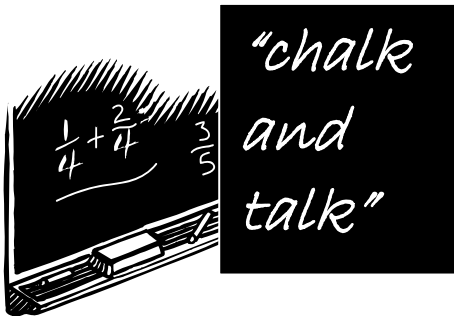




legal education & training group



LETG Newsletter Autumn 2007

♦ All the leaves are brown, and the sky is grey.... ♦

but here's the LETG news to brighten up your day!!

In this issue, we catch up with some of our 2007 LETG Award winners and take a look at some of the issues being reported about the potential impact of the Leitch report as well as bringing you our regular features.

Inside this Autumn edition....



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New LETG Website

Our new and improved website is available for inspection at www.letg.org.uk. Members will be able to access the Members Only areas on renewal of their subscription. Remember when logging in for the first time to click the "forgotten password" box to trigger a password update from the system. Please let us have your comments on the new design and functionality.

"And now for something completely different..."

No, not a line from Monty Python but the title of this year's hotly anticipated LETG Annual Conference...

"Dear diary,

I cannot believe it is nearly a year since I wrote about those extremely clever learning and development people from a group called the LETG and how interesting and thought provoking their conference at Aston business School turned out to be.

Well, great excitement and news diary, we are so lucky - the LETG are having this year's

annual conference here at Aston Business School on 21 and 22 November.

I understand that the theme of this year's conference is "and now for something completely different".

If you'd like to find out more click [here](#) to see the full programme.

LETG and College of Law pilot new Change Management Programme from January 2008

Following strong interest from LETG members, the LETG Committee and The College of Law are delighted to confirm the Change Management programme will be commissioned. The first module will run in January 2008. Please look out for more information on booking and confirmed dates in our Newsflashes.

LETG "Matched, Hatched and Dispatched"

Very many congratulations to Jenny Pugh on her marriage to Mark Hughes-Webb on 29 September 2007. We wish Jenny and Mark every happiness in their married life.



Congratulations to Amber Moore, who gave birth to 9lb 2oz Marcus Bartholomew Douglas on 14th August.

Other news...

T&D more important than salary...

Training and development are perceived as more important than salary, suggests a survey of graduates.

A poll conducted by accountancy firm Ernst & Young found that nearly half (44%) of more than 1,000 respondents rated training opportunities highest, while 18% voted for salary and benefits as their top concern.

For more see www.personneltoday.com

Free learning materials from the Open University

Free learning materials are available from the Open University's open content site OpenLearn. There are currently more than 7,000 hours of learning materials available and half a million people worldwide are taking advantage, with some of the most popular modules being "HR: recruitment and selection" and "Diversity and difference in communication". Why don't you take a peak..?

Training is changing and so are trainers' roles and essential skills

In the July 2007 edition of Training Journal, Daniel Hanlon (Managing Director of Training Synergy - www.trainingsynergy.co.uk) argues that technology now allows learning to be linked with business rather than learning objectives and therefore that training is "strategic" rather than "tactical". In light of this, Daniel examines how he believes trainers need to change their actions, attitudes and aptitudes. Instructor-trainers are being replaced by "learning enablers" who combine presentation skills with those of a coach, mentor and facilitator to find the most appropriate learning conditions for each individual, based on learning preferences and the available technology. Since training must demonstrate its usefulness to the business, trainers must also be skilled at running trainee assessments. These could be completed via multiple choice questions; telephone interviews both immediately following the training and after a longer period to see how much each learner has retained; setting specific tasks and assigning a mentor to assist in completion of the tasks; or measuring the trainee's performance against KPIs. The extra demands and changing nature of training, also means trainers need a greater level of professionalism and experience as well as a broader skill set than ever before.

Coaching in Decline?

According to *Training & Coaching Today* (July/August 2007), a US survey reports the use of executive coaching is waning. Boston-based Novations polled 2000 HR and training executives and found 33% were relying on coaching less than in the past; 48% at about the same level and only 19% more than before. These findings echo those in the CIPD 2007 Learning, Training and Development Survey which reported a 16% decrease in the number of organisations involved in coaching activity.

Special Feature:



The Leitch Report was issued in December 2006 and identified 4 key targets:

95% of adults to achieve functional literacy and numeracy by 2020;

More than 90% of adults qualified to at least Level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A-C) by 2020;

1.9 million people to reach Level 3 (equivalent to 2 A levels) by 2020; and

Over 40% of adults qualified to Level 4 (a certificate in higher education, foundation degree or honours degree) by 2020.

What news so far....

People management

The Government has announced that employers are to be encouraged to develop their own in-house training schemes. *World Class Skills*, the Government's response to the Leitch Review outlines plans to make it easier for employers' training programmes to be accredited through the Qualification and Credit framework.

John Denham, Innovation, Universities and Skills Secretary, called for an employer driven "skills revolution" and a "culture change in attitudes" to ensure the UK meets the

ambitious targets set out by Leitch. The Government is committed to achieving standards through a voluntary pledge rather than through legislation but has announced it will review the position in 2010. You have been warned...

See *People Management* (26 July 2007) for the full article plus a round-table debate on skills - "the big skill".



News from the CIPD website

(15 June 2007):

Household names such as McDonalds, Sainsburys and EDF Energy are amongst the first 150 employers to sign up to the public Skills-Pledge, recommended by the Leitch Report. By committing to the pledge, employers promise to support their employees to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills and work towards a full Level 2 Qualification (equivalent to 5 GCSEs).

L&D Professionals have key role in achieving world-class skills

Training Journal (August 2007):

According to Professor Mike Campbell, Learning and Development Professionals are vital to "sustaining Britain's future prosperity" by encouraging their organisations to sign up to the Government's new Skills Pledge, gaining senior manager's commitment to skills and ensuring the skills acquired by their organisations are strategically relevant. On top of this, they must also ensure that HR activities are properly aligned with business objectives. An advisor to the Leitch Review of skills, Campbell told practitioners at this year's Training Journal conference that improving workplace skills was paramount if Britain was to remain competitive in a rapidly-changing economic world.

For the full article please see Training Journal (August 2007) or visit www.trainingjournal.com

And finally... the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills has just released "World Class Skills", the Government's plan for implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England - you might want to check it out at

LETG Member sharing

Don't forget to check out the LETG website to see the really useful answers to LETG member newsflash queries - there's a wealth of helpful hints and recommendations from other members there!

Recent events report

Pre-PQE : Finding and Forming the Lawyers of the Future, 13th June

Waa-hey! Let off the leash for the day - just like being on a school trip. Graduate Recruitment Manager and I took ourselves off to the LETG's Pre-PQE Conference at BPP's swish new Waterloo Centre.

The great and the good from the worlds of graduate recruitment and development together for a day of enlightenment on the wants and needs of our stars of the future.

Settled in the comfy seats in the BPP lecture theatre, we kicked off with the inside track from Legal Week Intelligence on what students really want from us, we discovered brand and reputation still holds the top spot. Certainly worth it's Top 5 billing however was "impressions from placement scheme" ... luckily Cobbetts were on hand to tell us all exactly how we should go about ensuring our placement schemes leave the right kind of impression. Next up, how to identify your future stars and some very thought provoking debate on the usefulness of assessment tools.

A fantastic panel of experts congregated to share their knowledge on the best ways to prepare your trainees to join you and very generous with their insights they were. GRM was particularly impressed that everyone was so willing to share... I think I even heard her say it was worth the time away from her beloved online application system!!

Lunch was up next and guess what... for every sandwich you took, there was a free LETG gift -

at least that's what it seemed like, there was such an abundance of goodwill and generosity: I grabbed my brolly and bag and scarpered outside before anyone could stop me and tell me to hand all the loot back!

We spent the afternoon thinking about how to make sure we get our trainees off to a good start in the office and discussing how assessment centres can be used to track their success. The accountants came along to tell us how they do it and somebody was even brave enough to address that thorniest of issues - supervision!

The finale? Who else but Jonathan Spencer from the SRA to give us the regulator's vision for training in the future.

Very many thanks to Committee Member Jenny Pugh for organising such an interesting day. Certainly GRM and I hope there are many more opportunities for us to get together and "share the love" - is that inappropriate??

Contributed by Liz Bryne, Jones Day



"Future Learning & Development Needs of Tomorrow's Successful Lawyers" Breakfast Briefing, 18th June

Chaired by Stephen Mayson, the LETG Breakfast Briefing saw a formidable panel of Managing Partners from a variety of organisations sharing their views and ideas about future challenges facing the L&D industry. Interested? Click on the link below to read the full questions and answers.

[Breakfast Briefing Minutes](#)

"The L&D Administrator as Ambassador" Workshop: 19th September

Phil Parry from JSB led the discussion with law firm participation from Suzanne Leighton at Reed Smith Richards Butler.

One satisfied delegate writes:

Having only been a Learning and Development Administrator for a short while, I was really keen to attend a course for people in my role. It was a great opportunity to learn more about what it means to be a Learning and Development Administrator, understand the challenges that someone in this role faces and also meet fellow Learning and Development Administrators to build up contacts.

Phil Parry was an excellent trainer who encouraged discussion and raised some very interesting points about the behaviours and characteristics of a Learning and Development Administrator and how these translate into our day to day activities. We looked at how to influence and be assertive, raise our profile, and communicate effectively. We also discussed a number of case studies, which was really useful as they looked at problem scenarios and how best to deal with these.

I thoroughly enjoyed this course and the opportunity to network with other Learning and Development Administrators. I found the course thought provoking and it was really useful to learn about other peoples' experiences in the role.

Contributed by Alison Rance, L&D Administrator, Charles Russell



LETG Annual Dinner and Inaugural Awards Ceremony, 28th June

Word was out and, like a wild fire, it quickly spread that the biggest event in the Training Calendar was going down at Temple, London, England. Yeh, that's right, the LETG Annual Awards was coming to the Howard Swissotel, and boy what a bash it was.

No sooner had the invitations hit mailrooms, they were despatched at lightening speed. Acceptances, cheques and confirmations were immediately flying back and forth. Jane, LETG Administrator and main organiser was overwhelmed and urgently drafted in Securicor to arrange a special collection.

Soon, the creme de la creme of the training fraternity would descend on Temple. If you

missed this gig, well, hey, I cannot begin to tell you how this would impact on your credibility.

So I am reliably told, the LETG Committee had been frantically beavering behind the scenes and had left no stone unturned to ensure it was a night to remember! Word has it, that even the pianist, Lola (Liberace in disguise) had flown in specially from Spain. When the day arrived, IQ, EQ and even SQ were at an all time high, as every effort was being made to ensure that everything was in place for what can only be described as a "mega" event, bigger than the Oscars!

As the clock struck six, the chosen few began to arrive from all corners of the globe (well, the UK actually) in pink stretched limos, big fancy cars, taxis, some by tube and even some on bicycle, how splendid they looked. In all their finery, they were greeted by the bootilicious LETG Committee.

Having been ushered towards the cloakroom to deposit their outer garments and re-jig their outfits, they made a quick pit stop to the loos before making their way to the drinks reception.

Once inside, they reached for a glass of champers and headed straight over to view the Table Plan (one of the most closely guarded secrets of this century). As they glared at the plan, some faces were expressions of joy, some a little more guarded but most were pleasantly surprised and up for it.

As they worked the room the atmosphere was buzzing and exciting. The more alcohol was consumed, the more the noise level rose, with lots of networking, negotiating, business development and of course gossiping.

As the evening began to get into its groove, jokes, banter and laughter could be heard and numerous business cards were exchanged. Within half an hour the guests were sitting relaxed on their respective tables, laid out in cabaret style.

The Chair, in all her glory, opened the evening with a short, informal address. First came the welcome, then a brief introduction, followed by some housekeeping. As the words "let the eating and drinking begin" were uttered, the Chair promptly sat down to rapturous applause.



"The Chair in all her glory...?"

There were some old faces, some new ones, some very old faces and even some good looking ones too - my don't we scrub up well! After the delicious starter and finger licking' good main, Lola began with a snappy, foot stamping, toe tapping jam on the old Joanna. Her set ended with a loud crescendo which sounded like three dozen plates had just been dropped from a great height in the kitchen. No sooner had she stopped playing, you could feel the excitement, the tension, the anticipation of what was to come next - showtime!

As silence swept across the room, the Chair rose and facilitated a seamless bafta-style masterclass. You could hear a pin drop. As each award was announced, there was deafening silence, then a battering on the old Joanna, followed by applause, after applause. The winning nominees graciously accepted the slick and stylish LETG memento clasp it tightly with both hands. One, two, three four, five, six, BAM! As quick as a flash, the proceedings were over, as those gathered, eagerly congratulated the winners (with bright beaming faces) as they returned to their seats.

Finally, the Chair rose for one last time and concluded with a short review, and a hearty thanks to all those involved. Like when church bells ring after a wedding, the proceedings drew to a close. The politically correct began to make their apologies and exits, whilst the hard-core diehards tucked into the truly scrumptious dessert. It was picturesque, similar to when a red sun goes down on a warm spring evening, it was over.

As they disappeared in the directions from whence they came, you could hear mini debriefs and reflections going on in groups of two or three.

What a bash! It was mega; great food; what a refreshing experience; I learned loads; I'm definitely looking forward to next year.

*Contributed by Margaret Dunmore,
from Shearman & Sterling.*

More 2007 LETG Events for your diary

Please make sure you've got the following dates firmly marked in your diary....

October:

10 th October 2007	Jones Day 21 Tudor Street London EC4Y 0DJ	Writing Persuasive Reports and Proposals includes lunch) £60.00
9.30am to 1.00pm		
John Trimbos from Trimbos Training leads an interactive workshop focussing on how to write more persuasive reports and proposals. Booking Form		

22 nd October 2007	Herbert Smith Citygate House 39- 45 Finsbury Square London EC2A 1PX	LETG Annual General Meeting
5.00pm		
This year's AGM will be followed by drinks and canapes courtesy of our hosts.		

November:

21-22 November 2007	Aston Business School Conference Centre	LETG Annual Conference: "And now for something completely different.... Creativity and Innovation in Practice"
This year's conference asks can we learn from organisations outside the legal profession? What use is social software? Using Constellations – are we reaching for the stars? Are learning and creativity mutually exclusive? To find out the answers, book your place at this year's event here		

This issue's "Member in the spotlight"!



Jan Jones, Wragge & Co - Winner of the LETG "Unsung Hero 2007" Award



What's your role and how long have you been in it?

I have been PA to Wendy Morrison, the Director of Professional Development at Wragge & Co for nearly 8

years. In that time, the job has grown immensely from secretarial support to becoming involved in firmwide projects, which has helped me develop my understanding of how professional services firms work. My work can range from organising our Partner Leadership Programme and administering external training through to producing the training budget and reports from our training database, as well as co-ordinating the activities of the Professional Development Team.

Typical day?

There are two "typical" days. My "PA support to Wendy" days can include scheduling and attending meetings, working on projects, producing documents and presentations – usually to very tight deadlines! On my "training administrator" days I could be booking external courses, working on the training budget, analysing information from our training database, producing reports on course attendance, cancellations, diversity etc, and working with the other training administrators in the team.

What's your office like?

The team is based on the 15th floor of one of Wragge & Co's Birmingham City Centre offices. It is light and airy, moderately tidy and we have wonderful 360 degree views around Birmingham

and the Midlands. We are the weather forecasters for the firm – we can see the rain and snow coming in, the patches of blue sky suddenly appearing in the grey clouds, and we have wonderful sunsets. And we also try to work when we are not looking out of the window.

How many in your team?

We are a team of 8 – our Director, three training and development managers focussing on management and skills development; legal training; and support staff development, and 4 administrators, who work closely together to provide a seamless service to the firm.

Biggest challenges?

Keeping all the plates in the air to prevent crises. Making sure that all the delegates are on the right course on the right day in the right room.

Greatest triumphs?

Being voted the LETG Unsung Hero!

Any training room nightmares?

I had to organise a development day for our Group Leaders, and one of them had recommended a local coaching inn near to his village in Warwickshire for the venue. We had invited an external coach to attend the session and she and Wendy were to arrive the evening before and stay overnight. What I had not realised was that when the hostelry closed for the evening, all the staff actually went home! Wendy and our guest coach were left alone, with the keys to the inn, in the middle of the Warwickshire countryside. An additional item to add to future check-lists!

If you had a magic wand, what would you make happen?

I recently saw a statistic that only 25% of people are trusting of each other – 50 years ago it was 75%. Wouldn't it be great to have a society where we had trust in each other?

If you could be anywhere in the world, where would you be?

Why not out of this world? A three night stay on the Galactic International Hotel, orbiting the earth for a mere £2m, would be a wonderful experience, and imagine the views. In reality – walking on South Sands Beach in Salcombe, South Devon, in November in wellies in the pouring rain. My favourite place!

Person you'd call in an emergency?

Dr Who! Then he could transport me through time to before it happens or to the future so the emergency is over!

One word of advice to new members?
Make the most of opportunities to network. We are all in the same profession and there are some great ideas out there.

Any help you'd like from providers?
We receive so many calls from providers, a little less telephone pressure and constant calling when we have already said we will get back to them if we are interested would be appreciated.

Want more from **this** newsletter?

Contact [Karen Aubrey](#).

Your LETG committee

[Pauline Holland](#), Chair, Annual Dinner, Law Society ETC

[Patrick McCann](#), Vice-Chair

[Peter Carrick](#), Website development

[Sandy Boyle](#), Treasurer

[Karen Aubrey](#), Newsletter

[Jenny Pugh](#), Website development

[Tracy Clegg](#), Gifts

[Shannon Campbell](#), Annual Conference

[Rebecca Fradley](#)

[Margaret Dunmore](#)

[Liz Bryne](#)

[Jane Cochrane](#), LETG Administrator

www.letg.org.uk

Article 1

When is team building pointless? By Alison Clayton-Smith

‘We’ve got an away day coming up and we want a team building exercise for the afternoon. It needs to be fun but not too embarrassing for people. There are 40 of us and we’ve got an hour and a half slot. What do you suggest?’

This is the sort of request that makes me smile and despair at the same time. The problem is, we use the term ‘team building’ without necessarily defining what we mean. To help design an appropriate development intervention we need to ensure that all concerned have a shared understanding of the term. And first of all we need to clarify what we mean by ‘team’.

What is a ‘team’?

We could spend a lot of time defining the word ‘team’. Indeed many academics have done just that. One such definition is:

‘A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.’¹

A team is different from a group because a group can be a collection of individuals who don’t necessarily rely on each other to achieve a common purpose. Now without getting into a long discussion, I do hold the view that any group of people can be a team if they decide to be, even if their level of interdependency on each other is small. For example, a department can be viewed as a team from the perspective that all the individuals are working towards

delivering on the service that department offers. Without each individual the department could not, in theory, achieve its objectives. However, the larger the group the more difficult it becomes to work as a real team because of the increasing complexity of communication, information and time to make decisions. Arguably the sometimes pained question ‘Are we a team?’ could be answered by saying ‘Well yes if you’re behaving, or trying to behave, like one.’

What is ‘team building’?

Let’s take our 40 people from a department or practice group. Are they a real team? Do they depend on each other regularly to achieve their goals? Are there common goals? It depends at what level you’re looking. But when someone asks for ‘team building’ what do they really mean? Do they mean that they want this group of 40 people to develop a common purpose and goals, to recognise each others strengths and challenges, to agree ways of working together and holding each other accountable? Not always, no. Sometimes if we probe a bit more what they want is for everyone to get to know each other a bit better, to break down some of the formal barriers, and encourage people to build more productive relationships. Oh yes, and usually have a bit of fun.

So in such a situation we might want to talk about building ‘teamwork’ instead. The UK Centre for Legal Education defines ‘teamwork’, as:

‘the ability to establish working relations with others, to interact effectively, and to promote productive cooperation’

The term ‘teamwork’ can therefore be applied to any interaction that involves 2 or more people.

¹ Beyerlein, M.M., Johnson, D.A. and Beyerlein, S.T. (eds), *Virtual Teams*, in *Advances in Interdisciplinary Studies of Work Teams*, Vol.8, 2001, Elsevier Science Ltd, Oxford

Isn't it all just semantics?

Well yes and no. In one way, yes it is just semantics. The manager or partner who is requesting a team building activity isn't necessarily that interested in debating whether their group is really a team or not. Often they just want an activity to get people together. No, in the sense that even if they aren't interested, we, as learning and development professionals, ought to be so we can be clear about the type of intervention we're designing. There is no point putting something together which explores how well all 40 people work together and coordinate activities as a team, if they don't ever really need to do that. There is however value in using activities which allow them to mix with people in the group they don't normally.

Maybe I am just being a pedant, and maybe everyone already understands what team building is, but my experience of requests suggests that perhaps there is still some room for improvement. Hopefully, with each request we can challenge managers and partners to consider what is really a team so that when a group does need to be a team, there is real commitment to building and developing that team rather than just spending a couple of hours getting to know each other and having fun.

Biographical data

Alison Clayton-Smith set-up her own development consultancy after 9 years' successful HR and training experience with an international law firm. She focuses particularly on working with law firms to tackle communication issues within and across teams and individuals. Her particular area of interest is how our internal beliefs and thoughts drive our behaviour and impact on our interactions with others. Alison can be contacted via email at Alison@connectperformanceconsulting.co.uk or via her website www.connectperformanceconsulting.co.uk.

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Article 2

Helping lawyers overcome the perfectionist trap

By Alison Clayton-Smith

A lawyer I once coached dropped out of running races in her personal life unless she had done enough training to do a really good time. In her work life, she was often afraid to speak ‘off the cuff’ in case what she said was not correct. Lawyers seem particularly prone to perfectionism and some of its less helpful consequences. How can we as, training and development professionals, help them to recognise that perfectionism does not always lead to an effective lawyer?

Perfectionist origins

We only need to think about the legal mind and the nature of the profession to appreciate that lawyers are likely to have leanings towards perfectionism. Lawyers are:

- taught to focus on the detail and facts;
- concerned with getting the best argument possible, or getting the correct wording in a document;
- aware of the difference a comma in the wrong place can make.

At the same time, getting into the legal profession is a competitive business and requires strong academics. Lawyers are typically high achievers who are used to being successful and being rewarded for that success.

The consequences for law firms

Firstly, there are positive consequences to perfectionist behaviours. For instance, individuals will be keen to make sure they have been thorough in their research and the advice given is sound. There are unlikely to be emails with spelling mistakes. Attention to planning for every eventuality means that nasty surprises are less likely to occur. And of course, not all lawyers necessarily lean towards perfectionism.

For those that do and for whom perfectionism is an overriding way of behaving – that is where individuals feel unable to do anything less than ‘perfect’ – they may find themselves:

- afraid to speak out in meetings, do presentations, network with clients;
- spending too long on things with the result that clients are charged too much (or that time has to be written off) and work-life balance becomes an issue;
- avoiding taking risks and innovating;
- preferring to do the work themselves rather than delegate to others who they think may not do as good a job because they demand perfection from others;
- and when they do delegate, they tell the person exactly what to do and how to do it rather than coach them,

Where someone attaches their self-esteem to their achievements, the ability to accept failure, or 'just doing ok', is limited.

What can we do?

This is an area that lends itself to the use of coaching. Often individuals have very strong beliefs based on their life experiences which are leading them into unhelpful perfectionism. In a coaching situation we might:

- Challenge them to consider whether everything they do has to be 100% right. What things do not need to be perfect?
- Get them to define what being perfect looks like. How do they know it is perfect? Help them to understand what the implications of this are. What is the difference between 'excellent' and 'perfect'?
- Ask them to look at others around them and see if they can learn anything from others behaviours.
- Help them to focus on what the benefits would be of focusing on 'ok'.
- Get them to review times when they have failed at something. How did they react? What were the consequences?
- Encourage them to identify some small risks they could take, perhaps outside of work first.

For example, I coached someone who had time management issues. She considered herself (proudly) to be a perfectionist but she also wanted some work-life balance. In her mind everything had to be done perfectly. She would rather be late with something than feel she had done a less than perfect job. We looked at what aspects of her job might be done a little less than perfect and what this would mean. She observed other people who she thought were high performers and noted in what areas they spent less energy and time. We also considered what would happen if she unexpectedly found she could not come to work because she avoided delegating.

Aside from coaching individuals, we could include discussion on perfectionism in self and others as part of our training for supervisors and partners.

Finally...

Helping lawyers deal with unhelpful perfectionism is challenging. It usually takes them time and small steps to change because of the deep fear of change and failure. However, by working on this issue we are tackling some of the underlying behaviours that challenge law firms in managing their people and providing excellent client service.

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Article 3



Designing Experiential Learning – the 4 Box Model

Experiential Learning is a process through which the learner develops new or improved skills, behaviour or insights from the experience of attempting an activity which has been designed to surface the desired learning goals. It is a structured form of 'learning by doing'

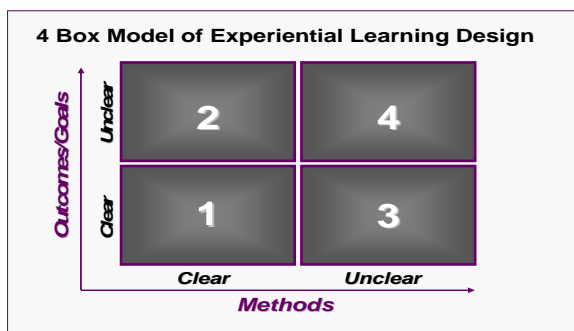
The most common form of experiential learning is by simply assisting a skilled person in doing something and then gradually developing competence so that the learner can do it too.

Due to the rich context this type of learning exhibits – the learner uses every sense and capacity in the process of learning – experiential learning, when properly designed, can be amongst the most powerful learning techniques available to the trainer.

In developing management and/or team based learning, designers of experiential learning now commonly use an explanatory framework called the '**4 Box model**' as a basic design tool to help them achieve the right pitch in their exercise design.

The 4Box model was developed by experiential learning practitioners in the late 1970's as a template to accelerate skills development in managers.

The model is as follows:



Box 1

Both methods and outcomes are clearly understood. – What you do and how you do it are clear – but performance increases with practice. An example here would be a simple task requiring the application of a skill, 'how to give feedback' for instance.

Box 2

Methods are clear but the outcomes are as yet not understood – for example a team may be set a complex set of simple tasks which they need to complete in order to maximise an outcome. Box 2 exercises are often competitive, creating situations where the outcome cannot be known.

Box 3

The goal/outcome is clear but the methods one uses to get there is unknown. This is a true problem solving experience. In this scenario, a team may be given, for example, a profit target to achieve and a set of resources and market data. They must then make decisions as to what they will do and organise themselves in various roles and prioritise tasks which will achieve the goal.

Computer based simulations such as business games often use box 2 and Box 3 designs, where background design parameters can shape and guide team and individual performance.

Box 4

Both the goal and the methods to achieve it are unknown – This simulates a situation for example, of an organisation facing a chaotic and changing market, or a problem which only becomes apparent once the team investigates an issue. The team must self-define goals and then organise to achieve them. Box 4 simulations can be used to develop sophisticated skills in team collaboration and coordination, leadership and also issues such as organisational creativity and innovation.



A typical application in a use of the 4 Box frameworks would be in a team building programme or in a leadership development programme designed to develop a set of specific skills. In these examples, the learning intervention would consist of exercises and inputs. starting in Box 1 e.g. simple team tasks or coaching skills; and then work through the boxes with increasingly complex and sophisticated exercises and skill sets. Once these have been deployed then the design moves to Box 2.

Box 2 may be a 'basket' of box 1 type tasks where choices of task need to be made and the whole activity based around a form of relative competition (so the goal remains fluid).

Then moving up to a Box 3 design which focuses, for example, on problem solving effectiveness and organising a team to exploit an opportunity.

Box 4 design can then explore scenario planning, self-directed goal setting and may also incorporate all the other activities and forms of organisation as a means of achieving a (self managed) set of goals. Around the experiential exercises developed using this template, the resulting programme may use other interventions such as team based coaching and team reviews to directly affect the skill sets of participants.

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Article 4

Alternative things to do at meetings

- Wear a hands free phone headset throughout, once in a while drift off into an unrelated conversation, such as: "I don't care if there are no dwarfs, just get the show done!"
- Write the words 'he fancies you' on your pad and show it to the person next to you while indicating with your pen.
- Respond to a serious question with: "I don't know what to say, obviously I'm flattered, but it's all happened so fast".
- Use 'Nam style jargon such as "what's the ETA?", "who's on recon? And "Charlie don't surf".
- Reconstruct the meeting in front of you using action figures and when anyone moves re-arrange the figures accordingly.
- Shave one of your forearms.
- Draw a chalk circle around one of the chairs, then avoid sitting on it when the meeting starts. When someone does eventually sit in it, cover your mouth and gasp.
- Turn your back on the meeting and sit facing the window with your legs stretched out. Announce that "you love this dirty town".
- Walk directly up to a colleague and stand nose to nose with him for one minute.
- Mount the desk and walk along its length before taking your seat.
- Reflect sunlight into everyone's eyes off your watch face.
- Gargle with water
- Repeat every idea they express in a baby voice while moving your hand like a chattering mouth.
- Gradually push yourself closer and closer to the door on your chair.
- Hum throughout the meeting.
- Pull out a large roll of bank notes and count them demonstratively.
- Bend momentarily under the table then emerge wearing contact lenses that white out your eyes.
- Drop meaningless and confusing management speak into conversations such as: "What's the margin. Marvin?" "When's this turkey going to get pasted?" "If we don't get this brook babbling we're all going to end up looking like doe-eyed Labradors"
- Produce a hamster from your pocket and suggest throwing it to one another as a means of idea-exchange.
- Announce that you've run off some copies of the meeting agenda. Then hand out pieces of paper that read: My secret agenda... 1. Trample the weak 2. Triumph alone 3. Invade Poland. Re-collect them sheepishly and ask everyone to pretend they haven't seen them.
- Attempt to hypnotise the entire room using a pocket watch.
- When referring to someone in the room always call them your "homey" or "dog".
- Leave long pauses in your speech at random moments. When someone is prompted to interject shout: "I AM NOT FINISHED".
- Bring in a stereo, turn it on and start playing a game of 'Musical Chairs'
- When someone introduces themselves to you, repeat a different name back.
- If corrected, just say 'yeah whatever'



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Article 5

ENHANCING THE VALUE OF TRAINING – *change what you do to change what you get*

Most firms can increase the value they get from training by putting in place more rigorous implementation strategies. Lack of effective implementation contributes to higher drop out rates, lack of any meaningful change as a result of the training, no sustainability of skills, cynicism amongst partners and fee earners as to the value of soft skills training, diversion of the soft skills budget to other areas.

In our experience of working with law firms, training managers and their teams are good at identifying the content of training, selecting training providers, recognising what good training looks like and managing the logistics required for a successful training programme but there is often no strategy for implementing the training.

In this article we outline the steps that training managers need to take for the successful implementation of their training initiatives to ensure individuals and the business gain the maximum value for the money and time invested.

Plan the training initiative with care

Training initiatives often fail because insufficient groundwork is put in before the training begins. Some firms have a well developed training culture where training is seen as the norm and partners, fee earners and business services staff have an expectation that it will happen. In most firms this is not the case.

Time spent analysing the business to discover what skills are needed to support the business objectives and identifying the potential obstacles to success will greatly improve the chances of producing a positive result.

Having a clear plan to remove obstacles and tackling these well before the training starts will ensure the programme gets off to flying start rather than struggling against unexpected difficulties and opposition.

Gaining the commitment to training.

In most firms there are pockets of resistance to soft skills training which need to be overcome before any training begins. Whilst you may believe your proposed training initiative will be of value to the firm, the partners and fee earners you are trying to persuade may not see that value.

If they perceive the cost (time, money, effort, use of resources, disruption, hassle) of your proposed training initiative outweighs its perceived value, partners and fee earners will not buy into it. There may well be a need to sell the initiative to them, so do your research well and make sure you focus how the training addresses their real needs and will deliver real benefits for them, not just the organisation.

Enlist the support of senior partners

Having the full backing of senior partners and key influencers in the firm can help to establish the expectation that your training initiative is a priority, which needs to become part of individuals' personal development programme.

Support needs to be **VISIBLE** and **ONGOING**. All too often projects begin in blaze of internal publicity and lots of support from the top, which proves to be short-lived as management attention is diverted elsewhere. Senior management attention on a regular basis is one of the most effective ways of ensuring the training is seen as a priority. Nothing will give greater impetus to the training than partners and heads of departments following up with the people who have attended the training and reviewing their progress.

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It is important to agree in advance what sanctions will be applied to individuals who simply don't turn up. All too often individuals drop out at the last minute using client work as the excuse because it is easy and they know there will be no consequences if they do. Worse still partners pull delegates off training at the last minute or even during the programme. All these things materially reduce the value of a training programme and damage the general perception of training. Making it difficult for individuals to drop out will reinforce the priority placed on soft skills training e.g. insisting on the permission of a head of department, assigning the cost of cancellation to departments, naming and shaming individuals who drop out does have a material impact on attendance levels. Firms who adopt these practices are seeing much reduced drop out rates.

"80% of success is showing up" – Woody Allen

Target the training

If you can pinpoint the individuals who need the training, CAN use it and WILL use it you will materially enhance the value of any training initiative. Here are some ways you can target the training to increase its success

Start with the willing – identify those individuals who are receptive to the training and leave the people likely to be resistant to last. They may become less resistant as they see the benefits their colleagues gain from the training. Working with receptive people will not only ensure early results but will enable you to make any adjustments, which are needed before the more difficult individuals attend the training.

Communicating early success will help to reinforce the value of the training and will energise the project and give it momentum.

Focus on average performers – a common mistake is to focus training on poor performers, since they are the most visible. Working with this group is likely to be difficult and will require significant effort to make performance gains. These are the people who drop out at the last minute, come up with excuses about why they can't use what they have learnt, or come up with reasons why these skills are not relevant to them. Even where there is progress it is likely to be limited and at best turn poor performers into average ones.

The biggest improvement in results comes from moving average performers into the best. This group is likely to show fastest improvement for the effort put in. The impact of moving this group of people from average to good is likely to provide an excellent return on the investment

Just in Time not Just in Case

Not everyone can use the training they attend because their job doesn't provide them with the opportunities. Consequently they will soon lose the skills they learnt. Adopt a Just in Time strategy rather than a Just in Case approach.

Don't stop once you have started

Attending training is only the start. The real value for individuals and the firm is the application of skills to ensure a visible and sustainable change in behaviour. For most partners and fee earners the soft skills they learn are to support them in parts of their role for which they often have least time (BD and management) and the lowest confidence. Ongoing support for partners and fee earners who attend training is vital.

Knowing is not enough. Willing is not enough. We must do - Goethe

There are a few simple things, which need to happen after training to ensure partners and fee earners apply what they have learnt. Ensure every delegate completes a Personal Development Action Plan, which clearly identifies what they have learnt, what they plan to do and when they plan to do it, plus any further support they need. Ask



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them to share this with a colleague or their boss. Encourage delegates to work in Alumni groups to support each other after the training to provide coaching and mentoring to help them implement what they have learnt.

“You can change the behaviour of an entire organisation provided you treat training as a process not an event” – Warren G Bennis – psychologist and management guru

Measure and track results

Finally measure individuals' progress. The objective of most soft skills training is to develop new behaviours, which are observable and measurable, so implement activities which will enable you to do this. Questionnaires to identify how individuals have applied their new skills, business simulations, and short refresher sessions are some of the techniques that will help you measure and reinforce the impact of training. Remember to communicate success to build momentum and commitment for your training.

Taken together these simple steps should ensure your training initiative will bring real and sustained results. Furthermore it should bring a return far greater than the time and effort invested.

8 tips to ensure your training initiatives are successful

- 1. Plan the training initiative with care** – identify and overcome the obstacles
- 2. Gain the commitment to training** - show how it will help them
- 3. Enlist the support of senior partners** – and keep it going
- 4. Start with the willing** – they'll help you sell it to others
- 5. Focus on average performers** – greatest impact for least effort
- 6. Just in Time not Just in Case** – they'll use the skills they learn
- 7. Don't stop once you have started** – keep it going with coaching and mentoring
- 8. Measure and track results** – publicise and celebrate success

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More information can be found at www.huthwaitefleming.com

Article 6

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Business Consulting

Hitting Perfect Pitch. Michael Farrell & Stella Smith

‘We have a pitch the day after tomorrow – can you help us?’

Sound familiar?

Learning and Development or Marketing are often asked to assist pitch teams in getting ready. All too often the request comes a couple of days before the pitch. This is too late. Firms need to start recognising that an increasingly competitive market place with increasingly sophisticated clients, more and more lawyers are having to get out there and pitch for business. Whether it is for a place on a panel or for a key project, clients are comparing and contrasting in order to get the best for their money. Pitching is tough – it really is a battle to do better than the rest.

Pitch teams have about thirty minutes to get it right. In those 30 minutes they not only have to showcase their technical and experiential credentials, but they also have to convince the client that they would be a good team to work with. Clients do not make decisions on fees alone, they make decisions about people and personality. Stories of lawyers losing pitches because the client did not like them are commonplace.

Getting to perfect pitch means investment – of time, thought and practice. If a pitch team walks in under-researched, under-prepared and under-practiced, they are walking into failure. So what do pitch teams need to do to get it right? The following steps set out a Pitch Programme which has moved a pitch team from good to excellent.

First step is to know the client. A good pitch starts with in-depth research into the client’s business, strategy, challenges, market and values. In addition, a pitch team will investigate the decision maker within the client – what are they like, what do they look for, what are their fears? If a pitch team can behave like the client, think like the client and understand the client – they will be trusted by the client.

Second step is to know the competition. Too many pitch teams accept the client’s refusal to give away any information about the other firms pitching. However, every lawyer has a network. Pitch teams need to use this to find out who they are up against and then move on to defining how to differentiate themselves or manage any potential negative comparison. The key is to create a hook which will make the team more attractive than the competition

Third step is to prepare the message from the client perspective. Any team can deliver an excellent presentation on the firm and technical skills. But any lawyer can do that and it is not what the client wants to hear. A good pitch team analyses the client fears and needs and delivers a message to show how they will address the needs and remove the fears. They go beyond the pitch document and see the world through the client's eyes – then they talk through the client's mouth. Also important here is selling by story - tell a client how you have helped someone else and s/he will hear how you can help her/him.

Fourth step is to choose the mode of delivery. Long PowerPoint presentations are seen as old hat. If you use this method present it as a pitch document but not as a presentation. If the team opts for a formal presentation, slides must be short, clean and pithy. Five bullets per slide, keep to words not lines. Verbiage is a fast-track off the short-list.

Fifth step is to achieve sophisticated and impressive delivery. A pitch team needs to impact as collegiate, seamless, energetic, co-operative and experienced. A pitch team needs to be well selected and well primed. This means practice and more practice, both individually and as a team. A high-performing pitch team is seen by the client as a high performing legal team but this cannot be achieved by a quick prep in the taxi on the way to the pitch. Practice needs to be backed up by training, coaching and feedback by a pitch coach who will act as the client and knock off all the corners before they go in. Pitch coaching is specialist and requires investment but it is never wasted. A good pitch team who does not win is a pitch team remembered and one that will be asked back sometime in the future.

Sixth step is to anticipate questions. We all hope the client will not ask difficult questions – but they will. Floundering in the face of tough questions will lose the pitch. Time spent anticipating the questions and practicing a well-formed, forthright response is time spent investing in team confidence and credibility. In doing this, the team needs to anticipate the questions they really dread. Anticipation coupled with planned responses are the key to confidence and confidence delivers success.

The final step is to anticipate and manage fee push. The old belief that it is inappropriate to talk money at the pitch no longer holds. Pitch teams need to have their fee structure ready and fully thought through before the pitch. They must avoid the old 'loss leader' chestnut. This is a method to make the lawyers more comfortable but which traps them into years of under-charging. A confident team will know what they want and know how to justify this. Backing down sends a message to the client that the team is either unsure of or undervalues their own worth. It is most important the team is clear about when they will walk away.

So in short, pitching is a growing trend and lawyers need to rise to the challenge. Pitches can be powerful showcases for the legal team. But this power is driven by preparation and practice. Investment in preparation time, coaching and practice will reap rewards, if not in the next pitch then through a growing reputation of being a team worth seeing. L&D or Marketing can put in place pitch programmes which guide the pitch team through the seven steps and, in doing so, set their pitch teams up to hit Perfect Pitch with the client.

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