

Knowing and Doing

“Knowledge is power” Sir Francis Bacon

In what circumstances is Sir Francis Bacon’s famous quotation true? It is only true if the person who has the knowledge chooses to act on it. In other words, a link must be made from knowing something to doing something.

How is this relevant to business people? This insight can be applied to all the products we have “invented” over the years, only to see them manufactured and marketed by someone else because we did not act on our idea.

This principle can also be applied to management training. The vast array of knowledge on offer in this area can be sampled in the business section of any book shop. You can read about leadership, decision making, effective communication, running meetings and a host of other subjects which are immediately relevant to a manager. At the end of your reading you will have greatly increased your knowledge of these subjects, which is certainly a valuable exercise.

How far will you have increased your ability to do any of these things? Immediately after reading these books, your ability to run meetings, motivate staff etc. will be the same as it was before you started reading. It is only when you apply the knowledge you have gained that you will reap the benefit of improved performance.

When you have finished reading the book you are primed to learn. You have some ideas to work with, and hopefully the intention to put them into practice. Arguably, it is in putting them into practice that the real learning takes place. It is here that we bridge the gap between knowing and doing – often called the gap between theory and practice.

How easy is it to bridge this gap? Generally, the more complicated the activity, the more time it takes to bridge the gap. Who can remember reading a book on improving one’s golf swing, and then trying manfully to turn the knowledge of what one should be doing when one hits the ball into what one actually does? If you were given the instructions on how to disarm an attacker, read them through, and were then faced with that situation, how confident would you feel about your ability to handle it satisfactorily?

It is one thing to say we know how to do something, and something else entirely to say we can actually do it. Mitchell Phoenix programmes, with their day a month structure, ensure that ideas from the seminar room are put into practice in the work place. This both bridges the gap between knowing and doing, and creates concrete business results.

“The implementation of the ideas on a monthly basis is a strength of the programme” Barney Pilgrim, Projects Director, Banks Developments

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