

CASE STUDY

RAF consultants benefit from High Intensity Training Seminars

Today's armed forces face a unique set of demanding and often shifting challenges. Flexibility to deploy rapidly at short notice anywhere in the world is commonplace, but more delivery of the capability required to do that must also more and more represent real value for money and efficiency from inception to disposal.



Finlay McLean leads a team of twenty internal management consultants who work with RAF project teams and personnel to ensure good decisions and processes are being made and followed, both strategically and on the ground. With the RAF engaged in expeditionary warfare, which has brought many challenges regarding capability, process and personnel, Finlay and his team have found themselves in high demand.

"Our client needs us now more than ever and as a team it's important that we rise to the occasion," explains Finlay. "Our continuing personal and professional development is vital. All of the consultants on the team are military or civil servants and have deep sector expertise, but few have traditional consultancy training before joining the team.

We were aware that when it came to selling the benefits of our services, and convincing clients to engage with us, there were improvements to be made. With that in mind, Elevation Learning's High Intensity Training Seminars (HITS) were an inviting prospect. For a set price, we were able to train our entire consulting team in two key subjects - Winning Business and Negotiation and Influencing Skills - in just one day away from the client."

Elevation Learning's managing director Calvert Markham ran the Winning Business seminar in the morning. Finlay continues: "This session helped us understand the importance of promoting our key services, how we might brand ourselves as a team, and the benefits of selling success stories that detail what working with

us can achieve. As a result, we have already launched our own micro site on the internal website that acts as a shop window for our services, along with flyers that explain what we do.

The Influencing and Negotiation workshop that followed taught us about the 'push' and 'pull' styles of influencing clients (push - assertive approach, pull - more discursive), and the importance of 'ethos, logos and pathos' - which is about establishing your credibility (ethos), clearly promoting the 'hard' benefits of working with us (logos), and conveying a deep understanding of the client and their environment (pathos). These last three areas are particularly crucial to us. The importance of word of mouth and reputation cannot be underestimated in the RAF; if people are convinced we not only really understand where they are coming from but are experienced, innovative and driven enough to lead change - they'll buy us. We regularly network with key heads of department and have to impress quickly, so learning how to quickly establish our credibility and empathise with client needs is critical. We are also often asked to share our best practice and success stories with consultancy heads from other public sector organisations too - who sometimes push new business opportunities our way - so it's vital we can also quickly get on their wavelength, and sell them a great story about how we can partner with them to help solve a client's problem.

The lessons we learned from trainer Monica Hernanz in this session were really helpful, and we were keen to implement some of the 'push and pull' styles of influencing, using ethos, logos and pathos, with clients and contacts straight away."

Finlay concluded: "The HITS sessions lasted half a day each and were very intensive, but learning in detail about two vital topics made great use of our time - and our lean training budget. The whole team learnt new tools and techniques which they could begin using straight away, and our new starters found the training particularly useful, both as an introduction to the RAF and general consultancy, and also in increasing their understanding of our sales strategy and goals for the coming year."