

**"It's the people that  
make the difference"**



## Modelling excellence .....What is it?

**We are what we repeatedly do.  
Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." ARISTOTLE**

### **What is modelling?**

Modelling involves identifying people - or teams and organisations - that are excellent, and eliciting what precisely they do (i.e. their behaviours) and, probably even more importantly 'how they do it' when they are 'being excellent'. We know that excellent behaviour comes from a level of unconscious competence, what are often referred to as 'habits' - i.e. when we are 'being excellent' we are not thinking about what we are doing, we simply do it! Modelling Excellence in a process designed to "download" that information from unconscious competence to conscious competence. From this then the objective is to transfer the skills and strategies. This is an accelerated learning process.

### **Who do you model?**

Anyone who consistently gets good results at something. When you ask people who are really excellent, "How do you do it?" the most common response is, "I don't really know" or "I just ... sort of ... do it and everything happens naturally." This is typical of 'unconscious competence'. By the end of the modelling project the person being modelled invariably says "Well, I never realised *that's* what I do" and often they will add "I thought everyone did it that way!"

Even a little modelling will show that people often use widely different internal processing strategies, and this accounts for the gap between mediocre and top performers. Most strategies, once they are made explicit, can be easily learned or modified to accomplish organisational or personal goals.

### **Why model anyway?**

To date most approaches to modelling have concentrated on studying external behaviour. This is not surprising since external behaviour is observable and there is a ready-made language to describe it. However, if a person's most important capabilities are internal (i.e. thinking and feeling processes); traditional methods of modelling are of limited value. Most people today accept that their ability to produce effectively is influenced by their feelings, way of thinking, beliefs, values and sense of identity. It therefore becomes crucial to identify thinking strategies and other 'intangibles' that are so important in excellent managers, planners, trainers, negotiators, social workers and so on. Quite simply it is about utilising resources and repeating excellence.

**"You know more than  
you think  
you do." Dr Benjamin Spock**

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