

HR road test

Powerful Writing for Professionals

by Editor Group. www.editorgroup.com

The HR profession probably has more challenges to overcome than most other functions. Many of these challenges are born out of the somewhat 'warm and fuzzy' past of the HR profession, whereby practitioners lack the necessary business nous to communicate effectively across functions. A 2004 Australian survey of CIOs, for example, found that the ability to communicate effectively is the pivotal skill for these professionals. Of the 284 participants, 84 per cent rated this skill highest, up from 79 per cent the year before.

Effective business communication is a skill that often eludes HR practitioners. As a result, HR practitioners have often had trouble gaining credibility amongst business peers and establishing support for business initiatives. With this in mind, *Human Resources* magazine recently road tested a course put together for business professionals. The course, *Powerful Writing for Professionals*, is run by Editor Group, a corporate writing and training firm which works with business and government clients to create or improve a variety of written material.

The one-day course is designed for professionals who need good writing corporate communication skills for producing persuasive proposals or making complex matters intelligible to a wider audience. HR professionals often struggle when it comes to creating concise and persuasive business cases for the CFO and other key stakeholders, and the course is especially helpful in that it provides attendees with a fresh perspective on how to do this.

Our facilitator for the day was Tony Spencer-Smith, who heads up Editor Group's writing, proofreading and media skills training courses. He started the day by looking at the importance of good punctuation and grammar, followed by the necessity for thorough planning and researching. This is often a stage HR practitioners fall down on, but it is essential in understanding other stakeholders' priorities.

Another gripe that many executives have with HR is the function's propensity for jargon. This could be the number one pitfall in building an effective business case for HR initiatives. Tony showed us how to cut out clutter and clichés and replace them with clear, concise language. He looked at the mechanics of persuasive writing and how to attract and keep the interest of readers through strong writing and structure, and concluded with techniques for beating writer's

block and details some essential tools of the trade.

Powerful Writing for Professionals provides HR professionals with an objective approach to effective business communication. Tony Spencer-Smith is certainly well qualified to present a course on such communication. It is a great all-rounder for business professionals, but the course is still evolving and could do with a little more tailoring to meet the specific needs of HR professionals. That said, the importance of good business communication cannot be understated, and could make or break the business case for your next HR initiative.

Cost: Group booking for up to eight people: \$3,300. Individual booking for mixed group course: \$550 per person.

Venue: Selected training venues, or group courses onsite.

Further information: Editor Group. Tel: 02 8912 9500. Email: training@editorgroup.com. Web: www.editorgroup.com

HR Road Test: another *Human Resources* magazine first

Making a purchasing decision is one of the biggest challenges HR professionals face time and time again. Who do you go to for a 360 degree feedback solution? Need a new executive coach, but haven't been able to find anyone decent? How do you decide who's the right person? No doubt one of the most powerful influencers of decisions is a direct referral. Problem is, finding those referrals. Once again, *Human Resources* magazine steps into the breach. Turning our staff into human guinea pigs, we selflessly review all comers with a training course to deliver or a service to provide. Road testing what the vendors have to offer, we tell it like it is. If our staff think they're great, we'll tell you. If they're unable to get it together on the day, we'll tell you. These are not press release driven puff pieces, but genuine reviews of the products and services on offer. If you'd like to have your product or service road tested or you'd like a particular sort of HR consumable given the once over before you put your hard-fought-for budget on the table, then call David Hovenden on (02) 9422 2274 or email david.hovenden@lexisnexis.com.au for more information.