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## DTC Customer Events

### ■ Canberra

*'Managing Difficult People in the Workplace'*  
Thursday 27 May 2004  
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### ■ Melbourne

*'The use of Coaching as an Effective Management Development Tool'*  
Wednesday 30 June 2004  
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### ■ Sydney

*'Your Career – Taking Control'*  
Thursday 29 April 2004  
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*'Taking Charge of your Career'*  
Thursday 13 May 2004  
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## Coping with Parenting

Do you struggle at times to create a balance between your career, managing your household, community and social responsibilities, and raising your children? It is a difficult balance for many working parents and is a common source of stress for both mum, dad and of course the children!

There are a number of strategies that can be used successfully to ensure that your family is a healthy and happy one. So what is a healthy family? A healthy family is one where everyone is involved in decisions and activities, where there is a high level of communication and mutual respect and where the children are empowered and have a high level of self-esteem.

A few tips towards achieving a healthy family balance include:

### Create effective family rules

1. Rules hold a family together. They create a foundation for learning, taking responsibility and developing mutual respect.
2. When creating rules, create them from a positive perspective (for example, using your quiet voice in the house!)
3. Have as few rules as possible.
4. Take the time to educate your children about the rules and ask them to reflect the rules back to you using their own words.

### Demonstrate effective co-parenting

1. Make the rules together with your partner.
2. Be supportive of each other. The children will be confused if you as parents have conflict over rules or other aspects of parenting.
3. If one of you intervenes in a situation and the other disagrees with the intervention, avoid the temptation to voice your disagreement and undermine the intervention. Discuss it later!

### Encourage communication

1. Demonstrate interest in your child's life, and experiences. Talk about school and other interesting daily events. It is in these discussions that your children will learn valuable lessons, and share themselves with you.
2. Encourage your children to talk to you about things that are important to them.
3. Use active listening behaviours (face them and use eye contact) and reflect to them what you hear them saying.
4. When there is an opportunity to teach values to a child in a meaningful way take advantage of that.
5. Schedule regular family meetings and encourage group discussion wherever possible.

### Be and "active" parent

1. Help your children learn by teaching them how to do things "their way". Don't expect them to have the same level of expertise as someone older.
2. Be aware that you are **always** a role model to a child.
3. Demonstrate your love through your actions.
4. Develop routines. Routines create an environment that feels dependable and safe to your child.
5. Make time to spend one-on-one time with each of your children – remember the quality of your time is more important than the quantity.

### Plan for major events together

1. Involve your children in planning for major events such as holidays.
2. If children are going to attend a school holiday program, let them review the program and look at activities in advance.
3. Allocate jobs and responsibility appropriate for age.

### As parents and partners, support each other

1. *Affection.* These are things like, saying "I love you", giving your partner a hug or kiss, enjoying a shared joke, laughing together, saying you enjoy your partner's company, doing something

to give pleasure to your partner (eg bringing them a cup of tea in bed, paying them a compliment).

2. *Shared quality time.* Spending an hour just talking, doing enjoyable activities together, working together on a project, taking a drive or a walk together, going out together as a couple, discussing personal feelings, reminiscing about happy memories.
3. *Respect.* Listening to your partner's opinion, proudly introducing your partner to others, and thanking your partner for things they do.
4. *Communication of ideas.* Telling your partner about your day, asking your partner about their day, discussing topical events, giving your opinion, and talking about mutual interests.
5. *Support and assistance.* Making yourself available to help or do errands for your partner, doing something to save your partner time or energy.

### Strategies if you are not managing

1. Don't be afraid to ask for help – seek assistance from family, neighbours or friends.
2. Talk with other parents about how they are managing.
3. Consider all the support mechanisms available to you such as your EAP, your GP, community groups.
4. Remember – parents are not perfect, just parents!

### Useful Resources

Sher, B., 1998. *"Self-esteem games: 300 fun activities that make children feel good about themselves."* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.  
 Carr-Gregg, M and Shale, E., 2002. *"Adolescence: a guide for parents"*. Finch Publishing, Sydney.

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## Performance Management: Changing the Paradigm

Neil Woodger (HR Connection October) correctly points out that many people find the process of performance feedback stressful. Despite the almost universal presence of Performance Management processes across public and private sector organisations there is still a high level of discomfort for many employees in relation to their involvement and a reluctance by Managers.

Effective performance management practices add great value to any organisation and to its people and this is widely recognised. This value can only be realised, however, if employees and their managers willingly participate; they will be less willing if they find the process difficult or stressful.

The discrepancy between the potential value and the actual experience comes down to a question of paradigms. The traditional Performance Management paradigm is one of Appraisal; the new paradigm is one of Planning.

### The Old Paradigm: Appraisal

Organisations still following the Appraisal paradigm focus on the Appraisal interview and primarily address the attributes and effort of the individual job holder. In this paradigm the Appraisal form becomes important. The individual is being assessed, often for the purposes of salary review and it is important both establish criteria for assessment and have a record of this assessment. Forms are often kept on file and used as a primary reference for salary review or promotion.

There is a reliance on rating scales, generally linked to criteria such as 'level of motivation' or, in some extreme cases, 'punctuality'.

The disadvantage of such an Appraisal process is that it is generally an isolate event, not directly linked to the business processes of the organisation. It is an assessment at a point in time and will therefore be heavily biased by events which have occurred in recent months or weeks. In other words, a person

who has had a good years but has experienced problems in the last one or two months will not 'rate' so well as a colleague whose problems were some months earlier and largely forgotten.

It is not surprising that individuals who perceive this to be the paradigm dread their annual interview and it is equally not surprising that many Managers see little value in it.

### The New Paradigm: Planning

In the new paradigm, performance management is not a synonym for personal appraisal. It is a wider concept and is not about completing an annual "report card". It is an ongoing process of defining work goals and standards, monitoring actual performance against these and ensuring that the best outcome is achieved for all participants.

Performance management is primarily concerned with clarifying and achieving outcomes and goals, establishing expectations through mutual discussion and agreement and establishing a process for review. In establishing any plan, there must necessarily be a review process but it should be emphasised that the review is contingent upon the plan and is not an end in itself.

In the new paradigm, we are not reviewing the attributes and inputs of the individual but rather the success of the plan in term of its outcomes, as measured by agreed performance indicators.

A good performance plan needs to be:

- ▶ Linked to business and other relevant plans
- ▶ Developed by mutual agreement
- ▶ Relevant to the needs of the workplace
- ▶ Well documented, clearly and simply
- ▶ Reviewed regularly and updated when necessary

When the process is understood in this way it becomes clear why it is nonsensical only to have a review at the end of the agreed planning period. A good plan needs to be monitored and reviewed at periodical intervals so that it can be redirected if it strays off target.

Monitoring performance throughout the planning period has a number of benefits. First, it recognises that circumstances change and that it may be necessary to adjust objectives accordingly. Second, it provides encouragement and support to the staff member thereby maximising their chances of actually achieving a good result. Finally it allows the supervisor to feel confident that overall the business or unit plans can be achieved.

Monitoring is not a one way process and is not a euphemism for “checking up” on the staff member. It is a shared process and should be approached as an open exercise in sharing information and, where necessary, problem solving. There should be no implications of recrimination for lack of progress or achievement as this merely produces defensiveness and reduces the effectiveness of the process. Individuals are accountable for the outcomes to which they agree and any shortfall, identified early, represents an opportunity to provide them with coaching and support to assist them to succeed. The discussions between employee and Manager also provide useful information to the organisation about its own processes and feeds into the ongoing planning process.

Used well, under the new paradigm, performance management is a process which:

- ▶ Enhances the organisation’s planning process by linking individual performance to the organisations goals
- ▶ Creates a greater clarity for employees about their role and expectations of it
- ▶ Provides greater support for employees and helps them to succeed
- ▶ Fosters both individual and organisational growth and learning

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