

Delivering Effective Mediation



Karen Erwin

Erwin Mediation Services

Mediation has a success rate of over 70 percent and gives both parties control in the process and outcome of a dispute¹. It is generally accepted in legal circles that ninety percent of Litigation cases settle on the doors of the Court or Employment Tribunal.

Whether it is a commercial dispute or one in the workplace, mediation should be the preferred option for you and your clients.

What is mediation - In a nutshell it is a process whereby the parties themselves, with the help of the Mediator, find a solution to their problem. Because the parties have devised the solution (rather than having it handed down by a Judge or an Arbitrator) it better fits the problem it is trying to resolve and is more likely to last. The relationship between the parties in the dispute is more likely to survive than if they go to Court. As the disputants employ the Mediator and because there is no formalised Court-like process, mediations can take place very quickly and confidentially leading to much reduced cost in both management time and legal fees.

Where the dispute relates to the workplace, and particularly a claim of bullying or harassment, the matter can be dealt with confidentially and before the parties become polarised and the issue disrupts the work environment. The same is true for those facing change in their organisation.

So what is mediation, how does it work and how can you use it in your own or in your client's business.

Problem solving is the starting point of mediation. "We are where we are." – "How are we going to go forwards from here?" You don't have to prove or justify your prior actions to the Mediator – the Mediator is not going to judge you or give a decision on which party is right or wrong. The background information about the dispute is used for context and, because of that, you don't have to spend days preparing your

case as you would have to for litigation.

Speed - With mediation you can get to your mediation day in a matter of weeks. You don't need to spend days or years preparing the case, getting witness statements and documents as you would for The High Court or for the Employment Appeals Tribunal.

Costs – because you don't have to go through the Court or Tribunal process with the attendant time and preparation, it automatically costs considerably less to mediate.

Management Time – the amount of time you spend on preparation for mediation is much less than that required for litigation. The statement of your case or defence that you will have to prepare for the mediation is not written in legal language. It simply sets out the facts of your claim and /or defence, attaching any directly relevant supporting documents.

Confidentiality – one of the basic tenets of mediation is confidentiality. Firstly, the very fact of agreeing to go to mediation is confidential. Secondly what happens in the mediation process itself is also confidential and the parties, when coming to their agreement, can decide what is to remain confidential and what may be made public.

Binding- when the parties arrive at their agreement, it is written down and then signed. From that moment it is binding. If, as sometimes happens in work place disputes, the parties don't want to sign a document, they can still agree that it is binding.

On-going relationship- because the parties haven't taken each other to Court and had a very public row, there is a much greater chance that the ongoing relationship can be preserved. Indeed part of the solution may be to include an ongoing relationship into the agreement. For example if the dispute is about one of the parties not paying for goods or services and if it turns out that this is due to lack of funds, the parties may agree to try to trade out of the situation and extra security to secure the debt may be given. Imagine the same scenario in a Court situation – you would end up with a Judgment for the debt with no assets to go against. Both parties would have effectively lost.

Lawyers – you may have lawyers and other advisors helping you and at the mediation or not – it is your choice.

Voluntary Process

Mediation is a **voluntary** process – both the parties have to agree to go into and stay in

mediation. This can be agreed at the time the dispute arises but is probably better agreed at the time the contract is made. The following is a standard precedent clause that you and your clients could use in contracts. It can be included in standard terms and conditions of sale or purchase, in service and employment contracts and in any contract or letter where you are agreeing terms with another party. It can also be adapted to fit in with employment grievance procedures.

"If any dispute arises in connection with the performance, operation interpretation or construction of this agreement the Parties will attempt to resolve the dispute by negotiation as soon as the dispute arises. If the Parties fail to resolve the dispute by negotiation they shall, as soon as is practicable, refer the matter to mediation. In the event the Parties cannot agree on a Mediator the matter shall be referred to the President for the time being of the Mediators Institute Ireland who shall nominate a Mediator. The Parties reserve all of their legal rights in the event of the mediation not being successful."

As mediation is voluntary any party may leave during the mediation but this tends not to happen.

Tiered clause

The clause is called a "tiered clause" because it moves the parties through options and stages of alternative dispute resolution before resorting to the legal route.

Because the most cost effective way of resolving a dispute is to negotiate with the other party this is the first option in the "tiered clause". The next stage is for the parties to go to mediation and only if this does not succeed are the parties entitled to resort to the legal route. These clauses can be tailored to the parties' requirements.

The legal rights of the parties are protected even while the mediation is on-going. If it is unsuccessful the parties can still go to or continue with their litigation. In cases where the mediation doesn't resolve all of the issues, it may narrow them and therefore narrow the scope of the litigation.

Costs of Mediation

The cost of the mediation will depend on the Mediator and on the likely length of the mediation but in general they would be in line with those of a Solicitor. The costs and any outlays of the Mediator are shared by the parties unless they agree otherwise. In workplace disputes the company normally bears all of the costs. The parties will have to

¹ CEDR Press Release April 2005

pay for their own legal advisors if they instruct them.

The real saving in legal fees comes in the much reduced preparation time for the case and the fact that the mediation can take place so quickly after the cause of action arises. Most commercial and workplace mediations are resolved within the day. The day is a full "office day" - indeed many go on late into the evening. This compares to a "Court day" which is four hours.

The fact that the matter can be mediated in proximity to when the cause of action arises also saves enormously on management time and energy. In contrast to litigation where you have to justify your previous actions which entails a "backwards focus", in mediation you are concentrating on the future and solving the problem.

Mediation has to be the preferred business solution to resolving problems. To make sure this option is open to you or your clients, a clause agreeing to mediation in the event of a dispute should be inserted into the contract and into the employment grievance procedures from the beginning. Having a mediation clause in your contracts will save you and your clients much grief, time, energy and costs.

Karen Erwin has unique experience, expertise, skills and qualifications in the commercial world. Professionally trained as a Solicitor, Karen, after 15 years as a senior commercial litigation and employment law partner in A&L Goodbody, moved into the business world as an executive director of The Irish Times.

Combining her business and legal experiences, Karen realised that companies were not best served by litigation to solve their disputes and so she set up her own company, Erwin Mediation Services Ltd., to provide a practical, fast, confidential and cheaper way of managing and resolving commercial disputes and disputes in the workplace.

She has just been elected by her peers to be President of the Mediators Institute Ireland

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Functional Silos & Process Tunnels



Roger Tregar

Leonardo Consulting

Some of My Best Friends Work in Silos!

The essential message of Business Process Management (BPM) and a key reason why implementation can be complicated, is this: we (mainly) design, manage and reward our organisations by functional performance, yet we deliver value to customers via cross-functional processes. Getting the right balance between functional management and process delivery is at the heart of organisational performance.

Where the emphasis is on functional performance alone we create silos that optimise functional outcomes, perhaps at the expense of end-to-end process performance. Neither is organisational performance optimised by focussing on process tunnels at the expense of functional operations. We don't want to replace functional silos with process tunnels.

FUNCTIONAL SILOS

Organisations have been designed around functions for a very long time and for good reason. The functions of an organisation, such as Sales, Manufacturing, Claims Assessment, HR, Warehouse etc, will always be important. They are the structures in which we get things done. The warehouse will always have a manager and inventory levels need to be controlled.

There is something positive to be said for silos. In the original use of the term, grain silos are used to store the raw materials for building the future - making product, feeding animals, planting crops. From these silos comes future prosperity and without them there would be no growth. Grain silos also provide effective control and separation mechanisms. Of course, if the grain stays in the silos, nothing happens. If we fixate on 'best practice silo management' we'll end up with full, clean and efficient silos but no growth, no products to deliver.

While looking at other examples of silos we can't ignore the much more ominous analogy - the missile silo. Mainly hidden, hard to penetrate, heavily defended and able to launch devastating attacks with a moment's notice. Perhaps your BPM journey has encountered more of these types of silos than the benign grain storage!

FOCUS ON THE INTERSECTION

To have an effective business process management orientation we need to measure the performance of the functions by their contribution to the processes they

touch. This performance assessment approach applies equally to functional teams and the individuals in them. To measure performance at the intersection of functions and processes we must understand our processes. There are many reasons for modelling processes. One very important reason is this need to understand how the functions and individual positions contribute to process performance.

People (usually) work in functional groupings and the purpose of their work must be to contribute to processes delivering value to customers. This raises the interesting question about reporting structures. Let me say firstly that I think human beings need to have clear reporting structures and that we all need to know 'who the boss is'. We will have varying degrees of need to interact with 'the boss', but it's when we have structures full of ambiguous relationships and dotted lines that we can get into trouble. It won't always be possible to have clear 1:1 relationships but this should be our notional goal.

In a recent client assignment we have found that some people can have three separate reporting lines for the different roles that form part of their position. This makes it hard to resolve priorities and conflicts and is not good for effective decision making. In this case, we are realigning positions with processes and achieving much better role alignment.

So, to whom should people report - the Functional Manager or the Process Owner? There is no easy answer. The particulars of the situation will determine the right approach for each case. However, it is clear that the key objective must be to have clarity about the reporting structures.

You can make a general argument that reporting directly to the Functional Manager is the best model for two reasons. In practical terms it is, of course, likely that the Customer Service Consultant in the call centre is going to report to the Call Centre Manager (Functional Manager). A Process Owner can also have a more detached view of process performance if she doesn't also directly 'own' lots of the functions and people that contribute to them.

Inevitably we end up in some form of matrix management. Some people don't like matrix management but I think it's an unavoidable fact of life. Is anybody out there actually living and working in a simple one dimensional world? The answer is to have clarity and shared understanding about who reports to whom and why.

A WORD ABOUT TEAMWORK

In this context you might also wonder if questions about reporting to Functional Managers and/or Process Owners are the same as collaborative working and plain old fashioned teamwork. Does good teamwork equate to good process management? It might do, but it depends on the team and the scope of its activities. If team is the

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The person determined to achieve success, learns the principle that:

- **Progress is made one step at a time**
- **A house is built one brick at a time**
- **A business grows one customer at a time**
- **A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step**

”

whole enterprise then certainly team success is process success. At lower levels in the organisation, a team might also be dealing with a genuine end-to-end process – but more by accident than design unless process-based management is well entrenched. In any case, teams are certainly contributing to process performance, even if unconsciously.

Seeking to increase “teamwork” is not new. Organisational teamwork has always been about teams within teams and getting rid of ‘us’ and ‘them’ – ie directing functional behaviours toward enterprise behaviours (strategic objectives). If teamwork means focussing, not on internal functional arrangements, but on customer outcomes then that’s a great definition of business process management.

IN SUMMARY ...

We don’t want to replace functional silos with process tunnels.

There is something positive to be said for silos. Grain silos store the raw materials for building the future – making product, feeding animals, planting crops. Without them there would be no growth. However, if the grain stays in the silos, nothing happens. Focusing on ‘best practice silo management’ might give us full, clean and efficient silos but no growth, no products to deliver.

Look out for another silo type – the missile silo. Mainly hidden, hard to penetrate, heavily defended and able to launch devastating attacks with a moment’s notice!

Effective BPM orientation means we measure the performance of functions by their contribution to the processes they touch.

There is no easy answer to the question “To whom should people report – the Functional Manager or the Process Owner?” Inevitably we end up in some form of matrix management. The critical issue is to have clarity and shared understanding about who reports to whom and why.

Does good teamwork equate to good process management? It might do, but it depends on the team and the scope of it’s activities. If teamwork means focussing, not on internal functional arrangements, but on customer outcomes then that’s a great definition of business process management. Teamwork is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for effective business process management.

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Taking Control of Stress in Your Life



Trish Ganly

Trish Ganly & Associates

‘Change the things that can be changed, accept those that cannot, and have the wisdom to know the difference’

Stress is the pressure we encounter in living our daily lives. It is a personal experience which can have a significant effect on many aspects of our lives – performance, energy levels, quality of life, confidence and ability. Of course a certain amount of stress is necessary in our lives to enable us respond to the challenges of our continually changing environment. But stress can become a potential threat to our physical and mental health if it is allowed to build up unchecked. The ability to cope with stress and pressure varies by individual – as we all differ in how we view and respond to situations – what one person experiences as exciting may be distressing to another.

In assessing stress levels I came across the following questionnaire in Tim Handles ‘Reducing Stress’ :

How Stressed are You ?

-take a short survey below;

Measure your level of stress regularly by responding to the following statements, and mark the options closest to your experience. Be as honest as you can : if your answer is ‘never’, mark Option 1; if it is ‘always’, mark Option 4; and so on.

1. I blame myself when things go wrong at work. 1 2 3 4
2. I bottle up my problems then feel like I want to explode. 1 2 3 4
3. I concentrate on my work to forget about personal problems 1 2 3 4
4. I take out anger and frustration on those nearest to me. 1 2 3 4
5. I notice negative changes in my behavioural patterns when I am under pressure 1 2 3 4
6. I focus on the negative rather than the positive aspects of my life. 1 2 3 4
7. I feel uncomfortable when experiencing new situations 1 2 3 4
8. I feel that the role I play within my organisation is worthless 1 2 3 4
9. I arrive late for work or important meetings 1 2 3 4

10. I respond negatively to personal criticism 1 2 3 4
11. I feel guilty if I sit down and do nothing for an hour or so 1 2 3 4
12. I feel rushed even if I am not under pressure 1 2 3 4
13. I have insufficient time to read newspapers as often as I would like 1 2 3 4
14. I demand attention or service immediately 1 2 3 4
15. I avoid expressing my true emotions both at home and at work 1 2 3 4
16. I undertake more tasks than I can handle at once 1 2 3 4
17. I resist taking advice from colleagues and superiors. 1 2 3 4
18. I ignore my own professional and physical limitations 1 2 3 4
19. I miss out on my hobbies and interests because my work takes up all my time 1 2 3 4
20. I tackle situations before thinking them through thoroughly 1 2 3 4
21. I am too busy to have lunch with friends or colleagues during the week 1 2 3 4
22. I put off confronting and resolving difficult situations when they arise 1 2 3 4
23. People take advantage of me when I do not act assertively 1 2 3 4
24. I am embarrassed to say when I am overloaded with work 1 2 3 4
25. I avoid delegating tasks to other people 1 2 3 4
26. I deal with tasks before prioritising my workload 1 2 3 4
27. I find it difficult to say no to requests and demands 1 2 3 4
28. I feel I have to finish all outstanding work each day 1 2 3 4
29. Fear of failure stops me from taking action 1 2 3 4
30. I think I will not be able to cope with my workload 1 2 3 4
31. My work life tends to take priority over my family and home life 1 2 3 4
32. I become impatient if something does not happen at once. 1 2 3 4

Analysis

Now that you have completed the self-assessment, add up your total score, and check your stress level by reading the corresponding evaluation. However low your stress level may be, there is always room for improvement. Use your answers to identify the areas that need improving.

32 – 64 : You manage your stress level very well. Too little stress can be unstimulating, so strive to achieve the optimum balance between positive and negative stress.

65 – 95 : You have a reasonably safe level of stress, but certain areas need improvement.

96 – 128 : Your level of stress is too high. You need to develop new strategies to help reduce it.

From : *Reducing Stress* by Tim Handle; Published by Doring Kindersley, London 1998

Are you satisfied with your result? If not, read on and even if you are satisfied with your result it's worth reading on as you may be able to help a friend/colleague in stress.

Each of us can begin to make a difference in our lives only when we decide to do something different otherwise we remain stuck in the status quo. As with all areas of personal change, 'making stress work to my advantage' must be a priority and some time must be scheduled each day to work on it.

DIARY **ASSESS** **DECIDE** **DO IT** **REFLECT**

1. Diary – Write down the demands being made of you over a two week period.

2. Assess – Categorise into personal, work and home demands. Critically assess these demands by asking some questions – e.g. Do I have to do this? If not, who else could do it? What would happen if it was never done? It is at this stage that a personal coach is invaluable to challenge you as you begin to make excuses and create obstacles. The coach challenges you on - where you are currently at? where you want to be? what's missing? what's the gap? what actions are necessary to bridge the gap? but remember a coach 'can only help you to help yourself'.

3. Decide to change patterns – Choose a number of strategies

4. Do It! – Make one important change everyday and stretch your comfort zone.

5. Reflect on what happens - Learn from your new experiences – what worked? what didn't work? What will you do differently next time?

In making stress work to your advantage it is critical to devise strategies that work for **you**, for example saying 'no', delegating, prioritizing, setting goals, relaxing. Integrating some of these self-management strategies into daily life supports the achievement of a balanced life, but it is persistence and practice which makes changes stick.

I cannot recall the source of these quotes which resonate for me when managing stress 'don't try to be all things to all men and

women!' and 'surrender to the fact that life isn't fair, it will liberate you!'

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Work Sm@rter But not Harder!



William Bruen

Priority Management

Do you want you and your organisation to be more productive? Most people answer 'yes' to this question. Then you need to "**Slow Down, Step Back and establish just how smart you actually work**".

Increasingly, individual workers are being controlled by their work and not vice versa. This is impacting negatively on work/life balance and causing increased stress levels. In a recent survey from Priority Management International, almost 85 percent of people were more concerned about leading a balanced life than they were five years ago, yet only one in 50 people felt they lead such a balanced lifestyle.

The push for productivity-increases here in Ireland is driven by the desire and need for businesses to accomplish more with fewer resources. Pressure to do more with less is causing negative stress particularly in the management layer of our public and private organisations.

It is remarkable but regardless of industry sector, all Information Workers suffer from similar stresses and productivity issues. These core 'Productivity Pirates' must be controlled in order to achieve sustainable control of your life as a whole – not just the working part of it. Unfortunately the portion of your brain that personally administers your work schedule is not controllable by your conscious mind with the result that people who are out of control at work cannot go home mentally.

On the positive side, this means that when you do succeed in gaining such control, not only does your effectiveness at work increase but so does the quality of your life.

As any science teacher will tell you, to control something you need to be able to understand and ideally measure that something. Information workers need to look at their 'Productivity Pirates™' on a regular basis. Every uncontrolled, highly reactive day is an opportunity to identify and rank the culprits. When you list them, have a look for any quick fixes.

For example, if some one person or a finite number of people are interrupting you, see can you control those interrupts through regularly scheduled one-to-one sessions. Perhaps some are just invalid interrupts that need to stop.

As a fundamental step to control your 'Productivity Pirates™' you must have clarity on what exactly you are supposed to deliver to the organisation. These 'work objectives' must be written or understood by you and your manager in such a way that you can assess and schedule work based primarily on its importance and not just its urgency.

This brings us nicely to the question of what system you do use to plan and track your work activities. Many Information Workers have disparate, unreliable systems and some have none at all. It is impossible to prioritise or know your capacity to deliver work when you operate this way.

The irony is that most such workers have a frequently under-used system on their desktops that is specifically designed to manage workloads with almost zero effort. All mainstream Groupware products (MS Outlook, Lotus Notes, Novell Groupware) have specialist functionality in this area that is easily leveraged. The user just needs to do some customisations, change their personal work management processes and they will have their own PA on their desk. In fact, it is better than a traditional PA as it thinks and makes judgments like the user themselves. Importantly, such a system takes all the pressure off the user when workloads become over-bearing. Over 90% of all Working Sm@rt™ trainees said that prior to completing the programme, they said 'yes' too often and over-committed themselves.

The Priority Management™ approach to solving this problem is to customise the Groupware system so the user can see in one view what they are committed to and what the effect of any new piece of work would have on their schedule. This means that when the new work inevitably arrives, all the stakeholders can use this consolidated information to make the right call for the business – not what the user wants, not what the manager wants, not who's shouting loudest but the right decision for the business. This ensures that the system is mandated by quality and importance not just urgency.

While workload management and a systematic approach to handling it, is fundamental to controlling our work, another interesting area is emerging as a 'Productivity Showstopper'. That is, the management of electronic data. The amount of e-information being generated is growing exponentially and is compounded by the fact that Information Workers hoard such data in wickedly poor or non-existent file structures, falsely believing that it costs them nothing to do so, apart from maybe getting into trouble with their system administrators. However, the real impact of such practices is the loss of the most precious resource of all – TIME. I regularly come across some senior executives, many of them very 'au fait' with technology who are spending more than an hour per day just looking for emails, presentations, spreadsheets or bits of paper.

I say this is an emerging area of productivity piracy as we are increasingly finding it so with our clients. The Technology Providers are also aware of this, with most major IT vendors offering solutions. Hopefully from the previous 'IT waves' of the 1980's and 1990's, organisations will realise, technology does not solve process problems.

A couple of fundamental process problems exist here. Firstly, people do not think about retrieving data when they are filing it, only when they are retrieving it. Secondly, filing structures tend to evolve as data arrives rather than being architected based on the requirements of the job. These issues manifest themselves in users not trusting their own filing systems and leaving emails in their inbox. They use search tools and regularly waste valuable time trying to find stored data.

As you continually look at your 'Productivity Pirates', you will notice that some of them are totally within your control (e.g. how you manage your workload, how you store your data, how you delegate, control interruptions etc.) while others you will share control with others (e.g. with your team, your customers etc.). This is a key piece of the productivity jigsaw and when addressed can have the most significant impact on your and your organisation's productivity. Information Workers seem to accept living with poor processes vis-à-vis their counterparts in, say, a manufacturing production line. This is largely due to the fact that Information Worker processes are not viewed as a synchronized entity – i.e. there are no monthly metrics on quality or non-conformance. However, here lies some very 'low lying fruit' in terms of reducing organizational costs and improving performance. It is vital that time is scheduled from both an individual and organizational perspective to assess all process issues.

In fact, the secret to controlling our personal and shared process productivity in today's world is to step back and establish just how smart we actually work. So the message is – Stop working harder, Work Sm@rter!!

Priority Management is the world leader in Productivity Management and have successfully trained more than one million graduates in Priority programs helping people become more effective in and out of the office by providing tools, processes and discipline. Clients range from small business entrepreneurs to Fortune 500 companies.

For more information, visit
www.prioritymanagement.com/ireland

“**People and rubber bands have one thing in common – they must be stretched to be effective**”

Setting Your Network Plan for 2006



Tricia Murphy

TIG Alliance

Now with the end of the old year and the beginning of the New Year, it's a good time to review just how effective networking has been for you in 2005.

Ask yourself the following:

- Did it bring you more business?
- Are you using it as effectively as you could be?
- Has it helped advance your career?
- What in fact has been its value to you in the last year and have you optimised all networking opportunities?

Maybe it's also time to sit down and think about how you can harness this resource to help you achieve your business, career and personal goals for 2006.

A survey was carried out during 2005 in the USA amongst the Fortune 500 and 95% of respondents placed networking as their **number one** business development tool. If this is the case, is it not something that should now be appearing in your business plan for the coming year?

“Being successful in business means having the right set of business relationships.”

Up until recently it was the natural networkers who seemed to benefit most from networking but more and more people are identifying it's power and actively seeking courses to help them build the skills to be more effective in this area. Networking is an art form that can be learned and, with practice, can help you gain the success you richly deserve.

Identify why you are networking

First thing to do is to think about the following:

Am I networking to...

- Improve my business
- Gain new market share
- Improve my profile within my organisation
- Gain that promotion
- Get the career I want
- Find a support group in my chosen career/business
- Build stronger connections with my current clients
- Infiltrate new markets
- Make strategic alliances
- Build alliances with other departments in my company

Once you have identified why you want to network you now need to make a plan to use this invaluable resource.

Am I moving in the right circles?

If 'its not what you know but who you know' then is the next question not 'how do I plan to get to know who I should know?'

- Am I making the best of the opportunities that come my way?
- Do I need a mentor?
- Do I need to practise my skills?
- Do I have the right skills?
- What is my networking strategy?
- Am I a member of organisations that can help me and if so:
- Am I an active member?
- Can I take more responsibility for the success of my involvement?

To paraphrase JFK; "Ask not what your network can do for you but what you can do for your network".

Being a member of any group has it's own responsibilities, and, most especially with networking, it is a truism that "The more you put in the more you will get out of it". Don't wait for you network to do something for you, take responsibility and make it happen!!

Are you known as a connector (i.e. the person others in your network call on because of your vast contact base)? Being a connector is a very powerful place to be and is a good area to work on if you are not already there.

Set aside time to network

When using networking as a business resource it is imperative that having identified it as something that you will use, you now decide to set aside some time to network. When setting out your monthly timetable, generally speaking, time is set out for marketing, business development, finances, but how many of us allocate networking time? The percentage is really small as most people see it as an ad hoc resource but what would happen if you treated, say, business development in the same cavalier manner? Most of us would be out of business! Maybe now is a good time to re-evaluate how to gain maximum advantage from this important resource. By diarising and setting aside time you will begin to see the amazing results networking can have on your bottom line.

Make an action plan

What actions can you take?

- Identify key organisations you should join
- Identify key people or roles you would like to have in your network
- Become a more involved member
- Audit your network as it now stands and identify its strengths and weaknesses

When making an action plan keep it realistic...by setting goals too high you are setting yourself up for a fall so take it all in little, manageable steps.

Get a role model

Identify people you think are great networkers and watch them in action. Remember that we all have to work within our own personality limitations so what works well for the gregarious may not be so

effective for the shy. Ask your role model to sit with you and give you feedback or tips on how they network and try to identify how these can be incorporated into your networking strategy. Could they become your mentor?

Networking events

Can you set up your own networking events and if so what would they look like? This is being really proactive and the great advantage is that you are in full control and you now have something valuable to invite clients and potential clients to and will get lots of kudos from the more passive networkers. Remember, everyone loves getting an invitation to something exclusive!!

Make networking part of your company culture

Inter-company networking is becoming more and more identified as a way to cut through the 'Silo' department syndrom which many large corporations seem to have developed in recent years. There is no communication between departments and as such the person who may suffer most is one of your most valuable assets – The Client. Is this leading to long delays in delivery? Is this loosing you other opportunities? Could your company be missing cross-selling opportunities which the client could really value? Are staff feeling isolated, stressed, unheard, disadvantaged?

Is there a role for networking that can help in the building of inter-company moral? Are staff moving on after a short space of time to other companies when they could just as easily have found career satisfaction within your company had they known the opportunities existed?

People learn from people so having a networking culture can have a really positive effect in more ways than one within your company.

Finally...

Make networking part of your success strategy for 2006, after all we all like to deal with people we know, like and trust and Networking is a mutually beneficial process whereby you help others achieve their desired goal and they in turn will help you. The most successful networkers are usually people who look at the whole picture and have a true love of helping others to connect with the people who can help them achieve their goals, however big or small. Use this resource well and see how you can make 2006 your most successful year yet!

"The most successful professionals know that networking is a process that requires commitment, effort and motivation over a working lifetime."

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President's Note



Jean Reddan

President

Well another year over and we are in 2006 already. Entering the new year, I am delighted to take up the role of President of the Institute of Business Analysis and Consulting. It's a great opportunity to be part of the newly developed strategy and believe that we are moving into a very exciting time for the Institute.

From a personal perspective, I have been a member of the Institute for a number of years now and have sat on the Committee for 2 years. Throughout that time, I have found that my involvement with the institute has allowed me to meet people who work in the same area (programme management), but also people from all different types of roles (IT project management, independent consultants, HR practitioners). This means that I keep in touch with good practice in business, by talking to people who have the experience, knowledge and expertise in their areas and who are willing to share their experience with me.

In taking up the role of President, I would like to start on a positive note by looking back at what we as an Institute achieved over the year in 2005. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the role that our past president David Ringwood has played, in bringing the institute forward over the last 2 years. David has been on the committee of the Institute for a number of years and did a great piece of work in driving forward the Strategy Development – a very worthwhile exercise and something that we as both Committee Members and Members of the Institute felt was long overdue. So a big thanks to David for all his work as president.

A key milestone in 2005 was our Annual Conference held in May last year. The conference was a fantastic achievement for the Institute with almost 100 delegates turning out to attend. Titled: "Achieving Real Business Results through High-Performance Teams - The 'how to' of making it happen", the focus was on the area of Competency-based Management. This allowed us to look at both the individual career development plan and also hear from expert practitioners about how to develop and motivate your team to effectively meet business goals and objectives. The session was competently chaired by Dr. John Bowman and there was an excellent line-up of speakers, where the mix fostered a very lively debate of the topics presented. The feedback from the conference was very positive, and most of us found the interactive element of the afternoon session very enjoyable.

This year's Conference will be held in May 2006 and again we aim to ensure that we are building on the interactive elements of the

seminar. The focus of this year's seminar will be on Change; Change Management, Best Practice Case Studies and the practical implementation of it. More news to follow on that later in 2006, so we will keep you posted.

Our lunchtime talks; a popular choice with many of our members, were also a great success in 2005 and I think that the quality of the speakers that we lined up for last year (all members of the Institute) show how much we have to learn from one another. Topics covered at the talks last year ranged from "overcoming Death by Powerpoint" to "Best Practice in Project Implementation" to "Inside-Out HR Strategies". So well done to all our speakers for their contribution and our sincere thanks.

Of course, we are always on the look-out for new speakers and new topics, so please contact us if you feel you have something you would like to address to your fellow members.

One new element we introduced to the talks in 2005 was the interactive networking sessions, facilitated by Tricia Murphy. According to many we spoke to, people found this practical focus of great benefit, so there will definitely be more of that in 2006. We are also lucky in that Tricia has now agreed to come onto the Committee and we welcome her on board and look forward to working with her (see Committee details on the website). As regards the talks, we also intend to ensure that there is a good balance between individual career path/ skills development, best practice in change management and effective management, with an increased focus on practical scenarios and case studies.

In line with our new vision for the Institute, "To be Ireland's focal Institute led by and for Business Change Professionals", we have put together a PR Sub-committee who aim to increase our profile externally in the business community in 2006.

On the topic of the committee, we have a number of new members this year including Geraldine Lavin (Consultant), Tommy Cronin (BOI Asset Finance and, in a first for the Institute, we have a rotating Student Representative – presently Anthony Breen, from the Master in Consulting Practice in the Michael Smurfit Graduate School of Business.

The biggest challenge for us in 2006, will be the implementation of the new strategy for the Institute. Given the strong Committee we have in place, who have put in a tremendous effort to date, I am confident that we are well placed to do this and we look forward to updating you on new developments throughout the year.

Of course, last but not least, I must take this opportunity to thank our Institute Administration Manager, Andrew Kinsella, for all his hard work in 2005 and I look forward to working with Andrew on a number of new initiatives in 2006.

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