



MEDIA RELEASE

Owners put business health at risk from self-diagnosis

Monday December 17, 2012. Founder and principal of international leadership & team building consultancy Kameleons – Developing Leaders, Mr. Michael Peiniger said in times when money is tight and expenditure for staff training is curtailed, business owners could use their training budgets far more effectively if they thought about problems in their business the same way as they did about their own health.

Michael Peiniger said “Part of the problem is that owners and managers often self-diagnose a problem in their business and go straight to the remedy, without often considering what all the symptoms are.”

If you were ill, you might put up with the symptoms for a while in the hope that it will go away over time. But if the illness is serious and the symptoms are ongoing, then you go to your Doctor.

It might seem obvious, but the Doctor doesn’t just hear what you have to say and then prescribe medication. To do their job properly, they ask questions, run some basic tests and confirm their diagnosis with relevant data.

In cases where the illness is more serious, the patient may be referred to a specialist for further tests and analysis.

Peiniger says, “The same applies to business. Managers often self-diagnose a problem and seek the quickest remedy – in many cases without considering all of the symptoms first.”

“The question that should have been asked was *‘what are the behaviours that I need to address and change?’* – not *‘what course will fix the problem?’* With the right diagnosis, the right prognosis and most appropriate remedy will be revealed.”

Finding the right training solution to address a problem is the same as seeking a specialist to diagnose and treat an illness. A specialist training organization can ask the right questions and conduct the correct tests to identify the underlying cause of a problem in the business – not just a symptom.

The Kameleons organisation was recently invited to provide a quote for a 2-day leadership course.

Reflecting on the request, Michael Peiniger said whilst he was happy to submit a training proposal, the most obvious question hadn’t been addressed by the prospective client i.e. *‘What leadership behaviours are the supervisors not currently doing to the required level?’*

Was it implementing strategy, communicating to team members or effective delegation?

Was it time management, not meeting targets or having difficult conversations?

The business owner was asked to first complete Kameleons diagnostic and assessment tool that revealed the main problem was the lack of cohesion between supervisors and the workforce as cause for internal confusion and frustration.

Without the diagnosis, much of the training course would have been wasted addressing a problem that wasn't there, rather than focusing on the core issue.

So how do we avoid this situation? Michael Peiniger suggests 5 steps to avoid self-diagnosis and potential waste of training funds.

1. Focus on the behaviour that needs to be improved rather than the remedy. Put into words what you actually want your staff to do and consider how you will recognize this change.

2. Use the right test, methodology or interview to identify the behaviour that needs to be improved. Just like a good doctor, a professional facilitator or training organisation will correctly identify the problem and prescribe the most appropriate remedy.

3. Ensure the training provider is also focused on the required behaviours improvement. Good training organisations will assess the skill level of staff before training takes place and provide KPIs for the outcomes that are clear, measurable and deliverable.

4. Use the services of the correct specialist. Unfortunately, where the local GP acknowledges their service provision is as a '*generalist*' and refer a patient to a specialist if warranted – many training organisations rarely refer clients to others when they are out of their depth. Businesses should check the credentials, references and testimonials of their training providers.

If other businesses haven't trusted their business health with the provider, why should you?

5. Make sure you feel good at the end of the process. If this was a medical problem you would know when you felt better – when the symptoms stopped. Make sure you apply the same for your business. Have you received a return on investment measured by behaviour and business improvement?

Michael Peiniger concluded, "There is no need for a common cold to turn into business pneumonia because of lack of attention or misdiagnosis. Equally, there is no need for ongoing organisational health problems because of a poorly prescribed training initiative."

"Take the time to understand what you need and research your provider – the health of your business may depend on it."

ENDS

Issued by Kameleons – Developing Leaders www.kameleons.com.au

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