

Behavioural Science and Leadership

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Behavioural Science and Leadership explains how cutting-edge behavioural science helps us to understand how leadership works, when it fails, and how to lead better. The programme is informed by the latest research in cognitive and behavioural sciences.

[Nick Chater](#) is Professor of Behavioural Science at WBS. Nick advises the UK Government and private sector on behavioural change through the Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) and has over 200 publications. He is also scientific advisor for, and co-presents, BBC Radio 4's popular series of psychology and current affairs, *The Human Zoo*.

An intensive three-day course for senior leaders, or those moving into senior positions, in all sectors, with roles involving:

- Leading and structuring teams
- Strategic decision making
- Helping build organizational culture
- Dealing with other companies, regulators, and media

The course will provide key insights into:

- The hidden biases in our thinking
- How to make better decisions
- When teams work; and how to lead them

There will be lectures to introduce key concepts, in-depth Q&A and relation to immediate leadership challenges. This will be complemented by:

- Small group discussion on applying insights
- Plenary sessions to bring insights to the group.

Key Program Themes

The key themes covered in the course are:

DAY 1 The Shallowness of Thought

To succeed in business, or anything else, it is important to understand ourselves. But our intuitive understanding of how we think and act, the stories we tell ourselves about our beliefs and motivations, turn out to be incredibly unreliable. Indeed, we shall see through exploring some remarkable recent experiments, as well as classic studies, that our explanations of our own behaviour are retrospective attempts to make our actions make sense. The real source of our behaviour can be very different: we are driven, much more than we realise, by precedent: we do what we normally do, and what other people normally do. This insight has enormous implications for our own behaviour, and for understanding consumers, our co-workers, culture and culture change, and the role of vision in an organization. We will also explore some specific biases that arise from the way we think, which have particular and profound relevance to leaders, including over-confidence and over-optimism, and how to guard against them.

DAY 2 Making Better Decisions

Leaders have to make decisions; but frequently these decisions are complex, very ill-defined, and often involve high levels of uncertainty. We are forced to rely on our intuitions. But how far can those intuitions be trusted? And how can we guard against the powerful biases that influence us all? We will discuss some of the latest experiments and thinking on how people make decisions; and draw conclusions to help improve our decision-making. In the light of Day 1, we will have seen that we have a powerful tendency to follow the decisions of others. A critical question is: when should we jump on the bandwagon before it leaves; and when should we go against the herd?

DAY 3 Competing and Cooperating

Most important strategic and interpersonal decisions involve taking account of the decisions of other businesses and individuals. And, of course, the other “players” are taking their decisions in the light of what they think you will do. We will explore both the theory, and behavioural experiments, that shed light on how we deal with the two crucial classes of decision: situations where we are competing against others--- if we win, they lose, vice versa; and situations where we can coordinate our behaviour to mutual advantage.

Competition arises between businesses, and sometimes between individuals in the same business. Coordination is key when we are part of a team, working with others in our supply chain, or cooperating across an entire sector. Strategies for ‘winning’ in these two types of situations are very different: it is crucial to know which type of ‘game’ you are in, and how to play that game effectively. We will explore the surprisingly positive messages from many aspects of recent psychology: people, possibly uniquely in the natural world, have a remarkable ability to coordinate and cooperate. But often, we need to inspire others rather than rigorously incentivize them.

Fee: £2,985

Duration: Three days

2015 Dates: March 6, 13 and 27