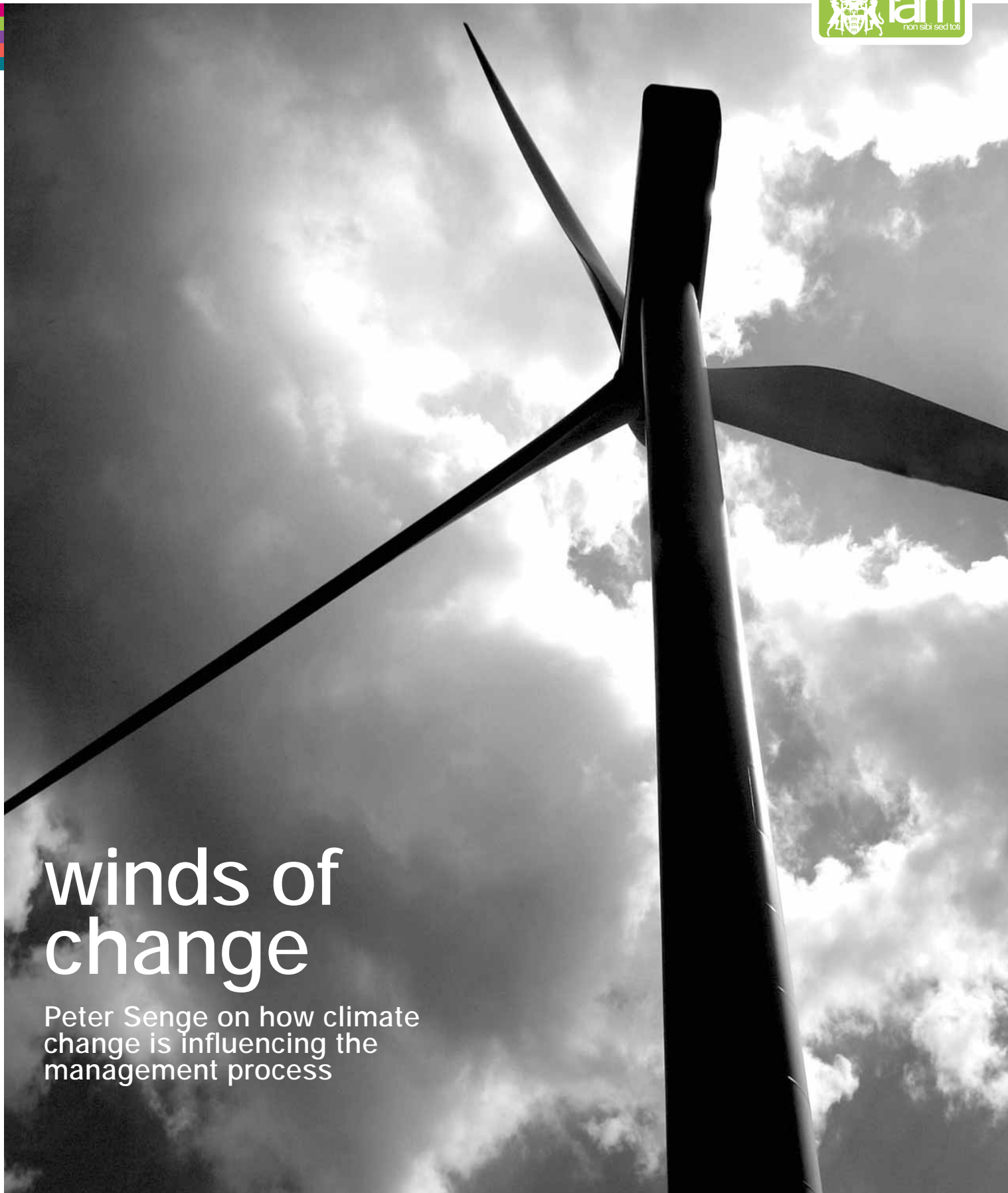


manager

The British Journal of Administrative Management



winds of change

Peter Senge on how climate change is influencing the management process



Publishing Schedule and Forward Features List 2009

Manager is published quarterly. There are four x 36-page themed printed issues published each Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. These are posted to the IAM international membership. Manager also has a monthly electronic sister journal called e.manager, which is e-mailed to all IAM members. As with the printed version, this consists of feature articles, news from the worlds of business and education and Institute news, as well as articles from our regular contributors.

If you have any feedback for the institute regarding manager,

its content, new look or the future features for 2009, please get in touch. We would also like to hear from you if you have ideas for contributions or the features that you think that we should include over the coming year. We'd love to hear from you. Please contact editor@instam.org.

Manager and e.manager regularly reach 11,000 members internationally of practising and studying administrative managers. If you have an advertising enquiry or would like a media pack, please contact richard.jane@instam.org.

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The British Journal of Administrative Management

AUTUMN 2008 Publication date: 24 October

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contents

Autumn 2008

regulars

Comment	04
Business Matters	06
IAM Matters	08
School Business Matters	10
Pro Development Matters	12
Coaching Corner	32
Management Matters	32
Book review	33
Greenlight	34

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COVER STORY

Peter Senge on why a sustainable environment is as much a corporate responsibility as an individual duty

16

21

GRADE A RESULTS

Getting the most out of your team



The Website Workout

A simple complete guide to strengthening your online presence

Dave Brockman



33

 New book review

Annie Townend tackles the office bullies **26**



28 THE LAW IS AN ART
Why it pays to get good advice





comment

By Ray Moorcroft FInstAM, Editor editor@instam.org

The management armoury

- armoury *n*
1. A store of weapons and equipment
 2. A collection of resources

All animals are born with a 'natural' defence. The tortoise has its shell. Deers rely on camouflage. The sheer size of an elephant protects it against attack. As for the human species, our brains and the ability to innovate and invent, enable us to protect ourselves against 'predators'.

However, in all cases, there is a period of vulnerability as each creature learns how to use its 'armour'... as it relies on observation and experience (sometimes fatal) for its education. The interesting thing is that, as the animal matures, it relies less on its 'natural' armour (and its parent, guardian or mentor) and more on experience.

So, for example, any game warden will tell you that an elephant, which has been gunshot-wounded and has recovered, knows that its size is no defence against the (much smaller) human with a gun, and consequently uses other, non-species specific strategies and 'weapons'. One example is the ability to access and 'hide' in places where it is difficult for humans to follow through to outright, pre-emptive attack, thus ensuring the elephant's survival... unless the human similarly develops and uses other strategies – in which case, the cycle of ingenuity begins again, but this time on a higher level.

Some animals do this better than others, which is arguably the basis of evolution... but let's not go there. Instead, let's consider the 'newly-born' manager as the animal in question.

This may bring back some embarrassing memories of your own time as a new manager, or even your first day in a new job, but consider the scenario. You have an office, a desk, a dedicated telephone (and

blackberry/mobile) and laptop – although you're a little wary about using them in the same way as you would your own (sports updates or arrangements with friends may not be allowable expenditure), but in general you're set to go. So much for the 'hardware', but what about the 'software' – the behavioural and knowledge weapons?

Well, most people rely on their 'natural' armour – the skills and competences that have served them well, and indeed, have brought them to their new and exalted position.

Unfortunately this is exactly the wrong thing to do. It simply ignores the new and different situation. Behaving as though nothing has

changed is denying that it has. If, for example, you continue to behave as 'one of the gang' when it's not appropriate to a new leadership situation, then you'll quickly realise (too late) that you've sent out the wrong message.

The title on the job specification has changed, so accept it and move on. Technology, (inter) national contexts (how do you 'manage' remote workers?) and time (familiarity?) are also factors which dictate that managers need to adopt new strategies.

And of course, it doesn't stop when you're a 'grown up' manager. The hard message is that the experienced manager needs to constantly update his or her defences against those who would readily adopt new 'armour'. The new defence involves thinking creatively and constructively about new techniques and skills to make sure the new armour fits... so buckle up... it's war out there!



This month, manager introduces to us the management armoury. As illustrated by our cover story, perhaps the greatest weapon in your own armoury is the ability to change and adapt.

“ it doesn't stop when you're a 'grown up' manager. The experienced manager needs to constantly update his or her defences against those who would readily adopt new 'armour' ”



Managing through tough economic times

In today's tough economic business conditions, the Business Matters team felt that it would be timely to draw together a range of viewpoints on how the credit crisis is likely to affect the management of organisations. We took as our starting point three studies whose findings we felt particularly impacted upon the role of the manager. We also offer a range of tips to help managers face these difficult times

Risk taking set to increase, says survey

People's appetite for risk-taking in the workplace is likely to increase if the credit crisis worsens, according to research carried out by international leadership development organisation, Common Purpose*.

Common Purpose is an independent leadership organisation that aims to improve the way organisations and society work. It operates throughout the UK and worldwide in France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Ireland, South Africa, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Over half of all working adults surveyed already consider themselves to be risk-takers and 43% think it will be important to take more risks to help their organisations survive through a recession.

The survey also found that only 13% of people avoid risk at all costs in their jobs. Common Purpose added that taking calculated risks is very different to acting rashly and is an inseparable part of entrepreneurship and innovation. Through their programmes, Common Purpose has found that senior managers from the private, public and voluntary sectors can effectively come together to use the diversity of their backgrounds and experiences to fertilise each other's ideas, to avoid pitfalls and to inform their understanding of risk. In today's complex and rapidly shifting context, it seems that being paralysed by fear into inaction is the biggest risk.

As Julia Middleton, Chief Executive of Common Purpose says, "An economic downturn is not the time to shy away from risks. Managers need to be brave and bold, and to look in new places to

capture the opportunities for growth and innovation. Looking into other people's worlds is a good place to start."

Common Purpose also offers a number of tips, which can be seen in the 'Top Tips' panel opposite.

The dangers of downsizing training and development budgets

In another study** Common Purpose have also explored the consequences of cutting training and development budgets during an economic downturn. The report, *Taming the Wolf at the Door*, found that almost half of training and development professionals surveyed are expecting a budget cut of 20% or more. Team building and soft skills development will be hit hardest, while technical skills training and surprisingly, leadership development, will be the least likely to be cut.

Worryingly, over half of respondents stated that the short term benefits of training cuts and reprioritisation will have long term negative consequences and only 3% of training and development professionals, who have held budgetary responsibility during a previous economic downturn, said that cutting the budget did not have negative consequences. These consequences included limiting the ability to fulfil organisational goals and setting back the learning and development strategy.

The cuts are predicted to be fairly evenly spread across organisations although the more senior the manager, the more likely they are to see a drop in investment in their development. One of the most striking findings of the report

was that over half of respondents are worried about retaining key staff during an economic downturn.

The belief is that talented managers, those most likely to give an organisation its competitive edge, may be the first to move on if commitment to their development starts to wane.

For further information visit: www.commonpurpose.org.uk

Five Top Tips for courageous managers

- **Be brave** stepping into the unknown, within or beyond your existing role, takes courage; courage to start and courage to continue
- **Be prepared** before taking risks, take time to build an understanding of the issues, challenges, and other stakeholders involved
- **Don't focus on areas of specialism to the exclusion of all else** losing sight of the broader context leaves you open to being blind-sided
- **Build a diverse network of people** use it to help formulate your plans. Different views and experiences may help to see things in a new light
- **Keep an eye on the medium and long term, as well as short term fixes** don't destroy tomorrow's value today.

Keeping the customer happy – a hedge against recession?

Another major new survey has revealed that companies are helping to take the bite out of the recession by trying harder to keep customers happy.

More consumers are declaring themselves pleased with the way they are treated despite higher prices and tighter budgets, according to the latest national

measure of customer satisfaction by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS)**.

The online ICS survey asked 12,000 people how they rated service performance in 12 major public and private sectors. The results, announced in the latest UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI), shows that the Index has improved from 69 to 71 out of 100 since the previous one was published in January 2008. ICS Executive Director Robert Crawford says, "Although it's not a huge increase, this is definitely a step in the right direction. It shows that when times are hard, managers realise they need to try harder to make life easier for the people they serve."

They have also got the message that when people have a finite amount of money, they will be more careful to spend it where they are treated well. They are much more inclined to factor in customer service when it comes to making purchase decisions.

The only differentiator left in UK business today is customer service. Products can be copied and costs matched, so service is the only aspect where companies can gain an edge."

The survey – the most wide-reaching measure of customer satisfaction throughout the UK – asked consumers to rate businesses and organisations on key areas such as complaint handling, professionalism, quality and competence and friendliness of staff.

Responses indicate that overall helpfulness and friendliness of staff have improved markedly but handling of complaints and enquiries remain a sore subject.

The 12 sectors surveyed were automotive, finance (banks), finance

(insurers), retail (food), retail (non-food), services, telecommunications, transport, leisure and tourism, utilities, Government departments and agencies, and local government.

For the second time, services – covering small enterprises from hairdressers and plumbers to travel agents and shoe repairers – was the top scoring sector, with an improved satisfaction rating of 79.

"Small businesses do well because they give personal attention and are easily accessible if things go wrong," says Mr Crawford. "But there is no reason why their attributes cannot be replicated by the larger set-ups."

Second best performing sector was again retail (non-food) where, after launching a concentrated drive on boosting customer service, Boots have leapfrogged John Lewis to take over at the top.

Worst performing sector was again local government, covering fire services, police forces and local councils, while utilities replace telecommunications as second bottom.

More information is available at ukcsi.com, which details the full methodology of the UKCSI and gives additional information on the results within each of the 12 sectors.

Cash flow crisis powers short term loans sector

SMEs are turning to short-term finance as they face a looming cash flow crisis.

The spare cash British companies have available has fallen to the lowest level since the early 1990s. Companies are also digging into their credit facilities at the fastest rate since 1992 when the

country was last in recession.

According to statistics from the Bank of England, from the 12 months to June 2008, the amount companies had in available, unused credit facilities dropped by 13.3%.

Chris Baguley, managing director of Bridging Finance Limited, a short term funding specialist, offers five key tips to help prevent a cash flow crisis.

www.bankofengland.co.uk/statistics/ms/2008/Jul/bankstats_full.pdf

www.bridgingfinance.co.uk

Five Top Tips to help prevent a cash flow crisis

- 1 **Make payment terms a core part of the client contract**
- 2 **Invoice as soon as possible**
- 3 **Chase invoices as soon as they become due**
- 4 **Do a cash flow forecast and re-forecast regularly**
- 5 **Cash cheques as soon as you receive them.**

* GfK NOP Consumer carried out a survey of 343 ABC1 working adults over 23-25 May 2008.

** The Common Purpose survey was conducted online in April 2008. It comprised of a UK-wide sample of HR and Learning and Development professionals.

*** The UKCSI questionnaire is a self-completion, web-based survey repeated every six months. This latest UKCSI is based on a sample of 12,000 adults surveyed during May and June 2008.



Jenny Hewell
IAM Chief Executive

I am pleased to extend a warm Autumnal welcome to all 'manager' readers this month. The IAM team is especially enthusiastic about our appointment of Peter Bennett as Qualifications Manager. Peter has a huge amount of experience in both administrative management and awarding body functions. I am confident that our members, students and customers will all benefit enormously from Peter's extensive knowledge and skill. He will be a great asset to the team.

This month there is a significant focus on School Business Managers (SBMs), both in England and the Western Cape, South Africa. I'm sure you'll be interested to learn that an SBM pilot programme has been launched in the Western Cape and the first 141 SBMs have been recruited and begun training across the Western Cape. The IAM will be accrediting the Western Cape programme and we are already looking forward to issuing IAM certificates to the first BSM graduates in South Africa later on next year.

NCSL on the international stage

England's National College for School Leadership, (NCSL), is uniquely placed as the world's only organisation dedicated solely to raising the quality of

school leadership.

The College's school business manager (SBM) qualifications – Certificate, Diploma and pilot Advanced Diploma

of School Business Management – are also accredited by the IAM.

Two recent projects for school children in Africa illustrate their international impact:

a project with South Africa's Western Cape Education Department and the involvement of SBMs in the International Leadership Learning Programme.



NCSL and the Western Cape Education Department

NCSL and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), South Africa have developed a new, pilot qualification for their school business managers to improve their skills. This will have a real impact on the education and life chances of the million pupils studying in South Africa.

Since the end of apartheid, a new education system and curriculum have been built under the vision of a Quality Learning Home for All. Half of pupils leave school before finishing Grade 12 (year 13 in English schools) and child poverty is a clear issue.

Teacher development, access to relevant teaching and learning materials, school infrastructure, technology and safe school environments also have an impact on learning.

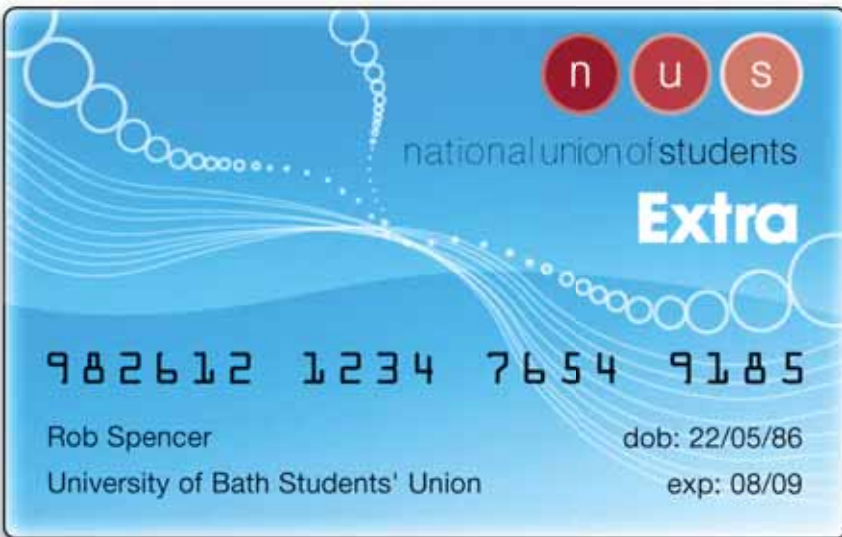
Ron Swartz, Head of the Western Cape Education Department said: "The most important resource the province possesses to improve its standards of education, is its people. By equipping those who lead and manage our schools with the best knowledge and expertise possible, we can improve the life chances of all of our young people."

150 South African

administrators have been trained on:

- Financial management
- Human resource management
- Risk management
- Facilities management
- Office systems
- ICT

Trevor Summerson, senior programme manager for the NCSL bursar development programme, says: "Education is a powerful tool to tackle inequality and change the world for the better, and school business managers are uniquely positioned to help make educational services truly world class."



IAM Member benefit the NUS Extra card

IAM is pleased to announce a further benefit to add to our member's package for Student members. The UK's National Union of Students and the IAM have teamed up to offer the NUS Extra card to our UK Students.

The card brings with it a vast array of discounts including offers from well-known companies including Amazon, Halfords, Principles and House Of Fraser.

The NUS negotiate new discounts onto the

scheme throughout the year and these are viewable via their website. Cardholders will also be sent quarterly newsletters containing the latest discounts and competitions.

Student members can apply now by filling out the form accessible through the NUS site and submitting it directly to the NUS. Please see the following for more information:

www.nus.org.uk/en/NUS-Extra/

new staff

IAM is delighted to welcome Peter Bennett on board as Qualifications Manager.

Prior to IAM, Peter was at City & Guilds for just over 15 years. He worked his way up through the organisation, having started as a temp, then as senior clerical officer before becoming Regional Quality Administrator, Assessment Administrator and finally, spent six years as Product Manager for all Business & Administration and Customer Service Qualifications.

Peter's role at IAM will see him look at the scope, quality and market penetration of IAM qualifications, as well as having responsibility for managing all assessment processes, including the examinations officer and external suppliers.

We look forward to working with Peter and to the contribution he will bring to the team.



Peter Bennett



School's out for Business Managers

IAM was proud to be presenting the Certificate of School Business Management together with the dual award of the IAM's Diploma in Administrative Management at a graduation ceremony that took place on 11th October in Nottingham. Graduate's achievements were celebrated by Anna Lemmon, Director of Education at IAM. A speech was also given by John Musso,

Executive Director of the Association of School Business Officials International based in Washington, DC. The successful event was also supported by NCSL, Manchester Metropolitan University and Serco Education and Children's Services. We extend our thanks to RS Live who ensured that the day proceeded to plan and was enjoyed by graduates and guests alike.

The International Leadership Learning Programme

ILLP is a new NCSL programme, offering senior school leaders the opportunity to learn from the challenges faced by their counterparts worldwide. It involves in-depth research before an international placement, with participants returning to share best practice in their own schools and beyond. With excellent professional development opportunities, the ILLP will have a positive impact on both school and system development.

The application round for the next cohort of the ILLP is now open. More details can be found at:

www.ncsl.org.uk/illp-index

Who goes where?

Schools are increasingly transferring tasks from senior management to administration, but Tony Attwood argues that the implications are not always being thought through

In June 2008, we at the School of Educational Administration undertook an informal survey of around 5000 school administrators, bursars, heads and deputy heads. We asked them to tell us if any tasks, which used to be within the province of senior school managers, had now moved across into the school office.

Where the answer was "Yes", we invited them to tell us about their experiences, and where the answer was "No", we asked if their school had thought about undertaking such transfers.

What did we discover?

The survey revealed that around half of the schools we questioned had been involved in changes of the type we described. Where tasks were being handed over from management to administration, the agent of change appeared more often than not to be one enthusiast. In some cases this was a bursar or senior administrator. Elsewhere it was the deputy head or other senior management figure. Almost always it was one individual who took up the idea and brought others round to this approach.

Where no such change, or very limited change was being undertaken, this tended to be because there was no one in the school who was initiating such discussion or taking on the role of change agent in any other way.

We felt that the data we gathered suggested clearly that in most cases the school was the initiator of change. There didn't appear to be any outside influences carrying the message of change from one school to another in a co-ordinated manner.

In terms of the tasks that were selected as being suitable for movement from management to administration, we were able to draw up a list of the most commonly mentioned areas of work (please see the following table). However, when we focussed on the most popular task for transference to administration (timetabling), the level of transfer was often subject to many caveats, which

suggested that it is now, in some schools at least, a task in which management still has some input.

The ten areas of work most likely to be transferred from school management to administration, in order of the number of times mentioned

- Timetabling
- Arranging cover for absent staff
- Budgeting
- Examination management
- Booking and overall organisation of school trips
- Health and Safety ensuring the school fully complies with relevant acts
- Personnel management
- Induction of new teaching staff
- Mentoring
- Work experience management

Why?

Where change was happening, the most common rationale given was the freeing up of time for managers and teachers. However, few mentioned the other side of the coin: the resultant increase in workload in terms of the administrators who took on new tasks.

There is, however, always resistance to change, and we found three distinct points of focus for negative feelings about this type of change (see below).

Reasons given for resistance to change

- Lack of belief in the ability of administration to handle the task
- Feeling that this was not how things are done in schools – i.e. that 'timetabling' is inherently part of the Deputy Head's job
- No need for change – everything is fine as it is ("if it ain't broke, don't fix it!")

We were also interested in what was not said. While administrators were quite able to complain about the complexity and timescale of certain new tasks (implementing the Financial Management Standards in England was a common area of complaint), no one said that the change should not happen because administration was already working at full stretch and couldn't cope with more work. Some respondents suggested that the administrators might not have the ability to handle the work: none said they might not have the time.

Meeting the challenge

No school managers who answered our questions, and who had implemented such changes, expressed the view that they were unhappy with the process of change. In fact, almost everyone welcomed the enhanced status that administration gained from taking on these additional higher-level tasks.

Interpretation and Implications

However, it may be that the process is throwing up certain other problems, even though our correspondents did not overtly highlight them.

First, while it may be that school managers do benefit from getting rid of certain activities, there clearly must be a limit as to how much work can be placed at the desk of the administrator. The problem is that no one seems to be sure where that limit lies, and no one reported that any sort of time-analysis was done before additional work was handed over.

Second, virtually no one mentioned any recognition or reward for the administrators who undertook extra work. A few administrators did state that they were now on senior management committees as a result of this role expansion. Not one spoke of a pay rise (although this might be a reflection of the traditional British reluctance to discuss how much one earns



– and it was not a question we asked outright.) Further, there are other sources, for example The National College of School Leadership (NCSL), which provide some contradictory evidence.

Third, there was no mention of training in anything other than the tasks themselves, and this might well be laying down a significant problem for the future.

All complex administrative systems (and a 21st Century British school is nothing if it is not a complex administrative system)

are made up of interlocking parts, and it is the way that these parts interlock that determines their efficiency. Yet no one in our survey mentioned the efficiency of the school as an issue. That is to say, no one acknowledged that there must be many different ways in which these different tasks could be integrated within the school office – and that some ways of handling the total workload will be much more efficient than others.

Because of this, and the lack of any

thought about overall in-service training and professional development for administrators who are now being called upon to work in a much expanded school office, it is clear that few people have started to look at school administration as a unit which can work in any one of a hundred different ways.

Convincing school managers and administrators that training and personal development in this area is an absolute necessity, is, I believe, our next big task.



A message from Anna Lemmon IAM Director of Education

In this month's Professional Development Matters we feature an article from Carl Evans, which really emphasises the importance of

Administrative Managers pursuing the Continuous Professional Development path in their careers. As this feature makes clear, and to quote Carl, "...CPD creates a win-win situation for both the organisation and the individual and so, rather than being a job benefit, should be part of the job itself." We are also including the ninth in the

enormously well received 'How to...' series from Carl and his colleague at Worcester Business School, Mark Richardson. Previous articles have appeared in this year's editions of manager and also in e.manager, the electronic sister publication, which is emailed to members in the months the printed journal doesn't appear.

Thank you to all those who have taken the trouble to get in touch with me to say how helpful Professional Development Matters is to you in your work and/or study. Feedback is always most welcome and this month, we are particularly keen to receive suggestions for articles for future editions. Please do not hesitate to contact me at anna.lemmon@instam.org

The usual job benefits bonus/pension/life assurance and... CPD?

Carl Evans examines the implications of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as a job benefit for Administrative Managers, raising fresh debate about its role in the profession

Taking a cursory look through the vacancies on a jobs website recently (purely for academic research purposes), it was surprising to note that for several posts, alongside the usual job benefits of bonus, pension, life assurance etc, Continuing Professional Development (yes – CPD!) was being listed.

It was typically stated in the form of, "CPD is supported and encouraged", "Ongoing professional development will be provided", "Progressive training and CPD initiatives", and "CPD support will be given". The fact that CPD was being quoted as a job perk, and not as part of the person specification, challenged conventional thinking – can CPD really be considered as a job benefit and what are the implications of this for Administrative Managers?

What is CPD?

The IAM defines CPD as the process of constantly updating personal skills and knowledge, while Kenzie and Enemark (1998, p.162) provide, "The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and the development of personal qualities necessary for the education of professional and

technical duties throughout the practitioner's life".

CPD therefore infers an obligation for individuals to update professional skills and ultimately sustain best practice in the occupational discipline. This is especially important for Administrative Managers who are subject to technological changes and must therefore look to CPD as a means of adapting to this changing environment through developing new skills. Consequently Hyams (1998) feels that CPD is crucial, in order to remain viable in the job market.

CPD can thus be considered as a planned self-development (personal and professional) endeavour, impacting positively on one's self-performance and invariably on the performance of the organisation. Effective Administrative Managers should continually seek ways to improve their knowledge, skills and competencies on subjects relevant to their personal and professional development, as well as their business.

CPD as a job benefit?

Whilst the argument for CPD is clearly stated, can it really be construed as a job benefit? Administrative Managers generally

This month's contributors to Professional Development Matters



Mark Richardson is Head of University at Worcester Business School and co-wrote this month's *How to...* with Carl Evans



Carl Evans is a senior Lecturer at the University of Worcester Business School & has been associated with IAM since completing the Diploma in 1986



Gbolahan Gbadamosi is a Senior Lecturer in Human Resources at the University of Worcester and contributed to the CPD article

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Hyams, E. (1998) *Professional Associations and the role of CPD, Assignment, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 8-12*

Kennie, T.J.M. and Enemark, S. (1998) *The growing importance of CPD Continuing Professional Development, 1, 160-169*

work in a busy environment, which could limit their availability to carry out CPD. In addition, Administrative Managers may feel compelled to undertake CPD offered by employers, which could raise stress levels and so could hardly be construed as a benefit?

The advertisements themselves are usually vague. In particular, what does the organisation consider to be an appropriate CPD activity? Will the individual have to contribute themselves? Is the benefit conditional, for example, upon business profitability levels?

Despite these negative questions, CPD has now become a necessity for Administrative Managers. The concept of lifelong learning now encourages individuals to continually update skills and knowledge. For an Administrative Manager, CPD is vitally important, not only for personal and career development, but also to contribute to improved business performance. Here, CPD should be an integral element of workplace development schemes such as Investors in People.

A win-win situation

To secure employment with an organisation that takes a positive approach to CPD must be precious, since the employer is clearly reinforcing its commitment not only to the career progression of its employees, but also to their personal development and continued relevance in the scheme of things. Yet at the same time, it is taking advantage of increased work performance from that individual, and helping to develop a learning organisation. A record of CPD activities is therefore important for individuals to provide employers with evidence of maintaining Administrative Management skills, and can support assessment against higher standards when seeking promotion.

Thus CPD creates a win-win situation for both the organisation and the individual and so, rather than being a job benefit, should be part of the job itself. In developing a personal commitment to CPD therefore, perhaps the Administrative Managers might initiate a process of providing answers to some relevant questions:

- What do I need to achieve?
- What is my ambition (for self and organisation) for short, medium and long term development?
- Which skills, knowledge or competences must I enhance?

CPD not only increases the usefulness of individuals to the business, but also raises the professional standing of IAM members by extending knowledge and skills, which ultimately enhances the profile of the profession of Administrative Management. As a result, IAM members should insist that CPD is at the very core of every job they apply for, and not a job perk.



BOOK REVIEW



OFF THE SICK LIST!
How To Turn Employee
Absence Into Attendance

by Kate Russell
MX Publishing
ISBN: 978-0-9546054-4-5
164 pages / paperback
RRP £9.99*
www.russell-personnel.com

It was good to see that this handbook kept to its aim to be focused and practical. For me this was a major strength. I like the layout and was pleased to see an early and appropriate focus upon prevention of sickness absence, rather than allowing it to become a problem. I did, however, wonder if the section on 'Reasons for Absence' would have benefited from being extended.

While not attempting to cover all the current legislation, there was some helpful guidance in the form of case material. This was delivered in an easy-to-follow way and provided about the right amount of detail. I also liked the use of examples posed as problems. Since each problem was then followed by a solution and supporting evidence, the reader was able to think through a solution and have their understanding confirmed.

The structure was easy to work with, particularly in respect of handling 'return to work' meetings. I found the 'do' and 'don't' questions were practical and helped to remind the manager of the need to be professional. Similarly the detailing of the 'headmistress' technique offered managers some appropriate guidance.

The various sections, for example on capability and stress, helped to provide coverage of linked aspects without going into unnecessary detail. Likewise the Appendices provided some useful examples.

I was pleased to see that the section on Statutory Sick Pay was included within the text, avoiding the temptation to deal with this area as an appendix. As with

other sections, the information provided was succinct while conveying the key messages.

So overall, I found this a useful handbook for the HR professional or student of HR, although perhaps too detailed for use by those who only need an overview of HR activity. As a manager, if this is an area that is posing problems for your organisation, the book would help to point a way forward by offering practical, easy-to-understand advice.

Mike Turner
FInstAM

**Book price correct at time of going to press.*



Administrative Managers are increasingly responsible for project-based activities that require effective leadership of a team; very possibly a team composed of specialists from a wide range of functional disciplines. In addition, the essence of many modern working practices, such as continuous improvement and Total Quality Management (TQM), are largely dependent upon teams to solve operational problems. Similarly, Belbin (www.belbin.com) highlights the importance of the composition of a team and its contribution to team effectiveness.

Whilst Adair (1986) advocates selecting individuals that possess the requisite team-working skills, this is not always possible within the normal constraints of an organisation. The Administrative Manager will therefore need to create, encourage and support a unity of purpose and spirit amongst the team. In such circumstances the Administrative Manager may decide to embark upon a range of team-building activities to help develop and maintain an effective and motivated working group.

This article outlines a suggested approach to building and developing the administrative team.

Building the Administrative Team

Team building is concerned with removing problems (such as low morale or inappropriate conflict) that might inhibit the effective and efficient functioning of the group. A useful starting point may be for the Administrative Manager to assess the

References/Further Reading

Adair, J. (1986) *Action Centred Leadership*, NY, McGraw-Hill
Tuckman, B. W. (1965) *Development Sequences in Small Groups*, *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 63
Woodcock, C. (1989) *Team Development Manual*, Gower Publishing.

The "How to...." Series

9. How to Build an Effective Administrative Team

by Carl Evans and Mark Richardson

existing level of team cohesiveness and therefore the extent of team building activity that may be required. This typically entails examining existing team performance and noting problems, or in the case of a newly formed team, an assessment of its team working capabilities. Here 360o feedback can be a useful tool.

The Administrative Manager must also be self-critical and encourage feedback from team members and colleagues, since ineffective leadership can also hinder team performance! Individual support from a coach or mentor may offer valuable development for the manager.

Woodcock (1989) suggests identifying any 'blockages' that might restrict team building activity. These might include issues such as vague objectives, poor performance or limited creativity. Once identified, the next step is to carefully plan team building activities, which have been designed to address the issues or 'blockages' that they are attempting to overcome. There should be a clear link between team building activity undertaken and increased likelihood of meeting (or surpassing) stated project objectives.

Team building activities tend to focus on encouraging cohesiveness among team members and can include recreational and social activities, such as an organised meal, social event or something more competitive, such as paint-balling. There are numerous organisations that specialise in team building activities, usually comprising outward-bound activities or problem solving exercises (for example, log on to www.skernlodge.com).

These can be useful since they

remove the team from their normal working environment. Nonetheless, challenging team building exercises can also be incorporated into the day-to-day working environment, for example by allocating groups to work on mini-projects, such as a collective piece of research. There are also specialist organisations that provide team building games and workshops (e.g. www.belbin.com), which can help with both development and planning activities.

Whichever activities or approach the Administrative Manager decides to adopt, it is important that the development of the team is carefully monitored in relation to work targets and that this is time constrained rather than open-ended. At all times, the Administrative Manager should encourage open discussion and feedback on progress and ensure adequate resources are allocated for team building activities.

The Administrative Manager may also wish to review reward systems, since many organisations have moved away from individual bonuses and introduced rewards that are increasingly based upon team performance.

There is some argument that a team will typically go through specific stages in its development (Tuckman, 1965) and should therefore be left to develop naturally by itself. However, in the modern dynamic working environment, there are activities that the Administrative Manager can consider to help facilitate the process in order to gain the commitment of all team members towards work objectives, as well as encouraging cohesiveness as a working group and re-enforcing the team's identity.

Institute of Administrative Management Award for the Royal Navy

Lieutenant Matthew Price, a Royal Navy Officer serving at Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde was this year's winner of the annual IAM Service award. Donated by the IAM, the award was presented at the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS), Cornwall, by Martyn Brooks, IAM Business Development Manager.

Recognised as the top student for 2007, Lieutenant Price trained at the DMLS in preparation for his Royal Navy role. Also recognised at the ceremony were achievements of other students trained during 2007, together with certain instructors for their dedication and commitment. A total of 40 awards were presented to a variety of personnel, ranging from sailors starting out on their Royal Navy careers to those who had undergone training in preparation for promotion. Many of the prizes were donated by individuals or by organisations affiliated to the DMLS.

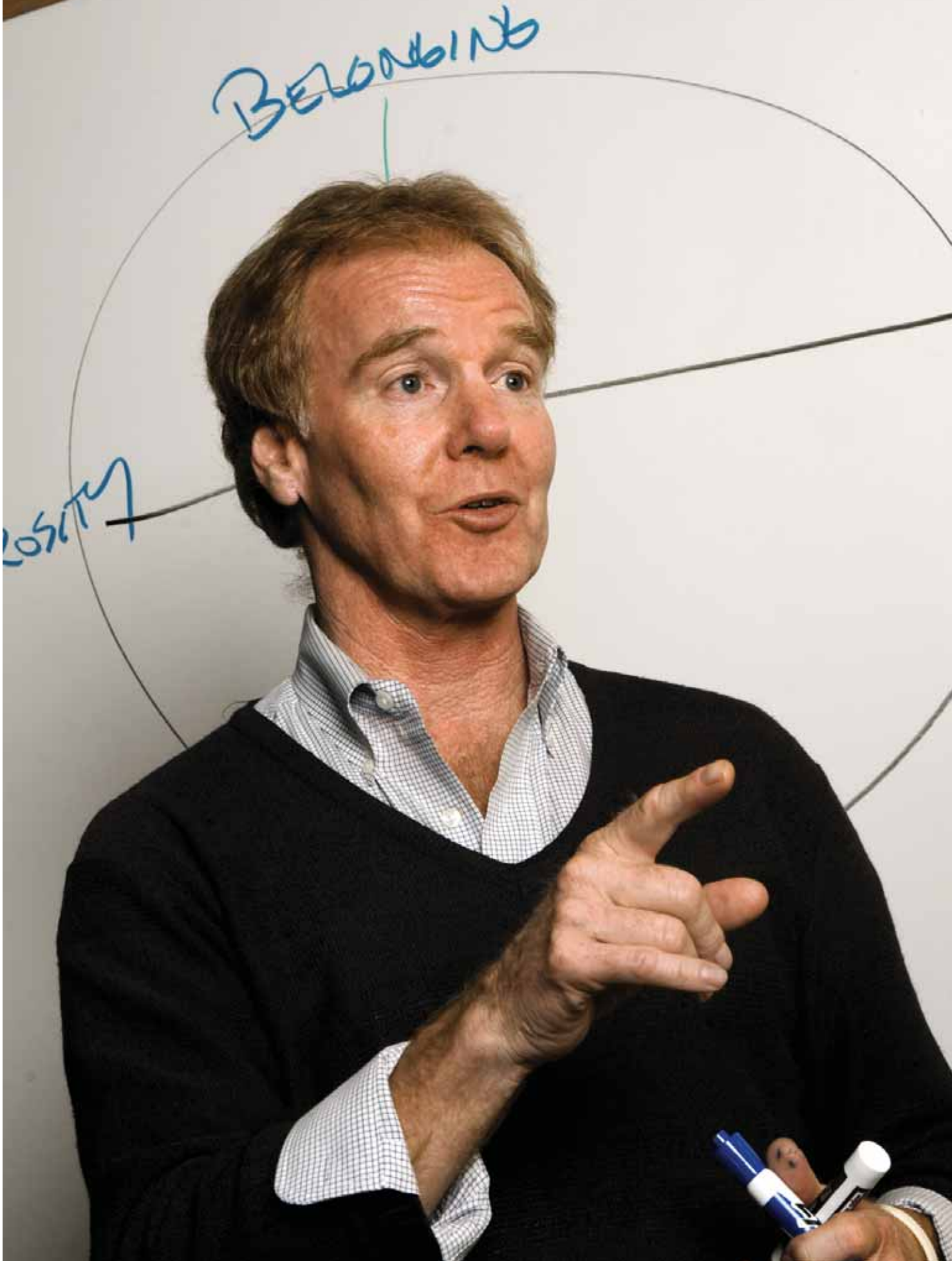
Based at HMS Raleigh, the DMLS is part of the wider Defence College of Logistics and Personnel Administration and provides training to all Officers and Ratings of the Logistics specialisation. These include catering services, supply chain and personnel administration. The DMLS also trains members of the Royal Marines, Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel and the Sea Cadet Corps.

Commander Nic Dodd, Commandant of the DMLS, said that the ceremony was an opportunity to formally thank staff for their commitment and sheer hard work, recognise achievements and also to ensure that training keeps up to date with industry best practice.



'How to...' articles published so far in manager and e.manager

1. How to give an effective presentation / e.manager February 2008
2. How to manage a meeting effectively / e.manager March 2008
3. How to prepare and manage a budget / manager April 2008
4. How to justify capital expenditure / e.manager May 2008
5. How to reduce and control costs / e.manager June 2008
6. How to conduct an effective appraisal / manager July 2008
7. How to manage change affecting the administrative team / e.manager August 2008
8. How to set objectives for administrative staff / e.manager September 2008



A conversation with Peter Senge

As climate and sustainability issues continue to impact on us all, they are also becoming an increasingly important part of the corporate agenda, and therefore a major factor to consider in the successful management of organisations. Peter Senge, one of the world's most influential business thinkers, talks to manager about his concerns

Peter M. Senge, Ph.D. has lectured extensively throughout the world, translating the abstract ideas of systems theory into tools for better understanding of economic and organisational change. His areas of special interest focus on decentralising the role of leadership in organisations so as to enhance the capacity of all people to work productively toward common goals. Dr. Senge's work articulates a cornerstone position of human values in the workplace; namely, that vision, purpose and systems thinking are essential if organisations are to realise their potentials. He has worked with leaders in business, education, healthcare and government.

The Wall Street Journal ranked Dr. Senge as among 2008's 20 most influential business thinkers.

The Journal of Business Strategy named him as one of the 24 people who had the greatest influence on business strategy over the last 100 years. Financial Times named him as one of the world's top management gurus. Business Week rated him as one of The Top Ten Management Gurus.

He is a Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is also Founding Chair of SoL, the Society for Organizational Learning, a global community of corporations, researchers and consultants dedicated to the "interdependent development of people and their institutions."

Dr Senge received a B.S. in engineering from Stanford University, an M.S. in social systems modeling and Ph.D. in management from MIT. He lives with his wife and their two children in the USA.

Imagine a world in which the excess energy from one business would be used to heat another; a world in which environmentally sound products and processes would be more cost effective than wasteful ones; a world in which the globe's major corporations are forming partnerships with environmental and social justice NGOs to ensure better stewardship of the earth and better livelihoods in the developing world. In actual fact, that world is already emerging.

Our situation could not be more urgent. We need to cut carbon dioxide emissions globally by 80% in 20 years. We need to reduce our consumption of water and energy drastically. We need to stop pretending that the problems belong to someone else; in an interconnected world, it doesn't matter whose end of the boat has a hole. There are no good guys and bad guys; we are all responsible for our core sustainability issues – food, water, energy, waste and toxicity. And every one of us has to be part of the solution.

A revolution is underway in today's major businesses. As Peter Senge and his co-authors reveal in their recently-published work, *The Necessary Revolution*, companies around the world are boldly leading the change from dead-end 'business as usual' tactics to the transformative strategies that are essential for creating a flourishing, sustainable world. There is a long way to go, but the era of denial has ended. Today's most innovative leaders are recognising that, for the sake of our companies and our world, we must implement revolutionary – not just incremental – changes in the way we live and work. Those transformative strategies from innovative companies around the world include:

- Coca-Cola's commitment to "water neutrality"; using no more water than it replaces, and its unprecedented collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund to conserve clean water around the world
- Sony Europe's producer responsibility system that takes back electronic equipment at the end of its lifetime
- Ford's new paint system, which reduces its CO2 production emissions by 15%

- Nike's commitment to 100% recyclability of all products by 2020
- Costco, WWF, Starbucks, Sysco, Oxfam, Unilever, The Rainforest Alliance and thirty other leading food companies and NGOs working together through The Global Food Lab to bring sustainable agriculture into the mainstream
- BP's rapidly growing alternative energy business
- Sweden's "Bio Region," the world's first industrial region in which all energy needs will be met without fossil fuels.

By working collaboratively across boundaries, managers in these organisations are exploring and putting into place unprecedented solutions that move beyond just being "less bad" to creating pathways that will enable us to flourish in an increasingly interdependent world. Initiatives from innovative organisations from every sector; from the EU's End of Vehicle Lifetime directive to Nike's new green products and Coke's transformative collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund are proving that by working together, businesses, government, and non-profit organisations are starting to bring about real, sustainable change.

Our sustainability crises call for a new way of thinking:

1 Seeing systems. In a world of growing interdependence, it's more important than ever to learn how to expand the boundaries of normal management attention and concern in order to see the larger systems in which business operates.

2 Collaborating across boundaries. The systems intelligence needed to deal with the challenges we face as the Industrial Age comes to an end, is collective and must be built through working together at many levels, within and beyond organisations, in teams and networks that span industries, communities, sectors and global supply chains.

3 Creating beyond reactive problem solving. Don't just make what you don't want go away. Bring something you care about into reality.

The conversation

The Five Stages of Sustainability: from Compliance to Innovation

- 1 Non-compliance** No sustainability efforts
- 2 Compliance** The organisation only initiates sustainability in reaction to regulatory demands, public pressures or enforcement
- 3 Beyond compliance** The organisation acknowledges that the savings and payoffs of sustainability far outweigh the investments
- 4 Integrated strategy** Sustainability is fully integrated into business strategy
- 5 Purpose/mission** The organisation is aligned with the core values of its people to contribute to a sustainable world

Q Why should we look to global companies to try to solve the sustainability crisis?

A Our world has become increasingly interdependent. Since this web of interdependence has been woven by global institutions, particularly multinational corporations and more recently, global NGOs, it is folly to think it will change without their leadership – and that means each of us who make up the institutions of business, education, medicine and government that shape the modern world.

Q Is your book about climate change or something more?

A Climate change is the tip of a very large iceberg. It is telling us that we have only a decade or two to reduce carbon emissions worldwide by 60-80%. It is like the heart attack that tells a person who has been living an unhealthy lifestyle for a long time to finally realise that change is no longer an option.

Addressing climate change will take much more than just new technologies. The sad fact is that we could be driving cars that get 100-200 miles per gallon today. The reasons we are not are far more complex than climate change: they have to do with the forces that preserve the status quo in industries around the world. Little will change at the scale and in the timeframe needed if these forces do not change.

The good news is that many people from different kinds of global institutions see the same problems and are working in diverse ways to shift these forces.

Q What needs to change first?

A The BIG Three:

- Food and water
- Energy construction and transport
- Products - material waste and toxicity.

These are the three basic global systems that shape how our world works and where the leverage for change lies. All are profoundly out of balance, and more and more people and institutions see this. But the forces maintaining them as they have operated for the past fifty years will not

change easily. It will require a critical mass of change leaders from diverse institutions learning how to see these systems work together – which is exactly what is starting to happen today.

Q Why is food of urgent concern?

A Global food systems are arguably the primary source of poverty in the world today, but few people realise this when they enjoy their cantaloupe in the middle of winter. To make that cantaloupe available at a price that we can all afford has been possible only because of fifty years of falling agricultural prices and farmers' incomes, along with the loss of over a billion hectares of topsoil. The new found desire for organic and other 'natural' foods among rich northern consumers threatens to drive the nail in the coffins of farmers around the world, who will get further squeezed by global food companies now setting standards they will struggle to meet.

Seeing this, today, over fifty of the world's largest food companies and global and local NGOs (including Unilever, Oxfam, Rainforest Alliance, Sysco, General Mills, Costco, Coke, World Wildlife Fund and Starbucks) are working together around the world to think and act together in favour of healthy and sustainable local and global food value chains.

Q How and why has Coca-Cola been addressing clean water conservation?

A Coke and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) have committed to working together for the next five years to try to promote integrated management of watersheds around the world. Coke's Chairman announced at the last UN Global Compact Summit in Geneva that radical change toward sound water management is crucial for Coke's future. He committed to work with other major businesses that depend on water toward this end. This has come as a result of many years of work inside Coke to help pragmatic business managers to see that being more efficient in the use of water is of little good if there is no water.

Q How has the fair trade coffee movement made an impact?

A The fair trade coffee movement has awakened consumer goods companies around the world to the fact that lots of consumers actually care that their purchases promote healthy communities and ecosystems. Initially promoted by NGOs, like Oxfam, the fair trade movement is evolving into more and more sophisticated systems of assessing and ranking the health of complex value chains: do they promote social and environmental, as well as economic, well being? How can this information be made available and salient to consumers? How can standards be continually elevated?

Q In our near future, do you think we'll see entire societies that can run sustainably?

A The whole of Northern Sweden already plans to run its industrial society with zero fossil fuels using advanced technology and cellulosic ethanol. All this came about as the result of a handful of people who, after the Rio Summit, knew that they needed to do something about climate change.

Q Is there any measurable impact that organisations have made to change systems toward greater sustainability?

A Close to 30% of the new construction in the US is now certified by the US Green Building Council's 'Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design' (LEED) certification system, an industry collaborative rating system that includes energy efficiency, air quality and human health, waste, water use and community impact. This has increased from less than 10% a few years ago.

Developed by a small group of frustrated architects, designers and builders, the LEED certification system has exploded from a small-scale attempt to guide people retrofitting old buildings to a sought-after standard of quality for new construction around the world. Many US cities are stated to require it for projects over a certain size.

Q How can IT help capture the collective intelligence of the world to solve climate change?

A Citigroup, Nike, Slumberger and several other companies are working with MIT, the Society for Organizational Learning and the Sustainability Institute on an open-source process of developing games and simulators. The purpose is to build public understanding of the basics of climate change and how it arises from economic growth and our choices of technology, transport, building and how cities are planned and developed. The games are fun and engaging and can start a process of people collaborating around the world in learning and action.

Q What does it take for a global company to transform its systems toward sustainability?

A Nike has an official target of zero waste, zero toxicity across its product line by 2020. This is the result of a few women who began building networks of designers and product managers over ten years and who then came to realise that this was the wave of innovation for the future that most excited them.

Q So is the sustainability crisis best solved by institutions or individuals?

A What is most systemic is most personal – the great paradox of systemic change is that it is about us all.

We are in the midst of the beginnings of a collective learning process without precedent. People and institutions working together around the world – learning how to see the systems we create, collaborating across boundaries, and shifting our orientation from reacting to the problems of unsustainability to creating realities that embody our highest aspirations, for us and for the future generations.

Q Where do you expect we'll find leadership?

A The untapped leadership force for the future is young people around the world. They have the greatest stake in the

future and they know the stakes. They can see where things are headed. They are interconnected as never before. And they have the imagination, persistence, and willingness that few adults possess, to step into the unknown. The only real question is why are we not more actively engaging them as leaders? Perhaps, it has to do with an adult world that is more interested in them as consumers than as human beings and citizens.

Q Why do you say that the industrial age is over?

A The industrial age is a bubble, like financial bubbles. Like them, it is based on a set of distorted realities that violate the larger reality of life on earth, like:

- nature generates no waste – “waste equals food” (versus our 1 ton of waste per person per day in the US)
- all living systems live off of energy that comes from the sun – our “energy income” (versus from digging up the remains of past life and burning it)
- food is mostly local and conserving the regenerative capacity of nature is as important as the food itself (versus the average pound of food in the US traveling 2000 miles before it is purchased and destroying ecosystems in the process)
- beyond basic material requirements, happiness comes from relationships health, and a sense of connectedness and larger purpose (versus from continuing acquisition of material possessions).

Many past societies have understood these ideas. Like all societal bubbles, the Industrial Age Bubble cannot last and signs of its ending are the multiple social and ecologies breakdowns all around us today. The only question is, not if, but how it will end. Will we get caught up in the danger, fear and instinct to protect the past that inevitably accompanies its end, or will enough of us see the possibilities this creates for living well, all together, on earth? This vision is what guides the countless institutional innovations unfolding today.

Q Can some of the same approaches that are contributing to environmental sustainability be used to address social sustainability?

A There is no environmental sustainability separate from social sustainability. They are two sides of the same coin of living in ways that cannot continue. Everyone who is deeply into the process of learning to live beyond the Industrial Age Bubble understands this.

Q How did you choose the organisations whose stories are chronicled in the book?

A The stories and examples in this book are a small sample of a very much larger movement around the world. We have picked these not necessarily because they are the most important, but because we have been directly involved. This helps us to describe them from the inside as well as the outside and we have some feeling for the journey of change they represent. Changing the world will, in the end, “be an inside job.”



THE NECESSARY REVOLUTION:
How Individuals and Organizations Are Working Together to Create a Sustainable World

By Peter Senge, Bryan Smith, Nina Kruschwitz, Joe Laur, and Sara Schley

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How do leaders show up?

Many organisational cultures stifle ambition, denying people the opportunity to display vital skills. **Anthony Landale** urges managers to take a step back and examine how they can start exercising their leadership muscles

How do you show up at work? By that I mean how is your energy, your clarity of purpose, your sense of ambition? Do you consistently arrive on the front foot or are you more inclined to arrive at work in reactive mode, armoured against all the demands you expect to have to deal with, feeling like it's a success if you just survive another week?

It's my contention that if you want to go home at the end of the day feeling good about yourself and what you are up to at work, then you have to be in the first mode. You have to show up with loads of energy and a clear intent. It's only in this mode that you can have any expectations of making a difference and creating a future that you want and which will motivate others.

So is this too much to ask? Surely people want to show up powerfully at work and their colleagues want them to as well. If only...

In my work with leaders I frequently have to confront the dead weight of repressive cultures and the self-limiting beliefs that they engender. What do these cultures typically promote? I'm afraid that all they engender are limited ambition, safety-first behaviour and defeatist thinking. Too often I hear people telling me that what I'm proposing "Isn't possible around here" or "We've tried that before and it didn't work" or "Bill, Jo or Erica won't like it".

As an outsider called in to help organisations and their leaders, I get a clear sense of what it must be like to work in such cultures and let me tell you it often doesn't feel great. I get a sense of people feeling beaten down and de-energised. And yet the people who've employed me want exactly the opposite for their business and for their colleagues.

Be at your best

So how might you, as a manager or a leader, tackle this issue and begin to show up at your best, as well as encouraging people around you to do the same?

The way to start is by getting clear first of all about what matters to you. This is critically important because it's only when you know what you care about that

you will put yourself behind what you are doing. If you don't believe in what you are up to – if you are only working for the monthly wage – and your teams pick up that you don't have any personal commitment to what you are asking of them, then you can confidently predict a response of grudging compliance or worse. So if you want your people to bring their best to their projects and endeavours then you will have to be self-confident and clear both about what you are doing and why it matters.

But is this realistic or is it consultancy snake oil? After all, how many leaders really believe in what they are doing? Surely, in most cases, they are just told what to do and they have to get on with it.

Typically, in most of the organisations in which I get employed, the reality is exactly this. People are in the habit of doing what they are told and they just get on with it. In fact they are extremely good at being busy and have worked their way up the organisation in that mode. And yet most of them know instinctively that this isn't a productive way to operate. They attend endless meetings, they fill their time with processes that don't add value and they almost run from one bit of work to another. They also know that much of this way of spending their energy is both inefficient and leaves them feeling empty.

When I ask them what would feel more purposeful, they tell me that they need to step back, they need to take time to set direction and they need to build better relationships with their colleagues and their teams. But they tell me they just don't have time and so they surrender to the 'Busy Culture' syndrome.

No surrender

This is crazy and it isn't true. They don't have to surrender to this situation, but when they do, it's for one or more of the following three reasons:

1. Because for too long they have been rewarded for such behaviour. Being busy is actually another way of claiming that "I'm important", and in many old world cultures, that is worth fighting for. But it isn't healthy, it doesn't promote high

performing teams and it won't achieve the breakthrough that is being sought.

2. Because they believe that if they stop being busy, then people will start to ask them awkward questions. The old world culture suggests that people who aren't busy will quickly be identified as dead wood and nobody wants that moniker. So managers continually agree to impossible workloads, even when they know they don't have the capacity.

3. Because 'busy-ness' is something many managers have adapted to. It's easy for managers to be busy. It's comfortable. Often managers find it easier fire-fighting or getting involved in the detail of a project than they do stepping back to think about what they are doing and asking whether it is making any difference.

A big part of my work is to help leaders resist this pressure, rather than surrender to it. This means encouraging them to challenge the agendas and expectations that other people set and start creating more dynamic workplace cultures. It means demanding that they start exercising their leadership muscles in a way that has them step back and see what is important and where they can add the most value. It means helping them see that instead of asking their people to simply do what they are already doing faster, they might have to change the context and invite their people to change the prevailing culture.

This is what it means to show up powerfully. It's not about working harder or faster, it's about bringing yourself to work differently and being the best you can be when you do so. This isn't always easy and it takes practice but the results for you, your team and your business, when you do so, are transformational.

Anthony Landale is leadership coach to the 2007 Asian Business Woman of the Year, Romana Abdin. He can be contacted on **+44(0)1608 811861** or email: **anthonylandale@aol.com**

A-class teams achieve A-class results

The most important component of a business is its people and that organisation will only be able to thrive if its employees work together to maximise their potential. Steve Adams discusses how employing and evaluating a well planned staff development day or team building away trip can help employees understand themselves and each other better

The issues that really matter in human progress probably aren't the ones aired in the newspapers every morning. Changes of government personnel, the latest doings of A or B-list celebrities, even modifications in financial indicators, don't really account for the progress of human happiness and well-being.

What does very substantially account for this, is the wealth created by economic success, which itself depends on a range of key factors, including quality of technology, political stability and, above all, how effective people are at work.

Today, people's effectiveness at work is, justifiably, under closer scrutiny than ever before. This is especially true in large organisations, where staff too often find themselves in environments that are unwieldy and unfocused, frequently creating severe morale problems as a result.

Smaller is more satisfying

It is the responsibility of management to stop this from happening. Building great teams doesn't happen by accident;

managers frequently need to incentivise their people through a concerted, goal-orientated intervention that encourages a decisive increase in self-awareness. One of the reasons why many people prefer to work in small organisations, despite lower salaries and possible lower levels of job security, is that they often relish the ready-made, positive collaborative spirit frequently to be found in such organisations.

This isn't to say that smaller organisations never experience problems on the morale or efficiency front, but generally, by their very nature, people are pleasantly conscious of working at the coal-face and enjoy seeing every day how their contribution, combined with the contributions of their colleagues,

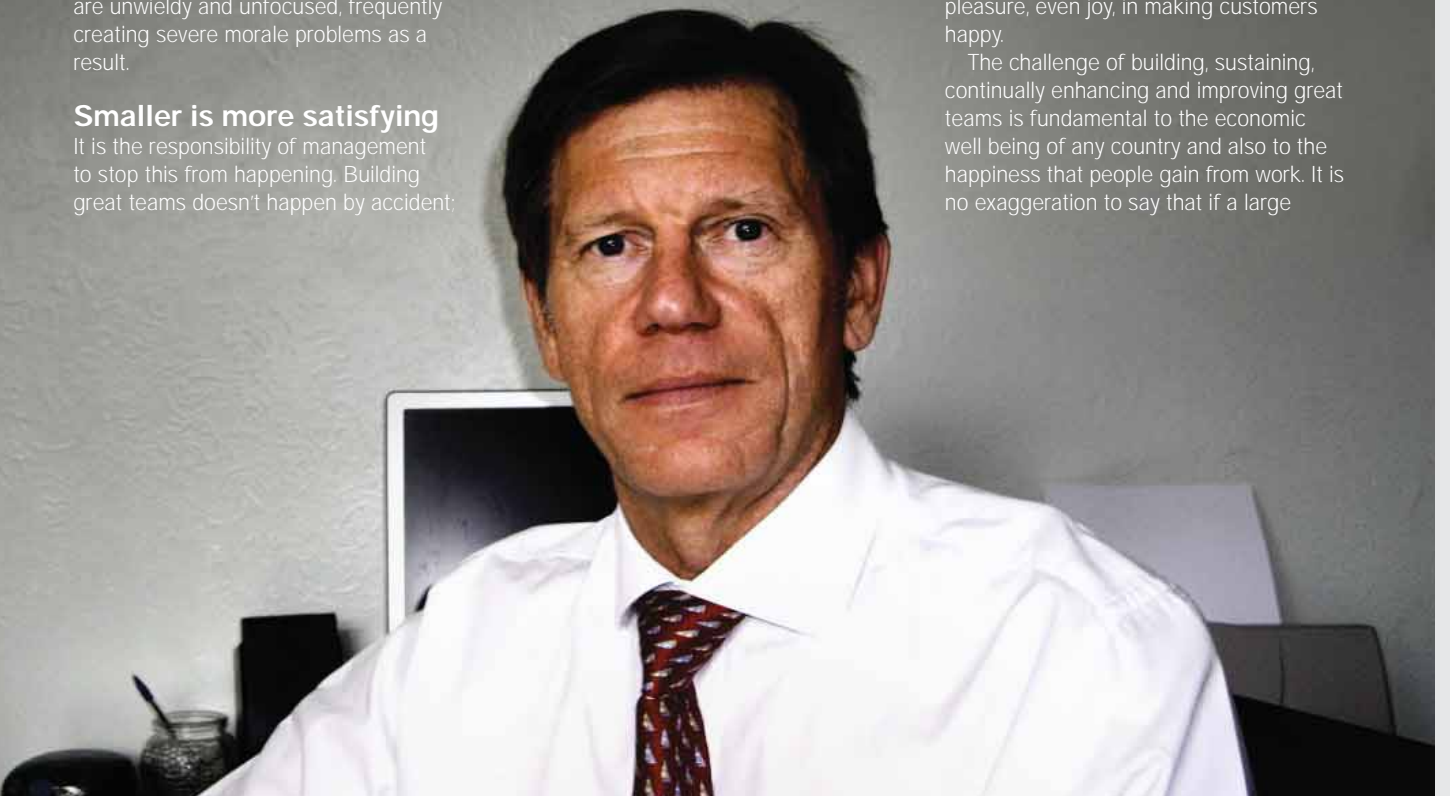
has a significant impact on what the organisation is doing.

This is by no means always the case in large organisations. In particular, big businesses all too often wind up internally with numerous fiefdoms centred around the ego and, too often, self-centred needs of someone who should be a team leader but is something closer to an autocrat.

Such fiefdoms tend to be uncreative, inefficient, claustrophobic to work in, irritating to do business with, and usually amount to something close to the kiss of death for the provision of good customer service.

Why? Because great teamwork requires, ultimately, a spirit of delight in being in the team; a spirit that can't be forged or dissembled; a spirit that takes a personal pleasure, even joy, in making customers happy.

The challenge of building, sustaining, continually enhancing and improving great teams is fundamental to the economic well being of any country and also to the happiness that people gain from work. It is no exaggeration to say that if a large



organisation could increase the effectiveness of its teams by about 10% (according to whichever method the corporation chooses to measure team efficiency), it would achieve a massive improvement in its bottom line.

Such an increase would also have positive results on all the personnel matters that really count, such as retention of key people, overall workplace morale and the crucial dynamic of 'discretionary effort' – that is the extra effort that people gladly and gratuitously put into their work.

Teamwork is a necessity, not an option

Why is getting a team to work well together so often such a challenge in large organisations? One major reason is actually quite straightforward: people do not communicate with one another properly. This prevents them from coalescing into creative, energetic, collaborative teams.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency in the human psyche for people to make erroneous assumptions about the agendas of others, rather than actually taking the trouble to find out what these agendas actually are. The result is a working atmosphere of mistrust, uncreative working and a lack of collaboration with, and resentment of, people with whom one is supposed to be working. If managers fail to identify and rectify this problem, staff will become insecure and unmotivated.

As a result, when workers achieve some seniority within such an organisation, they are more interested in gathering what power they can, holding the reins of that power tightly and resisting the attempts of others to interfere with their 'kingdom'.

Labour has become much more mobile over the past twenty or thirty years. Many jobs are obviously to a large extent project-based. These and other factors hardly

make people feel more secure at work. Real teamwork, which it's no exaggeration to describe as a holy grail of business and business efficiency, is under threat and likely to become more under threat as time goes by and as competition intensifies.

But if people really do collaborate well with each other, the results can be simply glorious. In the old days of sailing ships, it was impossible for many of the larger ships to be sailed by just one person. If that was true of simply constructed ships made of wood and canvas, how much more true, metaphorically, is it of the infinitely more complex organisational ships that create the wealth of the world we live in?

The point is that teamwork is not an option for a successful organisation; it's a necessity. Teamwork can lead to achievement, creativity and energy levels that someone working alone, or perhaps with just one other person, could hardly imagine.

How can real teamwork be achieved?

Many organisations try to confront this question every day and if chief executives and members of senior management are sensible, they involve themselves with solving this problem, rather than delegating it to their Human Resources Department.

Generally organisations accept that to promote teamwork, they need to try to implement a specific initiative to do so. Organisations do not, quite rightly, imagine that simply gathering the group of people together and telling them to work better as a team is likely to be especially effective.

One approach many organisations use is to organise an out-of-office team-building event and send the group of people on it. Firms supplying such event opportunities to organisations use considerable ingenuity in devising the

events and it's unquestionable that many such days out are a great deal of fun.

After all, if your normal experience of working life is sitting in an office with a group of people you don't especially trust, or even don't much like and are then suddenly encouraged to share an adventure with them during paid work-time, it's a fair bet you're going to enjoy that more than sitting in the office. You might even find that during the event, you'll get on with the people (and, who knows, even end up trusting them) more than you ever imagined you would. It's a bit like going to the office Christmas party. You suddenly see beauty and attractiveness in people you didn't imagine was there before and the consequences can be a great deal of fun.

But unfortunately, Christmas parties, like team-building 'away days', or even away weeks, don't last forever. And the day will come when you return to the office and encounter sombre reality.

And that's the problem. Too many team-building events – indeed most of them – are really just time out. Back in the office the old problems of communication, trust and collaboration almost inevitably resurface. You and your colleagues will doubtless retain happy memories of the event and even have a certain nostalgia for it, but it probably won't have changed the conditions of your corporate life sufficiently for a team to be galvanised into existence when merely a group existed before.

So what's the real solution?

What is needed is a different approach, one that will dovetail the external team-building event with the precise needs of the team and which will result in effective follow-ups that ensure the event, and the lessons it teaches, create a permanent change in how a particular group of

people work together.

Ideally there will be four stages in organising a good team building intervention. These depend very significantly on one another for the overall effectiveness of the event.

The first stage is a meeting between the organisers of the team building event and the prospective team in question.

All truly constructive interventions involving an organisation's people are those that happen because there is a strong perceived need for change, with the intervention seeking to address this need. A meeting between the people behind the team building event and the team and identifying as far as possible the team's precise needs from the intervention, must be a vital initial part of the process.

This initial meeting will allow the setting of objectives and preparation of the ground for the actual team building event itself. These preparations will range from discussions of what the team wishes to achieve and how it can be put into practice within the organisation, to practical advice on, for example, the best footwear for the walking expedition.

More seriously, this initial discussion may also be a good time for the trainer to suggest useful advice about how best to approach what may be a highly complex and demanding team-building challenge.

For example, it is often good advice to manage people's involvement in the challenge in 'psychological stages': For example, some long-distance walkers

reward themselves with a treat once they have completed, say, five miles of an arduous challenge. Creating stages and small rewards once stages have been completed is, in fact, good life advice generally. A major task is more manageable if broken into psychological milestones in this way. This is just one of many examples of how the team building challenge relates directly to the challenges of life.

The second stage of the process, which should ideally happen no more than about a month after the initial meeting has taken place, is the team building challenge itself. The entire aim of the process is that this challenge will shed significant light on the team's (or group's) issues that were discussed in the initial stage of the process.

Once the team building challenge has happened, that's it, at least as far as too many team building interventions go. The majority of team building challenge organisers seem to assume that once the challenge has taken place, it's up to the team to learn what lessons it can and that they will implement them in the real world of the office or production line.

But this philosophy is seriously flawed. Where there is no follow-up at all, or where the follow-up is inadequate, it is difficult to believe that the team building challenge can possibly be as productive as it should be.

What is needed is a proper, concerted 'debriefing' that enables the entire team as a unit, and also the individuals who comprise it, to address themselves to vital and pertinent questions relating to the experience of undertaking the challenge.

These questions should of course be tailored by the trainer to relate to the precise needs of the team and the individual. Indeed, some of the questions will very likely have already been identified during initial discussions.

The questions will be likely to include the following considerations:

Some questions to consider during debriefing sessions

- 1 What did you learn about yourself?
- 2 What factors tended to promote good teamwork?
- 3 What factors tended to prevent good teamwork?
- 4 What did you find out that is relevant to the working environment?
- 5 How can I best apply what I have learned in the working environment?
- 6 What is my overall plan from now on?
- 7 What outcomes do I expect as a result of putting my plan into action?

This third stage, a comprehensive debriefing, should take place no more than a month after the event in order to capitalise on the considerable investment that has been made in time and resources and also while the event is still fresh in people's minds.

The debriefing should ideally be followed, about two months later, by a fourth stage: a further discussion that looks at progress that has been made since the first debriefing and identifies what further progress can be made.

Overall, the entire purpose of the four-stage process is to ensure that, so far from only being a fun day out (although it should be that as well), the event, the goals set and the debriefing resolve the vital issues uncovered during the challenge itself. This process should enable the individual members of the team to work together better than ever before.

The four stages of organising a team building event

- 1 Meeting between event organisers and prospective team to determine precise needs and objectives
- 2 The event itself
- 3 The debriefing
- 4 Progress meeting/s

Steve Adams is managing director of *Go Beyond*, a team-building organisation that integrates a challenging external team event with concerted follow-up in the workplace.
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John Tennent
on the 'Business Acumen' skills
that managers must possess

Helping managers to be financially literate

What do you think about on your journey to and from work?

For many there is a stark contrast. The morning is about what needs to be done, such as planning meetings, keeping track of 'to do' lists and contemplating options for dealing with problems that need sorting out. The evening is far more reflective on things that went well and, more often, chewing over things that didn't. The most difficult journey is usually the one after the annual appraisal. Feedback has to be worn with a brave face when it is received, but usually it will be meticulously unpicked in private – separating out comments that are justifiable and those that are incredulous.

How to judge...what to judge?

For most there is an underlying motivation at work to be successful and to be seen and recognised as such. In judging whether you are successful, all depends on your definition of success. It can be about enjoying the praise from a really grateful customer, seeing the way your team is energised and focused, or the satisfaction that a task has been effectively accomplished. However, organisations tend to find these attributes of a successful manager difficult to judge and they see success more specifically through competency and capability frameworks on which feedback will be based. Conformity to the frameworks is required to align rewards that trigger promotion and perhaps the pay package commensurate with elevated status.

Many frameworks split competencies into two types: those that are job specific (such as for marketing, they might be based on consumer insight or advertising and promotion) and management (such as leadership, people management and communication).

A common competency that can be found in this second category is entitled Business Acumen (or a variation thereof). This is a very broad heading and open to wide interpretation by managers responsible for judging capability. For some it means being cost conscious. Yet for others it can mean aligning thinking to the overall corporate strategy.

Business Acumen can be seen as a supporting skill to the job of a manager, rather than a core skill. Many a senior manager, when asked what they are looking for in their operating managers, will use phrases such 'a safe pair of hands' or 'someone who can deliver the numbers'. Both of these phrases imply that they are looking for someone who can manage a budget and deliver their responsibilities within the constraints it imposes. Business Acumen therefore has a high importance, not only in its own right but also as a skill that will apply across many of the other competencies. Managers who do not enjoy this particular aspect of their role fail to give it enough focus and consequently find this out to their detriment. A manager who, when asked for a budget update, creates more 'heat' than 'light' in their answer is likely to receive the ire of those around them almost regardless of his or her other skills.

Therefore what are the aspects of Business Acumen that a manager should be able to demonstrate? Acumen starts with



THE ECONOMIST GUIDE TO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

by John Tennent

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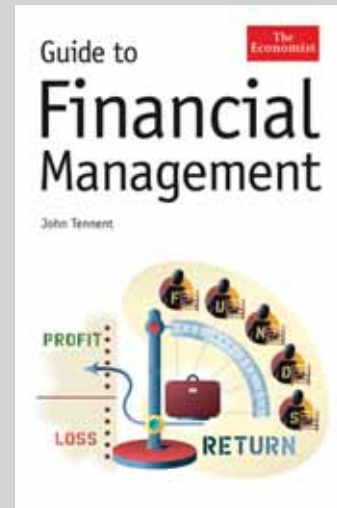
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John Tennent is the author of *The Economist Guide to Financial Management*, which is designed to help managers fulfil financial responsibilities and to demonstrate financial capability – the journey John describes in his article. The book, which is easily readable and technically sound, takes a practical perspective in covering the most important aspects of finance that are the entry level for all those that aspire to success. It is illustrated with a diverse and international set of corporate examples.



Summary: The Skills of 'Business Acumen'

- Engaging with the business strategy
- Understanding key performance indicators
- Reading and interpreting financial reports
- Contributing to the budget process
- Identifying the financial implications of decisions
- Continuing to seek ways to add value, not cost

a knowledge of the language and terminology used to report business and a level of financial literacy that enables an individual to engage with commercial discussions. In its fullest sense Acumen is about being able to demonstrate skills in six areas as follows:

- Engaging with the business strategy: knowing the organisation's mission, objectives, strategy and tactics at a macro level to ensure that all actions that are taken align with these overarching axioms. Individuals can then relate and understand why changes in the organisation are made, potentially making it possible to support initiatives, rather than undermining them.
- Understanding key performance indicators: knowing the portfolio of metrics that are used to monitor business performance at total company, department and project levels. This includes knowing how the indicators are calculated to ensure that actions taken can be translated into how the indicators will be affected.
- Reading and interpreting financial reports that are generated within the business. This includes total company, departments, budget area and projects. The skill is being able to assess strengths and weaknesses and identify appropriate actions that will improve performance.
- Contributing to the budget process: actively participating in the budget process, the setting of budgets and the monitoring of performance through the budget year. At a detailed level this includes using variance analysis to interpret the causes of deviation from budget predictions and producing year-end forecasts that predict the likely out-turn for the year.
- Identifying the financial implications of decisions: through the origination and evaluation of a business case that projects forward the likely financial effects of any changes to the business that will take place. This area ventures beyond finance into judgment, but judgment made on the basis of experience and sound evidence.
- Continuing to seek ways to add value, not cost: continually improving the performance of the products and services by adding customer value, whilst eliminating cost and waste in their provision.

Whilst strength in these six areas is by no means a fast track ticket up through an organisation, the opposite is almost certainly true. An inability in these areas will hold back even the most ambitious. The onus is often upon the manager to develop their skills through either structured training or reading.

The best place to start can be your own company's 'annual report and accounts', which is normally structured in two halves. The first half is the actual report, i.e. the descriptive part highlighting key events in the past year and plans for the future. The second half is the annual accounts, i.e. the numerical part with the detailed performance for the past two years. A familiarisation with the headline numbers and significant accounting policies will start a process of becoming more comfortable with this type of information. Reading quarterly updates etc will then seem more relevant and, after a while, may even be eagerly awaited by the manager.



How to tackle workplace bullies

Nobody gets anywhere in business by being soft but, 'hard' behaviour can quickly become bullying behaviour. Tolerating bullies or a bullying culture can be catastrophic but people are routinely bullied at work despite policies and procedures set-up to protect them. Business psychologist Anni Townend believes companies are underperforming because they aren't getting to grips with this problem

Dealing with bullying behaviour in the workplace is one of many managerial responsibilities. However, managers need support to deal with this growing problem. In order to help people to recognise the different forms of bullying and to change their behaviour, they need support from the top – from business leaders who need to actively lead the way in promoting a culture of assertiveness and inclusivity.

Bullying behaviour is more prevalent in organisational cultures where there is a lack of respect, trust and openness between people. Communication between people tends towards the non-assertive, a mixture of aggressive, passive and manipulative behaviours, of which bullying is an extreme form. Bullying can be verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, general or specific. Whatever form it takes, it is always undermining, humiliating, excluding and shaming of other people. It can be intentional or unintentional. When intentional, the intended impact is one of

hurting others. When it is unintentional, people have a lack of awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others. Either way, the impact of bullying behaviour on people is always devastating and often long lasting. Equally team members and the department as a whole are impacted on, resulting in lower morale, higher turnover of employees and reduced effectiveness. Whilst some high profile cases reach the media, most instances of bullying go unreported for fear of further bullying.

The importance of being assertive and inclusive

It is important that managers are clear about what are assertive and non-assertive behaviours and that their own communication is assertive and inclusive. Assertive behaviours are those that are underpinned by the values of respect, openness and trust. People take

responsibility for their behaviour towards others and are aware of the choices that they are making in their communications. Assertive relationships are characterised by mutual respect, in particular for differences.

When there is conflict, people see this as an opportunity for transformation, for building bigger relationships based on a deeper understanding of each other, irrespective of whether the conflict is fully resolved. Assertive relationships are bigger relationships in which people are curious. They listen to and ask questions of each other. They build on each other's ideas and are able to take risks by way of giving, receiving and asking for feedback, knowing that it is safe enough for them to do so.

Managers have the responsibility of ensuring that communication is assertive and also of establishing clearly what is acceptable behaviour. This can be done in one-to-one and team meetings. The

latter provide an excellent opportunity for managers to demonstrate assertive and inclusive behaviours. The manager can ensure that everyone is included at the beginning of meetings simply by 'going round the table' whether actually or virtually – as in a conference call. In this way everyone is 'seen and heard' from the outset. During the meeting it is the role of the manager to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to input their thoughts and feelings on different items. Managing the inputs from everyone, ensuring that people are given opportunities to voice their doubts and disagreements, is important. The manager's role in allowing people to express their differences is necessary if people are to work together more effectively. If differences and disagreements are not brought 'to the table', they will surface sooner or later in the form of frustrations which can lead to bullying behaviour.

Creating a positive working environment

Through their own examples of assertive behaviour and building of bigger more inclusive relationships, managers can create a positive working environment in which people are clear about what behaviours are, and are not, acceptable. In such an open climate, managers can have conversations in which they encourage their employees to reflect on their behaviours and are able to give

specific feedback to them if necessary on unacceptable traits.

Until it is brought to their notice, people may be blind to the fact that their behaviours are having a negative impact on others and it is only through clear and specific feedback that they are able to reflect on, and to change, their behaviours. The conversations which managers typically find most difficult are those where people are individually performing well and achieving their targets, but are using bullying behaviours to do so. This is clearly unacceptable and it is easier for managers to address the problem if they have already clearly defined and communicated what is acceptable behaviour.

As I have said, managers themselves need support in dealing with bullying in the workplace. It is vital that business leaders promote a culture of assertiveness and inclusivity in which diversity is truly valued.

Everyone needs to agree

Leaders who do this promote a culture in which everyone is responsible for ensuring that the values of respect, openness and trust are inherent in their own behaviours. Within this assertive and inclusive organisational culture, instances of bullying are recognised quickly, seen as a symptom of an underlying problem and addressed promptly. This can be done through a conversation between the

individual perceived as perpetrating the bullying and their line manager, sometimes in the presence of a member from Human Resources who can help mediate if necessary. A similar conversation, sometimes also with a member of Human Resources in attendance, is necessary with the person or people on the receiving end of the bullying.

After these conversations have taken place, the next step is for the people concerned to have a facilitated conversation in which there is an opportunity for one party to talk and to be heard by the other. Again the manager may be the best person for this role. At other times it may be appropriate for another person to be present in order to facilitate the dialogue. The goal of all these conversations is to further understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of the people concerned and, through this process of dialogue, to arrive at a solution which includes both parties feeling respected and feeling able to move forward. Sometimes it is sufficient for the person who has been bullied to receive an apology from the other person and an agreement that the offending behaviour will not happen again.

The combination of conversation and clear assertive communication in the workplace is key to creating the kind of inclusive working environment in which people understand what are assertive behaviours and in which bullying behaviours are addressed promptly.

The cost to business of bullying is huge

Typically bullying leads to high levels of absenteeism through stress and illness and organisations face damage to reputation, especially if a case goes to an industrial tribunal. Businesses are not getting the most out of their staff because they are not empowering them to perform to the best of their ability and they may even be scared or fearful to try.

The impact of bullying can be devastating to the individuals who are being bullied. They

can suffer mentally, emotionally and physically, often with long term effects.

People are often frightened to speak out about bullying because they fear it will only get worse if they do, or that they won't be listened to. All too often the person doing the bullying will have been bullied themselves and learned their behaviour as a result. For any organisation to really be effective, they need to encourage everyone, but particularly their leaders, to learn how

to be assertive and to acknowledge that their employees have a diverse range of opinions, backgrounds and attitudes, all of which can be accommodated.

In my recently published book I point out that simply having a policy and procedures to deal with bullying is not enough. I detail solutions which can build the right kind of culture in business to eliminate the dysfunctional behaviour underlying most bullying.

As a business psychologist, **Anni Townend** specialised in helping individuals and organisations to achieve their potential and is a leading advisor and consultant with over 20 years experience working with people in organisations as a facilitator, trainer, coach and counsellor. Her book, *Assertiveness and Diversity*, is a practical guide, useful to anybody concerned with relationships in the workplace. It is published by Palgrave Macmillan.



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How to handle your lawyer

Many executives have an affinity for negotiating deals, but when it comes to drafting a legally binding contract, Giles Dixon cautions managers to seek legal advice sooner, rather than later

1 Take legal advice sooner, rather than later



Although legal advice can be expensive – and some hints on controlling costs appear later in

this article – you can often save money, both for your company and in legal fees, if you get advice early on and do not leave it too late. You may think you have the necessary skills required for drawing up contracts but are your drafting skills really as good as you think? Solicitors are

trained to write in unambiguous English – believe it or not – and to consider the potential risks when looking at a contract. So for any contract, especially one of real potential value to your company, it pays to get it checked by a professional before it is signed.

Take a look at the Case History. If a solicitor had been asked to advise on, if not draft, the original agreement before it was signed, there would have been a more clearly worded contract that could have prevented the dispute from arising in the first place.

Even if no lawyer had been involved at the contract stage, if the defendant had gone to a lawyer before the proceedings were issued, a letter from that lawyer to the claimant could have made it clear that the claim was a spurious one and a settlement could have been achieved. And if the defendant had gone to a lawyer when he received the county court claim, he could have filed an effective defence and argued his case in court with good professional advice.

So, at each one of three stages, legal advice would have been worth paying for. It would have been quite inexpensive – just a few hours of the solicitor's time.

The message: when a dispute is looming, don't put your head in the sand and hope it may go away – get some independent legal advice at an early stage. Solicitors can help avoid disputes and can manage problems, as well as litigate, if all else fails. Furthermore it's important to make sure that any large contract is being monitored – not just run by an individual, however senior – but overseen by the Board. All too often a dispute with a supplier can escalate because the manager most closely involved is trying to protect his/her position. In a large group, he or she may not appreciate

how widespread the damage could be if one major supplier or customer falls out with the company. Getting legal advice is one way of keeping problems under surveillance – and under control.

2 Select the right legal firm



Solicitors, even in smaller firms, tend to specialise, so if you need legal advice, look for someone who deals with the

appropriate area of law for your needs. Whilst a long-term relationship between solicitor and client can be useful, do not feel you need to use the same firm for all your work. Larger companies have realised this for some time, and often use a range of law firms. Incidentally, this keeps the lawyers on their toes, as well as giving the clients access to different specialist providers.

Most solicitors obtain their clients through recommendation. If nobody is able to recommend the right firm to you, there are plenty of directories, e.g. Legal 500, Chambers and, of course, the Internet, with websites like Lawyer Locator. The Law Society (www.lawsociety.org.uk) has a full listing of solicitors by name, specialism and location.

3 Size matters



Unless the work is going to need a really large team of lawyers (and this is the exception, rather than the rule),

look at the small and medium size firms first. Not only are their fees likely to be

Case History: Publishing

A real life example: a publisher teamed up with another company to produce a new magazine. An agreement was written without any legal advice and it was signed. A dispute then broke out between the two sides and after some acrimonious correspondence, one of the parties – without having a decent basis for a claim – issued proceedings in the county court claiming several thousand pounds. Still no lawyers were involved. The defendant failed to respond to the claim in the time specified by the court and so judgment was awarded against him.


Only then did the defendant obtain some legal advice and, eventually, the judgment was overturned and he recovered some of his costs. However, the dispute meant that neither side spoke to the other and a business relationship that might have benefited both sides was soured. As a consequence both parties lost money.



less but the service is likely to be more personal with more partner involvement. Large law firms are a bit like grand hotels – impressive foyers, lots of staff and with a tendency to be more expensive, even for small things. At the end of the day, if what you want is friendly, personal service and a comfortable bed, you don't need the Dorchester!

The smaller the firm, the smaller the team is a rough rule of thumb. Whilst, for example, a joint venture for a construction project might be handled by one experienced solicitor in a niche firm, it could involve members of both the construction and commercial departments of a large practice. And while assistant solicitors in large firms may be bright and technically competent, they often do not have the wider commercial view or experience that a client needs.

4 Fees



Generally speaking the bigger the firm, the higher the fees. A partner in a large City firm may have a charge-out rate of £500 per hour, a smaller firm £350 and a sole practitioner less than £200. While you will see less of the partner in the big firm, the team approach is still likely to make the large firm more expensive than the smaller one. The fees panel (*right*) contains a few tips, which may help control costs.

5 Give the lawyer clear instructions



The first step is to work out what you want your lawyer to do for you. You may not be

entirely clear before the first meeting, but quite often that will be a preliminary session and you may not be charged for it.

Then remember that, as a general rule, you will be paying for the solicitor's time. Most law firms record time in units of six minutes.

Once you are clear as to your requirements, here are some tips that will help you to get the best out of your professional relationship with your legal advisors:

- Give the lawyer a written summary of the transaction and the aspects on which you need advice.
- Arrange to meet the person who will handle your work if it is not the partner you dealt with initially: the solicitor-client relationship does matter.
- Agree what service you will be getting and confirm it in writing: if you want a broad overview of a complex contract, rather than a line by line commentary, or advice on only the intellectual property aspects of a transaction, make his clear – it can have a big impact on the fees.
- Hand over copies of all relevant documents and correspondence, notes of meetings etc in chronological order.
- Don't hand over a box of files and then complain if it takes your solicitor a week to sort out the papers.
- Establish a sensible timetable for the work. Solicitors are busy people and need time to look after you properly.
- Do some preparatory work – if, say, you want a contract prepared, websites like ContractStore.com offer free checklists and low cost templates.
- And when you instruct a solicitor, remember it is in confidence and he or she needs to know the downside as well as the upside: holding back information, especially if a dispute is looming, is unwise. Your solicitor needs to be properly prepared to deal with the job.

Summary

I can't do better than advising you to take another look at point 1: Get legal advice sooner, rather than later. If you leave it too late before getting legal advice, it's quite likely to cost more than if you obtained it early on.



Also your solicitor needs to be adequately prepared and not asked to attend a difficult meeting without knowing the background. So, in the end, it's down to you!



Having been a partner in a City law firm, Giles Dixon has his own niche legal practice and runs ContractStore.com, which he founded to assist businesses put professionally-drafted, legally-binding contracts in place for a fraction of the cost that law firms normally charge. Contact: contracts@contractstore.com

Fees - getting a good deal

- When discussing your requirements, find out how the work is to be handled – i.e. the number and skills of lawyers concerned
- Get a firm price and timetable: solicitors do not like fixed fees but limits on time and cost, plus regular reporting can be important
- If you are bidding for a project, aim for a discounted and/or capped price, perhaps with a success fee if you win the bid
- Don't feel intimidated by the surroundings. Solicitors negotiate just like other trades

The Language of Success

Tina Catling believes that successful communication in everyday situations relies on utilising language that inspires and motivates

Many people would rather die than think. In fact, they do Bertrand Russell

I'd like to begin by asking you to consider two questions:

1. Do you think that the words you choose to use in business propel you and your colleagues to success or hold you back and encourage failure?
2. When was the last time you really thought about the words you select to use when you communicate?

Words can build or destroy

As an innovation consultant, I find myself in a wide range of organisations, from charities and manufacturers, to professional service firms and universities. I always find it interesting to really tune in to the language that is prevalent in an organisation. For example, in one business that was struggling to get people to think creatively, it became common practice to respond to people who presented colleagues with ideas with, "Interesting, but my push back to you on that would be...."

On the surface this seemingly innocent remark may seem harmless enough but consider it more closely and you will see that it is toxic. Would you say that to a child that you were trying to encourage? What impact do you think it would have? Really think about the words "push back". What do they make you think of? How would it make you feel if someone said that to you? Rejection? Being pushed around? Being bullied? Being at the mercy of aggression and power? Certainly not the stuff of trust, empowerment, nurturing or the encouragement of creative thinking.

So, it was no surprise that the management was struggling to encourage brave, experimental thinking and new ideas. Over time individuals got tired of being 'pushed back' and simply stopped being creative.

When we communicate, we take our word selection for granted. Mostly we babble on without consideration of the effect on the listener (and on ourselves).

One interesting exercise you can do to tune in to your language, and that of your colleagues, is to literally write down what you hear and what you say during one or more days, or even in one meeting or phone conversation. Keep your notes and then review them carefully, considering what you would judge to be positive and negative language. For example, "Yes and..." versus "Yes but..." and "We might" as opposed to "We will". Are you a "Yes and"... or a "Yes but"... person? And what about your organisation?

Words create reality

There is a language of possibility and a language of necessity. Some words compel us to action and some make us stop. Some make us curious to learn more and some make us feel bored. Some make simple tasks feel difficult and others make

difficult tasks feel easy!

Consider if you were faced with a difficult job, or one that you have been putting off for ages. Which of the statements below would motivate you to move forward towards success?

I might do it
I could do it
I should do it
It is possible for me to do it
I will do it
I can do it
I'm going to do it

Differentiate between the language of possibility and the language of necessity and you will become more positive. In fact, it's not just being positive when you communicate with others that is important. That will certainly have a positive influence on them. Equally vital is what you say to yourself – in your own head – that is critical. You must adopt a positive attitude towards yourself. Why? Because your own brain believes what you say, so for example, if you say to yourself, "I am not creative", then you will believe that you are not. And, of course, the opposite applies.

Whether you think you can or can't, you're right
Henry Ford

I know it sounds too simple or too good to be true, but it is true. Sages, clergymen, doctors, researchers, philosophers, psychologists, parents, teachers, coaches and poets all cite plenty of evidence. Real life examples abound.

The mind alters how the body works.

Man is what he conceives himself to be
Jean-Paul Sartre

The words that get things done

Equally when you are talking about your company or your team, the same is true. Which statement is more likely to create a successful outcome?

"We are not big so we will probably not be able to get the contract."

or

"We have the capability to give the client exactly what they need so we will win the contract."

Listen to yourself and your colleagues. Watch out for the dangerous, the negative, or even the violent words. Listen out for, and become aware of, the toxic words that creep into your lexicon and which all too easily become the norm.

The negative, self-doubting words
In fact, they do
MAYBE POSSIBLY PERHAPS PROBABLY ALMOST MIGHT

A combination of words like, "I might possibly try to write the presentation" is never going to get the task done as it hits the

high score for negativity, using a super strength combo of three disabling words in one statement. Why not just say, "I will write the presentation."

Aggressive words create stress

Listen out for the aggressive words; they can be silent but deadly – for example, "The idea was savaged, the knives are out, the project was killed off, that presentation was painful, he needs shooting." These aggressive words can significantly add to stress at work and make for an unpleasant and negative atmosphere.

Life is hard enough so stop using words that make things more difficult! In fact, just think for a few moments about the words of ease or difficulty? Do some words *put barriers in front of you* whilst others *oil the wheels*?

Make life easier / harder with the words you use

EASY together, collaborative, fun, straightforward, support, momentum, simple, trouble free, painless, solution

DIFFICULT huge, complicated, weighty, thorny, knotty, problematic, tough, hard, tricky, easier said than done, hurdles, barriers, battles

For example, imagine you are receiving a brief on a new task. Consider these statements about the same challenging project. How do the two statements make you feel?

"We know that you might struggle with this as it is a very problematic situation. There are a lot of barriers you have to get over. But we think you could possibly work your way through the obstacles, see the light at the end of the tunnel even if it is easier said than done. Perhaps you could give it a try."

as opposed to

"We are so excited to work with you on surmounting this challenge. We know if we collaborate, we will create a straightforward and painless way to success and will make it fun so the team will be motivated throughout."

Common Negative Phrasing

If you want to move to more positive communication, the first task is to identify and eliminate common negative phrasing. The following are quite common and should be avoided whenever possible.

1. Expressions that suggest carelessness, such as, "You neglected to specify, you failed to include, you overlooked enclosing"
2. Phrases that suggest the person is lying, such as, "You claim that, you say that, you state that"
3. Expressions that imply that the recipient is not too bright, such as, "We cannot see how you, we fail to understand, we are at a loss to know"
4. Demanding phrases that imply coercion/pressure, such as, "You

should, you ought to, you must, we must ask you to, we must insist."

5. Phrases that might be interpreted as sarcastic or patronising, such as "No doubt, we will thank you to, you understand, of course, please respond soon."

Who do you think you are talking to?

The words that motivate us as humans call to our personality types. If you calibrate your language to engage with the personality of the person with whom you are speaking, then you will build rapport, engagement and motivation. In essence you will be able to influence them positively.

As an exercise, consider someone you need to influence in the next few days. Is that person very serious, formal and organised, or chaotic and fun? Are they motivated by money and results or by collaboration, people and emotional rewards?

Are they a visual person – one who loves imagery – who says, "I see what you mean" or are they an auditory person – one who enjoys listening – and who is likely to respond with "I hear what you are saying".

For example, I am a highly visual and creative person, so if you want to motivate me to do a research task, then using words such as "difficulty" and "complexity" or "data" and "analysis" will make me run a mile. However, if you make me curious about the results and use words such as "discovery" and "exploration" or "insight" and "imagination", then suddenly the same task is more engaging and I want to work on it so that I can see the result.

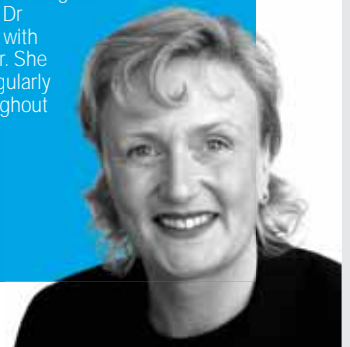
A final word

When I discovered the power of words and realised how much they were affecting my choices, my self-esteem and my success in life, I chose to think more carefully about how I used them.

I know that, after reading this, you will be more reflective about the language of communication and I believe and earnestly hope that life at work and at home will be more fun and more successful for you.

Tina Catling is Joint Chair and one of the founders of outside the box, an award winning marketing communications agency. She is also a director of THINK! – a strategic innovations consultancy. She has 25 years experience in marketing, initially with Saatchi and Saatchi and Ogilvy & Mather, working with clients such as Wedgwood, Club Mediteranée, American Express and Readers Digest. Tina has studied applied psychology with Dr Bandler (founder of NLP) and hypnotism with Paul McKenna, and she is an NLP Master. She is a sought after keynote speaker and regularly addresses events both globally and throughout the UK. She is the co-author, with Mark Davies, of the unique book **think!**

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management matters

By Jacqueline McLean

Managerial qualities

In keeping with the theme of this issue, Jacqueline McLean takes an overview of the qualities that successful managers need to possess

Let's face it. Management matters. It's a significant part of the functioning and longevity of an organisation and the bastion of standards, quality and competitive advantage. With a ubiquitous barrage of environmental variables seeking to attack the organisation's defences, the task of management in the 21st Century is complex, dynamic and challenging. It entails balancing a multiplicity of activities, such as forecasting and planning, to secure the organisation's future; organising tasks, human, financial and material resources; co-ordinating systems and processes; directing the organisation's activities and operations and controlling deviations from set plans (Fayol, 1916).

Management is an essential activity – but it is by no means an easy mantle to carry. At best, it's rewarding and exciting; at worst, it's an exasperating and rather thankless task. However, management is a crucial job and its effectiveness is heavily reliant upon the synergy of a myriad of interdependent factors. According to Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell (2007), managerial effectiveness is not merely dependent on how well qualified a manager might be, or how well s/he uses their intuition to make, often unpopular, decisions. They advocate that managerial success and effectiveness emanate from the possession and application of eleven qualities, which include having a command of basic facts about the job and organisation; being sensitive to macro and micro environmental events taking place around them and also being emotionally resilient in such a way that they are able to bounce back from dealing with emotional and stressful situations – which, I'm sure all of us will agree, is symptomatic of being a manager.

Like Pedler et al, Pettinger (2007) advocates that balancing efficiency (converting inputs to outputs; Naylor, 2004) with effectiveness (getting results) involves the interplay of ten personal qualities, which we shall explore. Pettinger's typology is similar to many other models, insofar as it espouses an 'ideal' of what should be happening. As with so many things, the reality is often quite different (theory-in-use; Argyris and Schön, 1974). So, in order to compare Pettinger's typology to a realistic situation, I asked Andrew Young, Director of Operations for the IAM, to spend some time applying the model to his roles and responsibilities as a busy director and manager. His findings are presented here.

Applying the Managerial Qualities in Practice

The first of Pettinger's qualities is ambition, energy, great commitment, self motivation. These are traits that tend to be down to an individual's personality and can be difficult to 'obtain'. One might say that they are innate or inbred. However, they are essential for any manager in order to progress in their career, as people with these traits tend to be naturally ripe for promotion.

The second quality is job, product and service knowledge. As a manager, this is essential in order to monitor the work of others. If managers do not have the essential knowledge about what the company does, they cannot ensure that the people in their team have the same knowledge, and to what extent.

With the third quality, drive and enthusiasm, I found that, like quality number one, they are also innate traits and key to what pushes me as a director and manager.

The fourth quality, creativity and imagination, links to an individual's approach to problem solving and thinking outside the box. It creates an innovation culture, where effective solutions are created easily. Again, it can be a personality trait which is difficult to obtain.

I definitely feel that the fifth quality, a thirst for knowledge, is imperative. In my career, I have found that knowledge is power and so the more knowledge and information managers have at their disposal, the better decisions they will make.

The sixth quality is a commitment to improvement. It can be easy to rest on one's laurels when everything is going right, but nothing is 100% perfect. It is the commitment to improvement and not necessarily the ability to spot improvements that matters. It should be that a culture of continuous improvement is everyone's business and not just the responsibility of management.

The seventh quality is a commitment to continuous development, both personal and professional. It is all too easy for a manager to reject criticism of their areas of weakness, but it is essential to swallow pride and show that everyone has areas of development. It is important for managers to realise that staff members have their own agenda and that ideally, the two agendas will work together and benefit both the organisation and the individual.

“Management is an essential activity but it is by no means an easy mantle to carry. At best, it is rewarding and exciting; at worst, it’s an exasperating and rather thankless task”

Pettinger’s Ten Managerial Qualities

- 1 Ambition, energy, great commitment, self motivation
- 2 Job, product and service knowledge
- 3 Drive and enthusiasm
- 4 Creativity and imagination
- 5 A thirst for knowledge
- 6 Commitment to improvement
- 7 A commitment to continuous development, both personal and professional
- 8 The ability to grow and broaden the outlook and vision of the organisation
- 9 A positive and dynamic attitude, self discipline and empathy with staff
- 10 A love of the organisation, and pride and enthusiasm in the job, people, products, processes etc...

The eighth quality is the ability to grow and broaden the outlook and vision of the organisation. As a manager, it is important to ensure that the vision of the organisation is current, appropriate and communicated to employees as a motivational tool. In order to survive, the outlook and vision need to be constantly evolving with the times.

The penultimate quality is a positive and dynamic attitude, self discipline and empathy with staff. I have found that attitude is key as a manager because you set the mood of the office by your attitude. The staff are motivated by positive attitudes and, in turn, they become more positive. Lives and work usually meet at some point and it is therefore important to show staff that you understand and empathise with their situation and are able to work together to create solutions.

The final quality is a love of the organisation and pride and enthusiasm in the job, people, products, processes etc. In my opinion, this is probably the most important quality of them all, as without a ‘love’ of what you do and who you work for, nothing can be achieved! It displays itself in the attitude of individuals and the level of efficiency at which the organisation operates. It is the ‘blood’ that flows through the veins of the company.

One of the things I have learnt from doing this exercise and, ostensibly, from professionalising my role as a director and manager by obtaining a master’s degree, is that one should be encouraged to challenge theories and use current workplace practice to either refine processes or point out where theories are misled. In reality, business practices are appropriate to the circumstances and requirements of the organisation, rather than theories imposed from academic institutions. Managers need to understand the theories but also need to adapt them for appropriate use. Importantly, they should also keep up to date with changes in business thinking, to ensure that regular processes and systems are at the cutting edge, rather than steps behind. My biggest driver as a manager is making sure the companies deliver what they are supposed to for our clients, and finding better and more efficient ways of doing this. Pettinger’s qualities go some way to helping to prioritise the achievement of the things that matter.

Many thanks to Andrew Young for his valuable contribution to this article.

BOOKS



BOOK REVIEW

THE WEBSITE WORKOUT

A simple, complete guide to strengthening your online presence

by Darin Brockman

Published by Words at Work, London

ISBN: 978 09552798 2 9

192 pages. Paperback

RRP £7.99

www.words-at-work.org.uk

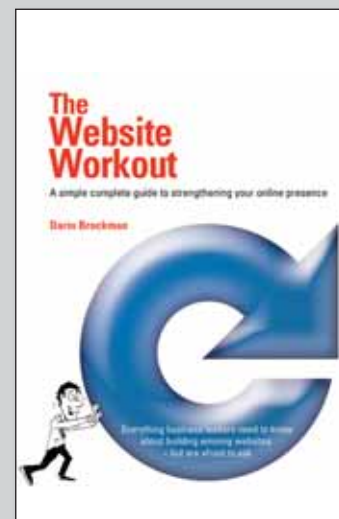
by Mark Bush FlinstAM

The author is the managing director of a leading web development agency. The aim of the book is to inform and coach business executives (who may not be familiar with website technology and jargon) on the importance of a top quality website.

It covers subjects ranging from what your website needs to do and the need for careful research into what it should look like, what information it should contain and what functions it should have. It then goes on to describe the absolute need to be high up on any search engine function; online trading and marketing; and concludes with the tools needed to maintain the site and assess its performance.

The book is written in an easy question and answer style – “How can a website achieve your objectives?” There are ample illustrations giving answers and the benefit of experience. There are also a number of colour illustrations, which are rather strangely placed in the centre of the book away from the relevant text.

There is no doubt that there is a wealth of experience here, which can be utilised to enhance a business. It is also a useful tutorial on the principles to be considered by both



senior and middle management. It is particularly strong on the need for analysis and feedback in order to keep the site up to the mark. The one thing that is missing is a concluding chapter bringing everything together.

A recommended read and a useful book for the top right hand drawer of your desk.

This month's Green Light covers a wide range of environmental topics of interest to Administrative Managers, including items relating to further and higher education, sustainable development indicators, and greening men's toilets!

Environmental Terminology – Bioplastics

Most plastics in use today are derived from oil and their use has two problems. They use up a non-renewable resource and waste plastic persists in the environment for very long periods of time. (According to the San Francisco Chronicle, the world's largest rubbish dump floats in the Pacific Ocean not far from Hawaii – and 80% of it is plastic.) Bioplastics are sourced from plant-based materials rather than oil and considerable research effort is being devoted to develop plastics that degrade in a matter of months. These bioplastics, however, can bring their own problems. Largely made from substances like starch, the land used to grow the raw materials is no longer available for food crops, and whilst they do biodegrade more quickly than oil-based plastics, this is often only under strictly controlled conditions in special composters.

Green Publishing

As environmental and sustainability issues grow more and more important, different commercial sectors become increasingly engaged. This is clearly shown in the publishing sector, where several popular magazine titles produce annual 'green issues' that provide environmental information to readers in their particular sector. The publishing sector also has its own environmental advice website (www.green4books.org.uk), which, since much publishing work has a strong administrative component, will be found useful to administrators in other fields.

New USA online eco-resource for schools

Readers in the educational sector may be aware of such school-based initiatives as the UK's Eco-schools Programme (www.eco-schools.org.uk). Although some far-reaching initiatives do exist in the college and university sector, such national programmes are not so well developed in the UK. In the USA, a new on-line resource has just been published, providing practical examples of initiatives from 'schools' (usually what in the UK would be referred to as colleges and universities). This resource gives details from more than 100 establishments of initiatives taken on climate change, carbon dioxide reduction, energy saving and much more. The resource, Higher Education in a Warming World is available for free download.

www.nwf.org/campusEcology/BusinessCase/download.cfm

Sustainable Development Indicators in your pocket

The latest pocket-size statistical overview of the UK's progress in Sustainable Development

has just been published by the UK Government body DEFRA and can be ordered free from the sustainable development website. The set of 68 indicators covers issues as diverse as the

environment and health, housing, jobs, crime and education. Each indicator uses 'traffic lights' to signal where things are getting better, worse or staying the same.

www.sustainable-development.gov.uk



Water Saving in Men's Toilets

Many companies could save up to 50% of their water costs by implementing simple minimisation techniques, according to the UK government agency Envirowise. One technique that could contribute to these savings is to use alternative approaches to regularly and automatically flushing the urinals in men's toilets. Several approaches are available. The one on trial in the Green Light offices uses special cleaning cubes, with a 3 litre daily wash down with clean water. The mains flushing system has been switched off for nearly a year, and the toilets are odour-free! Different organisations will probably need different solutions, and a range of approaches is available. Use the search term Waterless Urinals in an Internet search engine to view a selection.



Greening the Office free on-line audit tool and on-line resource

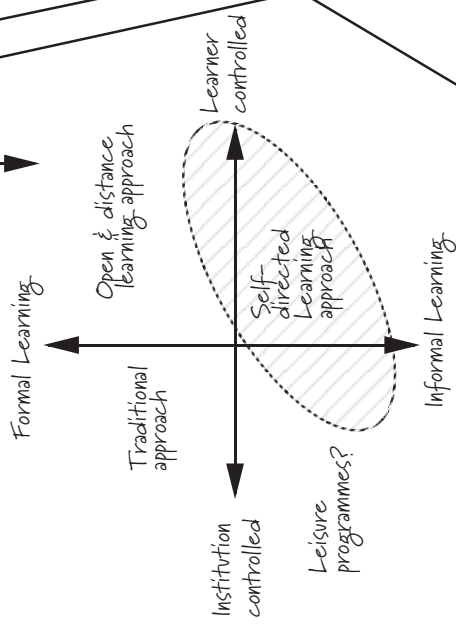
Most Green Light readers will be well aware of the matters needing attention when improving the environmental performance of the office. Sometimes, however, it is useful to carry out a structured environmental audit, and a most useful one is included in the website of Friends of the Earth Scotland (www.green-office.org.uk). The tool allows attention to be focussed on most office environmental topics, and to allow improvements to be identified and measured. The site also provides a series of information sheets of interest to those new to the topic – and perhaps those who need their memory refreshing!

This issue of Green Light was written by Mike Timmins, TLC Ltd. He can be contacted on telephone and fax number +44 (0) 117 904 0089

Contributions are always welcome. Please send news releases about any environmental achievement to: iamgreenlight@planet-save.com

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

- * WHAT IS SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING?
- * LEARNER NEEDS FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING SUCCESS
- * ROLES FOR MANAGERS
- * CHARACTERISTICS
- * THE LEARNING MATRIX



CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

- Self-directed learning often has the following characteristics:
- * Undertaken by individuals already possessing a degree of self-confidence
 - * Undertaken when the rewards of the learning are seen to be particularly valuable
 - * Can more readily occur here other types of provision are unavailable/inappropriate
 - * Comparatively difficult to implement for learners who have only experienced traditional trainer-controlled taught processes

Learning to drive fear

LEARNERS NEED:

- * Confidence in their own abilities
- * Independence and time to study
- * Resources - educational, physical and mental

Not all learners prefer the independent route, and even those using this process frequently use other processes such as tutor-directed programmes as well

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

A process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, to

- * diagnose their learning needs
- * formulate learning goals
- * identify resources for learning
- * select learning strategies
- * implement learning strategies
- * evaluate learning outcomes (Knowles 1975)

Can I do what I originally wished to be able to do?

- * Attend course(s)
- * Read
- * Practice
- * Talk to others & learn from them

'I need to be able to...

- By
- * a time (next week, next year)
 - * an amount (earn enough to support my family)
 - * a level of quality (get fit enough to run in a 25 mile road race)

- * Friends and relatives
- * Specialist advice/training organisations
- * Schools & colleges
- * Libraries
- * Evening classes
- * Internet

'What I hear, I usually forget
What I see, I may remember
What I plan and do for myself, I learn'

ROLES FOR MANAGERS IN THE SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING PROCESS

Managers can:

- Help learners identify starting points
- Help learners develop strategies for learning processes
- Help learners manage the learning process rather than simply provide information
- Provide underpinning competencies to learners
- Help learners locate resources
- Provide certain resources
- Help learners recognise their learning styles
- Develop learner guides

- problem solving
- communication
- critical thinking

library
computer access

Inspiring leaders;
improving children's lives

School business manager development programmes

The role of school business manager is now widely recognised as being an integral part of helping schools make better use of their resources and facilities, enabling headteachers and other leaders to focus on leading teaching and learning.

NCSL currently offers two programmes that are accredited by the Institute of Administrative Management, and recognised as an industry standard by employers across England: Certificate of School Business Management (CSBM) and Diploma of School Business Management (DSBM), both designed for completion within a 12-month period.

"The DSBM programme really helped me focus on whole school development and strategic leadership. It's a must for any school business manager's continuing professional development"

Gordon Bell, DSBM Graduate, Houghton Kepier Sports College, Tyne and Wear.

New programmes start soon. To find out more information and apply online, please visit www.ncsl.org.uk/sbm.

The future of school business management

NCSL are undertaking demonstration projects to assess the viability of an Advanced Diploma (ADSBM) and director's programme (SBD). These proposed qualifications will provide senior school business managers with the skills to manage 21st Century schools; providing strategic business leadership and become a catalyst for new forms of leadership and governance.

Achieving world class schools, 2009

The NCSL and TDA school business manager's international conference will be held on **22–23 June 2009** in Manchester. Please visit www.ncsl.org.uk/sbm for updated conference news, or email sbm@ncsl.org.uk to register your interest.