

Managing workplace relationships

Presented by Bill Cossey
Saturday - 9.45am-10.30am

(1) In his presentation, Bill Cossey talked about the challenges facing professionals as they move into management roles. He emphasized that remaining a professional was a noble career choice, that the roles are very different and need different skills. Often the most important aspect of being a professional is the attention to detail; managers often have to leave this behind – as managers generally will not be able to stay as abreast of the detail as the professionals for whom they are responsible.

(2) Bill discussed the work of Dr. W. Edwards Deming, the founder of the quality movement and the resultant emphasis on continuing improvement. He talked about Deming's view that 80% of barriers to good performance are in "the system" of an organization and only 20% are with the people. Further, the role of managers is to understand – by listening to their people – what those barriers are and to work to remove or lessen the barriers.

(3) Bill talked about the need for managers to balance their time in responding to pressures on them from above/below/sideways.

(4) The power of "yes if" – instead of "no" as a management response was emphasized particularly to requests from employees for improvements in the workplace.

(5) Bill talked about Generational difference and emphasized the work of Hugh Mackay, Bernard Salt and Mark McCrindle

(6) Finally, Bill gave some day-to-day hints

- People want to know that they are important to an organization and that their work is important to the work of the organization. Good managers do this
- Practise active calmness rather than high hype. Graham Winter's work was acknowledged
- Practise Stephen Covey's first "habit" of highly effective people i.e. only worry about those things over which you can have an influence
- Encourage humour. As de Bono says " No lateral thinking occurs in the absence of humour". Also, "You don't need to be sombre to be serious"

Celebrate success:

- Treat every employee as a volunteer and use the words "please" and "thank you" as often as you can
- Don't take yourself too seriously and be willing to say "I don't know the answer but I will find out".