

END OF YEAR REVIEW - 2007

I hope you too have had a good year and are remembering to review progress and set targets for the coming twelve months. After all, if you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there?

WORK

This has been a very busy year with both my regular customers and with some new, exciting businesses. Respecting confidentiality I cannot name names - however - two are in fast moving, reactive businesses. The people are full of enthusiasm and the businesses are very exciting and on great growth projectiles. They measure their progress on a daily business and their idea of long term planning is the end of the quarter! They are certainly different to some of my other clients who have more established businesses with processes and plans in place for the next 2-5 years.

I feel exceptionally lucky with the clients I have. Not only do I enjoy the work I am doing with them, they are really nice people. I enjoy working with them and am genuinely interested in helping them become the managers they aspire to be. It is very rewarding and I have the "my girls" feeling of Miss Jean Brodie sweep over me quite regularly.

Amongst the work I have been doing recently is

- Writing guidelines to help managers to write Job Descriptions/Profiles
- Using MBTI to help bring teams together and work effectively very quickly
- Using feedback on Leadership Styles and Climate to help Leaders work out how to adopt the styles needed for their team
- Running effective Managing Performance events and one-to-one coaching

I still get excited about the whole idea of setting targets that move a Business forward, having clear measures and deliverables and then clear development plans of how to provide the right help to meet those objectives. Without these how do you know you are working on the right things? The added layer of what the Leadership Styles can then help people deliver to the bottom line results is very exciting and I am really enjoying working with Companies to make this happen.

I had a VAT inspection this year. It is a very strange experience to sit there feeling uncomfortable and nervous even when you know there is nothing to hide. You might understand the feeling if you have ever looked in your rear view mirror to see a blue flashing light right behind you – you tend to feel guilty even when your logical head says you are not doing anything wrong. The VAT lady was lovely, very thorough but easy to talk to and gave me some good advice about areas I could do even better in future.

REST

The Anson Engine Museum, where I do a lot of voluntary work, is going from strength to strength. At the beginning of the year they won the "Visitor's Choice" in the Macclesfield Business Awards, they were short listed, again, for the Website of the Year and at the end of November our Volunteer Co-ordinator won the gold in the "Volunteer of the Year" for Cheshire. This was in addition to gaining the Visit Britain's Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS) it is the Visitor Attraction's equivalent of the ISO 9000.

To raise funds for the museum I did a sponsored Wing Walk in May – it raised the £2,500 I had set as a target, lots of publicity and I had such fun doing it. I can recommend it to anyone – it was great. Pictures can be seen at <http://enginemuseum.org/gallery/thumbnails.php?album=16> (Volunteers at work).

Looking ahead to 2008 we are planning to run an exhibition to celebrate 150 years of Diesel – from Rudolf Diesel the inventor of diesel engines to the fastest diesel in the world, the JCB Dieselmax. We already have the oldest and largest diesel engines in the UK so it is going to be a record breaking season. I recommend you come along and join in the fun. See www.enginemuseum.org for all the details. We offer clubs and societies a great visit with personalised tours of the museum so do bear us in mind if you are planning a night out for any club you belong to.

With my work in the local Tourism industry I have been asked to join the committee of the Peaks and Plains of Cheshire Tourism Association. What is it they say about asking a busy person if you want something done? It is interesting to think that I am once again rubbing shoulders with Hotel Managers and Tourism Professionals; maybe all my old skills will help me with my new role.

We never did get out to Australia to visit the Trustee temporarily based there but we did sneak off to Pennsylvania for 5 days in June to visit the Coolspring Engine Museum there. We enjoyed the US so much we are planning a return visit over Christmas/New Year to make the most of the favourable dollar.

PLAY

My nephew was in need of some help writing a CV and applying for jobs early this year. I spent a day with him going through things and coaching him through putting together a CV and application letter for a job he fancied. Blow me if he not only got an interview but a job offer (6 month contract) to be a Games Tester. He is in 7th heaven – being paid to play with games all day and gaining excellent experience for any future job in the design/games market. Only problem is he now thinks getting a job is easy having only ever applied for one and getting it!!

I treated Geoff to an activity birthday present (a flying lesson out of Manchester Airport) even though he knew nothing about it until we got to the car park outside the flying school. I knew he would get nervous otherwise so before he could catch his breath he was up and away. For someone who doesn't like flying I thought it might help him feel less nervous when we next go on holiday. He enjoyed it (or so he says) although he would never have chosen it for himself . . . and agrees if he had known in advance he would have been so nervous he would never have gone through with it. There is something about getting out off your comfort zone that sets your blood pumping.

I managed to get away for a week at the end of July with my mother and sister on a cruise out of Leith to the Norwegian Fjords. Great holiday overall but those two will remember it more for the dreadful sea sickness they experienced on the way over the North Sea. Great scenery and lovely people, I can recommend it.

The type of parties and celebrations you attend are probably a good indication of the stage in life you are. This year we have attended my aunties Golden Wedding Anniversary in September (what a fabulous occasion that was); a fabulous 60th party in fancy dress and in

October it was Geoff's 50th so we had a few days away in London. Great fun all of them, but very different when it was all weddings and christenings of my peer group. I am very much enjoying the life I have and inside I still feel the young girl I once was.

Stop Press 16 February 2007

I have just been notified that that I am a nominee for this year's NSPCC Cheshire Woman of the Year Award in recognition of outstanding professional achievements and service to the community. The Award winner will be announced in Chester at a lunch on Wednesday 21 March.

It was a lovely surprise to receive the letter this morning informing me of my nomination and inviting me to the Award lunch. I am absolutely delighted to have been recognised in this way and had no idea that I had been nominated. It is a secret nomination so I do not know who has put me forward. How very exciting.

The Cheshire Woman of the Year Award, sponsored by Cheshire Life, is now in its twenty-second year and women from all walks of life are nominated. The Lunch will be held at Chester Town Hall, by kind permission of the Right Worshipful, The Lord Mayor of Chester where the NSPCC Cheshire Woman of the Year will be presented with a trophy and a cheque for £1,000 to be donated to the charity of her choice. The event also raises funds through the generosity of its sponsors for the work of the NSPCC in Cheshire and the Wirral.