

kha Newsletter

Spring 2001



John Keary and Rosemary Harper

kha celebrated its first birthday at the start of March. Thanks to the confidence you - our clients - placed in us, we have comfortably exceeded our initial expectations for the partnership. Our core activity is still *coaching for directors* but we have added to our repertoire in several significant areas, including *board effectiveness*.

We are working with individuals and teams in the private and public sectors in the UK and internationally. Clients include BAE Systems, the BBC, Coca-Cola Enterprises, Consignia, Halifax, Sainsburys and Smiths Group. At the heart of what we do is a robust and reliable methodology, that enables us to work with focus and PACE! (see page

New associates David Smith and Jane Paterson-Borland have strengthened the **kha** team. Both have strong business backgrounds in major organisations, and their profiles are on the back cover.

Our alliances enable us to offer several complementary services. Castleton Partners' *Worldwork* is a wellresearched and practical tool for evaluating and developing international competences. Ben Hawkins *ViaNova* takes advantage of a superb location for those wanting to explore work and/or life issues intensively. *Speak Out!* is an approach to top teambuilding that doesn't involve hugging trees and does have a tangible product at the end.

There is further information on these services in this

There's no such thing as a free lunch....

On the other hand, we had an excellent dinner at One Aldwych in January and invited a number of human resources directors. There were no speeches: just a broad theme for debate and the opportunity to share experiences. We chose the theme of *change*. Our guests identified three major issues: the need to plan for the integration of cultures early in any merger or acquisition process; overcoming management inertia especially just below board level; and developing a critical mass of leaders committed to and capable of making change happen. Unsurprisingly, these are just the issues that were challenging HR directors a decade ago precisely because they are the ones that



The formula of a relaxed and private discussion in very comfortable surroundings seems to work well. As a venue, One Aldwych is getting rave reviews as one of the leading hotels in the UK and just happens to be modern too! The opportunity to network with peers in other organisations is well appreciated and our next dinner is in April. If you are interested, please let us know and we will include you in future events that will include a number of chief executives and other board

Everyone is a coach.....

Suddenly - or so it seems - 'coaching' is everywhere. Open a Sunday newspaper and you'll find articles on life coaching. Go to the gym and they'll soon recommend you have a personal coach to motivate you and shape that lumpy thing they call your whole body. Open any of the major consultancies' brochures or websites and coaching is there, cosily bracketed with selection, assessment and outplacement. And academics exhort line managers to coach: not command.

Enter 'coaching' into a search engine like AltaVista and up come no less than 889,010 entries. Of course, we could trim this down by qualifying it with terms like 'executive'. But it's fun to see what's out there under the name of coaching. It goes without saying that there are all sorts of coaches for sports like football, tennis and rugby. You can even engage a coach for croquet: "how to be a really mean and obstructive sh.." Or how about Synchronised Swimming in Italian - a bit of niche marketing there, all right.

Some sports seem to thrive on coaches. Tennis players have their coaches watching every stroke - bored individuals with deep suntans and baseball caps, dreaming of all those dollars. Football has always had coaches but now, instead of polyester tracksuits, they come in Armani suits and are invested with god-like attributes. Certainly Sven-Goran Eriksson has taken on this mantle. After all, it is he who will have to motivate young men on £160,000 a week to get out of bed and play for their country.

Perhaps this betrays a touch of cynicism about the Olympian ideals of sporting activity, so let's move on to the less frivolous.

At the end of this exercise I felt quite depressed. When we started out as coaches just a few years ago,

Why not try "Coaching for Life Balance and Brilliance"? We could all do with a little more brilliance from time to time. Perhaps you'd prefer Cognitive Coaching (only done when you are fully awake) or for the more lofty-minded, Astrocoaching - with Jungian therapists. Those of us who are connoisseurs of personnel departments' appraisal systems will appreciate "Catalytic Coaching - the end of the performance review" There is holistic coaching and "Personal, Professional and Financial Coaching" - both from the US, of course. There's telephone coaching and online coaching, which will "help you short cut the learning curve".

I tried one of the online sites and it took me straight to the Assess Your Profile button. The first page, before I could go any further, was a credit card billing form. I didn't go any further but tried another site, which asked me to fill out 10 questions to see if I needed coaching. I did need coaching. So I tried another couple of times, giving completely different answers. Yes, you've guessed! I ploughed on and found I was being sold books and videos with 7 or 10 point plans for success. Read the book and your life will be transformed.

coaching was such an arcane subject it had to be very carefully explained and strictly differentiated from other activities like training, saving 'lame ducks' and cleansing the corporate conscience through outplacement. Most line managers hadn't a clue what coaching was about and others who were partly informed were deeply suspicious or downright hostile. You sometimes felt like a cross between a missionary and a secret service agent.

Now coaching has burst out into the open, using every conceivable angle to sell itself. I began to think that **kha** was in danger of being too boring. Were we being seen as: "genuine, plain vanilla, and no fancy wrapping"? After all, we do nothing but coaching and we do most of it in face-to-face meetings. OK, we can be reasonably holistic, we've done our Jung too, and we do use the phone and email increasingly. Plus we've got a lot of experience of working cross-culturally. However, we only work with senior people and it has taken us time to get good at what we do. And that's it, folks.

Perhaps we really are missing something. So we worked through these attributes to produce a snappy acronym:

Performance-biased - we always look for performance gains from our coaching. We are challenging and provocative to help people stretch towards demanding goals and supportive when the going gets tough.

Aligned - we take care to balance individual and corporate goals. We support organisation change programmes and coach senior teams to lead the process.

Culturally attuned - we coach clients from a wide range of national cultures. We also help clients understand and work through corporate cultural issues.

Experienced-we have significant director-level business experience and know the realities of operating at the top of companies. We do nothing but coaching, at senior level, and have a substantial track record in a wide range of private and public sector enterprises.

So there you have our new distinctiveness:

**kha = coaching with
PACE!**

A time out... Via Nova

Most of our coaching takes place over a period of months, meeting development objectives en route. This apparently smooth progress to the desired outcome is also capable of coping with sudden changes of circumstances or unexpected opportunities. Rare is the coaching programme that doesn't have these 'disturbances' somewhere within it.

Sometimes, the change or opportunity is so significant or far reaching that, in an ideal world, you might like to seek solitude to work out a solution. Or, you might like the space to work through a set of options with your spouse or partner. For example, a major new appointment can often offer a complicated and messy mix of



roles may bring a higher public profile and an urgent need to be ready to handle media and other issues. Usually, the pressures of work and home life seem to crowd out any such ideas of 'retreat' and decisions are taken in a rush without working through all the consequences or preparing

kha is now able to offer 'time out' to individuals - and partners - in a unique way. A couple of hours from London is a quiet and beautiful corner of SW France. So what?, you may be thinking. Apart from it being a quick and painless way to get away from business and domestic pressures, it offers several other important benefits. First, accommodation is available in a range from chateau, to 'en famille', to a delightful cottage. It doesn't need us to sell the excellence of French catering and the positive effects of the exchange rate. Just be assured that your creature comforts will be taken care of in a style that suits you. Second, on the ground is an old colleague of ours, Ben Hawkins,

who will take care of everything from the moment you arrive at Toulouse airport. Not only is he a brilliant host

Is this just an excuse to take a 'mini break' in beautiful surroundings? No, but with all due respect to Milton Keynes or Basingstoke it beat them hands down on surroundings *and* costs. Is it a luxury for you or your key people? - hardly, compared with the investment in finding and retaining good people.

SPEAK OUT!

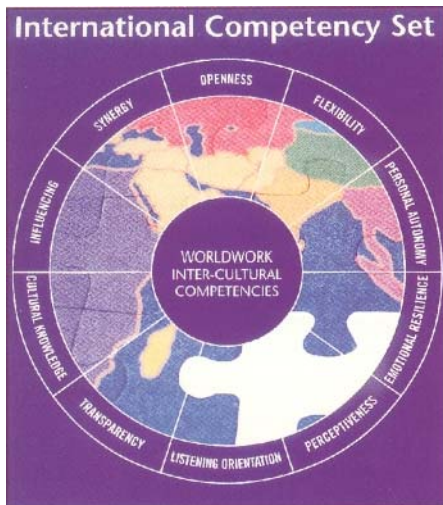
The more we work with top teams, the more we see their role shifting from wise men and women - experts in their fields - meeting occasionally to review strategy, to that of the guiding coalition tasked with selling a vision and gaining commitment. What propelled them to the top was probably a mixture of functional expertise, when they arrived there they found that the role required them to be convincing communicators with a skill set more akin to a TV presenter. Their audience is increasingly well informed, sophisticated *and* cynical about bland messages or single charismatic leaders. And they found that the top team had to speak with one voice or be discredited

Speak Out! takes teamwork and communication together in an intensively practical way. Speak Out! is run by Louise Beckett, who has worked with directors on their communication skills for a number of years, following a successful career in TV. Imagine spending several days working on the design and production of a corporate video, with a professional crew to film and edit the video under the direction of your team. You decide on themes, structure the presentation and play the roles with support and encouragement from skilled professionals. At the end of 3 or 5 days you will have a product that is polished enough for any internal audience and far more time pressures, effective team working is an absolute necessity; built in to the programme are opportunities to reflect on how the team works together and responds to critical pressures.



The location is the tranquil north of the Isle of Man, in extremely comfortable accommodation. The choice of the Isle of Man is deliberate: it is "away from it all" but only a short flight from most major locations in the UK and it is far less costly than London, for example. By its nature, every programme is carefully 'tailored' to meet each organisation's circumstances and to take account of each individual's development needs.

Worldwork



Natural growth into overseas markets, international joint ventures, alliances, mergers and acquisitions - all these present companies with a major challenge - ensuring there are enough senior people with the right talents to work and manage effectively across national and cultural divides. This might mean asking executives to work in a different country, or to lead and manage remote teams based in many parts of the world.

Worldwork offers a set of business tools that help businesses identify and develop the competences needed to manage international diversity. It makes use of a set of 10 inter-cultural competences. At **kha**, we use it to coach individuals and teams, helping them to understand the gaps between their intentions and their actual impact on people from cultures different from their own.

We are pleased to introduce you to the new members of the **kha** team

Jane Paterson-Borland - was a general manager who has held a variety of senior positions within British Airways. Her most recent position was as GM Service Business, a successful start-up operation. Before this she was GM of one of their management consultancy businesses, and was a senior manager in Customer Services and in Human Resources.



David Smith - was most recently Head of HR and Group Services at Woolwich plc, where he was involved in the change to retail banking. He was previously Personnel Director - Global Communications in BT and prior to that held senior HR positions in companies including The Rank Organisation and AMEX.

Another addition is our Client Support Manager, Charlotte Thom. Charlotte completed a BSc Honours degree in Psychology at University College London in 1999 and then travelled around the Pacific Region for a year. She joined **kha** as Client Support Manager after working for a large management consultancy. Charlotte's aim is to build her career in management development.



If you would like further information on any of our services, whether it be our core coaching process or our new programmes and initiatives including Speak Out, Worldwork and ViaNova, or you would be interested in attending one of our dinners at One Aldwych, please do contact us or go to our site www.khacoach.co.uk.

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