



RHEMA NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2007

Welcome to the Eye

Leadership in a global context

This is where leadership will play an indispensable role in the future of any significant organisation on a growth curve. The hard truth is that the global context makes almost superhuman demands on those who have to take a leadership role. The good news is that while such leaders are born, they can also be made - through training and coaching of exceptional quality.

Unavoidably, and maybe usefully, stating the obvious: the global marketplace is in a constant state of flux and change. Issues which arise can be sudden, dramatic and often radical (how badly was the likelihood of a collapse in the US sub-prime mortgage market anticipated? How prepared were leaders in sectors and organisations worldwide which would inevitably be hit by such a collapse?). Yet the underlying issue is market sentiment, which is a constant – in the sense that it is almost metronomic in its upbeat and downbeat fluctuations.

So business makes paradoxical demands on those it calls on to be leaders. They must be attuned to predictable unpredictability, showing proof of ability to deal coherently with future unknowns and interim certainties/likelihoods. And they must make others confident that they can also deal with this environment.

The demand is for more than core leadership skills. These are not sufficiently sophisticated in a global context – especially in terms of leading change rather than being forced into it. It is a business skill- also a political one (it is what every politician is trying to do all the time). Sophisticated leadership skills go beyond strategic thinking into the area of intuition – being in touch with market sentiment, leading change in a way which inspires, making paradox function constructively and towards a clearly understood goal (think of the way the great leaders such as Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King made unwanted violence serve their pacifist causes).

Globally attuned business leaders can be made, through training and coaching which is as sophisticated as the roles for which it prepares people. Building on advanced leadership principles, core beliefs and key skills this would include much role modelling and would need to be delivered by coaches and trainers of exceptionally high quality. But the rewards of success in such training and development are almost incalculably great.

This newsletter offers some thinking from a global perspective – one which a rapidly increasing number of organisations have to adopt. We believe these thoughts and ideas are well worth your consideration, whatever stage your organisation's development had reached.

Managing Director

Jeremy Francis

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The Big Issue

The training and development challenges of globalisation

Extracts from an article by Jeremy Francis which was first published on the HRDirector website, August 2007

Whether voluntarily or driven by market forces, organisations are increasingly globalising. Understandably their focus is on issues of shape, size, structure and location- alongside product and service standardisation, clear branding and a seamless customer service experience, creating a global IT platform, and a common corporate culture. But this huge organisational effort can overlook important training and development (T&D) challenges. Unless these are addressed, the global aspiration is a vision without substance.

Best in Class (BIC) organisations recognise that consistent use of common terminology is crucial, for job titles and descriptions, for internal structures, job roles and corporate culture. Their T&D plans then must support the improvement and development of individuals, via optimal, common performance management and talent development systems which will operate globally.

Strategy

BIC global operators truly seek to grow a learning organisation, sensitive to different individual and cultural learning styles. They incorporate at least three different measures of future and current success:

- 1) Attainment of personal objectives (linked to corporate objectives)
- 2) Observed behaviour using a job-specific competency framework
- 3) Evidence of commitment to the corporate culture and values.
They mandate core L&D programmes and resources and then use them to:
 - embed new protocols, policies and procedures (e.g. for project management)
 - achieve culture change via leadership and change management programmes
 - equip people with essential knowledge (including products/services)
 - Cross regional/multi-functional workshops encourage team working and cross-cultural understanding.

BICs use a learning management system to monitor and measure varying levels of knowledge and skill assiduously, as well as individuals' confidence to use these.

Powerful total capability management systems exist which can be deployed quickly to give both a global and granular view of a range of key data relating to recruitment, L&D, HR planning, appraisal of performance, competency and talent management, and succession/career planning.

The message is clear: BIC global organisations must achieve a complete picture of the people they have, the people they need, where they have them/want them, and how they should be developed and deployed for optimum operational impact. Only customisable software will deliver this.

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The Big Issue - continued

Such organisations have strong centralised global HRD functions giving training and development policy direction; also acting as internal consultants and facilitators to country/region or line-of-business specific local HRD representatives with local flexibility in delivery. The vital combination - consistency of content plus sensitivity to local culture and languages - is often provided by a global or regional training provider with local representation.

Excellent strategy is vital, but must be allied to intelligent tactics; the day-to-day on-the-spot response to shorter term, ongoing, drivers of change within the business – i.e. what is actually happening.

Tactics

In BICs the HR director stays close to the business, predicting and contributing to the response to economic, political, technological and cultural change drivers.

Working regularly with such organisations, Rhema Group observes that BICs know that it is absolutely essential to use consistent and cost-effective blended solutions embracing instructor-led training, coaching, e-learning, m-learning (via mobile phones), technology (webinars) and online L&D resources. We know that absolute necessities are:

- a 'clearing house' of local, tactical T&D responses, via a central hub/portal communities of best practice on an intranet,
- a common IT platform to monitor/measure effectiveness, using external as well as internal data,
- speed of deployment.

Rhema Group has worked and continues to work with such organisations, giving them the benefit of our experience while in turn gaining more knowledge and experience ourselves.

A final observation: global organisations differ from international or multi-national organisations in three main respects when it comes to L&D. Firstly, they understand the need for a global/local approach within consistent culture, protocols and processes; secondly, they use technology to achieve transparency across the whole business; and thirdly, they balance standardised with customised solutions for cost effectiveness.

In short, they act like the most sophisticated nationals but in a global environment. Why? Because to succeed, they must.



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News

In-depth marketplace report by Rhema Group questions conventional out-sourcing and off-shoring strategies

The need to improve levels of customer service and at the same time to cut customer service costs is an ongoing challenge for most large organisations, particularly if they have a global presence. Over the last ten years there has been an exponential increase in the use of out-sourced and often off-shored customer contact centres, but how effective is this?

The reduction in costs is not always accompanied by a rise in customer satisfaction. So today conventional out-sourcing and off-shoring strategies are increasingly being questioned by organisations and some are even reversing previous decisions and are now in-sourcing and in-shoring in response to the loss of customers to competitors.

Their early identification of new trends in delivering cost effective customer service activities, led Rhema Group to undertake an in-depth study of the marketplace. Six months of research have resulted in the production of a comprehensive 70,000-word report detailing both current and future trends.

The contents include findings and conclusions on:

- The use of leading edge technologies and infrastructures within best practice Customer Service Centres.
- The link of Customer Service Centres to E-Commerce portals.
- The developing role of the Customer Service Centre in the areas of Pro-active Selling and Customer Relationship Management.
- The deployment of regional and global Customer Service Modules for optimum impact.

Rhema Group MD Jeremy Francis stresses: "The new era of 'virtual' customer service centres is fast approaching. No more will organisations be limited by geographical locations and cultural differences with today's technologies capable of linking all involved in delivering customer service to a complete, shared view of the customer and their needs. It is now possible for organisations to take a real step change in their approach to delivering customer service – one that can truly deliver higher levels of customer satisfaction and a substantial reduction in costs at one and the same time."

A summary of the report findings is available from Rhema Group and copies can be ordered from nicky@rhemagroup.com, or call her on **+44 (0) 1634 290805**



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Rhema Group creates Bite Size Training to make training budgets go further

The need to invest in people development, and to do this in the most cost effective way, is an ongoing challenge for many organisations. As a major aid to achieving this balancing act Rhema Group has introduced a new offering – **Bite Size Training**.

The concept is both simple and practical. Organisations can offer three 'bite size' training sessions, each of two-hours, to their employees in-house over one day. Each session can accommodate up to 12 delegates so that up to 36 delegates can be trained on a given day.

The three sessions cover different topics which can be related or non-related.

Examples are:

- *Bringing Coaching To Life*
- *Dealing with Under Performers*
- *Developing Natural Authority*

Altogether 30 sessions are already available, and topics can also be created to order.

Rhema Group provides a trainer for the day, at the same fee it would apply for a one-day course for 12 delegates, meaning that organisations can train three times as many delegates for the same outlay.

Jeremy Francis, Rhema Group MD says: "We have always recognised the need to offer highly flexible, customised training solutions to our clients in the most cost effective way. Bite Size Training is another step in this direction. The concept is proving to be extremely popular with our clients who also experience another benefit – less time away from work for those being trained."

So committed is Rhema Group to this new offering that it has created a new website section to make it easy for those interested to view the topics available. Have a look at -

http://www.rhemagroup.com/docs/who_we_are/bitesize.php



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Make Mondays more interesting – check out Rhema Group web-based Weekly Tips

Rhema Group has launched a Weekly Tips section on its website www.rhemagroup.com this should not be a link aimed at HR professionals, training consultants, line managers and their staff.

Every Monday those visiting the website will find a new tip posted. Each is designed to provide fresh insights and quick process guides, on topical issues within broad subject areas including Leadership and Management, Change Management, Performance Management, Sales and Account Management and Personal Effectiveness. Archive pages offer access to previous tips.

Users can e-mail the tips to a friend and/or submit their own tip to Rhema Group for inclusion. Jeremy Francis, Rhema Group MD explains the need for this good idea. "When we asked our clients how we could quickly and easily add value to their managers and staff in the area of personal development their response was unanimous – regular, helpful hints and tips for increasing levels of personal effectiveness and improving interactions with others. As an organisation we recognise that many people live in a fast-paced and constantly changing world. We want to give them all the help we can to achieve personal success in this demanding environment, and we hope that our Weekly Tips will provide a valuable contribution to their ongoing growth and development."



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Strategic Partner News

Rhema Group alliance with Interactive Solutions new media inc. leverages both organisations' e-learning capabilities

Canada based Interactive Solutions new media inc. is a global premier e-learning development company specialising in client specific, online training solutions for soft skills, technical, and virtual/software simulations.

Its alliance with Rhema Group, whose expertise lies in the provision of e-learning content in the soft skills area, builds on the fact that both organisations are committed to offering the best quality of practical computer based learning solutions that achieve higher levels of employee performance and knowledge, while decreasing the time, expense and energies associated with traditional training procedures.

The two organisations will work closely together to create powerful learning and development experiences for their clients' employees.

Rhema Group MD Jeremy Francis comments – "Interactive Solutions new media has a global reputation for delivering the highest quality e-learning programmes. As a global player ourselves we now have a strategic partner in this area to fully complement the range of learning and development solutions we offer to our clients. We are very excited about the new opportunities for deployment of leading edge e-learning which we can create together."

Interactive Solutions new media CEO Don Graham adds: "Rhema's expertise in soft skills and their extensive competency in supplying e-learning content open up exciting new opportunities for both our companies and our clients".



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Product News

Rhema Group reduces the risks of flexible and remote working

Flexible and remote working, involving employees in working some or all of their hours from home or another non-office based location, presents employers with both opportunities and risks.

The major benefit of satisfying the employee's psychological contract, and securing their valuable contribution, is often offset by the risk that that managers and staff will not use time as productively as they would if working at the organisation's offices. Add to that the need to check on this risk.

It is important therefore not only to assess the individual's **capability** to work flexibly and/or remotely but it is also vitally important to assess their **suitability** to do so.

Rhema Group's assessment process, known as the Profile XT, addresses both needs. Before choosing or allowing people to change their work patterns organisations can create the "DNA" of the successful flexible or remote worker and use this to assess the fit of people to the "DNA" profile of the job. The assessment instrument measures behavioural traits which include:

- Energy level when working on their own.
- Manageability when working at a distance.
- Attitude to work and the working environment.
- Decisiveness when working alone.
- Degree of independence when unsupervised.
- Ability to make objective judgements without reference to others.

The assessment also measures the degree to which the employee can learn and develop on his/her own.

Rhema Group MD Jeremy Francis is convinced of the assessment's value: "Flexible working can be both very productive and cost effective for organisations wanting to achieve increased job satisfaction for the employee and improved levels of performance. Handled properly, the transition to flexible and/or remote working can be a great success. We aim to help organisations achieve this transition by ensuring the fit of employees to this new way of working.

Results have shown that those organisations which carefully assess this fit achieve five times the productivity levels of those which don't."



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Rhema People

Rhema Group Expands Core Team

Rhema Group has recently welcomed two new training consultants to its core team of Human Resource Development Professionals.

Sally Little is now responsible for the delivery of training and consultancy in the area of Performance Management and Management Skills. Sally has worldwide learning and development consultancy experience, working in many countries across Europe, the USA, Africa and Asia, as well as the UK. Her expertise in all aspects of the management of people, including training needs analysis, performance management processes, design and delivery of international training programmes, evaluation of learning and return on investment analysis will add considerable strength to Rhema Group's offerings to its global clients.

Tony Walmsley now handles Rhema Group's delivery of training and consultancy in the area of Marketing, Sales and Sales Force Development skills. Tony has considerable hands on experience of leading and managing sales teams in global businesses and working across a wide variety of countries and regions on the development of marketing and communication strategies. His expertise in all aspects of sales force development, and in creating training programmes which support the roll out of new business development strategies, will be a valuable addition to Rhema Group's strengths in these areas.

Commented Jeremy Francis, Rhema Group MD: "We are always looking to strengthen our core team of specialists and both Sally and Tony have proven track records as consultants/trainers of the highest quality. We are delighted that they are now part of our core team."



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Rhema Group welcomes Specialist Sales Trainer Mike Ramsay as Associate Consultant.

Rhema Group has appointed Mike Ramsay as their Sales Training Specialist in the area of using leasing products to increase sales for vendors and their value added resellers (VARs).

Financing Solutions are increasingly used by Original Equipment Manufacturers and their channels to market to make it easier for end-user customers to spread the cost of purchase of equipment and to facilitate the upgrading of equipment in the future. Vendors and their distributors have not always found it easy to train their sales staff to use a rentals solution effectively in the sales process. They need not face this challenge any more.

Mike Ramsay's *Selling with Rentals* training programme revolutionises the approach to using leasing products in the sales process. By changing the attitudes and mindsets of front line sales people, and equipping them with the knowledge, processes and skills they need to sell effectively Mike has achieved quite astonishing results.



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Rhema People

Banking Sales Training Specialist leads Rhema Group expansion into Banking Sector

The speed of change in the Investment Banking and Private Banking sectors which is driven by the need of retail, institutional and private clients seeking more sophisticated structured products has meant that banks are re-evaluating their conventional sales training.

Straightforward product selling skills for frontline sales people, focusing on a narrow range of products, are not sufficient to achieve long term sustainability. New relationship management and consultative selling skills are required to cross-sell and up-sell the vast range of hybrid products now available. Product specialists have to be involved in a total team approach to co-creating solutions for clients, and their knowledge needs to be imparted faster and more efficiently than ever before, due to the increasing demand for tailor-made products.

Recognising these key changes in the banking sector Rhema Group has appointed Sylvia Ashley to lead its expansion into the provision of more sophisticated sales training for investment and private banks.

From her background in Senior Sales and Marketing positions within leading Investment Banks, and her extensive contacts in the banking sector, Sylvia is extremely well placed to lead our global team of banking sales training specialists to satisfy the growing demand from the market

In conjunction with Rhema Group, Sylvia carried out extensive market research into the sales training needs of global investment and private banks in 2006, and is passing on the valuable insights gained via Rhema Group's sales training programmes for international banks.