



Gary Eaton & Kellie Mills

It seems like yesterday that we were starting a new financial year, and here we are commencing the 2008 calendar year. Apparently this is the year of the Rat in the Chinese calendar. Rat people are respected and said to be a courageous, enterprising people. The year of the Rat is meant to be a year of hard work, activity and renewal.

We hope that this is your experience this year, and we look forward to being part of helping you and your organisation move in the direction that you believe it should.

Essentials for this year include: being real, being kind to yourself, learning new things at every opportunity, asking for assistance (when required) and accepting that help when offered.

Cheers, Kellie Mills & Gary Eaton

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Coaching and Mentoring - Two Approaches

A critical feature of good management today is a focus on staff retention. For this reason, many of our client organisations are implementing coaching or mentoring programs - either team wide, or for specific team members. While coaching is more focused on specific job skills (e.g. people management or communication), mentoring has a somewhat different approach where the agenda is set by the mentoree.

Mills-Eaton participates in two ways:

1. **INTERNAL - We conduct training sessions to educate staff and management on how to initiate and manage structured in-house coaching and mentoring programs**

Organisations that use this approach are wanting more wide ranging assistance in the creation of on-going programs using their own people resources. These programs have the two-way benefits for both the coach/mentor and coachee/mentoree - where both grow in knowledge in experience. These are being implemented in a wide-range of enterprises including corporate and government.

Creative Problem Solving

Albert Einstein said: Doing the same thing, in the same way each time, while expecting a different result - is the definition of insanity!

In the arena of problem solving we often, unsuccessfully, try to resolve issues in the the same ineffective ways...This is particularly true in the area of Managing Change.

When an organisation is undergoing change, finding new ways to think about problems is an essential part of effectively dealing with them, and thereby meeting the challenges presented by change.

The creativity in creative problem solving is not artistic, but rather is technical creativity - where people conceive new concepts, ideas or methodologies.

There are two basic approaches to creative problem solving: Programmed thinking and Lateral thinking. Programmed thinking relies on logical or structured ways of creating a new product or service. Lateral Thinking, developed by Edward de Bono, can help us break out of our patterned or programmed way of thinking when those approaches fail us.

Our Creative Problem Solving (CPS) training session uses several models and introduces and applies eight practical tools including Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats.

CPS is not a theory focused session, but rather is a practical clinic about thinking differently. We identify and use Issues currently being faced by the client organisation as practice examples of applying the tools in the search for useful alternative solutions.

2. **EXTERNAL - We work as coaches for specific individuals who are requiring assistance in: leadership, delegation, communication, time management (especially dealing with procrastination) and people management.**

In some situations, especially those where technical skills are not at issue, it is useful to have someone standing outside the organisation to assist the manager, supervisor or team member.

These circumstances often are the result of promotion (particularly from a technical position to a more people management role), job reassignment, expansion / contraction or performance management. Individuals may also be struggling with priorities, staffing issues or other common workplace challenges.

3 Key Benefits of Coaching / Mentoring

- Staff see it as a positive investment in them, therefore they are more willing to take greater responsibility in their own growth and development
- Effective coaching or mentoring results in better performing team members
- Investing in coaching or mentoring for new leaders is an excellent way to reduce staff turnover.



mills-eaton: making a difference!

GENERATIONAL FRUSTRATIONS

Silents, BabyBoomers, X, Y, and next!

Interpersonal communication is one of the most difficult areas of organisational life. Not surprisingly, effective communication across the generations has become a 'hot' topic - but one with few clear answers.

In thinking about differences between the generations that might give rise to communication issues, one of the obvious elements would appear to be culture. Some may argue that we are all experiencing the same culture, but a brief consideration will illustrate the weakness in that argument:

- Silents and BabyBoomers experienced world wide wars. Many enjoyed the 'free love' of the 1960's and the financial catastrophes (and unemployment) of the 1980's. Longevity of service was valued, and superannuation was initially an option. There was a focus on work at all costs.
- Gen X and Gen Y have seen regional wars, experienced nearly full employment, 9% super-annuation contributions, huge changes in technology and electronic communications and a focus on post-secondary education. Their parents were at work for long hours, often at the expense of time with their children, friends and community.

As you can see, the experiences that shape us, our values, and impact our priorities - forming our cultural base, were and continue to be quite different. Do these differences really affect how we communicate?

Yes! The term 'work ethic' is an example. Some BabyBoomers believe that Gen Y do not have a good work ethic. However, Gen Y would say that this is not so, it is just that they are not willing to sacrifice their entire life for the sake of work. Gen X on the other hand are more entrepreneurial and are therefore willing to 'put in', but only if there is something in it for them.

Same words, different meanings.

So, if we were to focus on conceptualising the communication problems as being 'culture based', this may provide us with a fresh set of perspectives from which to work. It is reasonable to believe that just changing how we have traditionally processed and responded to daily issues may allow us to find new solutions and tools that we can apply to these challenges.

In other words, generational language issues may stem from cultural differences. If this is true, then how can we determine what these differences are and how we might overcome them?

Our suggestion is that we consider personal values as an avenue for exploration. After all, personal values are the expression of our personal attitudes (culture) that show up in behaviour (Values + priorities (generally) equal behaviour).

Exploring the 'work ethic' example a little further: A common comment about Gen Y is that they seem to value their social life more than their work life. If you

were to consider this a cultural example, you could make some assumptions and conclude that Gen Y staff will never have a work/life balance issue. Life will always win.

What do you do with this information? If you apply this particular knowledge to how you communicate with and manage Gen Y staff, you will never assume that they will be happy to sacrifice their life for the sake of work. Instead, they find it essential to maintain a balance. So, observing differences in generational values may offer us all a way of understanding our cultural dynamic - giving us useful communication clues about each other.

The Bottom Line. Culture and language use are related. Basic values, and therefore culture, are demonstrated through behaviour - including language. Therefore, some of the communication issues we are experiencing between the generations can be addressed by appreciating the value differences between each group...and using communication styles that recognise and do not devalue those differences.

staff training, coaching & mentoring

- team development
- communication
- leadership & management
- coaching
- generational communications
- supervisor skills
- creative problem solving
- influence & negotiation
- sales & customer service
- public speaking & presentation
- time management / goal setting
- emotional intelligence
- networking skills
- ◆ Belbin© Team Role Theory
- ◆ Conference Key Note Speaker
- ◆ Genos© Accredited Emotional Intelligence

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- Job Network
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- Health Care



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