

Yearbook



The genius of **Myron Tribus**
Illuminating Blackpool
How PowerPoint is killing **critical thought**
If Japan can, why can't we?
Bob Hawke - a natural Facilitator
Why deer?



The Universal
Improvement
Company

UIC

The Universal
Improvement
Company



Copyright © 2016 - The Universal Improvement Company
All rights reserved.

Except as permitted by law, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of The Universal Improvement Company.

We are very proud of our Yearbook and would be delighted to send you some extra copies instead.

Welcome to the 2016 Yearbook

I should start by thanking all the contributors to this year's eclectic mix of articles. Each Yearbook is a labour of love - with the odd bit of swearing to spice things up a bit. The fun starts round about Christmas or New Year when I have a first look at the articles. I read through each and edit them slightly for consistency in terminology and written conventions and the title goes on a mini post-it. Once all have been read, the post-its are clustered-by-theme and that produces the sections. It's far easier the sixth time around.

So what did the post-its produce this year?

Section 1 contains four articles 'from the top', two from the Southern and two from the Northern Hemispheres. Here, leaders of organisations share some words of wisdom.

Section 2 should make you think. We reproduce two articles from the press, highlight an opportunity created by the W. Edwards Deming Institute and hear from a long-standing UIC client. The purpose of these articles is to challenge conventional thinking.

Section 3 is all about you, our clients. There are articles from 19 different organisations. This section includes the usual photo gallery of all the jobs we carried out in 2015 and there are plenty of experiences to learn from as well.

I am particularly happy with Section 4 - The genius of Myron Tribus. Those of you who attended the 2015 UIMPROVE Conference in Sheffield had the privilege of hearing Lou Tribus speak about her father's life. Lou has kindly converted this into the written word for us. We have also taken this opportunity to reproduce Myron's seminal work, The Germ Theory of Management. I saw Myron present this many years ago. Prepare to be enthralled.

There are more gems in the remaining sections - public courses and conferences, Facilitator pages, a look at our systems clients and 'at the back'.



2015 was another great year for the UIC, but what makes a year great is not so much what we do, but the results of the hard work of our clients - and there's plenty of that in the pages to come.

We have a couple of important anniversaries coming up. 2016 marks the 10th Annual UIMPROVE Conference to be held in Sheffield on 16-17 May. We look forward to welcoming the lucky few who get to attend. For those who can't make it this year, remember we video all the speakers for the website.

2017 will see the 25th anniversary of the UIC. We have a Team Meeting agenda item planned to work on how we mark this occasion. If you have any suggestions or requests, drop me a line.

We do have a particularly exciting development in the pipeline. Henry Neave, author of The Deming Dimension, has interrupted his retirement in Cornwall to produce a new work - 12 Days to Deming. This is intended for modern 'students' of Deming's work who would like to know more and apply the learning to their own circumstances. 12 Days to Deming can be taken at your own pace. For me it is more likely to be 12 Years to Deming, but I always was a slacker when it came to homework. We are working closely with Henry to produce a number of versions - both on-line and in print. It is our intention to use the collective brain power of the attendees at the 2016 UIMPROVE Conference to kick-start the project. Our Project Steering Grid shows a finish date in time for the 2017 UIMPROVE Conference, where we will hold the formal launch.

That's plenty from me. I hope you enjoy the Yearbook.

Richard Capper
richard@theuic.com

FROM THE TOP

We start the 2016 Yearbook with four views from the top. Steve Jennings, Chief Executive of Weaver Vale Housing Trust and a long-standing UIC client, shares some lessons learned via exceptional results. Next, Jane Cole, a new appointee to the top job at Blackpool Transport, writes about her first year at the helm and what's been achieved. Ken Marchingo reflects on embedding and refreshing UIMPROVE. Finally in this section, Neil Scales, who undoubtedly has the most complicated role of anyone in the Yearbook - heading up the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads - explains why he supports UIMPROVE practitioners in his 6800 person organisation.

In this section

- Doing things right, doing the right thing
- Illuminating Blackpool
- Embed, refresh
- Here to deliver

01

Doing things right, doing the right thing

Steve Jennings is Chief Executive of Cheshire-based Weaver Vale Housing Trust and has over a decade's experience in applying UIMPROVE. Over the years he has been a regular contributor to our Yearbook and frequently brings a fresh perspective to the serious business of organisational improvement. This year he talks about some of the challenges faced by the social housing sector and highlights that, even in times of unprecedented change, doing the right thing, in the right way, is the right thing to do.

I have always talked about the need to be adaptable and ready for change if you are to succeed. Using UIMPROVE tools and techniques and the Annual Planning process has consistently helped us to both prepare for change and manage our way through it. Put simply, it helps you to do things right.

Our ability to adapt to change was certainly put to the test during 2015, as the housing world underwent a tumultuous year following a series of policy announcements and changes within the government's summer budget.

For the sake of brevity I won't go through all the changes and challenges but will highlight the announcement that, as from April 2016, all housing association rents will be reduced by 1% each year for the next 4 years. Prior to this, our annual rent increases have been tied to a formula of CPI +1%. Whilst this reduction is good news for our customers, it presents a major challenge for housing associations. The impact on the Trust is that we will have to reduce our operating costs by around 16% to make good the shortfall in annual income.

Following a series of facilitated meetings with our managers, it was clear to everyone that for an organisation of our size, the required savings could not be found through efficiencies alone and that job losses would be inevitable. However we have always tried to do the right thing in the Trust and have always managed to avoid compulsory job losses when undergoing previous changes.



STEVE JENNINGS

We decided that, this being such a major change, we should call all our 350 staff together to announce the impact of the changes, our plan to deal with them and the fact that it would lead to some valuable people leaving the organisation.

At the same time that this was emerging, we were aware that we were due to be surveyed by Best Companies, as part of our strategy to remain a Sunday Times Top 100 Employer. This announcement would clearly have an impact on the results of the survey. We could have delayed the meeting with our staff until after the Best Companies survey but knew that the right thing to do was to make the announcements as soon as we could.

We called the meeting on the Monday and the survey landed on the Friday of that week. Our announcement was very clear on the impact on the Trust and we anticipated that this would be reflected in the Best Company Survey results.

We have been in the Sunday Times Top 100 for the last 6 years and have been consistently rated as a 2 Star Employer. Our ambition has always been to achieve the highest 3 Star rating. When the results of the survey arrived we were amazed to discover that the scores had increased and staff had now actually rated the Trust as a 3 Star Employer. We had secured our place in the Top 100 for an incredible 7 years in a row.

I have to say that I just didn't believe this when the news came through. However, feedback from across the Trust indicated that we had gone about making the announcement in the right way, had handled the process in the right way, and that not delaying the news until after the Best Companies survey was absolutely the right thing to do.

All this still doesn't make the challenges any easier but we have two major ingredients to help us work our way through the changes ahead: the support of our staff and the UIMPROVE philosophy.

*Steve Jennings
Chief Executive
Weaver Vale Housing Trust*



The rent reductions described in Steve’s article were completely unexpected and a major shock for the industry. Weaver Vale Housing Trust has been building its capacity for change and improvement for many years. All Directors and senior managers have attended the Strategic Improvement Programme, all other managers attend Universal Improvement Skills and the organisation has maintained a pool of Facilitators since 2008. In 2014-2015, the organisation also put its managers through Leading Change and Leading Your Team. In September 2015, like every other year, the organisation held its 2 day Strategy Development Event. We are very proud to have been working with the organisation but - as we always say - the number one factor in the success of any organisation is the leader. Keep up the inspirational work Steve!



Leading Your Team, January 2015



Leading Your Team, January 2015



Leading Your Team, February 2015



Facilitator Development Programme, February 2015



Strategy Development Event, September 2015



Strategy Development Event, September 2015



Strategy Development Event, September 2015



Strategy Development Event, September 2015



Strategy Development Event, September 2015



Control Your Processes, November 2015

Illuminating Blackpool



LEADER SPEAKING: JANE COLE

Jane Cole, Managing Director of Blackpool Transport, has always been a staunch supporter of improvement and customer focus. Our history with Jane dates back to the heyday of InterCity. In those days we already knew Jane to be inspired, visionary and straightforward. So we were delighted when our paths crossed again after a 20 year gap. In this article, she reflects on how, as a new leader of the organisation, she has wasted no time putting her formidable experience and improvement skills to work.

I 'retired' from the rail industry in 2014 after a successful and rewarding 35 year career. For me it was the right time to move on. I knew that a change in career direction could not be put off any longer, so I took the brave step of launching my CV into cyber space, packed my bag and went to Rwanda as a volunteer on a missionary project.

On my return, I was asked to apply for the job of Managing Director at Blackpool Transport, and I was delighted to be offered the job in November 2014. I was not familiar with buses and trams, nor had I been an MD before, so I grasped the opportunity with both hands and decided to learn how to do it later.

My challenges were pretty huge. I had worked for Virgin Trains from 1997 to 2014 and seen the transformation from British Rail to the product you see today. Blackpool Transport needed bringing into the 21st century. The tramway had had a

£100m refurbishment of infrastructure and new trams in 2012 but, behind the gloss, a lot needed doing.

The company was making a good profit and was managed with prudence so that a large dividend was paid to Blackpool Borough Council (the shareholders of Blackpool Transport) each year. I was amazed to find that the company was being run with no business plan or strategic direction. I was very concerned about the lack of employee participation in the organisation. The adopted style had been command and control. Other than the new tramway, very little change had been driven through the organisation except for terms and conditions and pay rates. I had to bring in safety consultants to help produce an improvement plan and keep me out of Holloway Prison. The bus fleet was a mix of vehicles that were either old or not really fit for the routes they served and the heritage tram fleet lay dormant in the engineering shed.

I started with the top tier and made sure I had the right people in Director and senior management roles to support me. During this time I looked around for consultants to help with improvement and change models etc. but could not find anyone. This prompted me to start looking at my own material and I came across Deming's book 'Out of the Crisis'. I had borrowed the book from Richard Capper around 20 years previously when we worked together in InterCity (and never given it back!).

I am a convert of process and project management and my career so far had been based on the value of addressing processes

and using data to influence decision making. I am also a very practical people leader and know that change in people can be effected by changing processes.

So enter the UIC. Richard and I met for the first time in more than 20 years. I offered to return the book but he declined as by now he had bought another copy.

In March 2015 we started work together, holding an Executive Event with my top team and really got to grips with the skills required to transform the team into an effective Corporate Brain. I gave my first Leader Speaks in the recommended UIC format and I use that format consistently now. At this event I became aware of the strengths and weaknesses in my team and was able to make some brave decisions around people who were 'not on the bus' with me.

In July we embarked on the Strategic Improvement Programme, learning more tools and techniques for business and project planning and started to use data to inform our thinking on key strategic issues. Back in the workplace we began to use Notebooks and tools to hold effective team meetings and thought sharing sessions. We used Brainstorming and Clustering to enable decision-making. With larger groups we held Cocktail Parties. My team embraced this way of working and it made meetings interesting and productive, particularly with front-line people and their managers.

Next, the UIC facilitated us to start thinking about the key strategies we should be including in our business plan and by September we had produced a strategic plan ready for consultation with our Board and Shareholder. The plan got a huge thumbs-up and we have now produced an Annual Plan which has been prioritised with Strategic Achievement Measures for each strategy.

Over the past 12 months, passenger numbers have continued to rise. Over this time we have been reviewing running times on all services, paying particular attention to peak times. For us, being a seaside town, our peaks in relation to traffic congestion are Saturdays, Sundays and evenings during the famous Blackpool Illuminations. As a result, we have revised running times on these days and have seen significant improvement in both reliability and punctuality. With regards to service revisions, we had a very poorly performing service that operated all over Blackpool and into Wyre and due to the nature of the route it was difficult to operate reliably. To overcome this we have split the service and introduced a northern and southern circular line. This too has really improved performance.

The success of such developments can be seen clearly in the results from the past year. In 2015, Blackpool Transport saw a passenger and revenue growth of 30% on the tramway. Very significantly, we have done this without overcrowding. The introduction of a new fleet of 10 Mercedes Citaro buses on route 5 has also resulted in passenger and revenue growth of 8% for the route, accompanied by a 7% increase across all other bus routes. Finally, highlighting the success of our heritage offering, this division has seen a 300% increase in revenue over the last 12 months.

Continuing this growth plan will be our major focus over the coming years. In the long term, the vision is to be safe, profitable and to have a high value brand by delivering an amazing customer experience through a committed and engaged workforce.

In 2016 we are training our first 12 Facilitators to assist with projects, Project Kick-Starts, employee participation and meetings.

I truly believe that UIMPROVE has helped Blackpool Transport to shape a challenging itinerary for its journey and we will continue full speed ahead on this path.



A photograph of a transport timetable for 'Pleasant Street'. The top section is titled '1 Ticket 2 Ways to Travel' and lists ticket types: 'Adult Day | 55-110 Day', 'Child Day | Family Day', and 'Senior Day | Family Day'. Below this is a detailed table of routes and times. The table has columns for 'Monday to Friday (from 06:00 to 22:00)' and 'Saturdays and Bank Holidays (from 06:00 to 22:00)'. The routes listed include 'Blackpool to Fleetwood', 'Blackpool to Lytham', and 'Blackpool to Poulton'.

Jane Cole
 Managing Director
 Blackpool Transport





01



02



03



04



05

- 01 EXECUTIVE EVENT, MARCH 2015
- 02 STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME, JULY 2015
- 03 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EVENT, SEPTEMBER 2015
- 04 BUSINESS PLAN CONSULTATION, SEPTEMBER 2015
- 05 ANNUAL PLANNING, OCTOBER 2015
- 06 'BOAT CAR' 230, VINTAGE 1934
- 07 'BALLOON CAR' 715, VINTAGE 1935
- 08 RIGBY ROAD DEPOT
- 09 BLACKPOOL TOWER



06



07



08



09



Embed, refresh

Ken Marchingo is the longstanding CEO of Haven; Home, Safe, a homelessness and housing organisation in Victoria. Ken and his organisation have been working with the UIC for 7 years and, in 2015, decided they should check to see if they were still doing things properly and seeing a return on their investment.

It is not unusual for a CEO to question the path you have taken your organisation down and the resources invested over a prolonged period of time. This is a good thing, especially when a process has become a bit like handle-turning from year-to-year. A moment of awareness arises and you ask yourself the question: “Are we actually getting the desired return on this investment?”

And so, it was with our annual management retreat where yet again we enlisted the services of our independent external set of vigilant eyes to take us through a strategy planning session. As usual, this was an outstanding exercise in herding the cats into a cohesive view of the desired future, and nailing down concrete actions, tasks and projects. Mission accomplished...almost.

Next, we gathered together the General Managers and other specialist staff for day 2 to release the updated and new plans and get their inputs. We also posed the question: “Which methodologies are we using for these different projects?”. Cue some broken eye contact.

And this is where the rubber of UIMPROVE hits the road of reality. With around 25% of the workforce trained, but many of them many years ago, I asked myself: “Are we really using everything or just skimming off the parts we like?”. Whilst we use a corporate level Project Steering Grid, and whilst each division and group

utilises their own ‘downstream’ version in their teams, I did not have a confident sense that we were across it down to the detail. Let’s not overplay that moment. It wasn’t like I had the equivalent of klaxon horns blaring but it was a moment that stood out as an inflection point for the organisation. So, what to do? Start at the top and I commissioned a ‘refresher’ for the Executive Team.

Roll forward some 6 months and the Executive Team is in a room for some UIMPROVE Re-energising Days with our trusted Facilitator, Madeleine and new recruit, but experienced practitioner, Alison. They take us through the refresher and, as always, the facts emerge - slowly, sometimes painfully. We discovered (I feel a drum roll coming on about now) that we have embedded many of the processes to the point where they have largely become second nature.

So, the refresher on UIMPROVE became more of a sharpening-up session, and we spent the second day workshoping in great detail some of the emerging strategic and operational challenges confronting us. It was a brilliant exercise and a great use of the Corporate Brain’s time. We didn’t just refresh a methodology, we refreshed a tight team on process, we progressed our strategy and relationships, and we deliberately improved. It doesn’t have to be broken to run it through again and through doing so we did identify things that really bear further reminding and have



sharpened up a number of practices. We are getting back in touch with the manual, mandating the use of Notebooks and being clearer and sharper on remits, ensuring they are properly constructed and reviewed. These basics really count.

The icing on the cake however came later from an external accreditation agency who spent time in our 'metro' office (formerly North East Housing Services, a newcomer to Haven). They noted two things in particular. Firstly, they commented on the consistent client service and operating culture between the two major offices, noting there was no difference and the focus on client service was the "best they had seen in 15 years of external independent accrediting". That's nice, we like that; but the other comment that was made, the kicker, was that it seemed evident that the offices plastered with flipchart paper, walls covered with post-it notes - in every GM's office and in every meeting room - right back up to the 'corporate wall' (we have a massive dedicated corporate Project Steering Grid wall) created a common sense of purpose, a common language, and a focus on delivery. That's it really, a focus on delivery, validated by independent observation. Nice.

After around 7 years of UIMPROVE, we are now considering a fresh group of Facilitators and, around the same time, we'll refresh our existing groups with a Facilitator Recall Day.

We continue to speak across multiple human services and housing programs with a common language for getting things done and delivering. It's been a great year for us, merging with another organisation, delivering exciting new projects and with a strong team re-energised in how to do that. It seems like a good way to close off the year as we move forward into the next.

*Ken Marchingo
Chief Executive Officer
Haven; Home, Safe*



- 01 LEADERSHIP FORUM, MARCH 2015
- 02 EXECUTIVE EVENT, MARCH 2015
- 03 UIMPROVE RE-ENERGISING DAYS, OCTOBER 2015
- 04 UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, NOVEMBER 2015
- 05 PROJECT KICK-START, JULY 2015





01



02



03

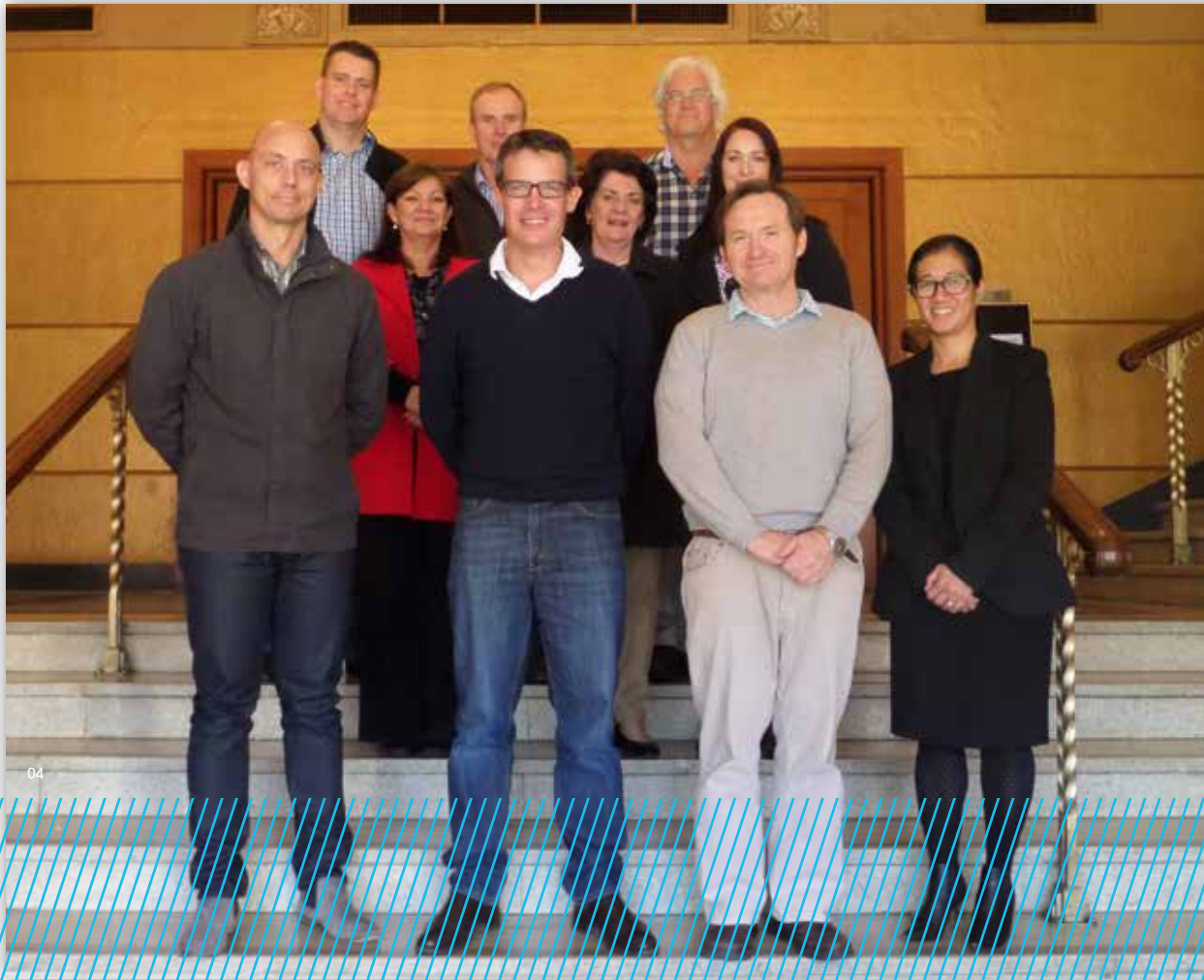


Neil Scales

Here to deliver

Neil Scales' job is different to everyone else contributing to the Yearbook this year. As Director-General of Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads, he leads a team of Deputy Director-Generals, each with their own large portfolios, whilst at the same time ensuring Government policy is delivered. The Department has more than 6800 employees, an Operating Budget of almost \$5.5 billion, Capital Budget of \$4.3 billion and manages assets worth almost \$59 billion. This means that his style of leadership needs to be different, setting clear direction, but leaving ultimate delivery in the hands of the talented people who work for him.

-
- 01 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BRANCH - STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EVENT, DECEMBER 2015
 - 02 POLICY, PLANNING AND INVESTMENT DIVISION - EXECUTIVE EVENT, TOOWOOMBA 3, FEBRUARY 2015
 - 03 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BRANCH - EXECUTIVE EVENT, OCTOBER 2015
 - 04 POLICY, PLANNING AND INVESTMENT DIVISION - EXECUTIVE EVENT, TOOWOOMBA 4, AUGUST 2015
-



04

Let's start with a simple question - because at my level of an organisation, they're the best. Why do I like UIMPROVE? A simple question should lead to a simple answer and in this case it does. I like UIMPROVE because it works.

Continuing with the theme of simplicity, let me explain my role - and, by extrapolation, the role of my department. It is to deliver for the State of Queensland an integrated transport network that is accessible to all. This includes residents, young and old, visitors, businesses and for the Queensland Government. It includes roads, rail (passenger and freight), buses, ferries, ports, cycling, bridges, tunnels - I could go on. And Queensland is a big state. I know as I try to get out of Brisbane as often as I can and visit my people - and also my customers and stakeholders in as many regional cities and communities as I can. For overseas readers unfamiliar with Aussie geography, have a look on the map - we're about seven times the size of Britain. Queensland is also

home to a huge diversity of indigenous people - and getting to know and work with these communities has become a particular passion of mine over the last few years.

Back to UIMPROVE. I need my Divisions to deliver on a huge range of fronts. Whether it's building roads, commissioning public transport or rapidly re-building bridges and other infrastructure that has got in the way of our occasionally volatile climate, we need to act professionally, promptly and economically.

When I first arrived in Queensland, my colleague Matt Longland who had been acting in my new role, told me that, in my first week, I'd be attending an 'off-siter' with my new team. I wasn't sure what I was letting myself in for but thought "What have I got to lose?". I wasn't sure if I'd love it or hate it but actually I got to know my new team, I was able to set out what direction I had at that stage and we got some real work done. I was converted.

Since then I have strongly encouraged anyone who works for me to get the training, read the manual and get on with it. Where people have done this, I can see the results. And I need the people who work for me to deliver because, put simply, that's our job.

*Neil Scales
Director-General
Queensland Department
of Transport and Main Roads*

THINGS TO MAKE YOU THINK

Anyone who has worked with the UIC will know that our courses and events are not just a collection of tools, tips and solutions, but are built on a firm philosophy of improvement. Whenever we teach something, we always include the history and underpinning theory. This requires people to think. The value of thinking before doing, particularly around managerial and improvement practices, is vastly undervalued. This section brings together a few random articles with one thing in common - they should make you think.

In this section

- How PowerPoint is killing critical thought
- If Japan can, why can't we?
- Understanding variation
- CEO bonuses

02

How PowerPoint is killing critical thought

King Canute-like, the UIC has one or two themes which we keep coming back to despite overwhelming odds. One of these is the use of PowerPoint in meetings. Readers that have attended one of our courses covering the Techniques for Productive Meetings will recall that we differentiate between Presentations and Briefings, the conclusion being that Presentations (specifically the use of PowerPoint or similar) are overused and Briefings (using flipcharts) are underused. Every now and again, we see something that reinforces this view. This article by Andrew Smith, seen on The Guardian website, adds a new dimension to this thinking.

I still remember the best lecture I ever attended. It was part of a joint series offered by the English and philosophy departments in my first term at university and, given that the subject was Sartre's Being and Nothingness, should have been the dulllest event in Christendom that night. But it wasn't. The lecturer, Thomas Baldwin, had a deceptively simple style: he would write a proposition on the blackboard facing us and gaze at it for a moment, like a medium beckoning a spirit. Then he would turn and smile, and start to explain.

Baldwin paced the room - but slowly. On occasion he would stop altogether, appearing lost, a moment in which all the world's logic seemed at stake, before somehow refinding his path to a second thrilling proposition. At one point he stood with his forehead in his hand for so long we almost called for a medic. He was so engaged, so present, that you could almost feel the motion of his mind - and through his, your own. I doubt if fewer words have ever been spoken in the course of an hour-long disquisition, and yet we all tripped to the bar buzzing with excitement afterwards.

To this day, if I'm feeling blue I think back to Baldwin's explication of the logical transition from anguish to nausea, and invariably I feel better.

Baldwin's talk came to mind recently when I listened to a debate, on Radio 4's Today show, about lecturing standards at British

universities. I have two children at uni who have both found lectures frustrating, so the contention of the education minister Jo Johnson that quality in this area was "highly variable" came as no surprise to me. What's more, during sample orations on open days, I had the same experience of being bored to tears by things I felt I should have enjoyed. So when my daughter reported an exception to this rule, I knew what my first question would be. "Did the lecturer use PowerPoint?". "Hm. No, he just spoke," she said.

PowerPoint is so ubiquitous that Lotte hadn't made the connection. But the lectures I attended had left me in no doubt that Microsoft's wildly successful 'presentation' program is not just inimical to, but destructive of, deep thought, and could have been scientifically designed to put the most eager mind to sleep. The more I inquired into why this might be, the more I began to see its somnolent reflection everywhere.

Let's stay with teaching a moment. PowerPoint's enthusiasts claim that it emboldens nervous speakers and forces everyone to present information in an ordered way. To an extent, both contentions are true. But the price of this is that the speaker dominates the audience absolutely. Where the space around and between points on a blackboard is alive with possibility, the equivalent space on a PowerPoint screen is dead. Bullet points enforce a rigidly hierarchical

authority, which has not necessarily been earned. One either accepts them in toto, or not at all. And by the time any faulty logic is identified, the screen has been replaced by a new one as the speaker breezes on, safe in the knowledge that yet another waits in the wings. With everyone focused on screens, no one - least of all the speaker - is internalising the argument in a way that tests its strength.

So, a few bored students: how serious is this? If the problem ended there, the answer would be, not very. But it doesn't - and a glance at PowerPoint's origins helps to explain why.

The genesis story runs like this: from the late 1950s corporations began to realise that, rather than going to the trouble of developing new products they hoped would meet a need, they could use marketeers to create the perception of need, then develop products to meet it (a shift brilliantly dramatised in the TV series *Mad Men*). To do this, different departments had to be able to speak to each other, to sell ideas internally. So while there had always been meetings, now there were meetings about meetings and - hey presto! - the modern world was born.

The presentational precursor to PowerPoint was the overhead projector, which is why PowerPoint screens are still called 'slides'. The program owes most to Whitfield Diffie, one of the time lords of on-line cryptography, but it was quickly snapped up by Microsoft. Its coding/marketing roots are intrinsic to its cognitive style, being relentlessly linear and encouraging short, affirmative, jargonesque assertions: arguments that are resolved, untroubled by shades of grey.

Do we notice that, as the Harvard Business Review has observed, "bullets leave critical relationships unspecified"? No, because thanks to the relatively low resolution of most projectors, fonts must be large, words few, and thus slides many. In the face of such a procession, we switch off, because nothing is being asked of us. As the academic visual-presentation expert and PowerPoint sceptic Edward Tufte notes: "PowerPoint actively facilitates the making of lightweight presentations". Through PowerPoint, everything has a tendency to resemble a pitch rather than a discussion: information is 'storyboarded', as for a movie - but the presentation is not a movie and the presenter is rarely Brad Pitt. No wonder we are bored.

And bored is the least of it. It's no coincidence that the two most famous PowerPoint presentations are: (a) the one presented to NASA managers by engineers, explaining with unarguable illogic why damaged tiles on the space shuttle Columbia were probably nothing to fret about; and (b) General Colin Powell's equally fuzzy pitch for war with Iraq. Now, blaming PowerPoint for Iraq would be a bit like blaming Darwin for Donald Trump, but the program made scrutiny of the case harder. Not for nothing did Brigadier General McMaster, of the US military, subsequently liken the proliferation of PowerPoint presentation in the military to an 'internal threat', saying: "It's dangerous because it can create the illusion of understanding and the illusion of control. Some problems are not bullet-izable".

Perhaps even worse, in the context of the 21st century, is a charge levelled by the French writer Franck Frommer in his book *How PowerPoint Makes You Stupid*. Because PowerPoint can only present propositions and arguments as equations, he says, they appear to have no owner; no one need feel responsible for them. In the post-banking-crisis world, we know both how seductive this is - and how dangerous. Some canny business leaders are now following Steve Jobs's example, and Tufte's advice, by restricting PowerPoint use to pictures.

I spoke to a former colleague, now a professor of journalism; a super-smart, tech-savvy man who has thought about this a great deal. He reminds staff that lecturing is a form of performance and must be treated as such. He thinks the new pressure on universities to generate revenue - to behave like businesses - has tipped the balance from communicators to researchers (though in truth, what doesn't take the form of a pitch in the financialised world of 2015?).

My friend also told me that when he removed PowerPoint from lecture theatres, his students demanded it back, because without it they had to organise their own notes. In this century, it seems to me, our greatest enemy will not be drones or Isis or perhaps even climate change: it will be convenience.

*Reproduced under licence from The Guardian,
Copyright Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016.*

Further reading

Refer to your manual:
The Complete Guide to Improvement,
Techniques for Productive Meetings,
pages 34.16 - 34.17

For a view from Switzerland:
www.anti-powerpoint-party.com

If Japan can, why can't we?

Pretty much everyone who has attended a UIC course will have seen the video 'A Prophet Unheard' which recounts the story of Dr W. Edwards Deming. A key part of the story was the showing on American television of a documentary 'If Japan Can...Why Can't We?' way back in 1980. In the words of 'A Prophet Unheard', "It was to be the second Deming revolution".

It was good news therefore when the following e-mail dropped into our inboxes from the W. Edwards Deming Institute.

NBC documentary now available for viewing!

On June 24, 1980, Americans widely viewed the NBC documentary titled 'If Japan Can... Why Can't We.' The program, part of NBC's White Paper series, prominently featured Dr. W. Edwards Deming. Produced by Clare Crawford-Mason and narrated by Lloyd Dobyns, this documentary has been inaccessible for public viewing for the past 35 years.

The Deming Institute is proud to announce that we have secured the perpetual rights and are making it available on our website and YouTube channel, free of charge.

This compelling documentary, about the ever-increasing industrial competition between the United States and Japan, introduced Dr. Deming to Americans. For the first time, they learned of the then 80 year old American who was widely credited with the Japanese industrial resurgence after WWII.

Viewers were astounded to learn that it was this American, Dr. Deming, who went to Japan in 1950 and began teaching his philosophy to their leadership. They listened and learned as he taught them about quality and productivity. When the program aired, the most coveted industrial award in Japan was The Deming Prize. Named in honor of Dr. Deming, the Deming Prize is still awarded, and highly esteemed, today.

Near the close of the program, Lloyd Dobyns asks Dr. Deming, "Would the same methods work in the United States...?" Deming's reply was the catalyst for relentless requests for Deming to help American businesses. Soon the icons of American industry, such as Ford, General Motors, Dow Chemical Company, Xerox and Hughes Aircraft were asking for his help.

Now you can view the video that started it all.

*Text reproduced with the kind courtesy of
The W. Edwards Deming Institute®*

Link:
www.deming.org

Youtube:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcG_Pmt_Ny4



Understanding variation

Fiona Wilkie is a Director at Symphony Housing Group and has a particular interest in how data can be used to help improve key processes. Here she reflects on what she learned from attending Universal Data Skills and how she can use this to bring about improvements in the workplace.

 VICKY AND FIONA DEMONSTRATE THE TAGUCHI LOSS FUNCTION

I have been working in housing for over 25 years and have led and managed senior managers and service teams - setting them targets, working on processes - and generally trying to deliver the best service we can for our tenants. We have always been frustrated in our sector with the continuing focus on targets that are set without any context or understanding of what is within our control and what isn't. The continued hostile environment we work in demands that we think about managing performance in a different way, one that delivers lasting improvement and will ultimately help us to be financially viable. Attending Universal Data Skills not only challenged my thinking about how we achieve this, but also gave me the understanding and tools to introduce the changes needed to deliver lasting service improvements.

I always accepted that it was not about my staff working any harder - it was about the processes they work in. However, I still placed our focus and efforts within the context of achieving targets. Often we would sit in senior manager or operational team meetings and discuss what the best target would be to set for the year ahead. We would talk about what we had achieved in the previous year and come to an agreement - based on some data and our gut feeling - about what stretching target we could set. We would agree X number of days for turning around empty homes, X percentage for rent arrears collection and X percentage for rent collection. Throughout the year we would then sit in Board and team meetings either congratulating each other when targets were achieved or discussing new actions to get us back on track.

We have access to a wealth of data about our processes, but what we have not done is consider how any results relate to a Normal Distribution. So for example, the time taken to re-let an empty home is affected by a large number of common variations relating to stock condition, housing demand, previous tenant damage, how quickly we complete the repairs, whether we have a new tenant lined up to move in, the standard of repairs

completed and whether the tenant accepts the property when they view it, etc. Each one of these has a process relating to it and simply looking at the overall re-let time and if it's on target or not is just pointless. Our focus needs to be on each process feeding into the overall re-let result and putting our efforts into making sure these processes are as efficient as possible. This needs a clear understanding of each part of the system and a focus on eliminating variation in each process.

What Universal Data Skills showed me clearly is that variation always occurs and our focus should be on reducing common cause variation if it is in our control. I also learned that sometimes, doing nothing is actually the right thing to do - particularly if the variation is due to a special cause and therefore unlikely to happen again. This is radical thinking for me and I now see that much of my efforts have, in effect, been 'tampering' with the process resulting in yet more variation leading to more varied results. This is a bit mind blowing! What the course has given me are the tools to explain to others what we need to do differently and, as with all UIC courses, the practical steps we need to go through are clearly set out in the manual. This is great because, when I go back to work and everyone glazes over when I start talking about Normal Distributions, Standard Deviations, Control Charts and Statistical Process Control, I have the step-by-step guide to help me explain it and for us to apply.

Let's face it, targets will always be set within our sector but we have an opportunity to look at delivering real improvements to services by focusing on eliminating variation. If we truly apply this thinking to Social Housing, we can and will deliver better services more efficiently and effectively to many vulnerable people whose quality of life is directly affected by what we do.

On a personal note, I promise never to judge my teams again on whether they met their target or not and I will do my best to eliminate target setting as a means to deliver improvement at all levels of my organisation.

Fiona Wilkie
 Director
 Symphony Housing Group



We had a look for some evidence of Fiona's 'over 25 years' in housing. Here she is in 1998 attending what is now called Universal Leadership Skills - back row, second from the right. She hasn't changed a bit. (And neither have I - RC)



CEO bonuses create 'traitors' and often worsen business performance

Dr Deming gave dire warnings about 'Merit Pay', more commonly referred to as Performance Related Pay. In 'Out of the Crisis' he says:

"It nourishes short-term performance, annihilates long-term planning, builds fear, demolishes teamwork, nourishes rivalry and politics. It leaves people bitter, crushed, bruised, battered, desolate, despondent, dejected, feeling inferior, some even depressed, unfit for work for weeks after receipt of rating, unable to comprehend why they are inferior. It is unfair, as it ascribes to the people in a group differences that may be caused totally by the system that they work in."

This is a difficult message for many managers to hear, as Performance Related Pay is common practice. In the video 'A Prophet Unheard', Don Petersen, CEO of Ford, is asked why Ford used Performance Related Pay when trying to adopt Deming's philosophy. His answer is telling: "Originally because everybody else did".

Further reading

Try the excellent
'Punished by Rewards'
by Alfie Kohn.

We are always on the lookout for contemporary writing and research on the subject and we were interested in the following article by AM Business Editor Peter Ryan on the ABC news website.

Chief executives who took their companies through the worst of the global financial crisis and survived most likely think they are worth every cent of their pay packet. However, new research out today warns that excessive CEO pay and performance bonuses - especially when a company's bottom line is under pressure - is out of kilter with the best interests of shareholders. Rather than encouraging bosses to make a company more profitable in the long term, the research says the lure of a fat bonus can often tempt a CEO to pursue poor strategies.

Dr Peter Cebon, from Melbourne Business School at the University of Melbourne, co-authored the study with Dr Benjamin Hermalin from the University of California, Berkeley. "Performance bonuses officially sound like a really great idea," Dr Cebon told AM. "But the trouble with performance bonuses is that they encourage the CEO to engage in strategies which lead to measurable outcomes in the short to medium term, and they encourage the board to hide behind the performance measures, rather than develop a deep understanding of what's going on in the company."

Dr Cebon said that, rather than focusing on the long-term benefit of a company, the potential for bonuses can really make a CEO blinkered and he or she might come up with poor strategies - or even strategies that are doomed to fail. "If you're in a very uncertain institutional environment, then pursuing bonuses could easily lead to very poor strategies," Dr Cebon said. "For 30 years we've had these enormous CEO salaries justified on the basis of this assumption, or the argument, that 'paid for performance' is the thing we need. And what this research says is that story that we've been told to justify their salaries may not be true."

The research, published in the Review of Financial Studies, suggested that, although bonuses should not be banned, there could be a regulated cap on the level of bonuses. "If you want to live in an economy full of traitors, then there's nothing wrong with having uncapped bonuses," Dr Cebon said. "If you want to live in an economy full of companies that create long term capability in their organisations, then a regulated cap on bonuses would appear to be what you want." Dr Cebon cited performance bonuses for the chief executives of Australia's big four banks and suspects they would do the same job with or without massive incentives. "My suspicion is that they're like everybody else, where the intrinsic motivators are what gets them out of the bed in the morning," he argued. "What matters is actually their relative pay, so that (former Westpac CEO) Gail Kelly can say that she earns more than Ian Narev (Commonwealth Bank chief executive) or Mike Smith (ANZ chief executive) can show off at the Melbourne Club or whatever," Dr Cebon said. "And that the actual quantum of cash doesn't make much difference."

Dr Cebon said company boards need to take more responsibility for incentive deals struck with CEOs, but agreed hefty bonuses and payouts were distasteful for shareholders looking for profit. "I'm not a lawyer, I'm sure this has to do with the nature of the contract that they negotiated at the start of their tenure. But I'm quite sympathetic to the shareholders," he concluded.

Reproduced by permission of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation - Library Sales. © 2015 ABC.

FROM OUR CLIENTS

In this section, we hear from many of our clients and publish all those photos you dutifully lined up for.

In this section

- ACT Government Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, Roads and Public Transport
- Action - Aiming for less and achieving more
- The Aspire Group - Not just another fad
- Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust - Refining the remit, improving mobility
- Broadland Housing Group
- Caledonian Sleeper
- Great Western Railway (1) - The hard (or runny) bit in the middle
- Great Western Railway (2) - Ready for kick-off
- Great Yarmouth Community Trust
- Housing Plus
- MKH Rail - Keeping partnerships on track
- NHS South East Commissioning Support Unit - The power of the post-it
- One Manchester - The Big Issue
- The Regenda Group
- SLC Rail
- South Yorkshire Housing Association - Cooperation not competition
- Southeastern (1) - Clutter on the agenda
- Southeastern (2) - How structure has helped
- Thirteen Group - Improving skills in the Tees Valley
- Together Housing Group - Rolling with the changes
- Transit Australia Group - Right on time

03

ACT Government Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, Roads and Public Transport

ACTION SCHOOL REVIEW, MARCH 2015



Action - Aiming for less and achieving more

Helen Greig is Development Director and Deputy CEO at Action, a charity providing a broad range of opportunities and support services around their four key principles of HOPE - Homes, Opportunities, Pride, Employability. It's been a particularly busy year for Action - they've been working on improving their key processes, whilst at the same time trying to focus on what's achievable. Here, Helen reflects on some of the things they have accomplished so far.

Action, a registered charity in South Yorkshire, started working with the UIC early in 2015 and the Senior Management Team started the Strategic Improvement Programme in May. Since then, all the managers have also been trained in UIMPROVE and the senior team also carried out a Strategy Development Event in September 2015.



< STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME, MAY 2015



< UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, SEPTEMBER 2015



UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, JUNE 2015 >



HELEN (RIGHT) AND ACTION'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM, STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EVENT, SEPTEMBER 2015

It is fair to say that our whole way of working has changed since those initial 3 days in May. Apart from the fact that every office has at least one wall covered in flipcharts and post-it notes, there has been a real enthusiasm for working to a project methodology. Project Kick-Starts and Cocktail Parties are now common practice and parlance, and feedback from people new to the methodology has been 100% positive. The most frequently heard comments are that people are having the opportunity to be involved in and shape projects, and that projects are actually being completed. This doesn't reflect well on our previous approach but, as most people will recognise, we didn't have a process and it is 85% about this.

As a Senior Management Team the process has highlighted the sheer volume of projects in certain departments, and - put bluntly - the impossibility of achieving them all. That's okay; it is important to know what can and cannot be achieved. Identifying that the task ahead is impossible is better to know at the start when there is time to change things than when months of energy have been invested in it already. This is why projects didn't get finished previously.

So now we are aiming for less but achieving more - an excellent result in my view.

Helen Greig
Development Director and Deputy CEO
Action



TRACEY JOHNSON,
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Tracey Johnson will be familiar to readers of previous Yearbooks, as she has written in the past about her experience of applying UIMPROVE at The Regenda Group. In the autumn of 2014 she took on a new challenge when she accepted the role of Director of Business Transformation at The Aspire Group, a social regeneration business which delivers social housing, training and neighbourhood services across Staffordshire and Cheshire. Tracey immediately set to work exploring how she could apply UIMPROVE in a new setting and here she reflects on her first year in the job and achievements so far.

Joining a new organisation in September 2014, it soon became very apparent that there was a lack of strategic planning in a systematic and consistent way through an Annual Corporate Planning Process. There were loads of great ideas and hundreds of projects contained in an overly complicated Excel spreadsheet that colleagues needed to keep up-to-date, but lots of routine activity was included as well. Having implemented the UIMPROVE way of working at Regenda and seen it evolve over 5 years, it was soon apparent what needed to be done. So...my first step was a 'taster' with those who had been involved in the development of the existing framework. It's always good to get the views from those who are closest to it and to hear what they had to say about the 'good and bad' of what was in place. What became very apparent very quickly was the utter confusion within the leadership team as to what they needed to do, what they needed to report on, who was accountable and who was interested in the outcome of their projects!

The Aspire Group - Not just another fad

Following the taster session, the feedback was great - "just what we need", "strips out the complication", "creates consistency", "puts ownership where it should be", "provides clarity and linkage to the strategic aims" - Hallelujah! The feedback could have been so different - so I was delighted. What I didn't want to do was come in as a new Executive Director and change everything, without others seeing the benefits first.

So...our journey at Aspire has continued. We have trained 12 Facilitators, our Heads of Service have been through Universal Improvement Skills, we have completed one cycle of Annual Planning and are just about to go into our next. Projects are clearly identified with project remits and realistic timeframes. The next 2 years will see the approach embed even further. This is here to stay and not just another fad!

Tracey Johnson
Director of Business Transformation
The Aspire Group



Facilitator Development Programme, June 2015



Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust - Refining the remit, improving mobility

Corrine Ralph is General Manager - Business and Performance for the Rehabilitation Service within the Specialist Services Division of Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust. She completed Universal Improvement Skills in July 2015. Here she reflects on the importance of taking time to develop the right remit before rushing to action.

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson is heading up a National Wheelchair Alliance, which was formally launched in March 2015 in the House of Lords.

The alliance has begun its work setting out the objectives for all wheelchair services with the release of a Wheelchair Charter, which aims to improve the lives of wheelchair users and their families. This document provides the ideal framework for the development of an improvement project that allows us to look forward and not get bogged down in historical issues.

We held our Project Kick-Start in October 2015, with the aim of agreeing the work streams that will help us deliver the improvements to meet the objectives of the Charter. Carl Crump, Project Leader, selected a number of Cocktail Party prompts to identify the work to be carried out, and we aimed to identify a leader for each work stream by the end of the event.

We secured the help of Jacqui Atkinson and Stuart Rich - neither of whom are directly involved, but are very composed and have detailed experience of UIMPROVE and some insight into the service - so we had Facilitators with an ideal combination of skills to help us out on the day.

At the end of the day we came away with four project teams, with named leaders for each, and a plan to meet again to discuss project remits.

There was some angst regarding the outcomes - some people expected that we would come out with clearly defined objectives, but Jacqui advised that, in her experience, this may be over ambitious in one event and that it is better to review the outputs after the event with a view to refining the project remit.

We now have project remits written and are looking forward to delivering improvements across our Wheelchair Service over the coming months.

Corrine Ralph
General Manager - Business and Performance
Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust



Broadland Housing Group

- 01 UIMPROVE RE-ENERGISING DAYS, JANUARY 2015
- 02 EXECUTIVE EVENT, JANUARY 2015



Caledonian Sleeper

- 01 EXECUTIVE EVENT, MAY 2015
- 02 EXECUTIVE EVENT, NOVEMBER 2015
- 03 MARKETING WORKSHOP, NOVEMBER 2015





SPINNING PLATES

DAVID CROME

Great Western Railway (1) - The hard (or runny) bit in the middle

Occasionally we think we should have some post-its pre-printed to save writing the same thing time-after-time. This is because there are one or two individuals who can always be relied on to produce something sensible and insightful, whether we're looking for a Yearbook article or a speaker at a conference. If we ever get round to this, the first batch of pre-printed post-its would include a pad of 'David Crome'.

I bet you're just like me. Most of the time you cook routine stuff, you know - pasta, chilli, and other standards. You do it well because you've honed the recipe over the years. Then sometimes you want to do something a bit different, try something new, maybe for a special occasion. So out of the cupboard comes Heston, Gordon or Nigella and before you know it you're running a project. As with most things, you know where you are starting from and you know where you want to get. But just like your chocolate fondant, the scary thing is getting the bit in the middle right. You trust Heston because he's the expert, his recipe is tried and tested and you know that if you do what he says then most of the time (though not always) something amazing will come out of the confusion.

This happens to us quite often here. Earlier this year we were grappling with a really tough challenge. Why do customers keep having accidents when they are on our trains? Okay, it's not that many, but it's horrible when someone gets hurt on your premises. Conventional thinking on this only gets you back to doing the things you've always done with inevitable results. Heston's good, but this is clearly time to get out the UIC recipe book.

Ingredients? The right people, including a Facilitator (ideally one called Barbara), a nice room, pens, post-its, flipcharts, fruit and Hob Nobs. Method? So much to choose from. Project Refocus or Kick-Start? Tools and techniques - Brainstorms and Cocktail Parties?

In this case we needed to hone in on causation. It's always tempting to get into Round Robins and other idea generators but here was a

need for careful analysis, because we don't want solutions for problems we don't have. The data is not always helpful. Every year, sadly, a dozen or so customers spill a hot drink on themselves on the train and it's nasty. But when you carry 100 million people a year and 30% of them have a coffee with them, the fact that it's 12 accidents one year, 15 the next and nine the year after is no reason to start claiming success or failure using such data, and it doesn't solve the problem.

The guru (a.k.a. Facilitator) said it was time to dust off our Ishikawa. And hey presto, we got some fantastic analysis of the qualitative factors and that leads on to creating the right solutions for the right problems. And that, we hope, means less scalded customers and, while we're at it, be careful what you do with the middle of that fondant.



Now as it happens, that same Facilitator helped plan our Annual Conference with a combination of meeting management and project planning methods. And this really paid dividends. So what do you do with a large team of managers who you expect to be able to juggle copious amounts of work, all at the same time without letting anything slip?

Easy...teach them to spin plates. Courses available at GWR at great rates!

David Crome
General Manager
Great Western Railway



Great Western Railway (2) - Ready for kick-off

One of the key principles of UIMPROVE is involving the people who do the job. In this article, Philip Humphries from Great Western Railway describes how this helped with preparation for moving large numbers of people for the Rugby World Cup.

Part of my role within Great Western Railway requires me to chair the Central Safety Focus Group meetings. It's a serious subject that requires people to participate to enable us to get the right outputs and make sure we are putting safety first. What I really enjoy about these meetings is giving the group an opportunity to come up with lots of ideas (including bizarre ones) using the Techniques for Productive Meetings. These provide me with a structured way of enabling all involved to discuss and decide what initiatives we need to drive forward. We have had some real success with the group and this is down to using the methods gained from attending the Universal Improvement Skills course a number of years ago and allowing those who attend meetings to participate and be able to express their creativity and any concerns.

Trying to obtain ideas from front-line staff can be challenging in most organisations, but especially so when people work a variety of different shift patterns. Recently, just prior to the Rugby World Cup, I needed to determine what safe methods of work, staffing levels and queuing systems needed to be in place at Bristol Parkway station.

It was important to give front-line staff the opportunity to have their say, because they would ultimately be the ones delivering the customer service. We needed to gather ideas and concerns quickly and efficiently.

We used the key principles of a Cocktail Party and asked people to provide answers on post-its when they had the opportunity. While this wasn't an ideal set up, it provided us with some really useful data that helped us plan our operations during the Rugby World Cup.

This was a huge success - the station as a whole was rated one of the best in relation to customer satisfaction and performance and I'm pleased to report there was not one recorded customer accident related to those customers attending the tournament. The technique gave us a really good opportunity to gather information before the tournament kicked off and allowed myself, the Station Manager and our teams to be well prepared and deliver a memorable and safe service that was enjoyed by our customers and staff.

*Philip Humphries
Area Competence Manager Drivers & Dispatch
Great Western Railway*



01 PHILIP HUMPHRIES
02 NO SHORTAGE OF IDEAS

Great Yarmouth Community Trust



UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, SEPTEMBER 2015



Housing Plus

UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, NOVEMBER 2015

housingplus
together for the right reasons

MKH Rail - Keeping partnerships on track

Luke Bodin is an Assistant Consultant at MKH Rail, a consultancy which provides advice and guidance for rail projects. At 17 years old, he is one of the younger Facilitators that we have trained - but previous experience shows he may be a future client - at Director level! In this article, he reflects on how facilitation can be used beyond projects - specifically for getting partnerships working effectively.

6 months after joining MKH Rail, I attended Universal Improvement Skills in Alsager. The course gave me a new range of skills and techniques which would help me support the project work of one of our key clients - SLC Rail, a rail solutions consultancy based in Birmingham.

After finishing Universal Improvement Skills I had the opportunity to facilitate Annual Planning for the Business Services team at SLC Rail. The approach was well received by the participants, who commented on "the positive benefits of doing it the UIC way". It has been fantastic to work for an organisation which has embraced the approach and is using it to get their steering right.

Since then I have had numerous opportunities come my way, including taking on a larger role in the management of frameworks with our clients, having the opportunity to become regional representative for the Transport Planner Society and also taking on more tasks within my existing roles.

More recently I have embarked upon the Facilitator Development Programme. Although I have yet to complete Module 3, I am quickly coming to understand that facilitation is not just about running Project Events - it's about using the tools available to make sure that meetings deliver outputs and not just updates.

The next step for me is to introduce the approach to partnership meetings. Learning about the Techniques for Productive Meetings has really highlighted the role of the Chair in getting people to work in this way. The faces at partnership meetings can change month-by-month; a Preamble alone will make life easier for those people who are attending for perhaps the first time. Introducing the approach will be more a challenge in some meetings than others, however I believe the results that SLC Rail and MKH Rail are delivering by working in this way together speak for themselves.

Luke Bodin
Assistant Consultant
MKH Rail



LUKE BODIN -
TRAINING AS A FACILITATOR, NOVEMBER 2015



01 UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, JANUARY 2015
 02 UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, FEBRUARY 2015



GARY MCFEGAN

NHS South East Commissioning Support Unit - The power of the post-it

Gary McFegan, from the NHS South East Commissioning Support Unit, attended Universal Improvement Skills in February 2015 during a time of major change. In this article he talks about how the tools and techniques he learned helped him navigate his way through the changes and how he has helped others get their priorities right. We particularly like the 'grasping the nettle' aspect conveyed by Gary, as it is often easy to shy away from putting UIMPROVE into practice during times of major change because 'the timing isn't right'. Gary demonstrates that this is never the case and also reinforces the usefulness of the manual. Thank you, Gary.

For me, February 2015 was a time of restructuring and uncertainty at work. I was temporarily stepping up into a more senior role. Time was precious and the thought of a 3 day residential course - Universal Improvement Skills - was not a totally positive one. However, I was persuaded by good feedback from previous attendees to give it a go. How glad am I that I did.

It was a different course from the outset - not all classroom theory and no embarrassing role play. It was well structured and accompanied by an excellent manual. For me it was all about the tutors, they were a fun bunch with the right level of light-heartedness and serious knowledge and experience. They bounced off each other and kept the pace well balanced and had that knack of refreshing the course at just the right moment.

A key issue for me was to make sure what I was learning was applicable to my workplace and that I would get the chance to

implement what I had learned. Those that do the course will know about the post-it and how key they are to the UIMPROVE process.

A few months later my organisation merged with two others and shortly after underwent a complete restructure with 52 people applying for 27 jobs. I attended an interview for a more senior role in the newly restructured organisation. On the table on one of the assessment days was a pile of post-its. Here was my chance - I grabbed it with both hands and set about answering the questions, using the post-it notes to brainstorm, structure and list thoughts and questions and then move them around as I built a project plan on a flipchart.

At a later date I was in a room with a group of GPs and staff and we had to come up with some ideas, rank them in order of importance and come to an agreed way forward. I once again utilised UIMPROVE tools and techniques to manage this. It really worked.

In summary, it was a course where the content sinks in, it was great fun to do and the manual is easy to refer to. I credit it with helping me to gain my promotion and prepare me for my new role, helping me to achieve real tasks and objectives in the day-to-day running of the organisation.

Gary McFegan
 Senior Associate - New Models Commissioning
 NHS South East Commissioning Support Unit

SOUTH EAST/CSU



NIALL POWER, RICHARD, DAVE POWER

WHY DON'T WE JUST... BUILD MORE HOMES?

Dave Power

The UK requires around 300,000 new homes a year. Yet there are currently something in the order of 130,000 built – not even half what's needed.

The last time we had a great housing boom was in the post-war reconstruction period of the 1950s and 1960s when there was a unified political agenda around housebuilding, backed by massive government subsidies.

Compare that with today when the government recently set its own national target of building 200,000 homes a year.

Although it claims "we are the builders" it's actually committed to the ideology of home ownership. So for the first time since 1974 there is no public subsidy for affordable rented homes – but there is a slump in home ownership across Britain.

Simply put, we are not building more new homes because they are too expensive.

But focusing solely on home ownership isn't the right solution. We need to look at housing in all forms of tenure, including shared ownership and affordable rent. We also need to get land supply back into the market, get planning permissions agreed and get builders building. That's a fundamental problem to which there has been no solid response.

In Greater Manchester, with the devolution arrangements now in place, we have an opportunity to rethink housing and influence its growth. Everyone would like to get on to the housing ladder but people are often pinned back by the need for big deposits. If you consider that Greater Manchester has a median income of around £25,000 and even for an entry level home you would need a £10,000 deposit, home ownership isn't an option for many people. We need better access into



entry level homes without excessive deposits.

There are discussions underway between housing providers and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to address such challenges.

It's unlikely that more affordable rented homes will be provided unless subsidies from market sales or other public funds are put into the system. That means it's up to organisations like housing associations to generate those funds through the better management of their own assets.

Homes are built the same way today as they were 50 years ago, yet without the same results. We can learn from Europe, particularly how to ensure the construction industry has the skilled workforce it needs.

How do we move forward? We need to look at everything in much smaller parts and build a strategy around it, not just one size fits all. Devolution provides an opportunity to construct the jigsaw puzzle in the right way.

A national consensus on a long-term accessible and affordable housing supply is needed. But here's the problem. A recent report by City Metrics analysed the increased take-up in benefit. While northern cities have a higher benefit dependency, work welfare take-up is doubling in places like Aldershot, Crawley, Reading and Cambridge.

Why? Housing is too expensive, there's not enough of it and rents in the private rented sector are increasing.

A reduction in welfare bills can't be achieved without a housing solution. Housing is a problem for our economy. Without a solution to that the long-term economic plan won't work. ■

Dave Power is group chief executive, One Manchester (onemanchester.co.uk)

One Manchester - The Big Issue

The Yearbook was about to go to press when we received this e-mail from Dave Power. It was worth a little bit of messing to include it.

A note to thank you for sponsoring me to sell The Big Issue North as part of this year's Vendor Week. I was delighted to be involved again and managed to sell four copies this year, which was an improvement on last year. When I was standing in the street in the rain being ignored, it struck me that there's a bit of a parallel with homelessness in that it's often hidden. Hopefully, by getting involved, I did my bit to help raise awareness of the issues, as well as raising £598-83 to help the many people trying to work themselves out of poverty.

Attached is an article from this week's edition sharing my views about the UK housing shortage and the opportunities devolution brings to address the issues in Greater Manchester. I hope you find this of interest.

Regards and thank you once again for your generous donation.

Dave

*Dave Power
Group Chief Executive
One Manchester*

one.manchester
social innovation



- 01 UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, FEBRUARY 2015
- 02 EXECUTIVE EVENT, MAY 2015
- 03 FACILITATOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, NOVEMBER 2015
- 04 EXECUTIVE EVENT, NOVEMBER 2015
- 05 LEADERSHIP FORUM, NOVEMBER 2015
- 06 UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, DECEMBER 2015

The Regenda Group



UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, MARCH 2015



South Yorkshire Housing Association - Cooperation not competition

In this article, Gareth Parkin from South Yorkshire Housing Association shares the successes achieved by adopting a cooperative approach when working in a multi-agency environment.

I was extremely proud to be asked to speak at the 2015 UIMPROVE Conference. I wanted to share my experience of using the approach and tools on the gargantuan task we had of developing a programme to reduce isolation and loneliness amongst the over-50s across the city of Sheffield. We were required to co-design and implement a meaningful programme that would also involve other organisations - some of which are usually our competitors. The task was a nut that no one organisation could ever crack alone and my initial thoughts of developing such a programme with different components and organisations were ones of dread, with phrases like ‘herding cats’ springing to mind.

And then, like a beacon of hope, I thought “cooperation not competition” and on my desk stood my trusty (and very well used and battered) UIMPROVE manual. By selecting the right methodology and by using the tools as directed in the manual, we were able to navigate everyone through the co-design work in an inclusive and non-tokenistic way. This eventually led to the fantastic news that we had secured the investment.

The tools have done more than just get us to the successful outcome of the bid; they’ve helped shape vital processes in our programme - such as our approach to procurement and governance - and they’re now in the heart of how we’re continuing to co-design and co-commission the Age Better Programme in Sheffield for the next 6 years.

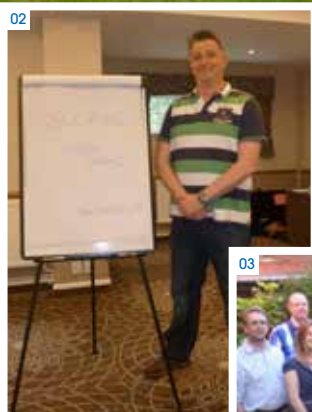
*Gareth Parkin
Programme Lead - Care, Health and Wellbeing
South Yorkshire Housing Association*



SLC Rail



- 01 EXECUTIVE EVENT, JUNE 2015
- 02 IAN WALTERS
- 03 DEPARTMENTAL EVENT, JULY 2015





Southeastern (1) - Clutter on the agenda

Kevin Pantony attended Universal Improvement Skills with his colleagues from Southeastern in September 2015. After the course, he experienced a light bulb moment relating to Juran's 85-15 Rule.

After attending Universal Improvement Skills it was straight back to work. Feeling fresh from the course, my first morning was spent in the signal box at Ashford with Network Rail.

My mind was focusing on two areas that had caught my attention.

- > The bulk of failure was process driven
- > Productivity (or lack of) at meetings

The meeting at Ashford was about recent performance at Ashford Station and the aim of the meeting was to seek ways of reducing delays. After opening the meeting and stating the aim, I said I had decided that I wanted to ignore the standard agenda and do one thing only that day.

This was to simply go round each person and ask them what it is they thought we should do to improve performance. Not the usual style of discussion that we were used to.

I added the condition that when people thought about this they needed to consider what was behind the current failures they had experienced. I stated that, having given this some thought, I was now of the belief that most things are caused by process, not people, so please don't go always blaming people. The first person to speak then started to blame their staff. My response was to stop them there and then and ask them to look deeper, as it seemed to be that some of their deployment and systems were clearly not right.

As we went around I sensed that people were more relaxed and were open and honest about what was experienced day-to-day. I felt we got more from that meeting than others because everyone had their say and their colleagues listened.

I've now stripped as much clutter as possible from the agendas of all meetings I attend. This is having a real positive benefit. I now also approach everything I deal with as a potential process issue, making me look deeper into the circumstances.

*Kevin Pantony
Route Performance Manager
Southeastern*



UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, SEPTEMBER 2015

Southeastern (2) - How structure has helped

Dan Tall is Head of Performance for Southeastern, a complex and challenging job. Whereas many of our clients arrange for mixed groups to attend courses, Dan attended with his team. This has led to some extra benefits, as he explains below.

The team I inherited was extremely knowledgeable; people had generally been in place for a number of years and were experienced and well qualified, but worked separately and in different locations. The responsibilities of the team are fairly wide ranging, covering performance reporting and analysis, delay attribution, performance improvement and data quality, and a second team that manages the contractual relationship with Network Rail and HS1, our infrastructure providers. There is a lot of responsibility and a huge range of interactions across the business to manage and, at the same time, we need to provide reliable information upon which business decisions can be based.



Our key issue was that we were really good at looking back over what happened yesterday, working out how things happened and reviewing them, but were less good at the really important work of working out the future and looking forward to what needed to occur. As a result, our planning and focus jumped around a lot. We had, as a team, become very reactive and focused on past events. As a result, what we were supposed to do was suffering.

Feedback from my team indicated that they felt under a lot of pressure, had too little time to focus on the key parts of their role and that we were focused on reporting failure rather than helping support the development of solution. All of this became a constant discussion point with my director, with both of us keen to get the correct skills in place within the team and get more focus on the 'look forward' aspects of performance and contractual management so that the team as a whole would become more proactive and helpful to colleagues. To do that means having very structured processes and making sure everyone was on the same page. My director didn't hesitate to recommend the UIC as the provider of good structure that is well known within the railway industry.

Working with the UIC did, however, take a while to get sorted, due to various changes we were going through at the time within our company. Therefore, it was not until 18 months later that I was able to arrange for my whole management team to attend Universal Improvement Skills in September 2015.

I met up with Josie beforehand to go through who was attending, what I thought their strengths and improvers were and what it was that I wanted to achieve. This was really valuable as it definitely gave me pointers as to how the UIC would approach the course and it was a good open discussion that really gave me confidence that the course would provide what my team would need going forward.

Both Josie and Alison were excellent, engaging and experienced in transport industries in the UK and Australia and that was really important in getting parts of my team involved right from the start.

DAN TALL



Watching a particularly taciturn member of my team chatting away with Josie really early on in the course was very refreshing!

Dr Deming's focus on quality and process definitely sparked my team's interest and we then spent 3 days of intense training on structures, process and tools that really got the engagement of my team.

The team displayed a real enthusiasm and energy for the course and its content, which was great to see - the benefits of the mixed training style offered by the UIC where we got to sample the tools and techniques, as well as the more formal training, kept the course stimulating.

What was great was to receive feedback from my team about how much they had enjoyed the course and what they could do differently in the future to adopt the processes around project management (of which we do an awful lot), how they would run meetings in the future to ensure they were meaningful, and how they would approach workloads and the planning of them. All excellent and a positive move forward.

I also now have a large collection of multi-coloured post-it notes and, for me, there have been numerous successes resulting from the training:

- > Better interpersonal relationships in the team and greater understanding of what they each do
- > A huge focus on how we do things and the tools that we use to do them
- > Focus on keeping structure in the work we do and planning out how we do things
- > A team that is functioning and working better with a positive attitude
- > A team now looking forward rather than constantly looking back
- > A team that is encouraging others to adopt the same outlook

What was also particularly useful was the review meeting some time after the course - offering reflections and ongoing support, that was a new experience for me and of real benefit.

Shortly after the course, I held an Annual Planning Day with my team. We used the tools we had learned and have now also got a fully mapped plan for the two biggest pieces of work that we are doing. Keeping to a structured approach was the key lesson, as the tools worked well. We have also involved our colleagues in Network Rail and this has brought even greater benefit. By focusing on the process problems rather than what we saw as the people problems, we were able to work together very collaboratively.

Next I am lining up Universal Data Skills - if this has half the impact of our first course, it will be time well spent.

Dan Tall
Head of Performance
Southeastern

southeastern



HANNAH POULTER



THIRTEEN GROUP'S TRAINEE FACILITATORS
(KATHRYN WHITTLE, LINDSEY BOAL, HANNAH POULTER AND SARAH MINNS),
NOVEMBER 2015

Thirteen Group - Improving skills in the Tees Valley

Hannah Poulter is Research and Implementation Analyst for Thirteen Group, a Housing Association based in the North East of England. Here she writes about how Thirteen's Facilitators will be bringing agencies in the Tees Valley together to improve skills and employability for their tenants and the wider community.

My team and I have developed a consortium bid with four other organisations which is focused on supporting young unemployed people on their path towards education, employment and training. During bid development it was identified that, to achieve sustainable and positive outcomes for our customers, we need to provide training which meets their needs. Jo is a member of our team who, like me, has completed Universal Improvement Skills and has significant experience in the delivery of employability support. She identified that the market is flooded with basic employability type courses. Therefore we knew that we needed to create something which is more engaging, innovative and tailored to meet the needs of young people and local employers. We needed a project for this, and it needed a Kick-Start.

Both Universal Improvement Skills and the Facilitator Development Programme have taught me that the two most important factors of Kick-Starts are the prompts and having the right people in the room. The prompts have been designed to answer the overarching question, 'What are the skills gaps for young people in the Tees Valley?' Previous research has suggested that soft skills, language and behaviours are often the main barriers for young people seeking employment, but this method will enable us to extract the views of the real experts across the Tees Valley, which will in turn inform our project remit.

We have invited staff from our Care and Support branch who have front-line experience in supporting young people, our employability team and also staff from Know Your Money (KYM) in Middlesbrough, a dedicated young people's money advice service. Alongside this we have invited colleagues from the local Job Centres and the National Careers Service, to ensure we both build on their experience of supporting the unemployed, and also so that the course appears attractive to them as referral agencies. What we feel will add to the feedback which is collected is that some of the KYM staff are also young people themselves who have previously had some experience of being unemployed. So while we are following the rules and not inviting our current customers, we are getting the next best thing!

The outputs from this Kick-Start will be used to help select and combine modules from a developed employability course which closely maps what skills gaps are identified.

We have made good use of Cocktail Parties at Thirteen Group since our first round of training in March. However, before attending our facilitator training, we would still have relied on 1-1 interviews to collect data for this project, which would be resource-intensive and would not have resulted in the buy-in we stand to gain from running a Kick-Start using trained Facilitators. I am really looking forward to seeing the outcomes of this piece of work.

*Hannah Poulter
Research and Implementation Analyst
Thirteen Group*

thirteen

UNIVERSAL DATA SKILLS, JULY 2015



STEPHEN BATLEY

Together Housing Group - Rolling with the changes

Stephen Batley is Group Head of Customer Services at Together Housing Group, and has successfully applied UIMPROVE to a number of projects. Here he talks about how he and his team have been improving their digital offer, by getting the right people involved from the start.

RED BEADS, JULY 2015



RED BEADS, JULY 2015



UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, OCTOBER 2015



Change is the one constant we all face and has been a way of life for the Together Housing Group since 2011, when three housing groups in the North of England combined to form a new group. We are meeting our new business environment head on and rolling with the challenges we're facing.

And it's not just internal changes that have had an effect. The new rules brought about by Welfare Reform have had a massive impact on the way we run our business and the recent rent reductions imposed by the Government have sent shockwaves throughout the social housing sector. In short, we have to work smarter. And that's why Together Housing Group has embraced UIMPROVE.

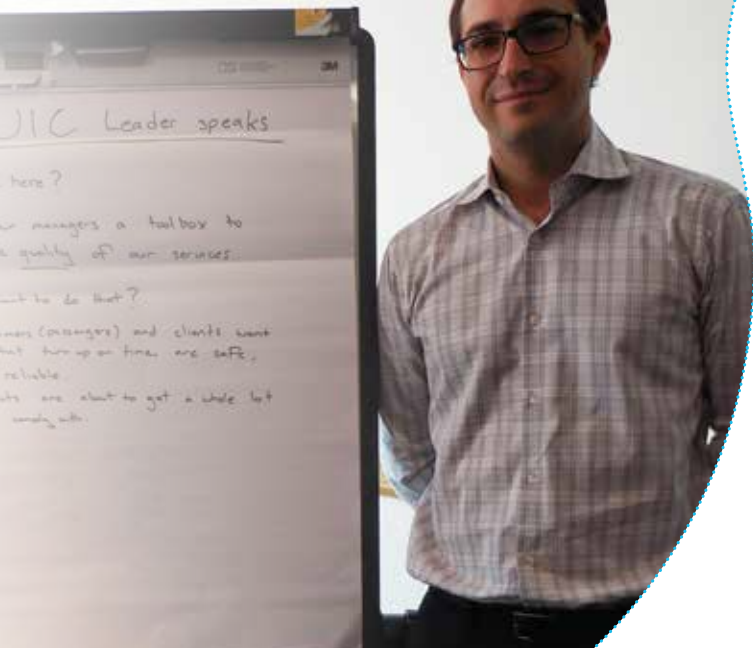
Efficiency in terms of time and money is top of the agenda and we are using UIMPROVE methodologies for two of the biggest projects we have run to date. We've already mentioned Welfare Reform, an issue that not only impacts our business but also the lives of our customers. And our move to a digital future has been a significant leap forward for staff and customers alike. Using UIMPROVE we were able to launch our Digital Together Strategy - to provide our customers with a multi-platform solution to

manage their tenancies wherever, whenever and however they choose. The potential savings to the company are massive and that's where UIMPROVE came into its own.

After a Project Kick-Start, our launch event brought together staff from all areas of the business, as well as tenants, to discuss the aims and objectives of the project. The Cocktail Party wasn't just a success, it proved to be of huge value, encouraging passion for the project, engagement and drive, as well as some fantastic ideas.

The launch of our new websites and app has proved to be a massive success, with 10% of tenants already signed up to manage their accounts on-line. As more and more colleagues have been trained in UIMPROVE methodologies or attended events using its tools and techniques, we have generated more ideas and achieved buy-in which has enabled us to address change quickly and effectively.

*Stephen Batley
Group Head of Customer Services
Together Housing Group*



It is always a pleasure to be able to work with an organisation that is full of energy, bursting with innovative ideas and really committed to its customers. Transit Australia Group is one of those organisations and John R Calabro has implemented some key improvements in his role as Acting Chief Operating Officer. John is a relative newcomer to UIMPROVE but has lived and breathed the concepts and practices of Statistical Process Control in previous roles. In the article below he gives us some insight into how UIMPROVE is helping TAG achieve its ambitious goals without losing focus on routine operation and the customer.

JOHN R CALABRO

Transit Australia Group - Right on time

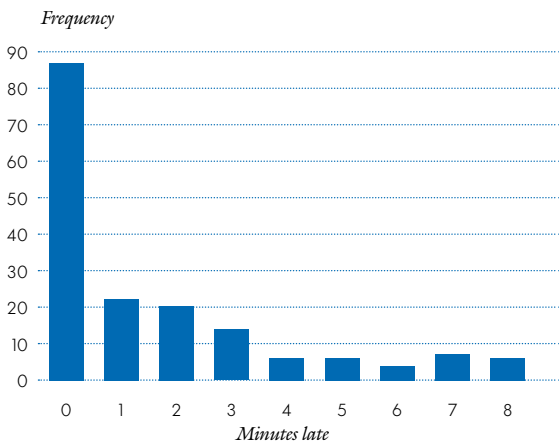
2015 was a year of firsts for Transit Australia Group. From obtaining triple accreditation in Safety, Quality and Environment and developing Australia's first Electric Bus, to submitting our first overseas tender submission for the Dubai bus network. None of this could have been achieved without our dedicated staff striving to improve everything that we do.

For us, the journey started 26 years ago when my father and uncle purchased a struggling company in receivership. To them, improvement and innovation wasn't an option, it was a matter of business survival. Fast forward to today and that pioneering spirit still flourishes throughout the company, enhanced by our adoption of UIMPROVE.

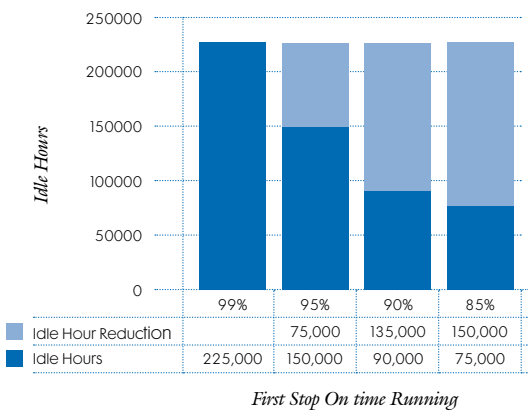
Starting with a Universal Improvement Skills course in February for our General Managers and culminating in the same course being rolled out to our 'GMs of the future' in November, much has been achieved in between. The highlight for me, a former practicing process engineer, is seeing our Network Planners approach our customers' problems from a 'quality' perspective. Taking punctuality as our quality metric (running bus services on-time) and applying simple statistical methods has allowed us to understand our networks and their inherent variation better than ever before. The encouraging learning was seeing that the same quality principles that I knew from pharmaceutical manufacturing could be applied to a non-manufacturing application.

For instance, the Histogram on the adjacent page illustrates the variability in travel time for our route 700 (Tweed Heads to Broadbeach) operating northbound at 08.06. Despite travelling at the same time each day, the variation equates to 16% of total travel time. This is due to light sequences, stopping patterns, weather conditions, seasonal traffic and passenger interaction. Only a very small amount of these effects are within the control of the driver. It is the timetable (that is, the process) and how it accounts for variability that is important. By accounting for the variability of running time we can ensure that the driver will start their next trip on time.





This study also highlighted the potential for cost savings to our agencies by the choice of on-time running Key Performance Indicators. There is a clear exponential increase in cost from raising the performance KPI from 90% to 95% and again to 99%. These decisions can affect the cost to the taxpayer by millions of dollars per annum in the case of large networks such as the Gold Coast. The next graph shows approximate idle hour savings for several on-time running regimes (first stop, Gold Coast). In everyday language, we can increase the percentage of on-time trips by building in slack to the timetable - but slack costs resources, more drivers, more buses.



In addition to our network design, UIMPROVE tools and principles have been instrumental in seeing a step change in performance in the day-to-day management of our networks. The Complete Guide to Improvement is found on all of our General Managers' desks and Project Steering Grids such as the one shown can be seen across our depots and offices.



UIMPROVE tools have allowed TAG to produce a far better customer outcome than the traditional approaches used throughout the industry, as well as bring savings to the taxpayer through our network design. We also utilised these methodologies in our first overseas tender submission in Dubai in 2015 and we continue to look forward into new frontiers in 2016.

Our main goal, however, remains to continuously improve our services to our existing customers and clients.

John R Calabro
 Acting Chief Operating Officer
 Transit Australia Group



- 01 EXECUTIVE EVENT, DECEMBER 2015
- 02 UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, FEBRUARY 2015
- 03 A VERY HAPPY DAN PALMER AT THE WHEEL
- 04 UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS, NOVEMBER 2015

< NETWORK PLANNING PROJECT STEERING GRID

THE GENIUS OF MYRON TRIBUS

Myron Tribus is a name familiar to all who have attended a course with the UIC. Key Concept 3 is one of the underpinning foundations of UIMPROVE. He also appears in the video 'A Prophet Unheard'. As with all the giants, the time available to us when carrying out training never does them justice. In this section, we aim to redress some of the balance. His daughter Lou documents his story and we reproduce the fabulous Germ Theory of Management.

In this section

- **Nine quality decades (and counting)**
- **The Germ Theory of Management**

04

“The juvenile sea squirt wanders through the sea, looking for a rock or a hunk of coral to cling to and makes its home for life. For this task it has a rudimentary nervous system. When it finds its spot it doesn’t need its brain anymore, so it eats it. We’ve met managers like that.”

MYRON TRIBUS AND JEAN-MARIE GOGUE
JOURNAL FOR QUALITY AND PARTICIPATION, JULY/AUGUST 1993

Nine quality decades (and counting)



Lou Tribus is a regular speaker at the UIMPROVE Conference, sharing her experiences in applying her father's teachings in her own classroom. At the 2015 conference she presented her father's history. In her wonderful presentational style, Lou managed to captivate and move us with the story. She has been kind enough to reproduce it here.

It has been just over 10 years since my father, Myron Tribus visited the UK. His last visit was in January 2006 on the occasion of his twin grandson and granddaughter's joint Bar/Bat Mitzvah. He was not yet 85 and still eager to take in the sights and sounds of London. He attended all the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations, played tourist with our other international guests and spent hours with his grandchildren, comparing notes on their new Mac computers - gifts from Grandpa for the special occasion.

Sadly, that was his last visit to the UK. Less than a year later, he had a small stroke which accelerated the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. Now, at 94, he lives comfortably at his home in Pensacola, Florida; looked after by my sister and a team of loyal, loving carers. He doesn't always recognise me, but he always greets me with a smile, the same smile that reaches out to me from photos going back to the 1950s and before.

It all started...

...in San Francisco in 1921, the roaring twenties. A young Jewish flapper-girl met a handsome Jewish officer. It was romance and wedding bells and, barely 9 months later, Myron Lefkowitz was born.

His early life was a little like a soap opera

His father, Ed Lefkowitz, died when Myron was still a baby and his mother fell out with her in-laws. She raised him on her own in a time when single, working mothers were not common. She had very little support from her own family and had to put Myron in foster care when he was small so she could work to support him. His mother, Marie, eventually remarried and her husband adopted Myron and gave him the Tribus name. The marriage did not last, however, and Myron and his mother were soon on their own again. These early challenges did not stop him from launching into...

...a meteoric academic career

He was an exceptional student from the beginning. He finished secondary school 2 years early and enrolled at the University of California in Berkley at the age of 16. He was an ROTC (Reserve Officer's Training Corps) student and combined university with military service, graduating at the age of 21 with a BA in Chemistry. He earned his PhD in Engineering at the age of 27. He was a Professor of Engineering at UCLA by 1953 and Dean of Engineering at Dartmouth College by the time he was 40.



A Professional Engineer

At a time when the field of engineering was becoming more and more specialised, Myron would refer to himself simply as a 'Professional Engineer'. He taught his students to be broad-minded and practical about engineering. The engineering program he began at Dartmouth based on engineering design and entrepreneurship still continues to this day. He saw hands-on engineering design as being essential at all levels of the curriculum. His own engineering career took him into many areas, including:

- > The de-icing of aircraft wings (while in US Army Corps of Engineers during WWII)
- > Salt water desalination and reverse osmosis filtration
- > Thermodynamics, thermoeconomics and decision theory (the subjects of his two published books)
- > Engineering education at four different universities
- > Policy making at a national level for science and technology while at the US Department of Commerce
- > Science broadcasting
- > Research and development while at the Xerox Corporation

A life-long quest for improvement

As long as I can remember, he was interested in how to improve processes in many areas of his professional and personal life:

- > He and my mother were members of the UCLA Gourmet Club in the 1950s. He built elaborate contraptions in order to make the freshest pasta or the finest spun sugar.
- > He was a black belt Judo sensei while at UCLA and injured his back while trying to perfect a Judo throw that he'd invented
- > He was on a life-long quest for the perfect shave. He tried all manner of razors (electric, disposable and straight) and every type of lubricant he came across. In his late 1970s, he would enthusiastically ask anyone he met to feel his cheeks. "Baby oil!" he would announce - his latest discovery to replace shaving cream.
- > A number of well-known figures in the field of process improvement visited us at home, people such as Lillian Gilbreth. She was the widow of Frank Gilbreth and famous for time and motion study. The book 'Cheaper by the Dozen' was written about their family. The well-known designer and systems theorist, Buckminster Fuller also visited us.
- > Myron was a passionate amateur photographer, woodworker and computer programmer. Our house was full of his beautiful photographs and furniture he had built himself. In his quest to improve the process of developing photographs, he would mix his own chemicals and experiment carefully with concentrations and timings. He designed and wrote one of the first word processors for an Apple computer in the late 1970s. He was still tweaking it, making it better, when I left the USA in 1979.

The Quality Era began...

...in 1974 when he was appointed the Director of the Centre for Advanced Engineering Studies at MIT. It was this work that brought him into contact with the works of Deming, Juran, Ishikawa, Shewhart, Sarasohn and others and launched his career as a TQM consultant. From the mid-1970s until well past his official retirement in 1986, he worked with organisations such as Ford, Jaguar, Proctor and Gamble, community quality coalitions and the British Deming Association.

Back to school...

At a Quality conference in the 1980s, Myron was asked if TQM had any application in a school. He replied: "It might make a difference in the front office, but I don't think it has any other application in a school." A few years later, he was happy to have been proven wrong. In the early 1990s, a high school teacher from Alaska began to try out TQM principles in his classroom with remarkable results. David Langford has trained teachers to use Quality methods in the classroom for many years now. Inspired by David, Myron began to consult with schools and teachers all over the world. He brought together the work of Deming and Feuerstein to create a new insight into the way children learn and the process of teaching. By 2006, when he finally stopped travelling and consulting, the majority of his clients were teachers and school staff, many from the school system in Pensacola, Florida where he now lives.

Anyone who wishes to send messages to Myron should e-mail me at Lou.Tribus@gmail.com and I will pass these on to his carers who will read them to him.

Lou Tribus

Footnote

You can see the video of Lou's presentation on the UIC website - www.theuic.com. Click through to the 2015 UIMPROVE Conference.

The Germ Theory of Management

Richard writes: I was lucky enough as a young railway manager to attend an early British Deming Association Annual Conference in Portsmouth at which Myron presented The Germ Theory of Management. Spellbinding and captivating are two words that spring to mind when attempting to describe the experience. After the conference, my boss at the time - Big David McKeever - told me to escort Myron, along with Dr Deming back to London as they were catching the train. It was clear that neither needed escorting but, on this occasion, I kept my mouth shut. So I sat quietly in the corner of the compartment while the two giants chatted. Dr Deming was an avid note-taker. He wrote throughout the journey. I wish I had been a better note-taker at that time because all I can really remember of the conversation was when Dr Deming looked out of the window and uttered the following: "Look at the sheep, Myron". Our thanks to Myron Tribus for his kind permission, granted many years ago, to reproduce this paper. We finally got around to it.

Introduction

In a recent review of Deming's theory of management, William B Gartner and M James Naughton wrote:

"Medicine has been 'successfully' practised without the knowledge of germs. In a pre-germ theory paradigm, some patients got better, some got worse, and some stayed the same; in each case, some rationale could be used to explain the outcome."

Doctors administer to the needs of their patients according to what they learn in school and in their training. They also learn by experience. They can only apply what they know and believe. They have no choice - they cannot apply what they do not know nor what they do not believe. What they do is always interpreted in terms of what they understand to be 'the way things work'. As professionals, they find it difficult to stray too far from common knowledge and understanding. They are under pressure to follow 'accepted practice'. In this regard, doctors are no better off and no worse off than the rest of us. We are all prisoners of our upbringing, our culture, and the state of knowledge of our teachers, mentors, and fellow-practitioners.

Today we smile when we read that, after sewing up a wound with silken thread, the surgeons of 150 years ago recommended that a length of thread should be left outside the wound. This was done to draw off the pus that would surely form - that was the understanding of 'the way things work'. The thread was, of course, un-sterilised and was inserted by unwashed hands using an un-sterilised needle.

The doctors of the time had a theory of how malaria was spread. They called it 'mal-aria' to emphasise that it was the bad air, the unhealthy vapours in the night, that caused the disease. Their theory of medicine caused them to look in the wrong places for wrong answers as solutions to their most pressing problems.

Today our managers do the same. When they are up against tough international competition they look to changes in economic policy, in tax structure, in trade policy - in fact, to everywhere except their own understanding of what makes a company competitive. They question everything except their own theory of management.

Changing people's beliefs is not easy

Imagine that it is now the year 1870. Pasteur has only recently demonstrated that fermentation is caused by organisms which are carried in the air. Only a few months ago, Lister tried out the first antiseptic - carbolic acid - and found that it worked to prevent inflammation and pus after surgery.

The spread of medical information was much slower 120 years ago than it is today. Imagine you are a young researcher in a medical school in the USA. The Civil War has just finished, and you are trying to develop your own career after army service. You are a serious young doctor who tries to learn the latest developments in your profession. Suppose that you have just learned about Pasteur's and Lister's work and that you have been invited to speak to a group of distinguished physicians, many of them having become famous for their heroic service as surgeons during the Civil War. What you now understand from your studies is that these famous physicians are actually killing their patients. Your responsibility is to explain to them - if you can - that, because they do not wash their hands or sterilise their instruments, they sew death into every wound. Your assignment is to persuade them to forget most of what they have been taught, to abandon much of the wisdom they have accumulated over their distinguished careers, and to rebuild their understanding of the practice of medicine around the new theory of germs. Do you think you could do it? Do you think you could convince them? Do you believe they will be glad to hear you?

Suppose, instead of being the speaker, you are a member of the audience. You are one of the good doctors who have earned respect and prestige in your village. You have a nice house on the hill, a pretty wife, a nice carriage, some fine horses, and a few servants. You are part of the elite of your society. How will you feel if someone starts spreading the word that your treatments are a menace, that the theories you hold are bunk - and that your habit of moving from one patient to another, laying unwashed hands on each, guarantees the spread of disease to all who are so unfortunate as to become your patients? What do you think will happen to your practice if this kind of word gets bandied about? How would you be likely to greet the messenger?

This is not 1870. You, my readers, are not doctors. But, like them, you are all respected professionals. For most of you, managing is a part of your professional responsibility. You manage according to what you have been taught and what you have learned during your careers. I have worked among many people like you and I know that, no matter what happens, you always have a good explanation. I should be shocked and amazed if you were to explain your latest failure in this way: "You know, I really don't understand what I am doing, and I think that most of what I know is wrong."

You are no different than I was when I was an executive in industry. You don't get to a position of responsibility if you are continuously in doubt about the validity of what you believe. And you certainly don't get there if you broadcast your doubts about what you know and can do.

My task is similar to that of the young doctor trying to introduce the germ theory of medicine. There is a new theory of management, as different from what most of you now believe as the germ theory was from what the doctors believed. For reasons which will become clear shortly, I call this different approach: The Germ Theory of Management.

Not everything the doctors did was wrong - just most things. Before the germ theory, doctors interviewed patients, took medical and personal histories, prescribed changes in diet and lifestyle, and were present at the arrival of babies. They developed a sense of social responsibility. They were sincere in their efforts to do the right things. Read, for example, the Oath of Hippocrates, which preceded the germ theory by many centuries. The earliest doctors did the best they could with what they knew at the time.

So do you.

But what the doctors were taught was not good enough. Some of that teaching was downright dangerous and harmful. They learned. So can you.

However, just as medical practice has been changed by the germ theory of disease, so managerial practice is being changed by the Germ Theory of Management. The changes are already being adopted in different companies, in different lands. The results of these changes are healthier organisations, more vital and more alive. In this fiercely competitive world, the unhealthy enterprises are going to die. The enterprises which continue to be managed the old way are going to disappear.

This is not some new fad which you will be free to follow or not as you please. What I am describing is your survival - or otherwise. Your jobs will depend upon whether you are willing to learn a new kind of behaviour. I do not expect all of you to like it. The doctors didn't like it then, either. But that's the way it was; that's the way it is.

The required changes in management are profound

In 1865, the French silk industry was suffering through high mortality of silkworms. In that same year, Pasteur was sent to the south of France to investigate what was killing the silkworms. There he isolated the bacilli of two distinct diseases, and developed a method to prevent contagion. Almost immediately, Lord Lister applied the same ideas in medical practice.

In the 1920s, Walter Shewhart at the Bell Laboratories was given an assignment to see what to do to increase the reliability of telephone amplifiers used to strengthen the signal in long-distance communication. These amplifiers were required to be about a mile apart and were to be part of a transmission system in which the cables were underground. Unlike the doctors, the Bell System wanted to be sure the amplifiers were healthy so that they could bury them! If they died, they would have to be dug up. The amplifiers contained vacuum tubes whose length of life was uncertain. Shewhart's assignment was to find out what could be done to guarantee the life of the amplifiers - to keep them from getting sick, so to speak. During this process, he discovered the virus of variability.

Shewhart discovered what, in retrospect, ought to have been clear to everyone. If, when you assemble a vacuum tube, every component that goes into the vacuum tube is the same as in every other vacuum tube, and if each tube is put together precisely the same way, and each is free of contamination, and if each is subjected to exactly the same load conditions, then each will live for the same length of time. The problem is that vacuum tubes cannot all be made the same. There are small variations in the chemical composition of the materials. There are small variations in the assembly process. There is always a small amount of dirt that falls by chance in different places. In short, there is always variability, and this leads to uncertainty as to how long the vacuum tube will last. If the assembly process has much variability, it is almost certain that some of the vacuum tubes will have very short lives. The tubes are victims of the virus of variability. This was Shewhart's discovery.

Shewhart's investigations led to the concepts of statistical quality control and, in terms of our analogy, his work (analogous to Pasteur's) has laid the foundations for the Germ Theory of Management.

Few people understand what variability does to the cost of doing business. Fewer still appreciate what can be done about it and what is management's role.

Just as Lister understood the broader significance of Pasteur's work in the field of medicine, so it was that W Edwards Deming understood the significance of Shewhart's work to the general theory of management. Deming was not alone. There were other pioneers, such as Homer Sarasohn and Joseph M Juran, who also saw the broader implications of Shewhart's work to management. These

men realised that the key to better management is the study of the processes whereby things get done. If you reduce the sources of variability in a process, you make it more predictable and therefore more controllable. You can schedule activities closer together and eliminate waste and delay.

The key idea is to conquer the virus of variability, leading to the improvement of process capability. This idea was taught widely during World War II and was important to the successful development of America's mighty war machine.

By 1956, a few people in the Bell System understood this idea well enough to write the following comment in the introduction to Western Electric's Statistical Quality Control Handbook: "...it is possible to make process capability studies in connection with practically any type of engineering, operating, inspection, or management problem."

Unfortunately, in the period after World War II, most of our managers were so busy making quick money that they forgot about the virus of variability, and the theory disappeared from the American scene. None of our Business Schools picked it up. In fact, on the few occasions that I have tried to introduce these ideas to the prestigious Business Schools of America, I have been listened to with polite amusement - if listened to at all.

Germs are invisible. That's what makes them so dangerous and so difficult to track down. You know about their presence only because of the symptoms they cause. The same is true of the virus of variability. It is invisible. You have to know where to look and how to look. Just as the doctor often has to use special instruments and may even have to culture a sample, so must the manager learn to take data and analyse them in a special way. In Dr Deming's terms, it takes 'profound knowledge' to understand.

An experienced doctor looks into your throat and says: "I believe you have an infection there - or have you just been eating some red candy?" The doctor feels for lumps in your glands and listens to the sounds of your lungs as you breathe. If the doctor does not understand the germ theory of disease, he cannot interpret the symptoms.

In the same way, a manager who is skilled in dealing with the virus of variability can judge the health of an enterprise by looking at data, by observing behaviour, by asking questions and analysing the answers, and by listening to what goes on in meetings. If the manager understands how the virus of variability works, he or she will understand what is seen and heard. If not, managers will be as helpless as the doctors of long ago, prescribing different vapours to counteract 'mal-aria'.

Variability: the virus that infects systems

The first thing that the doctors had to learn was that germs, although invisible, could be transmitted by various means from one patient to another. They had to believe that these germs mattered. They had to learn about sterilisation and antiseptics. They had to believe it was important to wash their hands. They had to learn about germ cultures and the causes of infection. They had to form new images of the world.

So will you. Let us consider an example.

Consider a company which purchases castings from a foundry (or has a foundry of its own), and passes these castings through a sequence of machining processes which are carried out on different machines. Various machined parts are then assembled into a product in which the parts move, deflect, and rotate, and are supposed to do so with some precision.

The materials from the foundry are not perfectly uniform. There is always some variability in the composition and treatment of the materials. The processes in the foundry itself are not always the same. We may say that the processes are infected with variability. They yield castings which vary in composition, dimension, hardness, and porosity. The variations occur not only from casting-to-casting but even within one casting. Hardness and porosity vary from point-to-point and from part-to-part.

When these castings arrive at a machine, to be scraped and cut by various tools, their variability infects the machine tools. The variation in hardness causes non-uniform tool wear. It also makes it difficult for the machinist to know at what speeds and feeds to set the controls. The tool wear is not predictable. Machine maintenance is not predictable either. Thus the infection spreads to the tool room, where a larger inventory is carried than would be needed if the life of the tools could be predicted accurately. Inventories are now subject to wider variations. Inability to predict the requirements for maintenance complicates the maintenance process and increases the number of people who need to be hired to work in this process.

With so many people to hire and train, the training system becomes overloaded, and not everyone receives the same training. Thus the maintenance system is infected with variability. After a machine is 'fixed', it may break down sooner than expected because the maintenance is not always done the same way. People with inadequate training do not follow appropriate standards of maintenance. The virus of variability spreads from the Maintenance Department to the Personnel Department where the records suggest that there are large differences between the behaviour of workers when, in fact, the workers are subjected to substantial variation beyond their control. They are the victims of a lottery, but they and the Personnel Department do not understand that. The virus of variability infects every department it touches.

Imagine a company making beer cans. The company purchases rolls of sheet aluminium from a supplier. As the sheet aluminium passes through the can-making machine, it is cut into various shapes by dies and then drawn into beer cans and beer can tops. The aluminium varies in thickness from roll-to-roll. When a new roll is fed to the machine, the machine may jam and its controls will have to be reset. The output of the machines is now unpredictable. The variability virus has spread from the aluminium supplier to the machines. After a while, some of the operators learn to apply special tricks when the aluminium rolls have to get changed. Because management rates the operators individually and competitively, those who learn new tricks are not always willing to share them with their competitors. What the management then sees is large variability in the capabilities of their operators. They think they are witnessing the results of variability of people; so they aim to fire the 'bottom half'. They do not know that the virus of variability is infecting their processes. They act on what they 'know'. They have an explanation for everything and are confident in what they do. In the process, they ruin the lives of some of their workers. They are a menace to the health of their companies but, because neither they nor their workers understand the virus of variability, they are unaware. They know not what they do. And they do not like to be told.

When a product is assembled, the variability in components creates variability in performance from one product to another. The variability of finished products may be so great that only a fraction of them can be used without being reworked. Some are so bad that they have to be scrapped - or, at best, taken apart and reassembled using other parts which may be similarly infected. What to do with the sick parts becomes an important policy issue for the company. Extra management meetings are called in an attempt to sort out the problems, making the life of the managers more hectic and unpredictable. The variability in the incoming materials has been allowed to infect all systems, including the management system. The symptom is managerial stress; the cause is the virus of variability.

These infections of variability, which have spread from machine-to-machine and to the personnel (even to the personnel records), are largely undetected by managers who do not understand the germ theory. They have their own theories of how things work. The cures that they apply may, in fact, make the infections more virulent.

The examples I have given are from the factory floor, but they occur in the office as well. In deference to my past experience as an executive in the Xerox Corporation, I shall not dwell on how variability in maintenance of copiers can cause variability in their performance and infect the performance of an entire office.

Suppose you live in a very small town which is served by a feeder airline. Suppose that the airline schedule is not reliable, i.e. you cannot be sure when your airplane will take off. This variability of performance causes you to plan your appointments at a distant city with considerable slack in your schedule. Sometimes, just to be safe, you travel the day before and must pay for a hotel room for an extra night. You dare not count on the morning flight to get you there or the evening flight to get you back. You are not alone. If you consider the total effect on the other businesses in the community, then you have recipe for the decline of the local economy. The added expense may well be enough to drive your company and others out of business. Too many people think of these illnesses of delays and missed schedules as 'normal'. They do not know what it means to be well. But a few of them travel to countries where the trains run on-time, the mail gets delivered promptly, the phone system works without delays, the taxis are clean, and the streets are free of debris. They marvel at the sense of good health.

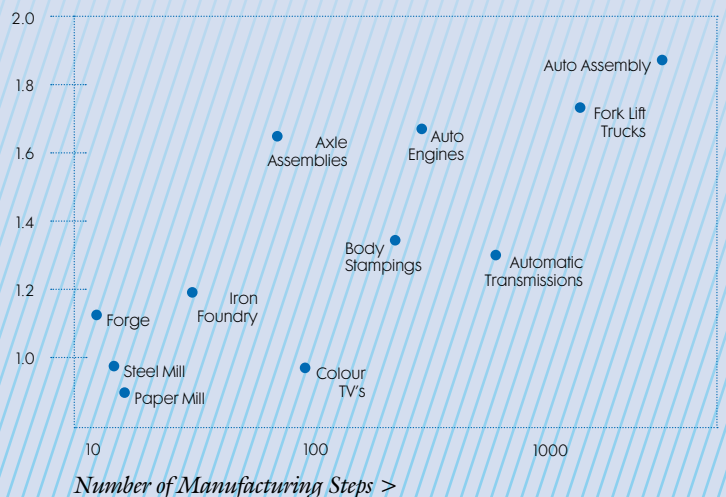
How much could be gained if all processes had zero variability? Consider the following example. In the early 1950s, to demonstrate just how quickly a house could be built, the Henry Beck Company of Dallas, Texas assembled a two-bedroom one-floor house on a previously prepared concrete slab. As pictured in 'Life' magazine, from the time they started to assemble the house until it was finished, painted, with one woman taking a hot bath in the bathroom and another cooking dinner on the kitchen stove, it took less than 3 hours. Think of that: 3 hours! The usual time is at least 30 days, often more. Why does it normally take that long? It is because the activities of all the people cannot be scheduled anywhere near so closely as in the Henry Beck experiment. If the carpenter were to start to drive a nail just 1 second after the board has been cut, instead of 15 minutes, the time scale is improved by a factor

of 900. Without that improvement, 3 hours stretches into 2700 hours. Nobody expects to be able to schedule all the people who are required to build a house so that each one does his or her job with only seconds to spare. We do not expect to see the precision of the Rockettes or of the ballet. We cannot expect that kind of precision in an industrial setting. But we can make each process more precise and, as we do so, the errors, goof, flaws, delays all begin to disappear. As we begin to conquer the virus of variability, we find savings in time and money that we never knew were there - savings which our accounting methods hide so cleverly that we think the waste is 'normal'.

We are not accustomed to thinking about achieving such precision that we could assemble a house in a few hours. Instead, we expect to wait half-a-day just for an appointment at the bank! The inability to schedule things accurately means that, for a complex activity, the total time required to do something is maybe a thousand times longer than it needs to be. This is the cost of the virus of variability.

Not all of the variability can be removed. Nobody knows, however, just how much can be done. Until Sarasohn, Deming and Juran applied these ideas in Japan, and the results were seen on a large scale, it was not appreciated that in many instances costs could be cut by as much as half (see *Figure 1*). We are not just talking about hardware. The results in the service industries are sometimes even more dramatic.

Figure 1.
RATIO OF NUMBER OF LABOUR HOURS REQUIRED PER UNIT OF PRODUCT AS MEASURED FOR JAPANESE AND US MANUFACTURERS. AS THE NUMBER OF MANUFACTURING STEPS INCREASES, THE RATIO BECOMES MORE UNFAVOURABLE TO THE US. (DATA FROM THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP)



After the audience suggest different cures based on common wisdom, I explain to them that the numbers in the table were actually generated by the random number generator in my computer. The flaws thus generated were assigned to memory cells to which I then attached people's names. In other words, the faults were generated entirely by the system.

Over 4 years, only three out of thousands of people suggested that perhaps the problem was in the system itself - that the system had been infected with the virus of variability and it was therefore not the fault of the workers. Only those three people suggested that we should analyse the data in the table to see if we could compute whether or not Eva's results were reasonable in the light of the variability exhibited by the system.

The fact is that the process itself is infected with the virus of variability. If you don't work on sterilising the process, i.e. reducing its variability, that variability will certainly infect the workers. Not only will it infect the workers - it will infect your judgement.

People change their views very slowly. I shall never forget the manager who said later: "Look, I know that the numbers were generated by a computer, but nevertheless, I would still talk to Eva!"

The output of these workers had been infected by the variability of the process over which they had no control. Suppose that the supervisor, with the objective of urging the workers to better performance, decided to post the above table on the bulletin board. Of course, we do not expect the workers to understand the Germ Theory of Management. They may think that the results are their fault and they will try to do better. Do you see how the virus of variability in the system will infect the workers' interpersonal relations and perhaps even their home lives? If the supervisor does not understand the theory, do you not see how the system of supervision will become infected? Suppose there is a system of annual rating for supervisors and that the data in the above table are available to the upper management. Suppose the upper management do not understand the variability virus and therefore think the supervisor should have done something drastic about Eva. Suppose the supervisor, however, does know about variability and understands it is the system that needs to be fixed. Given this disparity in understanding, how do you think the manager will rate the supervisor?

I am not describing a far-fetched scenario. I am describing what goes on daily in factories and offices around most of the world.

The variability in product performance also infects the purchasing process: e.g. the number of spare parts required is increased, making the purchasing and supply systems unhealthy.

We have seen, therefore, how this virus of variability can spread from the foundry to the Personnel Office and to the top ranks of management.

The point I want to make is simple: variability is a virus. It can infect every process it touches.

Dr Joseph M Juran has captured the essence of this spread of infection in what has become known as 'Juran's Rule':

Whenever there is a problem:
85% of the time it will be in the system,
15% of the time it will be the worker.

But the instinctive reaction of most managers I meet is to always blame the person. Sometimes I find a manager who, when confronted with a problem, will even say it is his own fault. He should have done something else. As a consultant, I often find it difficult to persuade him that it is in fact the system which is at fault. Many managers will persist in thinking that they need to change something in their personalities when in fact it is the system which needs to be changed.

Who should be responsible to clean up these processes - to sterilise them, so to speak?

Just as germs are everywhere, so are the causes of variability. Sterilising a process will require someone to study what causes the variability and then to remove the causes one-by-one. Managers are the only people authorised to alter the system. If you personally do not do this, it will not get done. Your entire operation will become sick. As a manager, you cannot delegate to someone else the responsibility for the health of the processes for which you are responsible. If you can delegate this responsibility, why do we need you?

Some managerial myths

In promoting this different approach to management, Don Petersen (until recently, President of Ford Motor Company) put it to his subordinates this way: “I hate to be the one to tell you this, but some of you were promoted a time or two for the wrong reasons.”

I have collected a few managerial myths which I believe need to be eliminated. I am aware that many of you will feel deeply resentful. That’s to be expected. You will either get over it or be pushed aside by those who do understand.

The Perversity Principle: If you try to improve the performance of a system of people, machines and procedures by setting numerical goals for the improvement of individual parts of the system, the system will defeat you and you will pay a price where you least expected to.

This idea does not come easy for people who like to think that the organisation chart (*Figure 3*) defines how things get done. They like to issue crisp orders to subordinates. They think they can divide the system into parts, along the lines of an organisation chart. They have a generic organisation chart in their heads.

Their managerial strategy is to ‘divide and conquer’. They see the organisation the way some friends of mine in Holland see it (*Figure 4*).

The conceptual framework of many managers is impoverished. They forget that work flows across the organisation chart, more or less perpendicularly to the lines of authority. They are unaware that the different steps in the process affect one another. They ignore the fact that they are dealing with a system as a whole. They are determined to judge each person and each division on its own accomplishments. They do not know how to recognise and define a system of processes. They do not understand what is meant by a process. They do not know how to recognise when processes which flow across an organisation chart are out of control. They persist in thinking that organisation charts describe how things get done when, in fact, things usually get done in spite of the organisation chart.

In some organisations, this method of management leads one department to regard another as the enemy. They would rather defeat the other department than the competition.

So the problem of thinking only in terms of the organisation chart, apart from the failure to harness the intelligence of the majority of the workforce, is that the work flows across the organisation. Suppose you set a target for the people in one department, telling them they are to process a certain number of orders per month. Then you give another target to your sales force. However, it matters greatly to the factory whether the orders arrive bunched up or spread out. It is important that they arrive in a predictable fashion. In other words, even if each person does the required amount of work on average, the variability in performance will cause extra expense and waste in other departments.

Figure 3.

GENERIC ORGANISATION CHART

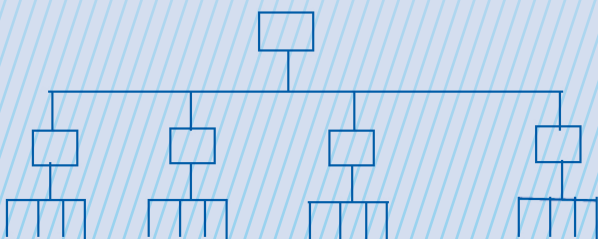
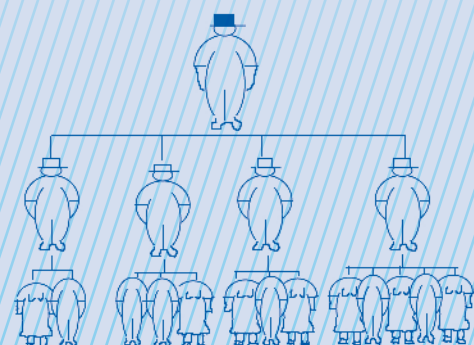


Figure 4.

THE HIDDEN ASSUMPTION IN MANY MANAGERS' MINDS: THE PEOPLE AT THE BOTTOM HAVE NO HEADS.
(BASED ON AN IDEA FROM THE MANS FOUNDATION, THE NETHERLANDS)



**The only form in which democracy dare appear before the peasant is as food.
The only form in which quality advocates should try to appear before management is with a solution to a problem that they really care about.**

On-line post, May 1998

Consider, for example, the loading of a ship. The cargo arrives at the dock in trucks and is unloaded by hand. Then the cargo is picked up by a stevedore and taken to a crane. Bundles of cargo are picked up and deposited on the deck. There, another stevedore loads it into a fork-lift truck and moves it into the hold. A colleague of mine observed that this was the way it was done for the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Marie. If you watch this activity for a while, you will see that time-lags are created by the variability of cargo sizes, the variability of movement of cargo, and the variability of the performance of people and machines. Setting targets for the individual performers does not speed up the process. It actually slows it down as each performer tries to look good at the expense of others.

The same difficulty arises whenever people have to work in series, whether it is in accounting, sales, maintenance and repair, or in customer service. The work flows across the enterprise, and attempting to treat it just as piecemeal operations creates waste and expense.

Sometimes the variability is so inherent in the system that there is no way to improve except by changing the system itself. That is why container ships have been so successful. By pushing the inefficient packing problem onto someone else, they have eliminated the variability in the loading process. The turnaround time for ships has been reduced to hours instead of days.

If you set targets for the people at the bottom of the organisation chart, or for the people in between, without regard for the systems aspects of the work, you are abdicating your responsibility. Remember what you tried to do to Eva. Don't do it to everyone.

The manager's job has changed

The people work in a system. The job of the manager is to work on the system to improve it, continuously, with their help.

There are several key words in this statement:

Work in a system: If you believe this, then you have to acknowledge that workers do not control what goes on in their work. Telling people that you are holding them accountable for results flies in the face of what you really know. When you do this, you are inconsistent with yourself. "But", you are certain to protest, "if I don't hold them accountable, they won't do anything." First of all, that's not true. More importantly, you should hold them accountable - to help you to improve the system.

The job of the manager: What did you think your job was?

Work on the system: Do you know how to define the system upon which you are supposed to work? Do you know how to work on a system? Do you know what you have to learn to do it? Do you know where to go to learn?

To improve it: Do you still hold to the admonition: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"? I suggest you replace it with: "If it ain't broke, improve it". Did you know you should be spending about a third of your time actively trying to improve the system under your care? Do you do it? Do you believe you should do it?

With their help: Do you accept that your people should help you? Do you accept that you should teach them to help you? Do you want them to help you? Are you afraid? Do you know what you have to do to make it possible for them to help you?

The state of health of an enterprise

Too busy to learn?

The readers of this are, of course, different. You are enlightened people. Surely you would not behave as the doctors a century ago behaved when they were told they should see that their operating rooms were sterile. They fought it tooth and nail: “What, stop to wash my hands? Don’t be silly. I have important things to do.”

The situation - and the state of mind - was difficult to change. It took a lot of work. The change required them to admit that they had much to learn. They were human. They resented the need to change. They hoped in their heart of hearts that it would all blow over.

For the change to take place, they first had to learn and understand the germ theory of disease themselves. It is one thing to learn a new theory when you are a young student in medical school; it is another when you are busy supporting your family through your medical practice. Further, changing practices and procedures in the operating room was not something they could do alone. They needed the nurses and orderlies to help them. So after they had learned the theory themselves, they had to teach the nurses and orderlies how to sterilise instruments and other medical facilities. They could not just leave these things to chance. They had to influence the training and education of nurses so that the nurses would do the right things without having to be told. Such changes could not come about overnight. Many patients would have to die along the way as the changes slowly made their way throughout medical practice.

The history of medicine is full of examples of doctors who fought the changes and ridiculed the change agents. They buried their mistakes - and few people outside medicine knew what was happening.

Today, I meet managers who do not want to learn. They are busy with mergers and acquisitions and with closing plants. They are busy beseeching the government to do something to somebody else, though all the while leaving them alone. With their false images of how an enterprise ought to be managed, they make impossible demands on their workers and thereby provide job security only for union leaders.

Even if you personally are convinced that a different theory of management ought to be adopted, you will quickly discover you cannot apply it alone. You are answerable to your boss, and if the boss does not go along with the new ideas then your job may soon be at risk. You will have some hard choices to make. If you occupy a low position in the organisation chart, you will be entirely frustrated.

The most frequent question I am asked is: “Will you please come and explain quality to our top management?” I have a stock answer to such requests: “I’m sorry, but I do not do that sort of thing. I have a colleague, however, who will accept such assignments. His name is Don Quixote.”

It is clear how the variability virus can ravage the factory floor. However, the variability virus will infect any system it touches. This includes the managerial system itself. Doctors can get sick too, you know. When you work in an enterprise that is sick, it gets to you. You don’t enjoy the work. You have to work hard just to keep things going. If you stay in the job too long, you can burn out.

It is important that a manager learn how to diagnose the situation in an enterprise by observing what happens in meetings. Because managers spend so much time in meetings, my colleague Professor Tsuda, of Rikkyo University in Tokyo, has prepared a chart (*Figure 5*) to help a manager make a diagnosis from the symptoms that will be exhibited in typical meetings.

Figure 5.

ANALYSIS OF MEETINGS
(COURTESY OF PROFESSOR YOSHIKAZU TSUDA,
RIKKYO UNIVERSITY, TOKYO)

Style of Meeting	Discussion without data	Data are discussed but only if they are favourable	Data are disclosed and analysed, good and bad	Data are presented and analysed statistically. Options are analysed, including the option to change policies
Decision Making	Based on politics, emotion, turf	Based on raw data without analysis. Options accepted on boss' hunch	Based on data, analysis and options proposed by the presenters themselves	Based on analysis, data, policies and options. Policies are questioned.
Diagnosis	People do not want to see problems, deny their existence	People see problems but are habituated to them	People see problems but do not know what to do because they are systemic	People want to see their problems and are quick to seek out data. They want to solve them
State	Drugged	Asleep	Alive	Alert Sensitive Alive

Perhaps with the aid of the people in Finance, you may have tried to divide your company into separate “profit centres”, with ratings for the performance of each. Everyone in your enterprise has a well-defined job and is held accountable for it. Well, whether you like it or not, the enterprise is one system. You can divide it up anyway you want to in your head; in reality, it is what it is: a highly interactive, complex system in which each unhealthy part infects the others. If you ignore this elementary fact, the system will never be healthy. It will not be able to compete against healthy systems. In due course, unless artificially protected against competition, it will die. Your job will go with it.

The culture transition

In my opinion, what this country now needs more than anything else is a better understanding of what it means to be a leader. Don Alstadt has described the situation in the USA with the phrase: “over-managed and under-led”. We need to lead our enterprises into a new way of managing. We need to lead the transition of our managerial culture from one norm to another. This transition started in Japan in the late 1940s as a result of Homer Sarasohn’s intervention after World War II. It accelerated when first Deming and then Juran went there in the 1950s, and it has continued to accelerate ever since. In the early 1980s, a few Western companies learned about the Deming Prize and about the impact of quality management on Japanese industry. Now we have quite a few examples in many countries of what it means to change the corporate culture in a similar way.

Learning from the experience of others, I can predict the path you are most likely to follow in changing the company culture. Once you start to change, there will be seven stages. My own observations bear out the validity of the following sequence, which was originally prepared by Professor Tsuda.

Stage 0: The management expresses concern only over market share, profits and return on investment.

Stage 1: The management is concerned about quality of the product because of impact on warranty costs and customer complaints. Loss of market share becomes apparent. The action taken is to add more inspectors so that the ‘bad stuff doesn’t get out’.

Stage 2: Management recognises that control of the production process will result in manufacture of acceptable products with less waste and lower cost. Support is provided for Manufacturing to increase Quality Control (QC) activities.

Stage 3: The results of the QC are limited by reactions of personnel, so management begins to emphasise quality management. Manufacturing introduces statistical quality control (SQC).

Stage 4: Management asks that SQC and quality management methods be applied to all departments which border on the Production Department (Purchasing, Transportation, Warehousing, etc.)

Stage 5 (a particularly difficult stage): Management attempts to persuade R&D, Engineering, and Finance to consider quality management principles; however, these departments think that, while other people are indeed part of the problem, they themselves are not. Gradually, professionals learn that quality is their mission.

Stage 6: Management begins to recognise that quality management principles will be useful if applied to all departments of the enterprise - but doesn’t know how to make it happen. It organises actions all over the company to see what to do.

Stage 7: Management proclaims (and acts consistently with the proclamation) that: “Company-Wide Quality Control is the company policy.” Specifically, this means:

- > Quality is first priority
- > Customer-oriented decision criteria
- > Personnel policies respect humanity
- > All departments coordinated
- > All departments cooperative
- > All employees involved in improvement
- > Solid relations with suppliers
- > Good communications based on factual data and Statistical Quality Control

A checklist of things that managers need to learn

Every manager should be competent in elementary statistics:

- (1) Process Flowcharting
- (2) Fishbone Diagrams
- (3) Run Charts
- (4) Control Charts
- (5) Pareto Diagrams
- (6) Scatter Diagrams
- (7) Histograms
- (8) Elementary design of experiments

Every manager should learn how to:

- (1) Recognise, define, describe, diagnose and improve the systems for which he or she is responsible.
- (2) Diagnose the variability of a system and decide which variations are due to special causes, and thus require special action, and which are due to common causes, and will therefore require a change in the system's design and operation. The manager must be able to tell the difference between signal and noise.
- (3) Lead teams of people from different educational levels in problem identification, data gathering, data analysis, and the generation of proposals for solution, implementation and test.
- (4) Diagnose the behaviour of humans, and distinguish those difficulties which are due to the variation in human abilities (15%) and those which are caused by the system (85%) (Juran's Rule).

“A leader's main obligation is to secure the faith and respect of those under him. The leader must himself be the finest example of what he would like to see in his followers.”

Homer Sarasohn (Japan, 1948).

Conclusion

This country is now engaged in a struggle for existence. Its industries have been destroyed, one-by-one. Because the economy is in difficulty, it does not generate the revenues required to run the government. It is cutting back on services - including defence - because it can no longer afford them. The only way to survive is through learning how to better manage resources. That's your job: learning how to manage the right way, to manage for quality.

Let me close with a short story from the newspaper columnist, Roger Baldwin of the New York Times:

‘Once upon a time there was a heavyweight bout in Madison Square Garden. As is the custom, before the main bout there were a few preliminaries. In one of the preliminary bouts the two fighters were very badly matched. One of them went down in the first round and didn't get up. Someone in the galleries began to shout “Fake! Fake! Fake!”. Soon the rafters were ringing with the cries of “Fake!”. Still the boy didn't get up. Finally the stretcher-bearers came and picked him up and carried him out of the ring. Still people kept shouting “Fake! Fake!”. The next day the boy died. You know, that boy had to die - just to prove the fight was on the level.’

Where to find the tools in The Complete Guide to Improvement

- (1) Process Flowcharting, a.k.a. Deployment Flowcharting - 29.10
- (2) Fishbone Diagrams, a.k.a. Ishikawa Diagrams - 29.3
- (3) Run Charts - 40.7
- (4) Histograms - 40.13
- (5) Pareto Diagrams, a.k.a. Pareto Analysis - 40.5
- (6) Scatter Diagrams, a.k.a. Correlation Charts - 40.17
- (7) Control Charts - 38.9
- (8) Elementary design of experiments - contact us

(Page numbers apply to Version 4.0)

PUBLIC COURSES AND CONFERENCES

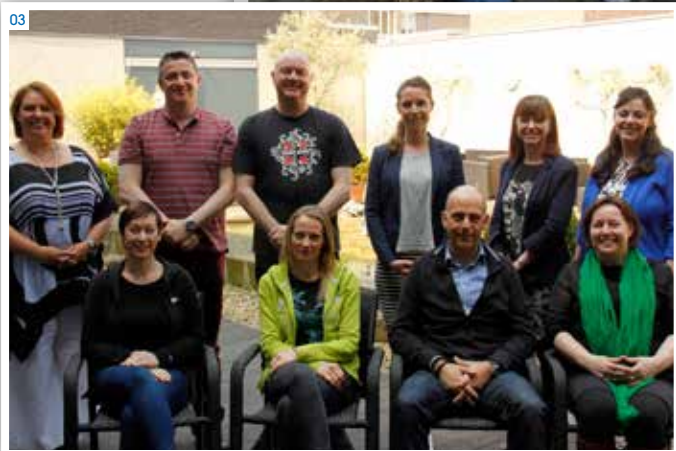
In this section

- Universal Improvement Skills
- The 9th Annual UIMPROVE Conference
- From the inbox 1

05

Universal Improvement Skills

Universal Improvement Skills is our longest running public course, attended by hundreds of people from a vast variety of organisations. 2015 once again saw courses in Australia, Holland and the UK.



-
- 01 ALSAGER, CHESHIRE, OCTOBER 2015
 - 02 MELBOURNE, MARCH 2015
 - 03 MAASTRICHT, APRIL 2015
 - 04 MAASTRICHT, APRIL 2015
 - 05 MELBOURNE, JULY 2015
-





The 9th Annual UIMPROVE Conference

Dates for 2016

The 10th Annual UIMPROVE Conference will be held in Sheffield on 16-17 May. We are delighted to say that our Keynote Speaker will be Jane Cole, Managing Director of Blackpool Transport.

2015 saw the 9th Annual UIMPROVE Conference in Sheffield. We were fortunate to have an abundance of experienced speakers who explored all aspects of improvement, from processes to facilitation and the use of data.

The conference followed the tried-and-tested format of a Keynote Speaker followed by several UIMPROVE practitioners telling stories of their successes and lessons learned.

We were delighted to welcome back Judith Burbidge, Director of Neighbourhoods and Wellbeing at Weaver Vale Housing Trust, this time as our Keynote Speaker. Weaver Vale has been working with the UIC for 11 years and Judith has been at the forefront of helping them achieve over 90% customer satisfaction and making it into The Sunday Times 100 Best Not-for-Profit Organisations to Work For over the past 7 years. Judith has previously spoken at the UIMPROVE Conference about her use of data to improve the services that Weaver Vale deliver.

Judith is a self-confessed systems addict and used the opportunity to reflect on the steps that teams at Weaver Vale have taken to control their processes and hold on to the gains. Her honesty about the highs and lows of developing a systems-based approach proved very popular and Judith's depth of knowledge and experience generated some fantastic conversations about improvement for the rest of the conference.

LUCY GOLDSMITH, JUDITH BURBIDGE, HOLLY WELLS AND JACK NEWELL,
WEAVER VALE HOUSING TRUST



Rachel Gee, Insight and Innovation Manager at Contour Homes, was a first-time attendee, along with Chris Radford and Vicky Young. Rachel introduced UIMPROVE to Contour Homes in July 2014 when she led a group of 12 through the Facilitator Development Programme. Rachel, Chris and Vicky told attendees about the success they've had introducing Facilitators to the organisation as well as some lessons learned and tips for managing a Facilitator Network.

VICKY YOUNG, CHRIS RADFORD AND RACHEL GEE,
CONTOUR HOMES

Next we heard from South Yorkshire Housing Association, another organisation with a long history of working with UIMPROVE. Gareth Parkin, Programme Lead for Care, Health and Wellbeing, talked us through SYHA's transition from a 'pick-and-mix' approach to the embedding of UIMPROVE and how this has delivered significant improvements through multi-agency project working.

Alex McIntyre, Data Project Coordinator, shared how he has helped to deliver SYHA's Frontline Customer Services project, an improvement project which sought to provide customers with choice and flexibility around how they access services. Alex demonstrated how Statistical Process Control has helped SYHA better understand the Call Centre's performance following the introduction of automated call handling.

GARETH PARKIN, IAN SHEPHERD, SONYA PAYNE, NATALIE MARSH, RACHEL WILSON AND ALEX MCINTYRE,
SOUTH YORKSHIRE HOUSING ASSOCIATION



Peter Strachan, Managing Director of Serco Caledonian Sleeper, made a welcome return to the stage this year. As one of our original clients, Peter has a 20+ year history with the UIC and has used UIMPROVE in organisations that he has led in both the UK and Australia. There is little from the UIMPROVE portfolio that Peter hasn't applied and it's no coincidence that his name appears in a number of examples in the manual. For his presentation, Peter took us through his UIMPROVE favourites including Cocktail Party, Leader Speaks and Executive Events explaining how he has used them to drive wide-ranging improvements.



PETER STRACHAN,
CALEDONIAN SLEEPER

Lou Tribus has been a very welcome guest at our conferences for many years and we were honoured to hear her presentation about the life of her father, Myron Tribus, the esteemed improvement thinker and practitioner. In her presentation, 'Nine Quality Decades and Counting', Lou took us through her father's early life, his CV and early engineering career, before enlightening us as to how he became one of the giants of quality improvement.



LOU TRIBUS



ALISON

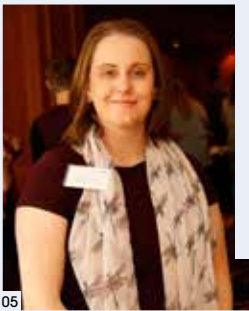
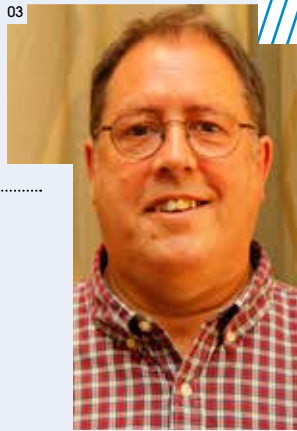
Alison Levings joined the UIC in early 2015 and wasn't thrilled when we immediately asked her to speak in front of a large, knowledgeable audience at the conference. Alison came to us from TransLink in Brisbane where she was a Facilitator and the Facilitator Network Coordinator. During her time as Network Coordinator, Alison experienced the same challenges as many of our clients - how to select the right people to become Facilitators and then keep them active and engaged. Alison spent some time reflecting on the traits that are common amongst the most enthusiastic and productive Facilitators and what an organisation can do to support them. Rather than prescribe a 'one size fits all' approach, Alison presented her thoughts on what to consider when contemplating who could be a great Facilitator and how she went about ensuring the last group she recruited became successful UIMPROVE practitioners.

MIKE DAVIDGE, NHS ELECT



Mike Davidge, Director at NHS Elect, posed the question 'How do you hit a target?' Using some entertaining audience participation, Mike demonstrated why understanding and improving a system is a far better approach to achieving targets than the common alternatives of distorting the data, or distorting the system. If you've ever read something along the lines of '95% of people must be seen and dealt with in the A&E Department within 4 hours' and wondered, 'what about the other 5% and what makes four the magic number?', then you should watch Mike's presentation on-line for a renewed appreciation of what the data in your own organisation could be telling you.

Thanks to all our speakers and participants for their contributions to another inspiring conference. Watch the videos at: www.theuic.com/2015Conf.



- 01 TOGETHER HOUSING GROUP
 02 THE WINNING QUIZ TEAM
 03 HOWARD ARTHUR, HWA ASSOCIATES
 04 THIRTEEN GROUP
 05 SAMANTHA MARSHALL,
 LIVERPOOL HOUSING TRUST
 06 ONE MANCHESTER
 07 BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY
 HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST
 08 ACTION
 09 DENISE WITH DANNY CEPOK, FIFE COUNCIL
 10 THE ASPIRE GROUP
 11 LYNN TEMPLE,
 GREAT YARMOUTH COMMUNITY TRUST



From the inbox 1



Hi,

Would you please thank all concerned for another superbly organised UIMPROVE Conference.

Thank you also for introducing me to Lou Tribus this year, again, the professional touch in bringing together people attending on their own, which I very much appreciated. As a result, I had not one but several very long conversations with Lou which were extremely interesting.

I especially found the attendance list very helpful, which enabled me to note the names of most of the people I spoke to - a staggering 28 out of 51, a huge rise compared to three the previous year. The difference this year was that I was on my own and so able to circulate freely rather than sticking within my group. Also different this year was that I had a plan, stuck to the plan and nailed the plan!

Very kind regards.

*Lynn Temple
 Improvement Co-ordinator
 Great Yarmouth Community Trust*

FACILITATOR PAGES

In this section

- **Bob Hawke - A natural Facilitator**
- **From the inbox 2**
- **Project Steering Grids, post-it notes and a little bit of pixie dust!**
- **From the inbox 3**
- **Facilitating change**
- **Facilitators - ready, willing and able**

06

Bob Hawke - A natural Facilitator

From the inbox 2



Occasionally we come across, read or hear about someone who is clearly a natural Facilitator. This was the case when we saw an article in the Weekend Australian. This was entitled ‘The odd strain in an unbreakable bond’ in which ‘former British high commissioners reveal what they really thought of us’. The following example of textbook facilitation jumped out at us.

Bob Hawke and Margaret Thatcher did not get along. Charles Cullimore, a senior British diplomat, described an incident during a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in the mid-80s when Thatcher was in the chair and an African head of state was struggling to make a point. A clearly irritated Thatcher wanted him to hurry up and kept interrupting until Hawke called out from the back of the room, “For Christ’s sake, will you let the poor bastard finish?”



MARGARET THATCHER AND BOB HAWKE AT 10 DOWNING STREET, 1986.
PHOTO BY FOX PHOTOS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES.
REPRODUCED UNDER LICENCE.

Hi Alison and Richard,

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

I want to say a big thank you for the training program and all the tools and techniques. I facilitated my first Annual Planning event yesterday (with Chelsea Akers) and it went really well, and was heaps of fun. I know I don’t have to tell you, but the process works!!

We’ll share some of our learnings when we see you in August for Module 3.

Regards
Fiona

*Fiona Coombes
(State & National Partnerships)
Government Partnerships
Transport Strategy and Planning,
Department of Transport and Main Roads*

Project Steering Grids, post-it notes and a little bit of pixie dust!

Nominated to be one of the first Facilitators trained in the Policy, Planning and Investment Division of Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads, Chelsea Akers found herself taking a leap outside her comfort zone. Although initially a little nervous about the experience, Chelsea has experienced exciting personal and professional growth which she credits to the skills and structure learned through her participation in the Facilitator Development Programme.

Project Steering Grids, post-it notes and a little bit of pixie dust!

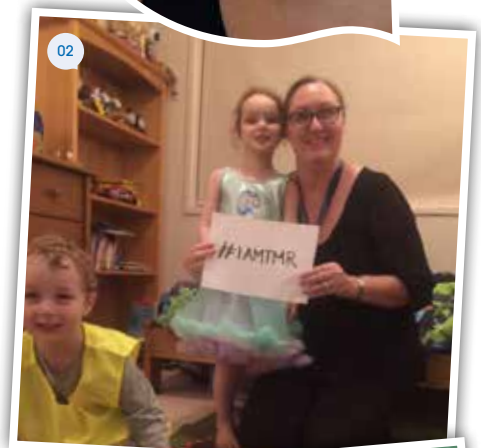
UIMPROVE Facilitators graduate equipped with a suite of tools including Project Steering Grids and post-it notes...but alas, no pixie dust. Despite this, in 2015, the UIC and Transport and Main Roads (TMR) made some magic happen!

When my mentor, who was undertaking the Strategic Improvement Programme, asked if I would consider Facilitator training I was terrified and excited at the same time. I thought this would push me outside of my comfort zone...and indeed it did in a meaningful, intentional, structured, but most of all a supportive way. What did I learn?

True North

The UIMPROVE Facilitator training helped clarify my 'true north', my leadership purpose. That is to connect, inspire and empower people to be their best, and build leadership values at all levels for the benefit of One TMR. To challenge people to be more than they thought they could be. As a business improvement Facilitator trained in the UIMPROVE methodology I can now achieve these goals. The tools and structure let me help executives, team leaders and project managers be the very best that they can be.

With this comes a desire to nurture my leadership potential, be mindful of my presence and behaviour, lead from grass roots and ensure opportunity for equal participation. Combine all of this with a shift in mindset to actively seek and give constructive feedback, to no longer fear failure - for with failing comes learning - to see obstacles as opportunities, explore and understand instead of assuming, and encourage collaborative



- 01 CHELSEA AKERS
- 02 CHELSEA WITH HER LITTLE TMR ENTHUSIASTS HUGO (THREE) AND GIA (FIVE)
- 03 CHELSEA AND PPI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PENNY FORD
- 04 CHELSEA BEING AWARDED THE IDEAS INTO ACTION VALUES AWARD BY TMR DIRECTOR GENERAL NEIL SCALES

conflict - this is where innovative solutions can occur! And the training has given me a newfound lens: a desire to read the room; sense the culture and sub-cultures within groups; quickly identify agendas; spot the culture architects and assassins; recognise people styles and flex my communication styles to adapt.

It's business improvement

UIMPROVE Facilitators are in an enviable position, with exposure to the Leadership Team and business activities across the whole of Transport and Main Roads. With this comes great responsibility: to be custodians of the process; trusted neutrals; champions of change. Opportunities to work with our leaders across the business, to work in the business and on the business. It's a whole new world!

It's about continual improvement, building a better Policy, Planning and Investment Division (PPI), a better Department of Transport and Main Roads, a better Queensland Public Service, and a better Queensland. And I'm thrilled to see the ripples of change.

It's personal growth

Tinker Bell says: "Your talent makes you who you are. You should be proud of it." When you nurture people's strengths and encourage them to identify opportunities for development it helps open doors for them and can change their lives. UIMPROVE Facilitator training has certainly changed my life.

Having an innate fear of public speaking and borderline imposter syndrome, UIMPROVE has introduced me to skills and structure that help manage my inner critic and boost my confidence. Armed with grids, flipcharts and post-its, I led 250 employees to spearhead Transport Strategy and Planning (TSP) Branch's response to the 'Working for Queensland Employee Opinion Survey'. I led nine events with assistance from the 2015 PPI cohort and existing Facilitator Network. The result: real business improvement, real actions, and an opportunity to introduce Facilitators and to socialise and embed the UIMPROVE methodology within TSP Branch. Exhausting...exhilarating...empowering.



UIMPROVE prioritisation tools and structure have useful application at home. Now-Soon-Later, Must-Should-Could and TPN Analysis assist in prioritising tasks and explaining choices and decision-making processes to my children. Understanding the Ishikawa problem solving process has allowed me to flex my communication style with a three and five year old (and sometimes my husband!), and to take an appreciative enquiry approach to better explore and understand issues prior to jumping to solutions. I sometimes wish for some pixie dust when it comes to picking up kids' toys though!

UIMPROVE makes Impossible, I'm Possible.

In 2016 I want to lead, motivate and inspire TMR teams to successfully embed the UIMPROVE methodology, starting with Annual Planning within the Policy, Planning and Investment Division. It's a very exciting time for TMR as we embrace diversity, inclusion, innovation and technology, implement new business improvement programs and invest in the future workforce. I want to continue to be authentic, strive to be the best version of Chelsea that I can be and live with a relentless pursuit of better. I want to be an ambassador for UIMPROVE and business improvement in TMR. I want to work with the business to leverage off our strengths and identify opportunities for development. All I need is faith in my ability, trust in the process, and a little bit of pixie dust!

*Chelsea Akers
Principal Advisor (Innovation) Corporate
Governance
Queensland Department of Transport and Main
Roads*

From the inbox 3



Hi Alison,

Thanks for the review letter. It's great to see the enthusiasm come through amongst the group and I appreciate the feedback and suggestions to ensure that Facilitators can contribute in the best way towards organisational planning and project outcomes.

Look forward to catching up in the next week or so.

Regards

*Peter Milward
General Manager
(Passenger Transport Integration)
TransLink Division, Department of Transport
and Main Roads*



Facilitating change

Carly Martin trained as a Facilitator at The Aspire Group in 2015, and despite this being a new way of working for the organisation, the Facilitators are making an impressive difference to the way work is delivered. Here Carly reflects on the inclusive way that Aspire has been implementing UIMPROVE and the difference that it's making at a time of great change.

This is probably the most challenging time ever faced by the social housing sector. We have to overcome the challenge of diminishing resources and increasing customer needs.

At Aspire we are responding by transforming into a smarter, slicker, simpler business and our new cross-group facilitation team are using their knowledge, skills and techniques to lead the way. We started our UIC journey in December 2014 and, in less than a year, it has had a massive impact, changing both the culture and the pace of the organisation. All our Heads of Service were trained via the Universal Improvement Skills course at the same time as our 12 Facilitators. Within a short space of time, nine Project Kick-Starts had been attended by more than 150 colleagues.

UIMPROVE has quickly become 'the Aspire way', demonstrating a firm commitment to the approach with buy-in across the business.

In the past Aspire had a variety of project management approaches, including team

delivery plans and service improvement plans. These traditional approaches lacked consistency, efficiency and ownership. Now, with UIMPROVE tools and techniques at our disposal, we have developed our annual plans and transformational projects with a new sense of cohesion. This has been taken on board by everyone involved.

Our approach has been successful because colleagues from every level of the business have adopted it and, in the future, the Facilitators will be the key to keeping this discipline at the forefront. They are hoping to network with other organisations who share similar ambitions to help embed the approach even further.

There is no doubt, this has been a cultural shift for Aspire, but it is one which will help us to proudly manage homes and deliver employment and training for our customers for many years to come.

*Carly Martin
Improvement Partner
The Aspire Group*



Facilitators - ready, willing and able

Facilitators are the guardians of UIMPROVE and are often the catalyst for making real change happen in an organisation. In 2015, we trained six new groups of Facilitators. Some were lucky enough to land in a ready-made bed, in organisations that already understand their worth and have well-established processes and coordination around facilitation. Others went back to organisations that were at the beginning of their improvement journey and are still learning what a valuable resource they have in their midst. In all cases we are very proud of them and wish them luck!

01



- 01 WEAVER VALE HOUSING TRUST, FEBRUARY 2015
- 02 THE ASPIRE GROUP, JUNE 2015
- 03 TRANSLINK, JULY 2015
- 04 ONE MANCHESTER, NOVEMBER 2015
- 05 IN NOVEMBER 2015 WE RAN A JOINT COURSE FOR CALEDONIAN SLEEPER, SOUTH YORKSHIRE HOUSING ASSOCIATION AND THIRTEEN GROUP
- 06 QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS - POLICY, PLANNING AND INVESTMENT DIVISION, APRIL 2015

02



03



05



04



06



UIC SYSTEMS

A major part of the UIC's business is the provision of systems, most notably our Kestrel operational performance improvement software for the transport industry. Kestrel is used in a wide variety of operations on both sides of the world. In 2015 we were very happy to welcome the brand-new Caledonian Sleeper franchise into the fold.

In this section

- Why this is important
- Proof and more proof
- Happy customers

07

Why this is important

Customer research shows again-and-again that the number one factor influencing customer satisfaction is operational performance - specifically reliability (whether the service runs) and punctuality (whether the service is on-time). Very simply put, Kestrel takes the plan (the timetable) and compares it to what actually happened on the day. Kestrel also includes the 'attribution' process. Attribution allocates delays to their root cause and, importantly, their Responsible Manager. There is a clear link to improvement philosophy here. Attribution is about cause-and-effect, specifically the bones on the Ishikawa Diagram of 'delays to services'. Allocation of specific delays to a Responsible Manager is about TPN Analysis. Managers should be eliminating delays that are a 'T' to them. 'P's and 'N's are fertile ground for projects and to prioritise these, Kestrel includes plenty of Pareto Charts. Kestrel is designed to make best, and easy, use of the most powerful tools for data analysis - Run Charts, Histograms and Pareto Charts. The aim? Pareto to death your causes of delay for about 50 years and you'll have a network as reliable as the Japanese.

'Buses', August 2014 edition, first page, first paragraph, first sentence:

"One of the most consistent messages to be read into most surveys of passengers' opinions of bus services is that punctuality and reliability matter most."

This isn't new!

"The importance of ascertaining the particulars connected with delays cannot be over-estimated, as they are frequently the result of mis-management, are often the primary causes of accidents, and in their history is developed a class of facts and delinquencies which could not be so easily detected in any other way. By these means, the prevailing causes of delays are made known, and an opportunity is given to apply the corrective, where the nature of the case will permit."

Guess the year. Answer on page 79.

From 'Out of the Crisis'

"My friend....while in Japan in November 1983 received these instructions to reach by train a company that he was to visit:

0903 h Board the train. Pay no attention to trains at 0858, 0901.
0957 h Off.

No further instruction was needed."

Proof and more proof

The January 2016 edition of 'Trains', an excellent magazine covering US railroading, ran an article called 'Why fewer rode' which examined the drop in passenger numbers across the long-distance Amtrak network for the fiscal year ending September 2015. A significant element was - no surprise here - unreliable performance.

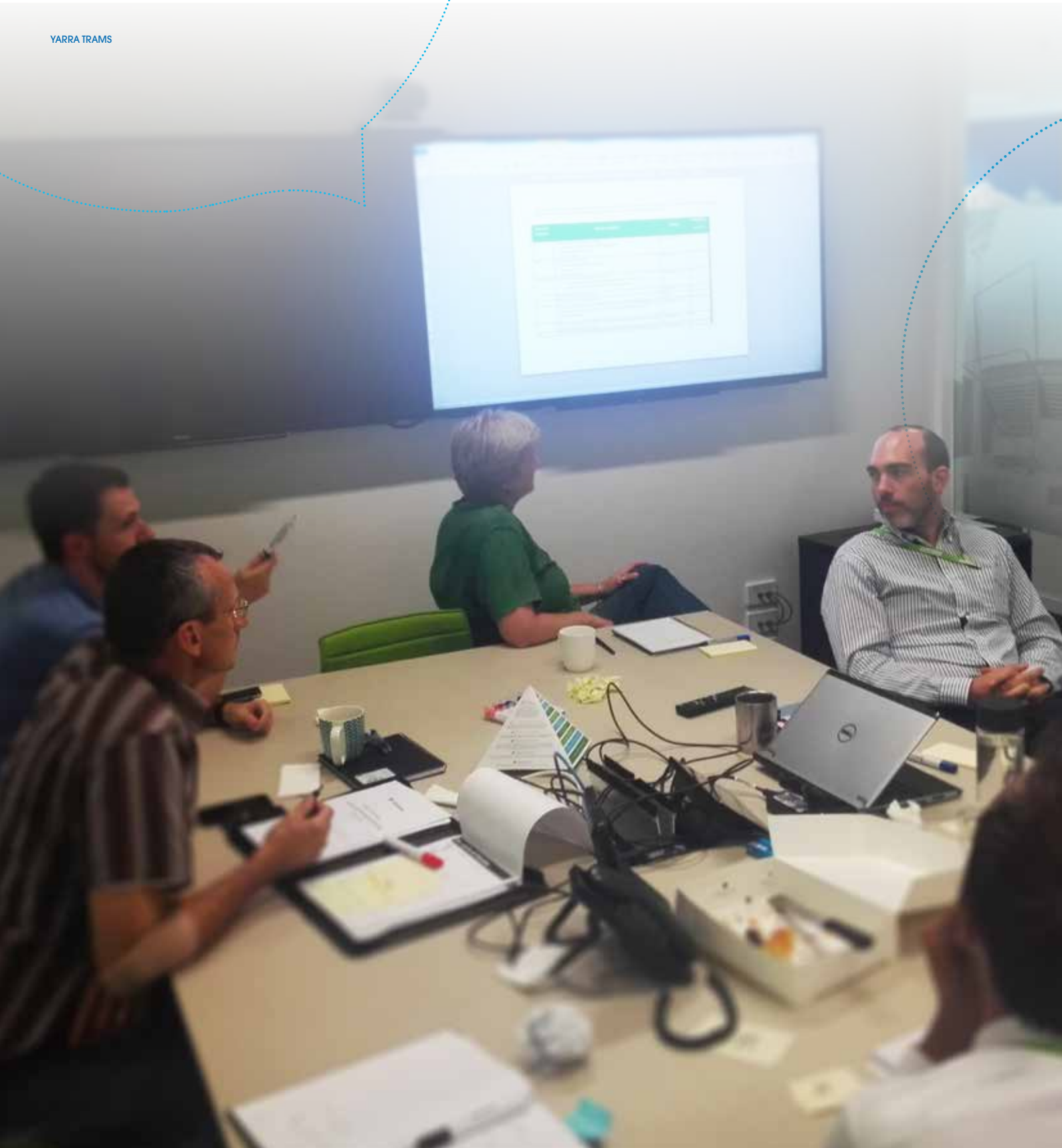
Lingering effects of the October 2014 meltdowns on NS's Chicago - Toledo corridor and the Canadian Pacific and BNSF Railway-hosted Empire Builder show that when travellers can't depend on service, they are less likely to count on trains again in the near term. Both the Capitol Limited and Lake Shore Limited saw counts drop over 4 percent (though sleeping car ridership was up slightly for both trains).



Proof that timekeeping has an effect - negative and positive - is evidenced by the Empire Builder's summer resurgence, when the train began to reverse its deep tardiness-caused slide of 2014. By September 2015, 25 of 30 Seattle arrivals were early or less than a half-hour late. June through September ridership rose 6.3 percent.

Happy cust

YARRA TRAMS



omers



SCOTRAIL



CALEDONIAN SLEEPER



NORTHERN RAIL



AT THE BACK

In this section

- It'll never catch on
- Why deer are drawn to railway tracks and how Japan is solving the problem
- From the inbox 4
- Stupid games
- Can Germany run like clockwork?
- Danger!
- Out-and-about
- Corporate Bryan
- Three quarters of staff admit tweeting in meetings

08

It'll never catch on

Reading through a back issue of Rail Enthusiast magazine, the following article entitled 'Mini-computers take to rails' caught our eye. The question for our readers: What year? Have a guess and then look for the answer on page 79.



Hand-held computers are about to revolutionise the information British Rail have about their customers - and will point the way towards giving them an even better service.

Trials carried out by market researchers on the East Coast Main Line have shown that information can be gathered, processed and made available for interpretation in a fraction of the time taken by conventional methods.

The new technique uses hand-held micro-computer terminals to store data, which is obtained by personal interview rather than by the usual method of asking passengers to fill out a questionnaire. Gone is the tedious job of sorting through handwritten forms, and translating the replies into numeric codes, ready for manual input to a computer. Information is available for processing just as soon as the terminal is plugged into its "parent" computer. Distance from home need not hold up the process. With a specially-constructed adaptor, conventional telephone lines can be used for data transmission.

No specialist training is required for researchers to operate their new equipment.

MINI-COMPUTERS TAKE TO RAILS

HAND-held computers are about to revolutionise the information British Rail have about their customers — and will point the way towards giving them an even better service.

Trials carried out by market researchers on the East Coast Main Line have shown that information can be gathered, processed and made available for interpretation in a fraction of the time taken by conventional methods.

The new technique uses hand-held micro-computer terminals to store data, which is obtained by personal interview rather than by the usual method of asking passengers to fill out a questionnaire. Gone is the tedious job of sorting through handwritten forms, and translating the replies into numeric codes, ready for manual input to a computer. Information is available for processing just as soon as the terminal is plugged into its "parent" computer. Distance from home need not hold up the process. With a specially-constructed adaptor, conventional telephone lines can be used for data transmission.

No specialist training is required for researchers to operate their new equipment. All they will need is the compact computer terminal and a clipboard, listing the questions to be asked and a range of responses. Each possible answer is represented by a bar code, similar to those



The new equipment in use during recent trials on the East Coast Main Line. Photo: British Rail.

mysterious markings which have become commonplace on food products and in library books. A light-sensitive wand "reads" the information as it is passed over the strip, converting it into impulses which are stored in the machine's memory bank, until they are

accessed and translated by the main computer. Accuracy is ensured by an audible "bleep" and an easy-read visual display. Alternatively, input can be by means of the terminal's own keyboard. The flexibility to choose either wand or keyboard input adds considerably to the value of the new equipment. "The passengers showed a great deal of interest in what we were doing and were happy to co-operate" said a member of the research team after a recent test survey.

Allowing time for a brief explanation, to satisfy curiosity, each 11-question interview averaged 50 seconds. And timings are expected to improve with practice.

Depending on the extent of the research, survey results can be available within a few hours — minimising labour costs and maximising efficiency, making it a popular idea with staff and public.

The computer terminals are not designed to replace tried and tested methods of conventional market research — but they will make them more versatile. For some exercises, it will still be necessary to ask the customer to fill in a questionnaire in the normal way. The information can then be entered to the computer through the hand-held terminals, which will mean a huge reduction in processing time.

EU
ALOM
Europ
introd
citize
disco
Conti
Irelan
19 co
The F
£5, an
BR S
be us
circul
first o
Sav
Belgiu
Switze
Greec
and th
30% i
Italy, Y
Denm
crossi
Sealin
Hoven
are pa
journe
Red
sleepi
supple
Contin
New
MICHA
Assist
Manch
has be
Engin
based

Why deer are drawn to railway tracks and how Japan is solving the problem

We never fail to be amazed by the punctuality and reliability of Japanese railways and an article in *Railway Gazette International* led us on a search down into the Useful Many of their Pareto Chart.

More than 5000 deer are struck by trains across Japan each year. The railway industry has tried numerous methods to try to deter deer from the lineside; fencing is the most obvious, but more exotic deterrents have also been tried including a spray produced from lion droppings.

None of these have been particularly effective, mainly because they did not address the question: why are deer attracted to railway lines in the first place? After studying the deer, it was determined that they were visiting the tracks to get iron supplements for a more balanced diet. It would seem that the particles produced by friction between the wheels and rails are an easy source for the deer to get their daily intake from.

Now Nippon Steel & Sumikin Metal Products have produced a new type of deer bait. It's called a Yukuru and is similar to a salt lick used for cattle, but it contains one very important ingredient: iron.



News Release

日鐵住金建材株式会社
 東京都江東区木場 2-17-12 SAビル
 企画部 企画グループ
 TEL:03-3630-2748 FAX:03-3630-2916

2015年10月8日

報道関係者各位

シカ対策システム『ユクリッド』の販売開始について

日鐵住金建材株式会社は、深刻な社会問題となっているシカ被害を解決する、シカ対策システム『ユクリッド』の販売を開始します。

『ユクリッド』は、農業、林業、及び鉄道におけるシカ被害の低減を目的としたシステムの総称です。当社の長年の研究成果により導き出された「侵入抑止編『ユカエル』」と「誘鹿材『ユクル』」をそれぞれの被害対策地域に適した配置を行うことで、シカによるトラブルを解決します。

「シカが列車にぶつかってくる数を減らしたい」、「農地や林地を守るためにシカを効率的に捕獲したい」というお客様の声を受けて開発した当商品は、シカに対して問題意識のある鉄道事業者様、自治体様、猟友会様、環境保護団体様など、様々なお客様にご使用頂けます。

『ユクリッド』の導入は、当社専門技術スタッフの現地調査に基づいた各商品の配置方法の提案から始まります。各商品を適所に配置することで、シカの行動をコントロールし、地域のシカ被害を低減するシステムが機能します。(右図参照)

今後とも、社会の要請にお応えし、安全・安心で快適な生活空間を創出し、社会の発展と人々の暮らしに貢献してまいります。

以上

〔本件に関するお問合せ先〕
 日鐵住金建材株式会社
 〔営業〕 鉄道商品営業部 佐々木、見城 Tel 03-3630-2459 (代表)
 開発企画部 梶村、見城 Tel 03-3630-2497 (代表)
 〔技術〕

〔日鐵住金建材株式会社の会社概要〕
 【本 社】東京都江東区木場 2 丁目 17-12
 【代 表 者】代表取締役社長 小塚修一郎
 【資 本 金】59 億 1,250 万円
 【設 立】昭和 48 年 4 月 20 日
 【事業内容】鉄鋼建材製品の製造・販売
 【ホームページ】http://www.ns-kenzai.co.jp/





From the inbox 4

Dear Richard

I recall during our recent training session with you that you are keen to see our skills used in different forums. As such, please find a photo of a Brainstorming session I held at our Church (St Peter the Fisherman, Clontarf, QLD) where I am the Church Warden.

We needed some clearer thinking on fundraising that normally gets confused in the 'Vicar of Dibley' style parish council meetings!!

Everyone was very impressed.

I hope you find the feedback useful?

Regards to all.

Martin Hall
General Manager
Surfside Buslines



SKILLS IN GODLY PRACTICE

Stupid games

One of our mantras when training Facilitators is: If it's not in the manual, don't do it. Not everyone heeds our advice though, and occasionally we hear of stupid games being built into something like a Project Kick-Start or daft team activities being carried out which always make us wince. This, seen recently in Private Eye, sounds fairly sensible compared to many of these...

"Our company has always encouraged employees to change their old ways of thinking," president Park Chun-woong of the Staffs recruitment company told reporters in Seoul, "but at first it was hard to bring about any real difference. So I began to make all my employees take part in their own funerals. I order them to dress in white funeral robes and write farewell letters to their loved ones, weeping while they do so. They then lie down inside their coffin, hugging a picture of themselves draped in a black ribbon. The coffin has the lid banged shut by a man dressed like the Angel of Death, and we leave them to reflect on the meaning of life for several hours. I thought that going inside the coffin would be such a shocking experience that it would reset their minds for a completely fresh start, and it seems to be having an impact. We also have compulsory laughter every morning, to boost morale."

Danger!

RUNNING LIKE CLOCKWORK ALONG THE RHINE VALLEY

Can Germany run like clockwork?

We were interested to see this item in the October 2015 issue of *Railway Gazette International*. The principles of a regular interval timetable, or *taktfahrplan*, have applications outside of public transport scheduling and are covered in our *Control Your Processes* course.

A detailed study of the feasibility of introducing a German national clock-face timetable based on a 30 and 60 minute cycle of long-distance trains with optimised connections has been published.

The study found that a clock-face timetable would be technically feasible and could be introduced by 2025. Depending on the chosen scenario, it could offer passengers travel time reductions totalling between 8 and 12 million hours per year, which could generate a growth in ridership of between 9 and 12 million journeys.



UIC consultants brave many dangers to deliver your improvements.



Out-and-about



Corporate Bryan

This spelling doesn't work quite as well but why let detail spoil a standard in-joke?

How to
use a Notebook

BRYAN SIMPSON

Three quarters of staff admit tweeting in meetings

We encourage an 'all gadgets off' policy in meetings. There is a wide variety of reasons for this, not least that it's helpful if everyone is paying attention to what's going on. Having sat in a meeting (not run or facilitated by us, we hasten to add - we were the guest) where the senior person present spent a fair amount of their time texting under the table, we thought we should include this widely published article - seen here in HR Grapevine.

Almost three quarters of social media users will check their news feeds on their smartphones during meetings, according to a new poll.

The survey by office experts LondonOffices.com found a huge 71% of staff would sneak a peek at their Twitter, Facebook and Instagram feeds if they were drifting away during a meeting.

Reasons given for this were keeping up-to-date with breaking news, wanting to check in with people and, for some, purely out of boredom. A spokesperson for LondonOffices.com said the survey

results showed how social media was having an increasing impact on the working environment. He said: "Social media is playing a bigger role in our lives, not just in our personal lives but at work too. We have become accustomed to having live news updates at our fingertips so it's only natural we begin to feel 'out of the loop' much quicker than we used to. The rise in the numbers of smartphones has made our social media channels much more accessible. We no longer need to sit in front of the computer to become updated. Now we have platforms such as Facebook and Twitter quite literally in the palm of our hands".

Many employers may view this as a headache but in some technology and marketing sectors, the use of social media in meetings is actively encouraged. The poll found almost half would go through their smartphones in order to see the day's headlines prior to live events, with 47% saying they looked at their Facebook and Twitter feeds for details. Out of all of the social media platforms available, Twitter is the preferred app for checking up on live events, with 28% of those polled searching for the event hashtags during meetings.

However despite the widespread use of social media for professional purposes, an honest nine per cent confessed to scrolling aimlessly through their smart phones during dull moments of a meeting. But a firm 99% believed that playing games on smartphones during meetings was unacceptable, with only one per cent admitting to a secret gaming session under the desk.

One respondent said: "My job relies on reacting to current affairs and keeping an eye on what's in the news so I regularly check my social media feeds during meetings. I have attended conferences where the use of social media sites, particularly Twitter, has been openly encouraged. Sometimes it's easier to ask a question via the Twitter hashtag rather than put up your hand in front of 100 strangers."

One person who took part in the survey confessed: "I've lied to my boss' face and said I was checking e-mail when I was actually sending a selfie to my best friend via Snapchat".

Don't do it!
(even if everybody else does)

Final word

Our Yearbooks are distributed to both our clients and a wide variety of people with an interest in organisational improvement.

We generally pester a select few to get a good range of contributions but we are always delighted to receive contributions from anyone who has anything they think would be of interest to other readers. The contents of your article should either reinforce something someone has learned, provide practical tips or some new learning, or challenge conventional thinking.

Please send your contributions, both written and photographic, to your favourite UIC consultant or direct to me. Although space sometimes thwarts us, we aim to publish everything received.

Richard Capper
richard@theuic.com

Did you get the years?

This isn't new! (page 69): 1856
It'll never catch on (page 73): 1983



The Universal
Improvement
Company



To be continued...

Australia

The Universal
Improvement Company
72/8 Goodwin Street
Kangaroo Point
Queensland 4169

ACN 140 484 617
www.theuic.com.au
info@theuic.com.au

Nederland

The Universal
Improvement Company
Tongerseweg 233A
6213 GC
Maastricht

www.theuic.nl
info@theuic.nl

UK

The Universal
Improvement Company
17 Knowl Avenue
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 2TL

www.theuic.com
info@theuic.com