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NLP and the Learning Organization

In his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge outlines his thinking about the keys to future business success. The principles he introduces point to the need for *Learning Organizations*. By this he means that for organizations to succeed in business they need to be constantly learning and developing. The term *continuous improvement* has been with us for several years now in connection with Total Quality Management programmes. What is different about the principles that Peter Senge puts forward is that he now stresses the need for this continuous learning to come from *the individual* rather than from an externally imposed system. Learning from within. Not a novel concept for anyone who has been involved with NLP for any length of time.

However I am still surprised by the number of companies who do not connect personal development with the development of the organization. Even worse are those who actively suppress personal development because they fear its impact on the business. All too often those individuals who are committed to realizing their true potential through managing their own development are the ones who pay for themselves to do the training, if indeed it is the training road that they choose to take.

I feel that the business world is on the brink of a Personal Development explosion. It is only necessary to look at the changing face of the bookshelves to realize that the interest is shifting away from re-engineering the organization to re-engineering oneself. We are moving towards a culture where organizations exist in a form that allows individuals to find their own role and ways of expressing their true talent. No longer is there a need to send managers on motivation courses—the people will motivate themselves. Rather,

managers learn how to create an environment and a style that allows this freedom of expression.

So how does NLP play a role in this? A rhetorical question undoubtedly for the readers of this journal but then again I am sometimes surprised. NLP offers individuals and organizations alike the *how* to achieve this new culture.