



THE KINGDOM WAS LOST

course guide

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► **Fact and Fiction**

All the characters and events in **The Kingdom was Lost** are entirely fictional. Any similarity to real people, products or organisations is coincidental.

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FOR PREVIEW ONLY

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This training pack is designed to show people the critical importance of attention to detail in their everyday work. Excellent performance has always depended on getting the little things right first time. In today's organisations this is everybody's responsibility, no matter who they are, what they do or how long they have been around. In a fast moving world we can no longer rely on the boss or bureaucratic systems to check our work. We must do that for ourselves every day, in everything we do, large or small. The purpose of The Kingdom was Lost is to help people recognise their responsibility for the quality of their work and show them how to act upon it. It will make them think twice before saying:

'I can't be bothered'

'No-one will notice if I don't do that'

'It's only a minor detail'

'Just this once won't matter'

'It's not my job to do that'.

Audience

Because attention to detail is everybody's responsibility the pack can be used at all levels in any organisation, whether in the public or private sector.

As an organisation's performance is the result of cooperative effort between individuals and teams, there are advantages in using the pack with groups containing a cross section of seniority and function. Discussion of the contribution which different individuals and functions make will prevent anyone thinking that this is nothing to do with them, perhaps because they are too junior or never come in contact with customers.

The half day workshop detailed in this guide is designed for a group of eight to twelve people.

Objectives

- Use of The Kingdom was Lost will enable individuals to: Understand the importance of attention to detail in their everyday work
- Recognise the contribution which everyone must make if their organisation is to achieve the levels of performance needed to survive and prosper

-
- Understand how to deliver high quality work by applying the 3 As - Attitude, Awareness and Action
 - Apply the lessons from **The Kingdom was Lost** to their own circumstances at work and produce an Action Plan (Handout 2).

Using the pack

You can use the pack:

➤ **To run a stand-alone, half day session**

You will find details of how to do this in the remainder of this course guide.

➤ **To run an intensive, ninety minute session**

The quick guide will tell you how to do this.

➤ **To inject the important lessons about individuals' responsibility for attention to detail into programmes such as:**

- **Induction.** It is very important for new employees to know why, what and how they are expected to contribute to their organisation's performance from their first day in the job.
- **Quality.** Quality systems are important and helpful, but they exist to support individual responsibility for quality, not replace it. Unless everyone accepts and acts upon that responsibility, quality will not be achieved.
- **Customer service.** It is essential for those who are not in direct contact with customers to recognise that their attention to the details of their day to day work will have an effect, for good or ill, on the end results delivered to the customer.
- **Planning/project management.** The use of **The Kingdom was Lost** on such programmes will help to balance the emphasis on systems, structures and formal planning tools.
- **Empowerment.** Whether aimed at individuals or teams, empowerment is all about encouraging and helping people to take more responsibility at work. **The Kingdom was Lost** demonstrates what that means - getting work right first time, being alert for problems and opportunities for improvement, speaking up when they think things are going wrong, taking initiative.
- **Teamwork.** A good team is more than the sum of its parts. Effective team workers share responsibility for their team's performance and use their different strengths to support each other's efforts. You can use **The Kingdom was Lost** to explore what this implies for teams in your organisation.

KEY MESSAGES

Attention to detail

Excellent performance depends on getting the details of our work right - and right first time.

► **Individuals' responsibility for performance**

Everybody has a responsibility for the quality of their own work - junior people as well as senior, new recruits and old stagers, front line staff and back room people - everybody.

► **How individuals make excellent performance happen**

Accepting responsibility is an essential first step, but building on that commitment takes:

- **Attitude.** The characters in *The Kingdom was Lost* display attitudes to their work which range from arrogance to diffidence and from carelessness to gross irresponsibility. Though few people would deny responsibility for getting the details right first time, many simply lack the correct positive attitude to make it happen.
- **Awareness.** We must all be clear about the particular contributions we can make to excellent performance. We must also recognise our strengths and weaknesses and find ways to build on the former and compensate for the latter.
- **Action.** Responsibility, commitment, attitude, knowledge, are all mere words. Unless they spur us to take action they are of little use.

CONTENTS OF THE PACK

Video

➤ **†The Kingdom was Lost (20 mins)**

The story of how a simple typing error started a train of events which led to a huge, prestigious architectural project for the Millennium going disastrously wrong.

Course guide

➤ **†About the pack**

An overview of the contents of the pack.

➤ **Workshop session plan**

Detailed instructions for the half day workshop.

➤ **Resources**

Handouts and ready made OHP transparencies.

Quick guide

➤ **Notes for running a short course**

Designed to be used when time for preparation and training is limited.

SYNOPSIS OF THE VIDEO

Case study

The distinguished architect Stephen Sunbeam wins a competition for the design of a major building to celebrate the Millennium. His imaginative idea is for a giant arena in the shape of a human ear to be built in a London park.

The Ear will be capable of holding 100,000 people. Access by tube, coach, taxi and car will all be underground and the audience will be transported to their seats by a system of high speed lifts.

Unfortunately, just as Sunbeam's PA, Sally, is typing that part of the design brief for the consulting engineer, David Wishart, which specifies the capacity of the lifts, they are interrupted by the delivery of a letter. Sunbeam is distracted by the message it contains: he is to be knighted. Sally cannot take her eyes off the handsome cyclist who has delivered it. The result is that the figure that goes into the brief is 10,000 people per hour instead of 100,000.

From here things go from bad to worse. Time pressure (and over-confidence) prevent Sunbeam from proof-reading the brief. Wishart and his team fail to spot the error before passing the brief to Paul Kumar, the sub-contractor who will design the lift system. He does not receive the brief when he should because, due to an error in Wishart's office, it goes to the wrong address. Even when it is rushed to him it still does not arrive in time because the courier, not understanding the urgency, allows himself to be sent off in the opposite direction on another job. A young trainee engineer, Janice, does spot the error. But she is unsure of herself and, although she tries to contact Paul Kumar by phone, she does not persist and her initiative comes to nothing because of the inability of a junior office worker to take a proper message.

Throughout the whole process everybody works away diligently at their own little bits without much sign of their thinking about where these fit into the whole. The process looks logical and systematic. There are properly structured meetings. Documents are signed off at appropriate points in the project. But still that missing zero does not come to light.

Finally, George Hall, the head of the company building the Ear, confronts the now knighted Sir Stephen about the mistake. But Sunbeam brushes him aside and Hall, thinking that it is sufficient to cover his own back by recording their conversation, goes ahead with construction.

Only when the building of the access system to the Ear is too far advanced to be rectified in time for the Millennium do the senior people - Sunbeam, Wishart, Kumar and Hall - realise what has happened. Their mutual recriminations do none of them any good. They must all bear the responsibility for this public disaster. The kingdom is lost.

WORKSHOP TIMETABLE

This is a suggested outline timetable for a half day workshop. You can adapt it to your own requirements.

Introduction	15 mins
Video: The Kingdom was Lost	20 mins
How mistakes are made	40 mins
Break	15 mins
How people make excellent performance happen - the 3 As	90 mins
Review	15 mins
TOTAL	3 hours

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

Session	Duration	Objectives	Process	Resources
Introduction	15 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To explain the workshop's objectives & the programme ➤ To brainstorm some real life examples of poor performance caused by inattention to detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer input • Group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHP 1 • OHP 2 • Prepared flipchart
Video: The Kingdom was Lost	20 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To show how small mistakes can lead to catastrophe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group viewing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: The Kingdom was Lost • Handout 1
How mistakes are made	40 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To demonstrate how the actions of individuals contribute, for good or ill, to the end result ➤ To identify examples of actions which contribute to poor performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual & small group work • Group discussion • Trainer input 	
How people make excellent performance happen	90 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To identify what individuals must do to turn a commitment to good work into action ➤ To apply the general lessons from the workshop to their own specific circumstances at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group work • Group discussion • Trainer input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHP 3 • Handout 2
Review	15 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To review the key objectives of the workshop ➤ To agree follow up work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHP 1 • Handout 3

PREPARATION AND FURTHER TRAINING

Preparation

► **Decide who should attend the workshop**

This may involve discussions with senior managers about the appropriate mix of levels and functions.

► **Collect a few, preferably current, examples of poor performance caused by minor errors and inattention to detail**

If possible these should be a mixture of public gaffes (for example, spelling mistakes in advertisements, lorries stuck under low bridges, products recalled because of safety problems that should have been picked up at the design stage) and errors specific to the participants' organisation. You will see that participants are encouraged to come up with their own examples in the first session of the workshop, but it is advisable for you to have some available in case the group is reticent and needs help to get started.

Some real life examples

Sorry about that!

When an elderly couple returned from holiday to their Council owned flat they found that it had been gutted and all their carpets, furniture and possessions sent to the local dump. That's what Councils do when their tenants die and have no heirs. But in this case someone had got the addresses mixed up and none of the other people involved had bothered to check.

We can always fix it later

When NASA launched the Hubble telescope which, at a cost of a mere \$2 billion, was designed to send back perfect, clear pictures from space, they discovered that a mistake had been made when producing the mirrors and the pictures were out of focus. The Shuttle mission to fix the problem cost another \$629 million.

All fall down

When the 70 storey Citicorp building in New York was constructed a contractor saved money by bolting the structure together rather than welding it. But he failed to mention this little detail to the engineer who had designed the building. The engineer remained in blissful ignorance until years later when a student wrote to him to politely enquire why the building didn't fall down. The engineer realised that all it would have taken was a 70 mile per hour wind to blow for five minutes to topple it and take with it all the other skyscrapers in the 18 blocks between it and Central Park.

► **Another reason for examples**

This is to counter any suggestions that the problem in the video is too simple to happen in real life. History is littered with examples, from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to the Challenger Shuttle disaster which, with the benefit of hindsight, could have been averted.

- Review the video and think about how the messages it contains relate to the participants' organisation
- Prepare a flipchart to help you outline the programme during the first session
- During the discussion of the second 'A - Awareness - in the session on how people make excellent performance happen (page 28) we suggest you ask participants, working in small groups, to analyse a project they have been involved in and identify the strengths and weaknesses which contributed to the final result. Think about the composition of the small groups you will use.

The systems issue

The Kingdom was Lost is about the importance of individuals taking responsibility and getting the details of their work right first time, but you may find that some people think the fictional problem it illustrates and similar real life examples can be solved by relying on systems and procedures.

In most cases you will be able to deal with this point during the general discussion in the sessions which follow the video. If, however, you feel that there is a serious over-reliance on systems and procedures in your organisation, to the extent that people will resist the message in the video, you may want to devote more time to this issue.

To help you do so we have provided an optional session, called *Does quality come from systems?*, which you can insert into the workshop. You will find this at the end of the Workshop Plan (page 34).

Further training

If you are planning to use *The Kingdom was Lost* as part of a wider programme, you will find that it works well with the following Melrose titles on programmes covering:

► **Induction:**

For Starters

► **Quality:**

Quality - The Only Way

➤ **Customer service:**

Keeping Customers Cool

➤ **Planning/project management:**

The Project

➤ **Empowerment:**

The Empowering Manager

➤ **Teamwork**

Team Player.

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

WORKSHOP SESSION PLAN

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INTRODUCTION 15 mins

Objectives

To explain the workshop's objectives and programme.

To brainstorm some real life examples of poor performance caused by inattention to detail.

Resources

- OHP 1: Workshop objectives
- OHP 2: Anything that can go wrong...?
- Prepared flipchart: Workshop programme

Session outline

- Welcome participants and ask them to introduce themselves
- Explain the workshop objectives using OHP 1

The objectives are:

- To show that good work involves constant attention to detail in our everyday work.
- To understand individual responsibility for excellent performance and show how we must all contribute to the high quality results that our organisations need to survive and prosper.
- To put responsibility to work - Attitude, Awareness, Action.
- To apply the lessons of **The Kingdom was Lost** to everyday work and produce an action plan to take back to the workplace.

- Use the prepared flipchart to outline the half day programme
- Introduce the video

The video tells the story of a project that went badly wrong because of small errors made by a number of people.

➤ **Ask for examples**

Ask for any examples the participants can think of which demonstrate poor performance caused by inattention to detail.

➤ **Show OHP 2**

Introduce a short brainstorming session to identify examples of work that has gone wrong because of inattention to detail. The Leaning Tower of Pisa is an early example of a simple design error that slipped past at the planning stage!

➤ **Encourage participants to identify examples from within their own organisation, as well as more public ones**

Obviously they do not have to be major catastrophes. Embarrassing errors which made individuals or their teams or departments look silly are also appropriate examples to identify.

Record the examples on a flipchart as you may wish to refer back to them later in the programme.

VIDEO:

THE KINGDOM WAS LOST 20 mins

Objective

To show how small mistakes can lead to catastrophe.

Resources

- **Handout 1: Who's who**
- **Video: The Kingdom was Lost**

Session outline

- **Distribute Handout 1**

Ask participants to pay particular attention to the mistakes these individuals make and why they make them.

- **Show the video**

HOW MISTAKES ARE MADE 40 mins

Objectives

To demonstrate how the actions of individuals contribute, for good or ill, to the end result.

To identify examples of actions which contribute to poor performance.

Session outline

► Find out what went wrong

Ask the group to list all the mistakes which led to the lift system being only a tenth of the necessary capacity. Tell them to concentrate, for the moment, on what happened. They will have a chance to discuss why later in this session.

► Record their responses on a flipchart

Their answers should include:

- Sally typing the wrong figure
- Stephen Sunbeam failing to proof-read the brief
- Paul Kumar's copy of the brief being sent to the wrong address
- Paul finally receiving his copy two hours late
- The scheme for construction being signed off without adequate checking
- Janice failing to follow through her concern Sean failing to take the phone message correctly The detailed design stage being signed off without adequate checking
- Sir Stephen brushing off George Hall's concerns about the lift capacity
- Hall failing to stick to his guns and make Sir Stephen listen.

► Ask for reasons for mistakes

Divide participants into groups of two or three. Ask them to take each of the mistakes one by one and agree explanations for this catalogue of errors.

► Reconvene the group for discussion

Their answers may include:

- Sally's typing mistake. She is distracted by the handsome courier. Stephen Sunbeam can think of nothing but his knighthood. They both stop concentrating.
- Proof-reading the brief. Sir Stephen is an arrogant man facing time pressures. This task is his clear responsibility and he shirks it. (Perhaps Sally, who knows what he is like, should have put a little more effort into making him do it?)

-
- Paul Kumar's brief going to the wrong address. Muriel should have updated the Rotadex and checked that he had received the brief.
 - Paul finally receiving his copy two hours late. Miguel accepted the instruction that re-routed him without any thought or discussion.
 - The two sign offs going through without adequate checking. At the very beginning of the project David Wishart realises that time is tight and that Stephen Sunbeam is the kind of person who thinks up grand concepts and leaves the detail to others.

Wishart:

Stephen, it's wonderful but is it feasible?

Sunbeam:

You're the engineer. I'm banking on you, David. The competition deadline's the end of the month.

An experienced consulting engineer like Wishart should know that a combination of time pressures and a creative mind unconcerned by detail vastly increases the possibility of error. It was his responsibility to take this into account and find ways of being extra careful.

- Janice failing to follow through her concern. Remind the group about another well-known folk tale - the story of the Emperor's new clothes. It is hard to tell the boss that he has made a silly mistake, particularly if you can't quite believe that you are right and he is wrong. But it is better to speak up than to send him naked into the street. Of course it helps in these situations if you get support from your colleagues, but Trevor provides the opposite.

Janice:

What if they've all made a mistake?

Trevor:

They'll pretty soon know, is what. And without any help from you.

- Sean failing to take the phone message correctly. Sean knows he is hopeless on the phone. Muriel has told him how to take messages, but he has failed to act on her advice, almost certainly because he is a bit scared of speaking on the phone.
- Sir Stephen ignoring George Hall's concerns. Once again, time pressures play their part. But in addition, Sir Stephen is preening himself about the awards ceremony and fails to register the importance of what Hall is saying. Moreover, there is a relationship problem between these two men, a problem which causes Sir Stephen to misinterpret, deliberately perhaps, Hall's motives in raising this issue.

Sunbeam:

George, I didn't get where I am today by making silly mistakes - is this your usual ploy of post-contractual re-negotiation?

- Hall failing to make Sir Stephen listen. George Hall seems to think that covering his back solves the problem.

➤ **Summarise lessons about individual responsibility**

The end result of an organisation's work is only the tip of the iceberg of performance. It is what lies beneath the surface - the mass of details, the scores of actions, the commitment of many individuals - which produces that result, good or bad.

Remind the group that excellent performance can only be achieved if everyone who has had a hand in delivering it understands their responsibility for it and gets the details right first time.

➤ **Lead a brainstorming session**

Spend a few minutes brainstorming the general lessons which this discussion of the Pig's Ear - what happened and why - teach us about what good work is based upon.

➤ **Record the answers on a flipchart. They may include:**

Good work comes from

- Concentration
- Attention to detail (the architect Corbusier said 'God is in the detail')
- Accuracy
- Doing the boring, routine stuff (updating the Rotadex) Sorting problems before they get out of hand ('a stitch in time')
- Getting priorities straight (the brief before the knighthood)
- Checking and following up
- Using systems properly
- Communicating effectively (talk is cheap - action can be expensive!)
- Supporting one another
- Putting the job first
- Taking initiative
- Persevering
- Looking ahead
- Teamwork.

Stress the fact that most of these are about the actions that individuals take. Explain that you will be exploring what individual responsibility means in more detail in the next session.

HOW PEOPLE MAKE EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE HAPPEN 90 mins

Objectives

To identify what individuals must do to turn a commitment to good work into action.

To apply the general lessons from the workshop to their own specific circumstances at work.

Resources

- OHP 3: Responsibility: The 3 As
- Handout 2: Action plan

Session outline

Introduce the 3 As using OHP 3

Knowing (or simply being told) that attention to detail is everyone's responsibility is an important first step. But for individuals to turn that knowledge into results takes:

- **Attitude.** Though few people would deny responsibility for the quality of their work, many simply lack the correct positive mental attitude to make it happen.
- **Awareness.** We must all be clear about the particular contributions we can make. We must also recognise our strengths and weaknesses and find ways to build on the former and compensate for the latter.
- **Action.** Responsibility, commitment, attitude, knowledge, are all mere words. Unless they spur us to take action they are of little use.

➤ Identify unhelpful Attitudes

Divide participants into groups of two or three. Ask them for examples of unhelpful attitudes to their work displayed by the characters in **The Kingdom was Lost**. Answers might include:

- Sir Stephen is arrogant and has a lofty disdain for detail.
- Sally is a fallible human being (aren't we all!) and that leads to her original lapse of concentration. She is also perhaps too eager to please Sir Stephen.
- Wishart is insufficiently focussed on his responsibility for the detailed engineering design of this project and allows himself to be swept along by Sir Stephen's enthusiasm.

-
- Janice lacks sufficient confidence in herself to follow up her concerns.
 - Sean is frightened of speaking on the phone. Miguel behaves like a robot, blindly obeying the instructions he is given without attempting to question them.
 - George Hall's attitude is almost entirely concerned with trying to cover his back. Point out to the group that this fails to protect him when disaster strikes.

➤ **Discuss Awareness**

Explain to the group that, while it is absolutely true that everyone makes a contribution to creating a quality end result, individuals' contributions will naturally vary. That is partly because their jobs differ, but it is also because we are all good at some things and less good at others. The Sir Stephens of this world can produce wonderful ideas and the David Wisharts have the skills to make them happen.

Stress that it is possible to draw a very dangerous conclusion from this statement of the obvious. Part of the reason that the project to build the Ear went so disastrously wrong is that many of those involved were simply doing their thing without any thought for how they might support one another and compensate for one another's weaknesses.

If, for example, Sally had been more aware of her responsibility to support Stephen Sunbeam's genius, she might have spent less time polishing his ego and paid more attention to the detail that clearly did not interest him at all.

Good teamwork is essential to produce high quality results and that means being aware, individually and collectively, of our strengths and weaknesses and then acting on that awareness.

➤ **Divide participants into small groups**

Ask them to think about real projects in which they have been involved at work. What strengths can they identify? What weaknesses?

➤ **Identify Actions**

Ask each individual participant to spend five minutes or so listing, as specifically as possible, the ways in which their own attention to detail at work contributes to producing a quality end result for their team, department or organisation.

They may find it helpful during this discussion to refer back to the examples of poor performance as a result of inattention to detail which they identified at the beginning of the workshop, particularly those which relate to their own organisation.

➤ **Ask the participants to form pairs**

After they have done this, ask them to form pairs who understand one another's jobs, swap lists, then discuss, add to and amend their individual conclusions.

➤ **Distribute Handout 2**

Ask participants to complete Handout 2: *Personal Action Plan* - to record the specific actions they can take to prevent mistakes happening.

REVIEW 15 mins

Objectives

To review the key objectives of the workshop.

To agree follow up work.

Resources

- **OHP 1: Workshop objectives**
- **Handout 3: The Kingdom was Lost: Summary**

Session outline

Show OHP 1

Use OHP 1 to review the objectives of the workshop. Establish whether these have been achieved and deal with any outstanding questions or concerns.

➤ **Agree action**

Use the conclusions from the final discussion in the last session to agree specific actions, together with timescales for implementation, which participants will take as a result of the workshop.

➤ **Distribute Handout 3**

Optional session

DOES QUALITY COME FROM SYSTEMS? 30 mins

Objectives

To identify the strengths and weaknesses of systems as a means for delivering high quality work.

Resources

- **OHP 4: Systems**

Session outline

► Introduce the session

Tell the group that organisations naturally rely extensively on systems and procedures to help them produce high quality work. The larger the organisation and the more complex the process that has to be managed to produce a satisfactory end result, the more this is likely to be the case.

► Identify systems from the video

Ask participants what systems they observed from what they saw of the project to design and build the Far. Answers should include:

- Demarcation of responsibility. Sunbeam is the architect, Wishart the main consulting engineer, Kumar a sub-contracted specialist on lift systems and Hall the builder. In a project of this size there would certainly be many others that we do not see and their responsibilities and reporting relationships would be spelt out to them in formal briefs and contracts.
- Formal documentation. We see the exchange of detailed formal briefs.
- Formal meetings. We see David Wishart conducting what, on the face of it, look like well structured and organised discussions.
- Systematic staging of the project with reviews and sign offs at the appropriate points.

Wishart:

The purpose of this meeting is to present Stephen with our scheme for completion of the Ear. If it's all satisfactory, Stephen and I will approve the scheme stage as complete and we can move on to the detailed drawings...

The trouble is that all of this system and order is like a shiny apple with a worm in it. Deep inside those elegant briefs lurks the erroneous figure of 10,000 people per hour.

► Briefly explore participants' systems

Spend a few minutes listing the various systems that exist to control and deliver quality work in the participants' organisation.

► Identify strengths and limitations

Divide participants into groups of two or three. Ask them to identify the strengths and limitations of using systems to deliver quality work. Record their answers on a flipchart.

► Use OHP 4 to summarise the main strengths and limitations of systems

Systems help organisations by:

- Making us plan what we are going to do and thereby increasing the possibility of spotting problems and tackling them before they arise
- Forcing us to be consistent in the way we create and deliver products and services
- Obliging us to keep records, so that we know precisely what we have done and can identify where improvements might be made and also where things have gone wrong when they do.

No matter how well designed, their limitations are:

- They cannot cover everything. In many cases it is the tiny routine things - the phone message that doesn't get passed on, the address that isn't updated, the equivalent of the loss of a horse shoe nail - that mark the start of the slippery slope to disaster
- The fact that they exist does not guarantee that they will be used
- They can encourage us to put our brains on auto-pilot. We think, wrongly, that the system will cope and, without our active help, it cannot.

Put particular stress on the final point on the OHP:

- Systems don't run organisations - people do.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

OHP TRANSPARENCIES

*The resources in this section may be reproduced or edited for use in presentations, seminars, or courses of which **The Kingdom was Lost** forms a part.*

This means that you can retype, photocopy, and tailor them to meet your training needs.

HANDOUT 1: WHO'S WHO



STEPHEN SUNBEAM

- The leading architect whose inspiration is behind the design of the Ear



DAVID WISHART

- The consulting engineer in charge of the structural design of the building



PAUL KUMAR

- The subcontractor in charge of designing the lift system



GEORGE HALL

- Head of the building company which is contracted to build the Ear



SALLY

- Stephen Sunbeam's personal assistant

HANDOUT 2:
PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Action to prevent these mistakes happening	
Mistakes that can happen	
Details for which I am responsible	

HANDOUT 3: THE KINGDOM WAS LOST: SUMMARY

Attention to detail

Excellent performance depends on getting the details of our work right - and right first time.

Individuals' responsibility for performance

Everybody has a responsibility for the quality of their own work - junior people as well as senior, new recruits and old stagers, front line staff and back room people - everybody.

How individuals make quality happen

Accepting responsibility is an essential first step, but building on that commitment takes:

➤ ~~†~~Attitude

Though few of us would deny responsibility for the quality of our work, we need the correct positive attitude to make it happen.

➤ ~~†~~Awareness

We must all be clear about the particular contributions we can make to excellent performance. We must also recognise our strengths and weaknesses and find ways to build on the former and compensate for the latter.

➤ ~~†~~Action

Responsibility, commitment, attitude, knowledge, are all mere words. Unless they spur us to take action they are of little use.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- To understand the importance of attention to detail
- To understand individual responsibility for excellent performance
- To put responsibility to work
- To apply the lessons to participants' jobs

OHP 1

ANYTHING THAT CAN GO WRONG...

Examples of poor performance caused by inattention to detail?

- Public?
- Your organisation?

OHP 2

RESPONSIBILITY

The three As

- Attitude
- Awareness
- Action

OHP 3

SYSTEMS

STRENGTHS

- Planning
- Consistency
- Records

LIMITATIONS

- Can't cover everything
- May not be used
- Brains on auto-pilot

Systems don't run organisations - people do!

OHP 4



THE KINGDOM WAS LOST

quick guide

This quick guide is designed to be used when time for preparation and training is limited. It provides an introduction to the whole pack and guidelines for running a ninety minute training session. The full course guide contains more detailed training notes and information.

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INTRODUCTION

Objectives

► Those taking part in this ninety minute workshop will:

- See that excellent performance depends on attention to detail, that is getting the details of our work right - and right first time.
- Recognise that everyone in an organisation has a responsibility for the quality of their own work.
- Learn how to put their responsibility into practice by applying the 3 As - Attitude, Awareness and Action.

Audience

Because attention to detail is everybody's responsibility the pack can be used at all levels in any organisation, whether in the public or private sector.

You may want to use it with groups containing a cross section of seniority and function to enable discussion of the contribution which different individuals and functions make to the overall performance of the organisation. This will prevent anyone thinking that it has nothing to do with them, perhaps because they are too junior or never come in contact with customers.

Contents of the pack

► Video: The Kingdom was Lost (20 mins)

The story of how a simple typing error started a train of events which led to a huge, prestigious architectural project for the Millennium going disastrously wrong.

► Course guide

A full outline of the video, notes and resources for a half day workshop.

► Quick guide

These notes will help you run a shorter session, using the video and selected resources from the full course guide.

Preparation

Collect a few, preferably current, examples of poor performance caused by minor errors and inattention to detail. Aim for a mixture of public gaffes (for example, spelling mistakes in advertisements, lorries stuck under low bridges, products recalled because of safety problems that should have been picked up at the design stage) and errors specific to the participants' organisation. There are three examples in the course guide (pages 12 - 13).

This will help you to relate the fictional example in the video to real life and counter suggestions that the error in the video is too simple to lead to such an outcome. History is littered with examples, from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to the Challenger Shuttle disaster which, with the benefit of hindsight, could have been averted.

When you are briefing colleagues about the practical arrangements for meeting, ask them to think, as specifically as possible, about the ways in which their own attention to detail contributes to a quality end result for their team, department or organisation.

► Prepare a flipchart

This will help you outline the objectives and programme during the introductory session.

► Be prepared to keep tight control of the time

OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING SESSION

Session	Duration	objectives	Process	Resources
Introduction	5 mins	To explain the objectives and programme	• Trainer input	• Prepared flipchart
Video: The Kingdom was Lost	20 mins	To show how small mistakes can lead to catastrophe	• Group viewing	• Video • Handout 1
How mistakes are made	25 mins	To identify the mistakes that were made in the video and the reasons for them	• Group discussion • Trainer input	
individual responsibility	35 mins	To identify what individuals must do to turn a commitment to good work into action	• Group discussion Trainer input	• OHP 3
Summary	5 mins	To check that the objectives of the workshop have been achieved	• Trainer input	• Prepared flipchart • Handout 3 • Handout

OUTLINE TRAINING SESSION

Introduction 5 mins

➤ **Outline the session's objectives and programme**

Use the prepared flipchart to explain that the purpose of this ninety minute session is to:

Demonstrate the importance of attention to detail

Explore the responsibility that everyone in an organisation has for the quality of their own work

Learn how to put that responsibility into practice by applying the 3 As - Attitude, Awareness and Action.

Video: The Kingdom was Lost 20 mins

➤ **Distribute Handout 1**

Ask participants to pay particular attention to the mistakes these individuals make and why they make them.

➤ **Show the video**

How mistakes are made 25 mins

➤ **Find out what went wrong in the video and why**

Ask the group to list all the mistakes which led to the lift system being only a tenth of the necessary capacity and why they think these occurred. Record their responses on a flipchart. Their answers should include:

- Sally's typing mistake. She is distracted by the handsome courier, Stephen Sunbeam by his knighthood. They both stop concentrating. Proof-reading the brief. Sir Stephen is an arrogant man facing time pressures. This task is his responsibility and he shirks it.
- Paul Kumar's brief going to the wrong address. Muriel should have updated the Rotadex and checked that he had received the brief.

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- Paul finally receiving his copy two hours late. Miguel accepts the changed route without any discussion.
 - The two sign offs going through without adequate checking. Time is tight and Sunbeam is the kind of person who leaves detail to others. An experienced consulting engineer like Wishart should know that this vastly increases the possibility of error and find ways of being extra careful.
 - Janice failing to follow through her concern. It is hard to tell the boss that he has made a silly mistake, particularly if you are not quite sure of your ground. Of course it helps in these situations if you get support from your colleagues, but Trevor provides the opposite.
 - Sean failing to take the phone message correctly. He is simply scared of speaking on the phone.
 - Sir Stephen ignoring George Hall's concerns. Time pressures, his ego trip about the award ceremony and the relationship problem between them causes Sir Stephen to dismiss what Hall says without really listening to him.
 - Hall failing to make Sir Stephen listen. Hall seems to think that covering his back solves the problem.

Individual responsibility 35 mins

➤ Use OHP 3 to introduce the 3 As

It is important to know that everyone is responsible for attention to detail and the quality of their work. But turning that knowledge into results takes:

- **Attitude.** Few people would deny responsibility for their performance, but you need the correct positive mental attitude to make it happen.
- **Awareness.** We must all be clear about the particular contributions we can make. We must also recognise our strengths and weaknesses and find ways to build on the former and compensate for the latter.
- **Action.** Responsibility is just a word. Unless it spurs us to action it is of little use.

➤ Identify unhelpful Attitudes

Spend a few minutes discussing examples of unhelpful attitudes to their work displayed by the characters in **The Kingdom was Lost**.

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- Sir Stephen is arrogant and has a lofty disdain for detail.
 - Sally is a fallible human being (aren't we all!) and perhaps too eager to please Sir Stephen.
 - Wishart is insufficiently focussed on his responsibility for the detailed engineering design and allows himself to be swept along by Sir Stephen's enthusiasm.
 - Janice lacks sufficient confidence in herself to follow up her concerns.
 - Sean is frightened of speaking on the phone.
 - Miguel behaves like a robot, blindly obeying the instructions he is given without attempting to question them.
 - George Hall's attitude is almost entirely concerned with trying to cover his back.

➤ **Explain the importance of Awareness**

Individuals make different contributions to the end results produced by their teams, partly because their Jobs differ, but also because we are all good at some things and less good at others.

Good teamwork and mutual support are essential to produce high quality results. We have to be aware of our strengths and weaknesses and then act upon that awareness.

➤ **Identify Actions**

Brainstorm the specific ways in which participants' own attention to detail contributes to producing a quality end result for their team, department or organisation. Encourage them to challenge one another's conclusions.

➤ **Identify improvements**

Use this discussion to identify how participants might improve their own attention to detail.

Summary 5 mins

➤ **Review the session's objectives**

Use the prepared flipchart to check that the session's objectives have been achieved.

➤ **Distribute Handout 3**

➤ **Distribute Handout 2**

Individuals can record their ideas to improve their own attention to detail.

FOR PREVIEW ONLY

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