

"Personal and Professional Development Belong Together Here" 2013

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This article tells the story of how OELAN, an IT consultancy company in Holland is putting Functional Fluency and TIFF to use.

As a business consultant, I work with companies in Holland to help them maximise the potential of their work force by developing individuals' strengths and talents. As a TIFF Provider, I often use Functional Fluency and TIFF to enhance this process.

Recently I did some work with an unusual IT company in Amsterdam that has a policy of investing in the personal development of their consultants. These consultants are specialists in testing and developing IT infrastructure systems in large organisations, where they have to relate to a wide variety of personnel at various levels. The company plays an active role in promoting a healthy work/life balance for their consultants. By combining this focus on quality of work and life with the focus on developing technical expertise and professional experience, they can guarantee successful results for their customers.

The consultants take responsibility for their personal development. They keep a continuous record of their progress using their own Personal Balances Score Card (PBSC). Two of the four elements within their PBSC are the External and Internal Factors. The other two elements are the Financial Factor and the Learning & Knowledge Factor. The Internal Factor is about their personal energy, their motivation in both personal and professional fields (drivers) and about being healthy. The External Factor is about relationships (both business and private), interaction and communication with others, and also their perception of themselves ('how do I and others benefit from my actions').

The company invests a fair amount in the personal development of their consultants. They get state of the art training on their Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) and IT skills and they have their own internal SOA Academy for sharing and developing this technical expertise. In 2012 they started working with Functional Fluency as part of the development of their social consultancy skills like communication, problem solving, advisory and intervention skills.

About 30 consultants so far completed TIFF and then had their own one-to-one Feedback Session with me, in which they learned from their TIFF profiles how to use Functional Fluency for themselves. The topics, pointers or ideas that arose from the Feedback Session were used by the consultants for input on the External and Internal Factors of their own PBSCs. In particular, the consultants discovered, with the help of Functional Fluency, how they relate to others in an effective way. They learned about how they do this well and what their strengths are. And we talked about how they can expand and develop their social skills to become more effective as consultants.

In the mean time, the manager responsible for Human Resources in the company has completed the training to become a licensed TIFF Provider himself. When all the consultants have learned with me about their own personal development topics from their TIFF profiles, the HR manager will take over coaching these consultants on their social consultancy skills.

The plan is that after one year they will retake TIFF and have the feedback session with the HR manager this time, with whom they will be able to talk about ongoing personal development of these vital social skills.

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