

# People

TRAINING • APPOINTMENTS • STAFF MATTERS



## Get with the programme

Management training is now commonplace in most businesses, but an annual motivational weekend away traversing rock faces and reciting mantras on cliff tops is not the answer to everything. **Rachel Machin** learns that a coordinated, cohesive and eclectic programme of training is the way forward

**W**hen a training provider called Corporate Collies is offering leadership and management training, and businesses are queuing up to try their hand at sheepdog handling, it's evidence of how far the UK has come in offering innovative out of office training and how experimental businesses have become in developing their staff.

Outward-bound weekends have been in and out of fashion for decades. They became the butt of many jokes in the early 1990s following a disastrous TV documentary, but have recently found favour once again with businesses of all shapes and sizes.

RBS Group Banking regularly sends its corporate team away for training weekends in the Brecon Beacons, as Dave Shalliday, regional director for South West and South Wales, explains: "We've done many team-building activities where we set challenges for groups of people from different parts of the corporate team.

"Some of the least likely people have come back the most animated. You do see people in a different light outdoors and this kind of training can drive people to change. Most of us wake up in the same bed – usually with the same person – drive the same car and sit at the same desk day in day out, so we want to experience something different and challenge ourselves."

The London Marathon, The Bristol Half Marathon and the Caledonian Challenge – a 54-mile walk in 24 hours – are all events RBS staff have been involved with and Shalliday is keen to stress the importance of marrying its employees' preferred leisure activities with those offered within training programmes.

And it's not just big businesses that are venturing out of the workplace with their

staff. Wilmott Dixon Construction, a family-owned business with six regional offices and a head office in Bristol, also sends its trainee managers away on weekends, albeit a world away from the traditional walking on hot coals scenarios. For this £4m business, it's outdoor activities with a conscience.

"This year we slept under canvas in Bristol and raised money for a homeless charity. We always try to couple the event with some fundraising. The guys really get a kick out of it," says Clive Pople, training director for the West and Wales.

Wilmott Dixon Construction appears to have the right idea. Professionally organised outward-bound weekends are costly affairs and, although research by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) found that UK companies spent an average of £1,056 per year on the development of each of their managers, this cost must undoubtedly be justified in terms of what return it will generate, both financially and culturally. Many outward-bound expeditions are ill conceived, wasting money and precious time.

Chris Atkinson, managing director of Bristol-based Elysian Training, an organisation specialising in leadership and management development solutions and result-focused team building, is in agreement.

He says: "The truth is that outward bound is often miss-sold. There is a world of difference between an incentive/reward experience and team-building experience. It's a great idea to send people away for a fun day out as a thank you, let them quad bike or shoot things, but don't expect them to come back to the office different people.

"Out of office activities work if the partner company understands business and more specifically your unique needs from the event.

"They need professional facilitators and powerful, context-driven debriefs following activities. Many team-building companies sell reward days as incentive days, where actually they have no expertise in delivering tangible business impact.

"We have an option to offer activities in Pembrokeshire where the value of taking people out of a city or office environment is apparent. The scenery energises them

## THE LAW WON

Developing in-house training is now a real focus for many businesses and the involvement of all staff at all levels is crucial to its success. However, this is often done in conjunction with the help and support of a training consultancy.

"Age and experience are a virtue," said a defiant Sir Menzies Campbell in his final speech at the Liberal Democrat conference in September 2007. There is no doubting he was right, despite his decision to stand down a month later.

And you'll find that many managers in the UK have the same qualities on their side, but as Ian Shipton, partner at Weston-Super-Mare law firm Powells, admits, this doesn't always prepare you for dealing with the more tricky aspects of management.

"There are various management tasks that one has to fulfil in any business. None of the partners here had any management training. In the past we'd dealt with situations as they arose and some of us were inevitably more natural managers than others," he says.

"Nowadays the culture has changed. Anyone that qualifies has to have management training. We wanted some training to reinforce what we were doing and highlight both the positives and negatives."

Powells were keen to source a training provider that cut through the jargon. "We were weak on management functions and wanted a training provider that was straight talking," explains Shipton. "We

wanted something that would give us bottom line benefits, not ethereal stuff like outside the circle thinking."

Marlene Hole, a training consultant at employment specialists PES in Bristol, fitted the bill. Bringing in a structured programme with a mixture of office-based activities was all that was needed to transform Powell's managerial know-how.

"We work with many established firms, some of which have grown by luck more than design. Our job is to go back to basics and put in a structured programme," says Hole.

"Most are in need of the simple tools of management. They need simple programmes to follow. Many don't want theory – they want practical knowledge. We get the organisations to think about the types of managers in the business – its values, belief system and behaviours that are not tolerated.

"That's the starting point because each client is different. There is no off the shelf training."

Shipton admits that some of the partners were sceptical at first. "We'd all instinctively managed and had different styles of management, but the training taught us that we can switch from one style to another," he says.

"We realised that between us all we embraced different styles of management skills. We were then able to recognise who was good at what and give people the right positions."

and the experiences take on a more significant role. As they go through them as a team, success in this context is established, and also in that recognising these activities are analogies for office life – and often, a team-build delivered in the relevant context can be an excellent route to truly understanding an organisation's development needs."

Despite the rise in outward-bound activities, research does suggest that they are certainly not the jewel in the crown of training methodology. Global consulting firm Hay Group, which conducts its annual 20 Best study – the 20 companies



HANDS ON Pareto Law training

"Out of office activities work if the partner company understands business and your needs from the event." **CHRIS ATKINSON**

with the best leadership and development techniques – recently found that top among its five development ‘red herrings’ was outdoor activities, the kind of thing that most team-building trips tend to embrace. Outdoor events, it argues, are what 26 per cent of normal companies do, whereas more than half of the 20 best companies do everything but these activities.

However, the most important realisation for any business considering its training offering is that of creating a programme that encompasses the kit and caboodle of training methodology, thereby giving employees a well-rounded and varied experience.

“A coordinated programme reflects the values of the organisation, in particular that of lifelong learning,” says Atkinson. “Without such a commitment the message is that the management are fine the way they are. This, in turn, sets the expectation that the more senior we get, the less we need to learn and develop.

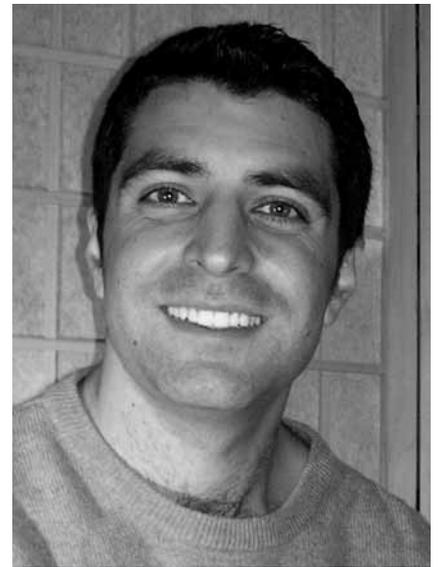
“The truth is that senior management and leadership have the greatest impact on culture and productivity, often they are under the most pressure and in many cases are coping without formal training in how to manage effectively.”



**BALANCE** Shalliday

“Our training programme runs the whole gamut. We do a number of job swaps and get people thinking differently,” says Shalliday at RBS. “Work/life balance is important. We’re a demanding organisation and the rewards are not always measured in pounds.

“We want people to really understand how it feels to work for this organisation



**CONTEXT** Atkinson

Five years ago it entered into a commercial relationship with Harvard Business School, a trend repeated by numerous others.

Atkinson believes that achieving a balance in your training methodology is key. “It’s all about context. That’s why we often encourage time-spaced programmes. These allow time to both process and practice,” he says. “Secondly, with internet and the explosion in business help books, training needs to be less about the theory and more about the reality that participants are dealing with on a daily basis. It is the responsibility of the trainer to create that context and make learning relevant.”

Businesses like Wilmott Dixon Construction, part of an industry often accused of leaving training at the bottom of the rubble pile, have proved that you don’t have to be a global player to offer a rounded and well thought-out training programme.

“We recruit trainees each year and nationally coordinate an in-house training programme. We’ve always been at the forefront of learning,” enthuses Pople.

**“Work/life balance is important. We’re a demanding organisation and rewards are not always measured in pounds.” DAVE SHALLIDAY**

Atkinson’s protestations are backed up by more research from the CMI, which states that despite the development of a more training orientated culture in business today, out of the 4.3 million managers in the UK, only 20 per cent are qualified.

Despite this surprising statistic, the example set by businesses like RBS is being echoed around the globe. It is no longer enough to do a few training days here and there, the training agenda must be at the heart of all HR policy.

so we employ life coaches, health and nutrition experts and bring fresh fruit in every day for our staff. All these are subliminal but, from the feedback, people don’t take it for granted.”

These alternative ways of engaging staff undoubtedly serve a purpose and, coupled with executive mentoring for line managers and access to professional courses, RBS seems to have a well-honed management learning and development model.

**SLEEPOVER**

Willmott Dixon staff raise money for charity with an overnight sleepover outdoors



**TRAIN TO GAIN**

Powered by government through the Learning and Skills Council, Train to Gain aims to raise skills levels and the quality of training in businesses across England. £1,000 is available for businesses in the South West with five to 249 employees.

Visit [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)

# Appointments

WHO IS MOVING ON AND UP IN THE SOUTH WEST

"We've got 95 trainers in the business and have made a big investment.

"We put our junior managers through rigorous management development and learning programmes and make sure a mix of theory and practice is included.

"All staff attend courses at the CITB Training Centre so that they can get an appreciation of the trade and, more importantly, spend a day with our CEO Rick Wilmott.

"It does make a real difference – our culture is unique and is of paramount importance. We want to remain a family orientated business."

Starting early is the key. Undoubtedly managers, particularly of the line and middle variety, are the crucial drivers of change in any business, but inducting a manager of the future as soon as they walk through the door is the only way to retain staff and build solid foundations.

"The RBS approach to development is people driven, not results driven," stresses Shalliday. "You get the right people and your business will perform.

"It all starts with recruitment, creating the right environment and holding leaders accountable for the organisational climate that you create."

Pareto Law, the UK's leading graduate sales training organisation, is built on this ethos. With its nine-week Academy Programme, graduates live and breathe the values, beliefs and culture of the business.

"Our training is led by the whole business," says Shelley Gallagher, head of training. "People aren't just thrown into a classroom. There are lots of practical hands-on activities. Although there is some theory, seeing the whole cycle is imperative.

"We've run mentoring and coaching days where everyone will dress up. Our staff's worst nightmare would be sitting in front of a Powerpoint presentation. They want to be challenged and get involved."

Any business not wholly convinced about the benefits of adopting a training culture should be aware of research by CMI that shows management learning and development in any form can have a positive impact on organisational performance and productivity.

"Bottom line results delivered following development programmes are well established and publicised," says Atkinson. "But the impact is very much dependant on the commitment of the organisation." ▀



EXPERIENCED Hancock

- Alaina Hancock has joined The Royal Bank of Scotland's corporate banking team in Exeter as assistant relationship director. She has six years' experience in the finance sector, having previously worked for insolvency practitioner Begbies Traynor where she was a trainee accountant. Prior to that Hancock worked for the Department for Work and Pensions.

- The Bristol office of Ernst & Young has appointed Giles Capon and David Scourfield as partners. Capon works in the human capital tax team, while Scourfield is a member of the firm's mergers and acquisitions team. The promotions mean that the South West practice has appointed four new partners in the last 12 months.

- Deborah Walsh has been appointed head of public policy and communications for the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) in the west of England. She already holds a similar position in the West Midlands, but will now extend her work to cover the South West. Before joining RICS, Walsh has worked for the likes of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the West Midlands Museums Service.



TAKING THE LEAD Walsh

- Business networking group 4Networking has named Terry Cooper as business adviser and consultant non-executive director. He is the founder of Clevedon-based business adviser Cooper Bradbury Associates and has also run a number of major companies in the UK and Europe. 4Networking was launched in Somerset by Brad Burton and Tim Johnson in February 2006. It now has 60 business groups around the country and more than 3,000 members ▀



NEW ROLE Burden

- Property advisory GVA Grimley incorporating Osmond Tricks has recruited Ian Burden to its office agency and development team based in Bristol. He has more than four years' commercial property experience, having worked for Vickery Holman in both Plymouth and Exeter and Savills in Exeter. In his new role Burden will have particular focus within the technology sector.

# Staffmatters

## Licence to drive

**I am planning on hiring a migrant worker for a driving vacancy. I read so much about migrant workers but I'm not fully aware of how to hire them and my legal obligations as the employer. Can you advise me on what I actually need to do?**

*William O'Neill, head of employment law at law firm, Rowlands, says:* "Migrant workers have been in the spotlight over recent months and the government has been clamping down on employers that illegally employ migrant workers.

"Firstly you need to ensure that the applicant is eligible to work in the UK. You must carefully check their original documentation, which includes one or more of the following: passport, identity card or application registration card.

"You also needed to make sure that it is definitely the individual that is applying for the position and that it is not counterfeit. Once this is established you should photocopy the documents and save copies for your records.

"Depending on where the candidate originates from they may require a Worker Registration. Candidates from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia will need to apply for this registration as soon as they begin working for you.

"Obviously additional obligations differ depending on the type of business you run and the level of English the individuals have, but as this is a driving position it is important to bear in mind that, as with any other employee you hire, they must have a valid UK driving licence.

"You should also make yourself aware of any cultural differences, as these could mean your candidate is less likely to obey company procedure, or obey particular laws. One massive problem is that migrant drivers don't always follow the drink driving law as it is one that is not recognised in all eastern European countries.

"Clear communication channels are needed to ensure that material you give to any migrant employees regarding health and safety or driving can be read and understood. Some foreign drivers may need information in their mother tongue, such as a translation of the Highway Code or posters on driving safety, to ensure you have done everything possible to ensure the safety of your driver and the public.

"Regular testing and continuous training is an effective way to keep employees up to date with changes, it also ensures information is understood and allows them to raise any issues or misunderstandings."



## Blog off

**We are thinking of starting a blog at our legal practice, which employs a substantial number of fee earners. Should we limit who can post entries to senior partners so we can control and monitor our messaging?**

*Simon Wharton, managing director of online search marketing agency PushON, says:* "You should certainly not restrict who can comment on your company blog according to the above criteria. Indeed it is essential that you adopt an inclusive policy based on moderating comment, not censorship.

"As a professional services company you have a wealth of knowledge residing in your practice. It is that knowledge that you sell. A blog is a brilliant marketing tool that can demonstrate your skills, knowledge and experience effectively and at little cost.

"I would suggest you think about which members of staff have exceptional ability and passion about their area of expertise. Get them to contribute regularly to the blog, whether they are a managing partner or an associate is not the key criteria – it is about using their pool of knowledge.

"The benefits of this approach are that you empower your staff. You show clearly that you have a forward-thinking company culture that values employees. What is more, clients, your market and indeed lawyers thinking of joining your practice are aware of your expertise and your enterprise will go up in their estimation.

"Use your blog as an integral part of the communication between your practice and your clients. Block aggressive or slanderous comments, but accept constructive criticism. If it is about control, recognise that interaction will go on without you – become part of the conversation."

## Witness challenge

**We recently held a team-building event at a local hotel. Afterwards one of our employees confessed that, while networking in the bar in the evening, he had witnessed another employee putting something in a female colleague's drink without her knowledge. He did nothing about it at the time. We have dismissed the perpetrator, but how do we deal with the bystander?**

*Kirsty Rogers, partner with DWF Solicitors,*

says: "This scenario raises both legal and moral issues. Clearly, the conduct of the perpetrator was serious enough to justify dismissal. It could also be argued that the lack of action by the employee who witnessed it was equally serious and cannot be ignored. The question is, do you have grounds to subject him to disciplinary action because of it?"

"The first question would normally be whether there is a provision in his contract

**Do you have an issue you'd like our experts to answer?**

**Email your questions to: [staffmatters@newsco.com](mailto:staffmatters@newsco.com).** All queries will be treated in confidence. All answers are for general guidance only. Each case must be handled on individual facts.

which places a duty on him to inform the company if he is aware of misconduct by another employee. In the absence of an express condition, there may possibly be an implied contractual duty to inform you, but this would depend on his seniority and the particular circumstances. In any case, he has actually confessed, albeit belatedly, so it could be argued this is irrelevant.

"As a result of his confession, the company could say it has lost all trust and confidence in him and take the decision to sack him. While dismissal is rather a draconian sanction, his failure to take action at the time must be addressed. An employer has a duty to take reasonable care of its employees and is vicariously liable for their actions, or lack of action. An employer who fails to raise awareness and to promptly deal with issues of this type risks being in breach of its duty of care.

"It is likely some form of disciplinary action could be justified here, though when imposing any sort of sanction you should be mindful of the difficult decision he faced in raising the issue, rather than ignoring it completely."

### Killing fields

**As a director of a company am I now at personal risk if someone in the company dies?**

*Doug Barnett, head of customer risk management with AXA Insurance, says:* "All directors should review their company's health and safety procedures in preparation of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act, which takes effect from 6 April 2008. Failure by senior management to ensure compliance with health and safety law may leave the company open to being charged under the new offence, should a work-related death occur.

"Under the new offence, companies and organisations can be found liable for a work-related death if actions at a senior level amount to a gross breach of a duty of care to the deceased. The new Act removes the need to find an individual responsible, thus making it easier to convict a corporation.

"To ensure compliance, we strongly advise directors to evaluate the company's current health and safety management system. An effective system will take into account the risks posed to employees, customers and anyone else affected by the company's activities. Involvement from the top level of an organisation will demonstrate that health and safety is a high priority. It will also help ensure that practices are implemented correctly.

"Getting health and safety right not only helps to protect an organisation from being prosecuted under this serious offence, but it can help to reduce costs as there are less compensation pay-outs and days taken off by employees recovering from injuries. Setting up the people and processes to control these risks need not be expensive and does not have to be overly bureaucratic, but what this change in the law does is remind everyone that ignoring these risks is not an option."

### They come with smiles

**Although my staff all say they're reasonably happy, I keep hearing surveys that claim they're all job hunting. What can I do?**

*Roger Clifford of [www.employee-intelligence.com](http://www.employee-intelligence.com), says:* "Up to 22 per cent of UK workers are hoping to find more rewarding employment during 2008.

"Potentially over 552,000 employees across the South West and six million people across the UK are sufficiently dissatisfied with their employer that they intend to voluntarily seek alternative employment this year.

"The cost to businesses of recruiting new staff averages almost £8,000 when full costs of administration, advertising, training and other elements are taken into account. When you add this all up for the UK it is over £49bn per annum."

"Poor communication between management and staff also serves to frustrate employees. Such factors are leading to employee dissatisfaction and a desire to leave a company.

"The problem for business is that staff turnover incurs hidden costs. However, by proactively engaging with staff, advance warning of the issues likely to persuade staff to leave a company can be identified and corrected." ▀



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