

SPRING 2023

# THE BIG READ

UNITING THE WHOLE SMART/COMMUNITY



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We love fresh thinking at smart/tasking, and in January we introduced some structural changes that will ensure our business is as optimised as possible for the year ahead, keeping us on track to achieve our business objectives. You'll find more details about our new company structure in this issue of The Big Read - it's an exciting time to be an Optimiser!

We think you'll also be intrigued to read all about 'Accelerate', our new apprenticeship programme. Meet Olly, Rio, Matt and Harry - our newest joiners! Our "Day In The Life Of" features the 'fab four' - read on to find out what makes them tick.

We've also got an insight into how we helped one client transform quality standards, and a great piece on 'leading through change' from our new Chief Experience Officer, Gary Gamp. Happy reading - and happy spring.

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# TECH TALKS: IMPROVING QUALITY STANDARDS, THE SMART/TASKING WAY



By **Niall Anderson**  
CEO, *Smart/tasking*

One of the many things we get asked about at smart/tasking is 'how can we develop a logical, process-led solution to assess and monitor standards'? When your business depends on quality, you can't leave anything to chance. At smart/tasking, our 'never satisfied' mentality is completely attuned to this dilemma. So when one of our clients approached us with their own quality standards issue, we stepped right in to help them out.

This particular client, a global enterprise, needed to tackle quality across their entire operations. With thousands of projects being implemented each year, and failure rates increasing in line with volume, they desperately needed to understand the root cause of their problems. But, as ever, affordability and ease of implementation were essential.

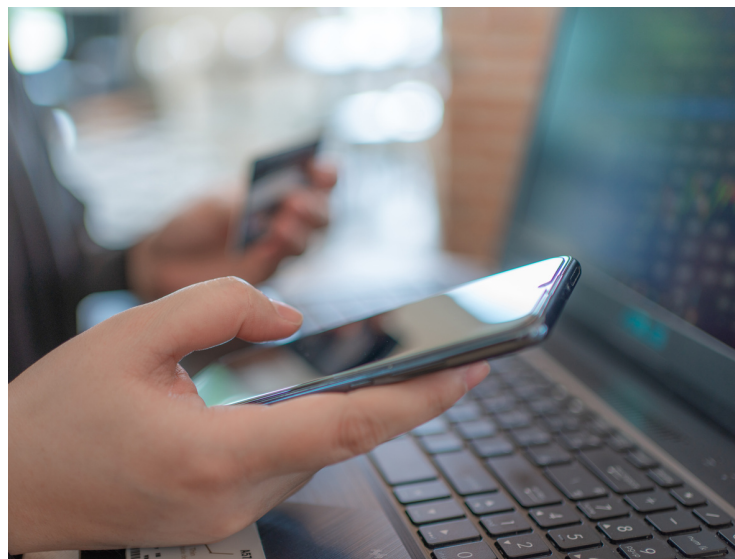
We started by collecting a large number of operational data sets, ranging from audit trails of change requests through to failures and escalations reports. We integrated these into a single database, enabling us to correlate data across all information sources. This enabled us to map incidents to root causes, and characterise problem statements into logical, compelling language.

Working with key internal stakeholders, we agreed upon a desirable, realistic set of standards, balancing costs and risks against success.

With a comprehensive effort-vs.-impact matrix in place, we were able to build out a full implementation roadmap and assess progress against targets, making any necessary adjustments along the way.

We were impressed to see our client's employees get totally onboard with this rigorous quality initiative. The outputs of our investigations confirmed the initiatives that were already in-flight, and added new perspectives giving the Leadership Team even deeper insights. The new integrated database rapidly became the catalyst for continuous improvement: by using this data intelligently, the objective was to detect context of incidents before they actually occurred – meaning far less financial wastage, and a much better use of our client's time and resources.

**Importantly, as smart/tasking commits to leaving a legacy on each of our engagements, our intervention has created a highly transferable service and a set of collaborative values which can be quickly spun up elsewhere, as needed!**



# LEADING THROUGH CHANGE



By **Gary Gamp**  
*Chief Experience Officer,  
smart/tasking, & owner of  
The Company Doctor*

If there's one thing we've all experienced a lot of lately, it's change. In the last 2-3 years, we've witnessed more change – economic, political, social, and more – than we have at any point in the last 50 years.

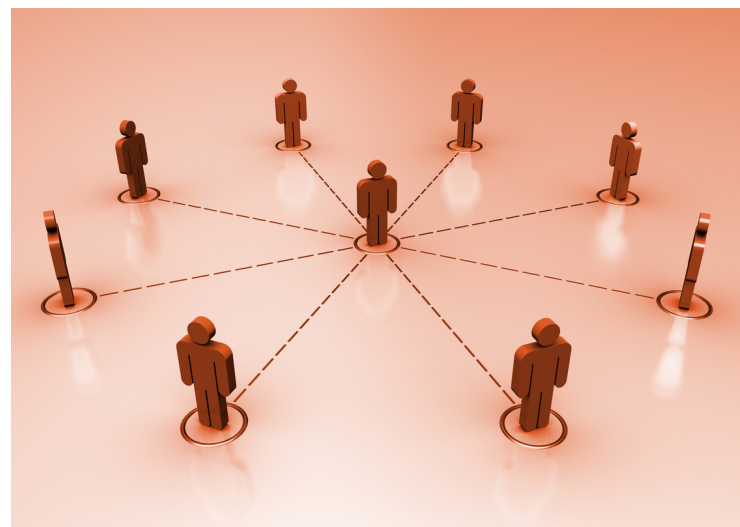
In business, too, change is the norm rather than the exception. So how can we keep positive and motivated during these times of flux? How can we keep our teams engaged and energised, and avoid 'change fatigue'?

One of the most important things to remember is that whilst major change can impact hundreds, even thousands of people (a business transformation, for example, or a merger) not everyone will experience the impacts of the change at the same time.

This means that as a leader, you can't assume everyone will be feeling the same emotion together. Excitement, uncertainty, despondency, elation and other feelings will almost certainly be staggered. In this situation, plotting where different groups of people are on a 'change curve' can help, and could be hugely useful when developing your communications and engagement strategy.

Speaking of communications – at times of change, this is really key. Having a strong narrative is vital, but you have to believe in it, and it has to be bomb-proof. Be under no illusion: your narrative will be checked, challenged, sometimes argued against and perhaps even ridiculed. You can't predict this. But you can exercise control over how you deliver it. Keep your story simple, and keep it relevant. Road-test it with supportive colleagues – ideally from different divisions, different levels in the business and different social groups.

Don't be too proud to change your syntax if you're told that your 'style' may not work. And don't be afraid to admit you don't know everything about the change that is underway. That doesn't stop you from explaining the business imperative, the payoff, the risks, and even the mitigating steps you're taking. Just because you're a leader, no one expects you to have a crystal ball.



***A change may impact thousands of people - but they won't all experience the emotions or thoughts associated with that change at the same time.***



(Cont.)

Finally, it's worth having a 'secret recipe' up your sleeve to help you get your message out there. Even the best leaders in the world need support!

Whatever change is underway, there will be some people in your business who are actively supportive, and others who are reluctant followers. Identify a group of active supporters, and get them 'on side' to help you.

Then try the 10-3-1 method:

- Identify TEN stakeholders whose role, network or personality will make a positive difference to your change
- Agree THREE messages that are in context to them, which they can use to help affirm your story
- Cement your ONE group-wide message that sits at the core of your overarching narrative.

***L-R: Smart/tasking's Danny, Gary, Franck and Niall, pictured here at the launch of our US operations, are 'Change Gurus'! For more information about leading through change - or any leadership tactic - drop us a line at [info@smarttasking.com](mailto:info@smarttasking.com).***



# KICKING OFF 2023 - AND A NEW COMPANY STRUCTURE

On the first day of February, our Optimisers and Core Team came together for our formal 'Kickoff 2023' meeting. With so many of us working for clients in diverse locations, and many of us working remotely for part of the week, it's not always easy to congregate on the same day – but despite the rail strikes, we all made it to our chosen venue of Farnham Rugby Club.

Niall Anderson, Gary Gamp and Paul Bibby took centre stage as they updated us on our operating model, our business priorities for the year ahead, and reiterated our commitment to clients. We also heard from David Jenkins, who shared an update on our Accelerate campaign, and from Simon Carroll, who leads our MarComms activities at ACE. Incidentally, both of these updates feature will feature in the Spring 2023 issue of The Big Read.

Of particular interest to the team was an announcement about the recent restructuring at smart/tasking, with exciting new roles for Niall, Gary and Paul.

Niall – known to us as 'The Alchemist' – has taken on the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In his new role, Niall will focus on business strategy and sales development, with a keen eye on both of the primary regions smart/tasking operates in: the UK, and the US. Niall knows our service offerings inside-out, so he will be ensuring that our methodologies and techniques are up-to-scratch and showcase the extent of our capabilities.

Gary Gamp, aka 'The Company Doctor', steps into the role of Chief Experience Officer (CXO). He will head up delivery, pre/post sales and our consulting capability.

As part of our DNA, we are always looking for the secret sauce to help get things done well and improving efficiency, whilst continually improving the customer experience.

Paul 'The Activator' Bibby will head the operational aspects of our business, including HR and connectivity, as Chief Operating Officer (COO). He will also be responsible for all things commercial, finance, HR, and product related, and will oversee our smart/hands function, ensuring that we deploy appropriately skills individuals that deliver against our clients' requirements. This really plays to Paul's strengths: he is something of an operations 'wizard', and is a keen advocate for enabling technologies to ensure our operations are running smoothly and seamlessly.

These new roles mark a formidable turning-point in our journey: one which will ensure we are as optimised as possible for the next stage in our journey, and which will support our ambitious growth plans in the UK and the US.



## LAUNCHPAD: 'ACCELERATING' OUR INTERNAL CAPACITY!

It's no secret: smart/tasking is growing rapidly, adding more capabilities, more clients, and more opportunities for talented people. For some time, we've been discussing an apprentice-style initiative that gives promising young people an opening into our world, coaching and mentoring them as they start to make their way in business. We're delighted to announce that in November, our plans came to fruition - via our 'Accelerate' programme!

Getting the word out about our new initiative was not hard. With a strong brand and carefully chosen placements, the applications were soon coming in. Our resourcing experts, David Jenkins and Andrew Awadzi, spent time filtering the CVs to identify a curated selection of the most promising applicants. These were invited to a morning workshop, hosted at Farnham Rugby Club, where the invitees were given an overview of smart/tasking, with insights into our service offerings and the clients we support. Then, they were put to work on a couple of tasks designed to challenge their initiative and to highlight their strengths and potential!

It was clear that everyone enjoyed the morning, and the Resourcing team and our Founding Partners all agreed that four candidates in particular stood out. Harry Manning, Rio Davies, Matthew Breheny and Oliver Parrington-Tyler were all offered a role at smart/tasking, and we're delighted to report that all four accepted!

The four started at smart/tasking in January, and we can honestly say that their progress and their attitude has been outstanding.

What's up next for our Accelerate team? Sharing some of their own enthusiasm and skills is certainly on the agenda. In March, they will attend Farnborough Sixth Form College's Career Fair, where they will chat with college students about their career aspirations and further studies. The aim is to help guide more young people through the next steps on their learning and career journey - naturally, promoting smart/tasking's Accelerate programme at the same time.

We're so proud of what we can offer to talented young people - and we're excited to see the difference it can make to more of them in months and years to come!

**Accelerate**  
to reach your potential



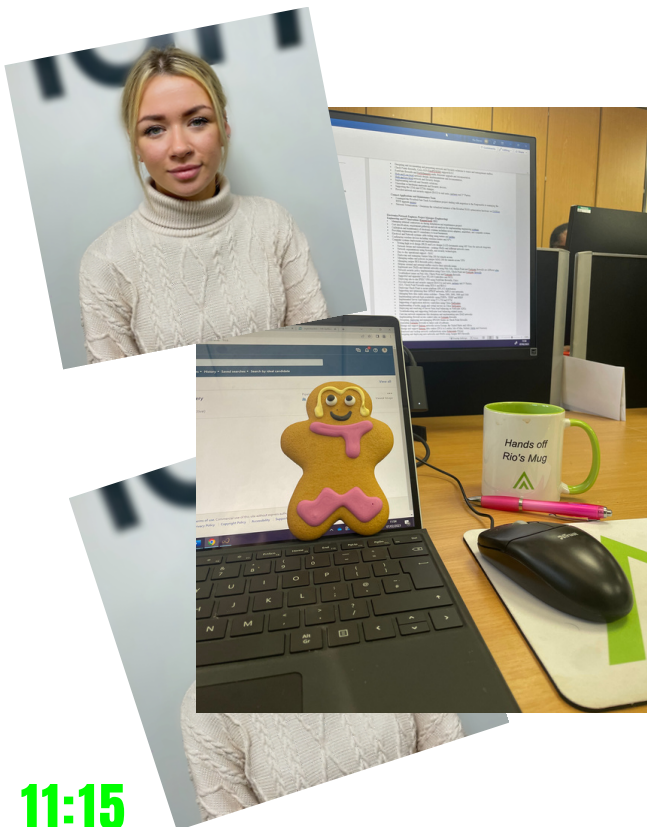
# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF... HARRY, MATT, RIO AND OLLY!

*Junior Consultants - Resourcing & Project Delivery, smart/tasking*



## STARTING THE DAY!

**OLLY:** I wake up at around 6.30am, scroll through social media, and check my messages. I catch my train at 7.30am, so I have a bit of time to get prepared before the day starts. I've really got into Gary Gamp's "The Company Doctor" podcasts, so I often plug into one of those on my commute to Farnham!



**09:00**

**OLLY:** I'm in the office by now, so after catching up with my colleagues I make a mental plan for the day. I check what requirements I am working on, and build an idea of what the candidates I am looking for will look like. Next I will run a search and start reaching out to potentials. I'll be engaging with some of my leads later, either over the phone or by email – sometimes by leaving a VM – so this part of my work is pretty varied.

**11:15**

**RIO:** Like Ollie, I use a range of methods to get in touch with my leads. LinkedIn is great for scoping out talented individuals who aren't on our database yet. I am always looking for more knowledge on the jobs that I am trying to assign people for, so before I speak to a candidate, I make sure I do some research on the job so I have a better understanding of what I will be talking about.



(Cont.)

## LUNCHTIME!

**RIO:** It's nice to kick back and relax with the team, and catch up on how their morning has gone. Sometimes we grab a bite to eat together, depending on our schedule. The Mulberry is a favourite, and it's close to the office, too.



## 14:00

**MATT:** I think we all share Rio's enthusiasm for The Mulberry! After a quick bite, I begin the afternoon by scanning through LinkedIn for potential connections and candidates. Often there are calls organised, either identifying candidates' key strengths for roles, or understanding clients' requirements. I finish off by consolidating the information into our database to ensure fluidity in our processes.



## 15:30

**HARRY:** In the afternoon, we normally follow up on calls that we made in the mornings, or if any have been rescheduled. I also check that we've uploaded information about our new and current candidates to our system correctly. Every two weeks we have personal development sessions with the directors from 2-5pm. On Fridays we tend to finish with a reflection session of the week. From time to time, we go for a pint in the local pub after work to socialise!



## 18:30

**OLLY:** I often go for a run when I get in... then its time to unwind for the evening, and get ready to do it all again tomorrow!





# WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

Meet our two newest members - welcome to the smart/tasking family!



## **Harry Manning**

*'The Engine'*

One of our four 'Accelerate' new joiners, Junior Consultant Harry is supporting our Resourcing & Project Delivery team. Harry is truly passionate about supporting and enabling colleagues to achieve the best possible outcomes. Outside of work you can find Harry exploring the nature - taking long walks, and maybe a spot of sea-fishing!



## **Rio Davies**

*'The Competitor'*

Rio has also joined Smart/tasking through 'Accelerate', and she sits within our Resourcing and Project Delivery function. Nicknamed 'The Competitor', Rio is skilled at connecting businesses by bringing teams together with the best-suited individuals for the task. Naturally inquisitive, she is always looking to identify the best possible solution to a problem. Outside of work you'll find Rio jetting off for an impromptu getaway with family and friends. When closer to home, she's a keen supporter of Arsenal football team!



## **Olly Parrington-Tyler**

*'The Blacksmith'*

Junior Consultant Olly holds an impressive First Class Honours Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Bristol! He also has 5 years' customer relations experience, so we're delighted to have him in our Resourcing and Project Delivery function. Like a true 'Blacksmith', he is warm, determined, and is energised by meeting new people. Outside of work, you can find him training for his next running challenge, or figure skating in the local ice rink.



## **Matthew Breheny**

*'The Communicator'*

Matthew has recently completed a bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Relations at the University of Sussex. A member of our project delivery team, he uses his communication skills with our internal team and with multiple clients alike. When not forging new professional relationships, you'll find Mathew experiencing new cultures, following governmental change, and cheering on F1 supremo Lewis Hamilton!



### **Emily Thomas**

*'The Multitasker'*

We love a perfectionist, so we're delighted to have Multitasker Emily join us as a Business Manager. With a keen eye for detail, Emily takes on whatever is needed to get a job done well. She has extensive experience in events planning and management, enhanced by a wide range of business operations and administration skills. Outside of work, Emily enjoys playing netball for her team in the local league. She also loves going to the theatre and trying new foods through travel.



### **Lisa Chart**

*'The Catalyst'*

With extensive experience in executive support and business management, it's no surprise that Lisa is known as 'The Catalyst'! She loves to work as part of a team and enjoys multi-tasking and prioritising heavy workloads for busy directors! In her free time, you'll find Lisa perfecting her ski technique on the dry slope, or trying to improve my tennis skills. She also loves a good fantasy novel – ideally read whilst on holiday in Italy, her favourite cultural destination!



### **Jessica Fowler**

*'The Fixer'*

'Fixer' Jessica is committed to helping businesses define, drive and maximise operational success and scalable change. With over 25 years' experience with leading Global IT and Telco providers, Jessica is a big believer that no one knows everything, but that everyone knows something - enabling her to think holistically and find right solution to a challenge, not just the easy answer. When not 'fixing' businesses, Jessica enjoys sculling on the Thames, enjoying a spot of travel, or relaxing over dinner and drinks with friends.



## CONTACT

We're always keen to hear comments, observations and questions - so please get in touch if you would like to share your thoughts.

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