

Poppyfish

people development

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2020 PORTFOLIO

LET'S GO FURTHER TOGETHER

A new view?

If you want a new perspective then all you have to do is change the lens.

2020 is changing the lens for many of us, challenging the way we live and work, giving us a new perspective and shifting our priorities. For some of us, these changes will be a fundamental and complete change of lens, whilst for others the changes have been less life changing, but still acute, like having to learn the discipline of remote working or keeping two metres apart whilst queuing to get into the supermarket. And the fact that we've faced them together has created new bonds.

Reflecting on these changes, and how they have affected us, both individually and collectively, is a strong platform for learning and development. Talking about how the change of lens has impacted us and the organisations that we work in is both good for us and those around us. It helps us to grow again. Honest dialogue promotes meaningful outcomes.

As the world around us starts to return to work our new lens will allow us to view the way that we work in a different way. This is the time to do the right thing, to seek a new vision.

Let's do it together.

Nick Skinner
Director

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We focus on you, your team and your business

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Our work is targeted at three levels: Individual, Team and Organisational.

For the **individual**, we support development through 1-to-1 coaching & developing talent. We upskill people to give them the confidence to be at their best. Much of our work is based around addressing specific training needs such as developing leadership and delegation skills, promoting emotional intelligence or a focus on behavioural change.

For **teams** we can create engagement and target team performance through facilitated workshops, training and learning events that bring people together. This same approach can be used across multiple teams to improve cross team working and prevent 'silo' thinking.

At an **organisational** level, we offer strategic insight to achieve systemic change and can offer board level coaching, leadership team workshops and facilitated away days. We can support wellbeing programmes and have designed organisation wide initiatives around culture, change and learning.

FROM BOTTOM TO TOP

We pride ourselves on working across the hierarchy, from the most junior teams to the most senior Director, and from PhD students and even professors across to some of the most poorly qualified workers in manual industries. The size of organisation is irrelevant, what matters is the individual desire to improve.

Some areas of recent work include:

Leadership Team Coaching
Facilitated Workshops & Focus Groups
Change Management
Training & Skills Development
Executive Coaching
Strategy Away Days
Safety Leadership
Culture Change
Strategy Wargames
Decision Making Exercises
Managing Performance
Hi-Potential Programmes
Wellbeing
Career Counselling
PhD Commercial Skills
Recruitment, Induction and Onboarding

We work to develop **individuals**, the **teams** they work in and the wider **organisation**

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WHAT WE DO

The following pages provide more details on what we do and how we do it.

Much of what we do is bespoke consultancy in our area of expertise so if you have a particular need that does not appear to be covered by what is in this booklet then please contact us.

We look forward very much to hearing from you.

You can reach us at:

Poppyfish People Development Ltd

Vaughan Chambers
Hicks Road
Harpenden
AL5 4EE

Tel: 01582 843400

e-mail: enquiries@poppyfish.co.uk

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership takes many forms, but from personal leadership through to business leadership we will work with you to grow the skills that you need to be at your best.

The methods of doing this are varied. For instance, we can offer **1-to-1 coaching** at all levels up to and including Director, often basing our work around **behaviour profiling**, role needs, or even individual self assessment. If desired, this can include managing a **360 degree feedback** process and the creation of **Personal Development Plans**.

We have experience in developing challenging and demanding **High Potential Leadership Programmes** that enhance the skills of entire cohorts of managers. As always, our style is to create a framework that allows individuals to take ownership of their learning and hold themselves accountable by creating ways to develop their skills on the job - you cannot spoon feed these skills.

And we can coach and consult to **leadership teams**, working closely with them to ensure they stay sharp, resilient and on topic in a volatile, complex and uncertain world.



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1 - to - 1 COACHING

Individual coaching is a powerful development tool.

We excel at building strong 1-to-1 coaching relationships with clients that move them towards where they want to be.

We can do this as part of a wider programme of learning and development or can coach on specific performance issues and individual contracts.

We prefer to work face to face wherever possible but can also use other channels where necessary.

If needed, we can produce our own 360, behavioural and self assessment questionnaires that can be used as a great skeleton around which to structure a development plan.

Sessions with a coach work at your pace to suit your needs. Typically you will expect to meet your coach for 90 minutes every 4 to 6 weeks, although this is entirely flexible and dependent on need. And, if needed, your coach is just a phone call away.

Unlock your potential today.



COACHING FOR TEAMS

We also coach leadership teams and offer a coaching workshop to develop coaching skills for groups of delegates.

Ask for details

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FACILITATED WORKSHOPS

Great things happen when people come together.

Poppyfish facilitated workshops allow people to tackle the important issues creatively and with energy.

We know that people see more value in things that they create for themselves. These workshops build engagement at all levels and make people realise that their views count.

Output from these sessions can be astounding. In just one day teams can generate more productive outputs than they might otherwise see in a whole month of meetings.

We have worked internationally and with groups across many sectors. We always trust in the power of the group to reach the right outcome, and we run with the energy that this creates. This makes these workshops a veritable hotbed of creativity.

We will handle all preparation for your event and will work with you to ensure we target the areas that you want to focus on and give the team the right mix of activities to get the best outputs.

We specialise in facilitated workshops in the areas of:

Strategic Planning and Analysis

Culture

Team Effectiveness

Performance Management

Project Launches and Reviews

Focus Groups

Process Reviews

Behaviour

Putting People to Work Safely

Strategic Planning

Project Management

Safety Leadership

NEULAND FACILITATION

We like to use Neuland Facilitated Pinpoint to help generate ideas and collect data. All outputs are photographed and provide a superb record of the outputs from your session.

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TRAINING YOUR PEOPLE

Our list of 'off the shelf' training and learning workshops continues to grow. From Time Management to Project Management and all stops in between we've got the right workshop for your people.

We don't do chalk and talk.

Instead, we lead delegates on a facilitated sharing of best practice that allows them to identify their own take away moments.

We like to get people on their feet actively creating knowledge and sharing their own experiences, using a format of exercises and proven models which we align with real world stories to give delegates the insights that they need to be at their best.

And we will check in with them some time later to see how much of their learning has stuck.

We will push them as far as you will let us.

And they will love it.



We can deliver off the shelf training at any venue of your choosing. Popular workshops include *Communication Skills, Team Effectiveness, Presentation Skills, Project Management, Appraisals & Feedback, Coaching For Managers, Understanding Finance, Introduction to Management, Time Management, Consultative Selling, Leading Safely, Negotiation Skills, Networking, Team Leadership and Understanding Behaviour*. Bespoke workshops are our speciality and are built with your input.

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STRATEGIC AWAY DAYS

Let's be honest, strategic away days get a lot of flak.

But the truth is that time away from the hamster wheel of the office is essential to allow a clear head to focus on the big issues affecting your business.

Away Days bring your senior people together to reflect, review and re-energise their plans for success. These are the occasions when you can celebrate what you have achieved, chew over the critical challenges of the present and set your sights on the future.

We're not here for a walk in the park. You will be pushed hard to ensure we get best outcomes for your people.

We will look after your Away Day from start to finish. We will work with your brief to plan and structure the overall programme and set meaningful objectives for the event. We can even help you to find a suitable venue and make sure that you have the right people in the room.

Our facilitators are experienced in a wide range of focussed group exercises and ways of working that will keep your team on topic and motivated. Experienced managers and leaders in their own right, they will consult to the group and ask the simple questions that cut through group think and by-pass organisational politics.

We treat these events in deadly earnest, and you will go away with a series of outputs and action plans that will prove that your time spent with us was some of your most productive.

"You have given us a great start to this critical piece of work and have left us with the start of a legacy - Thank you"

Director of Talent, UK PLC



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BEHAVIOUR MATTERS

We believe that over 80% of your success at work is attributable to the appropriate use of behaviour, and having a growth mindset.

The other 20% is the easy stuff. Like having the best technical skill and using the right procedures.

Our behavioural profile of choice is the SPECTRUM model from EvaluationStore. Clients report this as being easy to understand, impactful and memorable. In fact, we like it so much that we work with Stephen Jarrett, one of the developers of the model and author of *Across the Spectrum, What colour are you?*.

Just like any other profiling tool the SPECTRUM model is based on classic Jungian psychology, looking at degrees of extroversion and introversion as well as task or people focus. But unlike the other models SPECTRUM also recognises that in times of stress your behaviour changes. Do you become more insular and stubborn? Do you blame yourself when things go wrong? Or do you come out fighting and show your teeth? And how does that affect those around you?

The profile gives a great start point for self awareness and learning, bringing with it a common language for behaviour change that enables quality conversations to facilitate understanding and change.

We use SPECTRUM profiles to:

Promote self awareness and learning.

Explore team dynamics.

Create whole team and even entire organisational profiles that identify strengths and weaknesses.

Spearhead behavioural safety campaigns.

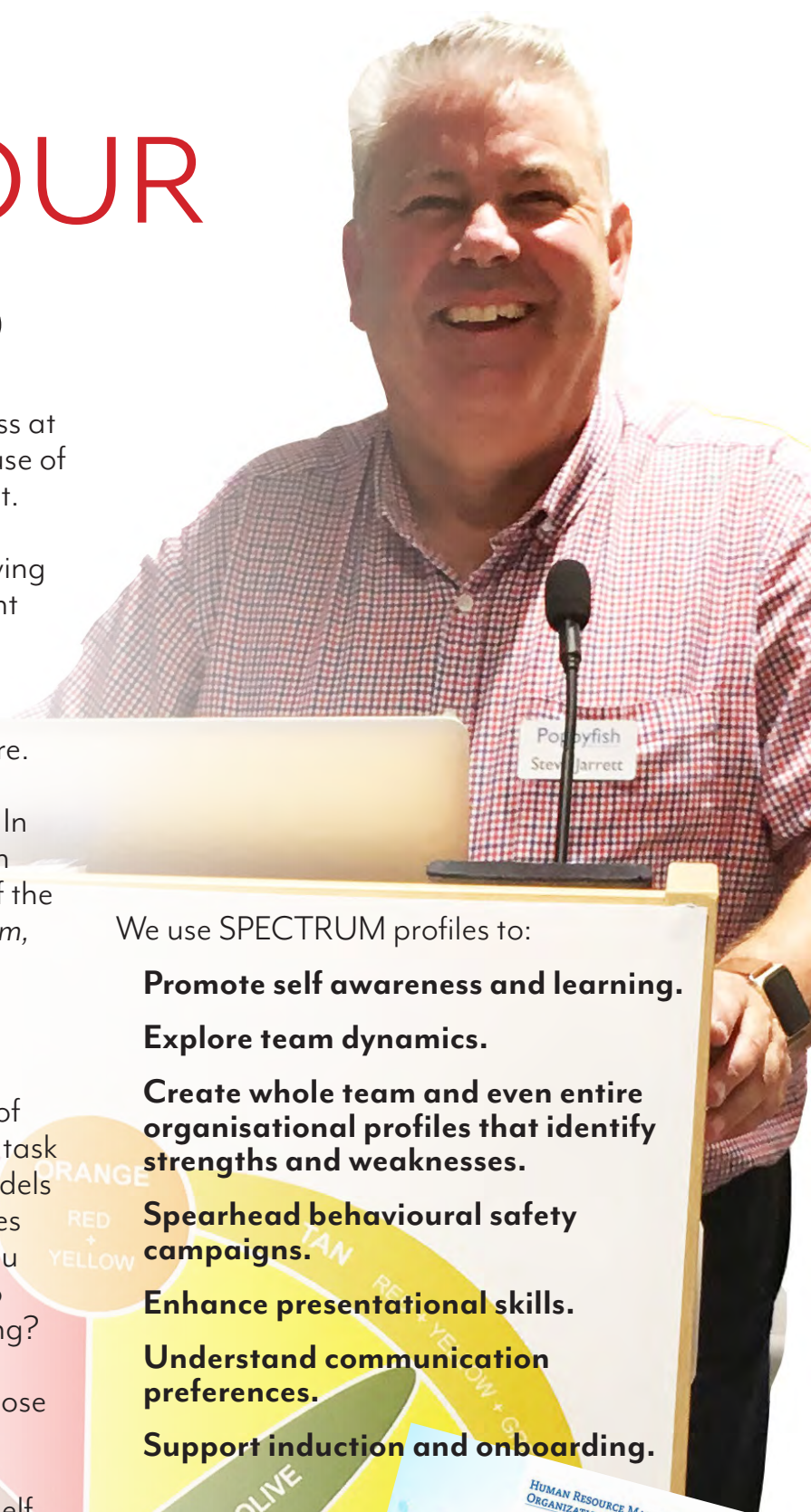
Enhance presentational skills.

Understand communication preferences.

Support induction and onboarding.

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WELLBEING

KEEPING HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND MOTIVATED AT WORK

Modern businesses accept that they have a responsibility to their employees and associates that extends beyond simply creating work.

We know that work/life balance isn't about a static position, but is all about knowing how to adjust to your current situation. Nutrition, diet and exercise all have a part to play.

For people to do their best at work they need to feel at their best. We will work with you to create wellbeing initiatives for your people. This might include independent lifestyle support & advice, nutrition, diet and exercise ideas, lifestyle mapping exercises, advice to combat stress and life coaching.

Typically, these might take the form of lunchtime drop in sessions, specific wellbeing workshops or health, diet and exercise related activities led by fitness and nutrition professionals.

Contact us for more details.

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BUSINESS WARGAMES

Business wargames use real world scenarios to engage and develop leaders and to challenge and define strategy.

We live in a volatile and complex world. Progressive leaders are using business wargaming methodologies to assess the strategic and operational readiness of their business. The wargaming approach challenges existing thinking and provide leadership teams with a credible exercise that scrutinises decision making, exposes weakspots and creates real space for operationally specific learning. They are the ultimate challenge to existing thinking. Quite simply, wargames argue back.

Our business wargames are designed with your input and include full bespoke scenario design, event facilitation and post-exercise review to ensure that no learning opportunity is missed. And if you are new to the wargaming approach don't worry. Our team have the skills and experience to design and deliver what you need. Indeed, working closely with you during the planning stage is an important factor in producing a quality outcome.

Wargames are individual, take time to create and the duration and content vary. But they are, without doubt, an exceptional way of developing your leadership team and future proofing your business. And they are simply superb for spotlighting talent in your team.

Enlist now.

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"The Poppyfish Red Team exercise was quite simply the best organised, scripted and resourced exercise of this type that I have been involved in"



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"Simulations can bring enormous benefits. Indeed, corporations using traditional management training programs may be wasting time and money by comparison. A well-designed simulation will yield much better results and prove more cost-effective" **McKinsey Group**

SIMULATE TO STIMULATE

If you are looking for innovative and practical ways of stimulating learning through doing then our business simulations and decision making exercises are just the ticket.

These workshops generate new thinking and when run as part of an inhouse training and development programme, really strengthen teams and allow individual talent to shine.

All workshops include supporting media, written materials and briefings for participants.

Most workshops can be run in any well equipped training room and are best scheduled as full day events.

SPOTLIGHT Talent	PROMOTE Resilience	STIMULATE Creativity
DEVELOP Leaders	The 8 benefits of simulations & decision making exercises	IDENTIFY Blindspots
ENCOURAGE Teamwork	MAXIMISE Return on Investment	CHALLENGE Existing Thinking

Example workshops:

Pandemic

How might a large scale flu outbreak impact your business?

Biodecision

Can you take your invention through to market?

Business Continuity Exercises

There's more to continuity than just pressing reset. We will design and deliver an exercise to test your team.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

The iPot Simulator:

Take the lid off leadership and communication with this memorable frenzied business game that generates oodles of learning. Involves getting creative



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EXAMPLE TRAINING COURSES

The following pages give examples of just some of the training courses that we can deliver for your team.

Most of these courses can be delivered in house or at a suitable venue of your choice to fit the following formats:

Half day Skills Bites:

Morning or afternoon sessions designed as refreshers or introductions to a topic.

Full day Workshops:

Standard length sessions to allow delegates to fully explore issues, try out new skills and share best practice.

Two day Workshops:

Best reserved for in-depth learning and most suited to Management Courses and Presentation Skills.

TO BOOK OR FOR MORE DETAILS



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THE COACHING MANAGER

Coaching is an essential and highly portable skill for the modern line manager.

Our coaching workshop is designed as a highly practical experience to promote quality conversations aimed at improved personal and organisational performance.

The workshop looks at features, advantages and benefits of adopting a coaching style and allows delegates to understand more about questioning and listening skills.

Working closely with other members of the group and the facilitators there is plenty of opportunity to try out new skills and give and receive feedback in a safe and supportive environment.

Above all else this workshop is about having a go, receiving feedback and helping delegates to embed a coaching style that develops others, builds relationships and drives business success.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop you will:

Know how to manage powerful developmental conversations with your team

-

Understand what it means to adopt a coaching style as part of your management approach

-

Know how to ask better questions that induce better answers

-

Appreciate the importance of authentic listening and how to use this to strengthen your management style

-

Be aware of a number of coaching models and understand how you might apply them at work

This workshop can be delivered inhouse or at any suitable training venue. It can be strengthened with the inclusion of a SPECTRUM behaviour profile

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THE HIGH PERFORMING TEAM

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People assign greater value to things that they create for themselves. This motivating, empowering and practical workshop brings your team members together to reflect on ways of working and set their own targets for change and improvement. Our facilitator will create a high trust and engaging environment allowing delegates to work together to clarify key outputs for the team and understand how they each contribute to the achievement of these goals. Once these key outputs are identified the team will define their own performance assessment tool and set targets for high performance, creating their own action plan to make the improvements they seek. It's simple. It's effective. And it works every time.

This workshop offers a massive return on investment and consistently receives the highest feedback. It is essential for all teams who wish to redesign, reevaluate or simply improve what they do.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this half day workshop your team will:

- Understand the key team outputs and how each person plays a role in delivering success

- Reflect on relationships with other teams and identify action plans for improved cross-team working

- Develop their own tool for assessing team performance and identify areas for improvement or change

- Understand the teams key strengths and how to use these to target the most pressing challenges

- Work together to define an action plan for high performance

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THE TEAM LEADER

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Leading a team comes with responsibilities, not only for your own performance, but also for the performance of those around you.

Often caught between the conflicting desires of senior management and the particular needs of your own team members being a team leader comes with a unique set of challenges and dilemmas. How can you manage everyone else and, of course, stay in control in your own job?

This workshop is suitable for existing and aspiring team leaders and uses a behavioural approach to help unravel this dilemma and includes an easy to remember and effective profiling tool that will give you the insight, the confidence and the tools and techniques that you need to be a great team leader who can deliver continued performance success and get the best out of everyone.

Highly recommended

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop you will:

Understand how to use a simple behaviour model to understand yourself and others.

-

Know how to identify the key outputs of your team and how to set realistic targets for high performance

-

Know how to flex your management style to suit the needs of your team and your boss.

-

Understand the vital importance of communication, delegation and performance management as key skills in your management toolbox.

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Pework:

Delegates will be asked to complete a SPECTRUM behavioural profile before attending this workshop.

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THE INFLUENTIAL PRESENTER

2 day learning workshop
includes SPECTRUM Behavioural Profile

LEARNING OUTCOMES

*By the end of this 2 day
non-residential
workshop you will:*

Understand how to engage influentially with your audience and structure your style and content to leave a lasting good impression.

Be able to apply a powerful behavioural profile to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of your presentation style and how others perceive you.

Know how to identify and clearly communicate your big idea or USP with impact.

Know how materials and technology can help you leave your audience wanting to know more.

Influential presenters ignite a spark in their audience that leaves them wanting to know more. Join us on this two day non-residential development workshop to understand more about yourself as a presenter and how to deliver impactful and influential presentations to any audience.

Starting with you delivering a pre-prepared presentation and working with no more than five other delegates, this practical workshop allows 1-to-1 development time and permits plenty of focus on individual feedback and development needs, with video playback available. All aspects of presenting and public speaking are covered, with our main angle being based around behaviour. The learning is personal and long lasting.

This course is led by Nick Skinner MBA MSc and consistently receives excellent feedback and outcomes.

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Prework:

Delegates are asked to come with a presentation ready for feedback.

Delegates will also be asked to complete a FREE online SPECTRUM behavioural profile 3-5 days before attending the workshop.

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THE CONSULTATIVE SELLER

A one day Learning Workshop

Bespoke to
your team

To be truly effective and differentiated in the eyes of today's buyers, sellers need to create value in the buying experience itself. This means helping customers to better understand the true nature of their need and how best to address it. To excel in this situation, sales people must demonstrate credibility, foster trust and openness through authenticity, and by listening to customer needs and creating value propositions that really work.

Consultative selling is an approach that allows you to learn more about your customer to present the best solutions for them that build relationships, minimises the threat of price competition from other sellers and re-inforces your own credibility and potential earnings.

This interactive and highly engaging workshop will be built around bespoke content to tackle the needs of your team and provides some key pointers to an essential skill that can open new doors to career and product success.

"An essential activity if you want to improve your conversion rate with customers and make every meeting count"

- Business Development Director

**To book this course for your team contact
enquiries@poppyfish.co.uk**

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this highly engaging and interactive workshop you will:

Understand the difference between transactional and consultative sales approaches and why they matter.

-

Understand the key role of questioning and active listening in service sales.

-

Have worked with your colleagues to perfect your value proposition.

-

Know how to pitch your proposition with confidence for best outcomes

-

Understand the six principles of influence and how to capitalise on them for maximum impact

-

**CONTACT US NOW AND
UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL IN
YOUR TEAM**

THE EASY NETWORKER

A Learning Workshop

Available as 3
hour "skills bite" or
as a full day deeper
session

For many of us, networking conjures up images of clumsy introductions, awkward conversations and an experience of stumbling from one self-conscious moment to another whilst sharing coffee with strangers. But we know that when the opportunity comes to make that life changing connection it pays to be ready to take it.

In this workshop we hold your hand through a practical approach to networking behaviour with tools and techniques for meeting new people, building rapport and creating and maintaining meaningful conversations that nurture good business relationships.

The full day option allows delegates to chart their existing network and identify how they need to build their network to attain their work and career goals.

This workshop provides some key pointers to an essential skill that can open new doors to career success - for you and for others.

Not to be missed.

To find out more:

E-mail: enquiries@poppyfish.co.uk
Phone: 01582 843400

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop you will:

Understand how to apply networking to your role and meet your personal objectives.

-
Get to grips with your personal brand and identify just what it is that makes you a great connection for others.

-
Know how to start a conversation that builds rapport and grow interesting conversations.

-
Learn how to appear interested - and interesting!

-
Have analysed your network and identified a plan to grow and develop it to achieve your career and business goals
(full day option only)

-
Know how to survive that next dreaded networking event!

BOOK NOW

OUR TEAM

Nick Skinner MBA, MSc ►

Director and Lead Consultant

Nick is the founder of Poppyfish and has developed leadership and coaching programmes, talent initiatives and bespoke learning packages for clients across many industries, working both in the UK and overseas. Nick has facilitated hundreds of learning workshops and focus group style events and project managed change programmes in the public and private sectors. Nick is an expert in decision making in critical incidents and is fascinated by human behaviour in the workplace. Nick has an MSc in People and Organisational Development and an MBA with distinction from the University of Hertfordshire.



◄ Stephen Jarrett MA

Associate

Stephen is specialist in change, HR, OD and strategy and is also a qualified life coach and CBT counsellor. A founding thinker behind the SPECTRUM behaviour profile and *EvaluationStore.com*, Stephen published his book "Across the Spectrum" in 2018 and expects to release his next book; "Blood, Sweat and Tears: How to Succeed in Business" in 2018. Stephen is an expert facilitator who has also worked as an ER manager, ER caseworker, HR manager, HR director and L&D manager. Always busy, Stephen is also a qualified sports therapist and has helped footballers and business people alike with mental health stress and wellbeing.



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CASE STUDIES

Take a look at some of our success stories. The following pages give examples of what we do and the impact we create with our clients.

We are proud to support our clients and take pride in delivering the kind of high quality service and professional support that builds lasting relationships and creates great outcomes.

Above all else we listen to what you need and then we will work with you to construct and deliver events, workshops and programmes that do exactly what they say on the tin.

We'd love to work with you.

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Eat our dust!

We think we are pretty good at what we do, but don't just take our word for it. Here's a selection of attendee feedback:

"A novel and ingenious learning event - Thank You"
Technical Manager

"There was a very realistic feel to the escalating situation that seemed to be really occurring outside our control room"
Critical Incident Exercise Participant

"I was amazed at what I learned at what I thought might be a waste of time"
An enlightened attendee!

"This was the best scripted, best organised and best resourced exercise of this type that I have been involved with... it took participants beyond the obvious"
Senior PR Manager

"You have given us a great start to this critical piece of work and have left us with the start of a legacy - Thank you"
HR Director of Talent, UK PLC

"Top Banana!"
Senior Projects Manager

"10 out of 10. Good, knowledgeable, read the needs of the group well and controlled performance"
Managing Surveyor

"Fun, interesting, engaging and well led"
Construction site manager

"A very good presenter with the right mix of talk, listen, engage and laugh"
Research scientist

"High quality content & excellent presentation"
Workshop attendee

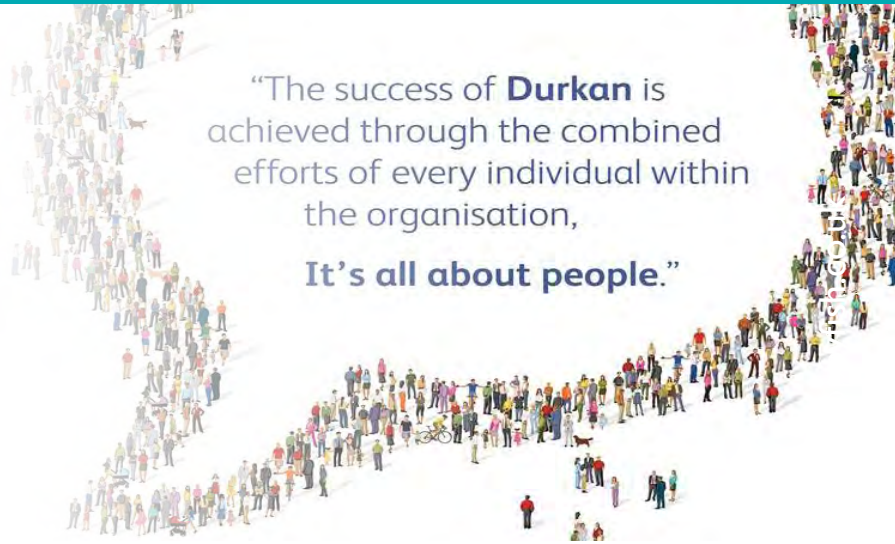
"It was quite a lively and thought provoking exercise and Nick was there, asking probing questions, promoting discussion and logging the ideas and priorities coming to light"
Management Accountant

"Great workshop! Highly recommended - 5 stars"
Statistician

"Thoroughly professional!"
Communications manager

THE DURKAN LEAD PROGRAMME

The experience of Durkan Ltd



“The success of **Durkan** is achieved through the combined efforts of every individual within the organisation,
It's all about people.”

BACKGROUND

Established in 1970 Durkan Ltd has grown from a small, family contractor to become one of London and the south-east's leading construction companies. With a turnover in excess of £100million and around 250 staff the business is the constructor of choice for many Housing Associations and other clients and is growing strongly.

THE NEED

The Board of Directors at Durkan recognised that technical excellence alone was not sufficient to deliver a great product, particularly where many different factions must work together seamlessly on tightly controlled projects. They wanted to strengthen teamworking and allow people the space to be 'at their best'.

WHAT WE DID

Working with the team at Durkan, we created a three tier comprehensive development programme aimed at enhancing capability across the full range of soft skills, from personal effectiveness and time management through to strategic direction and fostering a quality culture.

The Durkan LEAD programme (Leadership, Empowerment, Accountability, Development) was specifically designed in association with Poppyfish to allow people from across the business to come together learn and to tackle key challenges and share new ideas. A key feature of the programme was its 'diagonal' nature, involving people from all parts, and all levels of the business, with Directors working alongside some of the most junior staff, sharing an insight into each others worlds and getting to grips with practical issues.

As part of the programme every member of staff completed a SPECTRUM behavioural profile, giving them an easy to understand and practical model to understand their own behavioural preferences, and those of others. Workshops were supported by on-line materials and line managers were encouraged to keep development at the heart of their conversations with team members.

THE RESULT

Ian Cresswell, Director of Health, Safety, Environment and Quality at Durkan led the Durkan team's commitment to the work and shaped much of the scope of the programme.

“The LEAD programme represented a significant investment in our people and their skills and sends a powerful message about our values. The Poppyfish workshops have stimulated valuable learning about our business and we are generating some fascinating data about the way that we work together and how we can keep driving continual improvement. It's all about people”.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Something special happens when you mix people from across the business, and the work sparked development conversations that built bridges between teams and fuelled process and behavioural improvements. We learned that great ideas can come from anyone in any part of the business, and that what matters is the ability to flex and act on them.

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TEAM BUILDING FOR TECHNICAL TEAMS

The experience of the Home Grown Cereals Authority

BACKGROUND

The Home Grown Cereals Authority (HGCA) is a division of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), a statutory levy board, funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain and managed independently of both commercial industry and of Government. Its purpose is to make agriculture and horticulture industries more competitive and sustainable through factual, evidence-based advice, information and activity.

THE NEED

With a new team coming together under new leadership the HGCA wanted a facilitated session to allow people to come together, share ideas and establish a new team identity. Whilst some of the team were office based, a fair proportion were field based - in the truest sense of the word. This was the first time the team had all worked together.

WHAT WE DID

We created a facilitated workshop with a blend of task and people focussed activities designed to build connections between individuals and sub-teams. The workshop explored team roles and stakeholder connections to allow conversations that clarified roles and expectations, both in terms of individual behaviour and objectives and also in terms of strategic direction and overall goals. We reviewed barriers to progress and defined an action plan to carry momentum through into the 'real' world once the workshop had finished. And we also wore wellies and exercised our creative side - but that's another story!

THE RESULT

Dr Susannah Bolton, the Head of Research and Knowledge Transfer at the HGCA outlined the situation and the outcomes:

"We were experiencing some changes to our work and had some new staff in our regional teams which meant that the workshop was the first time that some of our group had met face to face. Poppyfish delivered a creative input that combined valuable exploration with some fun activities that allowed us to strengthen bonds and to consider some important business questions. It was time well spent and the feedback from all the team, both new and experienced, was excellent".

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

This session reminded us of the importance in taking time away from the daily grind to reassess priorities and targets. It reminded us that bringing people together to share ideas, challenges and problems helps to forge a strong team identity in which people become united in their work towards common goals and where they know that their input REALLY counts.

We learnt that the perceived blocks to performance can be overcome through the identification of actions that enable people to be at their best and most creative, and that this process can be accelerated through creative facilitation and collaborative workshop that by-passes the dreary inertia of a series of meaningless meetings!

Poppyfish
people development

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN TECHNICAL TEAMS

The experience of Open Answers Ltd

BACKGROUND

Open Answers Ltd has a twenty year track record of delivering specialist Open Systems and Open Source services to the world's leading technology vendors. Leveraging this expertise has enabled the company to gain a wealth of experience working with many of the UK's blue-chip organisations with an enviable client list. Since 2012 Poppyfish has worked with members of the Open Answers leadership team in a series of developmental and coaching assignments to strengthen the team's portfolio of leadership and management skills.

THE NEED

A growing client base was combining with rapid technical advancement to stretch the OA team. Individual team managers, all technically excellent and highly motivated, felt that they needed additional support and direction to change the way that they worked together and in the way that they drove performance and managed communication across the business.

WHAT WE DID

Starting with a simple behavioural profiling tool we held 1-to-1 sessions with members of the Open Answers Senior Team, asking questions to understand how they saw the situation and where they felt their strengths came together for good effect. This included some 360 feedback work and the crafting of individual development plans and some individual coaching. To encourage involvement of all staff we broadened activities to include team workshops where key outputs and responsibilities could be created and owned by the teams themselves.

This empowerment was seen as being a very important part of the process, giving everyone the chance to have their say and to identify areas where additional managerial focus was needed. These sessions generated engagement and clarified expectations between team members, whilst also allowing managers to shape their own style by leading the group and providing strategic direction.

THE RESULT

Jeremy Peet, Technical Director of Open Answers sees the work that has been done with Poppyfish as having been hugely beneficial for the development of leadership capability within the business.

"We know that Nick provides consistently valuable advice and never fails to impress with the breadth of his expertise based on considerable real-life experience. The sessions that we have had with Poppyfish have helped us to understand our own management styles, showed how we could work together more effectively and have strengthened our internal communications and approaches to performance management"

WHAT DID WE LEARN?


This work demonstrated that even in advanced technical teams the 1-to-1 human activities remain crucially important and that simple, frequent, visual communication and evidence of progress makes a big difference to team performance.

Poppyfish
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