

END OF YEAR REVIEW - 2008

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

Busy, busy, busy would be how I sum up the year. Most of my work is with my regular customers so allows me to build up relationships and follow their progress. At one multi-national I am on first name terms with all the reception staff so I no longer feel like a visitor.

Some of the deliverables this year have included Managing Performance workshops for various clients, an area of work I really enjoy as it is key that people can relate what they do to the Company's goals.

Teamworking has been another large chunk of work using both Myers-Briggs as a tool and for several teams helping them explore their strengths. The Marcus Buckingham book "Now, Discover Your Strengths" has proved very popular to help individuals and teams do exactly that.

The most used tools this year however are the Leadership Styles and Organisational Climate Exercises from Hay. It helps managers really understand the impact they have on their teams and to be able to chose the most appropriate behaviours. It is a very fulfilling area to be working in and I enjoy it enormously.

Just opened the letter from the tax man telling me how much I owe by the end of January – OUCH!!! I think the old PAYE was a great system as at least it went out a little every month and you didn't really have to think about it. Having to write a massive cheque all at once is horrid and makes you dreadfully aware how much money is taken off you.

REST

Geoff and I had a fantastic holiday in the States over Christmas/New Year. We had several days in New York, met up with friends in Philadelphia then flew up to Niagara Falls where it has been extremely cold so it was all very dramatic with ice and snow. Drove over to Michigan to the Henry Ford Museum and had a magical night at the Greenfield Village next door. Flew down to Orlando and spent Christmas Day at the Magic Kingdom – fab. After another few days in the sunshine drove down to Miami and he managed to lose the camera (which we had bought at Manchester on the way out) and all our photos. Yes, I know I said I wasn't going to mention it again! Anyway, next stop was Washington where he managed to get into all sorts of goodies to do with engines so was perfectly happy again. We brought in the New Year in Washington and flew back the first weekend of the year. Great time, would happily do it all again – well, apart from the camera bit.

Things are still busy at the Anson Engine Museum, where I do a lot of voluntary work. It finished the season 13% up on numbers. I was a bit disappointed as I had wanted 15% but as many attractions (nationally and locally) were down on numbers this year I suppose I shouldn't be too greedy.

They had a Diesel Exhibition this year so I learned a lot about diesel engines and did a lot of publicity for the first diesel engine ever to be built in the country (3rd ever built in the world)

that had pride of place in the exhibition. We had also managed to acquire the loan of the fastest diesel engine in the world, courtesy of JCB, While it was with us the JCB Dieselmax engine was awarded a prestigious IMechE Heritage Award, a terrific coup. Next year there is the first (of what is hoped to become a biannual event) Textile Festival in the area so we are supporting this by emphasising the engines that helped the textile trade, including a giant steam engine that used to power a local cotton mill.

I am the Vice Chairman of the local Cheshire Peaks and Plains Tourism Association and have been kept fairly busy with this. Their new look website launched this year and we are very proud of it <http://www.peaksandplains.co.uk/>

As it was my mother's 80th birthday this year, as well as organising a big family party over a weekend which was great fun, we took her to South Africa to visit a game reserve as she really wanted to see the animals up close. My sister agreed to come with us so we planned a trip for the end of November for the four of us – Lion Park, Elephant Sanctuary, Game Reserve then a few days to recover at Sun City. By the time the holiday actually came round the family numbers had swelled to eleven of us. It was terrific and I can highly recommend it to everyone. The next time Geoff and I manage to get down to South Africa we must make it over to Cape Town which I am told is equally fabulous.

PLAY

My CV writing skills have been made use of again by the family as it was the turn of my two oldest nieces to be writing and sending CVs. Kirsty actually graduated from York this year and I was very proud to attend the ceremony. (I can still remember the phone conversation when her mum called to say she was pregnant!)

Having graduated with Education as her degree she is going to Edinburgh next September for a years' Teacher Training course. In the meantime however she is off to Phillipines for three months to work with underprivileged children, then two months in Kenya working with primary school ages kids then off to America to work summer camp over there (again) with teenage girls. When preparing for her interview at Edinburgh it said they were looking for people who are "committed to development and to providing high quality education for all." She wanted my advice on how she could prove that. It made me smile, what a little star she is.

Getting ready for Christmas again – what a fast year this has been. I am sure someone must have pressed the fast forward button on my life.