

## New Shoots

Welcome to the second newsletter from Conker Consulting.

**W**elcome to this second newsletter from Conker Consulting. We were delighted by the response to our first edition and hope you'll find this one just as informative. Our circulation list has increased since the autumn so we would particularly like to welcome new readers and introduce ourselves as a personnel training and development consultancy specialising in small businesses and the voluntary sector. For more information about our services and examples of some of our recent projects visit our website at [www.conkerconsulting.co.uk](http://www.conkerconsulting.co.uk).

This is our third year in business and we are pleased to report steady progress. The new branding has been well received and our marketing initiatives are beginning to pay off. Awareness is increasing through advertising on the Best of Ealing website and in the Haven Green Directory, through the website

and our BNI membership. Our specially designed Christmas card was a great hit.

Our growing client list includes small businesses, business support organisations, voluntary bodies and local authorities. We've undertaken a varied and stimulating range of projects which include training, facilitation, personnel policy development and managing volunteer schemes.

One notable success was the action day which Rosanna organised for the Park Royal Partnership last autumn. Set some challenging targets she recruited twice as many companies and almost three times as many projects as she had been asked to deliver. Personnel from 16 organisations enhanced their team working, project management and leadership skills and 18 community projects benefited from getting done those jobs for which labour costs would have been a prohibiting factor.

As one of the participants said, "The benefits of employee volunteering are immeasurable - it's the ripple effect that cannot be monitored or evaluated that has the greatest effect."

Rosanna has set some challenging targets for Conker Consulting in 2007. She is keen to help more small companies professionalise their HR practices and is looking for businesses in need of a policy review or a new staff handbook. She is also keen to develop her growing reputation as 'the bridge' creating mutually beneficial partnerships between businesses and the voluntary sector. Call Rosanna on **07961 134 033** to discuss how she could help you.

As always Rosanna is keen to hear from you. Give her a call to share your ideas, opinions or queries or email her at [info@conkerconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@conkerconsulting.co.uk).

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## Making the most of an away day

**R**osanna was recently asked to facilitate a strategic away day for the Sick Children's Trust.

The aim was to develop a framework for a three year business plan.

The event brought together 25 personnel from all over the UK. Participants included care home managers, administrators and the charity's trustees. Each group came with

a different perspective and needs. Rosanna's challenge was to bring the team together in a way which would allow every voice to be heard whilst making progress on the business plan. It was important that people from all parts of the organisation understood each other's needs and perspectives therefore identifying how they could be mutually supportive.

Rosanna achieved this through a carefully thought out programme of activities which allowed individuals to combine in a way which gave them a broader view of the organisation. Feedback was extremely positive, as Claudette Watson, Chief Executive said, "Hiring Rosanna was a great decision as she helped us achieve a lot of groundwork to go forward to create our new plan."

Hiring an external facilitator for a strategic away day can help to keep participants focussed and moving ahead on the task without letting day to day issues get in the way. Talk to Rosanna to see how she could help you to get the most from your away day, call **07961 134 033**.





This column is a regular feature in our newsletter and we welcome your questions.

Email your personnel or development queries to [info@conkerconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@conkerconsulting.co.uk). We'll give you an answer and include the best questions in future newsletters.



**I'm thinking of introducing an employee volunteering scheme, is it a good idea and what do I need to think about?**



Yes it's an excellent idea as these schemes have been proved to aid staff development and retention. Employee volunteering is not a nice to have but a priority for all organisations large and small. A scheme will promote you as a responsible and caring organisation and allows you and your employee to put something back into the community. The first thing you need to do is decide your objectives for the scheme. We'll be delighted to offer you a free half hour to get you started, call Rosanna on 07961 134 033. If you have a question email it to [info@conkerconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@conkerconsulting.co.uk)

### DID YOU KNOW?

During the two World Wars children were recruited to collect conkers which were then used in the manufacture of explosives.



Conker Consulting contact details:

Telephone:

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# The Small Business Personnel Department



Employing staff is a major commitment for any business. In our experience many small businesses are fully aware of the financial commitments but less aware of their other obligations.

For example every employee is entitled to a written contract of employment within eight weeks of starting work. Do you know what should be in that contract of employment?

One of the things you'll need to explain is the grievance and disciplinary procedure but do you have one? You'll also need to think about holiday and other leave entitlements, hours of work and health and safety requirements. Do you have these policies and procedures in place?

It's important to plan how you will train your new employee. You'll need to cover health and safety, security, who's who as well as all the things the job entails. Find some tasks that your new recruit can do in the early days; this helps build confidence and a sense of belonging.

Your business may not yet need a personnel specialist but you do still need to meet your legal obligations. If you would rather spend time growing your business then Conker Consulting can design systems and write procedures which will meet the changing needs of your business at a very cost effective price. We can also help you to plan a training programme that will quickly bring your new employee up to speed. Give Rosanna a call on 07961 134 033 to see how she can help and if you already employ people who don't have a contract you'd better call NOW!

## Training for the voluntary Sector

Rosanna has developed four interactive, fun workshops specifically for the voluntary sector. These are

- Increasing your resources
- Building successful business partnerships
- Practical project management.
- Annual report writing



For more information take a look at our online brochure at [www.conkerconsulting.co.uk](http://www.conkerconsulting.co.uk).

Rosanna's workshops are always practical. She particularly enjoys it when her 'students' get that light bulb moment that sends them off to bigger and better achievements. One recent delegate described her training as 'inspiring and motivating'.

To find out how you and your team could be inspired and motivated take a look at the brochure or call Rosanna on **07961 134 033**.

## and finally...

Hopefully the winter colds and flu are almost behind us and we can look forward to summer, or can we? Are your staff tempted to throw a 'sickie' on the first day of warm sunshine? Do they all want to take the school holidays off? Managing staff absence can be a tricky business so it is a good idea to have an absence management policy in place before you hit problems. Rosanna can help, call her on 07961 134 033.

