



**MARK LANE** PROFILES THE EXCELLENT WORK OF MACNAUGHTON MCGREGOR, THE TRAINING AND HR EXPERTS, THROUGH TWO RECENT SATISFIED CLIENTS

## PEOPLE SOLUTIONS THAT GIVE REAL BUSINESS RESULTS

PEOPLE – they are the most important element of any successful organisation, whether it be the business leaders, the middle management or the people on the shop floor. Developing people and enabling them to reach their potential is the key to long term business success. Yet to do this successfully requires a clear idea of what you want people to achieve and the approach needs to be led by people with experience and expertise combined with an innate understanding of the employee development process.

It is in these areas where the team at Macnaughton McGregor excels. Macnaughton McGregor is a specialist in HR and training and development consultancy who have a wealth of experience in designing and implementing people projects.

The company works with organisations of all types and size, the emphasis of its work always firmly on people development and the maximising of potential from the workforce. An excellent recent example of this is its work with Easibathe, a supplier and installer of special needs bathing and access equipment based in the North East of England.

Audrey Macnaughton director at Macnaughton McGregor explains: "Easibathe is going through a number of changes and putting in a number of people processes. The company brought us in to have a look at performance management and job

descriptions, so we designed a tailor made appraisal system, came up with their performance measures and trained their managers. We also did briefing sessions with all their staff to ensure they were all prepared for the appraisal system.

"We truly tailor made the people systems for them, working closely with the managing director and linking in with the requirements of Investors in People. We did managerial coaching to make sure they were comfortable and happy with everything. Essentially, that is what sets us apart - we don't just design paperwork and do training and walk away. We do a degree of nagging, guiding and cajoling to make sure everything is implemented effectively."

The result of this extensive approach was a highly satisfied client. Martin Cook, managing director of Easibathe, says: "We found the help from Macnaughton McGregor invaluable when deciding on the best way to put in job descriptions and appraisals. They really got to know us and our business and now keep in regular contact with us to make sure we are making progress and implementing things properly. It's great to have such a professional team on the doorstep."

Another company that Macnaughton McGregor has worked with recently is Alex Scullion, electrical contractors and inspectors that is currently going through Investors in People. Audrey takes up the story: "I was doing some director coaching with one of the directors, practical coaching sessions,

and they mentioned IIP. I asked how they were getting on with some of the elements and this led to a conversation about appraisals. They wanted all managers to be involved with the design so I carried out workshops with the managers to introduce them to appraisals and we discussed and agreed what they wanted in a tailor made system.

"We then came up with the first draft and during another workshop we started to develop their skills to enable them to carry out appraisal meetings. At a final review session I acted out a live case study with one of the managers and they found this really useful because they had never tackled anything like this before and were unsure how it would run in real life."

Once again, Macnaughton McGregor won substantial praise from the client. Alex Scullion MD, Alex Scullion, says: "Audrey from Macnaughton McGregor really helped us to make progress on our Investors in People action plan. She involved the managers in designing the appraisal paperwork as well as training them to develop their appraisal skills. As a result they have really bought in to it and we are starting to see real progress. We would definitely recommend the service from Macnaughton McGregor."

Macnaughton McGregor also excels in assisting companies with contracts of employment and employee handbooks, alongside a wide range of other HR and training services.

For more information, please call 0191 246 1160 or visit [www.2macs.com](http://www.2macs.com)

# MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TRAINING

**AUDREY MACNAUGHTON ON THE CHALLENGE OF USING TRAINING TO POSITIVELY AFFECT YOUR BOTTOM LINE**



TRAINING COURSES are generally seen as a good thing but do they actually make a difference to the way people work and, ultimately, do they make a difference to company results?

The last thing you want to do is devote the time and energy going on a course and not actually get any benefits.

Similarly, if you are a manager you don't want your people to go on a course and come back saying that it was a good day and the sandwiches were good but they didn't get anything out of it!

The challenge for the training professional is to make sure that the training is well thought out, tailored to the company and delivered in such a way that motivates and inspires the people on the course to go back to work and put into practice some of their learning.

During our training courses we test or evaluate how the training is going by gauging the reaction of the group and observing and checking if they are actually taking on board the key messages and ideas.

One of the ways to make sure that a commitment is made is to give time and guidance to the group on preparing an action plan. The best advice on preparing an action plan is not to make general statements like "improve my leadership skills" because that's as specific as the New Year resolution of "must get fitter" – and will probably have as much success as the New Year resolution as well!

The key on action planning is to make the actions as specific as possible or in other words "what will be your first step?". This could be, for example, to delegate a piece of work. On our courses we always encourage delegates to do some more detailed action planning so that they have a clear idea of the steps involved and have no excuse of not knowing where to start.

In the training room we can only plan and prepare for future actions and of course what happens in practice can be a different matter. When it comes to making sustainable change back at work it's not as easy as just planning; what seems ok in theory doesn't always work out in practice.

On the job coaching can help here, so we offer to carry out coaching with people on a one to one basis or at the very least offer a helpline for delegates to chat over an issue or talk through their progress.

It seems that you can have a coach for most things – work, sport, money and life! Coaching as an approach has offered a great deal of benefit for people as each session can be focussed on a specific problem or objective and a good coach will tailor their approach to suit the client. The topics talked about are real work issues which could be problems or of course opportunities and the role of the coach is to give the person the chance to talk and think through how they are going to approach the situation.

All of the things I've mentioned so far are services you can get from an external training and development professional but what about the manager's role in coaching and making sure people get the best from courses or in fact any learning opportunity.

A survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) revealed that 99% of employers believe coaching can deliver tangible benefits to both individuals and organisations. Another survey by the CIPD revealed that 88% of employers now expect their line managers to deliver coaching as part of their day-to-day work.

We are often asked to provide coaching training for managers or team leaders and one of the principles we work on is that coaching is more than simply a skill to be developed and an activity to



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carry out every now and again; rather it is an overall style of leading.

A big part of this style of leadership is to take an active role in the development of your people. Key steps would include planning their development with them to make sure it meets their goals and those of the business, having a discussion with them prior to any training course to talk about what you expect them to achieve and finally being a sounding board and offering encouragement when they return to the workplace.