

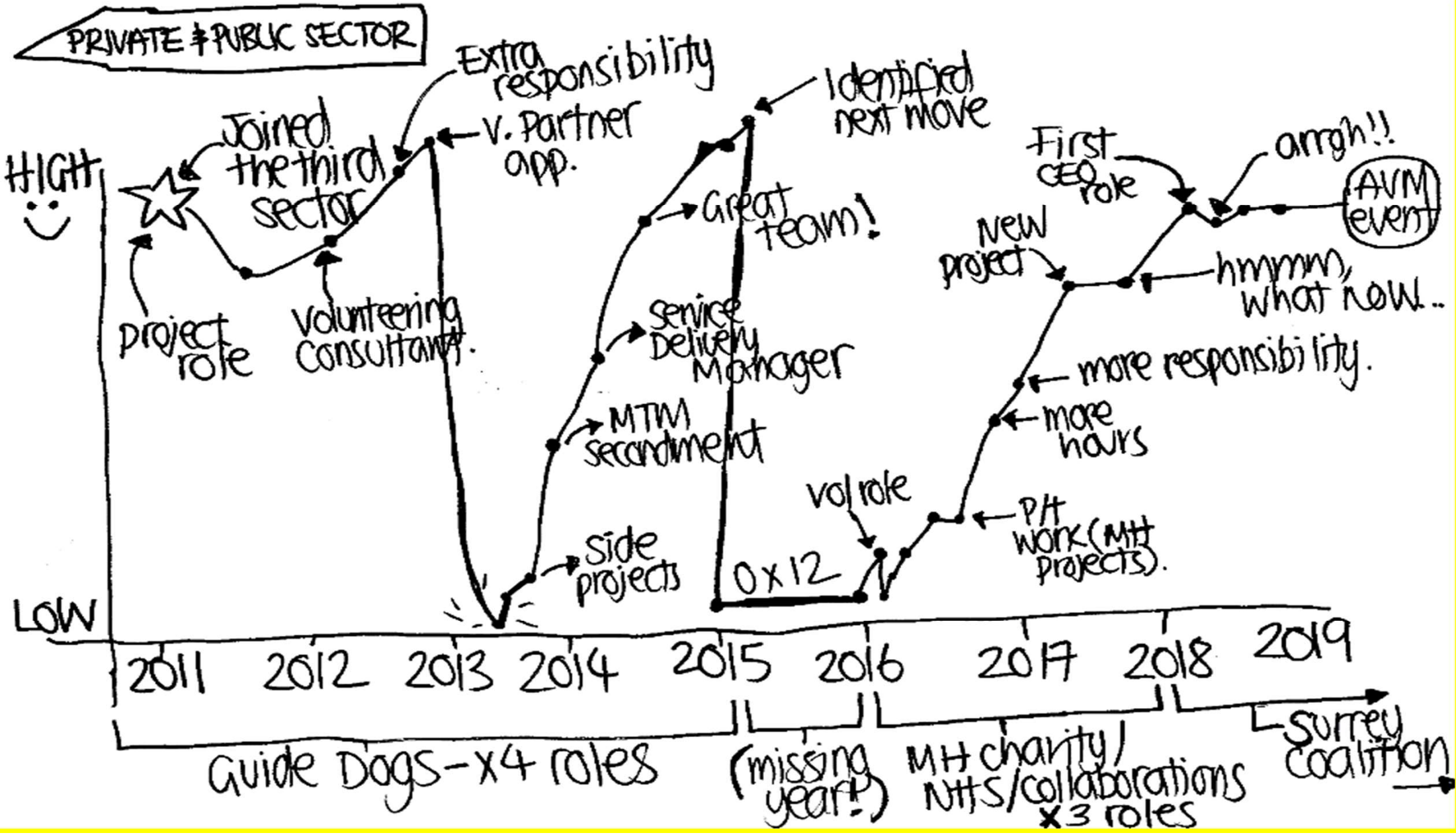


**Clare Burgess**  
**Surrey Coalition of Disabled People**

# Hello!

- Clare Burgess
- I'm here today to share experience of influencing successfully
- I'm going to be talking for about 25 minutes and we will have a short reflective task about half way through
- We have a Q and A session scheduled for later on and I really welcome questions /challenge/interaction
- I've broken my session down into 3 parts:- my journey to now, comparing and contrasting my ability (and methods!) to influence as a Volunteer Manager and as a CEO and finally, my 10 top tips to win hearts and minds.

Never a straight line! My journey to now...



# Now/my organisation

- Chief Executive, Surrey Coalition of Disabled People
- A regional not-for-profit working across Surrey & North East Hampshire
- Over 1500 members
- We campaign for, and promote the rights of disabled people to have equality of opportunity and independence



# Why is this relevant?

- Draw your own map
- Influencing across your organisation opens doors
- Influencing skills are a vehicle
- Do you know a leader who is not an influencer? Or an influencer who is not a leader?
- Investing time in influencing – building your personal ‘brand’ and its/your supporters

Comparing & contrasting influencing – then &  
now

# Influencing the team around me as a Volunteering Manager with Guide Dogs

- Became central within the team
- Invested a lot of time in building solid relationships and build my 'brand'
- Made it a habit to learn something new outside of my work remit every day – “wow, that’s interesting, do you might telling me about it...”
- Built trust
- Enabled me to influence change in practice and gain buy-in to volunteering initiatives
- As an example, a change in attitudes towards a lead volunteer role



# Influencing upwards in a National organisation

- Once I had a solid rep within local team (cross-functional), I targeted building my influence within the National volunteering team – buddying, improvement projects, suggestions and ‘experiments’, gave feedback.
- Once I had some good buy in , started to target Leaders outside of volunteering – approached and asked if they would do X with me, gave feedback, shared great news, asked to learn, established what they value – built personal relationships, always delivered
- Started to get invited to take on additional project work – Microsoft (a great one), talking dog bowls (not so great)
- Enabled me to transcend role (and silo)– opened doors for a secondment in a senior (ops) role
- Had credibility with other functions & at different levels so I was accepted easily
- Specific example, changing the name of ‘Volunteer Development Coordinators’ to Volunteering Consultant

# Now, influencing volunteer management as a Chief Executive

- In an organisation that is not used to identifying people as a volunteer and no framework
- So many opportunities!
- Challenges: it is very hard to tell how bought in people are - they just do it ! Life as an emergent leader was often easier because it was easier to gain buy-in from within the team
- No push and pull to find the magic middle
- Direct issues with influencing a volunteer (Trustee) and I am working every day to build my influence within the trustee team – being there, establishing individual needs and values, changing my focus.

# The differences .....

- How long it takes to make a change
- How you can tell that people understand/believe
- Who you are influencing e.g. Trustees, Commissioners, External Leaders in the 'system'

My top 10!

# 1. Change YOUR focus

- Instead of thinking about how I want to influence this person towards XYZ or how I want to change this persons behavior, I try and focus on the kind of conversation I would like to have with this person.
- What sort of relationship would I like? I then work out how I can best achieve this
- E.g. my challenging trustee

## 2. Connecting

- Taking the time to invest in making (and then building) a connection
- Used to see this as something to do on the side/around the real work – it is the real work!
- Challenge – could you make a commitment to invest some time in ‘connecting’ every day for 30 days?

### 3. Show appreciation

- Be the best cheerleader
- Always offering genuine and specific appreciation
- Another challenge – could you consider sending one extra bit of positive feedback/appreciation each week? Try and look outside of your work area.
- As an example – the first time I connected with the CEO of Guide Dogs

## 4. Constant curiosity

- It's easier to influence others if we understand where they are 'at' – what the role is that they do, the challenges they face.
- People love sharing knowledge – show your interest
- The broader your knowledge base and understanding the better your influence



## 5. Communicating with clarity & consistency

- Communicating in –line with the brand that you are trying to build
- Being persistent and consistent with your communication
- Trying every method available!
- As an example, influencing for a change in volunteer involvement in an NHS project – it was a very big change for them, I had laid the groundwork, when it came down to the communication I used so many different methods – face to face, email, calls, twitter, greetings cards, balloons

## 6. Expert on tap, not expert on top

- Getting your positioning right – that shoulder to shoulder approach
- We're in this together
- How can we solve this /make this better
- "I wonder..."

## 7. Demonstrating what's in it for them & Evidencing the impact

- For both of these, I try and go by 'no data without stories, no stories without data'
- Trying to use WIIFY as your BLUF ('bottom line up front')
- You are approaching with a solution to a problem they may not have even noticed yet

## 8. Keep topping up those piggy banks

- The more you have the better – I try and aim for a broad spread (and quantity of banks is more important than how full they are!)

## 9. Be a barrier spotter (and slayer)

- Making the path as smooth as we can
- Not in-validating the struggles/scale of the challenge but helping to highlight ways to overcome them (and making this as easy as possible)
- E.g. In the NHS project, spotting a barrier with system integration – had a solution in place to offer

# 10. Progress

- Having that focus on continuous improvement
- Acting as an outside consultant, always looking for better, smoother, more value
- Learning from every lesson/failure

## To summarise....

- Influencing is sometimes easier as an emergent leader rather than as an appointed one
- Influencing as a skill transcends the boundaries of roles and functions in its usefulness
- As a Leader of Volunteering, there is no doubt that you are an accomplished influencer as the two skills are so closely aligned
- Remember your two challenges in the month ahead – 1) Investing time in 'connecting' and 2) Showing appreciation to influence (ideally outside of your immediate work area)