



RHEMA NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2005

Welcome to the Eye

2005 is the 20th Anniversary year of Rhema Group, one of the UK's leading, well-established and respected providers of customised blended learning solutions via e-learning, consultancy, training, coaching, diagnostics and online resources.

To celebrate, and to offer our contacts a source of information and ideas relevant to HR development we are launching The Eye newsletter. We will produce it regularly, keeping you up to date with the (sometimes surprising) variety of interesting work being done across the whole area of people development. Every quarter The Eye will describe and explore good ideas - from the viewpoint of an intelligent, totally professional HR development provider.

.....and a quick look back at 20 years in the people development business

Rhema launched in 1985 when the UK economy was booming, growth was to be seen everywhere and there was a feeling of unbridled optimism.

Training, almost all of it instructor led, was used to underpin the growth of organisations and their quest for competitive advantage in an increasingly deregulated and de-unionised environment. Those were the days!

Twenty years on, life could not be more different. Change is a constant, uncertainty the norm, and flexibility the key. Little wonder that the HR development world contains a bigger mix than ever of potential solutions including conventional training programmes, coaching, E-learning, on-line diagnostics and assessments and a host of personal development resources.

Rhema has grown stronger over the years by re-inventing itself – many times. We are now a true one-stop-shop of human resource development resources capable of being delivered globally 24/7. We can deliver blended solutions, highly customised to our clients' needs anywhere in the world at any time and we believe we are in touch with the realities of today.

We look forward to another 20 years of helping people to develop and realise their full potential.

Managing Director

Jeremy Francis



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The Eye is not your usual marketing-led newsletter

This very compact publication is an ideas and information source for busy HR managers. It will look at what is being done in UK organisations of all sizes, and in international and multinational companies which want learning and development programmes of uniform content and standard rolled out for managers and employees across continents or the globe.

Current best practice in human resource development is changing constantly. Companies have very good ideas about that: they want an intelligent, totally professional, cost effective response from HR development providers, to turn these ideas into programmes which put their people in a position to maintain commercial competitive edge.

The Eye is backed up by the Rhema Group website which offers more detail on a range of topics. And the website itself is developing to give direct access to Rhema expertise and products - including course materials and thought-provoking topical bulletins. These will be in the Trainers' Library which will be launched early next year.

Readers can participate in our Big Question Poll on-line. Not a long questionnaire demanding time, but a single relevant question which tests the view of in-house HR and training professionals on a current topic. This month the topic is the Learning and Development Activities Blend. Results will be published in the next issue.

And there will be regular Eye offers, such as free information sheets and low-cost half-day seminars.



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The Big Issue

People Development and Blended Solutions – the missing ingredient

Flexibility of delivery, responsiveness to people's different learning styles, cost effectiveness - the benefits of Blended Solutions are obvious, and increasingly well-recognised by HR Development specialists. The last five years have seen this approach become a key part of organisations' long-term people development strategy.

Strategy is one thing, but reality can be something else. Have Blended Solutions really caught on?

How many organisations have succeeded in building a learning and development environment which is truly focused on the learner; which holistically blends instructor led training, coaching, e-learning and online learning and assessment tools, with conventional distance learning and self development resources? Happily, it does appear that the number is rising.

Use of Blended Solutions in Just in Time Training (positioning and timing of training - versus ongoing learning - as close as possible to the point of use of the relevant knowledge and skills) also seems to be growing. This supports Rhema's experience that people's development needs continue to be driven by organisational change, and that very often the timing of the training intervention is driven by the timing of corporate change initiatives. This shorter term, just-in-time approach can be one dimensional, but these days it is more frequently multi-dimensional in its delivery.

So Blended Solutions are now used in the long and short term. This is as it should be, to meet both strategic and tactical people development needs. The number of true "learning organisations" is increasing and they and their employees are more likely to be winners in the future.

That all sounds great: the recipe is fine. But what is the missing ingredient?

All too often managers lack the motivation and ability to grow their peoples potential.

The reason? Quite simply a lack of reward to fulfil their part of their role properly. Many senior managers receive and pass on mixed corporate messages about people development. Yes, the organisation subscribes to the ideals and ideas, and yes, it is investing in tools and techniques. But managers are not being specifically appraised and measured on delivering people development, and they are not being specifically paid for doing it.

Organisations will continue to struggle to optimise the potential of their people, and therefore the full potential of their business, until managers are recognised and rewarded for their people development role. Unless this happens the traction needed for the success of wider people development initiatives and plans will not be there.

What makes the very few true learning organisations which exist today different to others is that they really understand the old maxim – "You get what you reward."



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And they know that rewarding managers for their vital contribution in this area is not difficult at all. All that is needed is the ability to make the connection between the long term sustainability of their organisation and the people development role of their managers.

They must in a practical, businesslike way recognise that ongoing corporate success today is all about their people and how they are developed and grown.

This belief still seems to be a long time coming as the vital ingredient in the blend. Those senior managers that capture it may be few, but their contribution to their organisations will be colossal.



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Client Projects and Outcomes

Rhema Group “exports” instructor led and online training for BOC sales teams in rapidly expanding SE Asia market

BOC Group serves 2m customers in over 50 countries, and wins 30% of its £4.6bn annual sales in the rapidly-expanding Asia Pacific market. Plans for major growth there this year hinge significantly on centrally directed and supported training and development for BOC S.E. Asia sales forces.

Rhema Group was tasked with exporting its already-successful UK training programmes to BOC’s key locations in Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and the Philippines. It had to ensure consistency of content, message and quality of training - via BOC’s regional training manager.

Rhema further supported that objective by Training the Trainer and licensing BOC to deliver a complete package of copyright training programmes, including Territory Planning, Consultative Selling, Negotiating Skills and Sales Force Management, customised for local culture and markets while ensuring consistency and quality of content.

More support came through Rhema’s innovative electronic interactive version of the instructor-led training modules; BOC offered these as an e-learning programme via its global intranet.

BOC Group Organisation Development Director Mervyn Smit says: “We have had excellent feedback from the delegates. We’re committed to the sustainable development of people, and Rhema has been our natural choice of partner because they have always met our needs in this objective”.

Leadership Development prepares managers for global market

The need to equip managers to be effective leaders and change agents is fully understood by expanding, innovative companies such as Netherlands-based global vendor leasing specialist as De Lage Landen.

Rhema Group is involved in the pan-European roll-out of a set of programmes in DLL’s worldwide You can make the difference Leadership Development Programme. This demands customised content and messages which are absolutely consistent plus unfailingly high quality of delivery, to develop managers who can help to shape DLL’s “best in class” approach to serving its partners with innovative financing programmes.

140 European division managers are going through two Rhema programmes – New Realities and Leading Change (4 days) and Programme and Project Management (2 days) to equip them to operate in a global organisation and to prepare them for the global market. Other elements of this major leadership development initiative are being delivered by other world-class providers in Europe and the Americas.

Nicoline Carstens, De Lage Landen Global Leadership Development Programme project director demanded high quality, an international service, in-depth understanding of people’s learning and development processes, and flexibility in working with the company to deliver customised programmes.



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"We expect of our suppliers that they foster within themselves DLL's core competencies of co-operation, accountability, knowledge and an entrepreneurial approach. Our business will in future change, probably dramatically, and we need suppliers like Rhema who can be sparring partners and co-creators with us."

Unique Editorial Academy for Editors at Reed Business Information

How do you get creative, highly individualistic people to lead and manage teams consistently (and measurably) in a creative, subjective profession?

The answer to this thorny question has traditionally been: You don't - you let them concentrate on being writers, artists etc and don't expect them to be managers in any conventional business sense.

However, as a world-class business to business publisher with more than 100 news and information products covering 18 markets, RBI recently challenged Rhema Group to come up with a solution which would really work for senior people in its UK editorial offices.

The result is the RBI Editorial Academy - a unique programme to develop consistent, effective editorial leadership across a wide range of publications covering areas as diverse as agriculture, healthcare, property, personnel, science, travel and TV. The Academy has won enthusiastic response from RBI's Editors for the way it engages fully with the special creative nature of editors' roles. It also serves RBI's corporate goals of being a market and quality leader, embedding business best practice, and being an employer of choice for quality creative people.

Carol Eaton, Training Director RBI UK has seen the Academy win "universally high acclaim" and is convinced that " Rhema has demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the editorial process and the role of senior editors. The programme content tackled and resolved many issues, including the soft skills and behavioural ones involved in managing creative teams."

Customer service training is for logistics people too: ask BOC's delivery drivers

The logistics operations which connect companies to their suppliers and their customers, and move goods between the three, are seldom regarded as playing a key role in "customer service". Yet the right skills there can hugely improve cost-effectiveness, efficiency and customer relations.

BOC firmly believes this, and asked Rhema Group, which has regularly provided some of its HR development services, to work with the company on an unusual and imaginative training project: a specially-created training programme for delivery drivers handling potentially hazardous loads.

Working closely together BOC and Rhema have built and successfully started to run their Creating Excellence in Customer Service programme - for drivers who tanker propellant gases from refineries to client companies. The premise is that safe and legal supply of such a product must be in the hands of people who are prepared to do more than just drive; people who have skills in addition to the technical skill needed to manoeuvre an HGV with a sensitive cargo.



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That relationship is not 'invisible' in the logistics side of the operation, Rhema's William Burton stresses. "There, like everywhere else in the supply chain, satisfied customers cause less stress and take up less time per transaction – and finding a new customer costs four or five times more than retaining an existing customer." Bob Girvan, Project Manager for BOC Special Products, strongly agrees: "I'm completely convinced that this training is time and money well spent. I have heard nothing but favourable reports, and I believe we have laid the foundations of an excellent customer service offering."

The two-day course is taking drivers in groups, and covering procedures, hygiene standards, demonstrating expertise and building relationships, interpersonal skills and dealing with safety issues. A role-play element helps to deal with situations where customers must understand legal and safety requirements which may restrict a drivers' ability to do precisely what the customer wants (while actually doing precisely what the customer needs).

Not turning a crisis into a drama:

Rhema Group trains the Crisis Help Desk an international bank Rhema Group was chosen by leading international banking and financial services provider SG Corporate and Investment Banking (SGCIB), to create and deliver a two day Training and Development Workshop concentrating on the techniques needed to handle situations which demand an efficient and effective Help Desk. This meant thoroughly preparing Service Desk and switchboard staff to take on a Crisis Help Desk role promptly and knowledgeably the moment they might be required to do so.

Focused on thoroughly preparing administration staff to take on this role the moment they might be required to do so, the tailored workshops were judged a big success as training experiences, and some of the skills acquired were called on as companies all over London dealt with the disruptions caused by terrorist incidents in early July 2005.

Rhema Director William Burton, who created the customised two-day courses for Société Générale, focused firmly on one aim. "We had a single goal – to ensure that SG's help desk staff could, when and if required, fulfil the vital purpose of a Crisis Help Desk – which is to provide 24/7 communications capability to all elements of the company's crisis management organisation from the moment crisis procedures are officially invoked until the conclusion of the incident.

"Companies know that this kind of readiness cannot be created after the event; it must click into place the instant it is needed, and that means thorough and regularly reinforced training."

James Coulson, who is responsible for SGCIB's crisis management arrangements in London, was delighted with the results. "We were very satisfied with the training that Rhema provided for us. They showed a great capacity for understanding our specific needs and gave us an effective and customised training course."

The training covered the key responsibilities of a Crisis Help Desk:

- respond calmly and efficiently to all external and internal calls



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- transfer callers swiftly and appropriately (especially to Communications team- without getting drawn into being a direct media information source)
- create an accurate record of all calls
- effectively manage callers who might be anxious, even overwrought.

The Rhema courses also dealt with technical skills, including operation of the company's help desk system; familiarisation with a suite of pre-recorded phone messages and with SGCIB's internal and external escalation procedures.



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Rhema and its global network of partners

The Rhema Group is a highly respected and well-established UK human resource development company which also operates globally.

Founded in 1985 by MD Jeremy Francis, and with a company name derived from the Greek word Rhema meaning "Inspired Word," it now operates internationally via 15 business partners with offices in Hong Kong, Singapore, New York, Sydney, Johannesburg, Brussels, Paris, Milan, Düsseldorf, Madrid, Lisbon, Prague, Warsaw, Vilnius and Copenhagen.

- Rhema focuses on
- Talent Development
- Management Development
- Performance Management
- Sales Training and Skills Development

providing customised and blended solutions involving business consultancy, training, coaching, software and E-learning (via internet and client intranets). It provides an expert resource in support of learning and development functions– all on a 24/7 basis – in 10 languages to clients in 20 countries.

Through its networks and a global community of people development professionals, Rhema has identified and linked with proven best practitioners in each region.

UK companies get the best a national expert can offer, while elsewhere a "flexible logistics" approach enables these partnerships to channel Rhema training programmes, diagnostics, learning materials and software to clients (Rhema's or their own) with local cultural adjustments as well as precise language translations where appropriate. Global companies are therefore offered extremely rapid roll-out in all their territories of any centrally–mandated training or people development programme, with consistency of content and quality plus uniformity of messages – as well as cost effectiveness and ease of management.

The best of original products from international partners are also used and distributed by Rhema in the UK.



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Rhema News

New Rhema Directors to specialise in instructor-led training and E-learning.

William Burton has significantly added to the strength and scope of Rhema's expertise – and major client base – in the instructor-led training and coaching aspects of people development.

A philosophy graduate with RSA Cert TEFL he started his career as a teacher. But in the past decade he has dedicated that skill to the commercial learning environment, where he regularly and successfully delivers training to groups of two to 200 managers and staff.

His high-energy training style is practical and results-orientated - personally taking a project from needs analysis, through course design to delivery and review. An increasing roster of blue-chip clients attests his success. (Full biography on the Rhema website)

Sue Gilkes has joined Rhema as Director with particular focus on instructor led training and E-learning

Sue Gilkes has worked within the training industry for over 15 years, starting in the IT industry.

Prior to joining Rhema Sue worked in the Caribbean with multinational companies providing training and consultancy and was the first Qualified Business Professional Instructor specialising in Sales, Leadership and Customer Service. She also wrote a twice weekly column for the leading national newspaper in Barbados providing businesses with support and advice on staff development issues.

Sue has recently been voted onto the Board of The Learning Lab, the centre of excellence supporting Government, Industry and corporate entities in the use and development of learning strategies using technology. (Full biography on Rhema website)

Rhema Website

New sections and some redesign have just been completed on the Rhema website, to add to the information available to HR professionals and to make the site easier to use.

In the new About Us section you will find information about the enlarged team of Rhema Directors, and we have for the first time added access to our Press releases – a quick way to check out the range of work Rhema has recently been doing, and for whom.

www.rhemagroup.com