

Sheila
Stokes White



Entrepreneurs Forum
Business Breakthrough Programme
2008 - 2009

Background & Rationale

The Entrepreneurs Forum Business Breakthrough Programme was a participative and practical programme aimed at helping business leaders maximise their own performance and that of their people and, through them, their business. The programme included a two day residential Boot Camp, six all day workshops, facilitated action learning groups and on-going mentoring support.

The pilot programme received widespread positive feedback and attracted considerable interest in a second programme which subsequently ran the following year.

Issues

The first Business Breakthrough Programme was led and run by three very expert facilitators who provided a highly dynamic combination of theory, practical exercises and real work on key business issues following the model of – awareness – assessment - action. Their personal styles of delivery were all very different providing a stimulating and varied delegate experience. The content material used throughout was of the highest quality and extremely current.

Following the BB1 programme the feedback indicated that the programme could be improved even further by:

- Addressing the gender balance
- Considering the implementation team dynamic
- Considering the business model
- Addressing the overall delegate experience of every delegate
- Creating synergies within the programme

Any programme, however good, can be improved by the methodology used and the way in which the implementation team interact with themselves and with delegates. Over many years Strategic Solutions Ltd have organised and delivered programmes of many kinds and the skill in maximising the delegate experience lies in the expert juxtaposition of the different elements of the programme including quality of presentation, individual flair, management of small group exercises and the encouragement of the delegates learning experience.

Intervention

Sheila Stokes White, Managing Director of Strategic Solutions was invited to join the implementation team for BB2. The inspiration for this was the combination of her unique skills and her experience as a delegate on the first programme. Her appointment was designed to address the above areas for improvement. As the second programme unfolded Sheila facilitated one of the three action learning sets which formed an integral part of the programme. In sets of 6-8 these were quite structured and allowed the particular business challenges of each delegate to be explored. Sessions ran monthly for 90 minutes which usually allowed two delegates the opportunity to explore a pressing issue. In addition a camaraderie developed within the group which gave delegates the added support of all the others in the group and individual mentoring from the facilitator.

Benefit

A strengthened team offering greater flexibility; an improvement in the overall dynamic of the event; Greater use of interactive exercises, a choice of gender for individual mentoring.