# Learning and development
## Horizon scanning



Good and emerging practice for learning and development within local government and small organisations

# Good and emerging practise of L&D (CIPD)

- L&D professionals want to move from a traditional approach, but over 75% feel their organisation's senior leaders prefer a more traditional L&D offering and are blockers in moving to a future-focused approach.

- Advances in technology, changes in the workforce make up, definitions of work itself, demands from learners and the need to demonstrate impact on performance, all play a part in L&D professionals asking questions about the focus and approach learning and development needs to take.

- There are clear opportunities to engage learners and drive organisational performance by embracing the following ten shifts:

    - Shift 1: Focus on business needs, not just L&D priorities;

    - Shift 2: L&D outputs informed by metrics, not guesses;

    - Shift 3: Learning underpinned by research and evidence;

    - Shift 4: L&D shifting to a curator-concierge approach, not just creator;

    - Shift 5: User-choice and co-creation, not prescription learning;

    - Shift 6: Social learning, not just formal;

    - Shift 7: Just-in-time and in-the-flow learning, not delayed;

    - Shift 8: Bite-sized learning, not just feasts;

    - Shift 9: Digital-mobile learning, not just face-to-face;

    - Shift 10: Measuring learning value, not volume.

- These ten areas demonstrate where and how L&D professionals have an opportunity to drive organisational performance, build learner engagement and evolve their practise. These ten shifts do challenge a traditional training approach to meeting organisational needs but whilst challenging it there is a place for formal facilitated learning when addressing relevant performance gaps and taking advantage of relevant technological development

RedQuadrant

## Shift 1 - Focus on business needs, not just L&D priorities

- This shift ensures that L&D strategy is aligned to organisational strategy addresses performance gaps.

- Key question: To what extent does L&D really align to the organisation and its strategic goals and direction?

- Other questions to consider:
    - What or who is driving the learning priority?
    - How does the learning we provide address the opportunities or problems for the organisation's employees?
    - How can we help learners be equipped to influence the business?
    - How does our own learning keep pace with sector needs and what is on our horizon?

## Shift 2 - L&D outputs informed by metrics, not guesses

- This shift challenges L&D professionals to use and align to business metrics.

- Key Question: To what extent does L&D mine the rich sources of data across the organisation?

- Other questions to consider:
    - What metrics are we using to underpin our learning; how do we demonstrate value?
    - What strategies do we have about measuring the impact of our learning activities on organisational outcomes, in one, three and six months?
    - In an environment of challenges to budgets how can we support learners to demonstrate the impact their learning is making?
    - How do we link key performance indicators (KPIs) to our content – for instance if we are undertaking any tips on recruitment, are the recruitment functions KPI's included and updated as required?

RedQuadrant

## Shift 3 - Learning underpinned by research and evidence

- This shift encourages L&D professionals to consider latest evidence to inform how learning interventions are designed and delivered.

- To what extent does L&D activity look at how the brain works to inform learning design and delivery?

- Other questions to consider:

  - How we do we routinely build our evidence-informed practice?

  - How are we integrating evidence-informed principles into our learning design and delivery, for example, human centred design, the SCARF, RAD and AGES models?

  - Are we using out-dated learning theory, for example learning styles such as VAK (Visual-Auditory-Kinaesthetic)?

  - Do we really understand the models we use in our design and delivery (for example, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, applying stakeholder management, 70:20:10) and the intentions from the originators?

  - What support are we giving to learners to manage cognitive overload and neurodiversity?

## Shift 4 - L&D shifting to a curator-concierge approach, not just creator

- This shift demonstrates a way for L&D to signpost resources rather than designing courses from scratch.

- Key question: To what extent does L&D default to the solution being a specially designed course?

- Other questions to consider:

  - How proactive are we in finding great existing content and partnerships to supplement our programmes (Seek)?

  - What added value are we adding through helping learners contextualise learning for their context (Sense)?

  - What system can we use to deliver curated content or point to wider learning (Share)? Examples could be our intranet, virtual learning platforms, MS Teams, and apps such as Slack, Trello Scoop It, and various social media apps.

RedQuadrant

## Shift 5 - User-choice and co-creation, not prescription learning

- This shift explores the role of the learner in the process of providing and producing resources to aid learning.

- Key question: To what extent does the employee have a voice in the design of any intervention intended for their learning?

- Other questions to consider:

  - Is learner input an intentional part of our design or is our model 'we do it all'?

  - How can we encourage learners to find and integrate content into the programme?

  - Are we part of a recognised 'go to' subject matter network with wider influence?

  - How much do we know about the knowledge and skills that already exist in the organisation, before designing or curating content?

## Shift 6 - social learning, not just formal

- Earliest records of social learning are ancient cave paintings, so it is something humans are well versed in. This shift encourages the concept within an organisation's L&D offering.

- Key question: To what extent does L&D capture the opportunities from social learning to support formal provision?

  - What social spaces are we deliberately creating in our programmes?

  - If Twitter has been a top learning tool for some years, how are we integrating the use of social media in our programmes?

  - What social communities do we have an influence in; do we have a planned and growing online presence?

RedQuadrant

## Shift 7 - Just-in-time and in-the-flow learning, not delayed

- This shift questions the time delay offered in traditional L&D approaches.

- Key question: To what extent is learning provided at the time it's needed?

- Other questions to consider:

    - Do we control when learners can access content or is access flexible?

    - Are we focussed on a 'just-in-case' or 'just-in-time' approach?

    - How can learners access content in a way which is most convenient to them, not L&D?

## Shift 8 - Bite-sized learning, not just feasts

- This shift asks if resources for learning can be offered in small chunks spaced out rather than offering longer courses that bombard people with information with little time to absorb or apply the learning.

- Key question: What is the driver and rationale for a full day or several days of formal training?

    - Is our learning 'chunked' for easy use and access?

    - How can we create great bite size content – podcasts, video clips, curated links, infographics, forum discussions?

    - Have we considered when and where out learners might wish to learn and how we can facilitate that better, for example while travelling?

RedQuadrant

## Shift 9 - Digital-mobile learning, not just face-to-face

- The opportunity to embrace the range of digital opportunities that are at the disposal of L&D teams is central to this shift, using digital solutions to make the most of any face-to-face time available.

- Key question: To what extent does L&D integrate a variety of options for delivery?
  - What is our road map for digital inclusion?
  - How confident are we to design learning for digital platforms, what skills or roles may we need?
  - Where does digital delivery fit in our aspirations?

## Shift 10 - Measuring learning value, not volume

- Traditionally L&D have a 'rear-view mirror' approach to measurement, rather than looking at the value of the learning offered. This shift challenges that approach.

- Key question: To what extent is our current measurement system demonstrating impact on performance, engagement with learning, and transfer back into the workplace?

- Other questions to consider:
  - What things are we measuring that are never really used?
  - Is measurement being designed-in from the first shift?
  - What time period really allows for added-value to be demonstrated?

RedQuadrant

# Challenging thinking on training

- Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff, an internationally recognised learning effectiveness expert, published a study in his book Telling Training's Story that shows 15% of people don't try a new concept after they learn it, and 70% try but fail or give up. Just 15% of leaders who get training are actually able to establish permanent change after traditional learning experiences. Other experts report only 10% of such corporate training is effective.

- Why? It seems it's largely due to how we rank and design the training. To get good marks from employees and to sell to L&D departments, training needs to be:

  - Clearly signposted, taking you from A to Z in a linear manner

  - Entertaining / edutaining (the content should be fun)

  - Linked to some specific learning objectives

  - Reasonably easy to complete, with

embedded tests to help the memorization of the learning

- However, research illustrates that none of the above helps with long-term learning or the application of learning in one's work:

  - Instead of being linear, content should be interleaved (presented in a random order within a holding theme).

  - Rather than content being entertaining, it should force people to grapple to understand it

  - Instead of being highlighted upfront, learning objectives should emerge from this grappling, with learning pathways being unique to each person

  - It should be difficult to complete, with people failing to do well at an immediate testing level, instead excelling via longer-term percolation and application

Taken from **EQ**LAB https://www.eqlab.co/about-eq with sources added

RedQuadrant

# L&D initiatives that challenge traditional thinking

1. **Microlearning:** Microlearning breaks down training content into bite-sized, easily digestible modules. Instead of lengthy classroom sessions, learners engage with short, focused bursts of learning. This approach challenges the traditional notion of long training sessions and allows for flexible, on-demand learning experiences.

2. **Gamification:** Gamification integrates game elements into training programs to enhance engagement and motivation. By incorporating elements such as points, badges, leader boards, and rewards, learners are challenged to actively participate and compete, making the learning experience more enjoyable and immersive.

3. **Just-in-Time Training:** Just-in-time training delivers targeted and relevant information at the moment of need. Instead of comprehensive training programs, learners receive specific training resources, job aids, or tutorials to address immediate challenges or tasks. This approach challenges the traditional notion of pre-emptive training and focuses on practical, on-the-job learning.

4. **Social Learning:** Social learning leverages social media platforms, online communities, and collaborative tools to foster learning through interaction and knowledge sharing among peers. Learners can share insights, ask questions, and engage in discussions, challenging the traditional one-way flow of information in training.

5. **User-Generated Content:** User-generated content allows learners to create and share their own learning resources, such as videos, blogs, or podcasts. This challenges the traditional notion of content creation solely by instructors or experts, enabling learners to take ownership of their learning and contribute to the collective knowledge base.

6. **Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR):** VR and AR technologies provide immersive learning experiences that challenge traditional training methods. Learners can engage in realistic simulations, virtual environments, or augmented scenarios, allowing for hands-on practice and experiential learning.

7. **Peer-to-Peer Coaching:** Peer-to-peer coaching involves pairing learners with colleagues or mentors who provide guidance, feedback, and support. This approach challenges the traditional hierarchical structure of training and encourages a collaborative and knowledge-sharing culture within the organization.

8. **Personalized Learning Paths:** Personalized learning paths allow learners to customize their training experience based on their individual needs, preferences, and learning styles. This challenges the traditional one-size-fits-all approach to training and ensures that learners receive content that is relevant and tailored to their specific requirements.

RedQuadrant

# Best practises of L&D within local authorities

1. Assessing Needs: Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the knowledge and skills gaps within the organization. This can be done through surveys, interviews, and performance evaluations.

2. Goal Alignment: Align L&D initiatives with the overall goals and objectives of the local authority. Ensure that the training programs directly contribute to improving performance and addressing organisational challenges.

3. Individual Development Plans: Encourage employees to create individual development plans (IDPs) that outline their career goals and the skills they need to develop. IDPs can help guide training efforts and provide a roadmap for employees' professional growth.

4. Customised Training Programs: Design training programs that are tailored to the specific needs of local authorities. This can include modules on governance, public administration, policy-making, project management, leadership, communication skills, and legal and ethical considerations.

5. Blended Learning Approach: Implement a blended learning approach that combines various training methods such as classroom sessions, online modules, workshops, mentoring, and job shadowing. This allows for flexibility and caters to different learning preferences.

6. Partnerships and Collaborations: Foster partnerships with external organizations, academic institutions, and other local authorities to leverage expertise and resources. Collaborative initiatives can include sharing best practices, co-designing training programs, and joint learning opportunities.

7. Continuous Learning Culture: Cultivate a culture of continuous learning within the local authority. Encourage employees to engage in ongoing professional development and provide opportunities for them to acquire new skills and knowledge.

8. Evaluation and Feedback: Regularly assess the effectiveness of L&D programs through evaluations, surveys, and feedback mechanisms. Use this data to make improvements, adjust training approaches, and measure the impact of training on individual and organizational performance.

9. Leadership Development: Invest in leadership development programs to nurture the skills of current and future leaders within the local authority. Provide opportunities for leadership training, coaching, and mentorship to develop a strong leadership pipeline.

10. Knowledge Sharing Platforms: Establish platforms and mechanisms for employees to share knowledge and best practices across different departments and teams. This can include intranets, communities of practice, online forums, and regular knowledge-sharing sessions.

RedQuadrant

# OTHER INSIGHTS INTO GOOD L&D IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Learning & Development
Horizon Scanning 11

# Other insights

- MJ Awards 2017 - Workforce Transformation St Albans City and District Council - Bringing In and Bringing On Talent: https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/415660/response/1011600/attach/4/MJ%20Awards%20St%20Albans%20Workforce%20Transformation%20FINAL.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1

- NLGN – Outside the Box – the Council Workforce of Tomorrow https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/outside-box-ab0.pdf

- The 21st Century Public Servant https://21stcenturypublicservant.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/21-century-report-4-pg-report.pdf https://21stcenturypublicservant.wordpress.com/ https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/social-policy/research/the-21st-century-public-servant.aspx

- The Adaptive Council https://www.publicservicetransformation.org/2020/12/the-adaptive-council-from-redquadrant-and-the-public-service-transformation-academy-adaptivecouncil/

RedQuadrant

# MJ Awards 2017 - Workforce Transformation St Albans City and District Council - Bringing In and Bringing On Talent:

- St Albans City and District Council faced challenges in staff recruitment and retention due to the attractive yet expensive living conditions and the high number of professionals commuting to London.

- They implemented an innovative workforce strategy focused on bringing in and bringing on talent.

- To bring in talent, they developed creative recruitment campaigns highlighting the benefits of working locally, established apprenticeship programs, and utilized new marketing approaches.

- They focused on making new staff feel welcome, with the Chief Executive personally welcoming 85% of new starters and engaging in conversations to improve their experience.

- To bring on talent, they introduced leadership development programs for all line managers and created opportunities for staff advancement and secondments.

- They provided political awareness training for officers and training for councillors on getting the best out of officers, fostering better understanding and collaboration.

- The council implemented new pay and reward initiatives, such as performance-related profit share schemes, and revised criteria for awarding pay increments based on customer service and people management.

- They incorporated cultural changes into policies and processes, including enhanced staff reward and recognition frameworks and the implementation of 360-degree feedback.

- The council promoted a changed attitude toward risk, encouraging risk awareness without being risk averse.

- They focused on developing a comfortable and flexible working environment, including home and remote working options and the use of modern technology.

- The council formed partnerships with other organizations and shared office space, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

- Their efforts resulted in significant improvements in staff retention, increased staff satisfaction, decreased absence rates, and positive feedback from staff surveys.

- They achieved the Investors in People Gold Award within two years, recognizing their engagement in behavioral and cultural change and their high-performance culture.

- Overall, St Albans City and District Council demonstrated an innovative approach to workforce transformation and local government leadership, leading to improved performance, satisfaction, and recognition.

- https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/415660/response/1011600/attach/4/MJ%20Awards%20St%20Albans%20Workforce%20Transformation%20FINAL.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1

RedQuadrant

# NLGN – Outside the Box – the Council Workforce of Tomorrow

- This report emphasizes the need to recast the employment 'deal' for staff in local government, aiming to empower employees to be more flexible, innovative, and entrepreneurial.

- Local government is going through significant changes and leaders need to consider the implications for their colleagues in order to progress together.

- The existing employment 'deal' in local government has strengths and weaknesses. The report explores the weaknesses and proposes actions to reshape it in the future.

- It is crucial to work across the sector to promote local government as a dynamic and inclusive employer to attract the best candidates.

- The hierarchical working culture of local government needs to change to become more outward-facing, which will help provide a genuinely 'new deal' and engage colleagues effectively.

- The funding cuts and structural changes have affected job security, career progression, and pension schemes, leading to frustrations and demotivation among local government employees.

- Local government needs a strategy to motivate and engage its workforce to ensure they are prepared for future challenges.

- The report suggests the importance of a systematic cultural change and new models of leadership to achieve a 'new deal.' It provides examples of self-managing, non-hierarchical organizations as potential models.

- Immediate actions include creating an outward-facing and rebranded image of local government to attract diverse skilled candidates and implementing innovative approaches to staff development and talent retention.

- Long-term goals involve creating a less hierarchical working environment through ambitious cultural change.

- This report also concludes with several recommendations, including the co-production and implementation of clear workforce strategies prioritizing autonomy and reducing hierarchy, engaging in nationwide forums to support workforce strategies, countering negative perceptions of working for a council, rewarding hard work and innovation, and driving culture change through senior leadership.

- https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/outside-box-ab0.pdf

RedQuadrant

# The 21ˢᵗ Century Public Servant

These points outline the key characteristics and skills required for public servants in the 21st century, as identified in research:

1. Municipal Entrepreneur: The future public servant is expected to take on various roles and be a steward of scarce public resources.

2. Citizen Engagement: Public servants should work co-productively with citizens, expressing shared humanity and pooled expertise.

3. Generic and Technical Skills: Public servants should possess both professional expertise and generic skills, including communication, organization, and caring.

4. Fluid Career Paths: Public servants should have portable skills that allow them to work across sectors and services, encouraging learning, reflection, and diverse experiences.

5. Ethos of Publicness and Commerciality: Public servants should combine public sector values with an understanding of commercialism, embracing both altruism and commercial skills.

6. Rethinking Public Services in Perma-Austerity: Public servants need to rethink public services to adapt to a long-lasting era of austerity, balancing short-term cost-cutting with strategic vision.

7. Fluid and Supportive Organizations: Organizations should be flexible and supportive rather than siloed and controlling, addressing issues of organizational culture instead of relying solely on structural changes.

8. Distributed and Collaborative Leadership: Instead of heroic leadership, public servants should embrace distributed and collaborative models of leadership, emphasizing leadership at all levels and across organizational boundaries.

9. Locality and Loyalty: Public servants should have a strong sense of loyalty to the locality in which they work, understanding the importance of place and its impact on public service.

10. Reflective Practice: Public servants should have the time and space to reflect on their practice, learn from others, and reconcile the changing dynamics of public service.

11. https://21stcenturypublicservant.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/21-century-report-4-pg-report.pdf

RedQuadrant

# The Adaptive Council

Formation of a learning community: During the first UK lockdown in 2020, a learning community of 120 people was formed to explore possible futures and build back better. The community met regularly online and was supported by the Public Service Transformation Academy:

- COVID-19 crisis impact: The crisis led to an unfreezing of innovation and a desire to maintain agility and effectiveness even as governance and boundaries return to a 'new normal.' It highlighted gaps in understanding communities and the need to blend traditional analytic data with 'thick data' (human stories) for better insight. Funding challenges and the rise of mutualism and community power were observed.

- Heroic leaders and tension between top-down and bottom-up change: Heroic leaders delivering results sometimes supported and sometimes undermined positive activity driven by people acting freely at lower levels. The tension between top-down and bottom-up change approaches needs to be addressed for effective leadership.

- Mixed economies of public service delivery: Public service delivery involves a mix of public, private, social, and community sectors. The demand for environmental and social justice has increased, accelerating the need to work in different ways to cope with complexity.

- Economic, environmental, and social conditions: The crisis highlighted differences between essential workers and those rewarded with status and riches. The gig economy and zero-rights employment have been accelerated. Increased social and political polarisation, awareness of climate breakdown, housing challenges, and social atomisation have added complexity to people's lives.

- Challenges in the public service workforce: The workforce faces exhaustion from the crisis, long-term impacts of austerity, and personal crises. New leaders are emerging with different expectations. Organizations need to recognize these dynamics, provide time and space for processing, and offer flexible working patterns and recognition to shape an adaptive culture.

- 'Perfect storm' of 2021: Structural changes and impacts contemplated for the future include local government reform, potential changes in procurement laws, discussions on care services, potential waves of COVID-19, economic challenges, potential bans on commercial investment, and overhauling the planning system.

- Complex challenges and the need for an adaptive council: There is a crisis of uncertainty in measurement, management, and existing forms of governance. Organizations must manage tensions between centralization and collaboration, layers of public services and civil society, and structures and culture. An adaptive council requires an insight-led approach, economic development in a complex world, digital acceleration, and recognition of the importance of culture.

- Twelve aspects of the adaptive council: The adaptive council approach emphasizes flexibility, municipal entrepreneurialism, balance between technical skills and collaboration, systems thinking, intentional culture shaping, reflective and collaborative learning, equal citizenship, adult development, effective governance, strong ethics, and insight-led understanding.

- Living out the values: The adaptive council model is supported by a vision of 'all as citizens' that values equality, agency, empathy, access to resources and support, human-to-human relationships, seeking diverse perspectives, creative and collaborative power, an economic model that works for all, lifelong learning, and transparent decision-making based on values.

- https://www.publicservicetransformation.org/2020/12/the-adaptive-council-from-redquadrant-and-the-public-service-transformation-academy-adaptivecouncil/

RedQuadrant

# Adaptive public services

**Demands**

Deep uncertainty – Creativity? Despair?

Economic development in a complex and unpredictable 'glocal' world

Dynamics tensions between staff

Our 'service provision' models are inherently problematic

New expectations of employees and organisations

Need to recognise change and transition

Accelerated need to work in different ways to cope with complexity

Need to be insight-led

The future will remain turbulent, uncertain, ambiguous and novel

**Challenges**

Risk of crash-out, no-deal 'Brexit'

Local government reform and devolution

Complete overhaul of the planning system

Procurement law re-write?

Complete reshaping of estates

CCGs abolished? National care service?

Toughened rules on commercial investment

Public Health England?

Fraud, error, public inquiries

Overwhelming budget pressures

Vaccine roll-out

Future pandemic spikes

Move to fully flexible working

**Hexagon clusters:**

- Systems thinking and complexity navigation
- Work across boundaries
- Balance deep technical skills, emergence, and collaboration
- Embrace 'municipal entrepreneurial-ism'
- Offer a new flexible employment approach
- Intentionally shape culture and identity
- Generate rich, multi-level learning from action
- Act as equal citizens
- Be highly engaged with adult development
- Effective, open governance
- Being trustworthy
- Insight-led understanding

overview: https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6739811963091722240/

short report: https://bit.ly/theadaptivecouncil

# EXAMPLES OF SMALL ORGANISATIONS WITH GOOD L&D

Learning & Development
Horizon Scanning 18

## Innocent Drinks

- Innocent Drinks, a well-known smoothie and beverage company, has a strong focus on employee development. They offer various L&D opportunities, including leadership and management training, technical skills development, and personal effectiveness programs.

- The company promotes a culture of continuous learning and growth by providing employees with regular feedback, coaching, and mentoring. They also encourage cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing through team projects and initiatives.

- Innocent Drinks supports employees' career development through individual development plans, career progression pathways, and opportunities for job rotations or secondments. They also provide financial support for professional qualifications and external training programs.

## Jagex

- Jagex, a video game developer and publisher, values employee development and invests in L&D initiatives. They offer a range of training programs, including technical skills training, game development workshops, and leadership development opportunities.

- The company encourages a learning culture by providing access to online learning platforms, internal knowledge-sharing sessions, and regular workshops led by industry experts. They also organize hackathons and innovation challenges to foster creativity and problem-solving skills among employees.

- Jagex promotes career growth by providing clear career pathways, regular performance reviews, and opportunities for advancement within the organization. They also support employees in attending conferences and industry events to expand their knowledge and network.

RedQuadrant

# Monzo Bank

- Monzo Bank, a digital bank, places a strong emphasis on employee development and offers a comprehensive L&D program. They provide training on topics such as banking regulations, customer service, financial literacy, and digital skills.

- The bank promotes continuous learning through a combination of online courses, workshops, and on-the-job training. They also encourage employees to pursue industry certifications and provide financial support for relevant qualifications.

- Monzo Bank fosters a culture of collaboration and learning by organizing internal meetups, knowledge-sharing sessions, and mentorship programs. They also facilitate cross-functional projects and encourage employees to develop skills in different areas of the business.

# Innocent Pet Care

- Innocent Pet Care, a pet food company, prioritizes employee development and offers a range of L&D opportunities. They provide training on areas such as pet nutrition, product development, quality assurance, and supply chain management.

- The company encourages a learning culture through regular team meetings, knowledge-sharing sessions, and ongoing coaching and feedback. They also offer support for external training programs and industry certifications.

- Innocent Pet Care focuses on empowering employees to take ownership of their development by providing resources such as books, online courses, and access to industry publications. They also promote career progression within the organization through transparent performance evaluations and internal job opportunities.
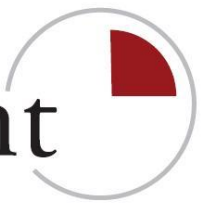
RedQuadrant

# Always happy to talk...

**Benjamin Taylor**

079 3131 7230

benjamin.taylor@redquadrant.com

www.linkedin.com/in/antlerboy

www.twitter.com/antlerboy

www.redquadrant.com

www.redquadrant.com/newsletter for regular updates