

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2021 by Margaret Hartley



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Inspiration

During a recent networking meeting, we were asked the question:

'Who is the richest person in the world?'

We all had a guess, but were not very sure. (and most of us got it wrong!)

Then we were asked to name a teacher who had inspired us?

Names abounded around the room about PE teachers, Maths teachers, French teachers - with lots of stories.

I got to thinking about my inspirational teacher and why she inspired me.

My inspiration came from Mrs Beecham and she was my Geography teacher for both O and A Level studies (yes, I'm that old - long before GCSE and the like!)

Why did she inspire me? I remember her being very understated, however when she walked into a room everyone took notice.



She wasn't very tall and she wasn't very glamorous (unlike Mrs Oldroyd who always wore high heels, pencil slim skirts and lipstick!) and she dressed quite ordinarily - however her love of Geography was very deep and very thorough.

She could talk on any subject with the Geography remit - from climatology to geology and human geography to oceanography - and she did it WITHOUT NOTES!

Other teachers who taught me brought in - what we call now a lesson plan - Mrs Beecham (I never found out her first name) would arrive, stand at the desk at the front and talk - sometimes with a presentation, other times not - and speak with enthusiasm and passion - that's what inspired me.

Once I embarked on my training career (firstly with BT and then starting Benchmark) - I have always striven to run my training sessions without notes.

I may have all the trainee notes in a file in front of me, however I try to memorise the details in my head either the night before or sometimes on the morning of the session.

I always feel if I can talk - with enthusiasm and passion - without referring to notes which are pertinent to that company - the trainees will be inspired by me. If I have to refer to notes I think they would not be as keen to absorb new ideas and take on board what I am trying to say.

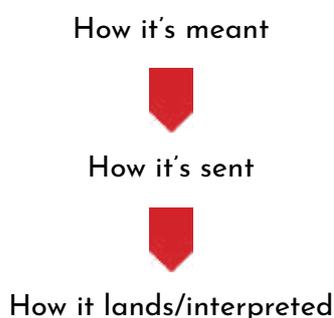
I hope I'm as glamorous as Mrs Oldroyd - but more importantly I hope I'm as inspirational as Mrs Beecham.

Who was your inspirational teacher? And why?

Communication

During the training course I deliver entitled Delivering Excellent Customer Service I talk a lot about communication and how sometimes - what we say - and how we say it - can be misinterpreted by the receiving party.

In a nutshell, communication is:



So, sometimes how it's meant is not who it lands with the other person. A prime example is texts and Whatsapp messages - because they are 100% words they have not tone of voice and not body language to endorse what they are saying.

Often people receive emails which they consider rude or abrupt and when they next talk to the person they say they didn't mean the message in that way! Hence how it was meant is not how it lands.

And then along came emojis (see more later) so that we can add visuals to what we mean eg 😊 😞 and many more!

I also talk about the customer being made to feel important with the logo MMFI



And I'm always looking for examples that I can find in my own experience to demonstrate how customers are not made to feel important with some communication. I didn't have to go far to find an example this month and this came at the veterinary surgeons I use for my two dogs Missy and Wesley.



I was on the phone ordering some flea and tick medication for them both when the nurse taking the call said

'I'll have to pass you to Lauren - I have an emergency just come in'

She paused after the first sentence which gave me time to think Why are you passing me to Lauren? Am I not important (ie MMFI me!)

If she had said:

'Mrs Hartley - I have an emergency just come in through the door - can I pass you onto Lauren to continue the order?'

It would have landed with me much better - by using my name she would have gained my attention and also personalised the call - by mentioning the emergency first I would have understood that if it was me with the emergency I would have wanted her to come off the phone - and transferring to Lauren would have been the right thing to do. I may even have asked if all was well.....

I will always emphasise that every customer feels they are the only customer you ever deal with - and want to be treated - ALL THE TIME - in that way.

85% of Your Day

During Lockdown - be it 1, 2 or 3 - managing time was difficult! A lot of my customers and their staff worked from home and that came with its own problems.

It became known as living at work as there was no let up in many ways.

When I was asked to design a course which combined both Time Management and Working from Home we had to include Zoom/Teams as being a potential time waster.



Upon doing a bit of research as well to include in the training (by Zoom I hasten to add) it came to light that the lack of commuting caused a lot of issues.

People missed the travelling to and from work. The travelling to allowed them to 'wind up' and the travelling from allowed them to 'wind down'

A lot of people had worked their own ways of coping with the lack of commute - some took their dog for a walk, others watched 30 minutes TV, one even drove their car round the block and parked back in their driveway.

Whatever worked for them was great, however the main topic for time management and working from home was - only schedule 85% of your day.

Nearly all trainees who worked from home found that they didn't take as many breaks, they worked longer hours and whilst they shifted more work, they were also more tired at the end of the day.

By only scheduling 85% of your day to work - it left 15% which could be reactive to more work coming in - or more importantly taking those breaks which were often missed.

One client started 'coffee room chats' on Teams which involved someone saying they were going for a coffee and would anyone like a chat? The chat could be by text or visual - whichever was most effective for the person. A lot of people missed the camaraderie of the office and the banter. By introducing 'coffee room chats' the team still had the interaction they craved and around 15 minutes 'break time'

Gaffs I have Made

I guess after training for over 30 years I am going to have made a few 'gaff's along the way and so I thought I'd share some with you.

My first was while working with the call centre at Empire Stores. I was doing the TNA (training needs analysis) and talking to heads of department from Call Centre, Customer Service, Mail Opening (yes, really! - pre Internet days) and Accounts.

I diligently took notes and produced my report for the personnel who had a training requirement.

They fed back to me that they were rather concerned about something I had put in the report which was a condition called 'a.....' it didn't take me too long to realise that they had meant 'slow pay' - being a customer who was slow at paying. Not my interpretation which was slope (\) a

They found this hilarious and it became a standing joke that I was training the 'a trainees on a certain day!

My second was while helping out at a local pub with front of house. I am a firm believer that if you can't do it, you can't train it so I work every now and again at front of house, cold calling, customer service - to keep 'my hand in' and also ensure I have some examples to discuss with the trainees.

This particular shift I was looking at the reservations on the booking in sheet and noticed there were several families called Walkins. When I went over to take their order I commented that it must be a celebration, they looked slightly taken a back and rather puzzled. As I started to explain, they advised me their name was Mr and Mrs Connaught - not Walkins.

Yes! You've guessed it - Walkins was 'walk ins' - people who had walked into the pub on the chance of getting a table.

Myself and the staff concerned still laugh about it to this day to say I felt rather stupid is an understatement!

*Walk-ins
Welcome*



My third involves a training course I ran - aptly named Time Management - and I was late arriving.

The course was in the centre of Bradford - notorious for not having much sat nav coverage and being bad to park.

I know Bradford fairly well so didn't anticipate much issues - the sat nav was working fine - and I was in good time - arriving at Bradford City Centre 30 minutes to park and get to the venue.

Then! The sat nav stopped working and I got in a wrong lane of traffic - then I encountered road works. I rang forward (hands free of course) to advise I may be cutting it fine and all was well. Then! I couldn't find a parking space and because of the city centre site and the one way system I was going round and round in circles.

Time was ticking away I rang forward again to advise and all seemed good.

I arrived 30 minutes late with 5 trainees sitting with their arms crossed, tapping their toes and raising their eye brows with one declaring 'You're going to have to work bloody hard to earn your money today' I hasten to add that 1 of the trainees had returned to their desk to continue work until I arrived.

Now! What I should have done is say 'Well there's your first time management test. I advised I was going to be late so you could have gone back to your desks and continued work until I arrived - or you could have sat here chuntering and being childish until I arrived. You had a choice and only one of you has passed the test'

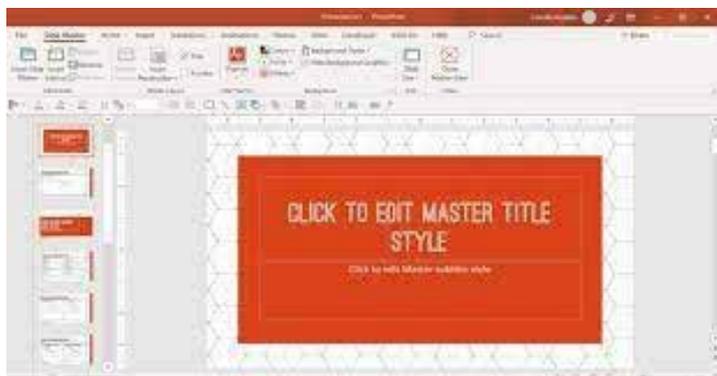
Instead, I was flustered and had to take several deep breaths in order to calm myself down, get set up and then start.

I managed to demonstrate that, even though I had lost 30 minutes, I was going to prioritise the learning so that we maximised the learning to what they wanted to know.

I did work hard to earn my money that day - and it's something I have never forgotten - and I am ALWAYS early for Time Management training!

My final gaff (and I am sure there are more!) was running a Presentation Skills course. I am not a lover of PowerPoint, however for this course I know it is necessary because most trainees will be required to use it - or a similar product.

I prepared the slides and - as always - put the company logo on the front of the workbooks and also on every slide of the presentation I was going to show them.



I arrived and duly set up the room for the 6 trainees - the PowerPoint slide on the wall declaring the title

and the company and waited for the trainees to arrive.

They walked in and one immediately said 'That's not our logo It's our sister company's'

Now there's an old saying which is 'You don't get a second chance to make a first impression' and boy was that true this time.

I rapidly thought how I could use this and stated (something like)

'From the minute your audience walk in you, and your presentation are 'on stage' - and you don't get a second chance at this. I have blown this one for you how can I make it up?'

This prompted discussion as to how it had happened in the first place and what I could do to make it better.

I don't think they realised my mistake - and it certainly proved a learning curve for me!

Train The Trainer Training

I have been asked for this on a regular basis throughout my training career and I always have to stipulate that the training is not accredited, and I have no formal training qualifications.

The course has evolved from my love of imparting knowledge to other people, the incidents I have encountered along the way and also the feedback I have had from trainees who have then gone on to either train or become trainers as a job or as self employed.

So I thought I'd show you how I run this course because it is 2 days and it does include a lot of practical sessions.

The definition of training is (widely accepted) to be 'The art of bringing a child, person or animal to a desired state or standard of efficiency by practice or instruction'

My course is based around this video course outline taken from my YouTube Channel

YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/t2GD4CirpaM>



Here's how the 2 days would go:

Pre-course work:

Everyone completes the Learning Styles questionnaire designed by Honey and Mumford which decides which learning style you are: pragmatist, theorist, reflector or activist. It is important to know this when writing a training plan so that all can be encompassed in the session.

Day One:

Introduction of trainer and trainees Learning style results - why they are important - how you can use them.

Training v Teaching

What is a trainer's job?

Writing a training plan - planning time - activities and visual aids.

Practical session: write a training course on how to read an Ordinance Survey map using techniques appealing to all Learning Styles.

Communication: body language, words and tone of voice - how to use them as an effective trainer.

Visual Aids: 10 points of PowerPoint 10 points of flip charts 10 points online training.

Awkward trainees - how to deal with questions, hecklers, bored, tired, 'told to come' trainees.

Zoom/Teams: how to make online learning as interactive and stimulating as the classroom.

Practical Session: take a company topic of training and 'brainstorm' how to train to maximum effect, using the new skills learned.

Day Two: Training time!

Each person presents their training plan plus a section of their training session.

Each person has 1 hour to do this and it will be videoed and played back for class critique in the afternoon.

An award will be made for the best training session at the end of the day.

The training doesn't stop there because a trainer's job is also to keep the momentum going, so I send four emails to the personal inbox of the trainee, every week for 4 weeks and this covers the topics they have covered during the two days and also some reminders of things that have happened in the two days.

Training doesn't stop in the classroom!

If this looks like something that you might be interested in I am running this as an Open Course on

11th and 12th November, 2021

at Dintingdales c/o Scarthingwell Golf course LS24 9PF (between Sherburn in Elmet and Tadcaster mid way between Leeds and York)

OPEN COURSES from Benchmark

Yes! I'm back in the classroom and I can't wait to welcome more trainees into the Benchmark family of education.

I'm running them again at Dintingdales Meeting Rooms which is part of Scarthingwell Golf Course just outside Tadcaster - LS24 9PF

Delivering Excellent Customer Service

Keeping the customer informed, keeping promises & making them feel important - good communication is key - be it face to face, telephone or email

6th October, 2021
9th November 2021

With loads of free parking and oodles of free coffee - this is the ideal venue to get trainees away from the office and discussing what they want or need to learn.

Here's the schedule from now to the end of November, 2021

Leading Effective Teams

Get to know about leadership, motivation, handling difficult team members, delegation & more

20th October, 2021
16th November, 2021

Cold Calling/Making Appointments

Getting that first impression right with powerful words and persuasive techniques- mixed with LinkedIn and also email - making appointments made easy

14th September, 2021
17th November, 2021

Presentation Skills

Learn how to control the nerves, write and present a session visual aids effectively and powerfully - full theory and practical sessions

21st October, 2021

Personal Sales Skills

That all important meeting - making a great first impression, listening & looking for clues, selling benefits, working out recovery lines and closing.

29th September, 2021
25th November, 2021

Handling Difficult People and Situations

Not everyone sees the world as you do, or reacts to situations like you do. Learn to prevent, adapt and handle difficult people & situations

28th September, 2021
23rd November, 2021

The trainee rate includes:

Personal invitation to attend
All course notes
Personal Action Plan
Certificate of completion
Morning & afternoon refreshments and lunch
4 follow on emails to refresh the new skills learned

Above courses are £200 + VAT per course

Times are 9.30am until 4.30pm

Want to know more?

Call me on 01977 682900

All these courses can be run in-house, highly personalised to your company.

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