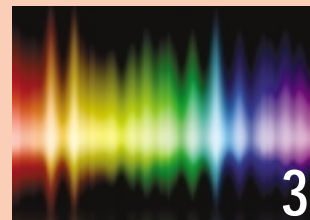# Keep training

Failing to train in a slowing economy is dooming your organisation to fail

22

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
- Maximising productivity
- Mystery shopping – its vital role
- Is it practical for businesses to reduce air travel?
- Culture shock – don't get caught out

www.humancapitalmanagement.org
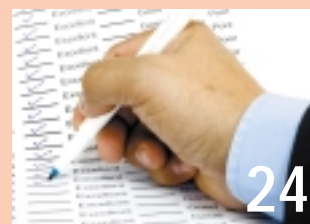
Cost-cutting campaigns never looked so good

HCM™
HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT
PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGIES – IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Contents

6

11

19

Farewell

This issue of *HCM* is regrettably the last published by M R Publishing due to my retirement after forty years in publishing. I would like to thank our advertisers, contributors and of course, you, our readers for the support the magazine has received during the last two years and previously under the titles *Training & Development* and *Training Technology & Human Resources*, spanning three decades.

I hope a 'new home' will be found for the magazine and *HCM* will continue its important role within the human capital management sector.

Every success for 2009

Mike Randle
Publisher
m.randle@btconnect.com

COMPETITION WINNER

We are pleased to announce the winner of a free workshop run by the Farnham Castle Training Centre is

AT THE ROOT OF MANAGEMENT TRAINING.

Further your career with professional qualifications from Level 2 to Level 5 with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI)

NEC can offer you:

- Distance learning Courses
- Teacher & Trainer Resources
- Licensed management training materials
- Tailor-made training programmes for your unique requirements

Choose from:

- Introductory Certificate in Team Leading
- Award in First Line Management
- Certificate in First Line Management
- Diploma in First Line Management
- Diploma in Management
- Continuing Professional Development

Or:

- ISRM Supervisory Management Certificate
- ISRM/City & Guilds Higher Professional Diploma
- ISRM/Active IQ Fitness Management Certificate

Quote Ref C209

DEVELOP

CAREER

CHOICE

Widening opportunities through distance learning

Enrol now!

☎ 0800 389 2839

🖱 www.nec.ac.uk

nec
NATIONAL
EXTENSION
COLLEGE
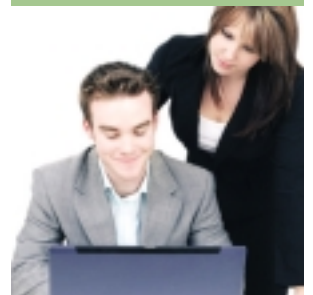
Learning styles

Christine Knott, managing director of Beyond The Box, suggests appropriate learning activities for people with varying learning preferences.

Reflectors, theorists, pragmatists and activists, these cover the spectrum of the learning preferences when taking on board new information.

As trainers, we need to be aware of our own preferred learning style. By doing so we can ensure that we avoid falling into the trap of designing and delivering to suit our own learning needs and preferences and ignoring, unconsciously, the needs of the group.

Honey and Mumford still offer one of the most reliable theories for recognising and stimulating different learning styles. This theory identifies four main categories of learning preferences: reflectors, theorists, pragmatists and activists. These cover the spectrum of the learning preferences of all delegates when they are faced with taking on board new information.

If, as a designer of training programmes, you take all of them into account in order to stimulate each person, you will be much closer to embedding key messages. Furthermore, employing different media to engage different learning styles while delivering the session will also create more interest and enjoyment for all learners, irrespective of their style.

The use of technology has opened a world of opportunities for using and creating different training vehicles that can be targeted at different learners. More traditional methods still have their place and can be equally rewarding, so it's worth revisiting them.

Activists

We all enjoy having the 'activists' on board. It's comforting to know that, when they are present on a training programme, there will always be someone ready to volunteer for almost anything! Activists love to get involved and are rarely afraid of jumping in with two feet. They learn by 'doing' and thoroughly enjoy experiencing the moment. Because they are keen to 'try anything' once, in both work and social environments, they will be forced to consider the consequences of their immediate actions and this is part of their learning process.

If your training session will be improved with the inclusion of role plays, activists will relish being given the opportunity to take a leading part. They are happy to lead discussions and thrive on competitive tasks.

Reflectors

Many activists join the ranks of reflectors as they get older. Having learnt the hard way, most will think twice about 'jumping in' and suffering the consequences before volunteering.

That's a key trait in reflectors: standing back and considering different perspectives and options. If you were considering project work as a training medium, reflectors would benefit from the opportunity to research and analyse the data. They also enjoy watching and listening, whether this is to a presentation or a video.

Theorists

Equally keen to analyse data are the theorists. Being logical thinkers, they also

---

Key points

- Trainers need to be aware of their own preferred learning style - to ensure that don't just design and deliver learning materials to suit our own learning needs and preferences.

- Honey and Mumford's theory identifies four main categories of learning preferences: reflectors, theorists, pragmatists and activists.

- Employing different media to engage different learning styles while delivering the session will also create more interest and enjoyment for all learners, irrespective of their style.

thrive on systems and models. So, whatever the subject matter, if you can link it to a process they will gain a faster understanding. Theorists love to read and investigate, so a great learning tool would be to give them written information and ask them to attach a logical model or system to it.

Pragmatist

In their enthusiasm to try new ideas, pragmatists are similar to activists – but only if they have been convinced of the theory beforehand. If there is an opportunity to watch an expert demonstrate how to do something, they will eagerly model them.

The introduction of webinars into the training arena has provided an excellent opportunity for the pragmatist to watch and follow suit.

Because they are keen to return to the workplace and quickly put their new skills into practice, their learning curve will be shortened.

By Christine Knott

Activities that help embed new knowledge for…

Activists, include:
● Team games where they can get involved and work out problems.
● Brainstorming – allow their imagination to run wild on a project.
● Present back to a group – in the format of a TV advert.
● Competitions – compete against other group members example: create a Mastermind or 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire' game.
● Charades – based around the new skills.

Reflectors, include:
● Watch a DVD related to the subject matter and follow with a quiz.
● Group activity allowing them to listen and observe others. They guess the charades the activists are performing.
● Create a debate situation with panel and audience – they would be the audience.
● E-learning programmes where they can work at their own pace.

Theorists, include:
● Present information in graph format and ask them to explain them to prepare a report on their findings, or complete a quiz sheet.
● Reading – task them with reading to be followed by a question and answer session or quiz.

● Competition where you put a process in place.
● Logical thinking puzzles – based on information from the session.
● Word quizzes – create word searches, crossword puzzles or a word game based on Scrabble.
● Team quiz game where you have to give a full explanation to a question – explain how x works.

Pragmatists, include:
● Create a working models to demonstrate the subject matter.
● Practical demonstrations which they can copy.
● Team quiz game that requires demonstration of how something works.
● Building game – jigsaws and so on.

If carefully planned, training activities could include several games - such as 'University Challenge' or 'Never Mind The Buzzcocks' - and tasks. These can help to ensure that all learning styles are stimulated and have a part to play in the overall game.

Contact
Christine Knott, Beyond The Box Limited, Old Grove House, 13 Vine Street, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 4JS Tel: 0845 270 6520
Web: www.beyondthebox.co.uk

Isn't it great to get good services on time?

In a recent survey*, e2train's customers gave a resounding thumbs up to the services the company delivers. They said that e2train implemented learning technology projects on time whatever the issues. 97% of them also told us they believed the service they got from their implementation consultants wasn't anything but excellent.

Then, once they were up and running with their learning solution, almost 95% of customers also agreed that the technical support from e2train was always delivered in a timely manner.

Of course, these kind of results don't just happen by accident. e2train consultants are highly trained and dedicated to providing outstanding customer service. Their skills encompass all the project management and technical know-how that will make your learning project a success. This is also probably why e2train believes it implements more learning management systems in the UK than anyone else.

For more information on how to get the learning technology solution you need, on time, contact us on sales@e2train.com, call +44 (0)1285 883900 or visit www.e2train.com.

Learning **Technologies** 2009

Visit us at Stand 15 at
Learning Technologies 2009
Olympia 2, London
28-29 January 2009

e2train
Learning & Performance Technologies

Preserving the past - informing the future

The National Archive for Educational Computing (NAEC) was established in the mid 1990's.

Nick Rushby reports on the development of The National Archive for Educational Computing.

Although the term 'e-learning' only came into general usage in the late 1990s, the application of information and communication technologies in education and training goes back about half a century.

By the late 1960s interest and activity in the UK was growing and, in the 1970s, the National Development Programme in Computer Assisted Learning (NDPCAL) injected significant funding for research and development. Over the years, successive projects and information services have come and gone, leaving behind them collections of papers, learning software and equipment of historical value.

The National Archive for Educational Computing (NAEC) was established by Richard Millwood, of Core UK, in the mid-1990s to save the collection from the Ultralab project from disappearing in a skip.

In the past few months, the Archive has gathered momentum and is now attracting support from a number of organisations including The Science Museum, The Association for Learning Technology, Becta and BESA.

In July, the NAEC held a one day conference, hosted by the WLE at the London Institute of Education. The conference introduced the Archive to a wider audience and explored the way forward for this growing national resource.

There is an urgent need to find a permanent and secure home for the existing collection, which comprises around 500 boxes containing material from the Microelectronics Education Project (MEP), Richard Fothergill's personal archive, The Computers in the Curriculum project, the National Interactive Video Centre (NIVC) and Ultralab. These boxes are currently in a storage unit and are relatively inaccessible to researchers. More material has already been identified and will be added once the Archive has a permanent home.

The question, of course, is 'why keep all of this junk?'

The answer is summarised in the quotation from George Santayana that: 'those who ignore the lessons of history are doomed to perish by them.'

The Archive's materials contain the lessons from earlier technology based learning projects that can help us avoid

Key points

- The National Archive is working with its supporters to create a permanent and secure home for the growing collection of papers, software and other artefacts on the use of technology in education and training.

- If it is to be of use then the archived material must be curated and made accessible to researchers and practitioners – now and in the future.

- We should think carefully before we throw away our personal or corporate archives of materials and software for educational and training technology. Should it be added to the Archive?

- We need to plan for the needs of researchers and practitioners 50 or even 100 years in the future.

- Find out more at www.naec.org.uk

some of the pitfalls and move forward faster by standing on the shoulders of giants.

Paul Bacsich commented that: "The value of a longer-term perspective on the development of educational computing is now becoming clear, as shown in several areas: policy aspects (where effects often become evident only after several years and earlier approaches reappear in new guises), the use of business methodologies in the management of organisational change linked to educational computing (such approaches enter e-learning with about a ten-year lag) and, last but not least, in discussion of prior art as it relates to proposed patents for artefacts and systems related to e-learning."

But in order to be useful, the materials need to be accessible to researchers – both historians and those engaged in e-learning research – and to practitioners. Conference delegates gave evidence of how their experience of earlier projects had helped them to be more successful in their contemporary projects, but exactly how a narrative of the history can be distilled from the mass of material was the subject of much discussion and invaluable advice from Dr Tilly Blyth of the Science Museum in London, Peter Chilvers from the Bletchley Park Trust and Paul Wheatly from the Digital Conservation team at the British Library.

It is not an easy question to answer. It was agreed that the Archive should not be a snapshot of the material around in 2008, but that it needed to grow to incorporate the reports, software and artefacts that are here – in the present – but which will shortly become history.

Many of the participants were challenged by the suggestion from Tilly Blyth that the Archive should plan for a 50 to 100 year horizon. How do we make sensible decisions about what someone in 2110 might want to explore about ICT in digitising any of the documents? And would these future researchers need access to the original printed versions?

Similarly we can develop emulators that will run software originally intended for the BBC B microcomputer, the Research Machines 380Z and the Sinclair Spectrum – not to mention the micros. These will enable us to replicate the experiences of teachers, trainers and learners from that period – but would future researchers want to see and touch the original artefacts?

As Richard Millwood noted: "These are difficult questions and heavy responsibilities."

Sandra Crapper was a member of the Directorate of the National Development Programme for Computer Assisted Learning between 1973 and 1977. She believes that: "Now is the time to begin to draw that evidence together. We have the communication technologies to reach the education communities past and present who can develop a time line containing the research, evaluations, Government strategies, artefacts, and the personal stories. We have the multimedia technologies to present it in an accessible format. And we have the storage technologies to provide an ongoing national archive which will inform present day and future developments."

The conference participants identified three key priorities for the way forward:
● To establish a secure and permanent home for the archive materials.
● To seek funding for the curation work.
● To work through the archive systematically, cataloguing, digitising and making the materials more accessible.

Pete Chilvers found it interesting to, "think back over those exciting creative times, the visions for the role of ICT in education, and the wisdom acquired by those who worked through it. It would be great for that experience to be able to inform the future developments in ICT – sometimes to avoid the mistakes; sometimes to take on ideas how the technology can meet the vision effectively and economically."

The mission was summed up by Sandra Crapper: "We need to cherish all of our heritage and the effort put in to develop a National UK Archive of Educational Computing. This Archive would be a resource to be proud of and invaluable to the future of an educational system that will remain intrinsically linked to technological developments."

By Nick Rushby

In essence

Nick Rushby is a director of Conation Technologies and has been working in the field of learning technologies for 37 years. He is currently helping The National Archive for Educational Computing (NAEC) to retrieve and catalogue technology-based learning materials from the period 1970 to 2000.

Contact:

Nick Rushby, Conation Technologies, The Office Building, Gatwick Road, Manor Royal, Crawley RH10 2RZ Tel: 01293 459807

Email: nick.rushby@conation-technologies.co.uk

Web: www.conation-technologies.co.uk

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

In your recent article "The talent crunch" you said that recent data from the Office for National Statistics shows that "the UK is still seeing its highest level of job vacancies since records began". This is not correct: the latest data show that there were a total of 558,000 vacancies in October. This was down 53,000 on the previous month and down 128,000 on the October 2007 figure. It is 133,000 fewer than the all-time record of 691,000 vacancies seen in March 2008.

Yours,

Karen Dunnell
National Statistician
Office for National Statistics
Government Buildings
Cardiff Road
Newport NP10 8XG

Ask your staff: they'll know the answers

Your staff can help you to solve business and performance issues you might not have even thought about. They'll be also more engaged as a result. Graham Jarvis explains.

Human capital is the most important asset of any business, but it is also undervalued. That's because most firms' managers still take a traditional authoritarian view of their employees, which can demotivate staff, create an atmosphere of resentment, lead to higher churn rate, as well as reduced individual, team and corporate performance. It's time for change because progressive organisations have realised the value of talking to their staff and investing in their human capital.

The issue is particularly important in an organisation where a high level of customer-employee engagement is required. The Gallup Organization studied ten US companies in 2003, each of which, understood the value of their human capital and how customer-facing staff can either create a poor or rich customer experience. The outcome depends on how

Progressive organisations have realised the value of talking to their staff.

and whether staff are given ownership over their roles and empowered to make decisions that fulfil customer needs.

These companies, by applying Gallup's Human Sigma customer-engagement methodology, achieved amazing results: sales grew by 85 per cent and gross profit margins by 26 per cent. This is as much due to the increased confidence that staff feel when they are trusted to do their jobs well,

as it is about managers offering them a more collaborative approach to the way they think and work with their staff. Part of this equation should involve managers asking staff the right questions, treating them as adults rather than as children; enabling them to discuss issues and deliver feedback about their jobs, their customers and about how organisational processes might impact on their ability to perform.

Key points

- Staff motivation, empowerment, engagement with customers and training can increase the profitability and performance of the organisation.

- Managers need to ask more questions and listen to their staff without there being any repercussions, as they will gain more respect and loyalty from their subordinates.

- Customer-facing staff can offer invaluable customer insight, and it's relatively cheap compared with a field survey – but online surveys of customer and employees can help to maximise their ability to engage more appropriately.

- Your human capital is your most invaluable asset, particularly during a downturn as it can enable your organisation to gain a competitive advantage, so it needs nurturing and retaining.

- Managers don't know all of the answers and might need as much training as their staff in order to know how and when to ask the right questions – also, what are they? Managers need to listen more to their staff in order to get the most out of them.

- Open dialogue should be encouraged and rewarded, and managers should create the right environment for it to occur.
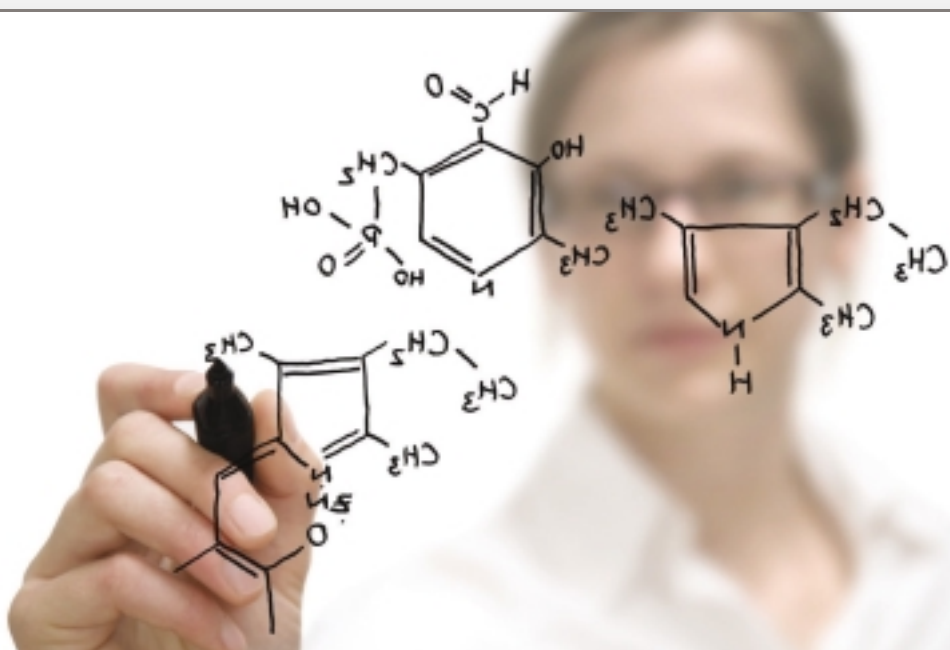
"Invest in your employees and show them respect, and they will be a powerful tool for you," said Mark Stuart. head of research at the Chartered Institute of Marketing. He added that training is one way to "prove to your staff that you value them, as well as giving them knowledge to increase their productivity, broaden their career prospects and help them on their way to better job satisfaction."

Nurturing and recognising the value of their human capital will help to prevent employees – particularly your best ones – from jumping ship to a competitor. The consequences of this are lost intellectual capital, skills and experience – invaluable assets that are both costly and hard to replace.

"Managers must take the perspective that organisations succeed because of their people," said Ashley Semmens, director of change management consultancy, WCL. "They should be doing everything they can to understand what improves their performance and working on those aspects to improve value."

His colleague Cindy Bush added: "Organisations are made up of people who make the work happen. The remaining assets are enablers."

But some managers fear adopting new approaches to managing their employees, and that includes opening up dialogue with them.

"There is a belief that managers should have all of the answers, and so they fail to facilitate good communication with their staff, which would enable them to provide solutions to problems and raise issues," said John Curtis, managing director of people management and leadership consultancy MC2.

Yet, by opening a channel of communication without causing employees to fear that they might be reprimanded for their comments, managers will enhance their reputations and deliver improved team and business performance.

Good managers understand the importance of asking their staff for feedback. In customer-facing environments they can provide invaluable customer insights, which can be used to improve the quality standards of the organisation, enable them to develop better organisational processes, staff training and customer strategies. They know that the key to success partly lies in the working environment that they create and in their ability to motivate their 'human capital' – their staff. This includes understanding what WCL calls the emotional quotient factor (EQ), which can be a barrier to ongoing organisational, team and individual improvement.

Those who forget that they are only human beings and think they have all of the answers, could find themselves becoming a bottleneck rather than the enabler of ongoing performance improvement.

Gary Schwartz, vice president of product marketing at Confirmit, an online survey and reporting tool that can deliver employee and customer feedback, said: "Managers who think they know all of the answers need to ask more questions."

That means that managers also require training to ensure that they can constantly maintain or deliver improved performance, to get more out of their people. They need as much support as their own staff if their own individual human capital is to bear fruit. So, while they should be accountable for the decisions they make, they, too, will require the support of their own superiors and organisation.

It's not all about going for a stick when something has gone wrong. Both managers and their team members might have unresolved issues that affect their performance. That's why an environment of open communication is so important. It enables an organisation to realise where its strengths and weaknesses lie and to fix any issues. Without dialogue, they could remain buried – diminishing overall performance.

Dialogue should be rewarded and encouraged, as indeed should the ability of staff to have more control over their jobs and decision-making. Most people want to do their jobs well, although Gallup has found that 71 per cent of employees are often disengaged and a further 20 per cent are actively disengaged from their roles. The latter are the ones who will dismantle the work your best employees do. So managers need to ensure that their staff are fully engaged with their organisations, with their roles and customers. This requires managers to trust staff more by giving them more ownership of their jobs, asking them the right questions, showing that they are valued and mentoring them to achieve more in their jobs. In comparison, the traditional authoritarian, know-it-all management approach will fail to deliver.

By Graham Jarvis

Pic Tom Kahri

Key questions

- Do we as a business deserve your loyalty as an employee?
- What's good and not good about working here?
- What is your vision for the organisation?
- If this were your business, what would you do differently?
- What do our customers want?
- What kind of experience would you expect as a customer? If it was your mum on the phone, how would you react?
- Which products are easy to sell and why?
- How can the organisation deliver the expected levels of long-term service and benefits to its customers and key stakeholders?

- What part can you volunteer to play in achieving this?
- How well do you think your management team understands what our clients need and how can you improve this understanding and their response to it?
- Which IT systems work well for you, and how can they be enhanced?
- How can your management/team leader help you?

Contact
Milner Curtis Ltd (MC2), Gopsall House, 7 The Green, Newton Burgoland, Leicestershire, LE67 2SS Tel: 01530 272 631; Email: info@mc2.gb.com Web http://www.mc2.gb.com

Culture shock: don't get caught out

You may have thought of 'culture shock' in connection with someone meeting an exotic culture for the first time - not with moving to the UK or another country in Europe.

Relocating to a different country is a big move in all senses of the word. Executives will need to prepare themselves and their family by learning as much as they can about the culture and practices of their new home and of the emotional issues they will face, to help towards a more speedy and effective transition and create a strong foundation on which to build a successful assignment.

Culture shock, although difficult to define, may manifest itself as feeling a bit 'down' or 'isolated' and, with the executive's husband or wife starting their new job, the person feels 'dislocated' and anxious. The key is to remember what that person has put her/himself through.

The move may be a promotion; a job that person has wanted for a long time. But a new job, in a new country, always comes with a price to pay. It's:

● *A new job, with new people to get to know and new responsibilities.*

Executives will need to prepare themselves and their family by learning as much as they can about the culture and practices of their new home.

● *A different country – different issues, different weather and different rules.*
● *A new home – new challenges, lifestyle (such as living in an apartment rather than a house with a yard, perhaps).*
● *Friends, parents, extended family being left at home.*
● *Homesick children, or children resenting being taken to a new country.*
● *Difficulty in understanding what drives the locals.*
● *Travelling on business more than usual; leaving the home maker really 'home alone'.*

To deal with these issues collectively is called 'culture shock', or what some writers have described in its more draining manifestation as 'cultural fatigue'.

It doesn't matter if this is the first or merely the latest overseas assignment, there will always be a 'process of transition'. The time that it takes, its manifestations and the period it starts, will vary from relocation to relocation – but it can, and almost certainly will, happen with every move.

The Pollock model (on next page) demonstrates how a person is perceived, how they see her/himself and what's going on inside her/his head and heart as s/he moves through the Five Phases of Transition.

Key points

● Relocating to a different country is a big move in all senses of the word.

● A new job, in a new country, always comes with a price to pay.

● Whether this is the first or merely the latest overseas assignment, there will always be a five stage 'process of transition'.

● Culture shock can be broken down into six areas.

● There are ten basic symptoms of culture shock.

● It's a myth that experiencing culture shock is a sign of weakness.

The Transition Model ©David Pollock 1999, New York

	Involvement	Leaving	Transition	Entering	Re-Engagement
How you see you	Belonging • Inclusion in group • Reputation • Position • Knowledge	Separation • Closure • Recognition • Farewells • Withdrawal/ Exclusion • Feeling Betrayed (?)	Unknown • Status-less • Structure-less • Clueless	Marginal • Superficiality • Tentative acceptance • Uncertainty of placement & use • Misinterpret behavioural signals • Searching for 'mentors' & 'buddies'	Belonging • Inclusion in group • Reputation/ position • Known friends, confide, listen) • Outsiders arrive, yourself no longer a 'newcomer'
How others see you	Commitment • Responsive • Responsible • Be fitend	Disengaging • Relinquish roles • Distance/ criticism • Loosen ties/ conflict • Closure	Chaos • Exaggerated problems = exaggerated behaviour • Misunderstanding/ ambiguity • Self-centred & isolationist tendencies	Introducing • Marginal • Observing • Risk taking (good & bad • special knowledge without use • Uncertainty of knowledge • Must initiate relationships • Trust an issue	Commitment • Responsive • Responsible • Friend • (Surprise adjustments)
Psychological state	Intimacy • Affirmed • Secure • Safe **Present**	Denial • Rejection • Resentment • Grief/ sadness • Postpone good-byes • Emphasize future idealize **Future/ Temporary**	Anxiety • Fearful • Uncertainty (schedule, job, duties, care) • Dreams • Emotional Instability • Grief • Disappointment **Present/ Temporary**	Vulnerable • self-esteem • continuity with past • Loss of identity ambivalent • Ambivalent • Psychosomatic problems … **Present/ Temporary**	Intimacy • Affirmed • Secure • Safe • (Alert) **Present**

● Loss of identity

● No confidence, feelings of inadequacy

● Negatively stereotyping the new culture you're living in

● Being obsessional – following rituals you had in the home country

The executive may not experience all of these but, if more than four or five symptoms are evident, s/he may be a 'sufferer'. The good news is that the executive will get, and feel, better.

It's a myth that experiencing culture shock is a sign of weakness. The reality is that it shows to the world that you are in touch with your feelings; you do relate to others in your host culture, and you do perceive the differences.

By Paul Stiff, intercultural trainer at Farnham Castle International Briefing & Conference Centre.

Remember that your settling-in can be a process, which will take time, rather than something that will snap into place in a few days.

What we call culture shock can be broken down into six broad areas:

● **Strain:** caused by an ongoing effort to adapt. You will sleep well in the early weeks of your arrival in the new country.

● **Sense of loss/deprivation:** caused by saying your goodbyes to those you know and love whom you have left behind.

● **Rejected by or rejecting members of the new host culture;** their unwillingness to engage, rudeness, aloofness and disinterest.

● **Confusion:** caused by a change in role.

● **Anxiety/disgust:** caused by things that are new to you – such as football violence, public drunkenness, blood sports, dark afternoons, traffic congestion and so on.

● **Feelings of helplessness:** caused by a feeling of 'it's all just too much' and the thought that it may be better to stay under the duvet.

Doctors agree that the symptoms of people suffering culture shock are:

● Sadness, loneliness, melancholy, depression

● Being over-neurotic about their health

● Aches, pains and allergies

● Insomnia, or too much sleep

● Irritability

● Idealising your own country

How long does it last?

Roller Coaster Model
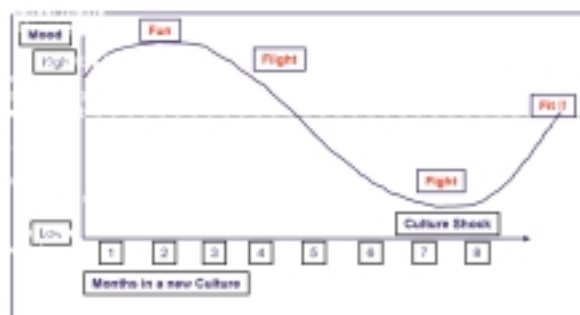
The RollerCoaster Model depicts mood changes from the beginning of the assignment to the end. Remember that, with any negative experiences, know 'that this, too, will pass'.

● Fun: the novelty, the 'Wow, I'm here!' factor, which lasts for a few months.

● Flight: from the locals - a pulling back into a mental circle with immediate family where the new culture may be run down, and denigrated. The weather will have changed by now - after three months – and, with it, the previous positive 'coping' outlook.

● Fight: a period of some difficulty where, if unhappy, the executive may think of pulling out of the assignment. This is the time to see particularly how the non-work partner\spouse is coping. If s/he is unhappy, the pressure to bail out is intense. Recognise this. Take a short break out of the country - even visit home. It's the 'coming back' that will help the process of assimilation and adaptation to your new life.

● Fit: that 'you've made it' feeling; the sun is shining; the kids are happy; health is good and, tomorrow, a visit to new friends is scheduled.

Culture shock is a burden none of us like to bear but, if it is carried positively, it will lighten and eventually disappear. Recognition that the condition is not unique is half way to success.

Cross-cultural training and briefing programmes are a crucial part of the process to optimising successful integration within the new host country. Farnham Castle is a leading provider of cross-cultural training and international assignment briefings for individuals and families.

Contact:
Farnham Castle, Tel 01252 720406; Web
www.farnhamcastle.com

Learning Technologies 2009

10th ANNIVERSARY EVENT!
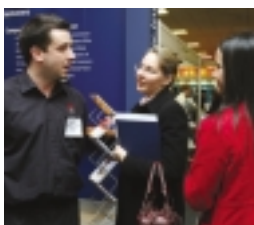
WEDNESDAY **28** JANUARY 2009

THURSDAY **29** JANUARY 2009

Europe's leading showcase of organisational learning and the technology used to support learning at work

The constant pace of business and technological change has made the Learning Technologies exhibition and conference, now in its tenth year, the must-attend event for everyone involved in organisational learning and development.

- See how new learning technologies are influencing how and what we learn at work

- Learn from the learning industry's foremost speakers, thinkers, visionaries and practitioners about the application of new learning technologies in the workplace

- Meet over 120 leading learning providers currently shaping the way we learn and develop corporate skills

- Choose from over 50 free seminars covering all the major issues affecting the L&D professional today

- Network with more than 3,000 L&D professionals at the exhibition and over 350 delegates at the conference

Olympia 2 London

Exhibition Enquiries
01730 817600

Conference Enquiries
01730 817601

Email
info@learningtechnologies.co.uk

www.learningtechnologies.co.uk

In association with:

LEARNING & SKILLS GROUP

LT2009 supports:

@WORK

ENTRY TO THE EXHIBITION IS FREE – REGISTER NOW. FOR CONFERENCE BOOKING AND DISCOUNTS PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE.

Sponsored by:

Adobe   BCS   brightwave   certpoint   Cisco webex   Edvantage group

imc Advanced Learning Solutions   Learndirect BUSINESS   NIIT   PPi LEARNING SERVICES   SAFFRON INTERACTIVE   skillsoft

Supported by:

Becta leading next generation learning   CompTIA   eLN the eLearningNetwork   e-skills uk   Institute of IT Training   ila   LIFELONG LEARNING UK Skills for Learning Professionals   TOWARDS MATURITY

Air to ground

A major change in business air travel is, well, 'in the wind'. Nicola O'Connell talks to Kevan Hall about whether this is bad news.

Despite increasing fears about the environmental impact of carbon dioxide emissions resulting from air travel, a three-fold increase is forecast in demand for air travel by 2030, according to the Environment Agency.

Yet how practical is it for businesses – particularly large, multinational organisations – to start cutting down on their air travel, when for years employees have

How practical is it for businesses to start cutting down on their air travel?

travelled extensively to conduct their business?

Kevan Hall, international management guru and CEO of Global Integration, has begun to notice an increasing trend among companies to try to reduce their travel commitments.

"Two or three years ago not too many business people were thinking about their

carbon footprint, but this has become a concern and people want to improve their business's image," he said. "Even more recently, cost has also become a pressing issue, especially with the current economic downturn."

Hall commented: "Good use of technology and delegation provide the best opportunities not to travel. Companies have generally under-used video-conferencing, which may now come into its own and, if managers can empower people and build more expertise at local level, then they don't need to be on-the-spot themselves. In fact, such development could result in additional benefits for the business."

Barrier

"We need to move away from the tendency to jump on a plane without giving it much thought – an attitude we have seen in many large organisations," he said. "It may even be a help to put up a barrier, and encourage people to question whether or not air travel is necessary at all. Certainly, there will always be advantages to meeting face-to-face, but the benefits of travel alternatives may outweigh these."

Whether it's for reasons of conscience or economic necessity it seems inevitable that many business people will change their habits in the year ahead. The air travel industry may not like it but, in future, the skies look as though they will be less crowded.

By Nicola O'Connell

Contact

Global Integration, 75 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire, RG40 4ND
Tel: +44 118 932 8912
Email: europe@global-integration.com
Web: www.globalintegration.com

Key points

- The Environment Agency is predicting a three-fold increase in demand for air travel by 2030.

- Good use of technology and delegation provide the best opportunities not to travel.

eLN
eLearning Network

The number one source for guidance on best practice and future trends in elearning

The eLN welcomes Next Generation Learning @ Work

The time has never been better to take a big step forward in the way we use technology for learning.

The pressures for change are considerable: severe financial constraints mean we must seek out the most efficient ways to deliver training; time pressures mean we must be able to respond faster to business needs; environmental pressures compel us to look for ways to reduce our carbon footprint; and new expectations from learners mean we can no longer rely on conventional approaches to learning and development.

At the same time, we're benefiting from some powerful enablers for change: new software tools make it easier than ever to create and distribute content, and to encourage communication; low-cost and high power computing has never been more accessible, offering media-rich communications wherever you are.

Technology transforms our lives. When applied to learning and development in the workplace, it has the potential to become a powerful contributor to both individual and organisational success.

Next Generation Learning @ Work is a new campaign designed to communicate these opportunities to every organisation, large or small, in whatever sector. It is about highlighting the need for a new era of learning and skills development to suit the 21st century workplace. It aims to raise awareness about the ways in which the effective use of learning technologies can boost efficiency, motivation, performance and, ultimately, the bottom line.

The campaign, which is backed by Becta and strongly supported by the eLN, provides a co-ordinated national approach to communicating the benefits that learning technologies can bring to the workplace. It will highlight how organisations and their staff can achieve more with less, reduce carbon footprint, improve competitiveness and productivity, and extend learning opportunities across the board.

Next Generation Learning @ Work is part of a national initiative promoting the effective use of learning technology in schools, colleges, universities and at work; but to succeed in reflecting the diverse needs of individuals and organisations in the UK today, this campaign has to have more than just one voice.

It provides us all with an opportunity to work together to shape the story, inspire others and stimulate demand. While it's still early days, you can see that Next Generation Learning @ Work already has growing support – why don't you join us?

http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/work

BIG HELLOS TO OUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The eLN received a record nineteen nominations for the twelve places up for grabs on the committee for 2009. Of those who were successful in the election, four are completely new to the committee and we wish them a warm welcome.

Carole Bower has worked at Futuremedia Learning (now Edvantage group) for the last four years and in the learning industry for over 20 years. Her background is in learning design, which in her current role means she is heavily involved in helping to inspire and create new learning solutions.

Fae Longman manages a team of IT trainers at CMS Cameron McKenna, a law firm. She uses virtual classroom technologies and creates online learning in-house for pre and post help.

Rob Hubbard is a freelance instructional designer and project manager, who elearning development houses hire to be the interface with their clients and who organisations hire to design and develop bespoke elearning content for them. Rob loves having a varied role and the way that every week is different.

Wendy Stubbs has over twenty years experience within British Airways, the last eight closely involved with elearning. She relishes the opportunity to network with like-minded people, sharing her passion and championing best practices.

Remaining on the committee from 2008 are Clive Shepherd, Claire Line, Barry Sampson, Viv Cole, Joe Quilter, Neil Lasher, Seb Schmoller and Mike Alcock.

AND SOME FOND FAREWELLS

Howard Hills is a busy consultant with operational experience in the Royal Navy and later as head of training for Lloyds TSB. Despite the demands upon his time, he has, since November 2006, devoted time unstintingly to the eLN as a very active member of the committee. Howard took the lead in refining and improving the criteria for judging when our annual awards were in their infancy. The Network has also been fortunate to benefit from Howard's knowledge of the use of technology in the context of organisational learning, his understanding of the impact of personality on learning, and how to bring about improvement in team performance and learning.

Jan Seabrook is first and foremost an instructional designer who has written many articles and courses for aspiring designers, including an option 'Corporate Training at a Distance' which is part of the London University MA course in Open, Distance and Flexible learning. Jan has a wonderful track record in developing technical training for hands-on situations such as railway maintenance (track record - get it?), gas boiler repairs, and solar energy. This experience spans almost a quarter of a century and extends to more 'gentle' job contexts such as finance, insurance and IT. Since joining the committee in 2002, she's made a substantial contribution as co-ordinator of all our live events, and has demonstrated her generosity in sharing her wide experience and encouraging other colleagues on the committee.
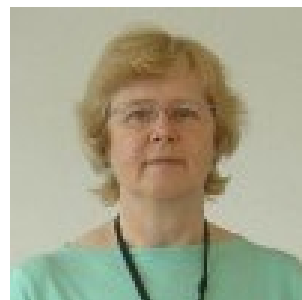
Geoff Berridge joined the committee in November 2004. Amongst his many professional accomplishments, he managed the Financial Marketing function for IBM in the late 70s and early 80s, helped to set up IBM Financial Services, the equipment financing subsidiary, and went on to manage the IBM Business School in the mid 90s. In the last eight years Geoff has, with his colleagues in Parataxis, been working on consultancy and business development projects with a wide range of clients. As a member of the committee he has shared his strong business acumen; his accountancy qualifications made him a natural candidate for the role of Treasurer, in which capacity he's served for almost three years.

EVENT REPORT: EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Starting off the conference in November, Nick Rushby and Jan Seabrook of Conation Technologies explored technologies that are 're-emerging'. According to Rushby, there are some training applications using smart cards, PDAs, multimedia, voice recognition and artificial intelligence that date back over 25 years. He added: "There's a number of reasons why knowledge of these early projects has been lost. In part it is due to our fascination with the 'new'. A key reason is that this work was published before the days of the internet. Contemporary practitioners base almost all of their searching on the internet – so, if it isn't online, it doesn't exist."

Using a case study from the social care sector, Joe Quilter of PSP Learnix, and Freddy Paraiso of MacIntyre, showed how improvements in technology are allowing learning materials to reach those people who previously have found it hard to gain formal qualifications for the jobs they do. Quilter explained that the social care sector in the UK employs some 2m people in 30,000 organisations` – and some 20% of these people have no formal qualifications. Paraiso then outlined how one of these organisations – Macintyre, which employs some 2,000 staff in 150 locations from Liverpool to Southampton – is using location-based learning using specially-configured netbook computers to provide induction training, along with training materials allied to the syllabus for NVQ levels 2/3.

Turning to an example of mobile learning in the financial services sector, Kris Swanson of Merrill Lynch revealed that the company has some 60,000 employees, 21,000 with BlackBerry mobile devices. Of these, some 6,000 have been given access to mobile learning materials developed by Intuition. Swanson revealed that making learning materials available via BlackBerrys has resulted in a 75% reduction in learning development costs, a 30% fall in users' 'time to competence', a 45% reduction in the time taken on training and a 1% improvement in users' assessment scores compared with those who studied the learning materials at their desks.

Under the title 'Square pegs and round holes', Rob Hubbard from LearningAge Solutions, facilitated a practical exercise that explored the advantages and disadvantages of using a variety of emerging technologies, including social media such as blogs, wikis and Twitter, as vehicles for learning delivery. Each table was provided with details of a different learning requirement and asked to suggest how, if at all, these new technogies could be deployed.

PROFILE

In each issue of HCM we talk to a different eLN member, finding out what persuaded them to join the Network and how it has benefited both them and their organisation.

Sarah Smith
Managing Director, Walkgrove Ltd, http://www.walkgrove.co.uk
Achieving high quality in all aspects of everything that Walkgrove produces is of paramount importance to Sarah. Her company strives to operate ethically, be reliable and provide value-for-money, creative solutions.

Sarah believes that Walkgrove consistently achieves its own high standards in these respects in the bespoke, generic and customised training and development solutions that it develops, because of the talented and loyal associates with whom it works. "These people - many of whom are members of the eLN - always go the extra mile and represent a real competitive advantage," said Sarah, who confessed that she still cringes when she sees some of the other generic elearning products currently on the market.

"One of the advantages of belonging to the eLN is that the network provides a valuable forum for the country's most experienced and knowledgeable users and developers of all forms of elearning to explode myths, question what is generally accepted, continually explore new technologies and new ideas, expose old ideas shamelessly presented as new, review, critically, our own 'take' on a particular aspect of the market – and, in short, provide a vehicle to help keep us all on our toes."

Sarah has noticed major changes in the industry in the 15 years since Walkgrove started in business: "For a start, the industry has become a lot more competitive," she explained. "This is driving standards and expectations upwards - and prices down. This has to be a good thing for buyers, sellers and, ultimately, the learners because it forces producers, such as us, to find faster and better ways of creating innovative solutions."

E-LEARNING AWARD WINNERS 2008

Most Innovative New Product or Tool in E-learning - Gold: digital publishing; Silver: Autology; Bronze: Diageo and Epic

Most Innovative Application of Learning Technology - Commendation: Edvantage Group and Bupa; Commendation: Royal Navy and IMC (UK) Learning

Excellence in the Production of Learning Content - Gold: NCALT; Silver: Royal Bank of Scotland; Special mention: LINE Communications

Meeting the Needs of Compliance for an External Regulator - Winner: Coventry Building Society; Commendation: Unicorn Training Group, the Chartered Insurance Institute and the British Insurance Brokers Association

Best E-learning Project Securing Widespread Adoption - Gold: Doctors.net.uk; Silver: Toyota and CERTPOINT Europe; Special mention: NCALT

Best Use of Rapid E-learning Content - Gold: BBC T&D; Silver: Kineo & Cable & Wireless

Best Use of Synchronous E-learning - Gold: The Dental Channel; Silver: Stockton City Learning Centre

Best Online or Distance Learning Project - Gold: e-Learning for Healthcare; Silver: Hibernia College; Commendation: Plan International and LM Matters

Best Learning Game, Simulation or Virtual Environment - Winner: Caspian Learning

E-learning Internal Project Team of the Year - AXA UK

E-learning Development Company of the Year - Kineo

E-learning Industry Award for Outstanding Achievement (Corporate) - NCALT

E-learning Industry Award for Outstanding Achievement (Individual) - Nick Lee - Hampshire Learning Centre and Peter Phillips - Unicorn Training Group

AXA UK receive the award for internal project team of the year

INSPIRATION - SUPPORT - COMMUNITY

The eLearning Network is a non-profit organisation run by the elearning community for the elearning community and represents the number one source for guidance on best practice and future trends in elearning.

Join us today at www.elearningnetwork.org

Free associate membership provides the opportunity for collaboration, discussion, problem-solving and support using our new social networking website, plus access to extensive online resources.

Full membership, for individuals, teams and organisations, attracts substantial discounts on eLN events, free webinars, subscriptions to leading industry magazines and active participation in the eLN as a body.

A skill for everyone

Most people greatly under-estimate the importance of good time management skills in the workplace. Maximising productivity during the working day is a key skill that has to be learnt.

Effective time management is one of the skills that no employee – from managing director to the most junior member of the team – can afford to be without. Good time management – which can be a differentiating factor between a good employee and a great one – requires practical planning.

The three essential elements of time management are prioritising and planning;

No employee can afford to be without good time management.

dealing with people, and simplifying your working procedures. Small changes that can be made to an individual's everyday working life can make a huge difference. These three simple elements are the first step to becoming truly efficient.

Prioritise and plan

It is not always obvious how an employee's bad time management skills can have an effect on her/his colleagues. There is an assumption that it is the individual who will suffer – having to work late or stay at her/his desk throughout the lunch break. However, if one individual is disorganised and spends too much time looking for bits of paper on a messy desk, or wading through accumulated emails, that person is no longer working as an efficient member of the team.

The knock-on effects can be a build-up of work. This is bad for productivity. Alternatively, it means that colleagues have to take on more work. This is bad for motivation. If this person prioritised her/his work more efficiently – by introducing changes such as dealing with emails as they are received, and ensuring her/his desk is clean of excess paperwork – s/he would reduce the strain on her/his colleagues.

Dealing with people

Other people in the office – be it interacting via phone calls, email, or just chatting at the water cooler – can be a huge distraction. An in-depth discussion about last night's reality TV programme may be a pleasant way to pass a lunch hour, but is not going to help complete a job in the time allocated.

Being able to focus concentration while working in close proximity to others, is an invaluable skill.

However, as well as being one of the biggest distractions, working closely with colleagues can also be one of the best ways to manage time. Individually, everyone

Key points

- Good time management requires practical planning.
- The three essential elements of time management are prioritising and planning; dealing with people, and simplifying your working procedures.
- If one individual is disorganised, s/he is no longer working as an efficient member of the team.
- By ensuring that individuals are working closely as a team, any minor day-to-day crises that may arise can be overcome easily, without individual workloads having to suffer.
- Focusing on one task at a time and completing it as fully as possible before moving on ensures that less time is wasted.

must be able to manage her/himself, but group management is one of the best ways to integrate a team and encourage good morale. By ensuring that individuals are working closely as a team, any minor day-to-day crises that may arise can be overcome easily, without individual workloads having to suffer.

Simplifying working procedures
One of the most obvious ways of ensuring that time is being used to its full advantage is to ensure that it is spent actually completing tasks. Constantly jumping from task to task guarantees that no job is likely to be completed as quickly, efficiently and professionally as it could be. Focusing

on one task at a time and completing it as fully as possible before moving on ensures that less time is wasted when an individual has to reacquaint her/himself with work that they have had to come back to.

By Martin Addison, managing director of Video Arts.

Martin Addison

Top Tips

Keep a properly organised desk
Searching for bits of paper is a classic waste of time.
Prioritise
Learn to differentiate between 'urgent' and just important.
Finish one job before going onto the next
A man who chases two rabbits at once catches neither!
Turn off your 'new mail alert'
The alert simply interrupts what you're doing.
Give yourself some private time to concentrate
Go somewhere quiet if you can.
Answer emails promptly
Read them once and then reply.
Don't check emails obsessively
If someone really needs to get in touch with you, they

will phone.
Don't allow people to distract you
Be clear who does – and doesn't - need access to you.
Be prepared to delegate
The more a team consists of individuals, who can cover for one another, the better it will be able to handle occasional crises effectively.
Say 'no' to jobs that aren't yours
Explain your reasons and don't be afraid to point out what's realistically achievable.

Contact:
Video Arts, 6 - 7 St Cross Street, London, EC1N 8UA
Tel: 0845 601 2531 or 020 7400 4800
Web www.videoarts.com

'Flying off the wall'

If you're already familiar with methods of personal performance and improvement such as visualisation, goal setting and SMARTA objectives then this series of 'off the wall' ideas offer something different. These gems were extracted by the author, Carl French, from interview notes made during his research programme into high flyers in business.

Make it your agenda

One highly accomplished scientist with a track record of major results said that she had only once tried to get funding for her own research and that the application had been turned down. How on earth had she been such a high flyer then?

She explained that she looked out for funded research that she could (a) make a success of and (b) use to progress her own particular interests.

Wasn't this a bit devious? Not at all, according to her, because she 'never hijacked the project' and 'always delivered the goods', so to speak. Her results were often the icing on the cake and the source of kudos for the sponsor. Nevertheless, she said that she

only did this when she could make the client's agenda her own agenda.

Her approach exemplifies what many business high flyers seem to do. They make the corporate agenda their own in some way. All of this pre-supposes that the high flyers have their own agendas - and they do. Indeed, it appears that you have to have an agenda before you can become a high flyer.

So, what's happening about your agenda?

By Carl French

Contact:
Replico Total Franchising
108 Smug Oak Business Centre
Lye Lane, Bricket Wood,
St Albans AL2 3UG
Tel: 01923 892997
Email: carlfrench@replico.biz
Web: www.replico.biz
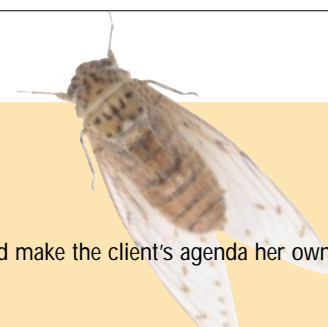
Develop and grow your organisation's talent

CIPD Talent Management Conference

12 February 2009, London   26 February 2009, Manchester

Join us and find out how to:

- manage talent to have a positive business impact
- develop leaders for the future
- measure the impact of talent management programmes
- ensure that business managers own responsibility for talent management
- deliver on your brand promise to achieve successful talent management.

Find out more and book your place online today:
visit **www.cipd.co.uk/grow**

cipd

Learning Light
engaging. effective. e-learning.

STOP PRESS!!!! Learning Light continues to move forward with a new focus and a new strategy.

And we want to ask you to check out our redesigned website www.e-learningcentre.co.uk it is being re-launched in the New Year.

It is an exciting time for us and we want to share it with you.

Learning Light act as a conduit for business, linking suppliers of elearning and learning technologies, to buyers seeking effective learning solutions.

We are based in Sheffield, in the vibrant heart of the Yorkshire and Humberside elearning and learning technology sector, and pleased to be part of a community that is home to arguably the highest concentration of businesses of this type in the UK.

If you seek unbiased, impartial advice and would like an opportunity to take a tour of e-learning and the 'Art of the Possible' in a safe environment without the pressure of a sales pitch.

YOU NEED TO SPEAK TO US

Our team is small, but focused on engaging business in the use of e-learning and learning technologies in the workplace.

OUR INVITATION TO YOU – Contact

Learning Light Limited, Sheaf Suite, Albion House, Savile Street, Sheffield S4 7UD
Telephone: 0114 201 8925 or email support@learninglight.com

Keep training

Economic uncertainty is no excuse to ignore the backbone of any business.

According to David Allenstein, failing to train in a slowing economy is dooming your organisation to fail.

As not only the UK but global markets plunge into recession, there are signs that training programmes could, once again, top the list of cost cutting plans. Such attitudes are short-sighted and fly in the face of proven strategies for business success: well trained staff are motivated, loyal and deliver quantifiable corporate value.

Furthermore, there is a raft of Government funding available designed to ensure organisations continue to invest in people. There is no need to cut budgets. Simply put in place a formal training plan that exploits the Government's commitment to lifelong learning.

Economic uncertainty is no excuse to ignore the backbone of any business: people. Those organisations that renege on training commitments will fail to come out of the current downturn in good shape and will be significantly worse off in the long term.

During the past decade of sustained growth, organisations have become comfortable and complacent. Profits have been consistently high enough to buy skills to support a seemingly never ending stream of new business. Those days are gone – for the time being at least. Organisations must become more efficient, competitive and truly focused on delivering customer value to sustain both growth and profitability.

Cutting the training budget is short-sighted and ignores a raft of academic studies that demonstrate the bottom line value delivered by training in every economic and competitive climate.

In a slowdown, it is essential to improve the quality of service and sales skills to fight for market share. With an increasingly price-sensitive customer base, it is those experienced employees that are best placed to deliver the top quality customer service required to win new business and stop existing customers price-hopping.

In recession, it is even more essential to boost staff morale. Individuals are also worried about the economy, job security, their ability to pay mortgages and manage rising fuel and household costs. A visible and formal training plan that provides new skills, career development and progression is an excellent way of improving staff morale and demonstrating on-going commitment to the workforce.

Confidence

Providing staff with certified skills, via National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes for example, gives a degree of confidence in long term employability. Furthermore, a sustained and visible commitment to training is also proven to

---

Key points

- Only 13 per cent of organisations have signed up to the employer's Skills Pledge to-date.

- However, with the range of funding available continually increasing, training is the most viable option for companies of all sizes to maintain a competitive edge and provide a seamless service to customers through the current economic slowdown.

improve staff retention. This enables companies to retain the key staff required in a challenging climate to remain competitive, ensuring the high levels of consistent sales and customer service required to avoid both customer churn and price erosion.

Yet only 13 per cent of UK businesses have signed up to the Government's Skills Pledge to date. Few organisations realise that widespread funding is available to support training and education programmes. The access to funding needs to be promoted to raise business awareness and support on-going skills development, especially in the current climate.

Nonetheless, there is little excuse for failing to train employees. The Government has a sustained commitment to education and learning. In addition to the Skills Pledge, organisations can access a range of funding programmes, including Train to Gain via the Learning Skills Council, which will cover the cost of professional qualifications such as NVQs. This is especially valuable for organisations with customer facing staff, such as call

centres, with NVQs available for call centre agents, senior agents, team leaders and supervisors.

Removed

And while, in the past, there were some upper age limit constraints, these have now been removed. From August 2008, even the upper limit on apprenticeship programmes was removed, allowing anyone of 19 or over to undertake an apprenticeship programme for contact centres and customer service, which include NVQs.

Of course, the Government's focus on NVQs does not suit every business. Many organisations baulk at the thought of educating staff rather than delivering

training that provides company-specific skills. Indeed, one of the limitations of NVQs is the emphasis on assessment rather than training and the development of new skills. There are, however, indications that the Government will extend its training and education funding beyond NVQs over the next few years to include other qualifications such as BTEC and ILM, as well as programmes that are not focused on achieving certification.

By David Allenstein

Best Practice

David Allenstein is Director at Best Practice Training & Development Ltd. Based in Watford, Best Practice promotes excellence in customer contact and management. It retains close links with related industry bodies and delivers a range of externally accredited programmes - including BTEC, NVQ, ILM, and ICS-endorsed - for many organisations including ING Direct,

National Grid Metering, Parcelforce Worldwide, KPMG and the Jumeirah Group.

Contact:
Best Practice Training & Development Ltd, Gresham House, 53 Clarendon Road, Watford, WD17 1LA Tel 01923 225225; Web: www.bestpractice.uk.com/

Top performing performance management

The talent shortage is real and is forcing organisations to focus more internally than externally - specifically on retaining and developing the people they've worked hard to recruit, and focusing on increasing workforce productivity.

Limited supply of skilled labour and risk of losing high potential employees to competitors is driving organisations to improve their performance management programmes.

The convergence of the limited supply of skilled labour and the increased risk of losing high potential employees to competitors is driving organisations worldwide to invest in implementing or improving their employee performance management programmes. In Aberdeen Group's annual state of the market report, 'The 2008 Aberdeen Report', 31% of the 4,654 survey respondents cited the 'shortage of labour/talent' as one of the top two challenges their organisation faced in 2008.

The pressures driving organisations to pursue employee performance management in 2008 reflect the realities associated with the global shortage of labour and talent. Although workforce productivity still remains a major driving force, cited by 27% of organisations, the primary pressures revolve around insufficient talent pipelines (43%), the loss of top talent to competitors (41%), and a diverse workforce with varying needs and expectations (34%).

Talent pipeline
The global labour shortage is making it more difficult to maintain a sufficient talent pipeline. So organisations are revisiting ways to accommodate the varying career / development demands and expectations of a diverse workforce. Organisations need to do a better job of involving employees in their own career development decisions, performance goal-setting, and in instilling a sense that each employee is valued and plays an important role in the organisation's overall success.

Aberdeen used three key performance indicators to distinguish the best-in-class (top 20% of aggregate performers) from 'industry average' (middle 50%) and 'below average' (bottom 30%) organisations with respect to their differing degrees of success in managing employee performance. These criteria focused on the organisation's ability to achieve year-over-year performance improvement in:
● Employee performance
● Employee satisfaction / morale
● Employee retention

Individual goals attainment and rating on specific reviews are the top two elements used to assess employee performance for best-in-class organisations.

Key points
● On average, best-in-class organisations improved employee retention by 21 per cent.
● Standardising performance ratings enables managers to provide clear and consistent feedback, thus building employee satisfaction and morale.
● Best-in-class organisations use a combination of formal and informal reviews to communicate, reinforce, and adjust employee performance objectives, expectations and goals.
● Best-in-class organisations use organisational knowledge to enhance employee performance.

Figure 1: Year-over-year average improvement in key performance indicators :
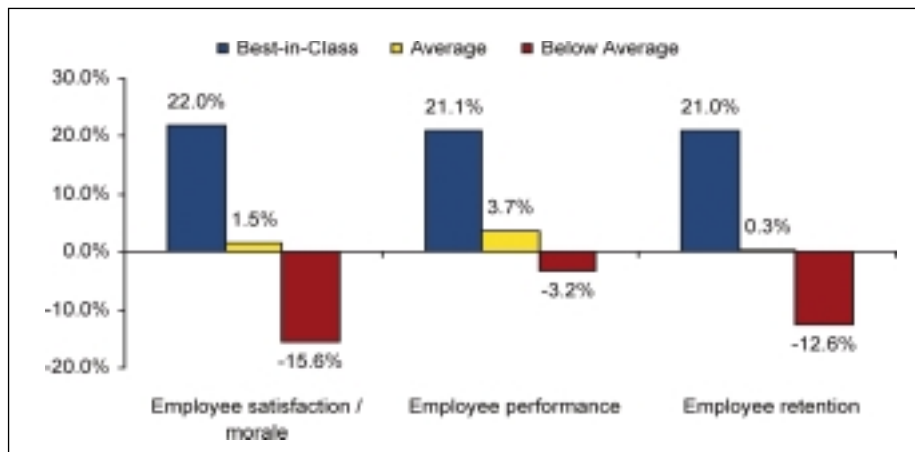
This shows that the top performing companies are setting measurable goals against which individuals are evaluated, in addition to the standardised job specific assessments that are a staple in the annual review process. However, the key to success in gauging employee performance management lies in managers involving the supervisors and engaging the employees. Seventy-seven per cent of best-in-class organisations ensure that managers involve employees in the goals definition process – and are 40% more likely to do so than those who are below average. By having managers involve employees in establishing job-related goals, these organisations establish common ground pertaining to performance expectations and create a greater sense of personal ownership of those goals by the employee.

There are two key differentiators between best-in-class and other organisations with regards to managing employee performance:
● Best-in-class organisations use a combination of formal and informal reviews to communicate, reinforce, and adjust employee performance objectives, expectations and goals.
● Best-in-class organisations use organisational knowledge to enhance employee performance. Best-in-class companies are 34% more likely than all other organisations to conduct peer-to-peer reviews, and 49% more likely to conduct subordinate-to-supervisor reviews.

In addition, although nearly the same the percentage of industry average (54%) and below average (55%) organisations pursue the alignment of employee goals and development activities to business priorities, their abilities to achieve performance improvement in the critical key performance indicators are vastly inferior to the best-in-class. These deviations can be explained, in part, by:
● Best-in-class are at least 40% more likely than below average organisations to focus on creating a performance culture at their organisation and increasing the productivity of the workforce. To achieve this, best-in-class organisations reinforce employee performance with supportive resources such as linking pay to performance, providing mentors or coaches, and establishing consistent communication between employees and their immediate supervisors.
● The below average are 38% to 47% more likely than best-in-class to focus their efforts on establishing goal setting processes and formalising a process for managing employee performance.

Consequently, all organisations need to maintain and update a repository of performance reviews. Currently, 30% of best-in-class, 35% of industry average, and 47% of below average organisations have employee performance records scattered throughout their organisations, with limited or no ability to update or leverage this data across their organisations.

In addition, all organisations should apply the collective wisdom, knowledge and experience within their organisations. By providing 'coaching' and 'mentoring' opportunities for employees, organisations provide a means to motivate and develop their workforce as well as maintain and build upon critical knowledge and skills.

By Kevin Martin and Jayson Saba

Figure 2: Elements included in assessing employee performance in best-in-class organisations:

Aberdeen Group

Kevin Martin (kevin.martin@aberdeen.com) is research director and practice leader, and Jayson Saba (jayson.saba@aberdeen.com) is a research associate with the human capital practice in research and market intelligence provider Aberdeen Group. For more information visit www.aberdeen.com/channel/hr.asp

To better understand how organisations are managing the performance of their workforce, in April and May 2008, Aberdeen examined the use, the experiences, and the intentions of more than 900 organisations using employee performance management (EPM) in a diverse set of enterprises. Aberdeen supplemented this online survey effort with telephone interviews - with select survey respondents - gathering additional information on EPM strategies, capabilities, and results.

This study was co-sponsored by: Beeline, Cezanne Software, Infor, SilkRoad Technology, SonicPerform, and Vurv.

Contact:
Aberdeen Group, 451 D Street, Suite 710, Boston, Massachusetts 02110, USA. Tel: + 1 617-854-5200
Web: www.aberdeen.com

Exploiting the participatory culture

The participatory culture is changing the way people and the media communicate and engage.

The 'participatory culture' has been defined as a new way of life that lets people create and circulate 'self-made content'.

The 'participatory culture' has been defined as a 'new way of life that lets people create and circulate self-made content such as video, audio, text, and images'. The culture has been taking shape in the form of popular social networking sites like Facebook, flickr, and wikipedia, which have encouraged mass participation and collaboration.

This participation-effect is also extending into the enterprise. Many of us are finding we need to interact, form on-the-fly communities and convey self-made content and contributions between ourselves; thus encouraging a participatory culture to develop and making employees within teams work together in a new and different way. In today's workplace, teams are being asked to deal with the pressures of ad-hoc projects, information overload, and high-performance. These challenges are precipitating new technologies and communities to help the participatory activity.

According to research specialists Gartner, the participation-effect is already a business phenomenon as many firms consider or adopt new methods to collaborate and make employees more productive. The participatory culture embraces com-munication, coordination, community and social interaction as workers need tools to help them talk to one another, plan and coordinate projects and activities, work with like-minded individuals, or even interact socially.

The interest in collaboration has been escalating and demand for improved information sharing along business functions is driving solid growth. Until 2011, webconferencing and team coll-aboration software markets are expected to grow at a rate of 23 per cent and 15.9 per cent, respectively, Gartner believes. Companies able to make the most of their staff's skills, knowledge and ideas can use collaborative technologies to improve a businesses' agility. Collaboration, it would

appear, is an obvious choice but, with most companies carrying vast amounts of dead weight in terms of processes and behaviours, the trouble seems to be how we are going to instill the workforce with a new set of values for productive collaboration.

These values include empowerment: making every key team member – across all relevant functional areas and geographies – feel part of the strategic planning, execution and innovation process.

In order to prevent information being hidden away in silos, individuals and teams need to have access to all important data, resources and creative ideas. There are also issues relating to managing the communications and relationships within

Key points

- Popular social networking sites like Facebook and wikipedia have encouraged mass participation and collaboration.

- In today's workplace, teams are being asked to deal with the pressures of ad-hoc projects, information overload, and high-performance.

- These challenges are precipitating new technologies and communities to help the participatory activity.

- The participatory culture embraces communication, coordination, community and social interaction as workers need tools to help them talk to one another, plan and coordinate projects and activities, work with like-minded individuals, or even interact socially.

- To prevent information being hidden away in silos, individuals and teams need to have access to all important data, resources and creative ideas.

- Collaboration can overcome reluctance to participate by identifying who is contributing; measure what that means to the company, its partners and customers, and reward it like any other contribution.

Secret agent of change

Mystery shopping delivers targeted evidence highlighting individual customer service problems.

Mystery shopping can play a vital role in keeping your organisation's performance at its peak.

Customer service affects many areas of our lives. The standard of service you receive determines future purchase decisions and your perception of retail outlets, services and brands.

Frontline staff are vital to the success of an organisation. As that organisation's public face, they are brand guardians, outwardly expressing all the positive and negative aspects of your organisation and brand – with both good and bad customer service experiences having significant impacts on reputation and/or sales.

The value of an effective advertising campaign can be wiped out in seconds by poor customer service. While companies devote significant funds to marketing and advertising, they need to consider how resources should be allocated to create the desired brand experience through their employees' interaction with the customer.

Customer service has become important to an increasingly demanding public. Research by Grass Roots – called 'Are You Being Served' – showed that, over ten years, the overall quality of customer service has fallen by 3.3

per cent, with customer satisfaction falling by 1.6 per cent. Over a quarter of shoppers (26.3 per cent) would not recommend to friends or family the store they visited.

With the internet allowing customers to research and make purchase decisions before they visit a store, staff must now deal with customers who have prior knowledge.

The key to ensuring staff deliver effective customer service is through mystery shopping – a customer service evaluation tool that allows companies to assess the levels of customer service across their stores. With mystery shopping, individual locations and respondents can be identified whereas, in market research, they are concealed. Mystery shopping delivers targeted evidence highlighting individual customer service

problems, so that companies can get to the heart of the issue on a store-by-store basis. Tailored reports can be delivered to branches in real time following a mystery shopping visit, ensuring a swift and action-orientated response whereby staff can be rewarded or retrained where appropriate.

Mystery shopping should be an active and engaging exercise, viewed as an agent of change – inspiring people and stimulating results – rather than being a box ticking exercise.

In our experience, there are four basic ingredients that, when added together, create a recipe for successful employee motivation:

1. Communication
Make employees clear on what is being asked of them and crucially, why. Staff often

Key points

- Frontline staff are brand guardians, outwardly expressing all the positive and negative aspects of your organisation.

- With mystery shopping, individual locations and respondents can be identified whereas, in market research, they are concealed.

- Mystery shopping should be an active and engaging exercise, viewed as an agent of change rather than as a box ticking exercise.

- There are four ingredients that, when added together, create a recipe for successful employee motivation: communication, education, measurement, reward.

much larger, more complex teams of dozens, or even hundreds, of individuals. In order to thrive, firms will need to adopt Enterprise 2.0 practices with the most advanced collaborative, web-based tools available.

For improved collaboration, organisations must specify the behaviours, or actions, required to move from a functional (siloed) approach to a cellular (node) approach. For example, requests for help from those nearby should be treated as an external customer request – where individuals respond positively and within an acceptable response time. Using a business's participatory culture also creates the 'architectures of co-operation' avoiding the problems of traditional knowledge management (KM). The biggest asset of any enterprise is what people know – and the problem has always been that the employees keep going home with it. Conventional KM has always attempted to create the infrastructure for knowledge sharing in the enterprise but its limits are the limits of understanding of the firm. KM assumed everybody was prepared to give up what they know. Collaboration can overcome reluctance to participate by identifying who

is contributing; measure what that means to the company, its partners and customers, and reward it like any other contribution. This can involve a large shift in attitudes. Software can make businesses visible to themselves and collaboration networks can become the real structure of a company. Making all this visible will mean that what should have been rewarded all along gets rewarded – and once you reward the right thing, individuals will, hopefully, get more of it.

Mark Levitt, vice president for collaborative computing and the enterprise workplace at IDC, believes that most organisations are still in the evaluation phase for next generation enterprise collaboration tools. Deciding how these tools will improve the workplace and how they might fit into the existing technology infrastructure are the biggest challenges, he said, but some companies have already nurtured a work culture of innovation that encourages individuals to contribute to projects that would normally fall outside of their individual job descriptions.

By Charlotte Delaforce

Examples

Google asks its engineers to spend 20 per cent of their time on personal projects and participate in small teams.

IBM's workers are encouraged to share ideas in company wide 'jam' sessions held every year. Through daily interactions with the company's social networking tools, IBM has encouraged its employees to think about how to help the company perform rather than just helping the departments to which they belong. This emphasis on shifting cultures towards a more collaborative environment, combined with the right tools that make collaboration easy, are keys to

successful innovation.

Mindjet, whose interactive knowledge sharing software is used by over 1m people, believes that the 'shared community' is the future for work. Mindjet Connect, the next-generation release of the MindManager software, allows teams to collaborate with a series of new web applications and online services that make mapping and team collaboration more powerful and accessible.

Contact:
Mindjet (UK) Ltd, 1000 Great West Road, Brentford,
TW8 9HH Tel: 0208 261 8240; Web www.mindjet.com

perform badly because they misunderstand what is expected of them. A mystery shopping programme should inspire managers to reassess the part they play in maintaining great customer service.

2. Education

A successful mystery shopping programme should be used as a 'wand of change' rather than a 'punishment stick.' If mystery shopping is seen negatively by employees, it will be resented and feedback will be challenged and rejected, rendering the research ineffective.

Employees should be offered an emotional connection with a brand because, if they don't care about it, they will not 'sell' it effectively to customers. Brand resonance can be built by educating on company philosophy, history and products. Empowered staff will be confident and prepared in answering customer questions effectively.

3. Measurement

Well-constructed mystery shopping programmes have a set of defined goals matching the specific needs of individual employees, so they understand their core targets and objectives. Programmes should also be tailored to the client's needs, to ensure

they tackle specific issues.

Instant reporting, either online or by video, ensures that results are quickly fed back, to identify problems and highlight suitably tailored training programmes.

Customer benchmarking can also be developed to help measure why certain customers go elsewhere. Armed with this insight, targets can then be set to win customers back.

4. Reward

Success must be recognised and incentives are key to motivating and rewarding staff. The recognition and reward of good customer service encourages employees to perform at peak level, while providing others with a strong example to follow.

By Nigel Cover

Mystery shopping in practice

One international retail bank briefed Grass Roots to achieve a better picture of their customer service skills to ensure they were continuously attracting and retaining customers. So Grass Roots created a mystery shopping programme to measure the customer journey for one of their accounts. This involved mystery shoppers opening an account with the bank and conducting 'real' transactions.

The programme considered branch characteristics, visited larger branches more frequently and included competitor branches. Each branch received a report on the visit, which included: first impressions; queue time and handling; enquiry handling; establishing customer needs; product knowledge and recommendations; closing the enquiry, and overall experience.

The programme was designed to focus on staff behaviour and analyse staff / customer interaction. The

behaviour was reported and clear findings were supported by detailed comments.

Branches continue to receive a regular graphical performance analysis and the programme provides simple to use, actionable management information.

Knowledge of the customer's journey has been taken to the next level and the use of communication, education, measurement and reward is making a difference where it matters most: the in-branch customer experience.

Contact
Nigel Cover/ Jamie Thorpe, Grass Roots, Pennyroyal
Court, Station Road, Tring, Herts, HP23 5QY
Tel: 01442 829400
Web: www.grassrootsmeasurement.uk.com

Book Reviews
DVD Reviews
Online Reviews

Reviews by Bob Little.

The Game-Changer

AG Lafley and Ram Charan's book (Kogan Page, £15) is intended to show business leaders how innovation can be an intentional, disciplined and reliable way to convert ideas into revenue and profit on a consistent, on-going basis. Indeed, they argue that innovation – the 'game-changer' - is the only way to achieve sustainable business growth. Lafley and Charan state that innovation is a reliable process based on the key drivers of: motivating purpose and values; stretching goals; strategic choices; unique core strengths; enabling structures and systems; implementing an open-minded, curious culture and inspiring leadership. This book will appeal to all those who want their ideas of business leadership challenged and who value considered views based on experience. Moreover, the book's publication is ideally placed to take advantage of 2009 being designated by the EU as the 'European Year of Creativity and Innovation'.

Business Wargaming

Wargaming as a business tool sounds like a flight of fancy for the boys of the Board Room rather than a serious technique for developing managerial strategic and tactical thinking – but Daniel F Oriesek and Jan Oliver Schwarz's book (Gower, £60) takes the whole idea seriously. They explain how and when wargaming can be used to test strategies, plan and prepare for crises, manage change or increase your organisation's ability to anticipate and adapt for the future. Creating imaginative and credible scenarios and testing them against opponents who are eager to find the plan's weaknesses and counter your strategy allows you to learn in the security of the conference room rather than the harder world of reality. This book is a 'must' for all those who fancy translating their wargaming activities to the world of business.

The Assessment and Selection Handbook

This book (Kogan Page, £35) offers advice and tools to introduce, design and deliver assessment or development centre methods in an organisation. Those looking for a 'how to' manual, especially for assessing supervisory and management staff, should find something of value in this publication.

Plugged In

Subtitled 'the Generation Y Guide to Thriving at Work' (Harvard Business Press, $16.95), Tamara Erickson's book waves the flag for the 'often misunderstood' Generation Y. Erickson champions their fresh perspective, motivation and willingness to take risks. She sets out the unique demographic and behavioural attitudes of Generation Ys; then offers a framework for finding a career path that is in tune with Generation Y's attitudes to family, finance and lifestyle, and then explains ten workplace skills that Generation Ys can develop to capitalise on their strengths or address their weaknesses. This book is far from a 'how to' career guide. Rather, it illuminates the issues that can help Generation Ys to set their careers in perspective and to collaborate more productively with both Generation Xs and Boomers. This, of course, rather limits this worthy book's appeal.

The Accountable Leader

Exploring the leadership-related problems that arise because of ineffective organisational structures, Brian Dive's book (Kogan Page, £18.99) uses case studies to focus on the relationship between accountability, organisational design, leadership and business performance. Dive believes that, while managers are under constant pressure to achieve 'maximum performance', many of them do not have jobs with clear or real accountabilities. Dive gets full marks for spotting this. Whether his readers will be able to change this state of affairs is another matter. Maybe it's time to believe in the triumph of hope over experience.

Diversity Training Handbook: A Practical Guide to Understanding & Changing Attitudes

Offering advice on such issues as stereotyping, racism, homophobia, prejudice, sexism and disability, this new edition (Kogan Page, £24.95) includes updated chapters on facilitating diversity training and the management of ethnic staff, as well as information on the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Diversity has become an increasingly prominent issue in all aspects of life in recent years. This book makes a valuable contribution to this area by encouraging readers to challenge existing opinions and practices, and embrace 'diversity'. Beyond being thought-provoking for its readers, this book offers those responsible for providing diversity training courses some helpful exercises, models, checklists and guidelines.

SIGNS SIGNALS TRENDS

Bob Little's round-up of the recent key developments in the HCM world.

Boost for Belfast bus staff

A unique training initiative targeting local bus drivers and inspectors in the Greater Belfast area is beginning to deliver some impressive results. The 'You Are the Difference' campaign aims to help Metro and Ulsterbus staff deliver high levels of customer satisfaction by offering tips and techniques and using driver and passenger feedback to boost service standards.

In the first three months since its launch, there was an increase of over 35 per cent in the numbers of compliments received from passengers about Metro and Ulsterbus drivers. Moreover, customer care-related complaints from passengers fell by 36 per cent over the same period.

Some 700 drivers and 70 bus inspectors, supervisors and managers have experienced 'You Are the Difference' training to date. The training - developed by organ-isational development consultancy Echelon - consists of a series of role plays in which staff interact with professional actors in a range of typical scenarios and requires role improvisation under the direction of the trainee audience.

More from www.echelonlearning.co.uk

ELIG sets learning priorities in Europe for 2009

Exploring a vision of learning in the 21st century; demonstrating how 'learning' can ensure economic survival in the light of the current global financial crisis, and promoting technology for 'upskilling' learning as well as building knowledge and skills within professional communities are the priorities for The European Learning Industry Group (ELIG) in 2009. These priorities were agreed at the organisation's annual general meeting (AGM), held in Italy, and hosted by Giunti Labs, a leading learning and mobile content management solution provider, whose CEO, Fabrizio Cardinali, is chair of ELIG.

Delegates heard the views of thought leaders in learning from the USA and Europe, including Pascal Debordes, e-learning Director of Cegos.

Debordes outlined the findings of Cegos's research into the corporate learning markets in EU countries. He revealed: "We found that the biggest budgets for corporate training occur in France but much of this money is spent on administration rather than on training.

"The UK spends about a third of French budgets on training but provides its workers with broader access to training materials - and appears to be better at evaluating the return on investment (ROI) from these. Forty seven per cent of surveyed companies in the UK are assessing ROI compared with only 26 per cent in France.

"Nonetheless, learners across Europe have the same expectations of e-learning materials - notably that they are user-friendly; have high quality content, design, graphics and interactivity, and contain 'concrete' examples and exercises," he said.

More from www.giuntilabs.com

Best practices in talent management

Cornerstone OnDemand and Astadia Consulting UK have revealed ways for successfully attracting, motivating, developing and retaining high performers in a 'down' economy.

At a recent business breakfast in London, learning and talent management experts - including Homeloan Management Ltd's Gary Evans and Ian Dye, of Willis Global Recruitment - revealed the best ways for businesses to gain advantages and strengthen their talent management strategies in such areas as:
● Driving employee engagement
● Providing clear career path and employee development programmes
● Giving appropriate performance and recognition reviews
● Assessing compensation and benefit segmentation
● Facing internal and external recruitment challenges

More from
www.cornerstoneondemand.com

Leadership learning diploma

A nationwide survey of over 1,000 working adults, undertaken by the UK-based International Institute of Leadership (IIL), has revealed that nearly 90 per cent of the sample believe that our present leaders cannot resolve the challenges facing the UK today - notably crime, the economy, immigration, the environment, terrorism, education, health, religious hatred and poverty.

Nearly all of those surveyed regard leadership as a fundamental learning issue and there was universal approval for more leadership learning in our organisations - although, in the UK alone, some £120m a year is spent on leadership development. So the IIL is launching a professional diploma based around its study on how people learn leadership.

When asked whom they believed to be the best leadership role models, top of the list were - respectively - military leaders, a family member, consultant surgeons in the NHS, professors in universities and chief constables. Bottom of the list comes the US Government, along with religious leaders.

More from
www.internationalinstituteofleadership.org

Future leaders in jeopardy

Organisations are failing to see learning and development issues as a key strategic priority and, so, are preparing for a future without adequately trained management, according to leadership development company, Dynamic Transitions. According to a recent CIPD report on supporting, accelerating and directing learning implications for trainers, 60 per cent of HR managers believe that top managers do not see learning, training and development activities as 'strategic'. Dynamic Transitions managing director, Judith Germain said: "It is the senior management's responsibility to ensure that strategy is clear so the whole organisation can work towards common objectives, and that any investment in training is closely aligned to the organisation's talent management programme."

And, with 52 per cent of HR managers believing that employees do not take ownership for their learning, Germain suggested that it is the responsibility of both managers and employees to make sure that the right skills are available

within the workforce if the organisation is to survive.

More from www.developing-leadership.com

DECOM debates the future for educational publishing

According to Vijay Kumar, Senior Associate Dean and Director of the Office of Educational Innovation and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology - and an advisor to India's National Knowledge Commission - the traditional education model has been based on scarcity and assumed limited educational resources. Today, he said, the development and availability of open education resources are making learning materials more widely accessible - although there are issues related to quality and secondary use, to be addressed.

Kumar was addressing over 100 top level executives - from the learning content industry, international publishing firms, corporate training providers and academic stakeholders engaged in both publishing and open courseware initiatives in schools, universities and corporate training, together with Government policy makers throughout Europe - who were debating the future of the learning content industry and, in particular, its ability to adapt to, and exploit fully, a new generation of educational content production, management, sharing and distribution models.

The debate took place in Italy - at

The Digital Educational Content Marketplaces conference (DECOM 2008). The event was hosted by leading learning and mobile content management solution provider, Giunti Labs, and the European Learning Industry Group (ELIG). The results of delegates' deliberations is being summarised in 'The Sestri DECOM Declaration'. Intended for the EU Commission, the Declaration outlines suggested policy actions to support a transition towards digital content marketplaces for educational publishing in Europe.

More from www.giuntilabs.com

New approach for today's challenging marketplace

Alistair Morrison

Organisation development consultancy, Echelon, has announced a revised package of products and services to help its clients not only to take advantage of today's difficult market conditions but also to develop stronger, healthier businesses with 'engaged' employees. The move comes as part of a refined and refocused business vision and strategy introduced by Echelon's recently appointed managing director, Alistair Morrison.

Morrison explained: "These new products and services from Echelon are attracting a great deal of interest from our clients because, when

times get tough, you need to get the most out of your workforce. Moreover, you have to make this sustainable - so that it will keep your business' bottom line improving consistently.

"That means driving employee performance by building employee engagement," he continued. "Motivation is temporary but engagement means that employees 'buy in' to the values and goals of the business and so will constantly and consistently 'go the extra mile' to make that business successful."

Echelon's new package of products and services is focused on internal communications and people development solutions that create sustainable performance improvements for clients. It is delivered through a combination of consultancy, internal communications, training, self-paced learning materials and various performance support tools and techniques.

More from www.echelonlearning.co.uk

E-learning 3.0

Speaking at the 'Hive Digital Repository and learn eXact LCMS Joint User Group conference', in Italy, Michael King, Vice President of IBM Global Education Industry, outlined three trends:

● Demand for 'learning outcomes' and pressures on costs are leading to an industry which is increasingly integrated student-centric.

● Consumer information technology (IT) will drive learner expectations of technology-delivered learning.

● Open technologies and standards will continue to drive enterprise IT innovation.

Giunti Labs' CEO, Fabrizio Cardinali commented: "From 1996 to 2000, we had 'e-learning 1.0' with traditional pedagogy, contents and models. Then, from 2000 to 2004, users became dissatisfied with this

first generation e-learning and we saw the growth of self-generated e-learning content with little emphasis on pedagogy or instructional design but presented via 'e-learning 2.0' technology. Now, we are witnessing the blending of formal and informal learning content, being delivered on mobile and open platforms. This is 'e-learning 3.0' and is helping to develop personal learning communities."

Consequently, learning systems need content that works in terms of both formal and informal learning, Cardinali continued. He added: "Innovation is the key if educators are to meet society's expectations."

More from www.giuntilabs.com

Timesheet module

HR and Payroll systems group Carval has launched a timesheet module that allows organisations to record and manage the hours employees spend across multiple projects, activities and client locations. As the application is either web or desktop based, it is accessible remotely anywhere and anytime. Allowing customisation from within its administration interface, the SQL based system calculates detailed reports and invoices from the time sheet information entered by multiple employees for multiple projects, tasks or clients. Clients can be either internal, like the HR department, or external - such as customers.

More from www.carval.co.uk

There is more, regular news in brief at www.humancapitalmanagement.org

❯ Thursday 26ᵗʰ March 2009 - Central London

Symposium events
International

❯❯ Join the learning elite at the
3ʳᵈ annual Learning Forum 2009

Symposium Events' 3ʳᵈ annual Learning Forum is the strategic conference of the year for training, learning and development professionals. You will examine how organisations are using the latest developments, strategies and technologies to improve your learning programmes. This one day conference will equip you with the tools to effectively:

- Measure the R.O.I of your training expenditure
- Improve retention through coaching and mentoring
- Maximise talent management and development
- Engage all employees in your learning initiatives
- Choose the right technology for your organisation
- Reduce the costs of outsourcing

4 things you might not know about **Symposium Events**?

1. We are experts in HR related topics
2. We produce over 40 industry leading events a year
3. We can produce events for clients covering any topic area
4. We are happy to develop bespoke seminars for a range of purposes

TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT BOOK YOUR PLACE AT THIS EVENT NOW

BOOK **NOW!** Call **020 7231 5100** or visit **www.symposium-events.co.uk**

Get up to speed with our
'Ultimate' experiential training

held at
RBS Williams F1
Conference Centre

Four highly experiential courses

Learn to design engaging
courses using
'Ultimate Instructional Design'
.
Manage better with
'Ultimate Talent Identification'
.
Learn to create the
'Ultimate Winning Strategy'
.
Build a better team with the
'Ultimate Taste of Teamwork'

In each course delgates learn by
experiencing the thrill
of fast paced immersive learning

"The whole experience was
amazing. Still on a buzz.
One of the best courses I've
been on - I want more !!!"

First Direct

"...the day you provided
yesterday was great for us
as a team"

Boehringer - Ingelheim

Trainer 1
The home of learning

0207 624 4844
www.trainer1.com

Real speed comes from excellent design