

February 2009: The What's Hot Edition

TEN FEET OF SNOW ... OR SO YOU'D THINK

As Britain comes to our annual halt due to weather that wouldn't raise an eyebrow in Canada or Scandinavia, Kent Trainers are turning our attention to what's hot in the world of business training.

Good Management is always Hot

Here are six tips to raise your standards of team management.

- 1. *Be a role model for the behaviours you want***
Stay on top of your personal admin and avoid procrastinating on the important stuff. Get the worst thing done first thing in the day - then everything will just get better.
- 2. *Make your meetings effective***
Start each meeting by stating what you have all come together to do. This will focus everybody's mind.
- 3. *Give spontaneous feedback whenever one of your team does something well***
This not only makes people feel good; it will also consolidate good practices.
- 4. *Delegate interesting work that will stretch people***
Holding onto the best jobs and delegating the dross is just plain mean. And, when you are under a lot of pressure, if you need to delegate dull work, people will be more willing to take it on.
- 5. *Find out what your team knows that you don't***
Your team members are closer to their day-to-day work than you are. Periodically get them together and ask them three focused questions about their work. Examples are: "what are we doing that's crazy?" "What have any of you learned in the last month that others can use?" "What can I do that will help you do your job better?"
If you commit to really listen and act, you will learn a lot.

6. *Treat your team members like adults*

Yes, we know this sounds obvious, but how often do we realise we want to kick ourselves because we've just heard ourselves talking to a colleague like a little kid. Equally bad, if you're a new manager or supervisor, do you sometimes feel like a bit of a kid yourself? Always remember, you are an adult who got to where you are on your merit. You are somebody's boss and that does give you the right to tell them what to do - as long as you do so with respect!

Learn More: [Management Essentials](#), on 24 February (Chilston Park) or 5 March (Buxted Park); our highly popular 3-day [Management Programme](#) starts on 17 February; [Meetings - Making them Work](#), on 10 February; [Supervisory Management](#), on 25 February

Coaching got Hot Ten Years ago

We think it still is hot. Some of the best results are coming from businesses that incorporate the ideas of coaching into how managers and supervisors guide their staff day-to-day. If you want to do this, here is a simple process you can use:

1. Start not answering your staff's more complex questions - instead ask them a question like: "before I answer, what do you think the answer could be? ... or part of the answer"
2. Help them to explore their question. When we figure out things for ourselves, we remember them better and feel great about ourselves
3. Don't impose your solution. If they find a good solution of their own, encourage them to use it, rather than say: "I'd do it this way ..."

Learn More: [Motivating your Staff through Training and Coaching](#), on 4 February

Getting Things Done is as Hot as it Gets

Meeting minutes can be dull to read and therefore often get dumped into bottom drawers or left at the bottom of your email inbox. After all, if I was at the meeting, *why do I need to read your minutes?*

Make your minutes compelling to readers by focusing them on people's actions. A great set of minutes starts with a list of attendees with the actions they have committed themselves to listed under their name - a personal to do list. Better still, put the to do lists into the text of your email as well as in the minutes that are attached.

Learn More: [Minute Taking with Confidence](#), on 27 February; [The Effective Confident Administrator](#), on 4 February; [Organising an Event](#), on 4 March; [Word for Intermediate Users](#), on 18 February.

Customers will never stop being Hot

Step 1: Attract them

The best marketing offers something of real value to potential customers.

Step 2: Secure them

The secret to making a good sale (one your customer will value) is to listen to what your customer really wants and match your offer to their needs.

Step 3: Keep them

Excellent customer service is no longer a nice add-on for a business: there are too many companies offering this as standard. Find some element of service that you can do consistently well, and prioritise it in every transaction.

Learn More: [Increase Sales through Effective Marketing](#), on 12 February; [Enhancing the Customer Experience](#), on 25 February

Goldilocks is still Hot

A great tip on influencing others is to make use of contrast. If I offer you two options and one is far too expensive, the other seems relatively more attractive than it would on its own.

If I want you to go for the more expensive option, then I need to give you three options: one very cheap (no one likes to be cheap-skate and cheap also offers the risk of poor quality), one very expensive, and a third in the middle. This is known by psychologists of influence as the *Goldilocks Principle*.

Learn More: [Influencing and Persuading](#), on 10 February or [The Management Programme](#) starting on 17 February

Recruit in Haste; Regret at Leisure

Poor recruitment decisions will haunt you for years and will really hurt when times are hard.

You may think recruitment training is at the bottom of your to do list, but now is the time to make sure you get it right and prepare for future recruitment.

The alternative to evidence based decision making is decision based evidence making, so start the process by asking "what evidence do we need to make this decision?" Then design your recruitment process to gather that information.

Learn More: [Recruitment Interviewing](#), on 26 February

Do you know everything you need to about cash flow, profit and loss, management reporting and the basics of accounting? In these times, *you absolutely have to*.

[Finance Essentials for Non-Financial Managers](#) is on 4 March