

## Why Big Business is Using NLP

Henry Ford is famously quoted as saying "If you think you can or think your can't, you're right". He was talking NLP. NLP helps us understand how what we think influences our feelings and behaviours. You've only got to think about what happens when you imagine a meeting or project going badly to know it feels pretty anxiety-producing. If you imagine it going really well, you can't feel anxious about it. It follows then that what people think, feel and do while they're at work influences the organisation, either positively or negatively. NLP focuses on how we can enable people to do the kind of thinking, feeling and doing that supports organisational objectives as well as their own success.

Earlier this year The Times (UK) reported that a plethora of organisations are now utilising NLP methodology to help customer service teams, sales staff and managers perform even better, including Barclays, Honda, First Direct, HBOS, Marks & Spencer and Vodafone. 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 of techniques 'underpinned' by NLP, according to Terry O'Brien, head of retail at Vodafone." The Times, 8 April 2009.



**"We take the very best of what people do, synthesise it down,  
make it learnable and share it with each other - and that is  
what the real future of what NLP will be."**

*Richard Bandler, Co-Developer of NLP*

NLP is often described as the study of excellence, and excellence is what most organisations want from their people. Effective communication is at the heart of successful business, and communication skills alone make NLP based training and coaching essential to any organisation, given the skills taught have their roots in studying highly respected communicators such as Milton Erickson, Gregory Bateson and Virginia Satir. What is it that makes the difference between an average speaker and Bill Clinton? What are the roadblocks to communication we often trip ourselves up with? How do you build rapport with someone who is completely disagreeing with you, or who is very angry? How can you quickly get yourself feeling confident in a challenging situation? NLP answers these questions and more.

Excellence comes from understanding how people work (inside their minds and bodies). It seems there are still organisational cultures that consider these 'soft skills' to be less of a priority when it comes to training, and yet they are the skills that really make the difference. One of Bill Gates' most well known quotes "we've got to put a

lot of money into changing behaviour” speaks volumes about the investment necessary to not only make a difference to people, but to help people make a difference. Microsoft is just another example of an increasing collection of businesses drawing on NLP-based training.

I’m often asked what the difference is between personal coaching and business coaching and my usual reply is ‘not much’. You can’t take the person out of the employee, of course, so it’s always personal. When I’m working with clients on work-related issues, the changes they make invariably have a positive impact on their personal lives, and vice versa. It’s about *growing people* and whether we’re sprouting new shoots in our work life, home life or health, all the areas of our life benefit.

When someone is no longer taking work stress home with them every night, it can be like having a different person in the house for those around them. They are also likely to be quite a different person at work the next day since they have had true down-time at home, are rested, refreshed and ready for a productive day.

Athletes around the world and across disciplines as diverse as rugby, Olympic diving and golf are using NLP techniques to improve their performance, including our own Steven Gurney, Triathlete and extreme sportsman. It makes sense then that businesses would get on the bandwagon too and make the most of it.

### Where is NLP useful at work?

- Problem solving
- Negotiating for win-win solutions
- Improving overall communication
- Influencing and persuading
- Presentations and meetings
- Stress management
- Managing people/giving feedback/etc
- Building trusted relationships
- Creativity strategies
- Helping people buy
- Resolving conflict
- Setting outcomes/vision



For more about organisational training and coaching go to [www.avaraconsulting.co.nz](http://www.avaraconsulting.co.nz). Recommended reading: *NLP at Work: The Difference that Makes the Difference in Business* by Sue Knight.



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