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Top Tips

May 2009 edition

Welcome to our Top Tips

In our May Top Tips we look at some of the courses coming up in the next month, all of which feature in our 2009 open course brochure.

Last month's Apprentice inspired tips went down with you so well, that we thought we'd take a chance and stretch the point a little. So, following Apprentice Tips 1 to 7 last month, here are seven more.

Tip 8: Effective Marketing means consistency, attention to detail and a focus on your key message. *How many of our readers are from Margate!* The branding experts and the local residents of Margate did not criticise the message of the team that chose to re-brand Margate as a destination for gay holiday-makers. What they did disparage was a confused campaign, with crowded posters, a lack of clear message and a half complete leaflet.

So, Rule 8: Your message needs to come across clearly and consistently.

Spend a day focusing on your marketing at [Increase your Sales through Effective Marketing](#), on 21 May.

Tip 9: Teams of four or five members tend to be the most effective. So what's been going wrong over the last weeks, when some teams have failed spectacularly? Apprentice teams superficially have the same goal, but in fact, each member is looking after number one. Consequently, some players are not listening to others. A respect for differing ideas and a group consensus process can harness the wisdom of the team.

So, Rule 9: Create a diverse team, encourage independent thinking and listen to everybody's ideas.

Spend a day focusing on getting the best from your team, at [Team Leadership](#) on 2 June.

If you want to get the best from individuals, try [Supervisory Management](#), on 10 June.

You have missed Day 1 of the [Management Programme](#). If you can't wait until the autumn, why not join it at Day 2 on 16 June. Day 3 is 7 July and you can catch up with Day 1 on 3 or 22 September.

Tip 10: Who is your audience? The secret of good business writing (and any other form of writing) is to start with three questions: Who is my audience? What is the message I want to convey? How can I get my message across in a compelling and persuasive way? Whether you are writing an advert for PantsMan, a poster for Margate, or a pitch for a cat box, these

three questions will always help. Thank-you Sir Alan for not making the contestants write reports.

So, Rule 10: Who - What - How before you start writing.

Make sure your written communication is clear, concise and to the point at [Business Writing Skills](#), on 17 June.

Tip 11: Sir Alan's apprentice will quickly aspire to a leadership role. Good leaders make time to reflect on their performance and think about their leadership style - something many of the candidates seem unable to do.

So, Rule 11: Take time to think and reflect if you want to boost your performance.

Our [Leadership Programme for Directors and Senior Managers](#) includes reflection time and a lot of powerful ideas to help you step above a middle management role. It starts on 22 May and continues on 23 June.

Tip 12: A half finished leaflet because they ran out of time. You could blame the cat. They lied about leaving space for adverts. Anyone who saw the episode with the half finished cereal packet will have known it would not end well for that team in the board room. Determine what needs to be done, then plan your time.

So, Rule 12: Failing to plan = planning to fail.

Don't get caught out by not planning your time. It's no surprise that [Time Management](#) is one of our most popular courses. Make time for it on 21 May. Don't be late!

Tip 13: Don't think financial planning is just for the accountants; it's not. It's a core business skill. You have two hot business leads - each one a big retailer with deep pockets and their product buyers ready to listen to you. Financial planning must be a central part of determining the products you take to them.

So, Rule 13: If you are in business, you need to understand finance.

If this is all new to you, then [Financial Planning and Budgeting](#), on 2 June, will put it into simple terms. And if you want to analyse your figures, you may want to attend [Excel - Intermediate](#) on 15 June. We'll give you an extra 10% discount on the Excel course, if you book onto both.

Tip 14: Shouting people down is not assertive, it's aggressive. Some of the participants need to think about the difference. We're convinced Sir Alan won't ultimately take on anyone who cannot control their temper or moderate their tone. He will keep them longer because this is entertainment and they make good telly, but they will not enhance his business and could expose him to risk.

So, Rule 14: Assertiveness means respect - for yourself and for other people.

If you're a wall flower, trying to get heard, or if you're worried you alienate people, the [Communicate Assertively and with Confidence](#) is a must for you. It's on 18 June.

We hope you enjoy the next episode of *The Apprentice*, on Wednesday evening!

Find out more about our full training programme at www.kenttrainers.co.uk, or call our office on 01892 836110. We are proud of our new website and hope it offers you the information you need to make your training investment decisions. We would be pleased to hear what you think!

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