Brilliant Minds
Training & Development

IT Business Relationship Management Team Development

at Jaguar Land Rover

JAGUAR

LAND ROVER

By Dianne Lowther

"The UK's Leading Strategist on Engaging the Profitable Brainpower of Your IT Professionals"

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info@brilliantminds.co.uk

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Executive sponsor of the project

Nathan Summers,
IT Business Relationship Director,
Jaguar Land Rover

Summary

Over a period of two years Brilliant Minds has delivered an NLP-based development programme to IT Business Relationship Managers and other key IT staff at Jaguar Land Rover, aimed at supporting a transition in culture and role. It's hard to quantify the value of a project like this, but we've had very positive feedback from both the course participants and the senior sponsors of the programme.

Nathan Summers, IT Business Relationship Director at Jaguar Land Rover, made a presentation of this case study in September 2012. Some of the graphics are from that presentation (and used with permission).

Overall, the target audience has shown a marked increase in interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence. We've engaged a largely technical group of people in learning about the essential people skills needed to develop their role and deliver what the business needs.

"Brilliant Minds wouldn't be the company it is today without the team of people who work with me.

My team of Associate Partners offer training and coaching in areas that match or complement my specialities in Business Leadership and NLP."

Dianne Lowther,
Brilliant Minds

Background

I was first approached by the Organisation Development Department of Jaguar Land Rover in May 2010. The IT department had recently finished separating the JLR systems from Ford following the sale of the company to Indian conglomerate TATA. It had become clear that it was time for major change…

- The transfer of ownership of JLR from Ford to TATA meant the transfer of over 1000 IT applications previously managed and supported by Ford onto an independent platform.
- This created the opportunity for the IT function to take advantage of new IT initiatives and sources of solutions to provide an efficient and cost effective IT organisation.
- In line with this, the role of IT professionals in JLR was moving away from a reactive customer service operation and towards a Business Partnering model.
- IT Business Relationship Managers were very experienced in the technology and in JLR but the shift in emphasis of their role had highlighted the need for new skills to take control of their relationships with the business and influence IT strategy and decision-making.

Reasons for undertaking the training

The Business Relationship team within IT at Jaguar Land Rover were the focus of attention because their role had changed dramatically. Under Ford, they were simply taking orders from the business to pass over to the development team. Under TATA they have an opportunity to contribute to strategy and to the choice of solutions.

This represents a huge shift of mindset as well as requiring a different set of skills. I think it's fair to say that the new Business Relationship role was viewed with some trepidation by a lot of the members of the team.

Nathan made it very clear to his team - the job of technology is purely to enable JLR to do whatever it wants to do with the right technology. It sounds obvious. But it wasn't always the case in the past.

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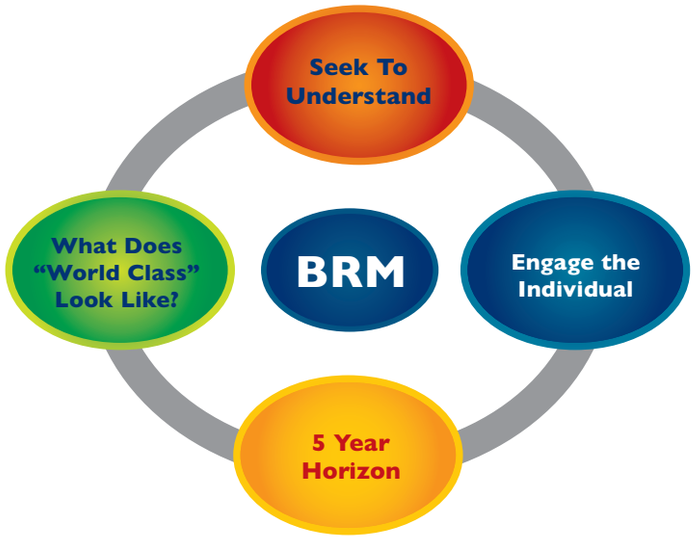
Department structure

The four functions within IT are:
- Business Relationship Management
- Chief Technologist Office (CTO)
- Project Delivery
- Service Delivery

The Business Relationship team need to understand what the business is trying to do. Their job is to listen, empathise with the business and think about what technology might be needed to run HR, manufacturing, engineering, or whichever department they are working with.

BRM role

Nathan Summers, as Business Relationship Director, identified four main areas of skill which are shown in the diagram:



- **'seek to understand'**:
  listen to the person's objectives, what challenges he has, what world is he living in, what is he trying to do;
- **'engage the individual'**:
  understand and empathise with the person;
- **'5 year horizon'**:
  think a bit more strategically about what Technology is going to do to enable that person to succeed;
- **'what does World Class look like?'**:
  have a point of view that enables the right strategic thinking and commissions appropriate projects.

In introducing this as a core set of competences in the BRM function, Nathan recognised that in at least two of those areas people cannot succeed unless they understand human beings and why they behave in the way that they behave. And that's not just other people: self-awareness and regular self-assessment are just as important.

To recap…

In summary, the purpose of the programme was to equip IT Business Relationship Managers with the skills, confidence and motivation to shift their style of interaction with the business from service provision to true business partnering.

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Objectives

Nathan talked with his team about **putting the science into relationships.** It is important that they, as an IT function, empathise and do their best to understand what the other people are trying to do and make sure that they've got what they need. But if they're also going to be able to share a point of view, and contribute to the strategic plans of different parts of the business, they need to have strong relationships with those individuals.

The original brief for the training focused on three areas:

Mindset

- Be able to confidently approach customers and suppliers
- See it as the primary role of the job to be proactively dealing with customers and suppliers
- Be able to achieve the 'right' mindset before starting

Influencing

- Understand the psychology of influence
- Be able to build relationships with a variety of personality types in a variety of situations
- Understand how to vary their approach based upon the responses they are getting
- Be able to spot changes in the flow of the conversation and adapt style accordingly
- Understand the concept of long term influencing strategies versus short term negotiation strategies
- Be able to deal with difficult behaviour to get positive results

Negotiation

- Recognise the opportunity to negotiate
- Be able to spot when a negotiation situation is arising and be able to respond accordingly
- Be able to demonstrate how the negotiation process works and how to use it
- Be able to challenge whilst maintaining relationship
- Control the balance of power
- Negotiate from a position of weakness when necessary
- Listen and respond to what is going on in the room

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Why Brilliant Minds?

There was an excellent 'fit' between the development needed by the BRMs and the skills, experience and expertise that Brilliant Minds offers.

1. We specialise in NLP for Business Leaders. Dianne Lowther is a Certified Master Trainer of NLP and has 20 years' experience of using NLP at senior level in business. As a team we have developed a credible approach to 'soft' skills that works extremely well with technical professionals and the leaders who work with them.

2. We have lots of relevant experience, working with IT Professionals at Microsoft, HP, SAP, Sun Microsystems and RBS Group Technology.

3. We've also done Business Partner training at DB Schenker Rail and Sheffield City Council.

4. We have experience in the Automotive Industry with the Leadership team at Schaeffler (UK) Ltd and work for Mercedes-Benz and VW Commercial.

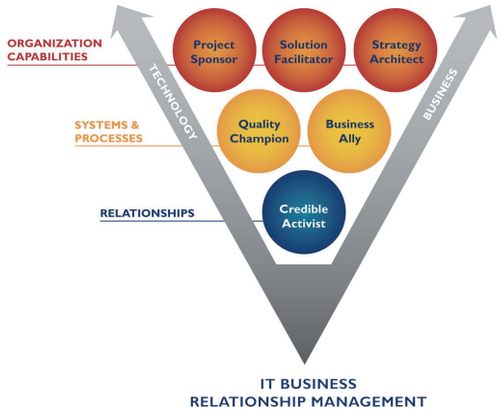
5. We're also local to JLR's base in Warwickshire!

The Development Programme

The competency model

Using the SFIA standards, David Ulrich's model of HR Business Partner competencies and other relevant material, I created the framework of skills and competencies that was used throughout the development process as a guide for individuals to identify needs and progress.

The graphic was created to summarise the essential areas of skill and activity.



Initial assessment

Each participant completed the 'Thinking Styles' personality profile and received a full report of their profile.

Intensive Workshop

The 4-day intensive programme was based on our 'Business Class NLP' programme and tailored to the competency model. It includes the 'best bits' of NLP Practitioner training and is full of ready-to-apply ideas. Specific content includes:

- Results focus
- Impact and influence
- Communications
- Understanding others
- Negotiation
- Managing energy and motivation
- Facilitating decision-making

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The style of delivery involves practical, hands-on experience of trying out new techniques, feedback and coaching from trainer(s) and testing of models as well as input from the trainer(s) and group discussions.

All of the techniques learned were applied to the participants' development agenda in relation to the Business Partner role. Many of the exercises were conducted as co-coaching experiences so that participants not only gained the benefit of the interventions but also acquired coaching skills that are relevant to the Business Partner role. There were reflective exercises to do between days of the programme to ensure that learning was used and applied.

At the end of the workshop we matched each participant with one of our team of experienced Executive Coaches.

Everybody came off the course saying very good things about it.

In particular, participants commented on learning techniques that were relevant to enable them to have well-formed and well-structured meetings; to be able to understand different types of individual; to be able to think about situations from a third person perspective, so that you can recognise what's going on between your conversation and someone else's conversation, and start to dissect it and realise what impact your behaviour is having on the other person's behaviour, and so on.

Interim assessment

After the workshop we ask participants to self-assess in relation to the competency model and bring their findings to an initial meeting with their coach. Each coach also provided feedback and observations from the workshop to help create a development agenda for coaching.

Coaching

Each participant had 3 coaching sessions of 2-3 hours, scheduled to suit their individual agenda during the 3 months after the workshop. The sessions were completely confidential, no reports were made of the discussions or the issues addressed. The experience of the 4-day workshop is a big part of the success of the coaching because the participants had already begun to have a different view of their own potential and what was possible in their business relationships.

The coaching was an opportunity to go through specific examples and apply the NLP techniques to things that individuals were struggling with and perhaps didn't want to discuss in the workshop in front of their colleagues.

Nathan sometimes used the term 'crossing the Rubicon'. Once people start to understand NLP, they can't really go back. There are things that you can learn about human behaviour that you can't unlearn.

It's incredibly powerful for participants to have put those things into real context with real examples. Some people said the coaching sessions were 'life-changing'. Everyone agreed they were very, very valuable.

Review Day

Three months after the workshop participants were invited to complete the 'Thinking Styles' profile again and to re-visit the competency model. Then there was a Review Day where the group came back together and shared their experiences of applying the skills, the results they had achieved and the personal benefits they had discovered.

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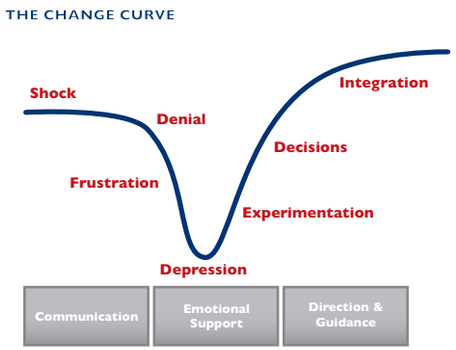
Results

Discussing the results with Nathan later, he highlighted several important areas of learning for the team: your point of view is just your point of view and that what goes on in your mind is only what's going on in your mind; that the effectiveness of communication is only measurable by the way it is received, rather than the way that you give it.



Not only did this help the BRM team in those conversations with their colleagues in other parts of the business, but it also helped them move through a really difficult change curve.

Within the IT function there was a drive to completely transform the way in which people were operating. They had quite aggressively pushed almost all of the team through this change curve - straight down through Shock and into Denial at speed.

The result was some wallowing around for almost a year trying to get up the other side. At the time of writing there are some shoots that show that people are starting to get to the other side and really operate in the mould described earlier.

Coming out of that difficult time there was a realisation that not only did the work the BRM team did with Brilliant Minds help them build relationships with the people in the business, but it also helped them understand what was happening to them as they struggled through that change curve.

Nathan knew that as a leader in that function, unless he was really taking the time to understand the individuals and the way in which they learn, and develop and engage with different people, he could have left a lot of them behind.

Building that level of adaptability and self-awareness to understand how different minds work and understand how to get different people through that change curve meant that even internally within the function the training had been useful.

...and finally

Competence	% of participants reporting an improvement
Influencing	80
Listening	50
Focus	50
Tough conversations	50
Prioritisation	60
Knowledge of business strategy and priorities	50
Negotiation solutions	50
Communication between stakeholders	50

Nathan's remarks likening this programme to 'crossing the Rubicon' were borne out in the assessment of participants. Many people told us they had had a real shift in the way they think about their role, their colleagues and their own capabilities – and that there is no going back!

The feedback given by people who participated in the programme highlighted several main areas of benefit:

Understanding the Role: The process of reviewing capabilities, behaviours and aspirations gave individuals insight into how they needed to change to meet the demands of being in the transformed BRM community.

Changing Behaviour: The clarity about their role led to increased confidence in actually doing it. Several participants talked about becoming more proactive, more visible and also managing people's expectations more effectively and with more confidence. One specifically mentioned managing the politics – something he had previously tried to avoid or ignore.

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Better Relationships: One participant reported that his business customer no longer regarded IT as his least favourite department! Many commented on improved working relationships and also personal relationships, which some attributed to better listening skills.

The Experience: There was a lot of enthusiastic comment about how enjoyable the course had been, how useful, and how much had 'stuck' some months after the programme. Several people commented on how useful the coaching had been in learning to use and apply what they covered in the workshop.

Overall, the target audience has shown a marked increase in interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence. We've engaged a largely technical group of people in learning about the essential people skills needed to develop their role and deliver what the business needs.

Brilliant Minds Profile

The Focus

Working with you and your Intelligent Introverts to find their voice in the business and engage with the overall commercial strategy. Using NLP and other psychological models to create a systematic approach to leadership, business partnering and professional impact.

Through a combination of workshops, confidential coaching, profiling and assessment, people are equipped with practical tools to contribute to a team, influence others and achieve results.

Why use Brilliant Minds?

Because we know our audience, there's no fluffy stuff, no hype and no role-playing in our workshops. It's all about finding practical ways to create authentic professional relationships and high quality work.

You benefit from relevant experience and industry knowledge we gained working with technology, engineering, science and manufacturing businesses or the IT departments within other organisations.

You can be confident that every person in the Brilliant Minds team is dedicated to high standards. We continually develop our own skills and share our expertise with our clients.

At the 2009 National Training Awards, Brilliant Minds won a Welsh Training Award for Partnership and Collaboration with Schaeffler (UK) Ltd on an NLP Practitioner programme for the leadership team that enabled significant improvement in business results.

Developing a programme that meets your needs and delivers clear ROI is our top priority.

National Training Awards
Wales Winner 2009

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What it costs

Depending on the size of project, our prices range from modest to 'reassuringly expensive'. When we work with you, a price is quoted to do the job. That removes the need to come back to the negotiating table every time you need another meeting or a follow-up session with course participants.

Because we only work with a limited number of select clients at any one time, we can be available to you for ad hoc meetings, problem-solving, sponsor management or a social event. It's all included in the price.

A Selection of Comments from Our Clients

"The programme that Brilliant Minds ran for us combined significant personal development for the HR managers and taught us practical techniques to use with others. The learning transfer has been immediate and real added value is being demonstrated."

Clare Hannah
Head of Organisation Development, DB Schenker Rail (UK) Ltd

"In my field I see a lot of trainers/consultants/coaches and most of them are ok and do an ok job. Dianne Lowther however is rare - she focuses on you and your results and ensuring that you are left performing to the right level - that is the level you set yourself. She partners with you, helps you along the way, challenges you to think and act differently and ensures that you transition new ways of working into your normal everyday being. She has a sound business understanding and a very calm professional manner. I can highly recommend the work that she does."

Karen Bailey Chartered FCIPD
Head of Competence Development at Volvo Trucks

"Best course ever – by a mile"

Richard Wiseman
IT Project and Programme Manager, RBS

"Having gone through the NLP Practitioner course, speaking personally, it's really, really helped me in these difficult times because it's given me tools and techniques to cope with the stresses and strains that the economic downturn has created for us. Without it, this would be a more difficult situation to manage. And I think this goes for other people on the course too."

Roger Evans
Plant Director at Schaeffler (UK) Ltd

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Contact Brilliant Minds:

You can contact Brilliant Minds on:

info@brilliantminds.co.uk

www.brilliantminds.co.uk

9 780957 292208

Price: £4.99