

BMTFed Newsletter

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One-Day Coaching Workshops

London - 3rd November

Edinburgh - 12th November

Manchester - 10th December

Tickets on sale now - click on a location for more information



Are You Killing Your Employees?

By Allison Reynolds

It's widely been accepted that people who are sick, get sicker more quickly if they are stressed. Recent studies tested the effects of chronic social stress on our genes. The studies demonstrated that an aversive social environment causes changes across hundreds of genes and in particular the way that genes associated with the immune system work.

Work-based studies have shown that employees are between 25 and 50% more likely to have a heart attack when they rate their boss as performing poorly in areas such as 'ability to set clear priorities', 'delegation' and 'delivering feedback'.

We now know that social stress causes changes to our genes and our health, and that employees who report deficits in leadership behaviours associated with expectation setting, delegation and feedback are more likely to get sick. If, as a leader, you want to protect against this, make sure you know what each of your people need from you. Create an environment where it's safe for them to give you honest feedback about any areas of deficiency and most importantly, make sure you respond well to that feedback. Continued failure to make time for these things might be putting your people in hospital.

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Memory Box

By Louise Riley

Over the last couple of weeks, in preparation for our daughter's induction into high school education, we have been creating a memory box. In other words, we have stopped hoarding what she doesn't use any more, discarded any broken items and kept the things which she just can't part with, all under her strict supervision of course. These memory box family rituals mark each significant chapter in her life; they give us the chance to reflect on achievements, indulge us in nostalgia and allows us the time to accept inevitable change. As we sealed our freshly made memory box in preparation to add to our collection in the garage, I noticed my career memory box, a collection of thank you letters and cards, photographs of projects and feedback from my mentors, recognition for a job well done, spanning the best part of twenty years. I took the box from the shelf and decided to revisit its contents.

I reflected on the influences which have shaped my leadership skills. The encouragement to explore ideas, belief in my ability and pinpointed feedback have been the drivers. When we willingly accept the guidance of the people who we respect, we are able to make the informed decisions which develops our leadership skills. We decide what to keep for the future, what to discard as no longer necessary in our lives and what to use to empower us to be the best that we can be in the present. Somebody once told me to receive feedback as a gift; you can choose to use it, treasure it or you can discard it, the choice is yours.

Behavioural Management Techniques (BMT) is a blend of applied behavioural science tools and project management skills. BMT is used to improve business and safety performance.



It's For Your Own Good!

By Lisa Kazbour

I've had a few conversations with safety professionals about why workers may or may not choose to engage in safe behaviors. All too often I hear the safety person say, "This is all for their own good, I don't understand why they wouldn't just do _____."

It's an interesting concept – a person who doesn't seem willing to do a behavior that we know is in their best interest – and this idea can lead many people who are trying to change behavior to being a bit frustrated. The truth is, there's plenty of things that are "for our own good" that we regularly don't do. When was the last time you brushed your teeth for two minutes, twice a day? Exercised vigorously for more than 2 hours per week? Cut back on your alcohol intake? Cut down your calories? Watched less TV? Drank more water? Ate more veggies? The list goes on, and on, and on.

The truth of the matter is that it takes more than being "in our best interest" for us to engage in a behavior. The environment has to be free of obstacles that get in our way, and created so that we receive more reinforcement than punishment for doing those behaviors. Simply being in my best interest has yet to get me to eat more Brussels sprouts, in the same way that simply being in their best interest isn't going to motivate your crew to comply with safety standards.

Save a Nickel?

By Kevin Kirk, Director of Safety at CSM Group

Last month's article on a 'Bit of Perspective' was spot on. It is so easy for us as individuals to rely on our history of situations rather than stand in the shoes of the performing individual. It goes back to listening and not telling.

A perfect example is safety glasses. The person tells you they don't wear them because they fog up. They just gave you the answer – give them a different pair until they find the ones that do not fog up on their face. There's only millions of choices when it comes to safety glasses. We drive their behaviour of working without safety glasses by buying 1000 of the wrong pair to save a nickel, rather than spending more on a single right pair for the worker.

Shades of BMT

By Howard Lees

I recently asked a conference room full of people how many of their companies held data on a small number of important, common daily knowledge-worker behaviours:

The number of daily inbound and outbound phone calls per person.

The number of daily inbound and outbound emails per person.

Out of 400 people in the room, the score? Nil.

Inspiring Others

By John Austin

Mike O'Shaughnessy (CEO of Revere Copper) responded to last month's Pareto Principle article. The article reminded us that 80% of value comes from 20% of activities; 64% of value comes from 4% of activities; and 50% of value comes from 1% of activities.

Mike added that in a 50 hour work week 1% of your time is just 30 minutes, and he estimated that the most effective leaders spend those 30 minutes *inspiring others*.

The Currency of Gossip

by Bruce Faulkner

Some working environments have high levels of dysfunctional behaviour. In these worlds, sensing shifting power bases and operating with political dexterity become required skills. Even if we only engage on the periphery of the intrigue each new happening captures our attention. In these uncertain environments gossip is the currency of the realm. So how can we devalue the currency of gossip?

Leaders who are inclusive and collaborative create supportive environments. The team jointly develops the plan. Progress against the plan is data driven. People ask for help. Everyone now knows what needs to happen next. In this setting, a person isn't a problem, rather, they are working on a problem. Other members of the team talk about how they are helping and contributing to keep the plan moving forward.

This approach removes the secrets. There isn't anything new to know. Our focus will shift back onto constructive and productive behaviours and these become the new currency of conversations. Positive environments breed certainty and we all like that.