

UPS and DOWNS



YOUR CHAIRMAN'S MUSINGS.....

Nearly 60 people attended our AGM this year held at Brighton Racecourse. It was a shame that a sea fret kept us from even glimpsing the glorious views but our speaker, Richard Worsley, gave us a thought provoking presentation on working in the 21st Century. The venue was a great success and we shall certainly be using it again; perhaps next time the sun will shine so that we can mingle outside.

This newsletter focuses on some of our branch activities, and, in particular, on the back page you will find the outlines for our September sessions. The diary card provides you with the dates up to the end of December and our handbook, containing all our events for the year ahead, will be sent out in September. Hopefully the website will also be updated by the beginning of August to give you information online.

I am delighted to welcome Graham Vaughan who has now joined our committee. As a committee we shall

continue to focus on providing you with a range of events, liaising with the colleges and students together with supporting our network groups. We are also keen to start our HR book group where we can discuss and share ideas and have chosen 'Coaching to Solutions' by Carole Pemberton who will be speaking on September 25th (see back page). If you are interested in signing up for this please let me know (email; gill.whensley@btinternet.com) or come along on the evening. I hasten to say that you are welcome on the evening whether or not you wish to participate in the book group.

Our next newsletter will be early September. Meanwhile enjoy the summer.

GW

WHEN EMPLOYEES SUFFER SETBACKS – TIPS FOR HELPING THEM BACK ON TRACK

Many people experience big setbacks at some time in their working lives. Some people carry the shadow months, even years later, fulfilling less than their full potential. What can you offer when, as an HR professional, you are called on to support an employee who has lost confidence?

The circumstances leading to difficult work experiences are complex, and you may well already have entered into any one of your formal processes. Procedures are intended to create the conditions for fair and consistent handling of a range of issues. What they often cannot do is repair the emotional damage such events may produce, and the resultant drop in performance.

What happens when things go wrong

Triggers for loss of confidence may include poor communication, bullying, toxic working relationships, severe stress, illness or even circumstances which challenge an individual's integrity (such as a cheating colleague). These events create negative emotions, which can affect relationships with boss, colleagues and loved ones.

The resulting stress reactions, if not resolved, may eventually compromise the individual's health and general wellbeing, leading from high anxiety, eventually to exhaustion and burnout. At this point, people are vulnerable to stress-related illness, or to the exacerbation of existing medical conditions such as cardio-vascular or digestive disease, or late-onset diabetes.¹

Tips for getting Back on Track

When employees hit confidence barriers created by work issues, here is an approach to supporting them back to effectiveness. It is based on a coaching programme developed by Ann Lewis Coaching. The process has five main stages:

1. acknowledging the reality of the experience and its effect on them.
2. creating a vision of how they would like to be operating when they are Back on Track.
3. raising their awareness of who they are, in terms of their strengths, values, passion and contribution.
4. learning from their own response to the way the original situation developed.
5. creating and implementing a plan for going forward.

The rest of this article addresses the individual directly.

Acknowledgment and awareness-raising

It may seem obvious to say that to get Back on Track, the first step is to want to do so. This involves recognising that you are in a situation which has temporarily knocked you off balance, and identifying exactly what is and is not going wrong.

A little first aid to take the edge off anxiety can help at this point. Try sitting in a favourite chair, eyes closed, taking a few deep breaths (always a good start), and then imagining in great detail the face of someone who makes you smile. Hold that vision for as long as you can before slowly opening your eyes.

When you're feeling relatively calm, start by getting a firm grip on exactly what is happening. Write it all down in detail, or talk to someone you trust. Don't censor, and don't edit. When you fully understand, destroy anything you have written, both as a symbolic gesture, and to prevent your repeatedly going over it.

Creating a vision

Again, in as relaxed a state as you can achieve, describe, in detail what you would like to be different about this situation. How would you recognise a satisfying and fulfilling outcome? What will you bring to it? Think big.

Be creative – make a collage, write a story, or a poem if the urge takes you. Keep this – you'll use it to stay on the path back to full effectiveness.

Revisiting your skills, values and strengths

When you're fully yourself, who are you? What are your strengths? What is important to you, and how do you bring that to your work? How would your team describe your strengths? What personal resources do you bring to this situation which you may not have had earlier in your life? These are your building blocks.

Taking on the learning

Now you have a vision for going forward, and a renewed sense of who you are, it's important to revisit your situation to find the learning. Often when bad experiences occur, people don't have the opportunity to take stock in a neutral way. Friends and family can be enormously

¹ Nowack, K. M. (1989). Coping style, cognitive hardiness, & health status. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 12, 145-158.

continued... When employees suffer setbacks – tips for helping them Back on Track

supportive, but often they construct a coping myth ('you are 100% right, "they" are entirely wrong'), which may make vital learning difficult to achieve.

You need to take space to consider what, if anything, you might have handled differently. How can this experience make you stronger? What will you do in future to limit the emotional effect of such experiences? Absorbing this learning is important in helping to avoid a repeat experience.

Planning to move on

Armed with raised awareness and reflection about yourself, you can devise a plan for going forward, based on your strengths, expertise and values, and from a position of greater confidence. What will you do? Who can help? How do you feel?

Points to watch

This is a sensitive process for many people, and if they work with someone, it must be in a framework of trust and confidentiality. Working with a coach is ideal.

In most situations, this five-stage process will be effective in enabling individuals to develop a more realistic and optimistic outlook. If they continue to

show signs of more deep seated anxiety, or appear depressed, they should be encouraged to talk to their GP or to seek the help of a counsellor.

You are welcome to use this as the basis for a tips leaflet, provided its source is acknowledged.

Ann Lewis

Chartered FCIPD

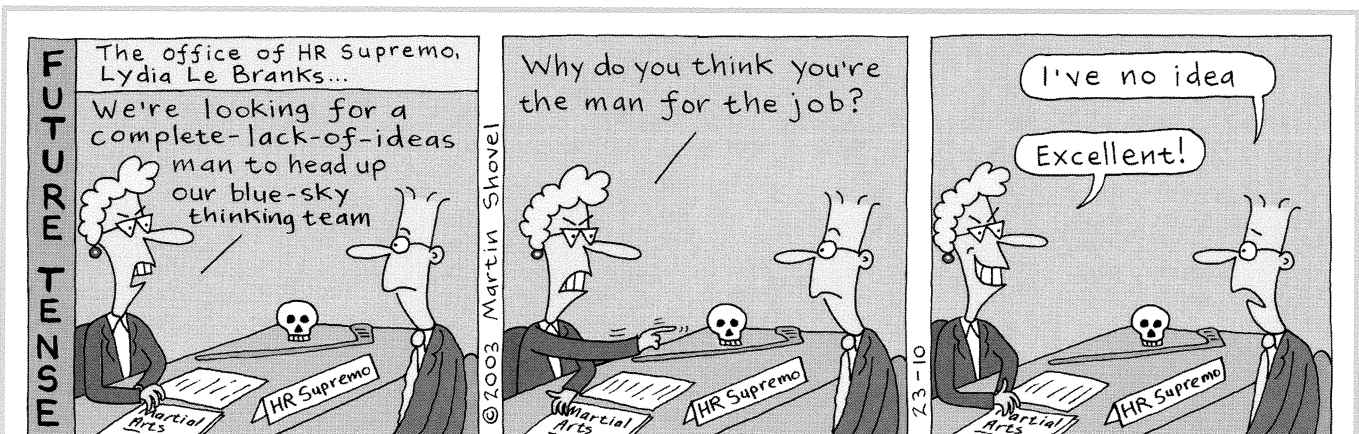
Ann Lewis is Director of Ann Lewis Coaching, specialising in leadership coaching and working with individuals, teams and organisations to turn around negative working situations. She was formerly a third sector HR director.

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Resources: Goleman, Daniel, with the Dalai Lama, "Destructive Emotions" (Bloomsbury). Rushton, Anna, "How to Cope Successfully with Stress" (Wellhouse Publishing Ltd). For assessing stress levels, StressScan™ from Consulting Tools: http://www.consultingtools.com/main.asp?prd_XMLID=stressassessmentprofile. British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, for a list of practitioners by location (<http://www.bacp.co.uk/>). www.annlewiscoaching.com for newsletters about the Back on Track process.



This strip cartoon is by Martin Shovel and is one of a weekly series that first appeared in the Daily Telegraph. Martin recently led an evening workshop for Sussex CIPD entitled: *How visual thinking can transform you into an inspirational trainer and presenter*. Martin's company, CreativityWorks, was set up to encourage people to make the most of their brain's 'visual thinking' capacity, and this workshop was designed to show how, by learning to 'think like a cartoonist', we can all improve the quality of our ideas, as well as the clarity and power of our written and spoken communication.

CreativityWorks offers workshops and consultancy on creative thinking and creative communication, as well as a variety of specialised workshops for teachers and trainers, leaders, managers and teams. Their clients range from banks and building societies to universities, hospitals, charities, and independent consultants and trainers.

To receive a free monthly newsletter about visual thinking and creativity, or to find out more about CreativityWorks visit www.creativityworks.net or call 01273 249813.

EQUAL EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IN THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE COMMUNITY

Employer Engagement is a real issue in Brighton and Hove. Brighton and Hove's economy is dominated by SMEs, there are only 8,000 VAT registered businesses of which over 85% employ less than 10 people. Unemployment is high being twice the regions average, more than 30% of the City's 16-74 yr olds are economically inactive, 40,000 local adults have basic skills below level 2. Whereas 29% of the working population have degrees or equivalents and we produce around 7,000 graduates per year, most stay on to find work here.

Employer engagement is a vital part of the process to enable local residents to become economically active. In many instances people lack the experience or qualifications to work in their chosen career; therefore, employer engagement provides an important opportunity for businesses to access motivated and reliable staff and for individuals to find work that they actually want.

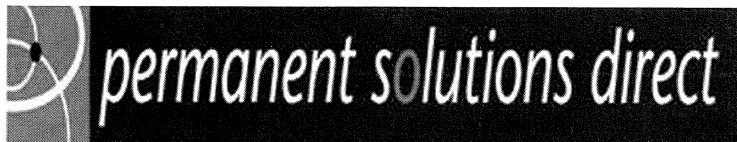
There are around 40 different organisations in the City directly engaging with businesses in order to find work placements and job opportunities for socially excluded groups, of which there are

11 priority groups: lesbians, gays and transgender; homeless; mental health; ex-substance misusers; ex-offenders; people with disabilities; people with social disabilities; BMEs; people living in deprived areas; NEET 16-25yrs; over 50s. In order to increase the over all number of placements and employment opportunities, *Equal Brighton and Hove* has funded an Employer Engagement Coordinator, Dec 05 – June 07, to bring together all of these organisations for the following purposes:

- To Network and become aware of each others existence and services so that organisations can build up specialisms.
- To share best practice, to create universal standards.
- To ensure a more consolidated and professional approach to businesses.

This forum/group is called the *Operational Employer Engagement Group*, OEEG, it meets once a month and is supported by an e-forum for the sharing of information.

For more information contact Claire Mitchell on 01273 774796.



HR RECRUITMENT FOR HR PEOPLE

*We are passionate
about what we do...*

Permanent Solutions Direct works with a diverse range of clients, mainly based within Sussex, Surrey and London. Our HR Recruitment for HR People division specialises in placing HR and Learning & Development professionals into permanent or interim positions, from Administrator through to Director Level.

Our three recruitment solutions – Database search, Short-term contract and Managed Campaigns are discussed in detail and tailored to meet your individual needs.

We are confident we can offer you the highest standard of service by ensuring all clients and candidates are kept fully informed at every stage of the recruitment process. This is something we commit to do and not just say, as it is the foundation upon which we place our reputation.

We cannot guarantee to fill every vacancy, or place every candidate but we guarantee you'll find us different.

To find out more about the Permanent Solutions Direct difference contact Lisa Jarvis or Angelina Andrews on 01273 495353, or visit our website at www.permanentsolutionsdirect.co.uk to find out what our clients and candidates have to say about us!

...and are certain we will bring you the right results

CAREER COACHING WITH SUSSEX BRANCH

People Management has its uses! Well we all know about the interesting articles for our CPD and the many jobs on offer but it is also a useful form of introduction when meeting another (previously unseen), member of the Branch in a coffee shop, especially if they are seeking a talk about their career!

Following an uplifting workshop run by Derek Osborn of WhatNext4U last year, Sussex Branch has launched an opportunity to help members trying to sort out their next career move in HR, or who are stuck in a rut, facing redundancy or generally unsure what would be best choice for their HR career. This is being organized by **Jo Bennett** who is currently the **Vice Chair** of the Branch and who has many years previous experience working as Membership Adviser for the Branch. She can be emailed at benjo@clara.co.uk.

Whilst Jo cannot reproduce the ambience of Derek's workshop, where music from The Mission

wafted over the senses, she can offer self help questionnaires as an initial contact to help you clarify your thoughts followed by, a coaching session to help determine your career goals for the future. Successes so far have included a member who was unsure whether to work in education or HR after a career break finding fulfilment working as HR consultant at a school. Another whose contract had expired gaining another contract very quickly but with an absolutely clear view where her HR career direction lay – her career ahead crystallised. Derek Osborn has offered his professional services longer term if the matter became on-going.

So, if you need your Committee's help, please do not hesitate to ask. We would also like to hear from you re your upgrading to Chartered Corporate Member or Chartered Fellow and if you want help with CIPD Membership please contact our **Membership Adviser, Richard Hewitt**.

BRANCH TRAINERS' NETWORK FORUM

The first Branch Trainers Forum took place in May. This was well attended by Trainers and Learning & Development Practitioners in the Branch, some of whom are freelance, others employed in organisations.

It was generally agreed that the forum will provide the opportunity to network and build relationships, to find out what other L & D professionals are doing, to discuss issues of mutual interest to us and to be part of a group for a change rather than to be there for other groups ! The issues people want to explore include looking at personal as well as professional development and include topics such as relationships and influencing, trainer skills and roles, latest thinking and initiatives, sharing concerns, and offering advice and support.

If you join you'll meet some of those other trainers we all knew were out there but didn't know an awful lot about!

Please contact me if you are interested
Frances Gaudencio
Frances@gaudencio-learning.com
0798 1278 645

Next Meetings Dates: All Wed Evenings
21st June
19th July
23rd August
20th September
18th October
15th Nov

Time: 7pm -9pm

Venue: The Triangle Leisure Centre
Burgess Hill

These meetings are FREE and include tea/ coffee and biscuits. The Centre does have a café and bar.

BRANCH NOTICEBOARD

STOP PRESS! Details of our first two programme items for the Autumn...

Liquid Thinking: How to create a cultural revolution in your workplace

Tuesday 12th September

Cottesmore Country Club,

Pease Pottage

7 for 7.30pm

Damian Hughes, HR Operations Manager, Unilever

Stuck in a rut? Know what you want but don't know how to get it? Feel like life is passing you by?

Damian Hughes is the author of a new, best-selling book, *Liquid Thinking*, which looks at the methods used by great achievers and shows, in easy steps, how you can adopt them into your own life, dreams and ambitions.

Hughes, a former football coach, has used the Liquid thinking approach with great success in his current capacity as

Human Resource Manager for Unilever's historical Port Sunlight factories and has reduced absence by 5%, tripled training attendance, reduced ER issues by 70% and helped the factory performance increase by 10%. Most importantly, however, he has been credited with helping employees recognise and achieve life-long ambitions, from running marathons to building their own houses.

He has also used it as a volunteer worker in an inner-city youth club which has helped many kids find a purpose in their lives from stopping crime to winning Olympic medals.

His approach has been lauded by Sir Richard Branson, Muhammad Ali, Jonny Wilkinson and Daley Thompson. Now you can come and hear Damian share with you the secrets of how to start a revolution in your own life, your own career and your own workplace by becoming a fellow Liquid thinker!

Developing Managers Who Coach as They Manage: An Introduction to Solution Focused Coaching

Monday 25th September

Preston Park Hotel, Brighton

7 for 7.30pm

Carole Pemberton, Career Matters

Coaching has exploded as a professional activity in the last 10 years, but the real growth has not been in professional external coaches, but in the expectation that managers should coach as a key contributor to performance delivery. The dilemma for managers is how to coach in a way that is compatible with the realities of how work is done.

Carole Pemberton will share the framework she has developed to help managers coach as they manage, so that

any conversation can have a coaching structure. Labelled by one manager as 'coaching on the hoof', the frameworks are drawn from Solution Focused thinking and provide well proven means for achieving outcomes. The session will allow participants to test out techniques that help managers to coach with confidence.

Carole Pemberton is the founder of Career Matters and Coaching to Solutions Ltd and is the author of 'Coaching to Solutions' (Butterworth Heinemann 2006) and a number of career publications including 'Strike a New Career Deal'. She is a Fellow of the CIPD, and an associate of the Academy of Executive Coaching.

We are hoping to restart our HR Book Club, using Carole's book, for interested members. However all are welcome to the meeting.

If you have an item for the noticeboard, contact Gill at gill.whensley@btinternet.com