



## **NLP for Business**

No matter what you do or don't say, you cannot help but communicate. In business, every word we say or publish has some effect on the recipient. What we think about ourselves and our job directly affects how we interact with others, either clients or fellow work colleagues.

NLP brings new insights and skills that allow the individual to be more effective in their chosen role by having a greater understanding of how what we think say and do impacts everything and everyone around us. Many businesses are looking for an edge, something that sets them apart from the competition. How to build greater customer loyalty, how to retain good employees. When a customer feels understood and valued they are more likely to give personal recommendations and be a repeat client. When an employee feels the same things they are more likely to exhibit greater commitment to their employer and their role.

Many people live their lives on auto-pilot especially when it comes to their job. This often gets referred to as ritualistic practice, doing things a particular way because that's how they have always been done. Basically what we are talking about is learned behaviours, patterns of behaviour or programmed responses. When we give individuals the awareness to see those patterns and consciously decide how best to respond we open up new possibilities for excellence. Some patterns or habits serve us very well, and some don't. Using NLP we can learn to identify those things we do well and do them even better. At its roots NLP is about modelling excellence and teaching that model to others. The model can also be analysed and refined. This technique is commonly used by athletes, but can also be used in business. Who are your best people? What is it they do that makes them the best? How do they do it? NLP provides the tools to identify this and teach it to others. It was through the process of modelling that the founders of NLP identified many of the additional elements that are now common to NLP.

Here are some examples of the elements of NLP and how they can link with the business world, the actual possibilities and applications are endless. The potential of the effect of how we think, what we say, and how we behave is only limited by our imaginations.

## **Representational Systems:-**

We experience our world through our senses, see, feel, hear, touch, taste and smell. We have language that relates to these senses. When we communicate an experience we all have a preferred or leading sense. For example one person may tend to use auditory language: 'I hear that there is a new store opening. Someone told me it was well worth a visit.' Where another may say; 'I have a feeling they've opened a new store. I'd like to go and experience it for myself.' Or alternatively 'I see there's a new store open. I must go and have a look round.'

When we communicate with someone using common sensory language, there is often a much greater sense of rapport with the other person. We may come away from an interaction with somebody and find ourselves saying, 'They were really easy to get on with; I felt that we just clicked' When communicating to a wider audience, using a range of sensory language can help to ensure more people receive and understand your message.

### **Meta Programmes / Behavioural Patterns:-**

We all have our own way of doing things, and we all have our own reasons for why we do things a particular way. Some people like choice about how they complete an activity, others like a set procedure and get confused if given too many choices. Over the course of our lives we learn ways of doing things. The more we repeat the same behaviour the more it becomes an ingrained habit. We are not stupid, we learn to do things a particular way for the best intentions, these can be manifold but ultimately it's because it serves us or suits us in some way at the time. Life changes, and what served or suited us at the time of the original learning, may not be ideal now. NLP helps the individual to become aware of habitual patterns, and provides tools to change them where appropriate. It is also about noticing the things we do well and utilising those strategies in other areas of our work or life. Useful Strategies can also be taught to others.

### **Values and Beliefs:-**

Henry Ford is famously quoted as saying "Whether you think you can, or think you can't, you're right". The way that we 'feel' about something has a direct impact on how we act. What we verbalise either out loud or to ourselves affects the way we actually go about the task. Having the right attitude or belief about what we are doing is vitally important. We all give different things different levels of importance. For some punctuality is extremely important, for others it's all about good manners, or good diction or personal presentation. The things we consider important will also affect the way we behave. NLP has a selection of tools for exploring personal values and beliefs around what is possible and what is not from the individuals own perspective. Much of this is given away in the language we use; 'I'm just completely overloaded right now. I'll just be off ill if you give me anything else to do. It's too much stress' or alternatively; 'Yes I'm sure I can find time to do that, is it OK if you came back to me tomorrow morning, that will give me time to finish this current work. NLP provides tools and understandings around how to effect change through the exploration of values and beliefs.

### **Language and Communication Models:-**

Our mind is bombarded by ever increasing amounts of data that arrives through our senses and gets passed to our brain for processing. Neuroscience has discovered that in order to cope with this vast amount of information the brain has some clever techniques. For example the brain shuts off visual data while the eyes are moving and presents us with a series of still images dramatically reducing the amount of processing required. In a busy noisy environment we are able to filter out extraneous audio information. For example people living near a main road or railway line can after a while not notice noises we might otherwise regard as intrusive. So we can see that some information is discarded. The mind fills the gaps using the memory of previous experiences of the same or similar things, this implies that some of what we think we are experiencing is not what is actually happening right now, but a generalisation of what we have experienced before in the same or similar situation. Sometimes it is useful to clarify or re-present some of the discarded information. NLP provides the **Meta Model** form of questioning for gaining clarity, sometimes called the message behind the message. A common occurrence in business is to communicate a task to an individual or group, only to find on completion that the result is nothing like you expected. There is no intention to get it wrong; it's just that there was not enough clarity in the first place. This is also a good example of where other NLP elements overlap, the desired message may have been missed because the person delivering it did not address all representational systems, or held some conflicting value or belief or used language not familiar to the audience. Another way to communicate with a large audience is to

use the **Milton Model**; this is based on the work of Milton Erickson. Strangely enough the technique here is to be purposefully vague and allow the listener to reach their own personal interpretation. This allows the presenter to keep to the core message with minimum detail. It is also an increasingly common marketing style where slogans like 'Every little helps' or 'Connecting People' or 'I'm loving it' and 'Just Do It', don't say what helps, or connecting how exactly or loving what or do what, but we get the message.

These are just a few examples of where and how NLP is being used in business. It is also becoming more common to find these techniques being combined in individual one to one coaching for people with limiting beliefs or other challenges that may be holding them back, and as mentioned before helping others to re-discover their own excellence and develop it. NLP coaching is a facilitative process. It is a do with rather than a do to exercise allowing the individual to explore and find their own inner solutions from their own map of the world through Awareness, Intention and Action.

NLP is already in use in well-known successful companies. The Times Newspaper has reported on the use of NLP in Honda, Microsoft, First Direct and Vodafone among others. The Times quoted Martin Moll, head of marketing for Honda who uses NLP in conflict resolution and performance management and says that it has immeasurably improved his ability to deal with people and the quality of his working life. Additionally, at Vodafone everyone who joins the company undertakes a training programme including NLP techniques, according to Terry O'Brien, head of retail at Vodafone." The Times, 8 April 2009.

First Direct have their own trained NLP staff in house who together with an NLP trainer have constructed a number of targeted in house courses covering coaching, performance management, motivation and communication. The success of the courses has led to a massive demand for NLP training throughout first direct. The training team have used the techniques with representatives, team leaders and managers and have seen increases in the sales performance and call quality of these people. First Direct are training more of their staff to Business Practitioner level in order to roll out NLP training to a wider audience internally. They have also recommended NLP training to other members of the HSBC group including Marks & Spencer Money.

The Times Educational supplement recently published an article by Mike de Val entitled 'Start giving NLP serious thought' reporting 'an impressive array of positive effects not only on students but staff as well'. Not surprisingly the article discusses how NLP is used to identify Strategies for Learning and Motivation and these same benefits are being applied with equal success in business too.

With the kinds of results already being seen and the huge potential yet to be experienced it really is time to not just give NLP serious thought, but to implement it now and allow everyone to enjoy the rewards both business and personal.

NLP is the exploration of how we think, communicate and change.

It explores attitudes that produce results.

It provides a platform to model and teach excellence.

It's not NLP that's important it's what we do with it.

NLP is different from other forms of personal development in that it is modelled from individuals who were experts in helping others change.

It explores how we connect to the world through our sensory experience and how we store and change that experience using our minds.

It allows us to connect conscious and unconscious resources, helping individuals to see their untapped potential.

While NLP has really strong business applications, practicing NLP also leads to personal freedom.

Business is not just about commerce it's about the people who work in it.

Give people the right environment, knowledge and tools and they will flourish.

At Ellice Training we know how simple fast and powerful NLP is, and we want to share this with you.

Find out more at [www.ellicetraining.co.uk](http://www.ellicetraining.co.uk)

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