

Biography – Dr. Donna Vick

My management education and experience began in 1983 when I obtained my Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management at Virginia Commonwealth University, USA. I then began teaching and eventually went into managing an educational and training organization. I then proceeded to obtain a Master in Education in order to more effectively teach individuals (adults) who were either being trained specifically for particular jobs or who wanted to continue their education and professional development for their current work or practice. My entire career since 1983 has been in education at some level (specific job training, 1st degree or higher education) and always strongly linked to job training and professional development and management and organizational development.

I was then fortunate to go to Great Britain to work with some of the principle innovators and thinkers in management education and learning. There I completed my doctoral studies as the Revans Scholar. I was part of the pioneering team which established the Revans Institute for Action Learning and Research at the University of Salford. This experience has enabled me to work with many different leaders and managers from various fields of practice with the specific aim of developing themselves and their practice (job). I also have had the experience of directing and developing programs attached to academic qualifications, that are designed around the needs of clients for management development.

I have deliberately specialised in organizational and management development using action learning processes over the last 11 years. This specialisation and expertise results from a unique combination of work experience and education which includes: Human and Organizational Development with subsidiary subjects of Project Management, Research Methodology and Approaches, Leadership Skills, Group Dynamics, Counselling and Listening Skills, Business Planning, Learning Theories and IT Skills.

I have gained invaluable experience by working with individuals mostly at senior and middle management levels who conducted research within their organization for purposes of management and organization development. Action learning underpinned the research process which has given me detailed and deep insights into management problems, issues and developmental challenges and how this does or does not contribute to organizational development.

My doctoral research was 'A Study of the Action Learning Process'. My thesis, under the direction of David Botham, Behavioural Scientist, John Morris, Social and Developmental Psychologist and Reginald Revans, Scientist and Educationalist (and Pioneer of Action Learning) focused on gaining understanding of how individuals in leadership and management positions learn in a context of action (experience). This experience took place in organizations in industry, small businesses and the public sector. The research examined how leaders and managers learn from an approach which uses dialogue created and sustained by an inquiry-driven process that fosters and develops critical thinking, reflective analysis, creativity and problem-solving ability. This approach requires testing theories in action by application and reapplication of learning into the work environment. Part of my research was done in the context of the organization by observing the managers and CEO as they

participated in an action learning set designed to support and encourage critical inquiry into their work to drive learning, development and progressive change. From this research I have developed a model for conceptualizing the action learning process. The model also addresses personal and professional behaviour to encourage and support personal development in relation to professional expertise and leadership.

As a result of my experience I have

Performed research for a European Social Fund that funded the ADAPT program for employment and improving the effectiveness of small and medium sized business enterprises, a collaborative international project (England, Belgium and France) which focused on construction companies and housing associations. Used case study approach. As a result networks were developed among to share best practice.

Performed evaluative research for the European Regional Development Fund and the Regeneration Fund Program, which funded a program in economically deprived communities to support individuals for entrepreneurial development in any area of business. Submitted evaluation to funding agency. This provided support for individuals who were becoming self-employed or starting a business.

Participated in delivery of a micro-networking program for Small and Medium Sized Business Enterprises to encourage networking and stimulate wealth creation among various businesses across regions. Participated in an interview process, monitored and submitted monthly reports to committees. This provided access to information and networking opportunities for small businesses that needed new systems, new ways of working and other areas of support.

Collaborated with University of Leeds doing research for the Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors for investigating surveying education. Performed literature search and review, set up 7 focus groups across England, Scotland and Ireland for collection of material from lecturers and heads of departments and senior practitioners. Attended and documented proceedings of focus groups for research reports and publications. This contributed to research and publication to assist researchers and teachers to improve processes for educating surveying students.

Designed and delivered a management development program for 15 Principal Care Managers in Bradford Social Services, Adult and Childrens Divisions. Performed evaluation of the 18-month program for the Bradford Social Services Executive Board. This created networks, fuller understanding of organizational systems, and supported implementation of new ideas to improve management practice.

Performed research for Northwest Development Agency of their 'Competitiveness Program' for 20 small and medium sized business enterprises participating in Government grant program to save businesses. Interviewed Managing Directors. Surveyed other involved individuals in

program. Prepared evaluative research report for NWDA of the entire program/project. This report contributed to the NWDA decision-making processes to continue to allocate or not allocate additional funding of this nature.

Participated and supported individuals involved in the New Deal for Communities program supporting them to develop ideas for new enterprises funded under the New Deal program. Outputs were personal development and confidence to move forward with enterprise development as well as networking and help with generating new ideas.

My consulting activities are listed below.

Research for Business Link Cheshire and Warrington for determining the current business environment of companies from India, i.e. amount of trade in all regions, FDI in the North West, key sectors of business in the North West and other specific information relating to trade. The research contributes to the development of India-UK economic relationship for developing partnerships for new areas of business trade.

Consultation and research for Henshaws Society for Blind People for the on-going development and implementation of their strategic plan. Interviewed the Chief Executive Officer and 10 Department Directors. Wrote research report of findings. Consulted and advised by facilitating Chief Executive and Board of Directors during meetings. This process re-directed the Board of Directors and the Chief Executive to further progress the strategic plan.

Research and Consultation for North Manchester Primary Care Trust, NHS running pilot program for developing and restructuring Family Planning Unit. Program is at the very initial stages at this time.

Consultant and researcher for the European Regional Development Fund supporting the Building Partnerships project, a collaborative research study (with UMIST) across England for establishing good practice guidelines in the construction industry focusing on improving equal opportunity employment in this industry. Managed projects developed by groups of participants and researched results. Outputs included the production of a video for schools to use in students career advising for the construction industry, focus groups and workshops held for small businesses to help them with setting up equal opportunity employment policies for their business and the development of the idea for a one-stop shop for career guidance for anyone interested in the construction industry. Major output was the publication of the Good Practice Guidelines manual on the web as a result of the research.

My background and experience has also enabled me to successfully examine and supervise research at the Master's and PhD level. All research has been grounded in the work environment, focused on management development and improving practice. Some examples of my research supervision include:

- Understanding Management in the Voluntary Sector: Management and

Leadership in Henshaws Society for Blind People

- Action Learning and the Empowerment of Mental Health Service Users in Bolton
- Developing Secondment Policy: A Case Study
- The Merger of Seven Business Links
- Action Learning and Business Advising
- Development of a Management Consultancy: Southern Cross Associates
- Developing a Business Exit Strategy
- Changing Culture in the NHS
- Developing a Strategy for Commissioning Services
- Improving the Fire Service
- Chronic Kidney Disease: Integrating Nursing Care To Improve the Patient Experience.