

irm SIG *People, Communication* NEWSLETTER No 45
and Behaviour July 2009 and:
Bumper Summer Issue

The content is extended to include all outstanding material from the current research period as this will be the last issue before the Summer Holiday recess and the final one in the present, partly informal style.

1 of 3- Current News

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Appendix 1 attached

2 of 3 - People's personas - "nature and nurture"

Extending an interesting concept brought up at the meeting reported in issue no 43 under the title of "Communication" given

Appendix 2 attached

3 of 3 - Decision making and the High Street - the Summer Feature

A recent look at high street prices revealed some bargains that had far reaching implications for the economy and probably

Appendix 3 attached

And now for something different

"Jobsworth" regulations are the subject of your editor's wrath this month. I visited a small town in central England recently

Final Appendix attached

Thoughts of the month

1) "The one thing in life that is certain is change".

Remember, as "Grimer" said in our last issue, it's better to be proactive than to have to become reactive.

2) "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life"

Attributed to Dr. Johnson, 1709 – 1784 by the Chartered Insurance Institute, Lloyds and others in a recent circular regarding the new Lloyd's and London Market Introduction Test (LLMIT). Long live the London financial market – Ed.

I would like to thank all of you who have contributed over the past three and a half years to this publication and supported Michael Ocock and I in running the SIG during the first phase of it's life cycle.

Back in the Autumn with a NEWSLETTER in the sparking new and concise format. This will include the Boxes and Web links agreed at the recent AGM and will be directly interactive with the build up of the fourth /final part of the Guide – *Enabling*.

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Appendices

1 of 3 - Current News

Ongoing development of the Guide themes of communication and liaison with other professionals, takes us into the apparently little chartered area of Public Relations. This is the other face of *Communication* from a risk management perspective. Whilst larger organisations will have their own experts in the field, smaller ones will not. Either way there is the multi-dimensional aspect of risk to be considered.

There are two actual professional bodies that come to mind in this expert area: the Chartered Institute of Public Relations in the UK with some 9000 members who run a diploma course which includes a subject on "Disaster communication". Also, it appears that the US Institute of Public Relations may hold some sway in the UK, with evidence of their qualifications actually being requested by at least one UK employer in the NHS sector.

Unfortunately, neither organisation appears to have a risk management SIG or similar but I have made a request to the CIPR advising that a delegate from them in this SIG would be very welcome. Time will tell if they will respond.

Box

Members should consider if there is a Public Relations or Communications high manager within an organisation, there could be an even larger fragmentation of responsibility for risk management - but conversely, another candidate for membership of any risk committee or risk champions' group.

In fact the "cluster" of risk interested groups in an organisation will vary from one organisation to another. Public Relations and Communication Departments will figure in some along with Risk Management and Internal Audit. However, the short term objectives of our SIG must still be on building up knowledge on working step by step with Human Resources - this is the ground breaking area that is paramount.

However, anyone requiring more information on PR aspects can visit the following Websites:

www.cipr.co.uk (UK) and www.instituteforpr.org (USA)

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And to conclude this feature on current news: our Chair, Pauline Bird, has recently had a meeting regarding the future of the SIG with the **irm** and it is hoped to be able to bring members news of developments via e-mail when these are formalized.

2 of 3 - People's personas - "nature and nurture"

Extending an interesting concept brought up at the meeting reported in issue no 43 under the title of "Communication" given by the Innovation, Value Added and Opportunity SIG, was a simple test in two parts:

1) "Management Style Assessment" (based on Corporate Lifecycles Model) which was an EITHER/OR answers format to 36 questions shown by putting an X one side for the "either" or the other for the "or".

2) This was followed by a second page; "Your Management Style" where the number of "Xs" scored in each category from the answers to the previous page were transcribed onto a four quartered drawing - the Xs to be positioned along diagonal lines with numeric values lowest in the centre of the page and highest (18 as half of the 36Qs) in the corners. The sheet was split into the equal quarters, each having a name for the different categories: *Producer, Integrator, Entrepreneur* and *Administrator*.

Candidates were then asked to join up the Xs to produce a shape on the drawing showing their style within the scope of the four corner headers. Now, your editor has always had a mis-trust of EITHER/OR questions, as often both are in fact correct, or at least correct in part. It's a bit like being cross-examined by a hostile advocate where you have to give a yes or no answer and both "yes" without qualification and "no" without qualification actually cause you to commit perjury!

Anyway, in the spirit of the thing I completed the Qs on what I perceived was my *nature* as I felt it had been when I started out in the insurance industry as a clerk in 1961 (an apt job description, wouldn't be called that now though!) - the end result was a diamond shaped pic on the axis *Producer / Administrator* and notably much nearer to Administrator. The other dimension was well out towards Integrator, but with hardly any Entrepreneurial skills at all - well I was only a gash clerk after all.

Then I re-did the test based on my present judgement *nature and 48 years of nurture* and ignored the EITHER/OR rule and put part, say 60%, on one side and 40% on the other (or 70/30 and so on). The important point was that I ignored the strict fixed choice and gave completely true answers!

This time the pic produced almost a central parallelogram, indicating equality of broad based characteristics. However, it was still very slightly squashed onto the *Producer / Administrator* axis but with equal distance between the two. The *Integrator / Entrepreneurial* skills axis was greatly altered - exactly equal now, but both had lower scores than the Producer and Administrator results, I suppose it's hard to get away from what you basically are!

Editorial view

I would argue there is massive scope for development of this theme. You could ask all staff to undertake the test "both ways" and see how their skills had already developed to skew the person away from their start out (*nature*) point. There would be a number of variables for future career planning and training which could be effectively discussed with each candidate.

The SIG is grateful to Marion Brown for providing the original test paperwork.

A recent look at high street prices revealed some bargains that had far reaching implications for the economy and probably arose out of bad decisions in the first place by others.

Your editor recently visited a "99p shop" (a pound shop in hard times?). I made two purchases: an AA road atlas marked at £6.99 but available at other cut price outlets for about £3.50 and a small metal trowel with hard plastic handle for extracting weeds from my crazy paving, again available at *Wilkinsons* and similar places for about £3.50. A *wopping* genuine saving of about 70%. But this started to make me wonder:

The "AA road atlas 2009" was marked on the receipt as a "promotion" (?loss leader) but was no doubt only available at such a low price as the publishers had overproduced and they would probably have otherwise gone for pulping. If *Pension Funds* have shares in the publishing company, some poor retirees' non-final-salary income is going to drop to cover this error in decision making.

The trowel was no doubt produced in an undisclosed fourth world country (assuming the third world ones are in the more expensive shops) by someone working in appalling conditions for perhaps 14 hours a day and the consignment would have come in any "flag of convenience" ship that had spare hold (or deck) space and the sailors would also be working in appalling conditions.

I felt so guilty about these purchases, that I was actually mumbling to myself the idea for this article as I walked home and a nice lady came up and asked if I was feeling all right.

And now for something different

"Jobsworth" regulations are the subject of your editor's wrath this month. I visited a small town in central England recently, after an interlude of about 15 years. Needless to say the biggest change was the incorporation of bus lanes and similar traffic updating - a new bypass had cut through some rather attractive farm land, a snake of tarmac and concrete adjacent to a line of shining electricity pylons winding its way on to the next destination, drivers no doubt little aware of the process of development decision making.

I remembered that this route had always been a problem at rush hour and indeed something had to be done. Part of the exit from the town had been bypassed a few years ago, now the bypass had been bypassed! But oh dear oh dear, still a single carriageway new road and with some very suspect junction design of the sort that tend to cause undue stress and encouraging reckless overtaking in the few moments possible- in your Editor's view one (very expensive) suspect scenario had replaced another. I would imagine that part of the problem is that officialdom looks at each segment of the plan in accordance with the regulations that apply, the need for dual carriageways depending on the mean number of vehicles per hour or something similar.

Many of you will recall the case of the man who was sent to prison for causing the death of many train passengers due to falling asleep at the wheel whilst driving on a motorway, his four wheel drive vehicle which was towing a car on a trailer plunging

down an embankment into the path of the train – according to the media he was held entirely to blame by the court – but the reason his vehicle was not contained within the motorway was that the whilst the rather short steel *Armco* barrier that protected the railway cutting was of regulation length, it only covered about half the gap!

Make no mistake, what he did was very wrong, but the same thing would have happened if he had an unforeseen blowout due to a latent manufacturer's defect in an apparently good tyre with adequate tread depth. Many children could tell you that a car will travel downhill on wet grass for a huge distance and the barrier simply wasn't long enough – surely anyone can see that, but not apparently our Authorities!

Another case that comes to mind is a recent example of fire regulations that in your editor's view got out of hand: A house was built with a bathroom on a side wall about a meter from the next door boundary. In view of the "spreading fire risk" (even though the next door house did not extend to that area) the Local Authority ordered that a two light width window with one opening lower casement was to be replaced with a narrower one light window so that it required a smaller aperture in the wall, hence there was a fixed lower casement in a standard window meaning that someone could now not climb out if trapped by fire – you see my point.

I would argue that this is a *people* risk - those in power should consider the knock on effect of enforcing strict general regulations in **all** circumstances, regardless of individual situations. The problem no doubt starts with the Statutory Instrument drafters in Whitehall (for UK readers) – greater care on their part with more considered wordings would allow regulations to be adapted in the greater good when required by responsible decision makers.