

2006 - The Year In Focus

Continuing Professional Development

This year, we've continued to take our own professional and personal development very seriously, although we do strive to make it fun too! With that in mind, Diane attended the two day Chartered Management Institute's second National Convention in Leeds in early October. The theme of Expanding Horizons: management for the future, provided some interesting and challenging presentations and workshops, but the best (in fun terms) came last, with the Drum Jam workshop. Two dozen delegates spent an exhilarating hour learning how to develop individual skills in a team environment, working on African drums and other instruments.

Throughout the year, Mike has been attending the Director's Certification programme run by the Institute of Directors. In October he faced the self-imposed challenge of sitting for the optional exam. He was delighted when the results arrived, to find he had been awarded the coveted Diploma. And its value? Mike has found that the added focus it has generated for him has been invaluable in undertaking the role of Chairman of the Audit Committee, part of his non-executive directorship duties.

In September Diane was sworn in as a new Magistrate on the North Staffordshire Bench. She now has to complete the intensive initial training programme, prior to being assigned a Mentor and sitting as a Justice of the Peace from the New Year.

MMBI

The "Motivating Merseyside Businesses to Innovate" programme is designed to facilitate the application of new technology to stimulate the development of local businesses, with support from the two universities in Liverpool. During the summer Mike worked with four such businesses, evaluating new ideas and supporting their development. These businesses are involved in monitoring, spectroscopy, manufacturing and biosciences.



3rd Stream — technology Reach Out from universities

Mike has always been interested in technology, enjoying the challenge of obtaining that vital first order; generally the most difficult as there are no supporting references. Working with the University of Liverpool he has successfully set up two demonstrators in the Semantic Web, the next generation of web searching that embeds intelligence in both the data and the search engine to produce much shorter, more accurately focused search results. The next step is to develop a strategic plan to take the technology forward.

Wide Range of Workshops

During the first half of 2007, Diane is planning workshops for diverse audiences. The first, scheduled for 11th January to the Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston Business Forum, is entitled "New Year — New Ambitions", and will focus on the benefits of setting clear and achievable goals for personal and business success.

On 1st February, Diane will be reviewing the importance of planning for Business Continuity. "So will the lights stay on in YOUR business?" is for the Chester and Clywd branch of the

Chartered Management Institute.

Last year we reported that Diane had presented an inspirational workshop for AS level Maths and Science students at South Cheshire College. The plan is to give a similar presentation again in summer 2007. Do contact Diane if you feel that any of these workshops could be adapted for presenting in your environment.





MPINGO Update

Last year we mentioned a new charitable activity. Mike as Chair of Environment Africa Trust (EAT) has now successfully established the collaboration with Mpingo Conservation Project (MCP), an NGO in Tanzania, which aims to conserve endangered forest habitats in East Africa by promoting sustainable and socially equitable harvesting of valuable timber stocks, and with a particular focus on Mpingo, the African Blackwood tree, which is used to make clarinets and oboes. MCP had its 10th birthday party at Emmanuel College late in 2005, celebrating that auspicious moment when the Cambridge University Expeditions Committee approved the proposal from Steve Ball and fellow expeditionaries to go to Tanzania. Wise Counsel (from Guy Norton, now an EAT Trustee) advised them to establish a data baseline. Successive expeditions developed the research, culminating in the programme that is now facilitating forest management by rural communities so that, with powers devolved from the national government, they can receive royalties for the trees and police illegal logging. Currently funded by the Darwin Initiative, EAT is working with MCP to obtain new funding to take the project beyond Spring 2008. EAT welcomes hearing from anyone, particularly with legal and HR experience, interested in becoming a Trustee as we work towards strengthening the governance model.

www.environmentafricatrust.org.uk

www.mpingoconservation.org

Words of Wisdom

"A dangerous place from which to view the world is your desk."

Cath Keers, Customer Director at O2

"Cultivate those who can teach you."

Israel Zangwill

"When your dreams turn to dust, vacuum."

Bishop Desmond Tutu



Technical Consultancy —

Safety, Risk & Environmental

This last year has seen growth in Haztech's business. This consultancy deploys an unusual business model, which is attracting both interesting assignments and good people to undertake the work, being very competitive. The increasingly complex legislative regime being imposed upon businesses, coupled with reductions in corporate resources, makes companies more reliant upon partnering with firms of technical specialists. Some of these specialists are turning to Haztech for their route to market as their traditional employment disappears.

Turning Words into Numbers

Whilst this might seem a bit far-fetched, Human Factors Analysts Ltd in Glasgow does just that. Taking natural human discourse, being the words people use (text or spoken) HFAL creates a taxonomy in context to abstract the human factors that underlie the activity. By applying statistical analysis they are able to quantify the data, making hidden connections and producing trends. The source is either an existing reporting regime, such as incidents, or a confidential source such as a focus group or confidential line. Originally used in safety, the methodology now has other applications, including consumer marketing.

Please contact us with your feedback!

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Why Business Mentoring?

Diane provides a focused one-to-one Business Mentoring service to people in key roles in a wide range of industries and organisations. But why should anyone want a mentor to support them in leading their business? An independent mentor will challenge in a positive and supportive way, acting straightforwardly to enable the client to develop their own insights.

One satisfied client said of Diane's service, "I believe every person in business who has ambitions to be really successful should have a business mentor. I have found our meetings invaluable. It is so useful to speak with someone with business acumen and who is outside of my business to act as a 'sounding board' for my ideas, and help me formulate and 'tweak' my plans."