



# Cardinal Talent

## Talent Newsletter September 10

Dear

The theme of this newsletter is unashamedly about helping others to help themselves!

The world is full of dramatic stories at present and there has been debate about charitable giving. It is said charity begins at home. It's good to give what we can to international causes but unless we can help those nearest us, how can we hope to help those further away?

Just as those caught in the path of natural disasters, job seekers, whether new graduates or those with experience, are swept aside by the flood waters of economic fall-out. Powerless to act, shocked and traumatised they struggle to regain their footing in precarious, restrictive conditions.

Typically help is slow in arriving, often magnified by the scale of the disaster.

Unless we help, our engine of recovery will not fire. If large swathes of our workforce remain underutilised, then the UK will never regain its foothold in the global economy.

Our economy is low growth and cash-strapped, caused mainly by the stringent conditions placed on lending and the impending public sector cuts. Even though we too might be on the rooftops or on a mud bank awaiting rescue, many of us have the means to lead the way to improved conditions by offering time or influence to help job seekers.

Our featured article on giving feedback is aimed at recruiters & employers to remember to help candidates improve their chances of success.

Participating in the Year in Industry scheme by offering someone the chance of a year's placement on the job will enable them to acquire life skills and industry experience.

If you're not in a position to offer help in either of these ways then how about helping a job seeker with interview practise, CV improvement or application form completion.

### What goes around, comes around, as our financial institutions will discover!

"Feedback for quality" will be on my blog at <http://melarmstrong.wordpress.com>

Our website [www.cardinaltalent.com](http://www.cardinaltalent.com) is designed to be a resource for both candidates and clients, so..

**Candidates:** do keep an eye on our website for new job opportunities **and..**

**Clients:** if you are looking to strengthen your organisation, please call me on +44(0)1484 687 587 or +44(0)7831 476818, or drop me a line to [mel@cardinaltalent.com](mailto:mel@cardinaltalent.com)

Best wishes



Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada

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## Feedback for quality



## Testimonial

"Advisor, listener, mentor and sheer confidence boosting are all accolades worthy of Melanie Armstrong. Seeking professional advice, Mel has 'rescued' and modernised my CV, advised interview techniques and developed in me, a personal realisation of my capabilities all of which has raised, and reset the baseline from which to further my career. I confidently recommend a visit to Cardinal Talent for personal, professional and winning guidance.

Thanks Mel"

**Bob Hedges, Head of Operations & Lean Business Turnaround Manager January 2010**

From a **customer service** focus, we're constantly seeking **feedback** to enable **performance improvement** and **learning**. For example, after interviews, I'm keen to know how the candidates **view** their performance, how they **interacted** with the client and whether they're still **interested** in the role on offer.

We're equally keen to learn about our client's view of the **candidates**, especially as they're calling the tune. What did they think of the **shortlist** and how did each candidate respond? Crucially, who is to be **recalled** and who **turned away** and most significantly, **why?**

This is an aspect which tends to be brushed aside in the rush to ask those who have been successful for another round. So **why is the "why" so important?**

It's important because whether or not the candidate achieves the next stage, they need to **understand why** they were **successful** or drew a **blank**.

Giving candidates a **deeper understanding** can lead to **personal insight, analysis** of the **feedback** and **evaluation** of their own **performance**. Most candidates need no encouragement to take this **opportunity to learn** from their experience, so that in future they know how to **improve** their **performance**.

From the client's point of view, although it may seem a chore, **collecting** and **reporting** the **evidence** as to **how** a decision is reached is **vitaly important**. Firstly it **informs** the client about the **veracity** and **robustness** of their interview process. If a panel is involved, results can be **normalised** across the members. If individuals are meeting candidates in different **timeframes**, then notes can be **compared** afterwards.

As **recruiters**, this is a **learning opportunity** for us too, checking **client feedback** comments against the original **client specification, candidate CVs** and our **interview notes**. The question constantly asked is what can we do **differently** to ensure we can **exceed** this standard in future?

There's another equally important learning **angle** to this process. Without this **quality of dialogue** between client, recruiter and candidate, the opportunities for **exploration, discovery** and **relationship-building** are sacrificed. With a progressive dialogue, **trust** can be built and possibilities **explored** leading to **openness**, shared **understanding** and a better **experience** for candidate and client alike.



In response to changing business circumstances, we've founded

## Cardinal Coaching Associates Ltd

offering improved services for individual private coaching, including job-hunting techniques, CV restructuring, Career Planning.

Additionally, adult teaching and training including PTTLS 7303 (City & Guilds)

[mel@cardinalcoachingassociates.com](mailto:mel@cardinalcoachingassociates.com)

## Support YINI!

My eldest son is completing his year with the Year in Industry (YINI) and because he's had such a great experience acquiring industry knowledge, developing his personal and life skills, I'd like to share some information about the scheme.

The YINI offers students of science, engineering, technology, computing, marketing, finance and human resources to businesses. The benefits are tangible bottom-line improvements, repaying student salaries many times over.

If your business or someone you know are willing to consider offering a YINI place, then to find out more visit the YINI website [www.yini.org.uk](http://www.yini.org.uk) or to arrange a visit contact:

**Chris Ward**  
National Director  
email: [c.ward@etrust.org.uk](mailto:c.ward@etrust.org.uk)  
tel: 023 8059 7061 (via Clare Hall)

Our favourite assignments are those where the **conversation** between the clients and ourselves **never stops**. An **exchange** of thought and evidence **streams** between each **stage** of the process, contributing to **understanding** and **knowledge**, which flows onwards to each of the candidates in a **timely**, **inclusive** and **personalised** way.

I'd like to think we can draw a **parallel** between what is described above and best practise in **teaching** and **learning**.

Research carried out by Professors Black & William<sup>1</sup> found that **formative (continuous) assessment** followed by **feedback** has a marked effect on learning **quality**. It has been found to **add** the equivalent of **two grades** to students' **achievement**. "Learners need information on what they **do well**, and how to **improve**, then they need to **act** on this. Teachers can give feedback, but students can too, with **self-assessment** and **peer assessment**. The best feedback (or **formative assessment**) uses student's work to diagnose **strengths** and **weaknesses**, and to set individual **targets for improvement**".<sup>2</sup>

**Success** at interview can be viewed similarly. What if you or someone you know **consistently** made the **shortlist** but didn't **clinch the job**? There's a strong possibility that **high quality feedback** resulting in **two grades of improvement** could make all the **difference**.

**So, remember, always ask for feedback – it's a real improvement opportunity.**

<sup>1</sup>Black, P. J., & William, D. (1998b) Inside the black box: raising standards through classroom assessment. London: King's College London School of Education.

<sup>2</sup>Petty G. Teaching Today. Feedback. Available from <http://www.geoffpetty.com/index.html> Date accessed 24.8.10



We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter

and thank you for your interest.  
If you wish to unsubscribe at any time, please  
email us at  
[admin@cardinaltalent.com](mailto:admin@cardinaltalent.com)

**Mel Armstrong** is a coach & recruiter of business leaders. A degree qualified metallurgist and Chartered Engineer, with a post graduate Fellowship in Manufacturing Management, her main areas of interest are developing self awareness in business leaders and manufacturing and business improvement. She works closely with a number of private clients providing business support through recruitment, transition coaching, outplacement , psychometric assessment and career development.

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