

XVI. Time for Change

The chapters of this book examined key issues in animal protection management, against the backdrop of the changing landscape of the movement's commercial and political environment. It was not the intention to highlight weaknesses and inadequacies, but these have become apparent nonetheless. So what does the movement need to do to achieve success in these times? This chapter summarises some of the changes needed. The final question is: 'does the movement have the vision, energy and commitment needed to make these changes?'

Only time will tell.
But we do not have time.

The rapidly changing commercial and political environment with which the animal protection movement is faced, calls for some fundamental changes. It needs to become increasingly professional and strategic, using modern management methods appropriate to its complex, mission driven environment.

Indeed, it needs to make its mission its real 'raison d'être', instead of just paying lip service to this. This should provide the real 'fire in the belly' that is needed to change the movement into a strong force for social change. It should avoid 'mission drift' in all its form – conscious and unconscious - in the knowledge that we have a window of opportunity to change the international animal protection landscape, and we miss this at our – and the animals – peril.

To succeed in its mission, the movement needs to change its focus to tackling problems at source, rather than endlessly sweeping up the tragic end results. We need to put a stop to being taken advantage of in service delivery activities. If an organisation still wants, and needs, to do service delivery work, it should make absolutely sure that it is paid at the going economic rate for this. It should also ensure that it is able to provide the highest standards of animal welfare, as a 'model' for all other providers. Otherwise, it should resolve to stick to applying pressure effectively until the prevailing dire situation changes.

The movement also needs to draw a halt to being co-opted and neutralised. Every serious organisation, of whatever ethical persuasion, should demand full and inclusive representation, not tokenism. In this regard, we need to end the current divisive attitude, and language, between welfare and rights. The term 'animal protection' should be used as generic, unifying language. To succeed, we need to focus on, and fight, the common enemy – not scrap amongst ourselves in the present weakening and destructive manner.

It is the responsibility of every animal protection society Board to give up any anachronistic thoughts of this being an honorary role. Boards are accountable, and every Board should ensure that its organisation is an effective part of the new animal protection movement for social change. A Board role is not a 'do-gooding' holiday. It

is a mission and an enormous responsibility. Any who can't stand the heat should 'get out of the kitchen'. Only true and committed animal protection professionals need apply!

Animal protection organisations of all shapes and sizes should strive to be strategic and focussed. They need to 'work clever, not hard', and leverage their resources to maximum effect. For this, they need to be fully aware of their own capacities and resources and the environment in which they operate. They should be constantly scanning and reviewing to keep pace with their rapidly changing landscape. In this quest, they can exchange 'burn out' for energy and passion.

To succeed, organisations need to review their structure to ensure that they develop the most effective structure for the task ahead. Structure causes so many problems, and wastes precious time and energy in organisational frustration, low morale and the non-effective communication strategies to counter structural deficiencies. Energy is wasted on inter-departmental conflicts, and endless rounds of non-productive meetings, instead of the real battle against animal users and abusers.

Effective operational management is also needed – not just in planning, but also in practice! Modern management practices are needed to cope with the changing external environment, which should be continuously monitored to enable the relevant changes to be made without delay. Evaluation and review should be part of effective management – with the aim being perfection. Because perfection means maximum impact towards mission. We all owe this to our funders, to the animal victims and to ourselves – for the enormous effort we put into this life's work.

This brings me neatly to a key message: We must stop trying to do everything! We cannot put the world's wrongs right overnight! We have to learn to focus on areas that will provide maximum impact towards our mission, and apply leverage and force. We need single-mindedness, and we need to train ourselves to say 'no!' In saying 'no!' we can in effect give more of what counts to our mission – stop being 'people-pleasers', and become animal savers.

All animal protection society managers need to learn the main message of 'managing the mission driven' – to value their staff. The mission driven are the organisation's greatest resource – and need nurturing and watering, and to be given the opportunity to grow. There are so many potential Gandhis working in the movement, each one an icon in their own right – albeit not yet recognised... See how much power Gandhi had alone? How much power is behind this combined force for good? It is not so much a question of harnessing this, as of releasing the shackles and constraints that hamper its free expression.

With the impact of globalisation, it is no longer sufficient to work in our own back yards. The animal use/abuse industry is global, and the movement needs to tackle this with a credible global force. Time has run out for the battles of the egos. We desperately need a powerful international movement for social change: strategic, focussed and professional – adept at leveraging its skills and capabilities internationally and supporting and assisting nascent and developing organisations across the world. If existing organisations do not take up this challenge with urgency and commitment, then others will emerge and take up the void. Animal protection is

rapidly becoming global, both in the industry and in the international political scene. The movement should not wait to take a seat at the top table, rather than waiting on tables, or picking up the scraps drooped from the table.

Competition is divisive and tears the movement to shreds. The industry is far stronger in terms of people and resources. Their political clout can be measured in economic building blocks, whereas the movement's building blocks are far more ethereal and fragile – ethics, morality and the power of good. They can only counter the economic threat if they are placed in a coherent stack, rather than small individual piles, that others are constantly trying to kick into the dust. We need the glue of coherence and unity. We need effective collaboration and alliances across the movement. Only then will consumers and voters begin to adopt the coherent message, instead of giving up in the face of all the noise and confusion.

Campaigning is the engine of the movement for social change. The movement's campaigning methods need to be updated and dynamic if we are to succeed. In most countries across the world, the days are gone when a small demonstration with placards and a campaign mascot could sway governments. The forces pitted against us are too strong and powerful to be combated with such simplicity. We need to generate a groundswell of pressure and support for reform. This will take new ammunition and new targets. Campaign targets are changing with the move from regulatory to market-orientated environments – from government and voters, towards business targets and consumers. An in depth understanding of the political and external environment is vital. Campaigns need to be hard-hitting, with focus and impact, but also well researched. They must be combined with a strong, professional lobby, avoiding the usual NGO pitfalls. Every country should be pressed to recognise animals as sentient beings, not just property, and have fully enforced animal protection laws – instead of the paltry 54 out of 192 countries that have laws at the time of writing.

Humane education is vital to the development of a humane ethic in future generations, and the movement should ensure that it takes full benefit of the two important UNESCO decades to lobby its case. Although longer-term, humane education is the only way to create a sustainable society that truly cares for the plight of animals. It has been shown to create compassionate and caring societies. After all, what better way to break the shell of children's understanding and empathy than through the non-threatening medium of animals? It is a vehicle for peace education, environmental education and human rights education, as well as engendering humane attitudes to animals. It should be in every curriculum and every school.

The animal protection movement is quite clearly one of the great movements for social change, but it has yet to reach its real potential and impact. We need to root out exploitation of animals wherever it has become ingrained into our society and institutions (Midgely), and to expose and shame. We must never let the unacceptable become the status quo. We must change hearts and minds before it is too late. We must let the force be with us – the force of Peter Singer's wonderful book 'Animal Liberation', because it was, and remains, the force of truth. We must never rest until we have forced those who turn away to face this truth. We must give them no hiding place, and never let them rest, until the animals themselves have found rest - and safety - away from human exploitation.

Do not be angry with me if I tell you the truth.
Socrates