



Welcome, Bienvenue and Herzlich Willkommen to

VocalPoint

FocalVocal's Free Monthly Newsletter

VocalPoint: Issue 8: April 2007

Welcome to the eighth issue of VocalPoint!

The FocalVocal team and I are delighted that you are interested in receiving up to date news about FocalVocal and reading articles written by us about current issues within training today. If there are specific questions you have regarding your training needs or areas that you think are worthy of investigation, we would be happy to hear from you and see if we can help out by doing some research and writing an article.

In this month's issue of VocalPoint, apart from giving you details regarding what's on, what's new and what's coming up, Chris Robinson one of FocalVocal's management development and work/life balance trainers will be giving some advice on how to maintain a healthy work/life balance

However, in the meantime:

What's on?

In conjunction with Harrow in Business (Business Link) and Clare Concannon, Monica will be running a Presentation Skills Training Day for the General Public on:

Date: Thursday 17 May

Time: 9.30am-11.45am

Venue:

Northwick Park PlayGolf
Northwick Park
Watford Road
Harrow
HA1 8TZ

Transport: Nearest Underground: Northwick Park Metropolitan Line

Free Parking: available in Northwick Park PlayGolf

Cost: £65.00

To Book: Please call Emma Wilding at Harrow in Business on 020 8427 6188

In-house taster sessions

FocalVocal is currently offering in-house taster sessions, a perfect opportunity for you to test drive FocalVocal's method of training and our skills. If interested please e-mail monica@focalvocal.co.uk

A recent two-hour taster session conducted at PKF (UK) LLP proved hugely successful and thought provoking dialogues regarding combating nerves by 'thinking in pictures' when presenting ensued.

'PKF invited FocalVocal to deliver a taster session on Beginners Public Speaking. The attendees found it to be informative, developmental and fun. The presenter and actors struck the right tone from the very start and allowed the participants to contribute which helped maintain their focus. It was a thoroughly worthwhile session.'

John Watkins Director of Training and Development PKF (UK) LLP
Accountants & business advisers

FocalVocal Taster Sessions 2007

1. Beginners Public Speaking with Monica Lowenberg
2. Assertiveness with Helen McNeill
3. Managing Change with Chris Robinson
4. Giving and Receiving Feedback with Chris Robinson
5. Work/Life Balance Helen McNeill
6. Media Training with Gareth Rubin and Monica Lowenberg

FocalVocal taster sessions are two hours and fifteen minutes in length, conducted at your premises by one trainer and two actors, one session can train up to 18 persons.

What's New?

✓ **Corporate Entertainment**

'Raise the Spirit' a light-hearted look at the world of wine, led by wine expert (or so he thinks) Angus Tarte. The inflated and flawed ego of Mr Tarte visits wine growers, sommeliers and marketers from the new and old world regions.

If you would like an opportunity to see FocalVocal's Karen Bartholomew in this production, DVDs of the show are now available.

If interested please e-mail monica@focalvocal.co.uk

✓ **New brochure that can be downloaded from publications www.focalvocal.co.uk**

What's coming up?

- **Personal effectiveness training with Monika Key**
- **Business coaching with Kirk Halinson**
- **Forum theatre**
- **Role-Players for assessment days and pilot days**
- **May VocalPoint with Chris Robinson on Giving and Receiving Feedback**

But for now, here is Chris Robinson, former head of training for TSB South East and FocalVocal's Management Development Trainer and an NLP Master Practitioner talking about:

Work – Life Balance: A Question of Maintenance Maintenant

At the last count, the average working week in the UK is now about 48 hours. If this is what most admit to, the figure for many is probably 60 plus. As companies everywhere have cut staff, it has become the norm for those remaining, to be asked to do more.

For many, what this means, once travelling to and from work has been taken into account, is that the rest of life consists of the weekend. This is liable to put considerable pressure on people to maintain some balance between the conflicting demands placed on them. All too often, work dominates the list of priorities.

Thus the Work-Life Balance has become a live issue for both employees and employers. On the one hand, managers have to take responsibility for keeping themselves sharp at their work place, without becoming self-sacrificing martyrs to their career. On the other, good employers will know that they cannot pay mere lip-service to Health & Safety issues. As stress related illnesses climb, adding to the figures for sickness absence, employers are increasingly factoring in mental health issues into their policies and practice, providing counselling and training as back-up.

So, what do I do as a manager, who suddenly realises that work dominates my whole existence: that there is no balance between work and the rest of my life? One might be prompted to ask how I got into this situation. But as a workaholic hooked on a life in the fast lane, I've probably been ignoring the signals for years. Signals from those close to me, signals from my body, even signals from my boss at work.

But I've had a frightener and I decide to take stock. I've always justified putting work first by arguing it's for my loved ones as I'm the chief breadwinner. So, why is it the loved ones who are complaining that they never see me and that they are concerned for the state of my health? The truth is, it was the macho thing to ignore them. I love the buzz I get at work. I've been called an adrenaline junkie by colleagues. They buy into the same fake glamour that I do.

Now, it has got to change. I'm not going to be much use to my family with a heart condition. What are my new priorities? Part of it is a time management issue. Spend less time at work and more QUALITY TIME with my family. At present I go home knackered and switch off. Parkinson's Law says 'Work expands to fit the time available'.

So:-

New Rule 1. Three days a week, go home an hour earlier

New Rule 2. Stop taking work home

New Rule 3. Spend the time saved with the family (just listening to them would be a start)

The doctor has told me I'm drinking too much, and I'm getting insufficient exercise. (Two reasons among others why I'm overweight, my blood pressure is up and my sex life has gone down the swan neck)

New Rule 4. Reduce alcohol intake by 10-15 units per week

New Rule 5. Go running with daughter twice a week

New Rule 6. Go for 20 minute walk before bedtime, with partner and dog (might improve sex life)

What does this all add up to? A small shift in priorities in favour of two of the things I love the most: my family and myself (body). It's a question of maintenance. We need to maintain the things we cherish. I cherish my work and the economic security it provides. I cherish my family and friends. I cherish myself. But only the first of these three has been receiving regular maintenance. So I've got to change my habits before I lose that which I cherish. Maintenance.

Maintenant. The French for now.

Ten things a manager can do to help employees who are experiencing work-life conflicts

Offer:

- flexible working hours
- telecommuting
- paid leave time
- on-site support services such as child-care and fitness centres
- job sharing

- summer day camps for children
- elder-care referral services
- dry cleaning pick-up and delivery
- on-site car maintenance
- free income tax and legal information advisory services

Who does this?

In the United States, where managers have become increasingly sensitive to work/life balance issues in order to retain and recruit staff, Stephen Robbins notes that:

- Cisco Systems opened a \$10 million child-care centre accommodating up to 440 children
- Intel has opened satellite offices around the San Francisco Bay area to accommodate employees who don't want to come into the head office
- SAS Institute provides day care to employees' children for a nominal sum of money
- Adobe Systems introduced telecommuting
- 3Com provides employees with concierge services to handle chores such as dry cleaning

Bibliography

S.P.Robbins (2003). *The Truth About Managing People ...And Nothing But the Truth*. NJ:Prentice Hall.

FocalVocal works with businesses in the private and public sector who wish to improve their communication and management skills. Businesses who

- *know that a dynamic, interactive learning environment is the most successful in helping you to retain newly acquired skills and be confident to apply them*
- *are bored with courses where you get to sit, but don't actually get to do*
- *have found it to be a bonus to have trainers and actors who are native English speakers but are also bi-lingual in German and French*
- *like the challenge of working with professional actors to test out new skills in a fun, non-judgemental environment*

If you think the same, then get in touch with FocalVocal today!

Please feel free to forward VocalPoint to anybody you feel would find it of interest.

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