

h CORRESPONDENT

AUTUMN 2006

THE CLIENT UPDATE FROM HARBINSON MULHOLLAND

Going for Gold

I am sure at some stage in your life you have been in a competitive sporting race, like the annual school sports day or a sponsored charity run.

When the race starts, your goal may be to get to the finishing line first and to claim gold, or you may just be content on finishing the race. However, as soon as the crowd begin to chant and cheer, you lose your focus and forget about where you are and why you are running the race. Towards the end of the race as your legs start to tire, the aching pain intensifies in your side and your lungs gasp for air, you may start to lose sight of your goal. Competitors may pass you but as long as you never give up and re focus your mind, you will reach the finishing line.

“Distractions may knock you off your path”

Your life is like this. Stop for a moment and think about it. You start out with a finishing point (where you want to end up) in mind, but distractions or events may knock you off path. The key is to train your brain to steer itself back

towards that finishing line and by doing this you ultimately maximise your chances of ending up there!

“Run with your aim in mind and go for gold!”

Once you are clear on what you want your business to look like in five or ten years time, assess your current situation and compile an action plan of how you are going to get there by setting short-term, medium-term and long-term goals. Keep in mind that you will come across obstacles that will steer you off course but by learning to steer back on the right path you will reach your ultimate goal, the finishing line.

Research has shown that people and businesses who are successful at achieving their goals and aims, are those who have a clear picture of what they want to achieve and who continuously monitor their goals and keep correcting themselves until they get there.

I ask you, have you a clear vision of your goals? If so, do you monitor them on a regular basis and do you correct

yourself if you become distracted? Do you want to be able to train yourself to do this?

Then why not discover for yourself how you can do this and reach your finishing line more effectively by taking 60 minutes out of your busy schedule to experience the business energiser!

The business energiser is a free one hour session carried out by one of Harbinson Mulholland's trained facilitators that will enable you to review for yourself your current business situation and create a re-energised plan for the future.

For more information on the business energiser or to book your free one hour consultation contact Wendy McCulla or John Horan on 028 9044 5100 today, or email:

wmcculla@harbinson-mulholland.com or jhoran@harbinson-mulholland.com

Coaching - Delivering a Winning Performance

Once a technique confined mainly to sport, coaching is becoming increasingly acknowledged in the business world as a means of considerably enhancing employee performance.

The Foundations of Coaching Today

The role of the sports coach is to stretch the individual, in both their physical and mental strength, to improve their performance and 'raise their game'. Nearly thirty years ago, Timothy Gallwey wrote a book which would change the face of coaching forever. 'The Inner Game of Tennis' described the coach's role as working with the tennis player to overcome their doubts and negative thoughts about their ability to perform well. He said "the opponent within one's own head is more formidable than the one the other side of the net".

It is now widely acknowledged that what goes on in the athlete's head is just as important as their physical fitness to achieve success. Self belief and a positive mental attitude are often what set the gold medallist apart from the competition.

So how can Coaching work in Business?

Gallwey defines the essence of coaching as "unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them".

When we apply this definition to the world of work, it is clear how coaching can have a hugely positive effect on employee performance. Coaching employees empowers them to find their own solutions to issues in their job. It also helps them to focus and prioritise in today's frantic pace of life. Thirdly, it increases their self confidence and self belief in their ability to be effective in their role.

Coaching is extremely powerful because it is tailor-made to suit the needs of the individual. Training courses provide a useful foundation, but any new skills or behaviours which have been learnt can often be lost on return to the workplace. The individual comes back to work brimming with new ideas about how they are going to change or improve, only to find themselves slipping back to their old ways as time passes and work pressures continue. By complementing the training with some individual coaching, businesses can ensure that these newly learnt skills and behaviours will have a lasting improvement on that individual's performance at work.

"We recently invested in a management development programme. This was devised by Harbinson Mulholland

and consisted of workshops and one-to-one coaching. The individual coaching sessions made this a very valuable investment for our company - managers were able to discuss challenges and opportunities specific to their own role and we have seen a marked improvement in the levels of confidence and performance of each manager. The Programme has proven to be such a success that we are now planning to run it again for our next set of managers".

**Colin Jeffrey, Finance Manager,
The Wilson Group**

So who does the Coaching?

A coach can be brought in from outside the business (this can be good if the employee would benefit from a different perspective or "fresh pair of eyes"). It is important that the conversations between the external coach and the employee remain confidential to ensure the employee feels they can be totally open about any work issues or development needs.

"Harbinson Mulholland now provides a coaching function to key staff within the business, assisting in implementing our Action Plan for the coming year (and beyond). This coaching enhances the performance of

these key staff as they drive the growth of our business".

**Stuart McLean, Managing Partner,
Level Seven**

However, coaching can, and should, become simply a way of managing employees on a day-to-day basis. Employees who receive support from their manager to develop their own ideas about how they complete their work (and how they resolve any issues along the way) will feel more valued, and will therefore be more motivated to perform.

Coaching is about supporting your employees and helping them grow in self confidence and in their ability to perform at a higher level. Managers who coach their employees on an ongoing basis can enjoy watching those employees develop the skills and confidence to achieve high levels of success.

Need more information?

If you want to discuss coaching for yourself, or would like to find out more about how to coach your staff to maximise their potential, please contact Wendy McCulla on 028 9044 5100 or email wmcculla@harbinson-mulholland.com



**Review Your Current Business Position
& Create a Re-energised
Plan for Your Future
in just 60 minutes!**

*Are you feeling stressed out when it comes to your business?
Would you like to start planning rather than reacting?*

Book a FREE Business Energiser session with us today.

You will focus on the following key areas of your business:

- Key success drivers for your business
- Building financial independence
- Creating value
- Goal-setting and decision making
- Work /life balance

Call **028 9044 5100** and speak to John Horan or Wendy McCulla or email info@harbinson-mulholland.com for more information.

Harbinson Mulholland is registered to carry on audit work and regulated for a range of investment business activities by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland

Top Ten Tips to Improve Your Marketing

“I know I should be doing more marketing, but I had an ad in the paper last year and I didn’t get anything from it.”

Most business owners “do marketing”. However, many business owners like the one quoted above just go through the motions, placing one-off adverts, a piece of PR in the local newspaper every now and again and then wonder if any of it actually worked.

If you do not really understand how it works or if it is working, you are less likely to spend money on it...seeing it as a cost to the business, rather than seeing it for what it really is...an investment!

In order to show you how to make the most of your marketing activities and to find out what’s working and what’s not...here are a few tips to get you started when carrying out your marketing activities.

1. Advertising

TIP! Include an incentive to action in your advert i.e. discount, free trial offer and a deadline to action.

2. Direct Marketing

TIP! Test your mailings on a small scale. Tweak headlines, copy, graphics and incentives to see what works best for you. Also, ensure you have contact names. No-one reads mail addressed to the ‘Managing Director’. Personalise!

3. PR

TIP! Ensure your press release will be of interest to your target audience by putting a local spin on it or using a current hot topic as your headline. NOTE: Ensure it is relevant to your story!

4. Event Management

TIP! Get full contact details of all your attendees by having a prize draw where by entry is putting their business card into the draw. You have a ready made list of contacts for your database.

N.B. To comply with the Data Protection Act, you must get their permission to contact them.

5. Referrals Programme

TIP! Send referrers a thank you card. It will encourage repeat referrals and word of mouth marketing.

6. Client Satisfaction Survey

TIP! Advertise your survey results internally and externally to motivate staff and prospects alike.

7. Corporate Brochure

TIP! Include customer testimonials on your corporate brochure as well as on other promotional literature.

8. Newsletter

TIP! Send an extra copy of your newsletter to recipients and ask them to pass it on to someone they think might find it of interest.

9. Website

TIP! Ensure it is user-friendly and easy to navigate. Incentivise registration and subscription to e-zines.

10. Sales

TIP! Set up a referrals/sales spreadsheet. RECORD all enquiries, sources of enquiries and conversion to a paying client. Only by measuring where your enquiries and new customers are coming from, will you find out what marketing is working and what marketing is not.



Susan Wilson, Marketing Consultant

Remember, you will benefit from being consistent in your marketing activity and communicating regularly with existing and prospective customers.

A reliable marketing plan, striking promotional materials and an integrated marketing approach will lead to better brand awareness, more sales, and a better bottom line for your business.

If you would like to find out more about how you can make the most of your marketing activities and find out what’s working and what’s not, contact Susan Wilson today on 028 9044 5100 or email swilson@harbinson-mulholland.com



IHT LOOKS SET TO HIT MILLIONS OF HOMEOWNERS!

Increases in the price of housing means that one in five house owners may be liable to pay Inheritance Tax by 2020 according to new research by Halifax.

An estimated 1.5m homes are currently valued at more than the current inheritance tax threshold of £285,000 and will be subject to inheritance tax of 40%. As the average value of a house in Northern Ireland is predicted to rocket again by a staggering 30% within the next 12 months, even more homeowners in the Province may be hit in the future.

When you die, Inheritance Tax (IHT) is calculated at a rate of 40% on so much of your estate as exceeds the tax threshold - so anything above £285,000 (2006/07) will be taxed at that rate.

Your estate includes everything you own including your house, your car, stocks and

shares, savings, investments, and jewellery. Certain gifts are completely exempt from inheritance tax and other larger gifts become exempt if you survive for 7 years. If you make use of these gifts each tax year, you can significantly reduce your IHT bill. Other ways of minimising the impact of IHT might include creating a trust and, very importantly, making a valid will.

The Government is expected to receive £3.6 bn this year as a result of IHT, already collecting a record £1.7bn in the first half of 2006.

Act now and you can minimise the impact of Inheritance Tax and help protect your loved ones’ financial future.

Contact Brendan McGuckin on 028 9044 5100 or email: bmcguckin@harbinson-mulholland.com to help you minimise the IHT burden!



Brendan McGuckin, Partner

Tax Tips For You

Reclaim VAT on mileage rates

Businesses may reclaim input VAT on the fuel element of mileage rates paid to employees who use their own car for business purposes or use a company car for business journeys, provided an invoice is retained for the purchase of the fuel. Rather than calculate the fuel element of the mileage rate, H M Revenue & Customs issue advisory rates which can be used as the basis for reclaiming VAT. H M Revenue & Customs have revised their advisory rates to reflect the increased cost of road fuel. The rates applying from 1 July 2006 are as follows.

Engine Size	Petrol	Diesel	LPG
1,400cc or less	11p	10p	7p
1,401cc - 2,000cc	13p	10p	8p
Over 2,000cc	18p	14p	11p

Businesses can therefore reclaim 7/47 of the above figures for each business mile reimbursed to employees.

UK real estate investment trusts

People considering property investment may wish to consider a new form of property investment that will be available from 1 January 2007. Where a company or group qualifies and elects to be subject to the rules for UK real estate trusts, the company or group will be exempt from corporation tax on its rental profits and also on its chargeable gains on the disposal of investment properties. Distributions to shareholders by the company out of rental property income or gains will be treated as UK property income paid net of 22% basic rate income tax rather than as dividends.

For existing property investment companies, a 2% charge will be imposed on the market value of the properties if they elect to be subject to the special rules. There are a number of conditions to be complied with to fall within the regime. For example, the company must be listed on a recognised stock exchange, no one investor may control more than 10% of the company and the company must distribute at least 90% of its tax exempt profits each year.

Claim relief for shares with negligible value

If you have invested in company shares and the business has failed, you may be able to make a claim that the shares have a negligible value and therefore generate a capital loss without actually disposing of the shares. The capital loss could then be offset against any other capital gains arising in the same tax year or carried forward for offset against future capital gains. If you originally subscribed for shares in an unlisted trading company, the loss generated may be able to be treated as an income tax loss rather than a capital loss. The income tax loss could then be offset against all other taxable income in the current tax year or carried back against all other income of the previous year.

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