

BMTFedNewsletter

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Alasdair Cathcart, President of Bechtel Power speaking at the Chicago BMT Conference, June 14th

June 13th & 14th 2012 Reaching Results BMT Leadership Conference – ‘Simplicity in Leadership’



Behavioural Management Techniques (BMT) is a blend of applied behavioural science tools and project management skills. BMT is used to improve business and safety performance.

Making Training Stick

by John Austin PhD

Training is not the solution you're looking for, it's the consequences that really make the difference. This might seem a counter-intuitive statement coming from someone who teaches courses in behavioral science for a living!

Our BMT course is designed to get behavior started. It's simple: If you show up and you do the work inside and outside of the course, you learn enough behavioral science to make improvements at work and at home. However in general, humans rely far too much on knowledge and knowing (i.e., training) and not enough on what needs to be done afterward to support its application at work.

Remember that antecedents drive about 20% of behavior and consequences drive about 80%? Training, on the whole, is an antecedent. This is not unique to our BMT courses, it's a problem in all courses and workshops. The real learning happens when you go back and try to apply the training. Most studies show that without coaching, it's difficult to get people to use what they learn in training.

So, what can you do after a training course, to support its application on the job? The simple answer is to ask leaders in the business to talk to their people about it on a weekly basis. Think of the things that 'stick' in your business – they probably all have people who doggedly bring them up at every turn. Below, are some simple steps for you to try:

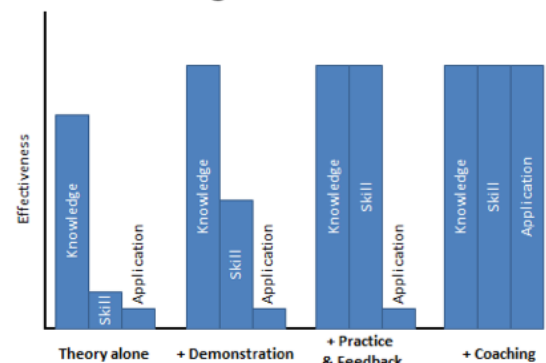
Step 1. Spend a few minutes each week asking your direct reports what they are doing to apply the concepts learned in the training. Step 2. After getting this base behavior going steadily, spend some time encouraging people to find and fix frustrations at work. Doing this is as simple as asking people what frustrates them, fixing some of those things, and feeding data on the improvements back to people to confirm that the solution made things better.

Step 3. Once you've got this going, you can encourage people to take on a project of their own and make improvements. You can spend some time with individuals who find an improvement project, to help them make it relevant to the work, data-based, and simple.

These steps correspond to the coaching model that we use, and it promotes often tough behavior change via taking on simple steps one at a time. In behavioral science, we call it shaping.

Remember, if you're not reinforcing behavior, you're punishing it.

Training Outcomes



Based on Showers (1988) Student achievement through staff development.

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Catch 22

by Rachel Edwards

At the BMT Leadership conference this month, Dr. Carl Hughes introduced us to the concept of clean and dirty pain; clean pain is the painful events we experience (emotional or physical) that we can't avoid, they just happen in the course of our days. Dirty pain describes when we re-live these events again and again, recalling the painful feelings. Dr. Hughes made the point that we can't control clean pain, but we can control dirty pain, and asked us to reflect on how much time we spend re-living painful memories.

The conference is a busy time; lots of energy and attention is spent making sure everything goes according to plan. Just like any important event at home or work, we were concerned with making the most of the opportunity and mitigating any hiccups – our attention was on planning it so well that we could enjoy the day. In effect, we were making sure we didn't experience any delays – anything that took us off piste and distracted our attention.

We all have stuff that we need to organise day to day; meetings, holidays, train tickets, time to work on a specific project – things that are affected by the cost of delay. Sometimes these things can feel like a bunch of stuff that's too time consuming to deal with right now, but sit in our 'to do' pile casting a nagging shadow. Dirty pain occurs every time we think about the list of things we need to get done, but are avoiding because they're too much effort, too hard, too boring, too time consuming. The rub though, is that delays in decisions bake in uncertainty, thereby making the dirty pain last much longer, and that's called catch 22.



A selection of photos from our recent 2012 BMT Conference in Manchester. Missed the UK conference? [Click here for Chicago.](#)

Yes, I can manage myself out of a paper bag, I really can!

by Howard Lees

This is a familiar theme I'm sure, it feels like *déjà vu* but at the end of our recent conference there was a steady stream of sinners filing out of the room committing to change their baffling bad habits regarding their communication lapses and failing on their promises. It's environment that drives behaviour and whether you are the creator of the environment or a victim of it you are still part of it and in a big way.

The conference theme was 'simplicity in leadership' and comprised a number of presentations orbiting this theme. Suitably qualified and competent pleasant people holding senior positions in organisations do understandably react badly when someone delivers tough feedback. Having your integrity questioned regarding your broken promises is tough but it doesn't happen enough, not nearly enough. Why does this happen? It's behavioural debt, it's just too easy in the moment to say "I'll do that", "I'll be there", "I'll attend that meeting". The credits are all experienced in the moment and become debt which either will or will not be paid off in the future by the obligation being met or not.

Your reputation is the cumulative effect of these moments, you are either regarded as someone with integrity or you are not. Of course it's very easy to live in a constant state of comfortable delusion and believe you are popular & have rock solid integrity. One of the quotes from the conference was *"unless you have data to the contrary, the only modest position you can take is that you are a nightmare to work for"*. I would suggest it's worth exploring, we are none of us saints, we are all in debt in some way.