



## HARD CORE SOFT SKILLS NEWSLETTER

*"Knowledge is power. Plug yourself in"*

Issue 1  
14 January 2015

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### HAPPY NEW YEAR:

Welcome to Hard Core Soft Skills Issue 1 and 2015! We wish you all a successful and enriching 2015 and look forward to partnering with you in your training endeavours.

2014 saw many changes for the LifeLine Corporate department. One of the biggest changes was the retirement of Ami Mendelsohn after over 20 years of service to LifeLine. Her contributions throughout the LifeLine family are forever felt and have been priceless. She still remains in close contact with LifeLine and especially our training department continuing to offer support and knowledge where she can.

2014 welcomed our new corporate manager Candice Cohen. Candice has been a volunteer at LifeLine since 2008 where she has counselled, facilitated, guided and remained actively involved. She studied psychology and has experience both in facilitation/training and business. We are excited to have her join the team.

Other developments in 2014 saw a great push towards accreditation. We are in the process of accrediting all our trainings and began through partnering with Nicdam (a SETA accredited institute). We began this journey by attending and completing the accredited facilitation and assessor course. We look forward to finalising this journey and becoming a world class training institute so “watch this space”.

2015 looks bright and promising with the implementation of standalone courses, our upcoming annual personal growth course and the start of many new and interesting training opportunities. For any course details please contact Candice Cohen on [candice@lifelinejhb.org.za](mailto:candice@lifelinejhb.org.za)

We’d appreciate any feedback you have on this issue, so please send any comments or suggestions to Candice Cohen on [candice@lifelinejhb.org.za](mailto:candice@lifelinejhb.org.za)

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## **PUBLIC COURSES:**

Don’t wait for work to send you on a course to improve your growth. With our public courses you will be able to send yourself and gain skills both personally and professionally. Look out for dates and topics on our website ([www.lifelinejhb.org.za](http://www.lifelinejhb.org.za)) and facebook page. If there are any area’s you would like to learn and gain experience in please e-mail Candice Cohen on [candice@lifelinejhb.org.za](mailto:candice@lifelinejhb.org.za).

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## **RESOLVING YOUR NEW YEARS’ RESOLUTIONS:**

The 1<sup>st</sup> of January is seen as a time to wipe the slate clean, a fresh start and new beginnings. Frustrated by bad habits like smoking, and overindulgence or overwhelmed by your chaotic lifestyle, you vow to change through making New Year’s resolutions. By May, the treadmill is collecting dust in the garage and you’re smoking 5 more cigarettes per day than you were the year before. Guilty and defeated many of us give up further attempts to change.

New Year's resolutions fail so often because people don't make plans for dealing with inevitable temptations, or set any specific goals to guide the implementation of the resolution. They also fail because people make an arbitrary resolution in order to fix a complex problem, without an awareness of deeper issues. Resolutions also tend to be negatively or punitively phrased leaving us with a sense of deprivation, instead of a positive resolution which is focused on self-fulfilment and achievement.

If you're determined to keep those New Year's resolutions, here are some tips to get you started.

**Clearly define the problem:** What is your motivation for the resolution and what insight do you have into how the current unsatisfactory situation was created. Research shows that people who gave considerable thought to their resolutions were more successful than those who came up with them at the last minute, like after the New Year's party.

**Write it down:** Write down your realistic resolution and place it in a prominent place as a constant reminder, let it be flexible to accommodate your goal changes.

**Have an action plan:** brainstorm tools you can use to implement the resolution and find your starting place. Set realistic time limitations for yourself.

**Spread the word:** Tell people about your resolution. Friends and family are more likely to be a form of support and encouragement if they understand your goal and can also challenge you to stick to them.

**Small steps:** Take the process of change one day at a time. A few positive effects of change will give you sense of control instead of being overwhelmed by all the days to come.

*How did the tradition of resolutions begin anyway?* The tradition seems to be as old as New Year celebrations; the Babylonians celebrated New Years' day over four thousand years ago, although their celebration was in March rather than in January, coinciding with the spring planting of crops. Resolutions were a reflection of the Babylonians' belief that what a person does on the first day of the New Year will have an effect throughout the entire year. So if you are going to break your resolution, you'll be continuing a long tradition of broken resolutions dating back to the dawn of recorded history! And you can always start again in March, Babylonian style.

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## **EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION:**

Motivating employees is extremely important to managers and supervisors, however most are at a loss about where to start, and so many myths still persist about what really motivate people.

Myth 1: ***Fear is a good motivator:*** Fear can be a great motivator...for a very short time. It can also lead to poor staff morale in the long term, and a yelling eventually loses its effect.

Myth 2: ***Money is great motivator:*** Not necessarily. Money, like a nice office and job security, can help people from becoming less motivated, but they don't usually help people to become really motivated either. A key goal is to understand the motivations of each of your employees, people are not motivated by the same things.

Myth 3: ***Increased job satisfaction means increased job performance:*** Research shows this isn't necessarily true at all. Increased job satisfaction does not necessarily mean increased job performance. If the goals of the organisation are not aligned with the goals of the employees, then employees aren't effectively working toward the mission of the organisation.

Myth 4: ***I can motivate people:*** No, they have to motivate themselves, however you can empower them with the knowledge, resources and creation of environment where they best motivate themselves.

*What are the steps then that you can take in supporting your employees to motivate themselves toward increased performance in their jobs?*

Step 1: *Supporting motivation is a process not a task:* With organisations changing all the time, it is an ongoing process to sustain an environment where each employee can strongly motivate themselves. If you look at sustaining employee motivation as an ongoing process, then you'll be less much more empowered and motivated yourself.

Step 2: *Motivating employees begins with motivating yourself:* If you hate your job, there's a strong likelihood that people around you do too. Enthusiasm is contagious, it's much easier for others to be motivated when you are taking care of yourself and your own job, leaving you with a clearer perspective on how others are doing theirs.

Step 3: *Understand what motivates each employee:* A great place to start is by understanding your own motivations, such as time with family, recognition, training opportunities etc. Ask, listen and observe which factors inspire each employee the most.

Step 4: *Align the goals of the organisation with goals of employees:* Employees can be working really hard, but if their results don't contribute to the goals of the organisation, then the organisation is not any better off than if the employee was unproductive. The goals of the organisation identified during strategic planning sessions, should be translated into expectations for each employee. This should be clearly communicated to them, at the same time their individual goals should be identified and aligned with organisational goals. Where necessary, jobs should be re-designed to be more fulfilling.

**Management should clearly convey how employee results contribute to organisational results, and offer reward.**

Step 5: *Organisational systems should support employee motivation:* Strong interpersonal relationships with your staff is only the start, the nature of these relationships can change greatly

especially during times of stress. Make sure you use reliable and comprehensive systems, for example compensation systems, employee performance systems, organisational policies and procedures, establishing various systems and structures to ensure equitable treatment of employees.

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## **GET THE MOST FROM TRAINING:**

Training is an investment in your staff and maximising the benefits of this investment, involves a number of key factors.

The *pre and post-training environment and climate* can affect learning outcomes. The manner in which the organisation introduces the training and the nature of trainee's previous experience in training (positive or negative) influences training motivation. Where the training is compulsory, preparatory information and positioning is vital and will need to be sufficiently detailed to shape trainees expectations, self-belief and their motivation to learn and apply skills on the job.

Furthermore, the *congruence between training objectives and the structure of the organisation* that may affect the delivery of a training programme with such factors such as organisational goals, available resources, constraints and support for transfer of skills into the workplace. Unfortunately many training programmes fail to reach their goals because of organisational limitations and conflicts, which could have been solved before training was implemented.

*Individual characteristics* that the trainee brings to the training environment have a large influence on the learning that takes place. Those with high mental ability (all other things being equal) are likely to learn more and succeed in training. However many jobs have requirements that extend beyond cognitive ability for success, and these are the factors managers need to identify to select suitable training.

It is well established for example that a sense of self-belief enhances learning outcomes and performance, it also influences a number of personal variables, including job satisfaction,

organisational commitment, the relationship between learning and conscientiousness, and the probability of implementing training technology.

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## LifeLine Corporate Training Courses:

LifeLine Corporate can assist you with your training requirements and offers the following training workshops:

- Listening and Communication Skills
- Assertiveness and Conflict Management
- Dealing with Difficult Clients
- Team building
- Stress management
- Facilitating Skills
- Counselling Skills
- Trauma Debriefing Skills
- HIV/AIDS training and awareness

To learn more about LifeLine Corporate visit <http://www.lifelinejhb.org.za/> or e-mail Candice at [candice@lifelinejhb.org.za](mailto:candice@lifelinejhb.org.za)

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

“There are people who, instead of listening to what is being said to them, are already listening to what they are going to say themselves.” - *Albert Guinon (1863-1923)*

“Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress. - *Mahatma Gandhi*

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## NEXT ISSUE: FEBRUARY 2015

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