DEVELOPMENT OF THE

VOLUNTEER WORKER

Led by John Burrows, Human Resource Development

Delegates were led through an "experiential learning exercise" which highlighted issues relevant to the management of our volunteer work-forces.

The conference delegates were divided into 14 groups each of 6-7 people. The groups were as follows:

1.		2.		3.	
	S. Porter		I. Tibbles		R. Paul
	J. Stichbury		B. Mann		L. Stewart
	C. Simmonds		T. Pointon		K. Henderson
	F. Rowlands		P. Heighton		D. Hinman
	A. Campbell		A. Rockcliff		J. Radcliffe
	R. Taylor		G. Allen		B. Kingsley
4.		5.		6.	
	C. Dean		P. Hyde		J. Pointon
	L. Richardson		K. Stodden		A. Mitchell
	J. Shanks		C. Tooke		R. Brown
	R. Gilbert		B. King		A. Spooner
	D. Campbell		K. Kings		D. Cumming
	J. Shaw		R. Jones		B. Tibbles
7.		8.		9.	
	C. Bachop		I. Cranston		R. Scott
	J. Savage		R. Brown		P. McCallum
	N. Meek		G. Trim		M. Austin
	J. Clayton		C. Northover		G. Murrell
	B. Serle		G. Summers		B. Peacock
	B. Ollerenshaw		L. Nyman		T. Borchers
10.		11.		12.	
	F. Doherty		K. Parker		T. Day
	I. Stewart		M. Grant		J. Brewerton
	D. O"Hoy		R. Gray		M. Moller
	B. Shakes		A. Cody		D. Filgate
	L. Day		N. Blackmore		M. Skinner
	C. Jacobsen		B. Worthington		S. Parker

13.	G. Richardson	14.	D. Bell
	C. Andrews		W. Day
	B. Gamble		D. Parkes
	A. Roi		J. Nyman
	L. Millar		B. Merchant
	M. Sanders		J. Phillips

In his opening comments, John Burrows pondered why people might be drawn to our sort of organisation. He raised the question of his son's car - a VW - and asked delegates what were its characteristics. It was suggested they were:

- Slow
- Noisy
- Smelly
- Unstable

but that these qualities were more than outweighed by positive qualities:

- Reliable
- Has character
- Durable

Our organisations are based on empathy with machinery - however John asked us to concentrate in this session on the "human machinery" - (the voluntary worker - our VW!) and how to keep it "well oiled".

A good starting point was to draw on and share the collective experience of the group. (With more than 80 delegates participating and, on average, probably 10 years experience to draw on probably 800+ man-years of knowledge was available)

Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions

Delegates were asked to consider the following statement:

Personally your involvement in the pursuit of your interest will have given you "satisfactions" - what are they? - the "highs"

and also disappointments or dissatisfactions - what are they - the "lows"

Each delegate wrote a list of own highs and lows and a group discussion was held in an endeavour to rank the most important. The most important satisfactions were:

- Challenge
- Team Effort (producing result)
- Friendship/Fellowship
- Team Work
- Realisation of a Goal
- Satisfied Customers (lots of loot!)
- Relaxation
- Part of Decision Making
- Support of Spouse
- Obsessions fulfilled
- Learning new skills
- Planning for the future
- Emotional impact of achieving
- Public Recognition

Important dissatisfactions were:

- Personality clashes
- Lack of Human Resources
- Factionalism
- Negative attitudes
- Establishing new members
- Frustration
- Lack of communication
- Lack of priority
- Lack of skills
- Unwillingness to accept standards
- Lack of recognition
- Dishonesty
- Skills not being called upon
- Inconsideration
- Too many chiefs

John made the point that if the above are the important things to the delegates they are most likely to be important to our volunteer workers.

Quality of Decision

$$Q \quad x \quad A \quad = \quad ED$$

Quality of Decision	Acceptance by those actioning the Decision	Effective Decision

Three situations were proposed:

1. I'm an experienced leader and I tell the team what to do.

$$Q = 8 \text{ (out of 10)}$$
$$A = 1 \text{ (out of 10)}$$
$$ED = 8$$

Typically: Decision Time |----|

Implementation Time |----------------|

2. I'm an experienced leader and I involve the team in coming to the decision.

$$Q = 8 \text{ (out of 10)}$$
$$A = 8 \text{ (out of 10)}$$
$$ED = 64$$

Typically: Decision Time |--------|

Implementation Time |----|

3. I have a damn good idea and I dictate that it be done.

$$Q = 9 \text{ (out of 10)}$$
$$A = 0 \text{ (or negative)}$$
$$ED = 0 \text{ (or negative)}$$

i.e. the job never gets done

Typically the total time involved in decision making and implementation is typically minimised in situation 2 above.

Desert Survival Exercise

Delegates took part in a major team exercise entitled *Desert Survival* The exercise require each individual, and later each team, to determine which items in a given list were the most essential for survival in an American desert. The exercise was designed to demonstrate the differences in quality of decision between an individual's decision making process and that of a team.

In the team debriefing after the exercise John stressed the importance of identifying:

- The problem i.e. biggest problem - dehydration

- The objective i.e. survival

- The best strategy i.e. get found

John raised the idea that team work provides the opportunity for SYNERGY - that is, that the total output of the team will be greater than the sum of the individuals' outputs alone.

Teams, he said, can do it better provided they have:

- Task Skills (they share or pool their knowledge of the task)

- People Skills

For the record, the team results in the Desert Survival exercise were:

Team		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Average individual	57	60	58	56	64	70	Not recorded	
Team result	42	48	38	40	54	50	?	
Gain	15	12	20	16	10	20		
Best	44	50	34	41	33	60		
Number Better	0	0	1	0	1	0		

Team	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Average individual	49	70	68	69	57	68	51
Team result	26	62	58	38	40	52	46
Gain	23	8	10	31	17	16	5
Best	31	52	53	54	32	42	38
Number Better	0	2	1	0	1	2	1

Training and Induction

An important issue is "how do we get to train and induct the new volunteer worker?"

> Sometimes attendance is sporadic.
> Sometimes repeat training is needed.
> Sometimes the "trainer" would rather be "doing".

There is a lot of knowledge about this locked up in our 'collective brain'. So here is our task. Blank cards were handed out and delegates were asked to record their ideas, one per card, on:

"How can we effectively induct and train the new voluntary worker?"

The cards were collected, shuffled and dealt out to the teams. The teams' job was to sort and prioritise the ideas and report back on those ideas considered to be most important by the team.

Important requirements for effective induction and training of new voluntary workers.

- Inform (about the facility, it's history)
- Introduction (aims, objectives, people)
- Encourage by involving
- Develop personal relationship
- Immediate involvement
- Avoid cliques
- On-going involvement
- 'Buddy' system - training
- Determine skills/abilities/needs/wants (i.e. interests)
- Encouragement and thanks
- Involvement in social activities
- Morale (of the whole place)
- Diplomacy and tact
- Provide a chance for fulfilment

Conclusion

The voluntary worker will respond if we understand and act upon what switches him or her on or off. We should think of our own "satisfactions" and "dissatisfactions", use team work and team knowledge to solve problems and to create the right climate to motivate the voluntary worker.