



3 Broad Street  
Stamford  
PE9 1PG  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0) 8450678007 Fax: +44 (0) 8458383907  
Email: info@qnlp.co.uk

*The Difference that makes the Difference*

## Case Study

# Modelling Successful Women

Modelling Process  
Sponsored by:



## Sponsors

This research was sponsored by the following organisations:

- British Telecom
- Halifax Bank
- Nationwide Building Society

Their support was invaluable in enabling this project to move forward.

## Introduction and Background to the project

It is generally recognised that women are significantly under represented in management, particularly at senior management levels. Whilst there has been movement in redressing this balance, there is still some way to go. QNLP's consultants carried out this modelling process to provide individuals and organisations with a clear view of what enables some to break through the 'Glass Ceiling' and go on to fulfil their capabilities.

*Glass ceiling is defined as '...the invisible barrier that keeps women from advancing to high level positions. In the Microsoft Encarta World Encyclopaedia, the term glass ceiling is a "barrier to career advancement: an unofficial but real impediment to somebody's advancement into upper-level management positions because of discrimination based on the person's gender, age, race, ethnicity, or sexual preference." In other words, "Glass ceiling" is a negative barrier of attitudes and prejudices preventing women and minorities to move up in their corporate ladder. It holds many to stay at their lower level positions and does not give them a chance to show their abilities and improve themselves. Another definition given to this invisible barrier is it "describes cases in which women begin their careers on an equal footing with men, and either lose ground gradually over time, or continue to progress on par with their male counterpart until, at some point, their progress is blocked." (Morgan, 1998)'*

The project was initiated to research the success patterns of senior women managers and to produce a model of excellence. Once compiled, this model can be used to facilitate the development of women managers by training and coaching. This model has been used to form the basis of development initiatives, both at an individual or corporate level, to increase the quality and quantity of women's participation in senior management.

The focus of this project was on how women can optimise their potential within their current organisational environments. In this way women can take more control over their career development.

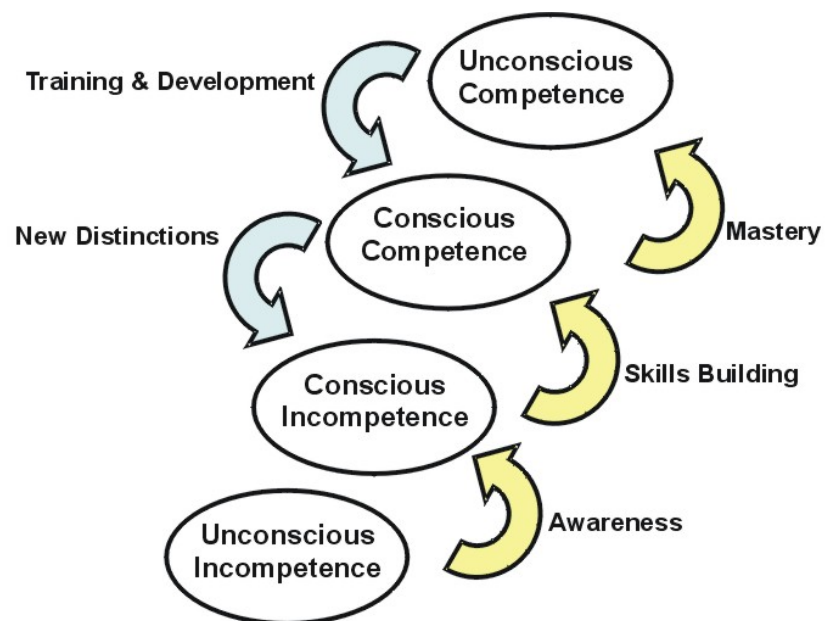
What is Modelling

Modelling is a natural process. It is one that we all engage in as we develop in our lives. Children model. They model everything. From walking and talking to tying their shoes to riding a bike. They model those who are influential around them. Everyone. Their carers, their siblings, their educators and from those they model they learn the skills that will assist them in each stage of their life.

As adults we continue to model, observing those who seem to know what they are doing and either copying them or adapting what they do to fit us and our way of working. There is a body of evidence from the US that suggests that up to 80% of the information we gather on how to get the job done is learned by informal methods – observation, trial and error, informal coaching – in a word modelling.

The modelling process is a refinement of this natural process using proven NLP modelling techniques (Neuro Linguistic Programming). It formalises the process and enables those who are *'the best of the best'* (Exemplars) to understand, not just what they do (standard training fare) but how specifically they do it. Ask most considered 'expert' in their field *'how they are what they are'* and *'how they do what they do'*. Invariably the reply will be a surface level answer that, whilst answering the question, will not provide detail information of how you can do it.

Our modelling process enables exemplars to fully realise their potential by fully understanding what they do at a level of unconscious competence. It also allows us to construct a model of those competencies that any individual, motivated to emulate an exemplar, can learn.



## The Role Models (Exemplars)

To ensure a robust final model we approached a number of prominent and successful women within large organisations. The project was conducted using nine role models or exemplars. Each of the final group were in senior positions in their respective organisations, either chief executive, main board member or head of a significant function or division. We selected exemplars at this level to define what it was that enabled the most successful to succeed. The following industry sectors were represented in the exemplars experience:

### Private Sector

- Industry
- Commerce
- Professions
- PLC
- Limited Company
- Partnership

### Public Sector

- Government
- Public office
- Financial institution
- Education

### Independent Organisations

- Trade union
- Members association
- Professional body

### Industry Sectors

- Manufacturing
- Motor
- Accountancy
- Banking
- Law
- Shipping
- Printing
- IT

## The Exemplar List

- **Ann Baldwin** is a management trainer, conference speaker and business writer specialising in time and stress management. She is a chartered accountant, a former office managing partner and latterly an executive partner in Grant Thornton, the business advisers, where she was responsible for personnel, finance and IT.
- **Jane Bradford** was the first equal opportunities officer with the National Westminster Bank and introduced the UK banking world's first career re-entry scheme for mothers in 1992. She was the bank's most senior woman executive which she joined from school in 1964.
- **Sue Camper** was the Chief Manager of the Official Reserves Management of the Bank of England's Foreign Exchange Division and was recently appointed The Bank of England's Agent for Wales. By providing intelligence on regional developments in the economy, the Bank of England's Agencies play an important part in the process of shaping the Bank's monetary policy advice to the Chancellor.
- **The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde** Chairman of The Housing Corporation. Brenda Dean was created a Life Peer in October 1993 and became a member of the Privy Council in 1998. She was previously General Secretary of SOGAT, the printing and paper industry trade union, having been elected in 1985 as the first woman to lead a major manufacturing union.

The Role Models  
-Exemplars  
(continued)

- **Baroness Jean Denton of Wakefield (1936 - 2001)** was latterly Opposition spokesman on Trade and Industry in the House of Lords, and before that had been a Minister at the Northern Ireland Office from 1994 to 1997, with responsibility for the economy. Before entering politics, she held senior managerial posts in the motor industry, while her first ministerial appointment had been at the DTI.
- **Ms Margaret Llewellyn** managing director of Dragon Shipping Line she started her shipping line and stevedoring organisation from nothing in 1988. She now runs a highly successful business and is one of the most senior women in the maritime sector. She is chair of the UK branch, of the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association.
- **Dame Barbara Mills QC** was the Director of Public Prosecutions. She became the Adjudicator for the Revenue and Customs on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1999. As Adjudicator she acts as an impartial referee when people are not satisfied with the way the Departments deal with their complaint. Dame Barbara is also Adjudicator for the Public Guardianship Office.
- **Sue Palmer** is Executive Board Member and Director of Marketing, of Grant Thornton. Sue pursued a career in marketing communications for financial services firms prior to joining Grant Thornton in 1988. She has been responsible for the development and implementation of the marketing strategy of Grant Thornton UK and was the first non-accountant and female member of the firm's Executive. She is also a Trustee of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which also administers the Heritage Lottery fund.
- **Dr Ann Robinson** is a Non-Executive Director of Almeida Capital. She advises the management of the company and promotes its private equity research and placement services to institutional investors. From 1995 to 2000 Ann was Director General of the National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF) where she was responsible for protecting and promoting the interests of UK pension funds which collectively manage total assets in excess of £800 billion. Prior to the NAPF, Ann was Head of the Policy Unit at the Institute of Directors.

### The Process

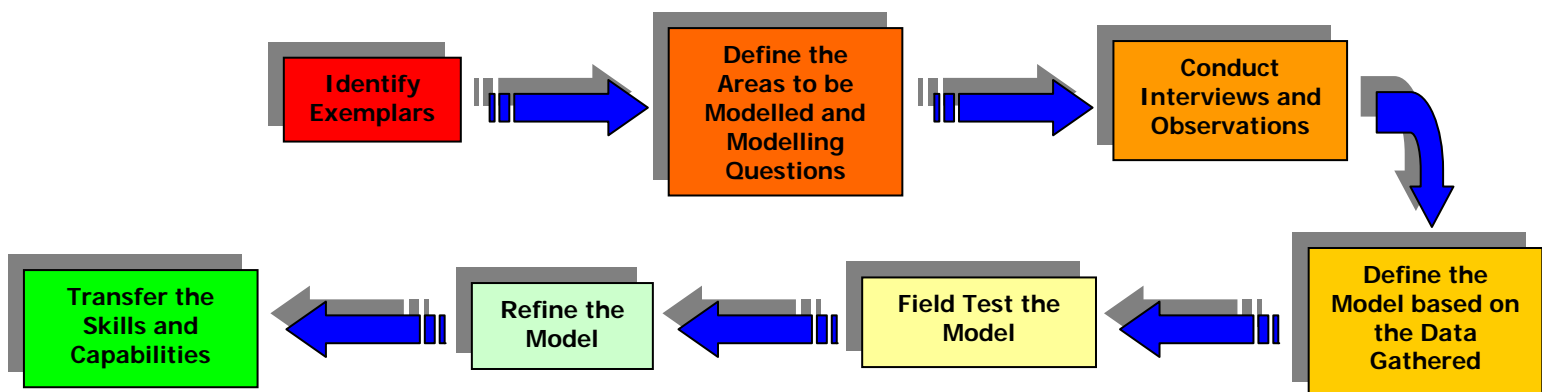
Starting with the end in mind and having clear outcomes defined for the model and its application, our consultants developed a very specific modelling framework. The questions within the framework would facilitate the discovery of the unconscious strategies and systems used by each exemplar to achieve their specific goals within their specific environment. Once gathered our consultants looked for similarities across the responses gathered under pre-defined headings.

The areas covered during this data gathering were:

- Relating to People and Situations
- What Drives Successful Behaviour
- Their Inner World – how it affects the external
- Perceptions of Time
- Communication Patterns
- Goals and Planning

Each of the exemplars was interviewed on the above subjects at length using the same questions to ensure similarity of response. Each interview was recorded and later transcribed to ensure we had gained all that was needed to construct the generic model. The interviewers were all trained NLP practitioners to ensure the patterns used by each individual were identified. NLP practitioners are able to detect these patterns through observation and listening and are then able to train and coach others in the development of these skills based on the models findings.

### The High Level Process



## Sample Output

The findings document created on the back of this research was compiled and presented to the project sponsors as well as the exemplars who had taken part. It explains the discoveries made under each of the subject headings – how the exemplars experience the world and how they use these personal interpretations in specific situations.

As well as the formal presentation of the findings, some exemplars asked for personal feedback so as to fully understand *how they do what they do*.

The research report is a 70 page document. The following is an excerpt taken from section five of the document. The component relating to:

### **5 Communication Patterns – the language of influence**

#### **5.1 Overview of concept**

The language of influence, known in NLP as the 'Milton Model', is a model based on the communication patterns of Dr. Milton Ericson. Ericson was an accomplished communicator who used language as a means of empowering and influencing others. The language patterns in this model assist in:

- Solving Problems
- Increasing Motivation
- Improving Performance
- Changing Limiting Beliefs

These patterns have been replicated successfully by others for use in many situations such as selling, public speaking and leadership.

The characteristics of the model are that:

- It is artfully vague encouraging the listener to make sense of what is being said by using their experience to complete the picture.
- It communicates with the unconscious mind and is therefore highly influential and can bypass unnecessary conscious resistance, for example, in assisting an individual in believing they can achieve their goals.
- It invokes a state of heightened receptivity.

The form of this language is easily understandable and therefore is a cornerstone in the establishment of rapport, to reach a large audience or gain commitment and agreement.

This model of language enables us to understand how highly effective spoken communication needs to be constructed. It provides a way of analysing the underlying structures in the spoken word and provides a tool set for choosing what to say and how to say it.

The Output  
(continued)

## 5.2 The research findings

The role models had an unconscious skill in the use of language. They were artfully vague, enabling the listener to 'fill in the gaps' and encouraging them to do so in a positive manner. Below is an example, taken from one of the interviews.

*...because of my history in the organisation I could make a lot of things happen because I was remarkably well-known. Having said that, I felt there were more things that could be done...*

This excerpt illustrates a number of important patterns:

### Unspecified verbs (make, happen, do)

Almost all the verbs in the paragraph do not specify exactly what happened.

### Unspecified nouns (things, they, them)

The nouns in the paragraph are also non specific. When combined with the verbs this gives phrases like '*I could make a lot of things happen*'. There is almost no concrete meaning in the phrase. Because of the vagueness it can be easily taken in by the listener, who puts their own meaning on it. There is also little in the way of detail that the listener can take exception to or disagree with.

### Presuppositions

This excerpt contains a number of presuppositions, that they:

- have a history in the organisation
- could make a lot of things happen
- were remarkably well-known

All imply positive messages about the speaker. Due to their vagueness a listener may well seek to clarify a point, however the result is that many such statements are readily accepted with no question.

### Because

Because is a powerful word in that it implies answers. Studies have shown that the use of it greatly increases the chance of getting what you need. It was used twice in the opening of this sentence in connection with the assertion 'I could make a lot of things happen – the net effect is that the assertion is more likely to be accepted.

The Output  
(continued)

### **Complex equivalence ('x' = 'y')**

This language pattern is used to link two or more assertions in order to imply meaning. i.e.

*'x' – 'because of my history in the organisation' means 'y' – I could make a lot of things happen'*

This may not be the case, but in using this pattern the speaker provides the listener with an unconscious choice – accept this or challenge it. **Deletions**

The speaker deletes significant amounts of information. For example:

*'Because of my history in the organisation' – What history?*

*'I was remarkably well known' – By who?*

The listener is encouraged by the deletions to fill in the gaps with their assumptions (the fact the speaker is sharing this information implies that the assumptions will be positive). This increases the receptivity of the listener.

### **Summary**

This is just one example taken from the series of interviews carried out in this project. We can see that this exemplar effectively used complex language patterns to promote her message in the mind of the listener. All of the exemplars in this study used similar patterns in their communication at different times and in subtly different ways. The analysis uncovered three main things:

- The subtlety and complexity of their spoken communication
- That this can be broken down into simple usable components that can be passed to others
- That much of the spoken skill in the exemplars was unconscious

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The exemplars were unconsciously highly competent in the Milton Model language patterns.

Each pattern identified is relatively simple to learn and use. There are many patterns and the advanced skill lies in the ability to select and use combinations of them to fully benefit.

Acquiring a high level of competence in this area is an important prerequisite to career success.

The language patterns can be learned in a training environment with the opportunity to practice and gain feedback. The model can be reinforced and further developed by on-going coaching. The model can be learned and used for problem-solving, influencing, conflict resolution and performance improvement.

## Conclusion

This is just one example of the information contained within the full findings document. Based on this information and the examples of patterns gathered from the exemplars, we can define a knowledge transfer process to suit your organisation.

The output of this study led to the creation of both internal training and development programmes for the sponsor organisations as well as 'open' workshop events for individuals over one or two days. It was possible to target each training event on the specific needs of organisations and participants. This was due to the fact that the content was based on 'real' examples of what worked rather than compiled from traditional sources.

QNLP has gone on to develop many of its core training solutions based on this methodology. Whilst not following the formal process we have modelled Consulting, Sales, Negotiation, Facilitation, Presentation, Public Speaking and Training to allow us an in depth understanding of what works and why. We also deliver training solutions that, whilst not being formal NLP trainings, provide our clients with an understanding of the skills and an awareness of the attributes, as well as the ability to coach others to continue the process of modelling excellence and passing it on to their communities.

The Output example used in this document was taken from the formal findings document from this project. A similar document will be compiled for each major modelling exercise we undertake. The knowledge transfer process defined to install the model and pass on the information to your community will be in a format that is conducive to your environment and the users of the information.