Welcome to the latest edition of the microskills™ network for participants of microskills™ training around the world.

This edition includes:

This entire edition contains contributions sent by readers.

Women in Community Roles

In the Snowy Mountains region of Australia, microskills™ is being used to develop the interpersonal skills of women working in important community roles. Leanne Atkinson (MergeR Consulting) was contracted by Monaro Rural Health Service to develop and conduct a pilot training workshop with the objective of developing the leadership capabilities of women working in unpaid but significant community roles. Leanne's research of the needs of these women showed that the skills required were typical of leaders and managers in all walks of life. It was quickly realised that microskills™ could provide the foundation for the workshop design, and David Neyle (Lightship People Systems) was engaged to design and facilitate the workshop.

The evaluation of the workshop was so positive that two further programmes have been conducted in the region. A strength of microskills™ training is the emphasis upon real outcomes. Feedback from participants reports that they have used the microskills™ to resolve the difficult matters of discipline and performance management of volunteer worker. Others went on to make formal presentations for financial support to local Councils, and negotiated the support of other community members to progress projects that previously had been considered 'too hard'.

As David Neyle says: "It is a pleasing outcome to see the camaraderie that has developed amongst the women who participated on the workshops. Something very positive has been created here, and microskills™ was a large part of that. microskills™ continues to be one of the most powerful interpersonal training techniques that I have been introduced to and used over my many years of facilitating training. Here we have an example of microskills™ working in a very different sector to the corporate world that typically I find myself training in. Yet the needs of people to be able to communicate and relate with each other in a confident manner are the same, and this explains why the deceptively simple principles of microskills™ are so powerful."

Followership

An interesting exercise we were sent by a UK colleague asks leaders to define how they would like their followers to behave. Typical items include words like 'self motivated', 'challenging' and 'self starting'. The next part of the exercise gets the leaders to list how they need to behave to get these behaviours from their followers.

A common conclusion is that some leaders micro-manage more than liberate their people.

Learning to Learn

In response to the article in a recent edition of the microskills™ network news about Multiple Intelligences, an Australian reader has written to say that he finds the MIQ by David Lazear (www.davidlazear.com) to be very helpful. It is also a free download, so is worth trying.

Email Problems

A number of people have written about problems with emails, usually complaining that they receive too many. A recent survey in London claimed that 20% of staff time is spent reading or replying to emails.

The prize for the worst use of email goes to the person who sent one to all company employees worldwide, 40,000 people, explaining that someone had left their car in the Head Office car park with its lights on. Four people then hit the 'Reply to All' button asking that their names be removed from the mailing list. That is 200,000 pointless emails.

The opposite problem is faced by academic staff in the Department of Psychosexual Studies of a British university who receive very few emails as the IT department has blocked any that have 'rude words' in the title line.

A Camel Story

The attached powerpoint slides (ACamelStory.pps) were sent by a Singaporean reader.

There are so many cases of companies paying good salaries for highly talented staff and then not using what those staff are able to contribute. There are also too many staff feeling as though they are working in cages waiting for the day when they can liberated.

As an aside, the Singapore Night Safari is a great experience. It is the animals that are free to roam and the tourists who are kept in cages – well, buses actually.

new ways of working™ 'Facts'

A popular feature of the microskills™ network is taken from our new ways of working™ consultancy. Each edition contains some 'facts' and statistics picked up from various sources around the world. (No guarantee is given on the accuracy of these.) Whilst they are mainly from UK research, they might have relevance in other countries.

1. Four out of five workers outside Human Resources believe that the HR function is of no business value
2. Fast food outlet McDonalds is to allow family members to work in place of each other
3. Most senior HR staff believe that their company bonus schemes have absolutely no

effect on motivation or performance
4. Many UK workers spend three extra working weeks a year commuting.
5. The UK Royal Mail has cut absenteeism by 15% since rewarding attendance with National Lottery tickets.

BreadnWater

BreadnWater is a Singaporean charity founded by Yang Siew (who attended a microskills™ course in his occupational capacity last year) and Madeline initially to help their own children to appreciate how fortunate they are to live in such a developed and prosperous country.

Using Yang Siew's considerable talents as a photographer, they produced a fabulous book of very human photos taken on a trip to Nepal in 2004. Sales of "Ray of Light" have so far raised US$60,000 for distribution to help the education of local Nepalese children. Additionally, Yang and Madeline make classroom visits to raise awareness among Singaporean school children.

They have just returned from Nepal again after tracking down the people from the book and photographing them a second time, two years later.

The www.breadnwater.com website is pretty impressive, too.

Experiences, comments and questions

We'd love to hear from members with any views and experiences they have either for publication or for reply off-line.

microskills™, problem ownership™ and Supportive Manager™ are part of a stable of methods used by the Tim Russell Group to train staff around the world in interpersonal skills. User organisations come from finance, travel, hospitality, retail, manufacturing, government, education, health services and telecoms. Applications range from customer service to management development, team-building to support skills, negotiations to managing meetings interviewing to selling.

new ways of working™ is the consultancy service to work with organisations on how they will be operating in areas of staff management in the future.

For more information

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