

proActive

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The Magic of Innovation : Develop your Creative Skills !

EUMA TRAINING DAY

WARSAW MARCH, 24TH 2007



«You are a magical person who can manifest your clear intentions into reality.»

...this was the motto of the rich and dynamic programme of Dimis and Liana from PERFORMA at the EUMA Training day that took place in the Intercontinental Hotel, an outstanding place in the heart of the city of Warsaw on March 24th 2007.

They took us on a special journey where we learned to breathe away and banish our fears, worries and trust our inner self, our intuition and believe that we too are creative !

Through fun, interactive exercise, and magic tricks, Dimis and Liana introduced to us useful techniques of how to

promote creativity and innovation at our workplace, how to keep our vision focused, how to unleash our adventurous side, take risks and be daring to make our intentions happen and get others support them !

We left Warsaw enthused, inspired and motivated to apply those new learnings back home.

Congratulations to the Polish EUMA Members who did their very best to make every moment of our stay a magic one !

By making use of our «intuition», «skills» and «creativity» in our daily work, we, Mana-



gement Assistants pave the way for others who may benefit from our experiences.

With loving regards,
Odile Huchet
Editor-in-Chief

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EVERYDAY CREATIVITY AS CHALLENGE !

Ferran Adrià, the world famous Spanish chef of the three Michelin stars' restaurant El Bulli close to Barcelona, speaks of the importance of simple creativity. Small inventions can make a big step. Adrià does not offer customers bread to start the meal with at El Bulli. He says that his customers stomachs filled with bread could not enjoy so well the many courses of the gourmet menu. So no bread on the list at El Bulli. This simple change, the chef says, proves much bigger creativity than any of his innovative and unique cooking methods.

What is creativity? Isn't it simply looking at things in a new way with open mind and doing them in a different, usually better way? We can all think of another way of doing some familiar things and thus improving the results. Creativity does not require that we are creative all the time. We can start with trying to be creative once a week and then gradually once a day. It is true that it is easier to be creative in matters that we know and which interest us. But why not sometimes try to be creative in things that we don't like.

Let's take the example: Filing documents is not everybody's favourite job. A former Boss of mine created a fantastic filing system of 12 boxes – one box for each month. He filed all his documents in the box of the month in which they were dated. When wanting to find a document he only had to remember which month it had been topical. It was not too difficult. If the document was not in the box he thought it would

most likely be in one of the adjacent boxes. When a new month started the previous content of the box including 12 month old documents was checked and most of it could be deleted. The system is simple and functions very well - and it spares also the Assistant's time. Simple creativity which on top of all makes a good story for visitors!



There is nothing superior, mysterious or secretive about creativity. First we need to have information on how things are at present and how they have been done before. Then we need to want to see things in a new light and have the interest and enthusiasm in doing them in a different way. Finally we need time for the work. The enemies of creativity are laziness, misunderstanding and bad time management. It is too easy to do things as they have always been done and just blame lack of time. Some are afraid of making mistakes. But mistakes can be a key to success. From mistakes we can learn – also from other people's mistakes. Mistakes might also

lead to new results that we did not even imagine.

To develop our creativity we Management Assistants need to be aware of what is going on in the world. We need to reach for new responsibilities, be open-minded in our approach to solving problems, be eager to learn and grow, and not be afraid to suggest something that at first sight might sound strange to other people. In addition, we also must have fun in the workplace – in a happy atmosphere creativity also flourishes.

It is important to share experience as there always are several creative ways of doing things. EUMA Conferences and Training Days are a very useful form of meeting European colleagues, building networks and learning together and from each other. It is a joy to return home from them with a suitcase full of impressions and ideas for the benefit of ourselves and our companies. A EUMA member crystallized the importance of participating in conferences and training in the following way: "As reply to a Boss who might say: What if I train you and you leave! Give the answer: What if you don't train me and I stay!" A most creative proposal!

Heli Puputti
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**FINNAIR flies EUMA
Executive Chairman**

Spring Council 2007, Warsaw, Poland

This year Poland invited us to celebrate their 10th Anniversary with them. The European Committee had found a rather tantalizing Training company whose title for the Training Day left a lot to the imagination. Some may have thought we were off on a jaunt, magic, innovation, a hotel with a view, not quite what the boss might call professional nor serious! It was, however, a very professionally organised event, thanks to our competent Polish EUMA members and Travel Bank coy. As for the magic, I myself was surprised when I set eyes on the city of Warsaw. I had done my homework, my mind was set... even the Poles I know told me it was not the best example of Poland to visit for a first time, grey, old place, steeped in history, etc. etc. Instead I found beautiful, wide, tree-lined avenues, exciting new architecture around the hotel area, huge parks to wander around, a brilliant copy of the historic capital which I never expected to see restored in this manner, fantastic food, wonderful jewellery and a very warm welcome. Oh yes, and the huge Swiss chocolate rabbit! In fact, I wondered why all the Poles are over in my place, so to speak, but yes, economy knows no beauty. You have to go where the work is. Let's hope that Warsaw remains as beautiful as this for the future and I'm sure that many of our Polish expatriated colleagues must often feel homesick, so remember that when you hear the talk again.

The Spring Council meetings were productive, as usual, see below.

National Chairmen, Treasurers and PRO meetings and the Full Council meeting

A short training seminar on 'Association Management - Module 1 Membership Gain & Sustain, Module 2: Committee Continuity was organized for all the Council officers since the event tried for the first time in Budapest last year had been popular. We were privileged to be entertained by two EUMA members who are professional trainers. Thanks to Helen Monument and Karen Nanninga we shall also have a follow-up to the information we learnt of in about six months' time. As a consequence, the Full Council meeting was scheduled to be brief and concerned with only essential items needing discussion/decision.

Endorsement of decisions at Full Council

National Chairmen's meeting

1. The Induction Programme for new members was approved and will be posted on the website for national groups to use.

2. The up-date of the Speakers' bank in a new format was approved.

3. A new study group was set up to start a revision of the Statutes.

National Treasurers' meeting

No decisions were made needing endorsement. The result of the surplus of the conference in Malmö, €6155.20, was announced.

National PR Officers' meeting

1. Up-dating of the website will take place on 1 July 2007 with forthcoming events from National Groups

2. The Media and Advertising team decided that financial rewards received from advertising should be split as follows from now onwards: 1/3 to the National group and 2/3 to CF instead of all rewards going to the Central Fund.

3. It was decided to open an official vacancy for Assistant Editor (or Deputy Editor?) for proActive, applications should reach the European PRO before 1 July 2007.

4. A new 3-star project has been launched to reward a success story which involves twin countries. Three stars can be gained up to the deadline of 1 July 2007.

All decisions were endorsed.

Remember that you can now read all the minutes of all the meetings on the website. So I shall not make a copy of it all in this page.

Website news

The web team leader – Kristín Pétursdóttir, Iceland has accepted to continue as leader of the group. The highlight of the Council meeting was certainly hearing from Christine Davies, European Honorary Member, who attended as representative of the Founder, Sonia Vanular. Christine was really welcomed back to the EUMA environment from which she has been absent since she retired and moved to live in Turkey where she is running a small daily newspaper for English-speaking readers. Christine makes the Self-Development programme come to life, so take a look at it on the website.

We also noted the presence of our newest European Honorary Member, Helga Glatzel. She was an active participant at the Training Day. An exciting programme for the next Annual Conference in Brussels was presented by the team and this is one you should really try to attend if you are concerned for the profession. Take a look at the conference website already www.eumaconference.be

European Committee Networking

The European Committee met in December in The Netherlands at the kind invitation of the new European PRO who invited us to her home. Preparations for the Spring Council meetings and Training Day event were on the agenda. The work of the committee members was mainly concerned with hand-over procedures to the three new committee members. None of us were able to be present at an

event outside our own country. It was, however, a very fruitful time for exchange of views.

Our External Relations Officer, Karen Nanninga, was very active. Here are just some of her actions for EUMA since Christmas: Gave a 3-hour lecture at Katho Hantal, Kortrijk in Belgium, one of the Belgian educational institutes with a management assistant's curriculum and a EUMA member. Supported the Planet GV conference in Croatia, end of February, and spoke on the subject of international issues: "Intercultural communication". Sent some information to the Japan Secretaries Association which has started its name change process and was collecting as many associations' names as possible, Harimi Ishii who speaks very good English is still in contact. Karen met her at the Summit in London in 2003. Wrote three columns for the new Dutch magazine 'Ambition' and used our EUMA network to find persons to interview. This is real visibility for EUMA.

Official Announcements

The Association Secretary announces that no candidates applied for the position of Affiliate Representative Employer. Consequently, the position is still open.

There is one candidate for the position of European Chairman:

Gillian Richmond, EUMA, United Kingdom

The election will be put forward at the forthcoming AGM 2007.

The AGM will take place on Saturday, 20 October 2007 in Brussels, Belgium

EUMA events:

2007 events

21 & 22 July 2007 European Committee in Nicosia, Cyprus

16 & 17 October 2007 – EUMA European Committee

18 October 2007 – EUMA Autumn Council Meetings

18 & 19 October 2007 - 33rd EUMA Annual Conference 'Evolution or Extinction'

20 October 2007– EUMA AGM
All events to be held at the Shearaton Brussels Hotel & Towers, BRUSSELS, Belgium

To be arranged by joint forces of EUMA Belgium and EUMA Luxembourg

2008 events

3 April 2008 EUMA European Committee in Oslo, Norway

4 April 2008 – Spring Council Meetings, OSLO, Norway

5 April 2008 - Training Day, OSLO, Norway

18-20 September 2008– 34th EUMA Annual conference, Council and AGM, BERLIN, Germany

2009 events

March 2009 – Spring Council and Training Day, Manchester, U.K.

September/October 2008 – 35th EUMA Annual conference, Council and AGM, Lake Garda, Italy

Further details on events are available at www.euma.org.

Morna Robillard
Association Secretary

THE MAGIC OF INNOVATION : DEVELOP YOUR CREATIVE SKILLS

Warsaw, 24 March 2007

PERFORMA

What a crowd that was!! Highly international, participative, vibrant, creative and fun. The dream of every presenter.

In the beginning I thought that presenting in front of 130 women and 2 men would be a difficult task knowing that this group of people is very demanding, perfectionist and very professional in what they do. But very soon I felt at ease as they all jumped in deep water and joined the fun of exploring their own creativity and that of their organizations.



We were comforted by the fact that thirteen competent, energetic volunteers acted as

team co-ordinators, helping us with their positive presence, to manage an interactive process in a large group of people.

We, at PERFORMA, believe that learning is more effective through fun and games rather than long academic presentations and note taking, so we prepared a rich program involving painting & interactive exercises for sparking creativity, used magic tricks as metaphors, music & humour for good mood, physical exercises & dancing for alertness and energising, team presentations and a little theory accompanied with case studies for further stimulation.

Starting from our basic credo that Innovation is producing something New AND Useful and that all humans are creative we proceeded to investigate some techniques which put our creativity at work in defining challenges at work, producing solutions and choosing the best ones.

After all good ideas must be valuable, original and feasible.

We began by re-defining the

Challenge of "How to promote Creativity and Innovation in our Organizations".

Many aspects of the main issue came out: how to persuade our managers, other departments, our colleagues, how to build innovative teams, how to develop creativity techniques, how to increase motivation within the organization, how to introduce change, how to gain acceptance of new ways of working - thinking and doing.



The methodology used to confront the various challenges was based on DIVERGENCE & CONVERGENCE, producing many ideas which are consequently categorised with eventual focus on the most preferred, following pre-determined criteria.

During Divergence we aim at producing ideas in big quantities and out of the box, the unexpected, not done before, the 'crazy' ones. We consciously stretch our brains to come up with many ideas and we practised by thinking as many possible uses of a newspaper!

My favourite one was using a newspaper as a killer weapon!

At this point there must be no critique, no discussion, all comments are correct, high energy, encourage feelings, visions, ideas and build on each other's suggestions.



Other techniques practised during brainstorming were picture association – using random pictures to evoke ideas and squid sketching – playing word association game and placing new words in a tentacle like squid-sketch for further idea stimulation. (We even did a 5 minute body stretch to form a squid sketch to suggest that mental stretching is as energising as the physical stretching.)

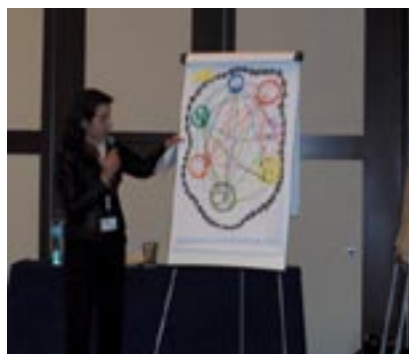
We had lots of laughs during the 'Yes, and press conference' game where we practised role playing with a twist: always say yes and build on more

ideas. The more provocative the interviewers' question, the more innovative the answers!



During Convergence we have to reach to a solution by evaluating ideas produced during the Divergence stage. Teams discuss the various ideas by approaching each one with what is good about it rather than pointing to all the negative concerns. Subsequently they rate each idea based on its value, originality and feasibility, to come up with the one with the highest score.

Having their ideas at hand the teams now had to 'sell' them to the rest of us.



Dimis with his magic tricks demonstrated that we buy products, services and ideas with our Reason as well as our Fantasy: We distrusted the 'salesman' with the ever changing lengths of ropes and wondered how Dimis found Eva's card by sharing a vision with her.

The teams, in an explosion of creativity paraded and presented us with their ideas whilst singing, dancing and acting. Well done to all!



In his last presentation Dimis expanded on his theory on innovative organisations. He used a triangle, a square and a pentagon to discuss the Sources (Talent, Energy, Method), the Structure (System, Target, Team, Individual) and the Culture (Ideas, Freedom, Risk, Humour and Engagement) of a creative organisation.

But the Finale was yet to come: Dimis' message was that an innovative organization must "Reward success, celebrate failure and punish inaction."

To communicate this message with unforgettable impact, he staged risk-taking in an impressive acrobatic trick of attempting to get 4 eggs fall in 4 glasses of water. The eggs were delicately balanced on cards on a tray which was standing on the 4 glasses. With one brisk move of the tray, while everyone in the room held her breath all 4 eggs fell in the glasses and there was happiness ever after !

Liana Tomazou
Performa

Intercultural competence

The ability to perceive cultural differences and to cope with them is one of the bases of intercultural-competence

It is one of many skills required for Management Assistants and EUMA aims to provide opportunities for the promotion of European cross-cultural relationships and professional understanding through the exchange of ideas and practices, by assisting members who wish to work in other European countries represented in the Association, and by holding international meetings of a professional and cultural nature. EUMA Austria invited its members and EUMA-friends to a workshop on the same topic in February and it was well received with the participants.

Business moves quickly these days and companies are under pressure to get their products out into the international market. Today's world requires us to look for global solutions in our everyday life as well as our working environment and in order to improve business and personal performance significantly we need "inter-cultural competence" to enable us to work across cultural and language boundaries and eliminate behaviour that can lead to difficulties. To succeed we need to build good relations, understand and respect differences, be flexible and adaptable; communicate clearly so that all can work towards agreed goals.

One of the primary challenges is the knowledge of foreign languages, but even when you are fluent in another language it is still not always obvious that you grasp the full meaning. Just think of how frequently we are misunderstood or misinterpreted by our own colleagues or friends.

Cultures can be different not only between

continents and nations, but also within the same company. Every human being has their own cultural affiliation or cultural identity.

Cultural characteristics can be differentiated between several dimensions and aspects:

- basic personality, value orientation, experience of time and space, selective perception, nonverbal communication, patterns of behaviour, etc.

To improve our intercultural competence we must raise our general awareness of all cross-cultural issues. It is a balance between:

- knowledge (about other cultures, people, nations, behaviours),
- emotional competence;
- empathy (understanding feelings and needs of other people), and
- self-confidence (the ability to express one's own point of view in a transparent way, with the aim to be understood and respected).

As EUMA Members we have the opportunity to work with colleagues from other nationalities during our international conferences and meetings, which gives us a chance to gain valuable knowledge and understanding. In our companies this knowledge can help us create real synergy by bringing people of various nationalities, with various capabilities together in a skilful manner and thus enhance corporate performance.

Angelika Geisemeyer

- Acting PR Officer EUMA Austria -

Visit to Aros - Aarhus Kunstmuseum (Aarhus Museum of Art)

On Wednesday 15th of November EUMA had planned a visit to the newly opened art museum ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum in the centre of Aarhus in eastern Jutland. – We were guided through the exhibitions by a very competent student who started by telling us something about the building itself.

It is a very beautiful and unique museum. – Unfortunately it was dark and rainy because from the roof of the museum you have the most pleasant view of Århus, the harbour and the bay.

The big sculpture “Boy” is the landmark of the museum and create by an Australian artist.

We started on the top floor, where the restaurant is situated. Not to eat but to see Gallery 1 that bring visitors into close contact with major works from the museum’s comprehensive collection of paintings and sculptures dating from the period 1770-1930.



We went downstairs in the museum and through the times of Impressionism, Expressionism and Modern Art. – After this tour we saw the current exhibition “Reappearance”, photos by Per Bak Jensen. Photos of small details in nature enlarged into big pictures. In these photos it was like time had been set to a stop. As a contrast to this we finished with the very special and, for a museum, unusual exhibition

“RACING CARS – The Art Dimension”.

- Art and ultimate motor sport united for the first time ever
- sculpture on wheels – in an artistic total installation
- 19 Formula 1 and Le Mans-racers
- Installation by Danish renown artist Ingvar Cronhammar
- Unique soundscape by experimental musician Martin Hall”

Indeed very unusual and spectacular. And a very interesting observation to make: All the business men walking around with an intense look on their faces studying cars and catalogue to see how fast each car could go, how many prices it had won, etc, etc.

The guided tour lasted 1½ hours and at 7:00 PM we were all quite hungry. We went to the café and had a nice light meal and a glass of wine before saying good-bye after a nice and interesting evening. This museum certainly is worth a visit.

Berit M. Vendelbjerg

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