

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

In this edition:     **The Bright Side**  
                          **Survivor Syndrome**  
                          **problem ownership™**  
                          **new ways of working™ ‘Facts’**  
                          **The Ant and Working Life**

## **The Bright Side**

The credit crunch will probably continue to wreak havoc for months and years to come but there might be a bright side to it as organisations re-assess their corporate values, go for longer term strategies and invest in staff.

As share prices have dropped, so they will become more stable and the emphasis will be on dividends, returns and the strength of the business.

Corporate leaders will need to become more wise than clever and will have to listen to others as we steer these uncharted waters.

More trust and less blame will enter the leadership ethos.

We are pleased to find that our client companies are looking to come out of the troubles with a better trained and more motivated workforce.

## **Survivor Syndrome**

The number of people at all levels of the organisation losing their jobs through the current financial crisis is frightening. But spare a moment for those who remain.

Survivor syndrome is a well documented condition where those who stay hold the guilt. They are reluctant to talk for fear of being seen to be boasting and are not sure how to deal with colleagues

working out their notice.

They also live in dread that they might be chopped in the next round of retrenchments.

## **problem ownership™**

problem ownership™ is one of the tools taught on microskills™ training programmes and we have been asked to provide a taster.

One of the key principles is to distinguish a ‘situation’ which simply describes a state of affairs from a ‘problem’ that prevents the achievement of an objective. This means that the direction is always forward looking to see what action can be taken rather than past looking (blaming) or present looking (resignation).

An example from our work with commercial airline captains is that an engine fire is a situation. The problem is how to land the aircraft safely.

The problem owner is the person with the authority to take action – in this case the captain.

Perverse as it might sound, the passengers don’t have the authority to do anything – so they don’t have a problem!

Obviously there is more to problem ownership™ than this but it gives a flavour of how to apply cold logic to problem solving rather than allow

emotion to cloud the decision making process.

We'd be happy to explain more, including our discussions about the re-dubbing of the Tom Hanks' movie Apollo 13. It now says, "Houston, we have a situation."

For more information about microskills™, problem ownership™ and their applications, please email:

[microskills@TimRussellGroup.com](mailto:microskills@TimRussellGroup.com)

## **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. Almost a third of employees (32%) keep their desks messy as they think it makes them look busy while 85% of senior staff think an organised desk is important in gaining promotion.
2. A report from Talent Q shows 82% of HR staff do not measure the return on investment of their practices - which is why they struggle to be seen to provide value to their organisations.
3. Strathclyde Police in Scotland has recruited 10 members of the Jedi religion as part of a diversity drive.
4. Thousands of Australians working in the UK are set to head back down under this year due to changes to the laws allowing them to have a migrant visa, as the economic climate worsens.
5. More than two fifths of students (43%) rate training opportunities as the most

important reason for selecting an employer, well ahead of job security (28%) and salary (11%), according to a survey by accountancy firm KPMG.

6. More than 100 cleaners at St Pancras Station in London are considering strike action over plans to introduce machines for them to clock in and clock out using their fingerprints.

## **The Ant and Working Life**

We were amused by this variation of the Ant Story that we were sent the other day. Not too keen on the depiction of the management consultants though!

<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/myportal-160270-ant-story-working-life-entertainment-ppt-powerpoint/>

## **Experiences, comments and questions**

We always like 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**

Contact us at:

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