



The Introduction to NLP for Business Leaders

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What is NLP?

Have you noticed that people are different? Of course you have. Have you ever wondered how those differences are created? I can explain: If you begin with the fact that most of us have five senses and yet there is far more information available to those senses than we could possibly process – or would want to – you have the key.

Given that our senses pick up more information than we can actually use, that indicates that a filtering process is going on in order to feed our conscious awareness with a manageable amount of data. Therefore each of us is only aware of a tiny proportion of what is going on at any one time. In effect, we all create our own, highly subjective, 'map of the world' inside our own minds. Small wonder then, that two people can emerge from an hour-long meeting with totally different views about what has been agreed or decided!

The 'official' Society of NLP definition of NLP is that it is 'the study of the structure of subjective experience'.

So NLP is built upon a systematic approach to understanding the filtering process, the nature of the filters – which may include beliefs, values, past experiences and languages – and the extent to which the resulting map of the world is effective. An effective map of the world is one that supports the achievement of your goals. An ineffective part of the map gets in the way of the achievement of the same goals.

NLP is also concerned with how an ineffective part of the map of the world can be adjusted to become effective. Hence NLP has generated many techniques for systematically changing behaviour, beliefs, habits, negative emotions and so on. It has also given us many equally useful techniques for eliciting information about maps of the world and the ways in which they operate, effectively or ineffectively. And ultimately, all maps of the world are effective at producing results – it's just a question of whether or not they were the results you wanted!

Areas of application of NLP in the workplace

Self-management

As organisations get flatter, more managers have more direct reports and hence less time for each one. As organisations grow, more people work from home or on a different site from colleagues, their manager or their team members and so the amount of input from managers reduces even more. To perform effectively every employee must be self-managing to some extent.

NLP techniques and principles can support activities such as goal-setting, self-motivation, overcoming nervousness before an important event, conquering mental blocks, improving decision-making techniques and managing self-development.

Communication

Communication is probably the biggest challenge in any organisation, and the larger it is, the more of a challenge communications become. In the face of increasingly 'flat' company structures, greater reliance on technology and the growing support for diversity in the workforce, effective communication is getting harder, and yet is also becoming more important than ever.

NLP can be applied to work out effective communication strategies for different individuals and groups. By using NLP models and questioning systems we can find out a lot about how others construct their map of the world and how best to structure communications to achieve the desired goal.

Learning and developing new skills

The pace of life and business is increasing. In the race for market share, most companies have to be highly flexible and adaptable in order to succeed. This means that the workforce must be highly flexible and adaptable too. People need to be able to learn new skills efficiently, manage change enthusiastically and constantly seek out new sources of competitive advantage.

Much of NLP was developed through techniques of modelling, which involves exploring the internal and external processes associated with excellent performance. This enables us to distil the essence of the skill of an excellent performer and teach it to others.

The modelling process can be used effectively by organisations to replicate the excellence of certain individuals. For example, wouldn't it be useful to know the real skills difference between your organisation's top performers and the rest? Those skills could be modelled and then learnt by the rest of the team.

Similarly, for individuals, NLP can help you to develop a reliable strategy for your own learning and how to model skills from colleagues, specialists or even public figures.

Dealing with emotional 'baggage'

There are an increasing number of people in the workforce who have experienced redundancy, a takeover, relocation, a merger or some kind of violence or harassment at work. Even the best organisations do not always succeed in helping people come through these kinds of experiences with a positive attitude. At worst, a whole organisation may end up demoralised and unproductive through a badly managed merger or change programme. Reluctant though we may be to admit it, many people carry these bad experiences with them and this can hinder them from achieving their full potential.

NLP offers some of the best and quickest techniques for acknowledging the personal significance of these experiences and shaking off the negative consequences such as mistrust of employers, anger and distress, low morale, lack of motivation and loss of self-worth. Having moved through the negative effects of the events, the individual is then free to consider the value of what they have learned and apply it constructively in the future.

Overall, NLP offers a structured, systematic approach and reliable, effective techniques for dealing with the most challenging aspects of managing people – and 'people' includes you!!!!

Case Studies – Coaching

George was a Senior Manager within a manufacturing and distribution business. He had overall responsibility for a site where some 500 people were employed and reported to a Director some 200 miles away. He came to me because his relationship with his boss was difficult and he had been unable to sort it out. Using NLP models and techniques, we worked through a programme of communications skills, identifying patterns in both George's communications and his boss's. George learned some simple NLP strategies for creating professional rapport and for adapting his communication style to facilitate meaningful dialogue with his boss. He was astounded by the results, because the skills he learned were completely transferable and helped him enhance communications in all aspects of his work.

I also helped him to give up smoking

Margaret was the Compensation and Benefits Manager of a large international company. She was approaching her 50th birthday when we first met and having a crisis of confidence about her perceived value in the business and was worried that her career would be over when she turned 50. She also had 2 teenage sons and a husband who found it hard to handle her frequent business trips that left him in charge of the family home. Her loyalties conflicted and she was beginning to feel very stressed. We worked through a programme that focused on Margaret's personal values relating to work and to family life. By using NLP techniques to identify and resolve conflicts in her values she was able to create a congruent plan for the future and stop worrying.

She continued to be a client for a long time after her personal coaching was completed, because the confidential nature of her work meant that she lacked a peer group to bounce ideas off and found that a coach was the ideal person to fill this gap. She eventually moved to another company in the same sector as HR Director and when her new company acquired the old one she became HR Director of the combined Group.

Derek was a Senior Manager in IT. He was very successful but found it hard to stay in any job for more than 2 years and seemed always to be working at cross-purposes with the people around him. He was regarded as a maverick, respected but also slightly feared. He came to me because he was curious about NLP – he didn't think he had any major issues. Working with Derek it became clear that he was a habitual 'mis-matcher' – he would disagree for the sake of disagreeing and couldn't stop himself from doing it. I helped him develop a different strategy so that he could choose when to disagree and when to go along with others. Two months later, he was promoted to IT Director in a different division of the company. Two years after that he took over as IT Director of the Group's most prestigious company at a time when a business-critical project was over-budget and behind schedule. By applying NLP to the process and making NLP coaching available to his senior team he was able to deliver the project on time.

Sally was Senior Sales Manager. She enjoyed her work and had an impressive track record of achievement. She chose NLP coaching because, in her early thirties she began to be aware of a conflict between her career goals and her personal desire for marriage and family life. This had become such an issue that it was distracting her from work and causing further frustration. We worked through a programme, which focused on Sally's personal values relating to work and to family life. By identifying and resolving conflicts in her values she was able to create a congruent plan for the future and stop worrying. Within days she was totally focused at work again and enjoying her leisure time much more. Within 3 months she was promoted.

Resolving conflicts in her values also enabled her to deal with a long-standing weight problem.

A year later she was also a relationship with the man who was to become the father of her two daughters.

John was a Senior Manager in a science and research organisation. Assessment had identified him as a potential 'high-flyer' but he consistently received feedback that he lacked presence and often failed to make an impact at important meetings. His Director of Learning referred him to me to 'see if we could do anything'. John had four coaching sessions in which we identified his personal values relating to work, profiled his personality using 'Thinking Styles' and then worked through specific behaviours that he could use to become more 'charismatic' and memorable in meetings. He realised that semi-formal situations were the most difficult for him and we developed strategies for handling that kind of occasion. Between his final coaching session and the review a month later, the company announced a re-organisation in which Managers at John's level and the one above would be in competition for a reduced number of jobs. John identified the job he wanted, declined to apply for any others and was appointed to the job of his choice – the highest profile role available.

Case Study – in-house training

NLP Practitioner Training at West Midlands Police

The NLP Practitioner training was undertaken by a majority of supervisors from one BCU in order to enhance leadership skills. The results show an impressive improvement not only in leadership within the BCU but also in wider policing skills. In an environment where all time off the job for training has to be carefully prioritised, this can be regarded as a 2-for-the-price-of-1 training programme, where management development also delivers results in core police activities.

Reasons for undertaking the training

The NLP Practitioner training was undertaken as part of the BCU Leadership Development programme. Key success criteria were:

- Effective team leadership
- Outcome focus
- Motivated teams
- Efficient problem-solving

The Superintendent who commissioned the training had recently qualified as a Practitioner of NLP and saw the possibilities of other benefits from undertaking this training. However, NLP has a very wide field of application and at that stage it was impossible to predict other benefits.

Method of delivery

The programme was delivered in four 4-day modules, one per month from November 2001 to February 2002. Between modules participants completed project work. This encouraged application of NLP principles and techniques to everyday working situations.

11 of the participants were BCU staff and they represented a mixture of ranks and roles:

7 x Sergeants – Custody Officer, Beat Managers, CSB Sergeants
2 x Constables – a Detective and a Tutor Constable/Microbeat Officer
1 x Sector Inspector
1 x BCU Personnel Officer

The remaining two members of the group were a Chief Inspector from the central training service, who joined the group largely to evaluate the training, and a Superintendent from another division.

Why Brilliant Minds?

The principal trainer at Brilliant Minds is Dianne Lowther. At the time of this training programme she had been practising NLP in a business environment for over 10 years. She has a well-researched theoretical knowledge of the subject as well as a logical and pragmatic approach to applying NLP in everyday working life. Brilliant Minds has an extensive list of clients in both public and private sectors.

As a bonus for this particular training, Brilliant Minds were able to use a trainer's assistant who has a Police background (as well as being a Practitioner of NLP) and therefore found it easy to relate to the specific interests and requirements of this group.

Results

The assignments completed between modules record countless examples of how the course participants applied the NLP skills in their normal everyday work. Because of the extensive skill-building exercises in the programme, many of the examples recorded are instances where the individual experienced unconscious competence in the skills and only afterwards noticed what they had done to achieve the results. The results can be shown in a number of different areas but these are by no means exhaustive:

Leadership skills

Delegates reported that they used NLP to achieve:

- Clearly identified outcomes from operational briefings
- Shared understanding of objectives
- More productive PDR interviews
- Improved relationships with team members
- Changing entrenched ideas

The Superintendent reports that he noticed 'a marked improvement in the motivation and results achieved by those teams whose Team Leader attended the course'. This is reflected in improved BCU performance figures.

"I was in duty in the cell block. The occupant of one of the cells was making a lot of noise – shouting and banging on the door. I walked down to his cell, talked to him using one of the NLP techniques I'd recently learned and he shut up. Within minutes he was asleep. My colleagues were amazed – now they think I'm a witch!"

Karen, Sergeant

“Two men had been arrested following a bar fight. I took statements from each of them in turn and they gave different accounts of the incident. With the awareness I had gained through learning NLP, I noticed that each was using his memory differently and it was clear which one was telling the truth. I was later told by the CPS that my observations, recorded during the interviews, had enabled them to prepare an effective prosecution.”

Graham, Sergeant

Understanding of self

All delegates reported useful self-awareness and hence better self-management ability. They all believed that they had experienced significant personal development through the training and that this enabled them to perform more effectively at work.

Understanding of others

One of the most significant areas of results has been in the improvement of working relationships. Much of this can be traced to the adoption of an attitude (consistent with NLP principles) of curiosity rather than conflict in areas of difference.

Here are some quotes from the evaluation:

“I have made major changes to my interactions and relationships with people”

“As an individual I am now more patient and tolerant of others values and beliefs”

“NLP helps me gain a quicker level of trust and support”

These skills can therefore be seen as a valuable support to the Diversity initiative previously introduced.

Policing Skills

Although the formal evaluation of the programme does not investigate benefits beyond the Team Leadership role it was originally directed towards, the project work shows many examples of how NLP skills can be applied directly to police work. Benefits in this area include:

- Improved questioning techniques
- Calming of aggressive individuals
- Quicker, more effective intervention following traumatic incidents
- Managing state of mind

The evaluation report prepared by the Chief Inspector concludes: “There is little doubt that the delegates who attended the NLP Practitioner course have benefited personally and have evidenced that they have been able to apply their new skills in the workplace to the benefit of the organisation”

“Two members of my team were constantly in conflict with each other. I’d tried everything I could think of and nothing seemed to make any difference. Then I applied some of the NLP techniques. Now they get along with each other as well as anyone else in the team.”

Mark, Sergeant

Case Study – in-house training



**National Training Awards
Wales Winner 2009**

NLP Practitioner Training at Schaeffler (UK) Ltd

Schaeffler (UK) Ltd is a manufacturing business in the automotive sector that undertook an 18-month development programme that included all levels of management but focused mainly on the top team. For a total investment of less than £70,000 they have shown a growth in business of 20% and have reduced absenteeism by 16%, saving £20,000 this year. This significant growth in business has set them apart at a time when most other organisations in the sector are struggling.

Reasons for undertaking the training

Schaeffler (UK) Ltd is a medium-sized manufacturing business in the automotive sector and had been through a major cultural change. In 2000, due to increased competition from low labour cost countries, the factory was struggling and threatened with closure. The leadership team put together a recovery plan with the overall goal to become 'Production Location of Choice'. They briefed the staff in a programme of one-to-one meetings and over a period of 3-4 years completely turned the business around, becoming the 'production location of choice' for new and existing customers and also within the Schaeffler Group.

In January 2007 when Adrian Roberts, HR Director, met Dianne Lowther of Brilliant Minds for the first time the leadership team were looking for ways to stimulate further improvement. The management team was working well, but the next level of supervisors and team leaders were reluctant to own Continuous Improvement, change processes and some aspects of the day-to-day running of the business. The question in everyone's mind was – how to make another big step forward? NLP had been briefly introduced to the leadership team by another consultant. They thought it might be useful but didn't know enough at that stage.

The Introductory Programme

The first step was an introductory programme of NLP in August 2007. All managers were invited and 15 out of 18 attended the two days.

The participants represented a mixture of departments and roles: Managing Director, Manufacturing Director, HR Director, General Manager, National Sales Manager, 2 x Sales Managers, Marketing Services Manager, 2 x Engineering Managers, Materials Manager, Production Manager, Quality Manager, Section Manager, Maintenance Manager, Training Officer.

Feedback from the introductory programme:

"It was very practical and I was able to relate the content to work situations"

Sales Manager

"Not a PowerPoint slide in sight! A refreshing change." Materials Manager

The managers who were unable to attend this programme joined one of Brilliant Minds public courses at a later date.

The Practitioner Programme

Following the introductory programme the HR Director, MD and Plant Director were convinced that NLP could be a useful tool to help them achieve their goals and decided to undertake the Practitioner programme. All managers were invited to attend, with a clear understanding that it was entirely voluntary and that no-one would be put under any pressure to participate since it represents a significant commitment of business and personal time.

The Practitioner programme was delivered in 5 modules of 3 days between January and July 2008 with an assessment day in September 2008. There were 8 participants:

Managing Director

Plant Director/Deputy MD

HR Director

Head of Sales

Head of Marketing

Training Officer

Engineering Manager

Distribution Manager

7 out of the 8 achieved the Practitioner Certification in September 2008 with one participant unable to complete the programme in 2008 due to ill-health, but completed during 2009.

NLP Skills for Supervisors and Team Leaders

By July of 2008 it was clear that the Senior Managers were gaining significant benefits from learning and applying NLP skills. They realised that these benefits could be multiplied if the next level of management – the supervisors, team leaders and key staff – were also to learn the skills and become to apply NLP to improve productivity and performance. The HR Director and one of the Engineering Managers identified the aspects of NLP that were most relevant to the target group and a programme was designed to run over three months. The programme included a ½ day NLP introductory session followed by three one day modules:

Module 1- How do you really manage people?

Module 2 – Problem Solving

Module 3 – Dealing with difficult situations

There were around 20 participants identified for this training, some involved in three-shift working, so they were divided into 3 groups. The programme was rolled out over a number of weeks and was fitted in around the shift patterns.

The programme was launched by 2 Brilliant Minds trainers and 3 of the Senior Managers who had participated in the Practitioner programme. Each of the Senior Managers then supported one module of the programme by giving individual accounts on how NLP had benefited them and the organisation and facilitating discussion on how to apply the content of the module.

Why Brilliant Minds?

The principal trainer at Brilliant Minds is Dianne Lowther. She has been practising NLP at senior level in business environments for over 15 years. She has a well-researched theoretical knowledge of the subject as well as a logical and pragmatic approach to applying NLP in everyday working life. Brilliant Minds has an extensive list of clients in both public and private sectors.

Results

The declared overall objective of undertaking the training was ‘to get people to want to do the right things.’ This included encouraging team leaders to take up more responsibility for not just the day-to-day operations but also for change projects and improvement initiatives. It also included stimulating greater involvement of all staff in problem-solving and quality standards.

The assignments completed between modules record countless examples of how the course participants applied the NLP skills in their normal everyday work. Because of the extensive skill-building exercises in the programme, many of the examples recorded are instances where the individual experienced unconscious competence in the skills and only afterwards noticed what they had done to achieve the results. The results can be shown in a number of different areas but these are by no means exhaustive:

Working relationships

Participants reported that they used NLP to achieve:

- Recognition and understanding of personality differences
- Adaptation of communications styles to accommodate different personalities
- Appreciation of each other’s skills and preferences
- New approaches to old problems
- Shared problem-solving and mutual coaching

Understanding of self

All participants reported useful self-awareness and hence better self-management ability. They all believed that they had experienced significant personal development through the training and that this enabled them to perform more effectively at work.

“I thought I knew myself. I’d done all the psychometric tests and personality profiles available and I thought I understood myself. Then I did the NLP Practitioner programme” Adrian Roberts, HR Director

Leadership Skills

The area of leadership was a key aspect of the programme and all the participants reported significant results in managing their team and delivering results. Roger Evans, Plant Director reported an interesting result from the company conference where he, as usual delivered the main speech. He decided, instead of simply presenting the company results and highlighting good news, to ask a series of rhetorical questions aimed at engaging staff in thinking about the future. The feedback from the conference was significantly more positive and enthusiastic than previous events.

Business Results

The business results shown by the company are particularly impressive given that the automotive sector as a whole showed a 25% downturn in the period in question. By investing around £65,000 in executive development the team at Schaeffler have shown improvements in business results across a wide range of activities:

- Shortly after the completion of the last module of the Practitioner programme in July 2008 the factory recorded its most productive week ever. This followed the introduction of a new organisational structure that gave Team Leaders greater responsibility than ever before, and they showed they were now willing to accept that responsibility and deliver the results.
- Overall the business has shown a 20% increase in output and with continued business growth the company has introduced seven day working to cope with increased demand
- The company has been nominated as the centre of excellence for Mechanical Tappet production within the Schaeffler Group. This is valuable recognition of the capabilities and performance of the workforce and secures jobs and investment for the future.
- There has been a 16% reduction in absence levels – saving the company around £20,000
- All levels of staff were involved in the annual quality and ESH audits and the results achieved were the best to date
- The company won one of the Welsh Quality Awards

Other improvements that have been noticed but are harder to quantify include:

- Different approach to problem solving and dealing with the customer
- Better approach to work life balance
- Day to day improvement in team working- managers are much more open
- Development of a blame free culture
- Greater understanding of the business and other people
- Increase in improvement ideas

At the National Training Awards 2009 this project won a Wales training Award for Partnership and Collaboration.

The following paragraph is an extract from the submission, which sums up the benefits of this training initiative:

“The NLP Programme has undoubtedly helped achieve these results and the Company has managed to buck the trend and grow its business during difficult economic times. In addition to improved employee behaviour in the workplace, equally valuable outcomes of this training have been the personal benefits experienced by the employees, which have been described by some as ‘life-changing’. This has evidently had a positive impact on family members and the wider community at large. “

This case study shows that development of so-called ‘soft skills’ can deliver hard results in business performance. The team at Schaeffler have shown that they really see their people as the business’s most important asset, that people are the only source of sustainable competitive advantage in the manufacturing sector and that the leadership team have a responsibility for their own development as much as their workforce’s development. The leadership team have shown an exemplary commitment to investment in learning and development at all levels in their organisation and are reaping rich rewards. Let us all hope that other organisations will follow their example.

NLP Certification and Training

NLP Training is an unregulated field. There is no single awarding body or professional institute. Hence you can find a wide variation between programmes on offer from different training companies. There are also some common principles.

Certification

There are 4 levels of certification widely recognised in the NLP community. These are Practitioner, Master Practitioner, Trainer and Master Trainer. You have to achieve each level before progressing to the next. Practitioner and Master Practitioner qualifications are awarded by Trainers; only a Master Trainer can accredit new Trainers.

The main awarding bodies in NLP are:

- Society of NLP
- American Board of NLP (ABNLP)/British Board of NLP (BBNLP)
- International NLP Trainers Association (INLPTA)

Training

The NLP programmes you will see most NLP Training companies offering are Practitioner and Master Practitioner. Since these are often a big commitment of time and money, most trainers also offer an introductory level programme so that you can attend one or two days and find out if you want to go on to Practitioner training and if that trainer's style suits your preferences.

Courses can vary significantly and two Practitioners of NLP who trained with different Trainers might have a very different set of skills. Some training companies regard a Practitioner of NLP to be someone who practices NLP in their daily life and uses it to enhance their professional expertise - this is probably what you should be looking for if you want to learn NLP to become a more successful leader. Other training companies approach NLP Practitioner training as a step towards setting up a 'practice' and using it as a therapist or coach with others one-to-one – useful if you want to do that, and for alternative therapists and so on, but not the obvious route for business leaders.

There is a reasonable amount of agreement about the syllabus for NLP Practitioner training, so you can expect some of the same ground to be covered whoever is conducting the training. What will differ is the depth in which each topic is covered and the examples and exercises

used. Some training companies offer a business-oriented programme and this will often be labelled as 'NLP Business Practitioner' training.

The potential downside to this is that the 'Business Practitioner' training will still focus on the techniques for personal change and cover the same material as any other Practitioner programme. If you're looking for a course for business applications, make sure it's being offered by a trainer with relevant experience of business.

A lot of people who learn NLP do so entirely for the personal development experience. If you attend a 'general' course you may find yourself learning with people who are dealing with a mid-life crisis, handling emotional baggage from childhood or trying to improve their romantic relationships. You have been warned!

'Accelerated' Training

One major difference between courses is their length. When NLP was first introduced in the UK in the early 1980's the standard for a Practitioner training programme was 20 days in total. During the 1990's some training companies introduced a style of programme they called 'accelerated training', which is usually about 7 days in total. At first sight this is very appealing to busy people; however, the reality is that the 7 days is the total time spent in the training room. Before you get there, you have to listen to an audio recording of the material at least twice, read several books and complete a written test. This works very well for some individuals – it depends on your preferred learning style – and has the advantage of flexibility. The downside is that some people are too busy to do the preparation and this can seriously detract from the effectiveness of the group sessions.

Other training providers offer a practitioner programme that is around 7 days in total without any pre-course learning. This simply goes to show that the notion of 'Practitioner training' varies widely. In general it's fair to say that the shorter the course, the less you'll learn. Remember that NLP is a set of practical skills that need to be practiced to embed them at the unconscious level. Without that practice, you can come to the end of the course with no new skills, just a lot of new information.

Do I really need to attend a Practitioner training?

This is a good question. The important thing to bear in mind is that NLP is a set of practical skills. That makes it difficult to learn from books. Imagine you wanted to learn to play a new sport or a musical instrument. Understanding the theory is one thing, but if you want to be able to do it well, you need to practice. NLP is similar, it's not about knowledge, it's about skill and it's easiest for most people to learn from someone who already has the skills.

Even a 1-day course will bring some of the basics to life for most learners. That will make the books more accessible and if you have someone to practice with then you can probably achieve quite a bit without actually attending any more training.

The question then, is – do you want a certificate? Currently, you have to attend a course in order to get accreditation.

Reasons to take a Practitioner programme

- To get the certificate
- To increase your network
- To get lots of practice and coaching from a Trainer of NLP

Reasons to learn without attending a Practitioner programme

- If you don't want/need the certificate
- If you like to direct your own learning totally
- If you have someone you can practice with

The Brilliant Minds Executive NLP Practitioner programme

I ran my first 20-day Practitioner programme in 1997 and it's always been a business-oriented programme because that's what I know about. I do have a degree in Psychology and I'm an experienced coach but I'm NOT a therapist, so I tend not to train people to do therapy or target the programme at people exclusively wanting personal development.

In 2010 I stopped running the Practitioner programme in favour of a condensed 4-day programme, on the basis that it would be more practical for business leaders. In 2012 I decided that there really is no substitute for a 'proper' Practitioner programme and on the basis that I want to deliver the best learning I can for my clients, I've reinstated the 20-day programme. Sometimes there really isn't a shortcut to success.

Benefits of Learning NLP

Learning NLP represents a significant investment, not just financially, but also in terms of the time you spend learning the range of skills and attitudes involved in NLP. Any sensible business person contemplating an investment of this kind would be bound to ask “What’s the return?”

The kind of benefits that you can expect if you learn NLP in-depth are varied and many. Also, as indicated in previous sections, different programmes may offer different benefits. From a business perspective, benefits can be put under three headings:

Self-management

Personal change is like charity – it begins at home. Almost every aspect of NLP relates to yourself and how you experience life, work, yourself and others. NLP gives us many useful techniques for managing that experience and shaping our lives the way we want them. From the simple process of defining outcomes, to subtle shifts in perspective and quick methods for self-motivation you will learn systematic, reliable techniques that really work. This means that any other type of training you take will become easier to implement. No longer will you have to struggle against your natural inclinations in order to adopt a new way of doing something. You won’t have to ‘try’ to remember to do a task in a new way. You will have the technology at your fingertips to re-order your own thinking and re-programme your habits to achieve the results you want. You will also understand how to make decisions effectively, how to manage yourself in relation to time, how to overcome stress and how to get yourself in the right frame of mind for the job in hand, whatever it is.

In flat organisations where management time is at a premium and most of us get infrequent input or support from our bosses, the skills of self-management are vitally important.

Communication and influence

As well as managing yourself more effectively, you will learn how to communicate with precision to achieve the results you want in your relationships with other people. By sharpening up your senses you will learn how to read other people accurately and how to adjust your communication to fit another person’s mind and mood. You’ll practice establishing rapport in order to achieve a quality of communication that rarely happens by accident but can be deliberately created and will lead

to brilliant results. You'll find out some of the ways that people differ from each other and in what ways they are the same. You'll practice communicating in different styles and structures so that you have greater choice about how to approach any person or group and how to achieve the results you have in mind.

We will also explore the use of language in some detail. You will gain the skills of using your words to engage with another person's thoughts and to direct their attention precisely where you want it. You will begin to hear much more than the words people are saying so that you can understand more fully what they are telling you. Your conversations will become more purposeful, more efficient and more enjoyable!

You'll probably find that your relationships become easier and that your influence becomes greater. And because these skills will be well-established by the end of the course, you won't even have to consciously do anything different – you'll just catch yourself getting brilliant results!

Resolving problems from the past

Most adults have had unpleasant experiences at some time in the past, although few organisations are willing to acknowledge the detrimental effect these can have on everyday business. Even fewer are willing to offer solutions to people suffering the consequences of re-organisation, relocation, downsizing, divisionalising, violence, harassment or debt. Some people go through major upheavals and traumas and seem to cope; others can be seriously affected by something that appears less significant. The difference between an experience that haunts you for a long time afterwards and one that you're able to shrug off quite quickly is usually in how you think about it.

NLP offers you an opportunity to actually move through any emotional baggage from the past as well as learning techniques for letting go of old fears, doubts and limitations. You will be able to retain the positive learning from any experience, whilst removing any debilitating blocks to your day-to-day performance. So, whether you've been made redundant and feel demoralised, or you've failed to achieve something and feel inadequate, or had to cope with illness and feel anxious, or whatever else is getting in the way of your natural brilliance, you will learn how to move forward in a new way, without it. This includes letting go of old grudges, breaking destructive patterns of behaviour and disconnecting fears and phobias. Free of that emotional baggage, you'll be able to respond to the challenges of today on their own merit and put your positive energy back into rewarding achievements.

These are just some of the benefits of learning NLP. Many Brilliant Minds graduates have moved their careers forward after taking the training, either through a promotion or by an important shift in direction or function. Most report a greater feeling of being in control of their own lives and destiny. Stress is reduced and daily tasks and routines run more smoothly.

It probably sounds too good to be true. If you're having difficulty believing that this is really possible, ask to talk to someone who has already done the training and hear what they have to say.

Benefits to organisations of training employees in NLP

Individuals who apply NLP skills in their work are valuable employees because:

- they take responsibility and show lots of initiative
- they develop clear goals and stay focused on achieving them
- they know how to get the best out of meetings
- they build rapport with others quickly and easily
- they appreciate others' points of view; they rarely create conflict
- they can do business with anyone
- they negotiate well and achieve win/win solutions to problems
- they are adaptable and flexible
- they can find the optimum state of mind for any situation
- they are in control of themselves and their emotions
- they have techniques for overcoming their own mental blocks
- they keep on developing!

A team of people who apply NLP skills in their work will:

- deliver results
- show respect for each other
- learn from each other
- share responsibility
- value their differences as well as their similarities
- focus on shared goals and values
- be creative

Recommended Books

Introducing NLP for Work, A Practical Guide

Dianne Lowther

You'd think it was strange if I didn't tell you about my own book, wouldn't you! Because NLP is a big subject and at first glance it's not obvious what's going to be relevant at work and what's best left in the therapists consulting room, some people miss out on valuable applications of NLP in the workplace. This compact book encapsulates all the essential principles of NLP that can be easily applied at work without drawing attention to yourself for anything other than great results. It's full of real life examples, practical tips, and techniques to try out for yourself.

Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming

Joseph O'Connor and John Seymour

This book was one of the first NLP books written in the UK. It is a comprehensive look at the important concepts in NLP and in my opinion is much more than an introduction. It's written in a fairly formal style with good explanations of technical terms and an NLP glossary at the back. Perhaps not the most accessible cover-to-cover read, but a good reference text used by a lot of trainers and experienced practitioners.

Principles of NLP

Joseph O'Connor and Ian McDermott

One of the popular Thorsons' 'Principles of...' series this is short but thought-provoking introduction to NLP thinking. Written in a conversational style, it brings to life the fundamental concepts on NLP and skilfully introduces the NLP presuppositions as they become relevant. This is the kind of book most people would read cover-to-cover in a few sessions. It's short, readable and informal.

NLP in 21 Days

Harry Alder & Beryl Heather

If you like to do more than simply read about a subject and prefer to have suggested activities to apply what you have read, then you will probably enjoy this book. It just about covers everything you might cover in a 21-day Practitioner training, but you can't ask it questions and it doesn't give you any feedback! The activities are comprehensive and varied - I particularly like the 'NLP presupposition of the day' feature. I suspect this might be best used as a companion to participation in a Practitioner training, but will certainly open up new possibilities for anyone looking for a NLP introductory text.

NLP for Dummies

Romilla Ready & Kate Burton

I like this book! I'm not a 'dummy' but a certified trainer of NLP and what I really appreciate in this book is the chunking and layout. It has strong visual appeal and is easy to dip in and out of. It combines simple explanations of key concepts with fun activities and examples. As with most other NLP books, it covers a lot of information and would be a useful reference for practitioner training and beyond. It also contains useful resource guides at the end.

Business NLP for Dummies

Lynne Cooper

Following the popular 'Dummies' format, this is just as good as the earlier book and just as well laid-out. Again, it's a good one for dipping into and covers loads of useful applications of NLP for business.

NLP workbook

Joseph O'Connor

I recommend this as a good third or fourth book on NLP. I wouldn't suggest it as a starting place, simply because it contains so much and some of the activities are quite complex. It is well structured and chunked into manageable pieces. It is comprehensive and thought provoking. The activities encourage the reader to explore the workings of their own mind and to challenge their own assumptions.

NLP at work

Sue Knight

Now in its third edition, Sue's book has become something of a classic. The new edition contains a lot of brand-new material and it still focuses on NLP in the business environment. It includes lots of anecdotes and examples of everyday business occurrences that will help you relate the subject to your own working life. It's a very enjoyable read.

Words that Change Minds

Shelle Rose Charvet

A classic for anyone who wants to master the art of adapting their communication style to suit the processing style of others. This book is a companion to the LAB profile and a good guide to the whole idea of metaprogrammes and how to use them. It is written in an informal and accessible style and does not presuppose any knowledge of NLP.

Performance Management

Michael D. McMaster

This is a thoroughly practical guide to applying NLP in a management context. It addresses the all-important issues of communication related to managing people, including planning, coaching and evaluation.

NLP Techniques

There are literally dozens of NLP 'techniques' – patterns for making changes in your own experience or behaviour that can also be used in coaching others. Here are three of my favourite techniques that you can use on your own easily.

Problem-solving:

This process works well on issues that are specific to you and that you can influence. It's not very good for stuff that's way beyond your control (World Poverty, Climate Change etc) and it might not yield anything new on a situation that you've been mulling over for weeks or months. Otherwise, it'll shift your thinking sufficiently to resolve the problem.

Just ask yourself each of the following 10 questions in turn. Answer each question fully before moving on to the next.

1. What's the problem?
2. How long have you had it?
3. Why do you have this problem?
4. Who is to blame?
5. Why haven't you solved it yet?
6. In this situation, what do you want?
7. How will you know when you've got what you want?
8. What resources do you already have that you can use to solve this problem?
9. When have you succeeded in something similar?
10. What is the next step?

Simple, but powerful!

This process is also a good one to use as part of a coaching conversation. Even if you don't fully understand the technicalities of the situation, you can use these questions to assist constructive thinking. It's a great alternative to giving advice or trying to solve the problem yourself.

Self-motivation

This process is useful for focusing your energy and attention on a specific task. It can help to overcome habits of procrastination and also to motivate you to do something that you do not enjoy.

It takes practice to get the very best results from this, but most people can derive benefit from it straight away.

Identify the specific task that you want to complete – now

Think about the task and notice the picture you have of it in your mind's eye as you think about it.

Adjust the picture in your mind's eye – it's not it's content, but it's structure that we're going to change:

- Make the picture bigger
- Make it brighter
- Bring it closer to you so it's really 'in your face'
- Add a stirring sound track, a piece of music that makes you want to get up and move

Go and complete the task!!!

Influencing others

When you have a request to make of someone, the language you use can be very important. Listen to yourself – are you making your request sound important or not?

One of the simplest ways to improve your chance of getting what you want is to assume that you will get it:

Ask, 'Which day next week can we meet up?' instead of, 'Can we meet one day next week?'

When you ask, 'Which day?' you make the meeting a foregone conclusion, the question is about when it's going to happen not if it's going to happen.

Here are some similar examples:

'Are you going to do that today or tomorrow?' (You are going to do it)

'Will you email me tomorrow when you've finished it?' (You'll finish it tomorrow)

Of course, the tone of voice you use will affect the overall result of using words in this way, but give it a go – you'll be surprised how easy it can be to get people to cooperate with you.

Contact me

If you have any questions about NLP or about training for yourself or your team, please contact me:

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