

The structure behind straight thinking

by Ken Everett

It's Monday morning; a half hour before the masses arrive. The coffee is fresh and so are you. Even the familiar view across the harbour looks fresh. You open your diary to plan the day, and experience that momentary, but no doubt illusory feeling of calm and control.

Then the jangle of the phone disturbs your peace and confirms your underlying fears. The boss's secretary explains the emergency which has befallen your leader and the even greater emergency about to ensue if someone doesn't appear in her place to open the regional sales manager's meeting in 30 minutes - on the other side of the harbour.

You act as though you had a choice, and accept the invitation with as much grace as you can muster. The topic? "Something about Quality, I think." At least you know plenty about that from heading the introductory taskforce.

The rest of the coffee you gulp as you rush out the door doesn't taste fresh any more. From the Star Ferry, the harbour doesn't look fresh any more either. You gaze distractedly at the life rings on the Ferry.

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Could this, or something similar, happen to you? Whatever the challenge, you are not about to be rescued at this moment by training in diction or dressing for success. What you need right now is some way to quickly organize your ideas so they can be presented coherently, in less than 20 minutes.

When Dr Keith Spicer created a management training course, called "Think on Your Feet", for handling such situations, he was surprised to find that the need it met proved so strong and universal.

Spicer is well-known to Canadians as the chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or in one of his previous roles as a professor, broadcaster, editor, author, and businessman.

His premise? You can't talk (or write) straight unless you can think straight. And "straight" thinking requires not so much genius as structure.

His genius? To describe ten simple, all-purpose structures - recipes for reasoning - to use in such situations.

These ready-made "left-brain" plans, channel the "right-brain" improvisation to produce "organized creativity."

Luckily "our hero" is familiar with these concepts.

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You decide to use the time-based clock plan based on past, present and future. You draft your speech as follows:

- 1/ The origins of the Quality program.
- 2/ Today's status.
- 3/ The objectives for next year.

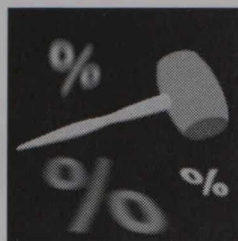
You reflect that while this is not exactly Pulitzer Prize material yet, at least you have a plan of action. And you're only halfway across the harbour.

Still enough time to find a theme to get and keep the sales manager's interest. They doubtless think this introductory speech is in the "shaking hands and kissing babies" category.

Well, you resolve, you'll show them!

(To be continued next issue)

Toronto-based Think on Your Feet International Inc. is now the licensee for the workshops. Ken Everett is the Asia/Pacific Associate. Seminars are conducted in Hong Kong and eight other countries in the region. Ken Everett Pty Ltd PO Box 1015, Neutral Bay 2089, NSW Australia, tel: 61-2-909-3218, fax: 61-2-909-1110.



Legal & Taxation COMMITTEE

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Legal and tax matters

Revenue Canada to integrate tax systems

In November 1992, Revenue Canada announced that it will integrate its systems with respect to goods and services tax (GST), income tax and source deductions. Businesses will have a single registration number with Revenue Canada and eventually with any other department of the Government of Canada.

Businesses will be able to make a single remittance for GST, customs and income tax. Taxpayers can offset a liability from one area of taxation (eg. GST) with overpayments or refunds from another (eg. income tax).

Businesses with gross sales of less than Cdn\$500,000 can file one simplified, combined business return.

Revenue Canada will integrate collection procedures for all accounts relating to income tax, GST and customs.

"Fairness policies" will be implemented for the GST system to bring it in line with the income tax system.

William Lau, KPMG Peat Marwick

Government attacked for poor fiscal management, tolerating tax avoidance

In his annual report on the federal government's financial conduct issued late last year, the Auditor-General of Canada, Dennis Desautels, attacked the federal government on several counts: spending over Cdn\$3.5 billion on energy megaprojects without clear objectives; lending more than Cdn\$17 billion to foreign countries which may not be repaid; and for paying hundreds of millions of dollars to retiring social servants, many of whom were subsequently rehired by the federal government.

The Auditor-General also alleged that the federal government was tolerating the use of foreign companies by Canadians to avoid taxation. In rebuttal, the Minister of Finance Don Mazankowski said Canada's tax laws must be competitive with other countries otherwise significant changes in the existing rules would result in businesses moving out of Canada.

In the near future, public pressure may force the Finance Ministry to make changes on tax rules dealing with cross-border Canadian investments. Canadian companies doing business in Hong Kong and Hong Kong investors in Canada could be affected.

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