

BMTFed Newsletter

No. 63 - November 2015

Behavioural Coaching Workshop

10th December, Manchester, UK

A few places remain - call Nicola on
+44 (0)7788 252 410 to book.

Visit www.hollinconsulting.co.uk for
more information



Where Does All The Money Go?

By Howard Lees

Capital programmes of work represent billions if not trillions of government expenditure. It's difficult to determine how much of the money goes on bricks and concrete, railway and power lines, workers' and engineers' pay packets. Back in the old days we used to estimate that a construction project would be about 33% plant and labour and 33% the materials that made up the finished job. The final 33% cost was organising it, designing it, and 'being there'. All of which is a bit ethereal, but hey, they were the norms. We also had a 10% contingency fund for when things went wrong, which went to the profit if we didn't use it.

Times have changed. We now appear to have more 'staff' on sites, more design costs, more project management costs and most of all, more 'approvals' costs. It's just a gut feeling, but it feels to me like investigating the direct costs and delay costs from 'approvals processes' could unearth a pot of gold. There may be some present day norms already out there and I would appreciate it if people could send me them. It feels to me like many clients would like to see the real % add-on costs caused by 'governance'. Even if they don't want to see it, then measuring it may allow the taxpaying public to have a say regarding the real costs of non-value-adding bureaucracy.

Email Howard at hlees@hollinconsulting.co.uk

Measured or Maverick

By Kate Coyne

Children are so much fun. They live in the moment without any need for mindfulness techniques. They live by immediate consequences. We tell our children to 'slow down' and 'be careful' as we are worried about the consequences of what might happen to them. Sometimes we tell our children what to do and sometimes we let them find out for themselves. We learn by trial and error how to manage their behaviour to suit what we want.

Adults also like freedom and sometimes want to have more fun and live in the moment. Slogans like 'live every day as though it's your last' encourage this. Does this mean working through a crazy bucket list of activities like sky diving and bungee jumping? I hope not. I guess over time we all settle on our own balance of measured and maverick in our own daily environment.

BMT on LinkedIn

The principles behind the BMT Federation are to 'get behavioural science to the world' by encouraging creativity, original thought and lively debate, whilst also sticking to scientific principles.



Join the debate and exchange ideas on our LinkedIn page. Click here to join in: [**Behavioral Management Techniques for Leaders \(BMT\)**](#).

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.



Purposeful Reinforcement

By Rachel Edwards

Most of us know someone who always seems to have their life together, appears well organised and always has enough time for the important stuff. They always seem to have enough will power or self control to do the right thing at the right time. These are the people that choose the healthy option at lunch, make time for the gym before work, or are on top of their emails and actions at work. People like that are impressive (or irritating), depending on how charitable you're feeling. So, do they just have strong will power, or is it something else?

The difference comes down to knowing how to design the environments we spend time in, in order to manage our behaviour. Over time habits form, which in behavioural-speak just means a behaviour that has received lots of reinforcement over time. This makes changing a habit tricky, as we have a long consequence history of reinforcement for that behaviour, which we have to compete with if we want to change. Our learning about which behaviours to repeat and which not occurs over time, and according to how much reinforcement the behaviours receive.

Employees learn which behaviours receive reinforcement, and with what frequency, and adapt their behaviours to suit. It is worth considering whether the behaviours we want people to find reinforcing, are, and the ones we don't want people to find reinforcing, aren't. So, if we're trying to shape up or coach a behaviour in ourselves or others, does that mean we have to reinforce it every time, forever? No – the reinforcement just has to happen on a frequency that's sufficient to maintain the behaviour.

Frames of Reference

By Howard Lees

A couple of years back I was in Noumea. It's an island in the Pacific about 2 hours' flying from Brisbane. We went to a shop to buy some bananas. The woman indignantly said, "It's the mango season." I was surprised, but this is a classic case of frame of reference - in my world I can get bananas all the year round, in her world you eat what's in season.

Shades of BMT

- With many knowledge workers there's little connection between time spent at work and wealth creation. It might only take 3 seconds to have a million pound idea. Of course, the workplace conditions have to be fertile for this to happen.
- High performance is achieved when leaders recognise that they need to view their own people as more important than their clients.
- Disciplinary procedures only exist in aversive environments. Of course, there's no need in positive environments.

Positive Reinforcement: Mostly Misunderstood

By John Austin

I ran across a foreman who I only heard negative things about from others in the business. They were having trouble getting him engaged in improvement efforts, coaching his direct reports, and a whole list of other things. I asked his boss if there's anything good about the guy, since I had only heard complaints. His boss replied, "Oh yeah, he's the best in the world at the technical aspects of his job. We'd be lost without him." I guess it's obvious, but I asked if anyone has ever told him that. Turns out it's not so obvious, since they hadn't. Delivering some reinforcement for the good stuff he's currently doing could create an environment where he'd be more open to trying some new things.

I continue to run into business leaders who don't seem to understand positive reinforcement. What do *you* think of when you read the words, "positive reinforcement?" Most people answer with and "atta boy", "pat on the back", or a "thumbs up". These are far too mundane to get at the true concept when it's properly practiced. The most effective positive reinforcement is insightful, personal, specific, and individualized. It's meaningful and impactful to the recipient.

It takes some time and effort to think about a person and what they do really well, what would be meaningful and impactful to them. Everyone has a talent. And, even if they don't have a "talent" as such, I'd venture that 99% of the people in your organization do *something* every day that's worthy of some heartfelt praise.

Why doesn't this happen more regularly? There are lots of reasons, many of which are discussed in this and previous newsletters. A simple one you could consider is that it requires a little time and a special focus on appreciating all of your people, every day.