

# BMTFed Newsletter

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On Sale Now:

## BMT for Safety Conference & Workshop

Nov 2nd & 3rd 2016  
Manchester, UK



## Is It Worth The Risk?

By Howard Lees

At our May conference Jack Sheehan talked about 'management by walking around' (MBWA) - a technique espoused by Tom Peters back in the 70's. It is even mentioned in historical annals, when Abraham Lincoln used to meet the troops to add his personal support and credibility to the task at hand.

Jack talked about the senior business leader going to the floor and talking to the people way below him in the hierarchy of the organisation. Of course, it only works well when great leaders do this. Unfortunately most organisations are not blessed with a surplus of great leaders who can carry this act off with aplomb and derive great results. I find myself advising against rank jumping, as most of our feedback on this points to its damaging effects. Too often, MBWA results in uncertainty felt by all the people within the hierarchy that sit between the leader and the troops.

A very useful piece of advice from Jack was "Whatever you do, don't be a problem solver." Leadership is a learned skill. I would suggest that successful MBWA is 'advanced leadership'.



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

## BMT for Safety Conference

Tickets are available now for the safety conference on November 2nd and post-conference workshop on November 3rd in Manchester, UK. We will have industry experts and BMT practitioners on hand to answer your questions about applying Behavioural Science to Safety. [Click here for more information and to book your place.](#)

## Child's Play

By Howard Lees

Following Richard's piece in the newsletter last month, I would like to add something along the same lines. We have just spent 3 wonderful weeks with our granddaughter Tilly. She is 14 months old and has just learned to walk. She has also learned how to have her immediate problems dealt with in some way.

If she is dissatisfied her solution is to emit a loud noise. She then has her parents at her beck and call. They are clever and use all kinds of distraction techniques but Tilly, in the end, always wins.

I was musing that we all used to make loud noises to get what we wanted when we were 14 months old. Over the years, we have replaced this basic ploy with all kinds of sophisticated techniques to get what we want (or not, as the case may be). We will also now tolerate things we don't like. Of course, now the minor irritation can turn into a major irritation, and then a local skirmish becomes World War Three. Perhaps if we had just made a loud noise when the minor irritation occurred then Armageddon could have been avoided!

*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.*



# After the Horse Has Bolted

By Peter Jarman

My beloved LandRover Defender 110 has been stolen from my driveway. Despite being locked, alarmed, immobilised and off the road, it was taken in the early hours without any disturbance to me, my family or neighbours. Before this, I was sure it was safe.

My immediate response was to go out and buy a top of the range CCTV recording system, 50watt LED floodlights, relocate my trailer which was parked on my driveway to a relative far away for safe-keeping, reinforce my garage door and double check all windows and doors were locked. I have spent every evening since staring at the CCTV monitor thinking this will reduce the risks.

A knee jerk reaction for sure. Belt and braces felt like the answer. Everything stops and you evaluate, reflect and put measures in place to prevent it from happening again. *Again!*

Three days on and I know how I could have stopped this incident from happening and have been kicking myself ever since. If I had parked at an awkward angle on the drive and had an additional steering wheel or handbrake lock fitted, my vehicle would still be sat on my drive. Simple stuff right? But I also know that one day my beloved LandRover will be replaced with another and life will go on as I slip back into a complacent world 'as normal'. It is just a 3 tonne lump of metal after all. Quickly forgotten.

We carry the same amount of luck with us every day and continue as we are, mostly without thinking and very often on auto-pilot. And of course, whilst all is well, we have no need to put right what is not wrong. It's not even in our thoughts. We carry this natural complacency at home and we bring it to work with us. So, when it comes to our safety on a construction site, we will always focus on the do's and don'ts whilst constructing amazing things. Luck is with us and all is good. Then one day the luck runs out.

Only when something devastating happens do you stop and think about your own safety and of those around you. We continue to be lucky every day, never knowing what is round the corner, and yet rarely do we think about the simple steps we can put in place that may prevent an incident occurring in the first place.

What simple steps will you put in place knowing all is well but with the knowledge that one day the results of your actions could have devastating consequences for those around you?

## Shades of BMT

- Observing what people are doing can be scientific.
- The list of things that people are not doing is endless.
- Ask a room of engineers to write down what's wrong with their project and they burst forth with enthusiasm.
- Ask a room of engineers to write down what's right with their project and they look at their shoes.

# It's Only Words

By Joanne Lees

Organisations and teams spend a lot of time talking about communication and how to increase effectiveness. The focus, however, seems to be on the end result rather on how to get there.

The words we use and the method we choose to convey them determine their success – a communication is not effective unless it's been received, understood and, if necessary, acted upon.

Until relatively recently, the only option in the workplace was to interact and build relationships with the people around us in order to get things done. Individuals used observational skills to read and adjust to body language: they were fluent at observing behaviours because they had to be.

In recent years, this seems to have been forgotten as people increasingly attempt to drive behaviours using only words. Words are another form of antecedent, and behavioural scientists will tell you that antecedents alone are only about 20% effective at driving people's behaviours.

Alone, words paint only incomplete thoughts - a message cannot truly be conveyed and/or acted upon through single words; someone has to complete the message, otherwise personal interpretation is all the receiver has to go on. How accurate the interpretation is will depend on the strength of a relationship. If we're all too busy and don't make time for building relationships, the accuracy and effectiveness of any message is reduced. This mismatch of what was intended and what was received creates uncertainty.

If the goal is to free up time in order to generate successful teams and increase a collaborative environment, we need to get much better at creating certainty. This means learning how to communicate effectively in a technologically advanced society. Simply put, we need to work a little harder to remember to close the laptop and look up from our phones long enough to have a proper face-to-face conversation with someone.

