

# BMTFed Newsletter

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## Tickets on Sale Now: BMT for Safety Workshop & Conference

Nov 2nd & 3rd 2016  
Manchester, UK



## The Truth, And Then The Truth...

By Howard Lees

There are some things that people will agree with, even when they know in their hearts that they don't really agree. Maybe they feel as if it's the right thing to say, perhaps they feel threatened by the thought of telling the truth, or perhaps they just don't give a damn.

It is very common for us to ask a new group of people a few sets of questions over time. As time goes by and they get to know us and we them, they loosen up and become more honest. The truth is much more useful than the fake aspiration.

## Did It Work For You?

By Walter Hufnagle

Just lately I have heard a few people say "I did this" and "I did that." I ask, "What happened? What was the result?" I'm not sure I am getting many convincing answers. As far as I am concerned, like the song goes, you can't have one without the other. Don't just do things and hope they work; do things and find out if they worked!



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

## Effort

By Allison Reynolds

Forget rational decision making. As human beings our behaviour is massively influenced by very small changes in the environment that we are often quite unaware of. Our brains are highly attuned to minimising effort and maximising reward. One area that is growing in popularity when it comes to using behavioural science to influence behaviour is simply to take the effort out of the behaviours we want people to do more of. On the face of it, it seems too simple, but trials have demonstrated that:

- Redesigning a patient chart to reduce errors and make it easier to read what doctors had written reduced misreading of the prescribed drug and dosage dramatically (King)
- Prefilling university enrolment forms increases enrolment from low income families by around a quarter (Bettinger et al)
- Changing an email so that the link takes the recipient directly to the form they need to complete rather than a webpage where they have to click on another link to access the form, increases response rate by 22% (Halpern)

These simple changes create massive swings in behaviour, so if you want to make behaviour more likely, take out the effort for the performer. Conversely if you want to make behaviour less likely, make it more effortful.

*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.*



# The Happy Bubbles

By Howard Lees

Organisations rightly set out from time to time to find out what their staff think about various subjects. This decision is usually followed by the employment of an external company that supplies a survey, usually an online one, usually quite a complex one. All staff are asked to fill it in as honestly as they can, and sometimes there is a facility for free text. People tend to agree that the surveys themselves are not anonymous; sometimes they even ask for your department, location, gender etc.

Most people I have asked regarding these stereotypical online surveys have admitted that after 3 pages of sometimes incomprehensible questions they begin 'pencil whipping' and simply want to get to the end of the survey and press submit. The result is a summary report, usually for the eyes only of the directors.

What happens next is quite diverse. There's a lot of 'nothing happens'; the survey completion being the original objective. Sometimes a report goes out to all staff or a note saying 'view the results at...'. Sometimes groups of people are put together to validate the key themes of the survey. These are generally facilitated by very nice people. If you have been asked to do this then you already know the levels of honesty you are prepared to emit in public.

Overall I think the view created by web-based staff surveys is that they achieve little or nothing apart from a comfortable happy bubble for the directors, who can now honestly say, "We asked the people and the people spoke." What I have described above could very easily go in the compartment labelled bureaucracy. From time to time we get to run an anonymous survey amongst people who have been steeped in this kind of bureaucracy, it's quite fun watching all the happy bubbles get joyfully popped by the attendees.

## Stimulus - Response - Stimulus

- People who request and get frequent feedback improve their skills very quickly indeed.
- A good tip when someone gives you feedback (good, bad, indifferent, even insulting) is to say, "That's very useful feedback thank you."
- When walking away from a verbal encounter, ask yourself - could I have got a better result if I had responded differently?
- The way you respond to every verbal encounter contributes to the shaping of your family/company culture going forward.
- If you have an 'eat less and exercise more' fitness strategy, it only ever works if you eat less and exercise more.



# DINO

By Philip Benson

The acronym stands for 'Director In Name Only'. There are a number of people in organisations now with the word Director in their title. It appears to be the new word for what we used to call a Manager. It's as if the title has been inflated up in order to pose to outsiders that this person is more important to their company than they really are.

Board Directors of companies have a fiduciary responsibility to their business, their people and stakeholders, including clients. Board Directors also share a financial dividend calculated annually from the company profits. The litmus test to find out if you are talking to a real Director is to ask them how much money they can spend without asking anyone else's permission. If this is less than £1,000 then you can be satisfied that you are talking to a Manager.

## BMT for Safety

Discuss safety with other behavioural experts in industry and academia at the [BMT for Safety Conference and Workshop](#) on November 2nd and Workshop on November 3rd in Manchester, UK.

Our post-conference workshop this year will focus on spotting the marginal gains in safety. Many organisations have reached a stage where the signs of success are hard to spot. This often makes it difficult to pinpoint where we can most effectively direct our efforts at continuous improvement. We will discuss this and other safety issues in a relaxed, interactive session.

## Shades of BMT

- David Brailsford's Mantra:  
Commitment x Hunger - Distraction = Performance
- If you don't ask for dissenting opinions you are unlikely to get them.
- The loss averse companies lose money. The wealth creating companies make money.