



True North

people=positive™

Newsletter



Welcome to another edition of the people=positive™ newsletter. As we approach the end of 2008 it is time to reflect on how busy this year has been and what this has meant for us.

Irrespective of the global commercial challenges and the downturn in the oil price, we continue to be involved in several major projects in the Oil & Gas

sector both at home and overseas and an increased presence in the Rail Industry. This year has also seen the emergence of alternative energy providers and once again our involvement with them. This is not just at home in the UK but reflects the development of our US Operations people=positive™ Inc. This edition of 'True North' will reflect some of these key milestones for the year.

Throughout the year whether at home or overseas, a number of key things have been highlighted again and again:-

People are the greatest asset for any organisation and can be a powerful force if galvanised to meet the commercial challenges of their company.

The key to operating through challenging times is the need for 'Enlightened Leadership'; the ability to see through the immediate curtain of 'fog' created by the ambiguous and uncertain business landscape and to provide clear and determined focus.

The challenge of finding skilled and experienced people is an issue that many projects are facing, particularly in the UK.

Best wishes from all of the team at people=positive™ and have great holiday break when it comes.

Rod Pashley
Managing Director

New on our Website:

[Tips and Tools](#)

Archive Articles on:

Performance
Safety
Leadership
Change



US Division Update

We have been operating in Texas for over 3 years now, and have been building our client base, capability and support team. This year we have supported Shell, ExxonMobil, Hess, Transocean, Acergy, Chevron and Forged Components, providing a variety of programs in areas including Behavioral Safety, Project Teambuilding, Partnering and Performance Enhancement events. Our use of improv actors (Inter-ACT) in many programs has continued to be a major success, plus the addition of Drum Café sessions, where the participants learn to become an African style drumming band.

I was looking back at our records and realize that we have covered more than 4,000 people in our Safety Interventions programs for one client, covering many of their locations in North and South America but also in Europe. We are now extending our learning methodology to Worksite Hazard Management – a critical area where risk exposures are most significant. Our key objective is to enable sustainable change in people's approach and actions – leading to enhanced safety culture with fewer incidents.

Hurricane Ike was a major event for us in Texas. Many of our neighbors have said that this has been the most dramatic experience they have ever lived through. A couple of earlier hurricanes in the last 30 years or so - Carla and Alicia - hit our area and were pretty bad too. Personally, we were very lucky and suffered no structural damage and although no trees were lost, we had loads of tree debris and now have a huge pile of garden waste. We spent 2 solid days clearing it all up! During the hurricane we had a huge amount of rainfall late on the Saturday morning, which at its peak meant we had at least 3 feet of water in our back yard. Many people in the greater Houston area were not so lucky. They have lost their homes and their businesses. The rebuild time will be lengthy for some but there is a strong resolve in the Southern States to deal with these natural disasters. The rescue and clean-up operations during and after the storm were amazing. What impressed us the most was the incredible community spirit...looking out for one another, sharing food, ice & water, impromptu meals and tea/coffee drinking depending on who had gas cook tops!!!



That is a lesson for me, the power of the team and what can be done collectively when there is the will and resolve to do it. It is the essence of our coaching in Safety. Huge progress has been and will be made in reducing accidents by looking out for each other.

Tony Mitchell

VP US Operations



Tony Mitchell
Vice President
US Operations

*Devastation
caused by Ike*

bp Clair *'Performance to be proud of'*

This September the Clair Team came together to reflect on performance and to look ahead to plan the next phase of challenging wells in the development of the Clair Field. Barney Mackie & Angus Crockett facilitated this Pre-Spud meeting at the Aviemore Highland Resort. Richard Smith, Wells Team Leader for BP Clair, sees the work done in bringing the original team together for a series of off-site Performance Workshops as fundamental to the success the team has enjoyed.

In sharing why people were proud to be part of the Clair Team, some key themes came through:

- During the last 4 years, new people have joined the team and they observe that individuals are always prepared to take time with them to help them get up to speed quickly so that they feel 'connected' with the team.
- Good planning and real involvement from all of the crew has helped the Clair Team achieve the reputation as one of the safest platforms in the North Sea.
- Difficult questions are encouraged and seen as an opportunity to challenge current ways of working.
- Any failures are used constructively and lessons learned are applied throughout the team.
- Each individual takes responsibility for continuous performance improvement in their own direct area of influence.
- There is good understanding of the 'whole' Clair business across the offshore team – this helps them respond positively to requests that might mean being willing to compromise on their own team's goals.
- There is mutual respect and good communication between onshore and offshore teams.

Perhaps the most important influence has been a consistency in keeping to the simple set of values the team identified at the start of the project. There is a calm and pragmatic approach from leaders when challenges are presented to the team – "It's not what happens but how we respond to it that makes the difference".

We look forward to following the progress of the team as they continue to deliver 'Performance to be Proud Of'.



Transatlantic Perspective – Safety

After delivering a workshop on safety interventions well over 200 times, one might think it would get slightly stale but that was never less the case than when shifting the program trans-Atlantic. The fresh perspectives, both of our UK team, who were working with the material for the first time and of the participants, rooted in Dutch culture, made the workshop come alive with new angles to be explored and a new vigor that both inspired and galvanized.

However, the most exciting aspect to me was the universality of human nature with regard to inhibitions, defenses and apprehensions. The same human blockages to growth we come upon in the US have seemed to translate to all hemispheres. Provocative and also reassuring. Being able to let participants know that they're all striving for the same goals with the same fundamental obstacles, worldwide, bolsters their confidence to intervene and frankly, to care.



Autumn Clack shares her experience of 'crossing the pond'.

'Global Crunch'

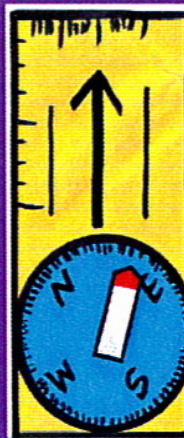
Leading Change Through Troubled Waters.....

Many businesses will be going through restructuring or even re-birth during these challenging economic circumstances. How do you re-energise your team following a period of difficult challenges? What gets your organisation through these times in better shape than others? How do you really turn a threat into an opportunity?

1. Adversity brings focus:

It's perhaps a sad indictment that it quite often takes times of difficulty to bring out the best in people. Teams seem able to find extra resources of energy and creative thinking and put aside previously intractable barriers in order to 'survive'. Collaboration is easier and there can be a genuine desire to listen to ideas and opinions that might have been given little attention previously. Take Gordon Brown's transformation from 'Anglo Saxon villain to European visionary' for example. Who would have predicted just a few weeks ago that leaders of the European Union would have been found listening so intently to Mr Brown's plans to transform global monetary systems?

- Take advantage of this 'window' of enlightenment – take a broad systemic view of exactly where you are at the moment. Encourage objective review so that any change initiatives have maximum chance of achieving sustainable improvement.



Scenario Planning?

Need some help with exploring possible futures for your business?

Contact Barney for more details

bm@peoplepositive.com

- Use creative tools like scenario-planning and other 'futuring' exercises to stimulate innovative ideation sessions. Involve as many people as possible in creating the criteria to 'filter' these opportunities through before deciding on a strategy.
- Build commitment to team-working through this period. Once you've got through this difficult period people will look back and be able to see the true power of integrated effort. Don't let the relationships fade so that people revert to type and assume old positions – keep creating opportunities for people to work together on new projects that will add value to your business.

2. 'Listen ... for a change...'

The great temptation for leaders during a period of instability is simply to act decisively and provide clear direction. Whilst this is clearly laudable and produces momentum and results in the short-term, the opportunity is presented to take a more 'courageous' track and create 'space' for people to fill with bold thinking which will help you to upgrade your decision-making.

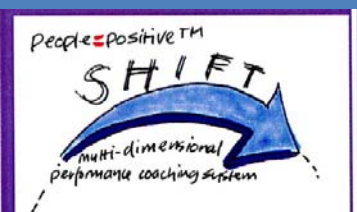
- Give permission for individuals to challenge current thinking and the 'obvious solution'. You may well still decide to go with that original strategy but when you do, you are more likely to achieve a positive response to your request to 'Disagree & Commit'.
- The power of genuine, mindful listening in transforming understanding of complex issues is significant. Don't be afraid of silence – be patient.
- Treat every contribution with unconditional respect. You may be the first leader to have made this opportunity available to some of your employees so it might take some time to build confidence that you are really listening.

3. 'SHIFT gear when you're going uphill..'

We do it without thinking when we're in the car – move up to a higher gear when the incline steepens - we know that just pushing the accelerator pedal harder only uses more fuel while the engine continues to labour. Some teams lose sight of the fact that there are always choices no matter what the circumstances are. The 'hill' is there but we can change our destination and go in a different route that avoids the hill. With that choice come consequences but it moves us from victims to leaders.

- Being proactive doesn't mean just pushing harder against the same obstacles.
- Step into considered choices – lose out on the opportunity to blame the world, but discover new freedom to move forward.

Don't blame the engine - adjust your driving style!



**SHIFT workshops to help
your team develop
resilience during
challenging times . . .**
Contact Barney for more details . . .

bm@peoplepositive.com

'rollin' rollin' rollin'

Our expanding work in Rail and Construction

*It's an active market in the Rail industry – both in maintenance and construction. Our involvement in this dynamic situation through helping several key organisations to improve their safety performance has meant designing new programmes and developing new tools and materials. **Andrew Thacker** gives some insight into how we're achieving success here.*

Network Rail has recently been asked to increase the number of trains that run to schedule. At the same time it has been told that it needs to deliver maintenance and upgrading across the network with a smaller budget than requested. These factors, allied to a complex system of different contractors, working on different projects, in different parts of the country might not, on the face of it, contribute to a safe working culture.

However, the rail industry knows that it needs to improve its safety record – not only high-profile incidents affecting passengers but also incidents involving workers and it is taking bold and imaginative steps to educate and protect the workforce.

It is attempting to change attitudes and behaviours of workers and to develop a culture of safe and efficient working throughout the industry. One of the ways it has chosen to do this is by selecting appropriate people from throughout the workforce and helping them gain the knowledge and support required to allow them to coach others in acting safely. people=positive™ is delivering the 3.5 day course for these coaches and is also involved much earlier in delivering awareness sessions to managers within the various companies so that they can identify potential coaches from within their area.

In delivering the Behavioural Safety Coach Workshops we take a person-centred approach, allowing the participants to explore their own motives and behaviours. This is based on the principle that before you can know and influence others you need to know and control yourself. We are diligent in making sure that whatever we do has a practical relevance – we are dealing with hard-working people who have a passion and commitment to their work and for whom this type of development is not common.

The course incorporates 5 elements, first propounded by May Gurney, which give an insight into why certain behaviour happens and what we, as individuals can do about it. These elements are Alpha Sleep, Time vs Risk, Habit, Lead by Example and Walk Over. Our approach is based on a knowledge that this type of development needs to be highly interactive and fun to have any effect. Whilst appreciating the seriousness of the subject matter, people=positive make the course colourful, interesting, and involving. We believe that making it personal makes it stick. The notion of personal choice pervades the programme so that by the third day, when they are presented with a scenario acted out in front of them, they are keen to coach the actors towards improving the communication and relationships that are presented.



Andrew Thacker



So, two years into a continuing programme, how is it going?

The answer is, very well. Over 300 people in Network Rail and contracting companies have had the benefit of the course. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. There are many coaches who have used the course to increase their own confidence and have come up with new ways of getting the message across. Others report that their ability to “walk-over” has been enhanced and others simply say that they are now more aware and more likely to intervene or take a safety stance.

Network Rail itself is confident that the course and the overall programme, is making a difference to the safety culture within the industry. A number of contracting companies have sent people on the course and then realised that they need to align themselves to cope with the consequences of having a more informed and active workforce. People=positive have been asked on a number of occasions to assist in helping that business development. people=positive™ continues to be at the personal development heart of the culture change programme. It is both exciting and stimulating to see people who use the awareness gained to validate their own feelings, change their behaviours and positively affect their workmates.

'Mindset' *Growing Intelligence in Organisations*

Most organisations are interested in how to help people grow and develop their potential. They also want to get the best results for their company through maximising the output from their employees. Recent work by a number of key writers and researchers in the field of Positive Psychology has provided strong evidence that from an early age, our approach to facing problems and taking on new challenges is influenced by the feedback and model we receive from key individuals around us. These learned attitudes then become our internal ‘conversation’ that informs our response to choices we make every day in our lives. When I am using music as an experiential learning activity to explore innovation or creative thinking, I will often ask the question, “Who is not a musician?” Quite a number of hands will generally go up, and when I then ask the further question, “ Who told you that you were not a musician?” the answer comes, usually after a moment’s puzzled reflection, “ Myself”.

It seems to me that if we can challenge our own self-limiting beliefs through understanding better the dynamic nature of our intelligence, then this will inevitably influence our interaction at work, with our families and with the world

"mindset" {noun}
a set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines one's behavior, outlook and mental attitude.

around us in general.

Carol Dweck, professor of psychology at Stanford University and author of the book *Mindset*, sets out the evidence behind her work.

'A leading expert in motivation and personality psychology, Carol Dweck has discovered in more than 20 years of research that our mindset is not a minor personality quirk: it creates our whole mental world. It explains how we become optimistic or pessimistic. It shapes our goals, our attitude towards work and relationships and how we raise our kids, ultimately predicting whether or not we will fulfil our potential.'

Dweck has found that everyone has one of two basic mindsets. If you have the fixed mindset, you believe that your talents and abilities are set in stone – either you have them or you don't. You must prove yourself over and over, trying to look smart and talented at all costs. This is the path of stagnation. If you have a growth mindset, however, you know that talents can be developed and that great abilities are built over time. This is the path of opportunity – and success.

Dweck demonstrates that mindset unfolds in childhood and adulthood and drives every aspect of our lives, from relationships to parenting. She reveals how creative geniuses in all fields – music, literature, science, sport, business – apply the growth mindset to achieve results. Perhaps even more important, she shows us how we can change our mindset at any stage of life to achieve true success and fulfilment. She looks across a broad range of applications and helps parents, teachers, coaches and executives see how they can promote the growth mindset.'

Over the past few years I have attended several seminars with Professor Dweck hosted by the Scottish non-profit organisation, The Centre for Confidence & Well-Being. In these sessions, attended by leaders from business, sport, teachers and educators, Professor Dweck has presented her empirical research and its very accessible application to many fields of human endeavour. With the emphasis on recognition for effort rather than ability and a healthy approach to constructive feedback, it represents a very different approach to the 'self-esteem' movement which began in California during the 1980s with the idea that many of society's problems were related to low self-esteem. The California legislature financed a task force to increase self-esteem in an effort to reduce welfare dependency, unwanted pregnancy, school failure, crime, drug addiction and other problems, with the goal of saving taxpayer dollars, according to the task force. Recent research is indicating that although self-esteem is an important factor in building confidence and that there is a correlation between happiness and self-esteem, there is a danger in boosting self-esteem with unrealistic praise which can lead to unhealthy self-absorption, especially in young people. More important therefore is an emphasis on **recognising effort**, and developing coping strategies to equip individuals to deal with new challenges and thereby encouraging a learning mindset.

So, how can this be applied to everyday relationships in business? Dweck has a few suggestions:

- Are you in a fixed-mindset or growth-mindset workplace? Do you feel people are just judging you or are they helping you to develop? Maybe you could try making it a more growth-mindset place, starting with



exceptional performance
takes effort and practice,
not just 'natural' ability



(Thanks to Danny Macaskill for the pic)

yourself. Are there ways you could be less defensive about your mistakes? Could you profit more from the feedback you get? Are there ways you can create more learning experiences for yourself?

- As leaders and influencers - create a culture of self-examination, open communication and teamwork – think seriously about whether elitism is an issue in your organisation. Lou Gerstner's book, "Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?" has some useful ideas on how to put this into practice.
- Is your workplace set up to promote 'Groupthink'? If so, the whole decision-making process is in trouble. Create ways to foster alternative views and constructive criticism. Assign people to play the devil's advocate, taking opposing viewpoints so that you can see holes in your position. Get people to wage debates that argue different sides of the issue. Remember, people can be independent thinkers and team players at the same time. Help them fill both roles.

References:

Mindset – The New Psychology of Success – Carol S. Dweck PH.D ISBN 1-4000-6275-6

Useful Links:

www.mindsetonline.com

www.centreforconfidence.co.uk

Next Issue . .

- *Feature on Inter-ACT*
- *Leadership Development Programmes*
- *High-Performance Relationships -development tools*
- *20th Birthday Celebrations!!*

Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter. We hope you have found something useful.

www.peoplepositive.com



people=positive™
Inverdrue House
Aviemore
Inverness-shire
PH22 1QH

Tel: +44 (0)1479 811900
Email:
office@peoplepositive.com



people=positive™ Inc
78E Shadowpoint Circle
The Woodlands
Texas
77381
United States

Tel: +00 128 141 94529
Email:
office@peoplepositive.com

