

CASE STUDY

PEP talk

The Personal Effectiveness and Power (PEP) programme at Roffey Park can have an uplifting, enriching effect on your approach to work and life.

Roffey Park has been running its PEP programme for twenty years and, during that time, over 2,000 people have experienced its uniquely holistic approach to developing interpersonal skills. One of the most recent participants is Phil James, an IT Service Delivery Manager at Cadbury, who enrolled in the programme in November 2008.

Phil had been at Cadbury for six years and had recently become aware that, although he was highly regarded as someone who could deliver results, he lacked some of the skills he thought he needed to have a wider and more positive impact in the organisation. After spending time considering his own developmental needs, he decided to look at courses that would help him have more of an impact at work, while understanding and improving his own approach to work and colleagues.



"I felt that there were times when the impact I had on people wasn't always the one I intended and that perhaps I wasn't as collaborative as I could be," explains Phil. "I realised I needed to work on my 'soft skills' to build on – and strengthen – my existing skill set. A colleague had been to Roffey Park and spoke highly of the experience. From the website, the PEP programme seemed to match exactly what I was hoping to achieve."

When dealing with others, people are inevitably judged on their own personal effectiveness rather than any purported 'formal authority'. To successfully influence people in these situations, confidence, clarity of purpose and communication skills are vital. Roffey Park's PEP programme aims to equip participants with a repertoire of skills to help identify and develop their credibility and personal style.

The PEP programme is a five day residential course that typically involves 10 -12 participants and two consultants. Personal Effectiveness is the constant 'golden thread' that runs through all aspects of the way in which Roffey Park works with people, touching upon all the topics that are core to its ethos: leadership, management, organisational development, talent management and coaching.

"The first thing that struck me was the ambience of Roffey Park," continues Phil. "The facilities are impressive and the accommodation is of a high standard. But most of all, there is an aura to the place that encourages reflective thinking. In addition, our two consultants were warm, welcoming and made us relaxed from the outset. Given the sometimes sensitive nature of what we explore in the programme, the sense of security they provided was invaluable."

The first objective of the PEP programme is to examine personal developmental needs, not just on a technical level but also from an interpersonal perspective. The programme then gradually enables the participants to become accustomed

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to giving and receiving feedback. A combination of whole group and small group sessions as well as workshops form the basis of the programme, with each participant encouraged to nominate and explore aspects of their approach to working with others.

“The course starts gently but that is vital to getting into the right mindset; you simply can’t jump headfirst into the PEP subject matter,” explains Phil. “Initially, the consultants help the team build trust and a sense of community, which then allows us to engage in an open dialogue. There is a steep learning curve but it combines not only the theoretical models and training but also the intrinsically personal needs of each member of the programme. By the end, we each had a fuller understanding of how to make a positive impact in the workplace and had gained a range of skills to influence others without authority as well as an increased confidence and ability to deal with challenging situations.”

On returning to work, Phil felt an immediate change in how he worked: “I came back feeling really refreshed and on top of work. The programme helped me consolidate my approach to work and energised me. I am also now much more aware of the nuance and subtleties of language – both spoken and unspoken. Where previously, I might have been perceived as having a bit of a chip on my shoulder; I feel more open and engaged with others and can empathise with their needs more easily. At the end of the day, I am much happier, and more effective, doing my job.”

“I am now much more confident in my own abilities and feel that I am taking control of my journey and not just reacting to external stimuli. The PEP programme was the perfect course, delivered by highly skilled and influential consultants that has had an extensive impact on how I work and relate to others.”

Sharon Brockway is the PEP programme director and, according to her, Phil’s experience is not unusual: “For many people, the PEP course can be a life changing event. I recently met a CEO of a large company who had attended the programme many years before. He told me that he would never have made it to the top of his organisation if he hadn’t come to Roffey Park and undertaken the PEP programme.”

Phil James found the experience so rewarding he is aiming to enrol some of his team at Roffey Park in the near future: “If I had to sum up my time at Roffey Park in three words, they would be: enriching, powerful and enlightening and I would be keen to encourage other colleagues to undergo the same transformational experience.”

For more information:

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