

# BackStage



All the latest from CentreStage Partnership - Summer 2009

## Leading by Example

Award-winning Lane4 and the key to great leadership

CentreStage continues to support leading consultancy, Lane4, on development programmes for some of the UK's biggest organisations.

The Bourne End-based firm, which has offices in Europe, the US and Australia, recently finished tenth in the survey for the Sunday Times 100 Best Small Companies to Work For. Staff at Lane4 ranked the company particularly strongly in the areas of personal growth and the valuable experience they gain for the future, and they regard their jobs as both interesting and good for their own development.

Not only that, Adrian Moorhouse, the 1988 Olympic breaststroke gold medal-winning swimmer and Managing Director of Lane4, won a special



Adrian Moorhouse

award for leadership. And what makes him a great leader in the eyes of his staff? First of all, they have great faith in him, and agree that the business is run on strong values. And crucially, senior managers listen, as do managers at other levels.

That's a fairly credible position from which to help businesses get the best out of their employees, an area where Lane4 continues to excel.

Over the past six months, CentreStage has provided roleplay for development workshops run by Lane4 for Lego UK and British Gas, designed to explore some of the key skills of leadership such as rapport building, coaching, handling conflict and giving feedback.

Lane4 is a professional services firm working in the fields of organisational performance, leadership development and executive coaching. With a unique heritage drawn from elite sporting and commercial achievement, Lane4's consultants help businesses to excel through the engagement and development of their people. The company has offices in Europe, US and Asia Pacific and work with business and HR leaders to improve organisational performance.  
[www.lane4performance.com](http://www.lane4performance.com)

The winner of the Sunday Times Best 100 Small companies to Work For poll was Christians Against Poverty, a debt counselling charity which scored highly in the areas of pride of and passion for the work and, like Lane4, leadership. Staff at Christians Against Poverty find the leadership, headed by Chief Executive Matt Barlow, inspiring. Apparently, Barlow spends time in each department on a regular basis and socialises with his teams too. In fact, all new staff members are invited to his home for a welcome meal. See our interview on page three to meet another Chief Executive who believes in spending time talking to staff.

## African Adventure



Scott Chambers - Managing Director of 3gHR - with CentreStage directors Gerri Farrell and Julian Hirst

CentreStage's ongoing work for Oracle included a foray into North Africa this year with a workshop in Egypt. Designed and delivered by Reading-based 3gHR for managers based at the Cairo headquarters, the workshop explored performance management and the techniques needed to hold difficult conversations. A highly successful day proved that whether in London or Cairo, a manager faces very similar challenges.

Oracle's Cairo offices are located at the newly developed 'Future Park', which despite being at the edge of the Sahara Desert, boasts hundreds of acres of fresh green grass. And that takes some watering!

3gHR's business is about 'appreciating people', applying a deep understanding of the dynamics of individuals and teams to design and deliver high impact interventions which fully engage people in achieving significant and sustainable results. [www.3ghr.com](http://www.3ghr.com)

# News

## Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Business Lunch

CentreStage director Julian Hirst appeared as guest speaker at the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce networking lunch in March, discussing ways to delight customers by exceeding their expectations.

Good customer service is vital to the success of any organisation. In these days of smaller profit margin and credit crunch, the level of service we provide to our customers is often the only thing that differentiates us from our competitors. As everyone knows a customer who feels good doing business with you is more than likely to stay with you and recommend you to others. Yet why is it that many organisations in the UK have turned bad service into an art form?!

Julian explored the subject of customer care using examples of CentreStage's work with The Royal Garden Hotel, the Royal College of Music and A2 Housing.

TVCC's business lunches are the ideal opportunity to build the profile of your company and to build new business relationships.

[www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk](http://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk)

## Hampshire Community Health Care

The leadership development programme for managers within HCHC, which was developed by Banana Park Consulting and began in 2008, has been extended until 2010, by which time it will have had an estimated five hundred participants. CentreStage provides the Roleplay and Realplay elements for the programme, which has received incredibly positive feedback. For more about HCHC and its investment in staff, read our interview with Katrina Percy on page three.

[www.hchc.nhs.uk](http://www.hchc.nhs.uk)

[www.bananaparkconsulting.com](http://www.bananaparkconsulting.com)

## Arema

CentreStage is working with Andy Maggs at Arema on an ongoing series of workshops for TEVA and Adepta. The programme, based on the Situational Leadership model, uses actors to explore the benefits of adapting management style according to the skills, experience and engagement of the individual being managed.

[www.arema.co.uk](http://www.arema.co.uk)

## Coca Cola Enterprises

CentreStage recently provided the one-to-one roleplay element for a series of workshops for Coca Cola in Wakefield. Our actors took the roles of bottling plant employees with too many sick days to their name, with whom delegates were tasked with handling in return-to-work interviews and disciplinarys. The workshops may be rolled out at depots around the country.

[www.cokecce.co.uk](http://www.cokecce.co.uk)

## HM Revenue & Customs

CentreStage has been involved in the development of two pilot workshops for HM Revenue & Customs. HMRC is striving to put its customers at the heart of its work, to enhance its understanding of customers and develop effective working relationships. Recognising that central to these aims are the attitudes and behaviours of staff, HMRC asked us to help develop a forum theatre scenario involving a tax inspector and the owner of a small business, in which delegates help the inspector establish an effective rapport and understanding of the customer through his verbal and non-verbal behaviours.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) was formed on the 18 April 2005, following the merger of Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise Departments. HMRC ensures the correct tax is paid at the right time, whether this relates to payment of taxes received by the department or entitlement to benefits paid.

[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

## Visit Us Online



If you want to know more about what we do, how we do it, who with, where and why, there's a whole load of information at [www.centrestage-roleplay.com](http://www.centrestage-roleplay.com), as well as our latest news, testimonials and a demo video to boot!

This newsletter is also available to download, so if you would rather receive it via email than by post, just let us know.

# The Age of Twitter

Love it or hate it, Twitter is transforming the way individuals and organisations network and exchange information. What with Stephen Fry, Downing Street and BBC World broadcasting the latest events, thoughts and pearls of wisdom every few seconds, it is on the one hand a dynamic stream of news and consciousness. But it's also your voice on the net, a virtual sandwich board that you can update whenever the mood takes you (Unlike a sandwich board of course, it doesn't weigh half a ton or smell of fish).

Some would say that Twitter takes the notion of information-sharing too far, that our need to stay in touch with the rest of the world is merely a symptom of the sense of being increasingly cut off from it. But if you look beyond the potential philosophical causes and implications, it's actually a brilliant way of keeping in touch with like-minded businesses, exchanging ideas and discovering new business opportunities.

So we're now on Twitter, and if you want to Twitter us, simply go to <http://twitter.com/CentreStageRP> or go to [twitter.com](http://twitter.com) and search for CentreStageRP. That's us! Maybe see you there.

# The Shows Must Go On

Although busier than ever roleplay wise, we at Centrestage continue to do our utmost to keep in touch with our theatrical roots. Following Mark's recent appearance as Macduff in 'The Scottish Play' (it's unlucky to say *Macbeth* in the acting world - darn, just said it), Julian is currently directing *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* by Jim Cartwright (Pinewood Theatre, Crowthorne 23rd -27th June). The original stage play was made into a film starring Jane Horrocks & Michael Caine. The show stars Gerri Farrell as the outspoken, outlandish and often abusive mother Mari. Full details at [www.ebos.org.uk](http://www.ebos.org.uk). Other productions with Centrestage involvement include, in July and August, Pippa in *Slugs Chips and Peas* and *Beetle Bruce* at Royal Parks throughout London, Julian in the role of Peter Quince for an open air production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to be performed in a replica of The Globe Theatre in Windsor during July - [www.windsorglobe.com](http://www.windsorglobe.com) - and Adrian in *There Goes the Bride*, a wildly improbable and joyfully dotty feast of laughter by English farce-masters Ray Cooney & John Chapman, also in July - [www.wokinghamtheatre.org.uk](http://www.wokinghamtheatre.org.uk). What a busy lot we are!

# In the Spotlight



Katrina Percy

Hampshire Community Health Care (HCHC), part of Hampshire Primary Care Trust, is one of the largest PCT provider arms in the country with a turnover of £135m and approximately 3500 staff. HCHC's main business can be summarised in one sentence – 'bringing health care home'. Many of its services help people stay independent in their own homes, help reduce unnecessary admissions to large hospitals, provide support for patients after major operations and to children and their families.

Katrina Percy is the Chief Executive of HCHC, and since joining the health service as a management trainee, she has worked across all sectors of the NHS as well as internationally. Her roles have included Chief Operating Officer and Divisional Manager in an acute trust, Strategy Lead for a Strategic Health Authority and Director of a hospital in Tanzania. Throughout her career, Katrina has delivered significant financial, performance and clinical turnaround and transformations. Since mid-2008 CentreStage has been supporting Banana Park Consulting with an ongoing development programme for over five hundred managers within HCHC by providing the roleplay and forum theatre elements of the course. Adrian McDougall spoke to Katrina about the challenges facing HCHC, her own role and the changing face of 21<sup>st</sup> Century health care.

## As a chief executive how do you spend your time?

I spend a third of my time working outside the organisation with various stake holder groups, for example GPs, acute trusts and commissioners, a third with frontline staff within the organisation giving talks, shadowing and attending briefing sessions, and a third with my direct reports, working on moving the organisation forward.

## That's a lot of time with front line staff, isn't it?

Yes, I think you have to with a community organisation like HCHC, where so often staff work on their own and in small groups in the community, actually in people's homes. But regardless of that, I like to spend time with my staff and I want to know what they do.

## What benefits do you get from talking to people on the front line?

It works both ways. Firstly I get a better idea of their jobs and what they think they can do to improve services and undo blocks to progress. So that informs me and enables me to move ideas forward. But they also hear me talking about my vision for the future and asking for their input. And that helps them buy in to that vision. The other big thing is around cultural change. Part of that is people hearing from me directly about the behaviours I want them to adopt. I worry otherwise about Chinese whispers and messages getting lost. I shouldn't be perceived as a grey suit in an ivory tower. They should know they can communicate with me direct. And meeting with my staff is the most enjoyable part of my job. I find it very rewarding when I go out and get a better understanding of what they do.

## You mentioned behaviours. How important are behaviours in HCHC?

As important as clinical tasks and clinical quality. I would say 95% of the complaints we receive are about behaviours and communication. And that all ties into the culture change I want to bring about. It's about turning the decision-making triangle upside down. So while my predecessors ultimately made all the decisions, my belief is that it should be the other way round. My role is to be clear about what the outcomes and guidelines are, but my staff should know they're in the best position to make decisions.

## So what does that look like in terms of behaviours?

The biggest thing is putting the patient at the heart of everything we do, not the convenience of

staff. I want to see people challenging themselves and the way they work to offer value for money, to make changes so they can offer the very best patient care and not do things just because 'that's how we've always done it'. I don't want staff saying 'that's not my job'. I want them to take responsibility and oversee solutions to challenges. For example, if we're faced with a ten week waiting list, I don't want to hear that we can't do anything about it. I want individuals to ask themselves how they can deliver better, how they can reduce and eliminate waiting lists, how they can improve costs and service.

Public sector organisations are increasingly being asked to become more commercial and competitive, aren't they? What does that mean for you, and how are you ensuring that HCHC is competitive?

By commercial I mean patient focus, adaptability, flexibility, being paid for what you do, being paid for delivering and being more accountable for the money you spend. If we do those things we will be successful. If not, we won't. We're empowering people to do this through our leadership development programme. It's what we call Service Line Management. We give them a budget and responsibility to deliver, and everything's measured down to team level so teams are accountable and hence more commercial.

You brought in Banana Park to deliver your leadership development programme. Why Banana Park?

I believe they offer a more tailored solution to our environment, and they're very good value for money. Their facilitation skills are the best I've ever seen and their combined backgrounds of psychology, marketing and HR are ideal for us. They engage their audience and they're innovative in how they deliver. They come up with interesting ideas and think creatively about solutions, and everything they do is based on the principle that I share; that by deriving the best performance out of your people, you will make your organisation successful. Also, the feedback is phenomenal. People who've been on the programme speak incredibly highly of the experience. Crucially, too, I have 100% trust that the messages Banana Park are giving to staff through the programme are exactly those I would give, and that they're developing people exactly as I would like. I've put a lot of my own energy into the programme and Banana Park knows where I'm coming from. And it's worth

noting that Banana Park run development programmes at every level in the organisation, from front line up to board level, so the input and the messages are consistent regardless of your level in the organisation. And of course that means everyone has to do roleplay!

Yes, you have firsthand experience of roleplay of course, because CentreStage is supporting Banana Park with the executive development programme. How was it?

Nerve-wracking in the same way it was for others. But it really holds a mirror up. Sometimes you know your own traits but perhaps don't admit them to yourself, and for me roleplay allows me to try things I might not normally try. I'm aware that I don't breathe properly when I talk, and that affects how fast I speak, so at the last executive away day I found myself lying on the floor practising controlling my breathing using my Diaphragm!

Equally roleplay exposes traits we don't know about – around the impact we have on others – and working with CentreStage has given us the opportunity to look at ourselves and get feedback about our impact on those around us.

How has the roleplay element gone down at other levels?

Feedback from other levels has been amazing. The roleplays have given individuals the confidence to address difficult situations and tackle poor performance. And when they've done this, they've realised that the real-life situation isn't as bad as they expected.

Would you say NHS staff tend to avoid conflict then?

Yes, like any public sector organisation. And there are a number of reasons for that. Partly it's the lack of individual accountability within the public sector and the sense that individuals aren't empowered to tackle under-performance. Also the unions are strong and so there's the fear of reprisal. As far as I'm concerned, if you tackle someone who's constantly underperforming and unhappy, you're doing them a favour.

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**"my staff should know they're in the best position to make decisions"**

**"it's the worst possible time to cut spending on L&D. If you do that, you're expecting people to do more with less"**

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## Ever get the feeling the time and money you invest in your people isn't quite hitting the mark?

We believe that a person's development should be many things, but *hit and miss* isn't one of them.

CentreStage is a leading learning and development consultancy based in Ascot, Berkshire. We design and deliver innovative drama-based development solutions that identify and respond to the learning needs and realise the potential of your organisation's most valuable asset: its people. We challenge preconceptions, change moods and inject that all-important sense of fun. We do it using roleplay, forum theatre and other interactive performance techniques.

"What we have to learn to do,  
we learn by doing"

Aristotle

...In the Spotlight continued

You lead a huge organisation with a £135 million turnover. How well do you sleep at night?

I sleep very well. Sleep is never a problem for me. I only feel stressed if I think that as an organisation we're not moving forward fast enough, or if I feel I'm not leading well enough. But no, I don't find sleeping a problem. In fact Richard, my partner, often asks if I'm narcoleptic!

And is HCHC moving forward fast enough?

We're getting there. We've built the foundations but I'm still frustrated as I'm not sure the changes around clinical services are sufficient. However the programme run by Banana Park has really improved communication throughout the

**"95% of the complaints we receive are about behaviours and communication"**

organisation and that's provided the foundations we need.

We're in a recession. Do you spend more or less money on learning and development?

I would never cut our development budget. Development improves morale and therefore productivity, which in turn enables you to take costs out elsewhere. This is the time you should be investing in development. In fact I believe it's the worst possible time to cut spending on L&D. If you do that, you're expecting people to do more with less. What we're doing is fun, which is great for morale, effective and very good value for money. We're not paying for everyone to go to the Henley Regatta or the Windsor Races – What our development programme offers is essential to moving the organisation forward.

What would you do if you didn't work for the NHS?

I'd like to be the Chief Executive of the British Americas Cup sailing team. It's a totally male-dominated environment, which would present a huge challenge, and sailing is my passion. Also, the complexities of that environment suit my leadership skills – team development, developing individuals on the boat, technological development, metrology and the race tactics. I also want the British to win the Americas Cup, to be the best!

Is your goal then for Hampshire to boast the best patient care in the UK?

Not just the best in the UK, the best in the world! I want us to be seen as world class, so people all over the world will want to come to Hampshire for their healthcare. And that's more likely than me ever captaining the British Americas Cup sailing team!

## 3C Associates

### CentreStage and 3C demonstrate the power of drama

CentreStage is teaming up with Henley-on-Thames based development consultancy 3C Associates, using the power of theatre to enhance a whole range of training courses. 3C's latest offering was showcased recently at a seminar at the Henley River & Rowing Museum to a large group of Learning & Development professionals.

Delegates at the seminar watched a short play designed to demonstrate customer service gone wrong. A lady has 30 minutes to board a plane, her ticket has been lost and the check-in assistant she ends up with is off-hand, inept and uncaring. The result is a rather negative, tempestuous encounter from which both protagonists emerge angry and jaded. But then the action is re-wound, the characters start the scene again, only the second time delegates can offer the clueless check-in assistant advice; how to stand, what to say, how to say it and what attitudes to adopt in order to make life easier not only for his customer but for him too.

3C Associates have been using forum theatre to support a number of development programmes on customer care and appraisal skills, but there are many applications for the use of drama, including diversity, performance management, coaching, assessment centres and conflict handling.



Pictured: left to right (front) Gerri Farrell, Carine Cowley (back) Julian Hirst, Hedda Bird, Helen Eades, Mark Holliday

3C Associates is a learning and development consultancy based in Henley-on-Thames, delivering programmes which include management development, customer service skills, consultative sales, telephone sales training, contact centre training and supervisor training, to name a few. 3C has also created the ROI Academy, which focuses on training evaluation, offering tools, processes, consulting, project implementation and open workshops to help customers model, maximise and measure the impact and value of their training.  
[www.3ctraining.co.uk](http://www.3ctraining.co.uk)