



People, Passion, Performance

September 2008

Lamont Associates, 3 Kinross Avenue, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 9EP
www.lamontassociates.com info@lamontassociates.com Tel: 01344 628329



*Autumn sweeps away all that
no longer serves nature*

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*Are you harnessing the power
of change or fighting it?*

Is the recession your big break?

What is no longer serving you?

First, the good news: you and your colleagues already have all the inner resources that you need to succeed. So, while news of a deepening recession abounds, we invite you to take the challenge of looking at the current situation differently.

How much of this fear-inducing recession talk actually makes the situation worse? When we are afraid, we act in ways that impede us reaching our goals. Fear reduces our creativity, our flexibility, our ability to think clearly and make informed decisions, and our capacity to take action - this is biological fact. None of this helps business to thrive.

But what if we could turn this on its head? When I checked the dictionary, I discovered that recession also means “a break” and “a time to take stock”. Every company, every group and every individual can benefit from a chance to take stock, to consider how we can make the way we do things better - more rewarding, more inspiring, more productive, more profitable. Everyone can contribute to this, be they company director or security guard.

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Thriving in Tough Times

Breakfast Seminar - 30th October 2008

Research shows that high staff engagement increases operating income by 19% on average. This seminar focuses on simple and effective ways to improve staff engagement.

Learn **three proven tools** that will enable you to:

- increase productivity painlessly
- retain key staff
- decrease absenteeism
- inspire staff to actively decrease costs
- increase innovation

Date: Thursday 30th October 2008

Cost: £65 inc VAT

Venue: Hilton Bracknell, Bagshot Road, Bracknell RG12 0QJ

Breakfast: 7.30am - 8.00am **Workshop:** 8.00am - 10.00am

[Contact us for more information](#)

Is the recession your big break?

(Continued from page 1)

It's possible for a business to focus too much on the balance sheet and forget the importance of the staff's ability to create, innovate and excel. When times are tough, it is the companies which embrace strong values that are able to draw on a deeper sense of community and of pulling together. The more vibrant and engaged your teams, the more you can collectively find ways to create success in these challenging times.

*"The pessimist
sees difficulty in
every opportunity.*

*The optimist
sees the
opportunity in
every difficulty."*

Winston Churchill

An engaged, passionate team can create a compelling vision of success against the odds. Together they can vision and innovate; developing new ideas for products, services, add-ons and upgrades. They can define and refine your "wow factor" - the thing that has your customers returning time after time. They can commit to ensuring that customer service exceeds expectations, reinforcing and improving your company's reputation. When a dedicated team pulls together in the face of a shared challenge, there are few limits to what they can achieve.

If you are reading this and you're not a manager or a director, if you feel you are powerless, why not create your own challenge? Get some of your friends and colleagues at work together for lunch; first, celebrate your Top Ten reasons for working in the company, and then use Radiant Problem Solving (see below) to identify areas where your group can help the company reach new levels. Even small steps, when we do them regularly, make a big difference - as anyone who has skipped their gym visits will know!

Are you sharing your wisdom?

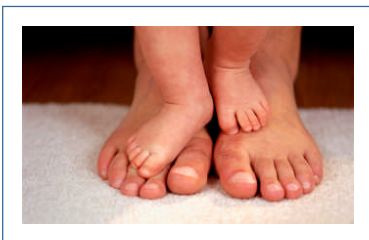
If life had an instruction booklet, what would you include in it? What have you learnt that would help a young person just starting out?

We are delighted with the contributions we've received to the *Life's Letters* collection ([see August newsletter](#)). The letters are simple and insightful. They express important truths we can all recognise.

We believe everyone has some wisdom to offer from their journey through life, and we'd love to receive **your** contribution. Even if you feel reluctant to write - give it a go. Make it one of your 'measured risks' for the week ([see July newsletter](#)). We look forward to hearing from you!

Email your letter to Jennifer: jennifer.hurley@lamontassociates.com

(We will be putting a selection of the letters on our website soon.)



Our steps can illuminate the paths of others



Together is easier than alone

“It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare, it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.”

Seneca

Radiant Problem Solving

The purpose of this activity is to help you think creatively about any problem and to generate innovative solutions fast.

Step 1: Name the problem. Now turn it on its head and express the problem in terms of the goal you want to achieve. Make the goal as specific as possible. e.g. ‘The problem is 30% engagement’ becomes the goal ‘80% engagement within 3 months’. Place the goal in the centre of a large sheet of paper in a bright colour.

Step 2: Thinking about the goal, the group brainstorms, for 2 minutes only, all the ‘blocks’ preventing the goal from happening. Generate these as fast as possible and without comment. Write them up radiating out from the goal and in a different colour.

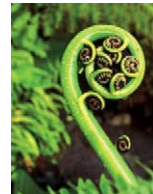
Step 3: Now for each ‘block’ (problem), brainstorm for 20 seconds all possible solutions. Use a third colour. In this way the solutions will stand out, distinct from the blocks.

When you’ve finished, look at the web of problems and solutions that you have created; see the interconnections and identify 2 or 3 solutions each of you will take action on. Get a buddy to help you keep on track with your commitment. Meet up a week later to check in and see how you are all progressing

Note: you may also notice that some of the solutions are about changing attitudes and perceptions; they do not necessarily require tasks to be done - it may be simply a shift in your attitude that will make the difference.

Kia Ora, Aotearoa.

A big hello to all our new subscribers in New Zealand. And thank you for your warm welcome during our recent visit.



Story - The Grape or The Watermelon?

Are you thinking big enough?

When Rodrigo approached Richard asking for help promoting his product, Richard was surprised. “Rodrigo you currently have the whole market! Why would you want to encourage us, your competitors, by asking us to set up an accreditation scheme?”

Rodrigo replied, “The market I have can be likened to the size of a grape. With competition, I think the market can be increased to the size of a water melon. I would prefer to have a slice of water melon to a whole grape!”

They are now working together to create that larger market for everyone’s benefit.

(Our thanks to Richard Pharro from APM Group for this story.)



Do you dare to dream of exceptional dreams for your team?