

BMTFed Newsletter

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Leadership Conference on Collaboration with Gen. Jack Sheehan (Ret.)

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A Need to Know Basis, Part 1 By Walter Hufnagel

Don't you just love it when people are determined to tell you something, even though you didn't feel that you needed to be told at all? There are some things we need to know for sure: How to work the safe in the hotel bedroom, what time breakfast starts, when the latest check out is. These things change in different hotels so we are on high alert. These days you never know whether the faucet in rest rooms is automatic or not. I recently held my hands under a tap in Italy for some time before I realised that you needed to pump a foot pedal to get water.

Shades of BMT

- Hiring someone is step one of a multi-step process eventually leading to high performance through coaching.
- Lots of organisational safety discussion paints a bleak picture of what's happening. In truth, most of what's happening out there is great.
- A lot of people struggle to understand how the sales process works. Many cannot envisage how a meeting for coffee once a month could turn into paid work. It can, and frequently does.

The Safest Strategy, Part 2 By Howard Lees

I received some feedback from readers to my article The Safety Strategy in last month's newsletter. One reader summed it up as, "It doesn't seem to me to be encouraging the right behaviours in Contractors who have the greatest influence on health, safety and wellbeing."

To clarify, I'd say that we are talking here about safety strategy, and not the day to day responsibilities of contractors to create a safe place for people to work. I would argue that clients have a massive influence on health and safety. Sometimes poor client responses when things go wrong make the future less safe for workers by shutting down crucial feedback loops. Out there we now have various levels of real safety and virtual safety, with the latter making the world a less safe place for workers.

We have a chance to influence clients and point out to them their responsibilities regarding real safety and also point out to them the destructive effects of virtual safety - I include in this: near miss reporting, zero injury initiatives, stair monitors, safety moments and many of the 'easy to measure' but highly irritating and patronising things that emanate under the guise of safety. It's a big subject, it's time to do something right now. Any ideas as to how we can influence the well-intended but misguided construction establishment would be well-received for sure.



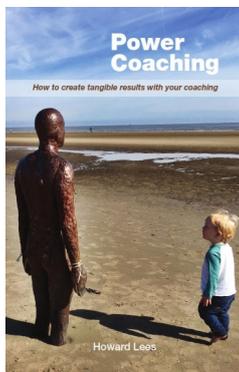
[Click here](#) to join the BMT group on LinkedIn for original content and debate.

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.



Coming soon: Power Coaching by Howard Lees

The author of the new book is holding coaching workshops throughout 2016, starting in London on March 22nd. [Click here for details.](#)



Schedules of Reinforcement By Rachel Edwards

If we're trying to shape or coach a behaviour in ourselves or others, does that mean we have to reinforce the behaviour every time, forever? No – the reinforcement just has to happen on a frequency that's sufficient to maintain the behaviour. Knowing a little about schedules of reinforcement can help us be more effective at learning what 'just enough' reinforcement looks like.

A ratio schedule refers to the number of times we have to do a behaviour in order to 'earn' the reinforcement. For example, when we turn on a light switch, we get light. The ratio of behaviour to reinforcement is fixed at 1:1; i.e. every time we do the behaviour, we get reinforcement.

An interval schedule is one where reinforcement becomes available after the behaviour is performed. For example, when we put a pizza in the oven, the reinforcement of a cooked pizza is only available after a certain time.

These examples are on a fixed schedule; we know how many times we have to perform the behaviour to get reinforcement (ratio), or when the reinforcement will become available (interval). To move from a scenario where we have to reinforce the behaviour every time, or where reinforcement becomes available after a short interval, we can consider thinning out the schedule.

Examples of behaviours that are on a current fixed ratio of 1:1 (which means every time the behaviour is performed, it receives reinforcement):

- Treating the dog every time it sits
- Praising every mouthful of vegetables a toddler eats

Over time, we can thin out the schedule by increasing the amount of times the behaviour is performed in order to gain the reinforcer:

- Treat every 3rd sit
- Praise every 3rd mouthful

We can do something similar with interval schedules by stretching out the amount of time the performer must wait before the reinforcer is available.

The benefit for the coach or leader experimenting with schedules of reinforcement is an increased capacity to coach and focus on different behaviours – it creates more space and time to focus on a broader spectrum of behaviours, rather than just heavily reinforcing one or two.

Collaboration By Andy Bull

Collaboration means working together to get things done as a team, and the expectation is that we can achieve something better than we otherwise would if we hadn't collaborated with others. It isn't, however, the easy option and I am always surprised at how many people think that just by pulling different individuals or companies together they expect that people will just naturally get on and deliver superior results. In reality it requires a high level of effort and interventions to make it successful. A married couple will have tasks that they divide between them and other tasks they do together. In a harmonious relationship they will know exactly how to support each other, working as a team, so that as a couple they are much stronger than as two separate individuals.

If we scale up the complexity of the collaboration to multiple different companies and hundreds of individuals, it looks considerably different. The amount of effort we typically put into developing a team is probably low compared to working on a technical problem. We rarely practice working together. Most teams don't appoint an observer or a coach to provide the team with crucial feedback. In fact, in business it's much more likely that without any form of practicing how to work together effectively some people expect a collection of individuals to go out and work as if they were a team without any preparation at all. It's a fatal mistake, in my view, to throw people together and assume that their daily behaviours will be collaborative. Developing a collaboration plan, working hard to create the team, adapting it as feedback becomes available, maintaining the plan - that's how collaboration can bring success.

Andy Bull is speaking at the Leadership Conference on Collaboration on 12th May 2016

