

# People - The Forgotten Asset

For organisations not to invest time and money on the research and development of new and improved products and services is incomprehensible. This activity enables an organisation to achieve its goals and stay at the top end of their market. So why is it that researching and developing their most important asset, their people, sits at the bottom of their to do list?

In a recent study by the Institute for Employment Research, over 36% of all employers identified critical skills gaps in the proficiency of their managers. So I ask you this, if 36% of your products/services weren't doing what they were supposed to do, what action would you take?

Today's people development arena is overwhelmed with articles and literature relating to tools, tips and techniques of how to get the best out of your people. From e learning to action learning organisations are given creative license to provide tailored solutions to suit the needs of the individual, within the boundaries established by the organisation.

So what's the best solution, what is going to give you the greatest return for your investment of time and money, what's going to enable an individual to grow and develop alongside the organisation. For some of us we approach this subject with subconscious arrogance and fail to recognise the positive and negative impact even the simplest situations have on individuals and their performance in the workplace.

A recent report in the national press discussed the use of electric

shock treatment as a behaviour-shaping tool. When discussing this article with a number of individuals they're initial reaction was, what I would perceive the common response to be,

"Such a cruel act, why would you want to do that to anyone, forcing pain on someone doesn't exactly change behaviour"

Granted, the use of electric volts as an act to enable behavioural change is morally and legally questionable for most, but it does lend itself to provoking thought on the impact we have on an individuals development, that impact sometimes more detrimental than we realise.

We are the products of our experiences, which simply means we are who we are because of the people we have come into contact with throughout our lives. And 'yes' that means we have had an impact on the lives of others, for some a scary thought. Whether we realise it or not we are being watched and subconsciously teaching others minute by minute. The burning question is 'what are you teaching?'

Research and Development from the people perspective is more than the formality of the annual



appraisal, the variety of assessment tools and the plethora of development interventions, it's the totality of the days, weeks and months we spend with each other. The impact of being pleasant on the phone to your customer, then cussing them out in the open planned office when you come off the phone, is subconsciously a greater learning event than delivering the organisations customer service workshops. The questions such actions raise are often ignored through our subconscious arrogance, rather should we not be considering the following, 'what are our actions saying to others, is it enhancing the performance we expect of others or giving them the 'electric shock treatment'

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