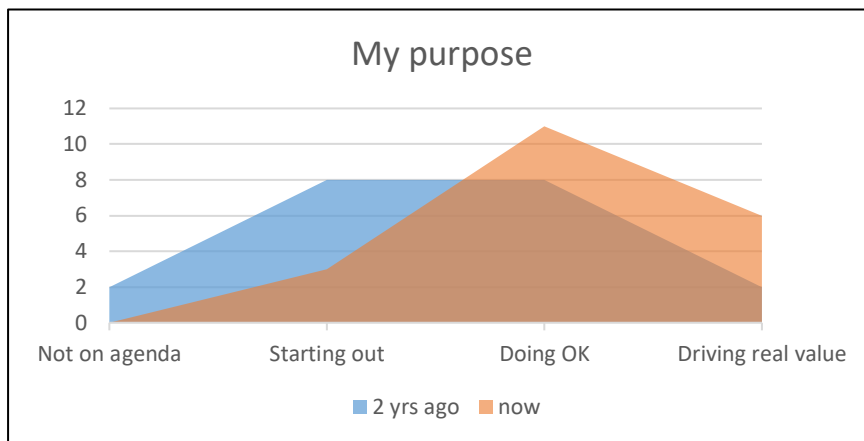
- Have we articulated *what good looks like* in terms of our expectations of managers?
- Have we translated this into something tangible such as a ‘people leader objective’ which can be used to measure and evaluate manager capability and performance?
- Are we using this data to drive targeted development and recognition?

Sadly, in some organisations, there still exists no acceptable answer to the question: *do we know who our best managers are?* Equally, there may be few real consequences for not delivering against this core mission of so many roles. Being able to draw a line in the sand and say that it represents our minimum expectation of the role is a hugely helpful step forward. Treating this like any other objective is another. Where the organisations surveyed reported good progress in this dimension, these were common factors.

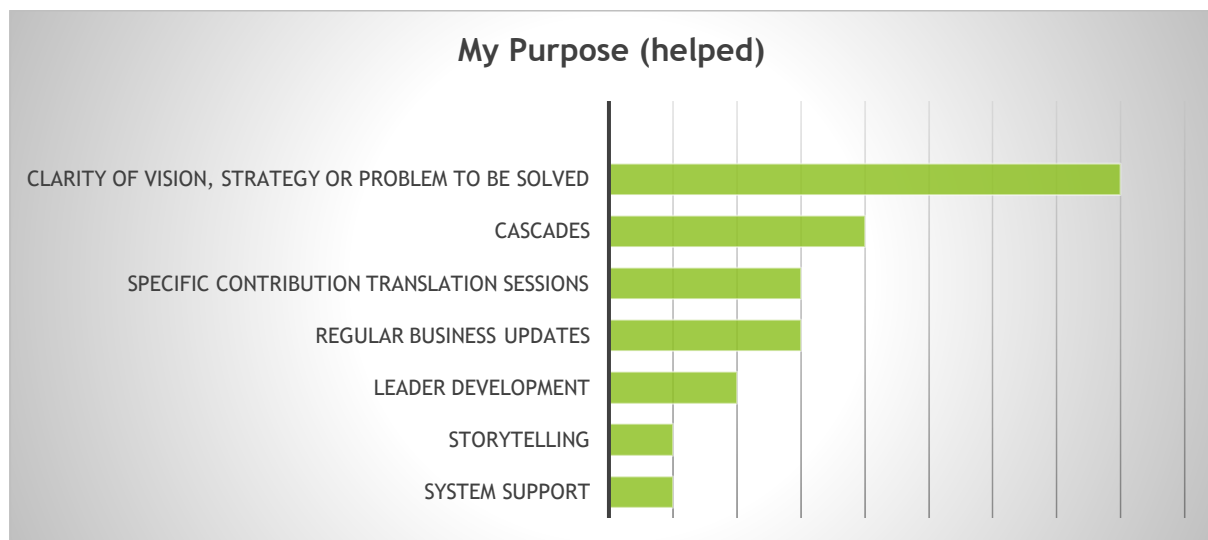


Managers' capability, willingness, and approach to working in this way were the key blockers, resulting in poor feedback, inconsistencies in approach, and a lack of buy-in to the need. As discussed above, **a key element in these blocking factors was an absence of guidance as to what 'good looked like' in this respect, supporting the benefits of clearer expectation setting around the role of the manager, and an inability to evaluate and leverage data around manager capability.**

My Purpose (MPU)



My purpose – whilst showing some level of improvement in general, the shift is not great and the starting point was at a low level to start with two years ago.



Key to unlocking this dimension of performance enablement was the ability to clearly understand the 'what' and 'why' of performance needs. Organisations reported that being able to articulate the context and rationale for delivery expectations was by far the most powerful lever for higher levels of progress against this dimension.

The most common ways in which this was achieved was through the use of management cascades and regular business updates, giving managers and leaders a chance to pass information through the different layers of the organisation from top to bottom. In some cases, specific sessions connecting organisational purpose and objectives to individual contribution were run by managers. These were found to be particularly effective when used.

Interestingly, we see the impact of systems being considered far less powerful than was the case for My Delivery Expectations. **We might hypothesis from this that when it comes to expectation setting, a process is considered an effective means of aligning individual objectives to strategy; but when it comes to creating a personal emotional connection with the end outcomes, a personal touch is what works.**

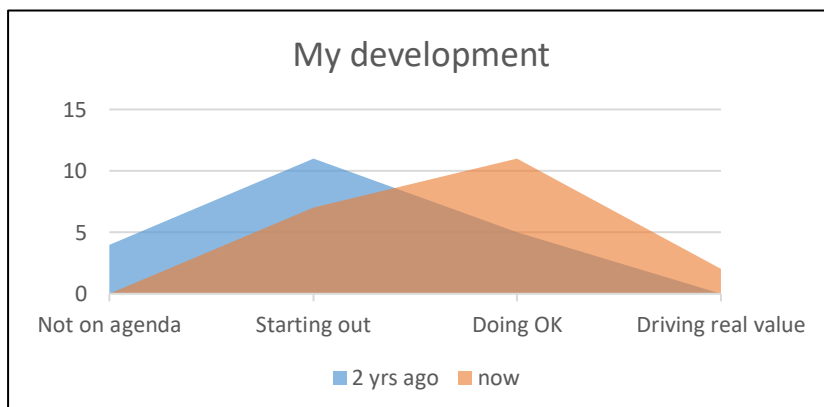


Unsurprisingly, what got in the way related to a lack of focus or capability in the same factors, with organisations citing a lack of clarity, poor or inconsistent communication, and an insufficient visibility of who was doing what as the key blockers.

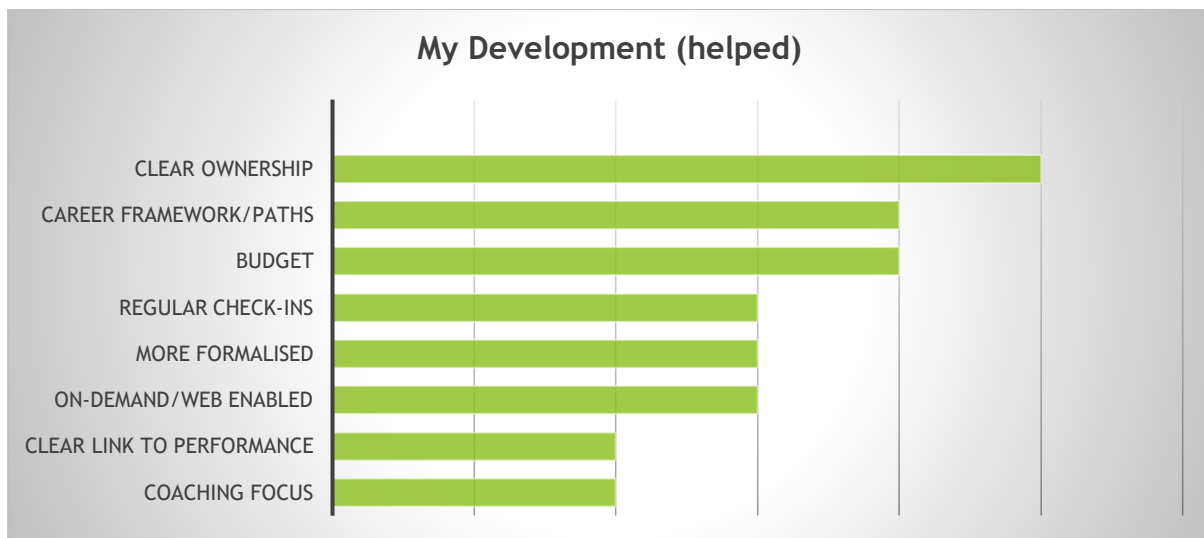
However, what is interesting is that a lack of time and space to reflect emerged as a blocker on several occasions. This is a theme that has appeared elsewhere in the research under different guises and also in relation to increased hybrid working. It seems that sometimes, in the rush to deliver, we lose track of the rationale and higher purpose that we are serving. The organisational representatives who mentioned this talked of people being encouraged to explore their connection with the purpose of the organisation and to understand the impact of their own contribution as time well spent.

Another interesting point is that some organisations connected issues in this area with the maturity of the organisation, offering the view that a sense of purpose was harder to establish in a new organisation. This type of comment was aimed more at reorganisations than new businesses, but is an interesting one for leaders to reflect upon.

My Development (MDV)



My development – this dimension showed an interesting result. Although there is a degree of general improvement, many consider themselves still early in the journey and almost none would say that they are adding real value.



This was perhaps one of the most interesting findings of the research but perhaps logical given the turbulence of the past two years. Although showing perhaps the lowest level of organisational success overall, where things were going well, they were characterised by clear ownership, a degree of structure, adequate funding, and regular dialogue.

We need to clarify that development in the context of the performance enablement dimension has two elements – an element directly relating to the skills and knowledge needed to deliver against my shorter-term expectations plus an element about future personal and career growth.

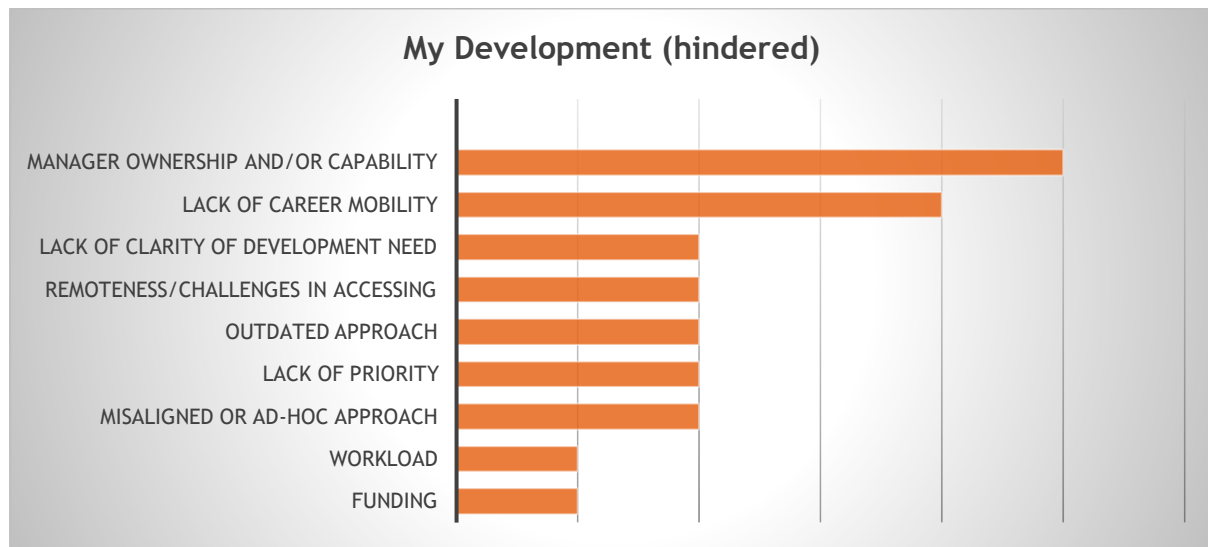
Top of the helpful pile here was clarity of ownership around development. In the main, this related to whether or not managers felt the right level of accountability for the development and career dialogue with their team members; or whether this was something owned by the individual and/or HR. This is not to say that development being owned by the individual themselves or even by HR or L&D was necessarily a blocker. **It was more about the fact that there were clear roles around development and that managers did not abdicate their responsibility but rather worked in partnership with the individual and HR function around development.** This manager involvement was most notable in terms of being able to help identify development needs and to provide career insight and dialogue.

Also of key importance in enabling My Development as a dimension was the presence of some kind of career framework. What was meant by this was that there was a reasonably good understanding of what it takes to progress and develop in the organisation and therefore what kinds of future roles were best placed to provide the requisite skills, knowledge and experience.

Development was an area where funding did play a key role. Over the past two years many organisations have either cut back on or paused investment in areas such as this due to the need to survive short-term pressures. In addition, relative to enablement dimensions which may be more closely related to manager capability, development frequently has a tangible financial cost in terms of programmatic solutions, diagnosis tools, or the use of third party suppliers. It is therefore understandable that we see the ability to fund development as a major factor in driving development.

The other area worth mentioning is that of e-enablement of development, with those organisations equipped to support digital, on-demand learning either in place of - or in

addition to - other learning formats, being more able to drive progress in this dimension during the pandemic.



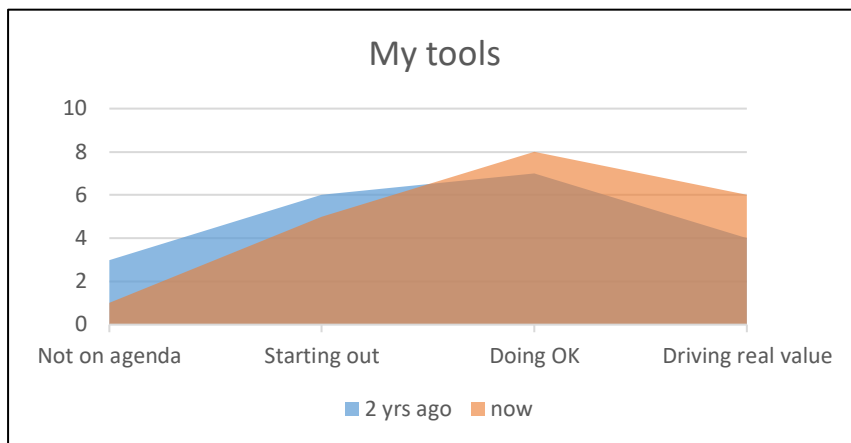
On the blocker side, yet again we see the attitude and capability of line managers top the pile. Where organisations reported that managers did not feel a sense of ownership for the development of their people, we saw generally lower progress. Even where ownership was not the primary issue, manager capability was a concern. This was especially the case when relating to the ability of managers to identify relevant development needs and to support them through feedback and coaching.

Career mobility was also cited by organisations as a key blocker to progress in delivering against development needs. This related to a combination of a perceived lack of advancement opportunity plus a lack of effective succession planning and career planning.

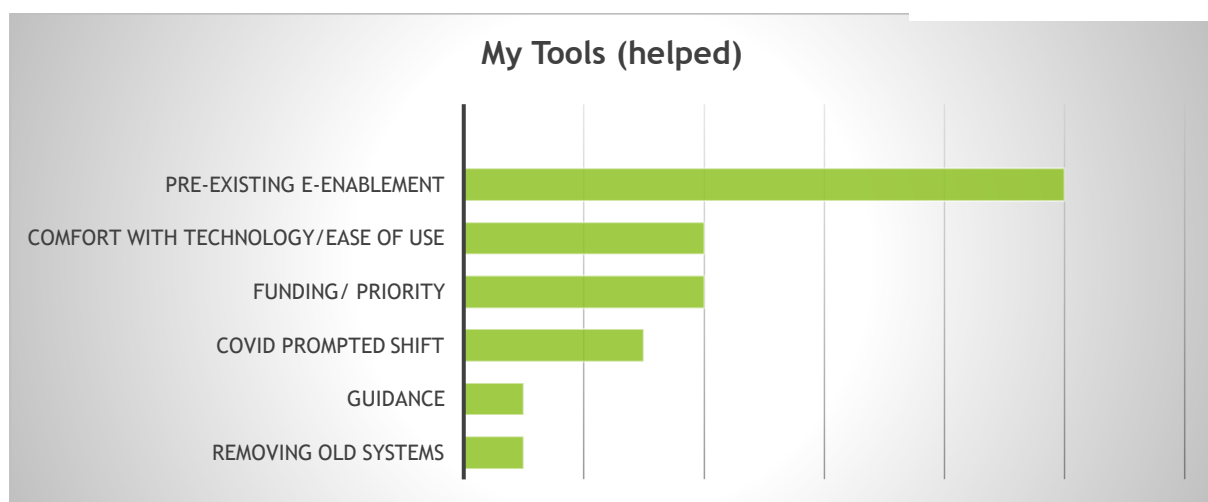
To make a quick point about access to development, this is something which has come up both in this research and wider interactions with organisations of late. Our response to the pandemic was to move a lot of development online. As mentioned earlier, this had a positive impact for many and is seen by many organisations as a key driver for their progress in this dimension. However, there is also a flipside to this. Depending on the type of organisation, where it is located, and the kind of work its people are involved in; actually accessing this online development may prove problematic.

This is not a new thing. We have seen for many years that certain geographical regions or populations (for example factory floor workers) may have less easy access to or less opportunity to utilise online learning. Simple things such as a lack of a digital identity such as a company email address may mean that accessing a Learning Management System is not possible. Our reaction to the pandemic only exaggerated this situation for many since it saw the withdrawal of face-to-face learning for many, which may have been their only interaction with certain types of development.

My Tools (MTL)

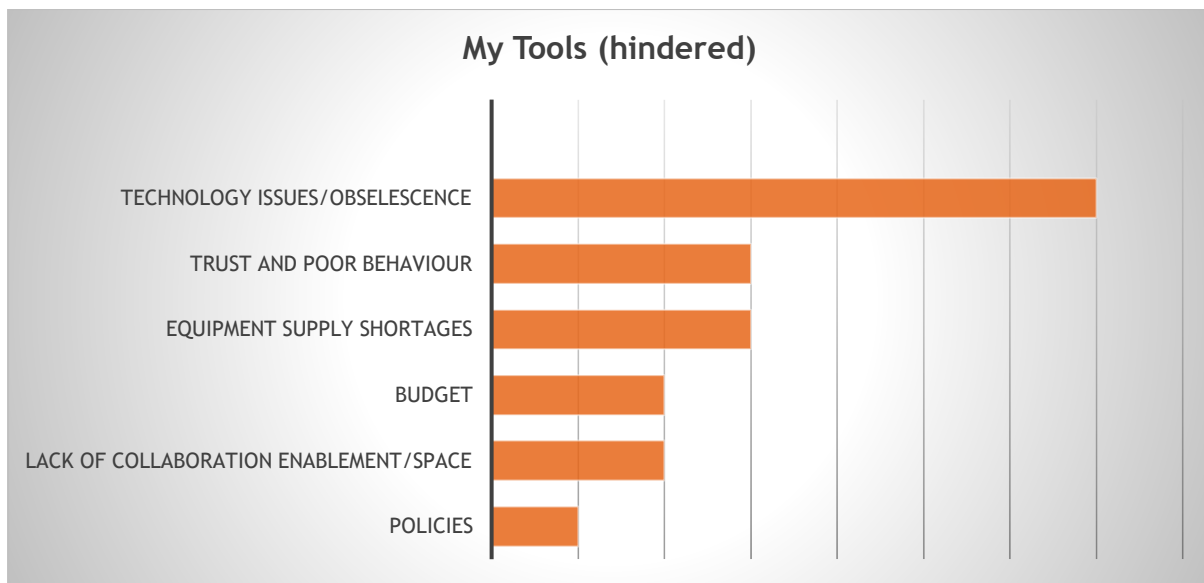


My tools –this dimension possibly shows the lowest overall shift in the past two years but it's starting position was reasonably well-advanced to start with, with a significant number of organisations rating their progress as 'Doing OK' or better.



Once more, we see a pre-existing level of digital or system enablement as the key driver for progress. This makes a lot of sense given the pandemic, which was stated as a real catalyst for a step-change in focus on tools, workplace design, and digitisation because those organisations that had previously invested in these elements were able to adapt more swiftly and easily to changes in working practices and location of its people. Those who had a lower start point had a greater gap to close. **Where the workforce was one with a pre-existing comfort with technology, where funding was available for investing in tools and where those tools were well-designed; organisations were able to enhance their ability in this area more easily than others.**

Although the removal of old systems was not in the highest results as a positive influence, it is worthy of mention here not least because obsolescence was cited as a key blocker to progress and because a shift in behaviour was needed in order to support a change in working practice. For many organisations, the past two years saw tools which had already been used in the organisation being further rolled out to become the main or even only mechanism (for example virtual working tools); but for some, these were new either for the organisation as a whole or for large chunks of the population. As such, when looking to migrate established behaviours from traditional work mechanisms to new tools, the removal of legacy tools is a vital element of supporting this shift.



As we can see from the above chart, issues with technology were far and away the greatest blocker for organisations. This related either to tools not being fit for purpose in the changed context of the past two years, or an inability to get them working well. Many organisations found that infrastructural elements such as VPN connections struggled to keep pace with the peak in demand. Others suddenly discovered issues with hardware or, as also shown above, difficulties in obtaining it due to demand, funding or the global supply chain issues resulting from the pandemic.

Blockers in the domain of tools did not relate purely to hardware and systems, however. Tools, in the context of this research, also related to workspace either in the home or workplace. This frequently took the form of a lack of space for collaboration in the workplace, but for those working remotely for some or all of the time it was more about having a suitable space to dedicate to work. During the first year of the pandemic, many individuals who did not habitually work from home were forced to do so, exposing the fact that they did not have dedicated working space in their own homes - or in some cases, simply a space where they could be alone. For example, I recall one organisation whose staff in one locality frequently shared accommodation, with up to six or seven other individuals. The only suitable workspace was the kitchen/living area and this was noisy and not at all private.

The really interesting result here, however, is the points raised concerning behaviour and, in particular, trust. For those perhaps wondering what this has to do with the topic 'My Tools', this was talked about by a number of organisations in relation to virtual working as a tool. The point here was that there were challenges in some cases associated with trusting individuals to be as effective working virtually as they were perceived to be in the office or with the way in which individuals behaved with one another in this new way of working. **This trust issue is one which comes up a lot in discussions around virtual working and most commonly has two dimensions, that of managers struggling to adapt to a shift from direct and in-person supervision, and that of team members trusting that other team members are 'pulling their weight'. Both relate to a shift from visible to invisible work practices and a corresponding shift to greater self-management of work.**

The concept of Value Added

When analysing the data from this research it was important to be able to find a way of expressing the relative 'progress' of organisations against the different enablement dimensions. Respondents were asked to rate their status now versus two years ago against a scale ranging from 'not on agenda' to 'driving real value' at either end of this timespan, but some had shown a greater degree of shift than others.

Therefore the concept of 'Value Added' was created. This is defined as the degree of shift in an organisation's perception of its status against an enablement dimension over the past two years, expressed as a numerical value.

For example, a shift from 'Starting out' to 'Doing OK' would be expressed as a 'Value Added of 1' (i.e one step on the scale). A shift from 'Starting out' to "Driving real value" would equate to a '2' and a shift from 'Doing OK' to 'Not on agenda' a '-2' etc.

What this allowed was both a relative 'numeric' comparison of progress against the different enablement dimensions but also a comparison of individual organisations versus one another; giving us the opportunity to delve beneath organisational averages in order to see if this held further insights.

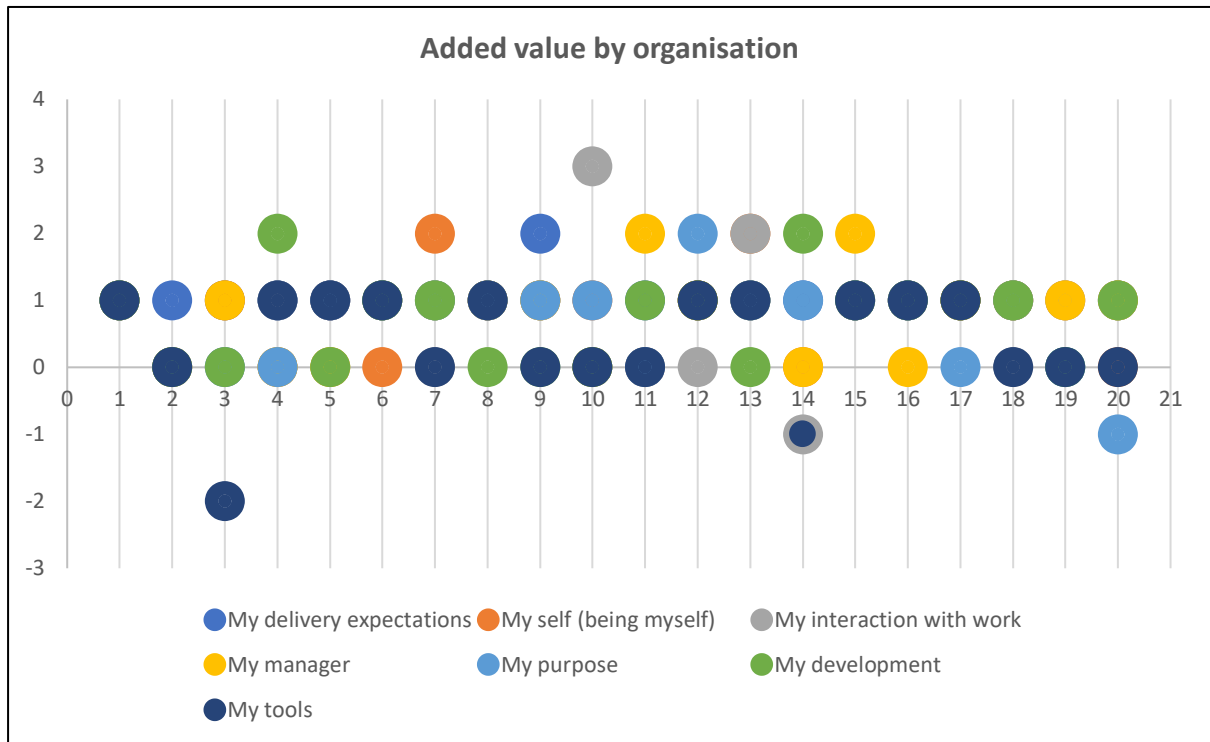
The table below shows the totality of 'Value Added'

Orgs	My delivery expectations	My self (being myself)	My interaction with work	My manager	My purpose	My devt	My tools	Org total added value
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
3	1	1	0	1	0	0	-2	1
4	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	5
5	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	4
6	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	6
7	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	6
8	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	6
9	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
10	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	5
11	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	4
12	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	7
13	1	2	2	1	1	0	1	8
14	1	0	-1	0	1	2	-1	2
15	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	8
16	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	6
17	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	6
18	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	5
19	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
20	1	0	1	1	-1	1	0	3
Dimension totals	19	16	14	16	13	14	7	

There is a lot to take in with this table, though it actually contains some really interesting results. What you can see here is the Value Added (i.e progress) for each organisation against each enablement dimension. The data has then been summed for each organisation and for each dimension to yield further insight. What this allows us to explore questions such as:

- Which enablement dimensions showed the overall highest or lowest value added shift.
- The distribution of any such shift across different organisations, for example, did all move the same amount or did some move a lot and others only a little?
- Are there any patterns in terms of which dimensions organisations showed more progress in than others?
- Which organisations showed greatest value added and is there any correlation between type and size of organisation?
- Which organisations drive highest value added and what are they doing? This can be used to inform a maturity framework.

For those of you who prefer a graph to a table, here's another way of looking at the same data. The different organisations surveyed are shown by their number (1 to 20) along the x-axis. The degree of 'Value Added' is shown on the y-axis. The value add by individual various enablement dimension are shown as coloured circles. If you are wondering why there are not seven distinct circles for each organisation, it is a result of different dimensions scoring the same value added and therefore being superposed on one another.



The first thing which emerges from this data is that although progress overall over the past two years is a distinctly positive picture, progress at specific organisation level is distinctly different, with a range of different value added scores across the dimensions. If we look at the sums of all the value added scores, the average composite level of progress across the past two years for all organisations is 4.95, with a median of 5.5 but a range from 1.00 to 8.00.

The enablement dimension with the greatest perceived progress across all organisations in the past two years is 'My Delivery Expectations', followed by 'My self/Being Myself' and 'My Manager'. The enablement dimension with the lowest perceived progress across all

organisations over the same period is very clearly 'My Tools'. This latter result should, however, be considered in the context that it had arguably the best starting position, so improvement beyond this would always be subject to a natural limitation.

Interestingly, some organisations perceived a backward step in certain dimensions, notably 'My Tools', 'My Purpose' and 'My Interaction with Work'. This appeared to be related in the case of tools and work interaction to issues with technology keeping up with change or functioning reliably. In the case of 'My Purpose' this was a result in changes in proposition and an influx of new staff joining the business.

These data were used to explore any obvious correlations between an organisation's ability to drive progress on these dimensions and the nature, sector, size, or average workforce age of that organisation. No obvious correlation was found.

A really interesting observation of this data is that it seems to reveal three tiers of organisations: those with low relative progress or Value Added, those with medium and those with high. This observation was further developed in the maturity framework.

Manager dialogue ('Manager Confidence Level') & performance enablement

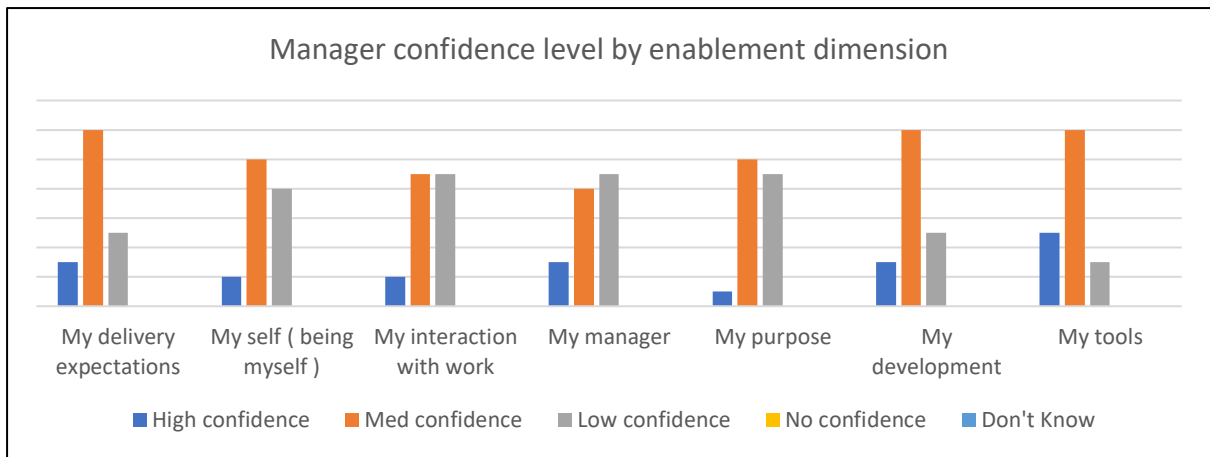
Here there were some really meaty insights and correlations. Before we get into the details, let's remind ourselves what it was we were looking to measure here and why.

Manager Confidence Level – *the degree of confidence that an organisation has that its managers are CURRENTLY holding effective and regular dialogues with team members in relation to each of the seven enablement dimensions*

Respondents were asked to rate their levels of confidence against a scale of:

- a) High confidence
- b) Medium confidence
- c) Low confidence
- d) No/None
- e) Don't know

Next we wanted to understand whether there was a link between organisational progress or status against enablement dimensions and the capability and desire of managers to be able to engage in regular and valuable dialogue with the team members on these topics in order to support them in their performance. This question was asked in the context of the present day only in order to have a common and current baseline.

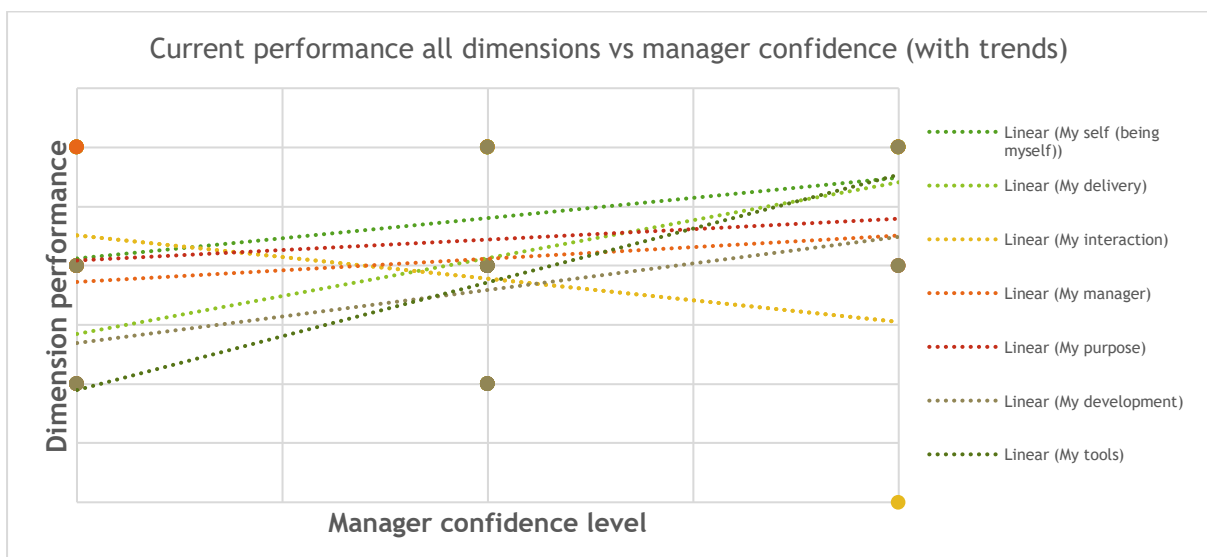


The top-line results are shown above by performance dimension. Straight away we can make some initial observations. The first is that none of the responses were recorded against the 'No confidence' or 'Don't know' categories, which makes things clearer to see. Beyond this, we can immediately observe that the most common responses are against the medium and low categories.

Broadly, the highest level of confidence across the various dimensions (looking at medium and high levels together) relates to a manager's ability to ensure that an individual has the right tools. This is also true if we look at high confidence on its own. After this, the highest confidence ratings related to managers' ability to effectively discuss delivery expectations and development.

Confidence is lowest in managers' ability to discuss purpose, interaction with work, give feedback, and demonstrate care through discussing wellbeing and individual circumstance. This is perhaps interesting given the shifts in the past two years, which have very much moved the focus onto these dimensions for individuals.

But is there a correlation between an organisation's level of maturity (or current performance) against an enablement dimension and the degree of confidence that managers are having the right conversations in the right way? In other words, what is the sensitivity of an organisation's performance in the various enablement dimensions and effective manager dialogue?



The answer? Yes, there is a correlation but to varying sensitivities. The more confidence that managers are engaging in effective dialogues with their teams around these topics, the higher our performance against them as an organisation. However, not all dimensions show this correlation to the same degree. Some are more sensitive to the impact of manager dialogue than others.

This correlation is most powerful when looking at the dimensions of 'My Tools' and 'My Delivery Expectations' and 'My Development' and lowest when it comes to 'My Self', 'My Purpose' and 'My Interaction with Work'.

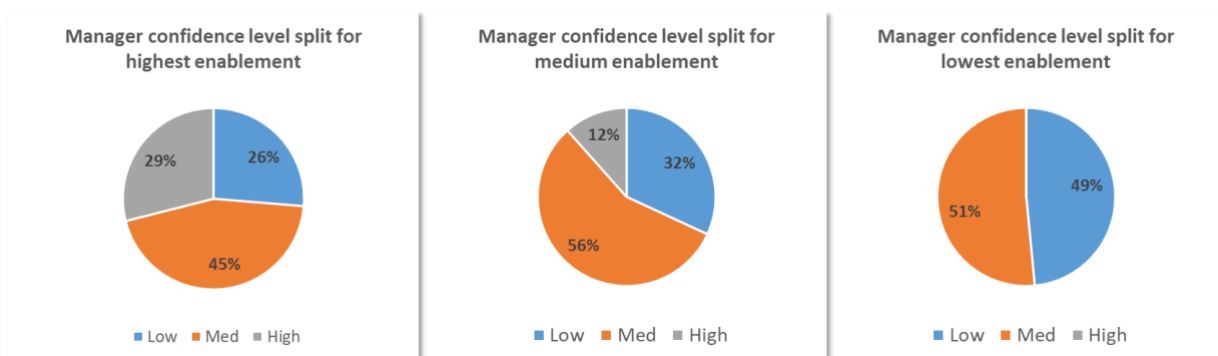
In fact, there is an indicated negative correlation when it comes to 'My Interaction with Work'. Data for this one dimension seemed to buck the trend. So much so that it was re-checked. If we assume that this correlation is not due to anomalous data, it might be explained by the fact that organisations equally reported that managers are still struggling to come to terms with some of the implications of managing teams in the new hybrid work environment or simply that they are distinctly ineffective at discussing these topics. Or equally that, since much change here was driven by technology and policy, the topic is simply less sensitive to the efforts of managers. We can't say for sure.

So is there a correlation between overall organisational performance against the enablement dimensions and manager confidence levels?

Let's divide our organisational data into three groups:

- a) Those instances of organisations reporting their status as 'Driving real value' (let's call this 'high enablement').
- b) Those instances of organisations reporting status as 'Doing OK' (let's call this 'medium enablement').
- c) Those instances of reporting below this level of maturity (let's call this 'low enablement').

If we now compare the incidences of each level of enablement against its corresponding manager confidence level, we see a startling result.



Look what happens to the 'high' manager confidence level component as degree of overall enablement changes. Where there is a greater incidence of high confidence in managers, there is high enablement. As the incidence of high manager confidence level decreases, so does overall enablement. Where overall enablement is low, there are ZERO incidences of reported high manager confidence levels. In fact, when we look at the high overall enablement result on the left, incidences of reported high manager confidence run at nearly 30%. This decreases by more than half for medium overall enablement and is, as stated, absent for low overall enablement.

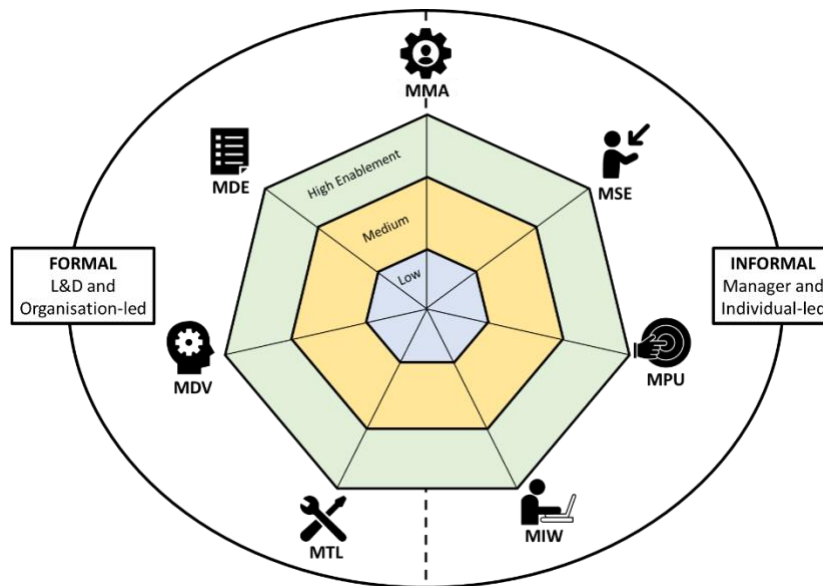
So what we have here are two important macro-level insights:

- 1. The higher our confidence that our managers are having great dialogue with their teams around enablement, the higher the enablement outcomes driven for the organisation.**
- 2. We believe managers are better when discussing what might be seen as more 'formal' or 'process-led' enablement topics such as setting delivery expectations, identifying and discussing development needs, and ensuring the individual has the right tools for the job...and less effective where these conversations relate to more 'informal' and 'manager/individual-led' topics such as purpose, personal circumstance, and wellbeing.**

Summing up and building the Maturity Framework

Both findings are very helpful in considering the way in which we build our maturity framework since they suggest it may be helpful to represent the various performance dimensions in a particular format (see below), with more 'formal' enablement dimensions shown on one side and more 'informal' on the other - with 'My Manager' at the top. They also suggest that a critical driver for higher overall enablement is indeed a manager's ability to hold regular and effective dialogue with their team around these topics.

In practical terms, this means that our maturity framework begins to take shape along the lines of the diagram below.



In addition, however, it suggests an 'equation for success' as follows:

Overall enablement is a factor of maturity level versus the seven enablement dimensions AND the confidence level we have in managers' ability to bring them to life at team member level.

Or to put another way...

$$PE = 7D \times M$$

Where **PE** is overall level of **Performance Enablement**

7D represents maturity against each of the seven enablement **D**imensions

M represents effective **M**anager dialogue

What this implies is that it doesn't matter what we do 'on paper' in support of progress against an enablement dimension, or how good a process we have developed or technology we have put in place; if managers are not capably bringing this together and making it live via effective and regular dialogue at individual team member level, it is far less likely that the investment will deliver against its potential at organisational level.

We have also learned through this research what ‘good may look like’ in terms of our journey of maturity through the different levels of overall enablement. Our data also allowed us to look at what really helped and what to watch out for along the way. Our Maturity Framework also has some clear guidance as to where best to focus our efforts to accompany the Maturity Framework and Equation for Success itself shown in the previous section. These are the ‘Dimension Personas’, the defining characteristics of each dimension. What this means is what it looks like at medium and high levels of maturity (and by definition, low, when we do not see any of these). Furthermore, the positive and negative influence on the dimension as it grows. An all-on-one-page personality.

Such a persona has been developed for each of the seven enablement dimensions, and are included elsewhere in this report. They have been built entirely from the research data described in the previous sections of this report.

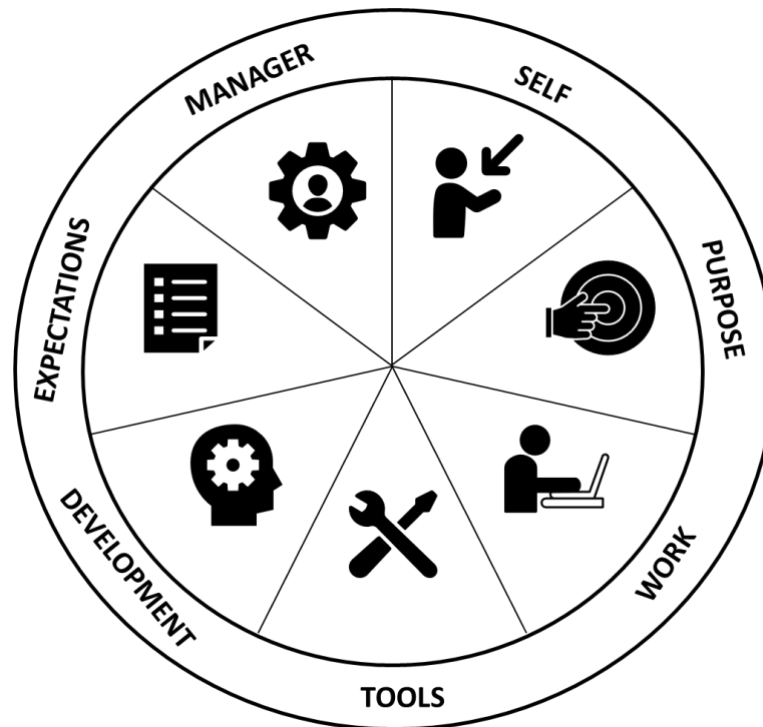
Dimension ‘Personas’

Enablement Dimension		
What it means...	Using data from phase 1 of the research in order to understand the dimensions and what they mean	
	Medium Enablement	High Enablement
Typically characterised by...	Using data gathered on what organisations had done in order to move their status to ‘Doing OK’	Using the data on what organisations had done over and above this to move their status up to ‘Driving real value’
On the journey...		
Focus on...	From data relating to what organisations saw in general as most helpful to this shift	Using data relating to what organisations saw as the biggest blockers to progress
Watch out for...		

So what we now have are three resources which an organisation can use together in order to describe, diagnose, and develop its effectiveness at performance enablement:

1. An overall Equation for Success ($PE = 7D \times M$), which allows us to describe in macro terms what effective performance enablement comprises of – and which emphasises the critical importance of manager dialogue in operationalising and realising its potential.
2. A Maturity Framework, which we can use to understand where we are, where we have gaps, and where we might best focus our effort, including that of manager capability building.
3. Personas which provide more detail for each enablement dimension, supporting our diagnosis of maturity levels and giving us clear steers as to what to look at - and for - in moving to higher levels.

We have learnt that performance enablement is described by the combined focus on seven dimensions.



We have learnt that although the past two years have been tumultuous, we have seen a general improvement in our levels of maturity around performance enablement, but that this has varied from dimension to dimension.

We have learnt that we have taken what we believe to be big strides in areas like interaction with work, but we may have taken our eye off the ball in terms of development.

We have seen that the pandemic was a major catalyst in driving considerable change in short timescales but that it also provided challenges in terms of demand, pace, fulfilment, personal circumstance, and budget.

We have seen that the progress of one organisation compared to another can vary considerably in degree - and also that, in general, organisations struggled with creating added value around less formal dimensions such as purpose.

And we saw the powerful impact of managers. Not just in terms of their capability and ownership supporting or hindering progress, but also in terms of the sensitivity of overall organisational progress to managers' ability to drive value at the coal-face through regular and effective dialogue.

And on these reflections this report comes to an end. Thanks go to all contributing parties for either gathering the information in the first place, or providing it honestly and constructively. I hope that you will agree that there are some really interesting points coming out of it, but also, a practical set of tools to help us do something about it!

Professor Nick Kemsley

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"Performance Enablement", by Professor Nick Kemsley, Executive Fellow at the Henley Business School, is available to download from our [website](#).

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