

European Business Improvement Manager year: 2013

Name: De Kroon

First name: Pieter

Address: Welfingstraat 4, 9241 GN WIJNJEWOUDE, The Netherlands

Home: 0516 - 481167

Mobile: 06 - 12996778

E-mail: pdekroon@wxss.nl

Date of birth: 3 February 1951. Married, 2 children living away from home, 1 grandson.

Presented by: NNK: the Netherlands Network for Quality Management, Tielsestraat 10 4021 HC Maurik

Main professional achievements

When you're on the verge of turning 63 years old and you're asked for your most important professional achievements, within the context of the application for European Business Improvement Manager of the Year, this gives rise to looking back at your career in a way you haven't done before. I'll start my elaboration going back to October 1969, my first job..

Consultant Special Employment Mediation, 1969-1974

It was during this time that the Netherlands realized it could no longer allow and maintain its people to stay at home for the rest of their lives, living off benefits, if they found themselves incapable for employment.

Therefore, a department for the reintegration of people who, due to medical reasons found themselves unfit to work, was founded within the National Employment Service. They were only attended to when they'd been home for a year already. For me, as an 18 year old deputy-consultant, this was an unacceptable situation as a starting point. First of all, people were socialized into their incapability to work, and after 14 months of being at home, there would be talk of reintegration under the threat of the loss of benefits.

Naturally this created a fear within most, through which they enshrined into their illnesses even more. I initiated the process of empowerment with individual clients during a time the word empowerment wasn't heard of yet. I supported them in working on their own futures. At the same time I wanted to tackle the limitations of the bureaucratic system focussing on the medical aspects, that attempt failed and therefore I went to another job..

***Main achievement:** Achieving positive results for individual clients which the system wasn't necessarily built for.*

Social worker, psychotherapist, health care manager, 1974-1987

Working on patient supervision in hospital, both individual as well as in (family)systems and groups. This was an environment which solely focussed on somatic aspects. I added the importance of proper social and psychological supervision. I've managed to introduce important alterations in the system through implementing a method of diagnosis with regards to the social and psychological aspects, resulting in an adapted integral plan of treatment. In the end, this method became standard in all somatic wards of the hospital.

The psychiatric ward got my special attention. At the time I was contracted, a neurologist-psychiatrist was working there, and no integral diagnosis took place. This permitted that electro / shock therapy took place without adequate diagnosis in all areas of life. I could realise a transition in the method guided by my own professional development within the psychiatric ward. Not just focussing on the individual, but paying attention to the entire background of the patient. In that context, during my time there, the ward occasionally admitted a different member of the system than the identified patient. Moreover, the patient with a pregnancy psychosis would be reunited with her child under supervision, as soon as possible. This was ground-breaking.

***Main achievement:** Introducing a different approach in the hospital based on an integral diagnosis (somatic, psychological and social) and plan of treatment. The introduction of multidisciplinary patient negotiations with focus on the integral approach as mentioned. As an active psychotherapist, but also as a staff member inspirer of this new vision, I contributed to the implementation of this approach in the broad domain of the intramural patient care in hospital. At the same time I contributed to the growth of the organisation I worked at that time from 6 to 140 staff members in 10 years.*

Manager of an organization for physically impaired/disabled people, 1987-2000

In 1987 I was appointed as the manager of a recently merged care organization for disabled people.

During the time of my appointment, a lack of professionalism was noticeable. There wasn't a generally accepted methodical ethic of working or thinking. That's why I immersed myself in literature and motivating international changes. Sweden and a few American states turned out to be leading the way. More thorough research mostly attracted me to the American developments, because in the US one focussed on the individual. After an educational trip it became clear to me, that was a need for a change in the Netherlands. To cause a breakthrough and start a movement at the base; 6 employees of my organization at that time worked in the US for 10 weeks. Upon their return they were highly positive and enthusiastic, without exception. Together with

myself, they then became the core of a transition programme. After the implementation of the programme “Fresh look at Care”, we launched an organizational development programme at a major conference in 1996. Linda Kahn and Barbara Brent were among the American professionals who trained and supervised.

Besides academic supervision by professor Annemieke Roobeek, lecturer in Strategy and Change Management at Nijenrode University, clients themselves were heard as well. And while the majority of them also have a speech impairment, a theatrical shape was opted which became the stage production “OdieZee” about the new mission statement and the need for change. Our American guests were so enthusiastic that they brought the production to the US. A unique experience, which got national attention in a television broadcast and has left me speechless and highly impressed. Severely disabled people suddenly became travelling actors and were awaited by American audiences, standing ovations and sold-out houses. After that, I could never say “This is impossible” anymore.

***Main achievement:** Implemented new professionalism in the organisation and creating a new world of possibilities. Created a breakthrough in the organisation to make it happen in all the organisational layers..*

Executive Chief Officer Vanboeijen, 2000-2013

The organization for which I started to work in 2000, was on the verge of bankruptcy at that time. There was hardly any future for its continuity due to a 13 million guilders debt and an annual exploitation shortage of 4 million guilders. There were also great difficulties concerning employee absence (>11%) and implementing care. But I saw opportunities. Besides, it couldn't get much worse.

First of all, the financial problem needed to be solved. Moreover, this was my assignment on the Board. I haven't just chosen for remediation and a savings strategy, but I immediately put the main focus on learning and one's own responsibility. Therefore I named my first note and its related plan: “Learning and Remediation”. This became very successful.

From 2001 onwards, we solely achieved positive yield financially and furthermore; the content of care was highly improved. Clients who had been regularly separated for years, found their supported homes in the community. Though accompanied, some took their first holidays abroad. Illness-related absence went down and the employees' contentment increased. These things earned me a nomination for “Care Manager of the Year” in 1994.

And still something was missing. It seemed as though we didn't match with the core of the employees and (the representatives of) the clients, even though we had implemented the widely accepted new mission. It was time for a breakthrough. This ambition became the foundation of my last major transition started in 2009 for which I carry the ultimate responsibility: “Focus on Location”.

The core

When we talked about this with staff and clients (and because many of our clients can't talk, parents / other relatives often speak in their interest and on their behalf), the core of the matter soon became clear to us. It's not about the organization, not about management processes, not about KPIs (key performance indicators), but it's the little things that matter. The core principles that came up, were:

Good life

A good life for all of the clients. We'll do anything to give them a maximum of support. To experience and understand the core of good life, it's crucial to listen to each other, and read between the lines to find out what may not have been said directly, but which ultimately forms the truth.

Great place to work

A great place to work for all of the employees. Employees are ready to invest heart and soul into helping establish a good life for their clients. These employees deserve the utmost support and should not feel or experience resistance by the organization in reaching this aim.

Financial health

In 2009, also due to falling real estate prices, we found ourselves in stormy waters financially. A proper intervention in the exploitation was crucial. And when finance becomes the centre of attention, this doesn't particularly lead to good life or great jobs, even though financial health is a precondition for achieving both. The core of the matter now had a frame. However, as a management team we gained another important awareness. As managers, we found that carrying out the traditional way to reach our goals wasn't going to work. Clients and employees have the key. They can find ways to construct good life, pleasing work and a proper administration of the household expenses. After all, they experience the everyday practice. But what do you do as a Board and management, when you don't have that key?

The method

We came into contact with Lean and Theory U, during our search for a different approach in working. Lean's principles compelled to us. An approved method, successfully recognized, which proclaims employees should only do what adds value for the client. After a pre-pilot we explained Lean's principles for Vanboeijen like this:

1. Solely do what adds value for the client
2. Think in processes

3. Prevention of surplus
4. Keeping an eye on what can be better
5. Run one's own business
6. Work from one's own power

When a management states one should work from one's own power and prevent surplus, this doesn't necessarily become the automatic work ethic. You need the engagement and commitment of all employees, the clients and their relatives.

That's why we brought together all who were engaged in a specific location, to let them think of what to improve to bring good life, pleasing work and financial health into practice. We did this on every location; this became the focus. Hence the overarching name of our process: Focus on Location (FOL).

This turned out very methodical. After pilots we had an elaborated process of 16 weeks with gatherings at start, in between and at the end, 0-, 1- and 2- readings. A core team of employees and parents/relatives was continuously formed, the team leader was the director and lean-tools were used during the process. The locations were supervised by a FOL-expert during these 16 weeks. A process supervisor with a lean-background. The majority were our own specifically trained employees.

Thus far it's mainly about mental processes, a different way of thinking and looking at things and acting differently from there onwards. But is it really that easy? Sometimes we're so stuck to old patterns and views.

Theory U (Otto Scharmer) has helped us gain more insight into these processes.

Scharmer relies on the 4 levels of connection:

1. Downloading

What you really do is repeat the old pattern. Before the other person has finished speaking, you've already formed your judgment.

2. Focussed listening

You're really focussed on conversation/debate and based on this, new insights come to the table. You look for gaps in the reasoning of the other person and you're aware there might be deficiencies in your own reasoning. You need an open mind for this.

3. Empathic listening

You block your own judgment and listen from the other. You're not content until you fully understand the other person's reasoning. We also call this listening with an open heart.

4. Generated listening

Only when we can let go of our own fear to fail and thus control situations, the possibility arises that new insights are presented. And so we brought Lean and Theory U together. This creates space for a new future which we'll shape together, proceeding while continuously searching.

It became clear that these starting points affected everyone in the organization, from supervisor to guardian, from board member to regulator. We now strive for improvements via a connection at level 4 at Vanboeijen. A group of employees came up with the following: "That's when it starts to flow, when the inner harmony increases, solidarity grows and improvements will arise." This touches all of us.

And that's why we let everyone at Vanboeijen experience the outcomes of their FOL with both the lean-method as well as Theory U. That's the exceptional thing; it's not just about mental processes and its structures, it's also about consciousness and experiencing. In other words, it's about: A different way of Looking, Thinking and Doing and about a different way of Looking, Being and Doing.

The process

In 2009 we started with a pre-pilot, externally supervised. We saw it worked. You didn't need to use KPIs for that, but one noticed the enthusiastic stories of the supervisors and the fervour of the parents during the final presentation. For the first time we saw the big difference between the initial- and the final presentation. And we often saw it again.

The managers were present at every presentation, without intervening. It is process on location after all! Based on this, 6 pilots were established and we trained our own FOL-experts. When the positive experience repeated itself and even deepened at the pilots, it was decided to FOL organization wide. Solid planning and a methodical programme was formed to do so. In 3 years' time, 100 locations FOL-ed and more than 2500 people experienced the change. Vanboeijen will never be the same again.

A telling detail is the functioning of the control group. Conform to our starting points we also wanted to give shape to the organizational embedding of the programme, differently and corresponding to our starting points. Employees and parents/relatives at the steering wheel, not the board/management. Therefore a control group was formed with the following members: 2 parents/relatives, 2 active employees, myself as the regulator, as the chairman. During this process we experienced how difficult it is to let go of your views as a manager/board member, but to look through the eyes of clients and employees. However, when it works, it adds great value. A wonderful lesson which got us thinking about the future.

The future

Recently Vanboeijen keened her future vision 2018, our : "Dot on the horizon".

Key is that all people at Vanboeijen have a voice in the shared responsibility to give shape to good life and pleasing work at one's own location. To let the organization be a support network in doing so. This foundation is the guideline in acting for all the people in the entire organization. This means to negotiate, to keep searching, probing oneself into another person's perspective and viewing the added value as a continuous test case. It's about giving people a voice.

This closely relates to the cooperative way of organizing things. This is why the people at Vanboeijen will work in a cooperative way for the upcoming years. The members will be the people with a disability, the most important people in their network (among which parents/relatives) and the employees. In a cooperative the members are the most important when it comes to the organization. They're vital in the method of working and organizing. They decide on the direction of the organization, they check whether the intended results were achieved, but most of all it's about learning and discovering how we can achieve the goals of the organization together.

Healthy communication is essential. A community without connection is no community. To support this, every location will get its own digital community: mijnvanboeijen.nl. To prevent internal focus, but to discover together and learn to facilitate, another digital network: samenvanboeijen.nl will support the entire organization and thus its communication. This is how we work on the upcoming future.

Main achievement: see at factual results at the next page.

Epilogue

During my final transition, in which I was awarded Business Improvement Manager of the Year 2013 in the Netherlands, I've been able to integrate my experience and education of the past 40 years. This has led to a methodically elaborated approach in which I succeeded to integrate the aspects of everyday environment and systematic environment. It became more clear to me that the individual can make the difference, starting with myself.

I broke with the existent change strategies and connected to the necessity of fundamental break-through (see Jan Rotmens). The connections between Lean, Theory U and the Manfred Kets de Vries' vision are the foundation of a transitional approach which prepares institutions and companies for a new world. After the success in my own organization, the method is now being implemented in 4 other organisations with a total of ...?... employees. I also play a part in this. We're on the threshold of further developments. A nomination for European Business Improvement Manager of the Year 2014 can be a break-through in a large rollout in other sectors and an introduction within the European Community.

This change also matched the imagery of the paradigm shift. This shift is on its way from organising from "the pyramid", in which hierarchical power, competition, ego, knowledge, scarcity, closed systems, large organizations and mass production prevails, to organising from "the pancake". This one's trademarks are flat, social and open ecosystems which don't revolve around possession, but around access; where sharing knowledge, education, care and sources prevail. The kind of leadership this asks for needs diversity within the organization, working with all sorts of people with different views, opinions and ideas. It asks for leaders who want to be humble and serve others, while they don't even know the exact outcome, yet realise that different forms of organisation are needed to get there. Leaders who leave space for the change agents within the organization, who allow experiments and change, who let in exterior knowledge and views. This leads to further social innovation, more diversity, more creativity, more durability and above all; more humanity.

Along with these, the connection between Lean, Theory U and Manfred Kets de Vries' vision form the base of a change strategy which prepares institutions and companies to a new world by means of a real transformation.

Leader skills

In all my jobs, I've always shown I stick to the course.

First the objective, the dot on the horizon: where do we want to go?

Then the basis and creating enthusiasm.

And after that methodically design and give structure to the change process, while maintaining people's strengths and flexibility.

And if anything, be a role model first and foremost, stubborn when it comes to content and humble in contacts, give others their credit(s) and put them in the limelight.

Factual recognition

- Prof. dr. Kees Ahaus,
Professor in Healthcare Management, in particular Quality of care, University of Groningen
CEO of CBO, the Dutch Institute for Healthcare Improvement
Chairman of NNK, the Netherlands Network for Quality Management
Member of the Dutch Academy for Quality

As CEO of Vanboeijen (a leading and innovative organization in long term care) Pieter de Kroon is known as a very transformational and authentic leader. I consider 'Regie op Locatie' (FOL) as the most successful bottom-up approach I have seen in recent years; 'Regie op Locatie' comprises ideas of lean and Theory U customized in a unique but still practical comprehensive approach. Employees, clients and their carers are deeply grateful for being empowered to run the location where they work and live. The quality of care is at a real high standard, while the quality management system is really supportive. I consider the impressive achievements of Pieter de Kroon as pioneering in the Dutch health care. He did not only inspire the lean journey of Vanboeijen but also showed his leadership in the spread of 'Regie op Locatie' within the Dutch long term healthcare sector. His application and presentation for the Dutch Business Improvement Manager award was seen by the jury as outstandingly good. 'Regie op Locatie' has the potential of a European best practice.

- Prof. dr. Gert van Dijk. Professor of Cooperative Business Administration and Management at Nijenrode Business University and a.o. Director General of the National Council of Cooperatives and Director of Multidisciplinary Research Studies at the Organization for Applied Physical Research: Pieter shows to the world, how a cooperative organization can be build. His concept of the Vanboeijenraad (a Board including family members and staff members) is brilliant.
- Betsie Pol, client: "They listen to what I think is important now, even though I can't say it that clearly."
- Lourens Touwen, Swanehilde's father: "We feel heard now that we give shape to the care for our daughter Swanehilde together."
- Ineke Touwen, employee client participation: "When we found out what a severely disabled woman meant when she made certain sounds, her mother said: 'When my daughter is really heard and really being seen, I think she feels that she exists' ."
- Karin van der Vries, Member managementteam Vanboeijen; "In the 14 years Vanboeijen was under Pieter his direction and leadership: the organization transformed from a traditionally directed organization under great financial pressure to an energetic organization where cooperative principles have more and more become the common denominator. This led to more personal responsibility and direction on the locations, where employees, parents, relatives and leaders carry the guardianship together.

By now, there's a healthy financial situation, but most of all, one notices, sees and feels that this leads to Good Life for Vanboeijen's clients and great places to work for its employees. For months already, illness-related absence has reached a historic low. This is a clear sign.

In his administrative role, Pieter greatly contributed to the vision that employees and parents/relatives are capable to take the right decisions together. Both for and at the various locations. During the foundation of the cooperative organisation principles, Pieter's strong vision greatly contributed the development of the organization in terms of designing the organization, support structure, leadership, but above all a cooperative way of working on a strategic level.

Pieter is typically a few steps ahead in the images of how it could be and what it asks for. Working on a new perspective and a new frame of reference for organizations and for healthcare (and also externally) and working on a transition which isn't yet recognized everywhere. Pieter looks for this in his negotiations about strategic development of the organization. This is where his strength lies. Whether this is with internal partners such as the Clients Committee, the Participation Committee, external partners such as De Zijlen, het Zorgkantoor (Care office), the healthcare inspection or the Ministry.

He operates from the perspective that "the meaning" of care asks for a different design of systems, organizations, support implements and change strategies. Pieter paves the way and is resolute in his own conviction that the cooperative model is a durable forthcoming form of organising. It strongly reflects on the other but mostly on the self, from the perspective that "in collaboration with each other" things should and can always be done. And as ever, from a drive to constantly look for what adds a maximum of value."

Factual results of your best achievement (success story):

Regie op Locatie (FOL) is my success story.

Financial results: 2000: 13 million guilders debts; 2013, equity capital: 16 million euros.

Employees. Got to the core, energized them. Illness-related absence from >11% to < 5%. In 2013

Clients. Contributed to better life. Even the most difficult clients, who otherwise are permanently separated elsewhere, have a normal life at Vanboeijen. There are so many touching stories, which I cannot express in numbers. Our last elaborate research in client gratification > 8.

Organization. Decentralized responsibilities and degrees were actually met.

The number of managers was reduced with 75%.

The implementation of a new cooperative way of working.

Real Estate. 75% of all estate has been replaced and newly constructed, a total investment of 45 million euros during the last 5 years and at the same time an increase of own funds and balance structures.

Date : 2014-01-14

Signature :

