



COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Shell are currently ranked No.3 in Fortune's Top 500 Global Companies. "The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage" cited Arie de Geus who in his time there watched Royal Dutch Shell grow



from being the weakest to the strongest of the big energy players. Arie believed that organisations would survive only through establishing a learning culture and by building a community that learns together as a team. Shell was probably one of the first of the new wave of 'learning organisations'.

In 1909 a great learning organisation was founded and is now one of London's finest adult education centres - The Institute, Hampstead Garden Suburb. In this issue we are delighted to feature extracts (*see right*) from an interview with its Vice Principal and Director of Operations, Richard Bradbury.

POWER OF CHOICE

One of the biggest challenges for a manager is choosing between training, mentoring and coaching. In appreciating their differences, Sir John Whitmore has kindly provided the following definitions:



Training is traditional teaching, usually largely lecturing and instruction with interactive experiential learning thrown in.

Mentoring is usually the on-going guidance and supervision given by an experienced person in the field.

Coaching does not put information in but largely draws out the latent potential of the coachee, to learn naturally and to perform.

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ENERGY INTERVIEW: - Richard Bradbury, The Institute, Hampstead Garden Suburb

David Finney: What is currently your biggest challenge as an organisation?

Richard Bradbury: Survival!

DF: How do you keep your staff focussed, inspired and motivated?

RB: I believe my management style is facilitative. I try to make time to listen, operate an 'open door' policy and involve staff at all levels in developmental and creative work. I'm a great believer in the value of team working to solve problems and move new initiatives forward. I try to remember to encourage, support and give praise and thanks where they are due, and where necessary, I try to be constructively critical rather than damning and judgmental.

DF: Name 3 ways in which you facilitate learning within your organization.

RB: In-house training on key topics; information exchanges between staff operating in different subject areas; encouraging staff to undertake relevant external training/qualifications with financial support from the Institute.

DF: What are the essential ingredients to effective communication at work?

RB: Mutual respect and trust among colleagues, and clear and accessible channels of communication both formal and (equally important) informal.

DF: Describe a time in your working life, when you personally felt completely fulfilled.

RB: I have experienced both high and low levels of personal fulfillment, but I have never felt completely fulfilled. I don't necessarily see this as a bad thing, however, since complete fulfillment could be the precursor to complacency and inertia. Some of the most rewarding moments have occurred when seeing the positive transformation of individuals' lives as a result of work to which I have contributed.

Quotation from Arie de Geus & interview with Richard Bradbury both reproduced with kind permission.

COACHING TOOLS – The GROW Model

Sir John Whitmore's GROW Model has become probably the most popular coaching tool for coaches and managers:

G – Goal; **R** – Reality; **O** – Options; **W** – Will