

# BMTFed Newsletter

No. 68 - April 2016

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

May 11th & 12th 2016  
Manchester, UK



## Proxemics

### By Howard Lees

We deliver training courses and workshops for a living. We have spent a lot of our time in training rooms, mostly training rooms provided by hotels. A hotel will advertise a training room as 'accommodates 15 people'. What they really mean is 'accommodates 15 people squashed in like sardines'. The hotel wants to sell space by the square foot, understandably. We have now worked out a rule of thumb. If we have 15 people to train, it means we actually need a room that would fit 30 people so there is enough space to move around and work in the corners of the room.

Humans don't like having their personal space invaded, especially in creative or learning situations. Humans perform better when they have room to manoeuvre, physically and mentally.

## BMT Conferences

Find out if our conferences are for you by watching this two minute video. [Click here.](#)



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Photo by Andy Stairmand, edited by Lynn Dunlop

## Train New Behaviours in Multiple Contexts

### By Allison Reynolds

It's frustrating when you think that you've created change and then old behaviours start to pop back up again. Behavioural science helps us to understand why this happens and what we can do about it.

Change occurs when undesired behaviours are put on extinction and new desirable behaviours are instead reinforced. However, if a behaviour is reinforced in one context, and then extinguished in another, on return to the original context the behaviour may pop back up again. This process is known as renewal.

For example, a person may be reinforced for virtual safety type behaviours in context A and then they move jobs to context B and instead be reinforced for real safety type behaviours. If they go back to an environment similar to context A it is likely that the old tick box behaviours will pop back up again. Other context changes that affect behaviour include one-to-ones versus meetings, in the office versus on site, even on the same project at the start versus at the end.

Learning and behaviour are context specific. Don't assume that just because you can get behaviour to occur in one context it will happen in another. Instead, be deliberate in shaping up new behaviours in multiple contexts.



[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.*



# Collaboration – No Silver Bullet

By Paul Sexton

A few years ago my company, Scottish Water, decided to improve the way we work with our supply chain. We wanted to re-shape the way we functioned with our key partners so that we could all work together to deliver our capital programme successfully by developing strong collaborative relationships. I was given the job of making this happen and, on reflection, getting these collaborative principals anchored has been the most challenging part of my job.

“I’m always collaborative” is something I hear all too often, but when you dig in to discover whether people actually know what this truly means or how to do it, you get a mixed picture. In fact, there is no silver bullet - setting up a collaborative environment takes a great deal of hard work, particularly when this represents a complete change of direction for everyone involved.

At Scottish Water, we’ve used an Alliancing Model for our capital programmes which is particularly suited to large, complex infrastructure delivery programmes, and we have contracts in place with long term partners for the next 6 or even 12 years. It focuses on getting the basic structure right first: Set up teams that need to work together to be successful; have leaders that steer their people to a single vision; and finally, with that in place, set out the behaviours that you want teams to exhibit; and reinforce those that exhibit them.

I have a personal vision about having a far more productive and engaged operational client. I’ve learnt that there is no one thing that makes good collaboration; it’s a multitude of small things that make it truly work. Your environment, however, does need to be structured to promote collaborative behaviour and I’d recommend checking that out before simply just asking your staff to be ‘more collaborative.’

**Paul Sexton heads up Scottish Water’s Alliance Management Programme and is speaking at our leadership conference on the 12th of May 2016 in Manchester.**

## Shades of BMT

- Which decent human being would say something sarcastic or hurtful to a colleague whose child is sick in hospital? It helps to know what’s going on with all the people in the workplace to avoid these calamities.
- Some people keep an eye on the radar screen and say and do what has to be said and done when it has to be said and done, and others don’t.
- If a leader promotes an ‘also ran’ to the top table, for whatever reason, it can piss off the people that had to work hard to get there legitimately.

## Trust

By Lynn Dunlop

Trust levels are high when the gap between what people say and what they do is very small. If someone does what they say they will do when I can see what they’re doing, then I am inclined to believe that they are like that when I can’t see them. So I trust them.

It’s for this reason that ineffective meetings are so insidious. By accepting a meeting invitation, I agree to turn up on time. By not doing so, I erode trust in all the other meeting attendees (and anyone they talk to about my lateness – dissatisfaction spreads fast). If I’ve agreed to complete some actions for the meeting but I don’t, others’ trust in me is eroded. If a meeting I’m chairing overruns, the attendees can see that I’ve not stuck to the agreed finishing time and trust is eroded. If a meeting I’m attending overruns and I don’t step in to try and end it (or simply leave), anyone waiting for the meeting room, or waiting for me to come out of the meeting, will see that I haven’t done what I said I’d do - leave the meeting at the pre-agreed time – and so they have no idea if I’ll do what I say I’m going to do on any other occasion. I become unpredictable in their eyes and trust is eroded.

You can’t always do exactly what you say you’re going to do, but you can do it often enough that you are seen by others as reliable and that, for me, is when people trust you.

## Personality Testing....

BLACKADDER: Do you like listening to people singing and dancing?

GEORGE: Yes, yes I do sir.

BLACKADDER: What about listening to crass comedians with their unfathomable catch phrases?

GEORGE: Yes sir, I like them very much

BLACKADDER: George, after much analysis I have concluded that you have a preference for music hall.

GEORGE: That’s incredible sir! How did you know that?

