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Setting the record straight – Speed Networking charts

Last month's newsletter (October/November 2009), included a wonderful article by Ben Craven entitled "Speed networking: how everyone can meet everyone else". Ben organizes speed networking events for many groups, including the ICA:UK annual general meeting at which Savita Custead saw his technique in action.

Savita recommended Ben's work in a discussion on the IAF Forum earlier in the year that began with Sally Murfitt's question about how to organize people at a meeting so everyone could meet all the other participants. I learned that Sally had spent an entire afternoon working with paper and

pencil to try and find a solution. She sent on the colourful chart she had worked out, but never got to use – so, as she noted, her solution hasn't been tried in practice.

In putting Sally's chart beside Ben's story, and in editing the Editor's Note to fit available space, I may have created the impression that Ben's computer-generated charts for the events he organizes might look like the one Sally developed.

So here, to set the record straight, is an example of one of the ready-to-run participant sheets that Ben produces for the speed networking events he co-ordinates. – *Rosemary Cairns*



Metaphors - Meta Force!

By Tobias Voß



In this article, the founder of Metalog, Tobias Voß, introduces you to the power of interaction metaphors and how to use them to successfully facilitate experiential learning (EL) team workshops.

Six delegates assemble for a team development workshop with the aim of addressing long-running conflicts. Much to their amazement, the coach doesn't mention the conflict but merely places a large circular board on a freestanding pedestal. Using masking tape, he divides the board into three sections of equal size.

"I would like to start out with an activity that you may find a little unusual", says the coach. "I will need your help for this, so please stand up and find yourselves a partner."

When the mini teams have formed, the coach hands out blindfolds: "One person from each team of two, please put on the blindfold."

The coach then carefully places a number of figurines of different sizes and weights in each of

the three fields on the board. "Your job is to move all of the figurines from the field in front of you to the next, clockwise. You will take turns. During each turn, each team is only allowed to move one figurine. Ready?"

As soon as the first figurine is lifted, the board begins to sway precariously. The group quickly realizes they are dealing with a very delicate balance - if they are not careful, everything will come crashing down around them! Each team must be aware of the effect that their every move will have on the others, and act with foresight. After ten minutes of cooperation, the group manages to move the last figurine to its designated spot. Finished!

Pleased with themselves, they all return to their seats. Before the coach can even start the discussion, the team manager bursts out: "Now I get it! We need to work on our balance!"

- "We depend on each other, just like the figurines on the board."

- "If one of us makes a move without considering the others, we all suffer."

- "There are 'blind' people in any system, those who have less information than the others. They need our special attention."

- "We need to keep the balance of the whole organization in mind!"

A productive discussion about the pillars of teamwork ensues with the coach facilitating and sharing the observations he made during the activity.

A metaphorical mirror

The tool demonstrated here, SysTEAMing, is an example of what I have named an "interaction metaphor". On the surface, the task seems to have nothing to do with the real team issue. However, the activity presents a precise metaphorical mirror of the world in which the teams operate, providing an 'emotional spring board' for exploring uncomfortable team conflicts.

In the SysTEAMing example, the group immediately recognised the parallels, were able to see what was wrong, and how they could work together to solve the problem. The activity gave them a "can-do" template that could be applied to their



A team moves the 'product' along the 'production line' to the 'shipping section', using Pipeline; on the previous page, the team is working on balance, with SysTEAMing. (Photo credits: Metalog)

daily lives. Realising what needed to be done, they were able to apply the insights they had gained to resolving their work-related conflict.

SysTEAMing is one of a number of multifaceted tools that I have developed, based on the recognition of how effective learning takes place. Learning is more effective when we use all of our senses, when we experience the situation at first hand rather than just 'understand' an issue on the factual level. This gives the learner a much deeper insight into themselves and how they behave than a flip-chart based set of bullet points.

As the tools are polycontextual, i.e. they can be used in many contexts, they can be adapted to a whole host of situations and can also evoke a wide range of emotional responses and recognition in the team members.

A crucial aspect of interaction metaphors is that they elicit authentic behaviour. When I ask participants before an activity about how they work together, I hear: "Oh, we're a well-oiled machine", "We work really effectively together", and so on.

During the activity, however, their true behaviour surfaces, mirroring precisely the way they go about solving problems (or not), the power structures and politics, the strengths,

weaknesses and preferences of individual group members, how they feel about their role in the team and ultimately how they feel about each other.

Facilitating organisational change

Interaction metaphors are more than just about uncovering problems in the group, however. Rather, they provide a solution-oriented "stage" on which to reassess strategies and explore new ways of working together.

It all seems so simple: just give them a task to do and the lights go on. Obviously, there is more to it than that. Experiential learning is great at providing fun team settings and EL trainers are often adept at offering exciting, interactive tasks.

But the whole reason for doing them, to effect organisational change, is often neglected. This results in HR managers downgrading EL training to 'team reward event' rather than a means of examining, assessing, building and strengthening the team.

Essential to success is the transfer to the participants' real lives. Done effectively, interaction metaphors quickly open up new ways of thinking. However, the coach must really take

care when setting up and reviewing the activity in order to get the most out of it.

I would like to share with you my thoughts on dealing with such interaction metaphors to optimise transfer to the real world.

Setting the stage

In setting up the activity, direct parallels are implied between the topic of the workshop and the activity at hand – here, the metaphor really comes into its own. By way of example, let's look at the tool "Pipeline".

"Pipeline" is an exciting, action-packed learning project. It is also an excellent interaction metaphor for the flow of communication within organisations. Using the "Pipeline", a system of halved plastic pipes, the task is to transport a ball non-stop within a given time over a specific distance and to a designated point. Oh, and without touching it! A real challenge.

A large automobile manufacturer was experiencing problems during shift handovers on the production line. At the end of their shifts, workers were leaving machines and tools dirty or incorrectly prepared. The workers from the next shift, unaware of the situation, would start the machines running – and within a few seconds bring production to a grinding halt, causing thousands of Euros in damage. Accusations

flew, each shift assigning blame to the other. My task was to help bring the teams together.

In the workshop, the various groups of shift workers (2 groups of 8) were presented with a task. "I have a technical optimisation project that I would like you to help me with". Holding up a small ball, I said: "This is your product. Your task is to keep production rolling steadily along the line and to ensure smooth handover from shift to shift".

I held up 4 short sections of piping: "These are your shifts. You must keep production moving to arrive just in time at the shipping section". I pointed to the "shipping section", a basket at the end of the room.

Handing out four half-pipes and one ball to each group, I added: "With limited resources, and ensuring that each member of the group is equally involved, your task is for both teams to reach the deadline for shipment. But there is a constraint on you. Quality control wants you to do it within 10 minutes and for the two products to be ready for shipping within 10 seconds of each other. I can't wait to find out what skills and resources you will draw on to coordinate and communicate with each other, and just how creative and cooperative you will be in reaching the shipping deadline just in time You have 5



The Tower of Power helps teams set their sights higher (Photo credit: Metalog)

minutes to discuss your strategy in your groups...".

Equating activity and real life

At this point, let's stop and look at what was achieved here. In setting up the activity we see the use of isomorphism, equating the activity with the real life situation.

Rather than calling the activity a "task" or even a "game", I use language that parallels their world by referring to the ball as the "product", the pipes as the "production line", and the basket as the "shipping section". This gives the activity a sense of purpose and overcomes resistance to what could otherwise be seen as "playing a game". Importantly, it implies the real reason they are doing the training and allows them to subconsciously explore creative solutions to their expensive, real-world problem.

The materials they are to use and the conditions of use are defined, providing them with a frame of reference. Furthermore, the time limit heightens the pressure and leads to more authentic behaviour as the teams become immersed in the activity. They are instructed to involve each other and to cooperate between teams but otherwise no roles are assigned (in other tools, roles such as manager and observer are pre-assigned) – but in reality, the groups each assign a leader themselves and members of each group interface with each other to coordinate the two groups. And finally the use of suggestive language helps pre-empt a successful result (not if they will succeed but how effectively).

Careful preparation is essential to ensuring the success of not just the activity itself but

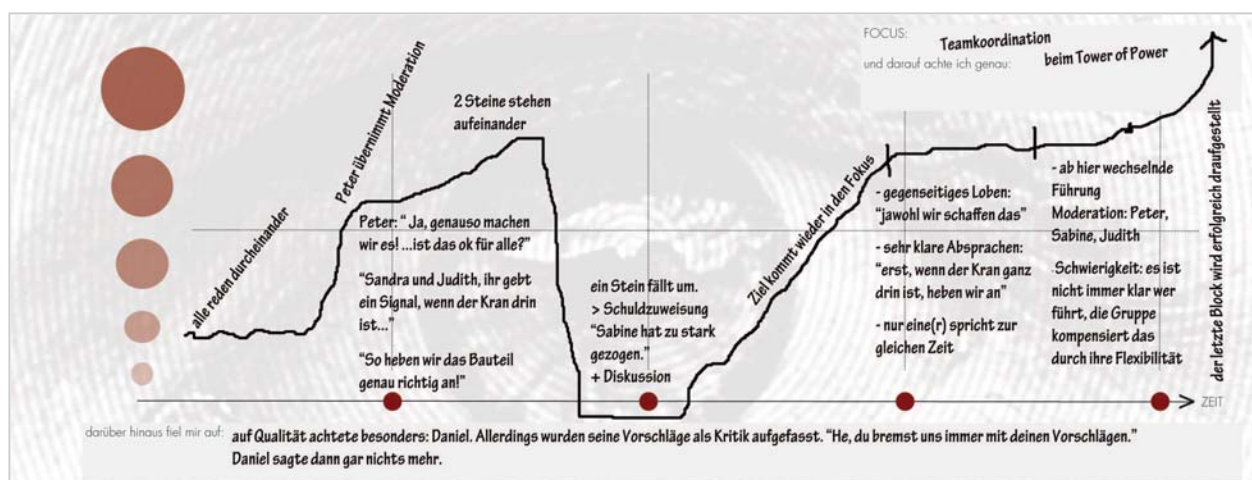
also for the feedback stage and the transfer to the real world. It may be occasionally necessary for the coach to intervene during the activity when he/she notices that problems are occurring and needs to get the teams back on track. The coach can also use the interventions to change the frame (shorten time, introduce a new element) in order to keep the team on its toes. Where necessary, the coach can abandon the activity and use the results as the basis for review.

"Many eyes make light work"

Once an activity gets under way, everything happens so fast that it is sometimes hard to keep the overview. The participants are immersed in the activity, the coach cannot possibly notice and record everything that is going on. The coach can of course nominate observers from members of the group and assign them a specific observation task. This is a tricky balance because the observers selected may feel sidelined, or be only passively involved. They may also be overwhelmed by events. For this reason I developed a tool to greatly increase the quality of the feedback: MetaBlog.

MetaBlog is a tool that allows observers to document the fast-paced events of the learning project in the form of a 'visual log'. The task is to draw a curve on a large format sheet representing the entire period of the activity, adding comments, assigning timing, and grading what they observe. It provides them and the coach with valuable detailed feedback and an overview of the entire process that can be used during review.

A number of observers can be nominated to keep MetaBlogs on various observer tasks



Using the MetaBlog, team observers chart the team's progress in accomplishing the task. (Photo credit: Metalog)



Exploring interaction in silence as the team finds the 'one true way' across the Pathfinder floor sheet (Photo credit: Metalog)

such as 'communicative discipline', 'group cooperation', and so on. It turns the task of being an observer into an active, focussed contribution to the whole process and brings an added quality and dimension to the review process.

Feedback and review stage

The first phase is simply about collecting what happened, focussing on the events and actions that were actually observed: "How was it for you?", "How did you achieve the task?", "What were the milestones or phases?", "How did you communicate with each other?", and so on.

It is important to collect and not analyse at this stage. The participants often immediately recognise the parallels to their real lives (which is what we want, of course) but don't allow them to start to interpret at this stage. Save that for later. If the activity didn't go very well, ask: "If you were to do the activity again, what would you do differently?" or "What would have helped you?"

Once you have collected all the impressions and reactions of the various team members, you are ready to move on to the next phase: the transfer stage.

The transfer stage is where the isomorphism of the activity comes into its own. What

the experience of the activity will give the participants is (hopefully) a "eureka moment" when they see the meaning that this has for their lives. After collecting the observations of the activity, you can ask: "Does this seem familiar to you?" or "What does this mean to your daily lives?" or "How does this reflect your working world?"

Recognising the connection to the real world provides the coach with a wealth of information with which he or she can achieve the targets of the workshop – and all provided by the participants themselves.

Finding a path forward

An example of what valuable information on a team interaction metaphors bring can be demonstrated with "Pathfinder". "Pathfinder" is an ingenious tool for exploring team interaction, how teams can become a learning system, and how to integrate all team members. The task is for the team to find the "one true way" across the "Pathfinder", a floor cloth with 40 squares. They must discover the way together and must all make it across, they have a strict time limit, are financially 'penalised' for repeated mistakes, and must achieve the task in total silence.

In one group, a team member, who was passive throughout, spoke in the review round

about how he felt 'shouted down' by the others during the activity (note: the 'Pathfinder' is completed in silence!) and reacted with resignation – a mirror of the team's real world. Able to express his frustration, the team and their coach discovered ways of re-integrating him.

Another group navigated its way across the Pathfinder relatively quickly because one participant came up with an idea to speed up the process that involved taking a 'shortcut'. In the feedback stage it became apparent that this behaviour, which the participant in question saw as a positive contribution, in fact mirrored longstanding resentment amongst some team members who felt that this participant had 'broken the rules' - even though he had not broken any explicit rules and had acted within the brief, merely interpreting the rules to his advantage - and had 'taken shortcuts' to achieve the task so that he 'looked good' in the eyes of the management. This conflicted with their belief systems ("we should do everything correctly and by the book").

Pathfinder provided the conflicting sides with a chance to express and address their firmly held beliefs. With positive guidance and solutions-oriented moderating, they were able to see and appreciate the positive intentions behind their actions, to resolve the animosity and mistrust in the group, and to find a common basis on which to build.

The interaction metaphor approach involves teams in fun, exciting, solution-oriented activities. As coach, you establish a neutral ground on which the team can experience themselves and each other in a positive, resourceful environment that has – as the title of this article implies – real power for change.



Band is an exercise that focuses on stretching teams – in more ways than one! (Photo credit: Metalog)

About the author



Tobias Voss, BA Honours in International Business and Cultural Studies from the University of Passau, Systemic Coach, Certified NLP Master trainer, clinical hypnotherapist, freelance trainer and coach since 1994 working mainly for international corporations and small and medium-sized companies, founder of METALOG® training tools, publisher of several articles in professional journals.

Tobias has many years experience in team and organizational development for corporations such as Nokia, Audi, BMW, Dresdner Bank, Infineon Technologies and Lufthansa. Tobias is a specialist for the integration of experiential learning programs for change processes in industry. Since 1998, he has carried out numerous train-the-trainer programs.

METALOG offers a 5-day trainer certification course entitled "The METALOG® Method - the process-oriented approach for fostering sustainability in organizational change and personal development". His book "Die METALOG® Methode" ("The METALOG® Method") will be published in Spring 2010.

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Hotel Hellsten - making a difference that matters

Interview and summary Kicki Oljemark | European AI Network

Twenty people met in the Hotel Hellsten in Stockholm on Oct. 20, 2009, to listen to an interview with hotel director Per Hellsten. The evening's interview focused on Per's dreams for the future - but we also learned more about his exciting background and life experiences.

How often do we hear a hotel director say that his overall goal is to be a part of creating peace on earth - and who could think that a hotel could be such a marvelous place to do this?

Supported by future oriented and circular questions, inspired by appreciative inquiry, Per shared his dreams in detail. He also reflected on how his values have developed and how they are noticed in his daily work.

The picture Per shared with us could easily be used as a metaphor for working with groups of people and organizations. He talked about the dream of creating space, contexts where people can meet and feel that they are welcomed and important despite of their different views. Per talked about the importance of creating context where people have the possibility to lower their defenses and to talk about the future and how they would like to live together for the future.

During the interview, a marvelous picture grew of hope and passion and the importance of showing each other respect and love. To start with, every employee at the hotel must feel that they are loved so that they also can share this feeling with the people they meet as guests.

Per is on a mission, that is clear. He wants to be a part of changing the world and it is a lovely mission. Through building hotels, Per aims at creating spaces and environments where people can meet in a friendly way. He describes in detail how he would like his guests to feel when they stay at the hotel or have conferences there. He also gave us the example of a man who came down to breakfast in his night dress and how happy this made him, as this was a sign that the man felt at home!

Per showed the fantastic strength of living one's dreams and to follow one's passion. He encouraged us as listeners to catch the moment and take the opportunities that come our way. He showed that it is always possible to learn new things and that we always have the possibility to

develop as human beings.

During the interview, we used an "outside witnessing team" to reflect on Per's story and we ended the evening by giving him feedback with colored post-it notes. He got a lot of them! From my perspective as an interviewer, the interview once again reminds me of the strengths and possibilities of interviewing into the core of positive actions and dreams. Listening to Per's lively and passionate story gave me a lot of hope for the future.

So all strength based friends out there, every action in this direction is a huge step toward a better world and hope for the future!

About the author



Kicki Oljemark works as a leadership and organizational consultant in her own company, Senspero, where she focuses on strength-based methods. She holds an MSc in leadership and organisational development from KCC foundation and Bedfordshire University, where she is also working on a PhD. Kicki is part of the Swedish Systemic Network in Stockholm. You can contact her at kicki.oljemark@senspero.com

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11 ways to build more learning into your work life

By Gillian Martin Mehers

Learning can be a useful accelerator for the work you do. It can help keep you motivated, let you experience your progress in a different way, keep you engaged with wider processes. So how can you build more learning into your work life? As a learning practitioner, I asked myself this question, and here is what I came up with:



1. Ask great questions

It is surprising how many people don't ask any questions, or only ask rhetorical, obvious or yes/no questions. Try to ask engagement questions that people want to answer, questions that ask people to think and share. Ask questions of yourself (like I just did). For all of your questions, consider how you ask them - an approach like Appreciative Inquiry can help you refine your questioning practice (it even works on yourself).

2. Listen for learning

Listening is a companion to number 1: How often do you ask yourself as you go into a listening or a conversation opportunity, "What do I want to learn?" Answering this question can help you listen very differently and more deliberately. You can also ask yourself, "How am I listening to this?" This can help you explore your openness to learning at that moment, and to notice when you are most receptive to new ideas and messages (and when you are not).

3. Be a better storyteller

Storytelling has so many contributions to make to learning, as we have written about so many times. It helps take you through the process of packaging your learning for better recall and reuse, makes it easier to repeat/retell (thus further embedding it), and makes your learning more useful not only to you, but also to others, as you do the work for them to distill the most meaningful parts of some experience or learning.

4. Start a blog/vlog

For so many reasons, blogs help you be a part of the conversation (even if you are only talking to yourself). They provide an opportunity to notice your experience and a provide a virtual place to record it. Because it's public, it asks for some quality control (through, say, number 3 above.) Its chronological organization and tagging helps structure your experience, so it can be used as a knowledge management tool. And I personally use it to strengthen my reflective practice, more on this below.

5. Join a community of practice

These can be physical, virtual or both. They can help you share and be shared with, providing rich opportunities for peer learning. They can be even more useful if you use them to practice some of these other learning tools, like asking great questions, and listening for learning. If you don't find a community of practice that fits, can you start one? (Ning makes this easy for virtual CoPs.)

6. Practice it

Find opportunities to try something again. Maybe you went to a great visual facilitation workshop - how can you continue to practice that even if you are a beginner? As you sit in on a conference call, or in a meeting, can you doodle icons of the conversation process?

7. Move your learning into a different side of your brain

Can you add an image to the theory, or link your learning to a physical experience that makes the point visceral? Can you draw a diagram that explains your thinking in addition to writing a paragraph about it? Can you move your learning from knowledge to behaviour change, from left brain to right?

8. Notice/Map your personal knowledge management system

If knowledge is a flow, how are you tracking the flows? What kinds of tools are you using to manage this flow - google is good of course, and what other kind of nets are you throwing out in the ocean of information to help you get the quality of inputs you need when you need them? In effect, what are you using as your personal knowledge management system? For example, do you have a list of the gurus in your field whose blogs or tweets you follow? Do you tag useful incoming content in your gmail or in a delicious account? Can you improve your email management system (e.g. through something like Inbox Zero?) Plenty of opportunities exist in the Web2.0 world of today.

9. Be deliberate about reflection

People use different means for this, and generally agree that they are more fully present for learning when they are actively reflecting on their experience. Capture, whatever your tool - journaling, blogging, songwriting, slam poetry - is helpful for many reasons that can be found in the points above. The choices you make about what to record helps to prioritise information, makes it more reusable and, depending on your tool, makes it available on demand for both yourself and others.

10. Help other people learn

In addition to the obvious social value of this, learning through teaching (with a small "t", thus not necessarily in a formal learning setting) is a well known way to embed learning. How can you volunteer your learning to others and in doing so practice and progress your own? Every conversation is an opportunity to exchange, so you don't need to have a classroom environment

to help other people learn.

11. Know your own learning preferences

There are of course diagnostics around this, and I think one of the simplest ways to identify your learning preferences is to ask yourself some questions (and voila we're back to point 1): "When was the last time I learned something new? What were the conditions that helped me learn? What was I doing? What were the people around me doing to help me learn? In what situations do I learn the best?"

Learning happens continually, and still there are always opportunities to integrate it more powerfully into personal practice and team practice, even without a training budget. For example, just writing this blog post gave me an opportunity for learning, which combined many of the above. Once you get out of the formal learning environment it's free for the most part, it's relatively easy, and still, it takes a little thought, and perhaps a change in daily practice.

The rewards, however, can be great - a boost in productivity, satisfaction, direct engagement with your topic, as well as an opportunity to strengthen yourself as a practitioner and further increase the value of your contribution to your community(ies) of choice.

This thoughtful piece 11 Ways to Build More Learning Into Your Work Life was posted on Gillian's blog, We Learn Something, on Thursday, November 26, 2009. You can read more at <http://welearnsomething.blogspot.com/> Gillian is Head of Learning and Leadership with IUCN - World Conservation Union in Switzerland. She is a Certified Professional Facilitator and member of IAF.

Developing a Strategic War Room through Facilitation

By Krister Forsberg and Per-Olov Olsson

The War Strategic Room represents a management team's shared perception of their business; a virtual room from which the business strategy will be planned and executed. It is a metaphor for the shared global view of the business and its environment.

Building a War Room starts with building the common understanding of the supply chain and the basis on which key stakeholders evaluate management performance and capability. The management team's collective intelligence provides the basis for consensus on the priorities for changes. Workshops led by an experienced facilitator enable managers to prioritize the information to set direction and establish goals for their units. The facilitator's role is to build consensus of the outcome of the workshop.

Five maps form the war room – the Business Environment Map, the Delivery Map, the Stakeholder Map, the Strategy Map and the Goal Map. All maps are needed to get the shared global

view of the business and its environment, and to select the right goals and strategies.

The business logic of our approach can be summarized in four principles:

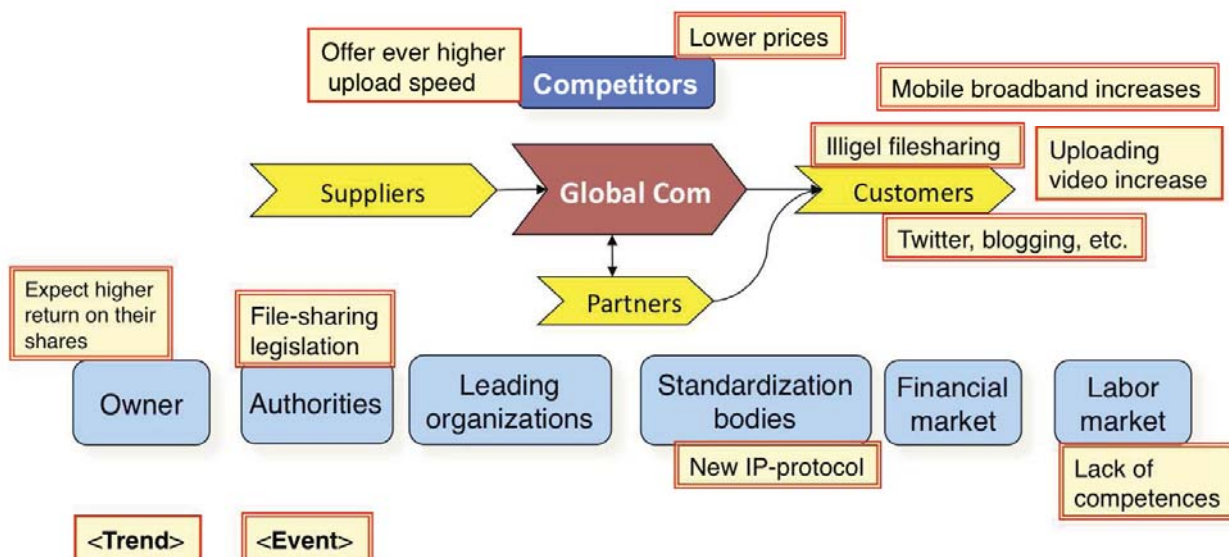
- Using managers' empowerment to take the initiative based on their own mission and own insight
- Focus on how key stakeholders (interested parties) evaluate the organisation's performance and capability
- Track and improve the organisation's capabilities which improve performance
- Collaborate with key stakeholders in developing the most competitive supply chain

The balance between strategic and operational tasks is a significant one. A manager's traditional task is to plan, organize, follow up, report and affirm by signing. Most managers are also responsible for recruitment, salary negotiations and, where necessary, terminations, and these are operational tasks that cannot be delegated. But

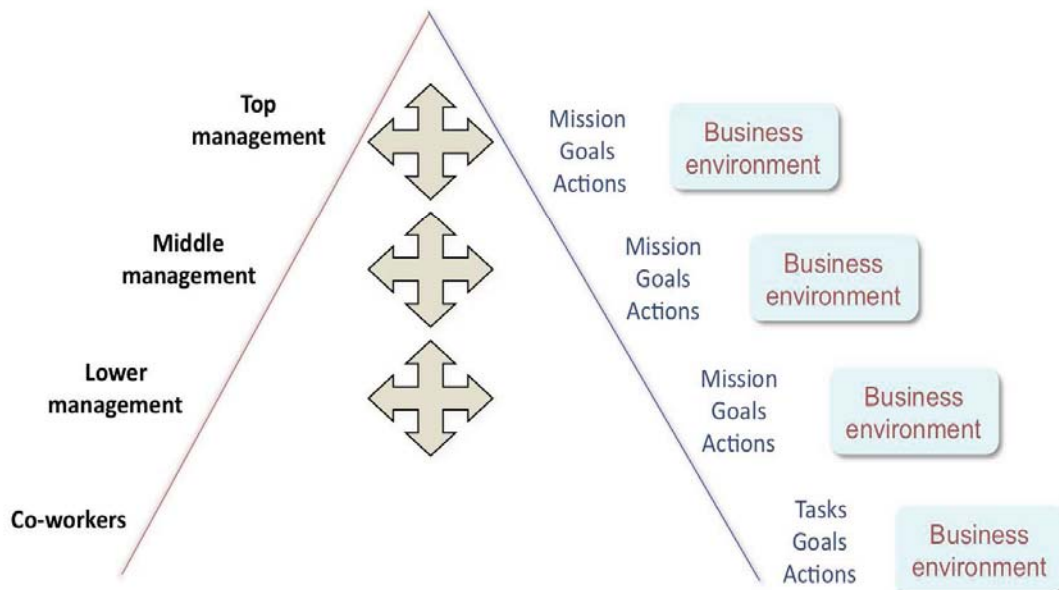
The Business Environment Map

Business Environment Analysis

What Trends and Events do we in our Management Team have to act on?



Empowerment on All levels/units



many other tasks, such as supervision and problem solving, can be.

Needs different skill set

Strategic tasks require a different skill set from operational tasks. A manager may work in a Management Team or alone, collaborating with their most important stakeholders.

Within the Management Team, managers will generate a global picture of the organisation and the environment in which it operates, including an analysis of the supply chain and the organisation's internal processes. Part of the management process involves prioritizing the trends and events which inform one's actions.

Outside the Management Team, the task is to engage key stakeholders, drive change, communicate with employees, and follow up on performance.

Assuming a strategic role requires managers to adopt several very different roles from those they occupy in daily operational work. Rather than taking all of the work on their own shoulders, managers can use the Management Team far more effectively by learning to share strategic tasks and act in the roles as goal drivers and relationship managers.

Many management models and methods

are not efficient to apply for managers working in a highly competitive environment in the 21st century. To be more efficient in the management process, empowered management teams need to adapt two shifts:

The first is to shift from the top down approach in which goals are cascaded from the top, to create a hierarchy of goals, to the empowered approach in which managers act on their own initiative out of their own mission and own insight. Each management team has its own business environment and supply chain to manage.

The second shift is from identifying goals from a vision and pre-determined perspective (e.g. finance, customer, process) to identifying goals from how the key Stakeholders evaluate performance and the ability to perform. In the management process, a manager may have one or several roles - Relationship Manager, Goal Driver and Goal Owner. As a Goal Driver, he/she is responsible for achieving a given goal by allocating resources and ensuring follow up. The Goal Owner is the head of the unit for whom the specific goals are designed. The key to success in Goal Ownership lies in the capability of the Goal Drivers and Relationship Managers that are selected and appointed.

Critical Roles in the Management Process



The MT Members (the workshop content owners)



Goal Owner
The head of the unit
Make the decisions



Facilitator
(the facilitation process owner)
Facilitating the Management Team
Building consensus of the outcome



Goal Driver
Allocate resources,
and follow up
progress and
performance



Relationship Manager
Dialog with the
stakeholder

Collaborate with key Stakeholders

As Relationship Manager, managers must engage key stakeholders, collaborating with them by sharing insights, aspirations and results; engaging them in commercial or non-commercial opportunities; involving them in solving problems; and sharing perceptions of risk with them.

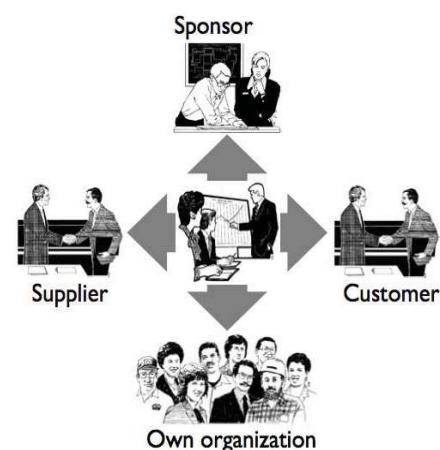
The effect is to create a dialog with Stakeholders – one that is characterized by trust and transparency. The purpose is to build the most competitive supply chain, which requires empowered Management Teams working in networks and driven by their own shared sense of mission.

For managers, stakeholder analysis involves identifying their most important stakeholders. Their line manager or sponsor is a key Stakeholder. The stakeholders have expectations of their performance and capability. The owner of the business, chairman of the board, investors and authorities all belong to the

circle of important stakeholders. Their most important stakeholder is, however, their customer.

Finally, within their own organisation, they will cooperate with their own people on

Managers' communication paths



how to efficiently communicate changes, goals, and so on.

Facilitator is key to success

Top team effectiveness usually requires an experienced facilitator, as not all management teams have reached the level of maturity needed to manage strategically. When facilitating Management Teams in identifying strategies and goals, the facilitator is focused on what the managers already know, rather seeking out new ideas through brainstorming. The answers to the key questions are in the heads of the managers.

Our experiences from facilitating these teams suggest that:

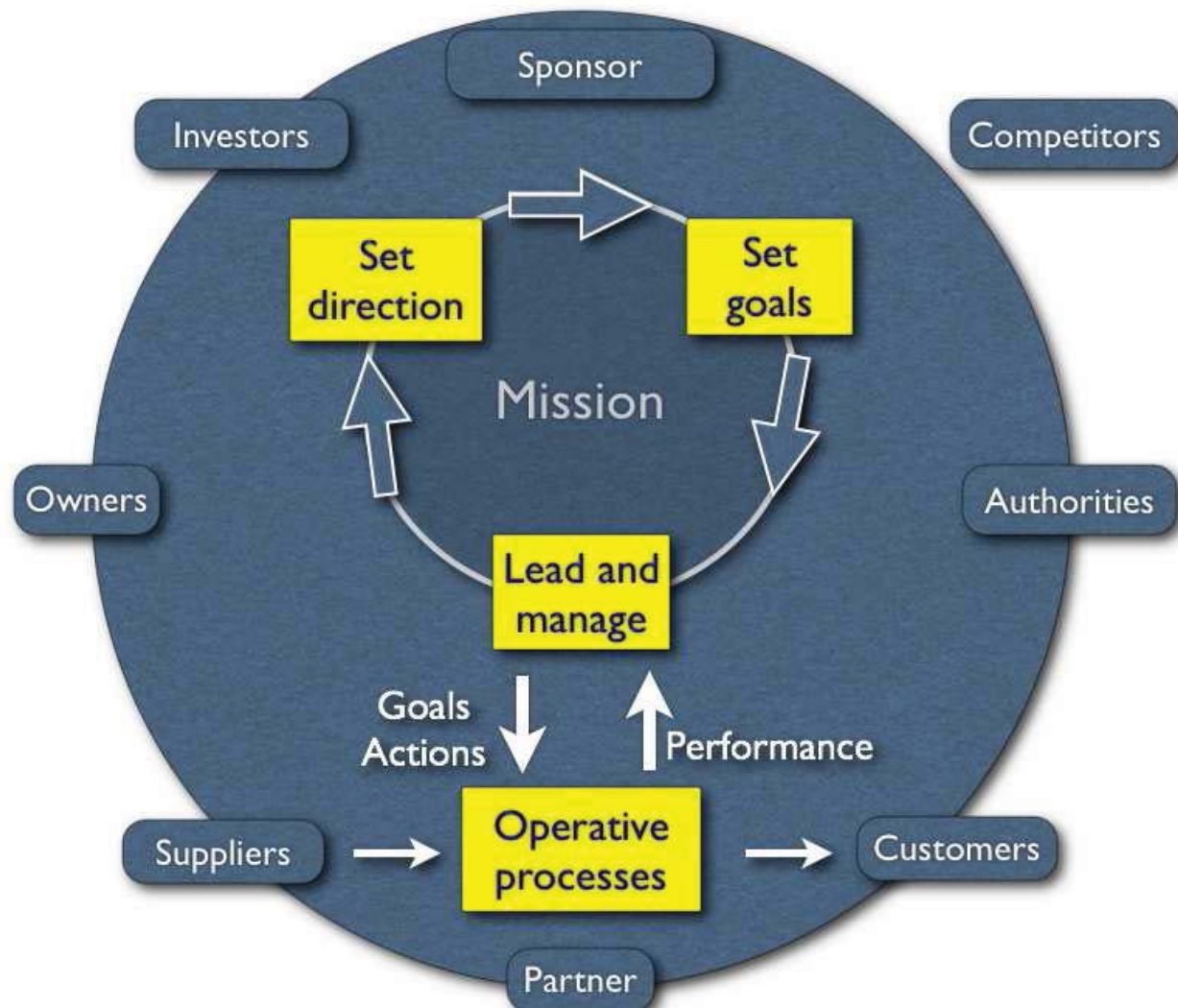
- Management teams need time to learn to work efficiently and effectively together. Immature management teams are likely to be diverted by conflicts and power

struggles;

- Many management teams try to grasp everything that they think is important; consequently, they set too many goals and lose focus on what is most important. Lack of prioritization is one of the most common obstacles to action;

Every management team needs a common understanding of the tasks the individual team members must perform if the organization is to achieve more. The most successful management teams are those that use defined strategic roles throughout the management process; the most important of which are Relationship Manager, Goal Owner and Goal Driver.

A management team will achieve more if its members know each other's strengths and are willing to compensate for weaknesses. All team members must accept that all roles in a management team are equally important.



Managers often form a diverted group of individuals, which will challenge the skills of the facilitator in any workshops. Group dynamics and the climate will also influence the results. Getting to know the team members is the essential first step for a facilitator. Is the management team a high-performance team good at managing group dynamics, or a group of frustrated managers still seeking their roles?

Providing methods and tools

What are the other prerequisites for a war room beyond understanding the stage of development of the management team? The facilitator needs to provide the management team with methods and tools to make high-quality decisions in consensus. His or her role is as enabler in the workshop process and building consensus of the outcome.

Over the years, we have developed a set of inter-related methods to meet five specific criteria. These methods should be:

- Generic – applicable to all organisations in terms of size, type, level and management system
- Selective – identifying the vital few pieces of information in order to exclude what is less important
- Stakeholder focused – the process must be centred on how key stakeholders evaluate the organisation's performance and capability, and on collaboration with those stakeholders
- Fast – applicable on all levels/units in parallel to save lead time. All steps interrelate seamlessly for the desired outcome
- Complete – provide support throughout the process from initial analysis to follow up on strategy implementation including progress reviews of actions and goals achieved

Once a management team has run its first successful war room, they find it much easier to repeat or develop the process. The Strategic War Room becomes their shared global view of their business and its environment both mentally and pictorially, and is their best source for creating a communication story that mobilizes and engages their people in achieving their goals and fulfilling their strategy.

About the author



Krister Forsberg runs his own business (www.kristerforsberg.com) in the area of operational development, management systems, management practices and, training and facilitating management teams. He has been member of several management teams in Ericsson within Mobile Internet and Mobile Systems.

Per-Olov Olsson now runs his own business as a facilitator and trainer of management teams. For many years, he worked as a trainer and facilitator of management teams, and was responsible for measurement process and performance reporting in Ericsson's radio network units. He was a champion in development of Ericsson's management process. He developed the Concept Delivery Map, Strategy Map and Goal Map.

The management approach discussed here is fully described in Goal-based Leadership, Forsberg & Olsson, Liber 2004 (In Swedish: Målbaserat Ledarskap.)

Preparing for the CPF assessment: my story

By Roman Neumayer

Recently I passed my CPF assessment to round my practical facilitation experiences off with an internationally recognised standard. In this article, I would like to share some of my experiences and impressions with you.

Being a certified Project Manager according to PMI and IPMA, it was clear to me that this certification should be handled like a small project. I started early to gather all necessary information and to work out stage 1, the documentary submission.

This prevented any stress and allowed me to take time especially to work carefully on part III of the documents, the statement of Qualifications and Experience. There you also have to state several workshops that you have done in the past.

My suggestion is that you ask the sponsors to send you a brief confirmation now because you will need it later, sometimes customers disappear and so it can be hard to catch them if you don't do it immediately.

The document also asks you for a description of one workshop in 2500 words. In the first moment this seemed to be a lot, but no worry. My suggestion is take a workshop of just one day, as this allows you to go into much more detail and as you have to match it with the Core Facilitators Competencies, you will not have enough space anyway.

Part III of the paper work took me much time. On the one hand I think I was a little bit inefficient but on the other hand, working carefully on this was also a very important preparation for stage 2.

Invitation for Stage Two

After the submission of all documents, I had to wait for some weeks until I received an E-Mail with the invitation for stage 2, the assessment day. The process description for stage 2 was also very clear. Now it was the right time to do the travel arrangement.



When groups sort out ideas, they own the results. (Photo courtesy of Roman Neumayer)

Next step was to decide on a workshop situation and to perform a contracting with your virtual client. For me, the hardest thing was not to get lost in this virtual situation where your assessor plays your client and you have to perform a workshop which is a role play as part of the assessment. Just thinking through the last sentence again and again helped me to see it clearly.

Preparation of this workshop was like you do it in your normal job, too: just perform. My suggestion is to prepare all materials that you plan to use beforehand at home and to bring them with you to the assessment. This again avoids stress preparing everything in the last moment.

What else did I do as preparation of stage 2? I reflected my personal attitude against the Core Facilitator Competencies once more.

A very long day

The assessment day was a really long day which took nearly 12 hours as I was the last candidate. The process for this day was very well structured and kept to the minute.

The initial interview was focused on your documents and the Core Facilitators Competencies. In parallel, there was time to do last preparations for the facilitation demonstration. Be creative and make use of the space and the material that is available there.

The practical facilitation was especially interesting. It seemed to me that the assessors had a very hard job. They look at your knowledge, your experience, how you deal with the people, the process, the time, the results and much more; this was the moment when I recognized that this assessment is a holistic approach. Even the process of the assessors seemed to be reflected permanently.

Passed!

The final interview was seeking any final evidence to confirm the certification result. Then I was asked to leave the room and being called in again getting my verbal result – PASSED!

That was a great moment, and on the other hand, my batteries were really empty after this long day. A little later I met with my fellow candidates for dinner in a pub. Three of six

passed and three failed; the day before also just four of six passed.

To me it seems that the IAF is looking for a really high standard and it is not just to go there and get it. For sure a certificate alone will not bring you one single job but for me it was a very important opportunity to get qualified feedback on my current performance and ideas for next steps and further improvement.

One final thing that I really enjoyed and that I can recommend was the possibility to attend the European IAF Conference on the next days, which was a great chance to meet many people in the same business and to get manifold inspirations for your work as Certified Professional Facilitator.

About the author



Roman Neumayer is Project Manager and Senior Consultant at Siemens. We congratulate him on successfully achieving the Certified Professional Facilitator designation during the assessment that preceded the IAF Europe conference held at Oxford Sept. 18-20, 2009, and are delighted he shared some of his tips for preparing for the CPF assessment.

Board approves 2010 Business Plan and Budget

By John Butcher, Regional Representative Canada | November 24, 2009

Following three lengthy conference calls in October and November, the IAF Board of Directors has formally approved its 2010 Business Plan and Budget. The Board especially appreciates the leadership provided by its Chair, Gary Rush, and Treasurer, Tony Nash, in crafting and refining these important documents.

In the coming year, the Board will focus on five priority areas, with accompanying SMART objectives.

1. Communications Strategy: Marketing, Branding, and Regional Communication

- The IAF website will be a portal for global and regional access leading to specific web pages for each Region.
- IAF will implement a comprehensive marketing and branding program that links the various programs (e.g., Certification, Conferences, Global Flipchart, etc.) to support the profile of the Association and the profession.
- IAF will develop active partnerships with other like-minded organizations to support promotion of IAF and facilitation.

2. Increased Member Retention and Membership Growth

IAF membership will grow 15% in 2010, 20% in 2011, and 25% in 2012. Membership targets are:

- o 1500 by December 31, 2010 (15%)
- o 1800 by December 31, 2011 (20%)
- o 2250 by December 31, 2012 (25%)

3. Diversified Income Sources

IAF will generate more than \$30,000 in revenue from sources other than membership, certification, or conferences.

4. Growth of Certification Programs

- IAF will have certified a total of 825 IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitators, including 96 in 2010.
- IAF will have a facilitator “Practitioner” program defined and ready for roll out. IAF will have re-certified 65% of eligible candidates.

5. Succession Planning and Role Definition

- By April 20, IAF will have a first draft operations and policy manual covering all of our policies and procedures.
- By July 31, IAF will have a full job description



for an “Executive Directorship” and an accompanying financial plan and budget.

By December 31, the Board will have filled the Executive Directorship position.

Supporting these specific priority areas and objectives, the IAF Board will continue work on several key projects, including:

- development of local IAF Chapters within our various Regions;
- implementation of an improved system of planning, budgeting, and oversight of our suite of global Conferences;
- improved and expanded use of our various communications and promotional tools (featured by redesign of the IAF web site);
- hiring a part-time Director of Certification Operations;
- continued work on a program to accredit training providers; and, translation of key IAF documents and information sources into other languages, such as Spanish and Mandarin.

All this will go on as the Board continues to direct and oversee the day-to-day operations of the Association, with the support of Peggy Bushee Services.

To enable this work, the Board has approved a balanced 2010 Budget of just over \$405,000.00. (Figures are in US funds.) IAF’s existing reserve is about \$150,000.00. Those funds enable the Board to respond to unexpected expenses, to take on new projects that might not have been anticipated at the beginning of the year but that will contribute significantly to fulfilling the Business Plan, and to underpin the hiring of an Executive Director by the end of 2010.

All in all, the Board feels that its 2010 Business Plan and Budget will significantly improve the directions of the Association and help to raise the profile of the facilitation profession and its practitioners.

Introducing Pamela Lupton-Bowers, new regional representative



I am massively proud of being selected as the European regional representative and, I must admit, somewhat anxious. I am crossing my fingers that I am able to meet the commitments and expectations of the

post. All I know is that I am grateful to be joining a team of people who seem to know what they are doing, and I am taking the baton from Martin Gilbraith who has led the team so far and set it up for success.

I started out my career in sports education in England and Switzerland and for the past 25 years have worked in adult education, first in academia, then in the corporate world, and lastly in the humanitarian sector, where I was head of staff training and development at the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

My approach has always been 'learner' based and therefore facilitative. My first challenge in pure facilitation came after we had launched a team building programme across the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 1995. Following the success of this launch, I was repeatedly asked to facilitate departmental strategy development and planning sessions.

These requests expanded to encompass global projects such as the Red Cross Global Blood Donor Project, and in 1998 I facilitated the launch of the organisation's Strategy 2010 process – I was recently invited back to facilitate an executive team meeting to begin implementation on Strategy 2020. I was particularly flattered in their continued confidence in me and it was a nice closure to the original project.

Since leaving the Red Cross in 2004, I have worked independently as PLB Consulting Ltd, providing learning and facilitation services to international organisations globally. My work has taken me to around 40 countries where I have



worked with local and international groups. The company continues to grow and I work with five or six associates who are able to run some of the field based projects for me that scale up from Geneva.

A passion to facilitate learning

I have to be upfront here and admit that my passion is for facilitating learning. A high percentage of my work at the moment is in helping organisations to design learning initiatives that are more facilitative than directive; that respect participants needs and expectations, and that enable different thinking and learning styles.

This work introduces me to some pretty incredible opportunities which I feel really privileged to be involved in. Just last month I facilitated team building amongst the syndicate groups of a humanitarian programme in Nairobi. The weekend following this course, I worked with a group of 30 women from Kibera (the largest of the huge slums in Nairobi) who are involved in a micro financing project and who wanted to improve their businesses, identify ways that could make them better business women, and work better together to improve the conditions in Kibera.

A defining moment of that day was when one of the women said, "I live in Kibera, but Kibera doesn't live in me." I think many of you will agree that moments like these make our work so meaningful and special. I left Nairobi to go to Warsaw where I had been invited as an expert contributor in adult learning techniques to a conference at the Academy of Sciences on Education of Dual use of Scientific Research. It certainly keeps me on my toes.

I learned about the IAF in 2005, my first year as an independent, and I completed my CPF at the



IAF conference in Germany. I loved the conference and ran a session in 'Brain Based Approaches to Facilitation' at the following one in Stockholm, and again in Edinburgh.

Unfortunately I missed the Oxford conference as I had assumed that the date was traditional and so I blocked the first weekend in October in my calendar, only to realise my mistake too late to be able to extricate myself from work commitments. I recently completed my CPF renewal, and also signed up for life membership.

The Geneva Facilitator Network

Two years ago with a few colleagues, I set up the Geneva Facilitator Network. We are a board of six people who established the network to provide personal development opportunities for people with an interest in facilitation, and a venue for sharing ideas. We meet once every two months and address topics and methods suggested by the group. It's been really hard work to compete with the number of other networks in Geneva, but we have successfully run three two-day TOP trainings, and workshops in Active Reviewing, Story Telling and in December last year successfully hosted a CPF event where four of our members were certified.

I take seriously my commitment to helping humanitarian workers professionalize by teaching 'pro-bono' three times a year in

Geneva, New York and Nairobi for The International Diploma for Humanitarian Assistance http://www.fordham.edu/iiha/pages/idha_about.htm and also provide support to the Jesuit Universities Humanitarian Action Network organised by the International Institute of Humanitarian Affairs at Fordham University. <http://www.fordham.edu/iiha/pages/juhan.htm>

On the personal side, several things at the moment demand my attention. I follow my husband around as he competes in IronMan triathlons, my son's cat has just had kittens and they are distracting him from his studies in LA, my daughter has just received great results in her SATs and is preparing to study at McGill, Montreal next year, and we are in the process of building a house in Chautauqua, upstate New York where we spend our summers and where we hope eventually to retire.

As I write this I am preparing a belated Thanksgiving Dinner to celebrate with my husband and neighbours, and this morning we began the long process of decorating the house for the Christmas holidays. I wish you all a wonderful and peaceful end of year however you and your loved ones celebrate. I wish you all every success and much happiness throughout 2010 and hope that I am able to meet with or communicate with many of you as our paths cross.

Developments in the IAF Europe leadership team

by Martin Gilbraith, IAF Board Regional Representative for Europe - rep.europe@iaf-world.org

In the September issue I appealed for members to get involved with the volunteer IAF Europe regional team to help the Association to grow, and better serve its members and the facilitation profession. I am delighted to report that more than a dozen of you responded, so we are grateful to all of them.

No less than five members put themselves forward to succeed me as IAF Board Regional Representative for Europe in 2010, when I move into the Vice-Chair role. It was a strong field of candidates so there was a difficult decision to be made, but Pamela Lupton-Bowers of Geneva was considered to offer the closest match to the skills & experience demanded by the role, and she was appointed by the Board in October to complete the second year of my term from January. So, I hope you will all join me in welcoming Pamela to the IAF Europe regional team, and to the global Board.

The regional team met in Belgrade in early November to review our year's work and begin to make plans for the next year, including how best to support local chapter development across the region, and how we can support members in that and in other regional roles as well. Although Pamela was not able to travel to Belgrade at short notice to be with us in person, she was able to join us at times by Skype to participate in some key decisions.

The first of these was to expand the regional team to five, by creating two new regional roles - one to focus on membership growth & chapter development, and the other on financial management & revenue generation, particularly through sponsorship and endorsement. The two new people will work as a team with Pamela as Regional Representative to the global Board, Rosemary Cairns (continuing on communications) and Gary Purser (continuing on conferences & professional development).

The second key decision was to have a second face-to-face meeting soon, to give the new team an opportunity to form and plan its work for next year. This will be hosted by Pamela near Geneva in mid-December.

I have been seeking candidates for the two new roles from those members who already expressed an interest in getting involved, in order that we can hopefully appoint two new team mem-



Martin Gilbraith and Stanko Petrovic during the IAF Europe team's meeting with the Serbian Facilitators Network. (Photo: Milica Turnic)

bers in time to attend that meeting. So I hope that we will be able to report in the next issue who they are, and what came out of that meeting - and I hope that that will include how the new team will engage all those others who are also keen to support IAF in the region, whether also in regional roles or in establishing & developing local chapters...

Also at our Belgrade meeting we were delighted to have the opportunity to meet with nine members of the Serbian Facilitators Network, and hear their views and ideas for IAF in the region - we hope to meet with members of the Geneva Facilitators Network in December as well.

If you have any questions or would like to know more, and particularly if you yourself might be interested to get involved, please email me at rep.europe@iaf-world.org, Skype me at martingilbraith, or call me on +44 161 232 8444 (or 0161 232 8444 from within the UK).

Thank you all for your commitment and support for IAF!

Welcome, new and returning members

(November 2009)

We are delighted to welcome Pawel Dabrowski of Poland who joined IAF in November, and to welcome back the following members who renewed their memberships during November:

- Helga Brueggemann, Germany
- Lain Burgos-Lovece, UK
- Gerardo de luzenberger, Italy
- Jeroen Geradts, Netherlands
- Ann Lukens, UK
- Gillian Martin Mehers, Switzerland
- David Rees, UK
- Dawn Reeves, UK



- James Traeger, UK
- Robert Verheule, Netherlands
- Christine Wank, Germany
- David Wedderkop, UK

Wanted

The IAF Europe team has not yet decided on a location for the 2010 European conference, or even if it will be one big conference and possibly several smaller events, or several mini-conferences spread around Europe, or even a European tour similar to the one that has operated so successfully in Canada for the past two years.

We are grateful to those who have already expressed interest in hosting an event this year, such as the facilitators group in Finland and facilitators in Poland. We would like to extend an invitation to others, who might be interested in hosting events in 2010, to let us know.

If you are interested in hosting a mini-conference, a workshop as part of a European tour, or a large annual conference, please let us know by emailing our team member in charge of professional development, Gary Purser, before Dec. 18, 2009. You can reach him at gary.purser@iaf-europe.eu.

As you know, events like conferences or tours don't happen by themselves (even if we wish they did!). They take a lot of dedicated work by a group of local volunteers, which can be supplemented (as it was for the Oxford conference) by a



company that carries out the logistical support work.

So help us make the decision about what should take place this year by expressing your interest in helping us to organize events or in participating in events.

Give us your ideas about where an event could be held in your area, how many people could be accommodated, local facilitators who might be interested in making presentations, and what is a good time for such an event.

Would you take part in a workshop that was part of a European Tour that came to your area and if so, what kind of topics you are interested in learning more about.

Would you attend a mini-conference if it was held close to where you live.

Workshops and Meetings

Find out more details about specific events by visiting the Workshops and Meetings section of the IAF Europe Forum (<http://www.iaf-europe.eu/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=8>)

If you would like to post an event in the Forum, please email rosemary.cairns@iaf-europe.eu.

DECEMBER

- Skilled Facilitator workshop, London, Dec. 7-11 (Roger Schwarz & colleagues)
- Metalog Training Tools workshop, Dec 8., Leeds, UK (Tobias Voss)
- UK AI Network meeting, Dec 11, London, UK
- Most Significant Changes training, Dec. 15-16, Cardiff, (Fiona Kotvojs)
- Survival Academy, Dec. 8-18, Copenhagen

JANUARY 2010

- Facilitation Skills Programme, Winter 2010, Glasgow, Kinharvie Institute of Facilitation. Jan. 19-20; Feb. 16-17; and Mar. 23-24. (Christine Partridge)
- ALIA (Authentic Leadership in Action) Europe, Jan. 10-16, Mennerode Conference Centre, Elspeet, Netherlands

FEBRUARY 2010

- Methods for Strategic Collaboration – Training Workshop, Feb. 25-March 1, North Wales. (Christine Whitney Sanchez and Cliodhna Mulhern.
- Using Strength-based Approaches to Personal and Organisational Change: The Theory and Practice of Appreciative Inquiry, Feb. 22-23, and March 3, 12, and 26, London, UK (Anne Radford and Malcolm Westwood)

MARCH 2010

- UK AI Network meeting, March 8, London, UK
- Facilitating Conflict, March 16-17, Glasgow (Kinharvie Institute of Facilitation)
- Open Space Technology training (en Francais), March 24-26, Brussels, Belgium (Diane Gibeault)



ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The IAF Europe Newsletter is published monthly by the IAF Europe Regional Team for members of the International Association of Facilitators living within Europe.

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Cover picture:

Thirty women who live in Kibera, Nairobi's largest slum, and who are part of a microfinance project, participated in a workshop facilitated by Pamela Lupton-Bowers last month. We thank Pamela for sharing this great photograph with us.

Please send your contributions to your Newsletter to rosemary.cairns@iaf-europe.eu