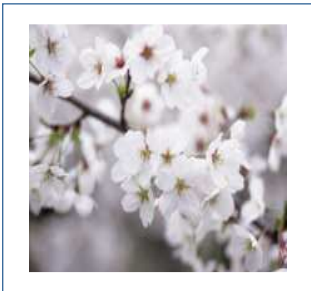




People, Passion, Performance

February 2008

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Spring is in the air....

“It is estimated that a week’s worth of the New York Times contains more information than a person was likely to come across in a lifetime in the 18th Century.”

Karl Fisch

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Spotlight on: Story

Never before in our entire history, have we as human beings had to deal with so much information. We live in a society bombarded by information, statistics and sound bites; the sheer quantity means that it can lack a sense of meaning. It is story that imbues raw data with value and purpose. Stories help us to understand, explain and create the world in which we live.

Every time we watch television, go to the cinema or see a film, we become involved with story-telling. Without realising it, we constantly make up stories in our daily lives. These stories become the scripts by which we live our lives: they determine our attitudes, responses and actions. They can inspire us to greater heights, where we excel by living to our fullest potential, or they can reduce us to mediocrity, as we dip into negative thinking and back biting.

For millennia, stories have been the way societies passed down their history, culture, values, insights and wisdom. There is something deeply

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Three highlights

A reader’s perspective on the 21-day programme

The 21-day programme is based on the eight tools taught on our courses; it helps participants practice the tools and techniques to gain confidence in their practical application.

“As promised, I did finish the 21-day programme, which I have to admit did take longer than 21 days, but still worked very well for me! The three ‘highlights’ that I have taken into my daily life are:

1. The meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh inspired me so much I now have his calendar in front of me and I read his book on peace in every day life. It’s now a regular part of my meditation practice - thank you. (For a copy of the meditation, email jennifer.hurley@lamontassociates.com)
2. The weekly visioning. So rather than just writing one huge long ‘to do’ list, I sit back and contemplate how I want the week to look and feel - energetically there’s a huge difference.
3. The weekly ‘review’ process of highs and lows - it’s fun!! And it’s a great way to stop, take a breath and be grateful.”

Julia Lewis, VP Global Partner Program, Sales Centric

Open Forum

Is there research on differences in leadership styles between men and women?

In response to our reader's question last month, Luke Aherne from University College Dublin emailed us with this response.

There has been a recent shift on the traits desired by management with a greater focus on women's more 'stereotypical' qualities:

- Being adaptable and changing to suit circumstances was seen as weak and is now flexible
- Women's greater emotional understanding is now seen as balanced rather than soft
- Their drive for the 'greater good' is now perceived as visionary and holistic

It has also been shown that women are more pro-active in adapting their interaction in the work place to suit the context. For instance women:

- Make requests in stages when a 'big ask' is involved;
- Use humour more than their male counterparts;
- Their leadership is more team-based with consensually driven decision making.

Small differences between men and women may include:

- Men tend to nod to signify understanding while women nod when they don't yet understand to encourage the speaker to keep talking.
- Men usually sit beside clients - are their 'right hand men' - while women are more comfortable sitting opposite their clients.

What is your experience of the difference in management styles between women and men?

Email Jennifer at: jennifer.hurley@lamontassociates.com

Spotlight on: Story (Continued from page 1)

... captivating about this method of teaching: it is potent, engaging and highly focused. Yet this powerful tool has been largely ignored by business. It seems a real waste, as stories can be effortlessly engaging and motivating. One well chosen story has the ability to sustain the culture and reinforce the values of any organisation, or family.

Through our stories, a company restructuring can become a grim nightmare or a new opportunity: the stories we tell about the events in our lives become our experience of those events. So we have a choice about how we experience our lives, about how we experience our work. We can choose the stories we tell.

To remind you of the power of stories, we're including an inspiring story that shows just how easy it is to make the struggle effortless: it's simply a question of the perspective we choose.

For more stories, check out our website.

"If we do not adopt the right outlook, it is possible that anything and everything could cause us frustration...

So this leaves us only one option: to change our own attitude.

By bringing about a change in our outlook towards things and events, all phenomena can become friends or sources of happiness, instead of becoming enemies or sources of frustration."

Dalai Lama

The Hot Seat

Nikki Kelly, APMG

“Nikki is a warm-hearted and conscientious person - she is always dedicated to the task in hand and pursues each new challenge with zeal.

I found her friendly nature very welcoming when I first joined APMG and she shows the same compassion to all members of the company, old and new. She is an asset to the company both professionally and personally.”

Our thanks to Emma for this month's contribution. Write in and nominate your colleague for our March issue: just send us a short paragraph about why you appreciate working with them.



Do we feel into the spirit of the challenge or do we fight it?

Upcoming courses & events

Tools for Success

September 2008
Birmingham

[See website for details](#)

Advanced Practitioner

May - November 2008
High Wycombe

[See website for details](#)

Global Leadership and the Global Fitness Framework Conference

Anglia University
April 2008

Rafting

By good fortune I was able to raft down the Motu River twice during the last year. The magnificent four-day journey traverses one of the last wilderness areas in the North Island.

The first expedition was led by "Buzz", an American guide with a great deal of rafting experience, and many stories to tell of mighty rivers such as the Colorado. With a leader like Buzz there was no reason to fear any of the great rapids of the Motu.

The first half day, in the gentle upper reaches, was spent developing teamwork and co-ordination. Strokes had to be mastered, and the discipline of following commands without question was essential. In the boiling fury of a rapid there would be no room for any mistake. When Buzz bellowed above the roar of the water an instant reaction was essential.

We mastered the Motu. In every rapid we fought the river and we overcame it. The screamed commands of Buzz were matched only by the fury of our paddles, as we took the raft exactly where Buzz wanted it to go. At the end of the journey there was a great feeling of triumph. We had won. We proved that we were superior. We knew that we could do it. We felt powerful and good. The mystery and majesty of the Motu had been overcome.

The second time I went down the Motu the experience I had gained should have been invaluable, but the guide on this journey was a very softly spoken Kiwi. It seemed that it would not even be possible to hear his voice above the noise of the rapids.

As we approached the first rapid, he never even raised his voice. He did not attempt to take command of us or the river. Gently and quietly he felt the mood of the river and watched every little whirlpool. There was no drama and no shouting. There was no contest to be won. He loved the river.

We sped through each rapid with grace and beauty and, after a day, the river had become our friend, not our enemy. The quiet Kiwi was not our leader, but only the person whose sensitivity was more developed than our own. Laughter replaced the tension of achievement.

Soon the quiet Kiwi was able to lean back and let all of us take turns as leader. A quiet nod was enough to draw attention to the things our lack of experience prevented us from seeing. If we made a mistake then we laughed and it was the next person's turn. We began to penetrate the mystery of the Motu. Now, like the quiet Kiwi, we listened to the river and we looked carefully for all those things we had not even noticed the first time.

At the end of the journey we had overcome nothing except ourselves. We did not want to leave behind our friend, the river. There was no contest, and so nothing had been won. Rather we had become one with the river.

It remains difficult to believe that the external circumstances of the two journeys were similar. The difference was in an attitude and a frame of mind. At the end of the journey it seemed that there could be no other way. Given the opportunity to choose a leader everyone would have chosen someone like Buzz. At the end of the second journey we had glimpsed a very different vision and we felt humble, and intensely happy.