

Virtual Newsletter

Issue 13

WELCOME to the

latest edition of the Zee Associates newsletter where we keep you abreast of the latest trends in the training and development industry.

This issue is all about creativity: the leading article on page 2 looks at the issue of where secretarial and support staff will be in the future and our Top Tips for Trainers focuses on creativity in your presentations.

I hope you find this latest issue thought provoking and useful. And if you would like to discuss your firm's training and development needs please call us for a free consultation.

Des Whitehorn
Training Principal

Oops!

Last issue we asked that if we have delivered training for you recently and you were really happy with it and the outcomes, that you leave feedback about our work. However, we gave the wrong website address. (Thank you to our clients who pointed this out!)



We need to update our rating regularly on the Kent Training Provider Register, and you can help by adding feedback direct to the register. To leave your feedback and comments, click on the Training Feedback tab at www.kenttraining.org.uk

(Your personal details will not be published.)

How curious!

The just-published Annual Survey of Hours and Earners highlights an intriguing disparity. Legal secretaries, on the whole, always seem to earn more than their counterparts in other trades and professions. Yet the survey states that secretaries in general rank 216 (of 300) in the national earnings league (£20,394) while legal secretaries trail behind in the league at 240 (£18,928). Can anyone explain this?

Trends in Training—Who's using us

The trend over the last couple of months is very mixed, as this snapshot shows:

Davies Arnold Cooper

- Supervising a Team

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

- Effective Use of Time
- Proofreading
- Managing your job Professionally

Herbert Smith

- Proofreading
- Grammar Workshop

Howes Percival

- Effective Interviewing

Local Government Ombudsman

- Call Handling Skills

Saffery Champness

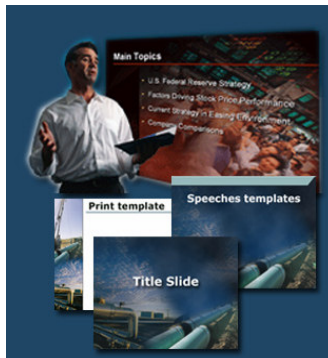
- Report Writing

Top Tips for Trainers:

No 10 The series continues this issue with "Creative Powerpoint Presentations".

Do your powerpoint presentations need an "Extreme Makeover"? If you have ever sat through a presentation trying to stifle a yawn, or squinting at the 20 foot screen to decipher

the annual survey figures, or just not had the time to take in all of the information on display, then you will know exactly what I mean!



Consider firstly the background template on which you will put your information and visuals. The colour may be a fabulous combination of lime and day-glo pink which matches your corporate colours, however it can make it very hard to read—which rather defeats the object! So choose something neutral and easy on the eye. Remember it's the information that's more important than the background.

Then consider TMI: Too much Information. TMI makes a boring and painful experience for your audience. Worse, TMI results in extremely low knowledge transfer - which is what most presentation designs are supposed to be about. As a guide, have no more than six bullet points per slide, perhaps with a (moving!) background picture that is relevant or which demonstrates the main point of that slide.

But importantly, don't just have the words "appear" or swivel when you click. Experiment with the advanced features like *bounce* to make a statement; *zoom in or out* to emphasise shocking statistics. And do them in colour! But make sure the statement you are making is the one you intend. (If in doubt preview it to

a few colleagues and gauge their response.)

Using the wipe feature will brilliantly bring to life the "cycle" you want to introduce, and can also be used to "hide" parts of text until you are ready to reveal them.

Plus consider adding movie clips to demonstrate, say, an item on body language or communication, or conducting a disciplinary.

Finally, don't forget to use the auditory channels. Screeches, soft breezes or hammer noises can illustrate, reiterate and lift your presentation. And sound bites and music to play in (and out) your audience are always appreciated.

Tip. Always have your first title slide repeated as the last slide of your presentation. Then you avoid that deathly black screen and the words "end of slide show, click to exit". Not very professional—or creative!

Let's not have any Death by Powerpoint in the future!

Brainteaser (8)

This issue's poser is a quick legal quiz—see how many you can answer correctly:

1. What does 'ultra vires' mean?
2. 75 years ago something decomposing in a ginger beer bottle started the law of liability for negligence. What was decomposing?
3. What does someone mean when they say something can't be commented on because it's 'sub judice'?
4. What is the meaning of 'caveat emptor'?
5. How much in damages did Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas eventually win in the 'Hello' case?

(Answers at the foot of page 2.)

If you would like to request course literature, discuss any of our services or request an invitation to an event please contact us:

Encouraging Creativity

By Des Whitehorn

Technology is changing the way we work. It's also changing our language! Not so many years ago blackberries were those sweet, if messy, fruits we ate more of than we picked on a late summer's day. A dragon was a mythical creature, and the BigHand – well, that was all to do with learning to tell the time! Will it ever stop? The answer is probably not.

And so we too must not stop. We must take the opportunity to encourage our staff – secretarial and support in particular - to think ahead and be more creative in their working practices. Otherwise we run the risk of staff who firefight at best, or are left behind. The impact of all this new technology is to increase the speed at which things happen, and ostensibly, to increase levels of productivity while making life easier. But for whom?

This change in technology and the way we now work has meant that many members of support are pretty confused and uncertain about their future, preferring only to think in terms of IT development and skills, rather than thinking creatively about the future: their role, new responsibilities and the positive impact and freedoms that technology can bring. Many support staff simply see their days being numbered, as more and more technology is invented which can automate and even replace parts of their job.

So, it is important that staff are encouraged to think creatively about their future and are equipped with the right skills to manage the process. Otherwise we may well find ourselves with a skills and manpower shortage.



Because digital dictation and speech recognition currently have wireless capability, we have the real possibility of future "hot" managers (no cheeky thoughts!) and VAs.

Let me explain: hot managers are similar to hot desks: people with no fixed abode and no need to come into a fixed office. They work on what's necessary or given; communicating and working through technology. Equally they have no allocated member of support. So support would have "hot" managers, necessarily being multi-skilled to be able to support them.

And this leads to the real possibility of more VAs – Virtual Assistants. If a "hot" manager can choose his PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) then why not his VA? There are many already, all well equipped with technology and able to provide excellent support from anywhere – a park bench, the

local coffee shop, even abroad.

There is little point in making fee earners and managers more productive unless firms also consider the role of support. What skills will they need? How can you create more adaptable staff? What should they be doing more of? What should they be doing differently? What knowledge will they need?

And probably the best way to do this is to encourage their creativity and involve them in the process. They need to be encouraged to think ahead, to constantly challenge historical and time consuming processes, to plan their futures and to learn new skills as well as add to existing ones, so that they can take more responsibility for their future employability.

If you are looking to the future, contact us to see how we can help you.

Oh Dear!

What do people fear most? At the top of the list is death, the fear of which is necrophobia. Second, apparently, is the fear of failure, which is called korrhaphiophobia. After reading this you may have developed a fear of words! (logophobia.) Or perhaps you developed a fear of a particular word or name, which is onomatophobia. And if you handled the short words well, but developed a fear of long words, look away now. In that case you suffer from hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliohobia. No kidding.

You are what you eat...

According to research by Office Angels, posh nosh equals office success, with almost half

of all office employees (48%) agreeing that what's in your lunchbox sends out powerful signals about your workplace ambitions. Top of the status symbol lunch choices are sushi and sashimi followed by organic salads and superfoods like blueberries. 25% say wraps with exotic fillings are the carb of choice while a traditional egg and cress sandwich scores "nil points" in the status symbol stakes. And if you want to make sure you stay firmly at the bottom of the career ladder, opt for burgers and fries at lunchtime. And eat them at your desk.

Next issue

The leading article will be "Who Done That?" an article on business writing and grammar by Judith Di-Castri.

No 11 in our series of top tips for trainers. Next issue: "Injecting some Charisma into your sessions".

Don't Forget...

If you have a colleague who would like to receive our newsletters, send their email address to us at info@zee-associates.co.uk

If you missed the previous issues of our newsletter, they can be viewed on the News and Events pages at www.zee-associates.co.uk



BRAINTEASER (8) ANSWERS: (1) Without authority; (2) A snail; (3) It's still before the court; (4) Let the buyer beware; (5) £14,600