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| Painless Business Newsletter #121 | | | |
| **Amuse, Inform and Inspire September 2012** | | | |
| In the last month James has been on a trip to South Africa, during which he visited the charity project that Painless Business has supported for many years. It is perhaps unsurprising that such an experience is the inspiration for this newsletter. Unusually, James has written in the first person, as it was such a personal experience.  As a result, we have chosen not to build on our Culture Club reference last month by continuing the dodgy Eighties musical references, though there was a moment when Dolly Parton very nearly became the theme. I know Graeme will be devastated we chose something else, but every other reader can consider how close you came to hearing our thoughts on Jolene, and recognise you have much to be thankful for... | | | |
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|  | *What if you didn’t know you couldn’t do it?* | | |
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| As part of our visit, Bev and I were taken round a range of projects that our charity has either already funded, or is planning to fund in the near future. We were in a very poor part of rural South Africa and it would have been easy to be consumed by the despair of some of the situations we encountered. Instead we were inspired by the many examples of hope and opportunity we witnessed. One particular lesson emerged, which I wanted to share.  We saw a number of small-business projects that World Vision is supporting in the start-up phase, building economic sustainability in the community. At one project – an egg production business run, like all the projects, by a women's co-operative – we saw how some basic capital funding and some business skills training had transformed the lives of the 20 or so people working there (and their families).  We knew that a number of these projects were flourishing, plugging a gap in the local market. Having grown up on farms, I wondered why they had never been tried before. I turned to Ledile, the charity project manager and a good friend, and asked the question. Her reply stopped me in my tracks: "Because they didn't know they could."  Now, this could spark a whole discussion about apartheid and a system that structurally under-educated the majority just so they wouldn't run their own businesses and would provide cheap labour for those owned by the minority, but here is not the place.  Here is where we can discuss the enormity and applicability of that reply from Ledile. They didn't know they could. Yet as soon as someone helped them believe they could, and provided the support to help them make it true, these women were off and flying, creating a growing business with profits to invest in expansion.  And I realise that, back here in the UK, we all have things that we don't know we could do, and we have things we think we know we can't do (one of my clients, who believes they can't do marketing, despite evidence to the contrary, may be smiling now).  When babies move from crawling to toddling, they don't seem to know they can't do it. They just keep trying. When Ledile challenged these women to do something they didn't know they could do, they excelled.  **What do you think you know you can't do, when actually you may be wrong?**  **What don't you know you could do, if you only tried?**  **What would you do, if you didn't know you couldn't?**  Now, people who think they may be wrong in thinking they cannot fly from tall buildings should NOT just give it a go. There are some things we can't do, and never will. But there are many things we could try, especially if we get the right support, perhaps a safety net, and grow into the new skills, rather than jumping.  In South Africa, lives are being changed (and arguably saved) because people are doing things they didn't know they could. They are abandoning knowing they can't and are proving they can. What could you change in your life? | | | |
| *Painless Business News* | | | |
| James was asked by World Vision to create a blog about his visit to the charity project. You can read the five parts on their website: [Part 1](http://blog.worldvision.org.uk/2012/08/31/returning-to-south-africa/), [Part 2](http://blog.worldvision.org.uk/2012/09/03/cool-teenagers-and-fun-photos-in-south-africa/), [Part 3](http://blog.worldvision.org.uk/2012/09/03/bitter-sweet-time-with-our-sponsored-child-in-south-africa/), [Part 4](http://blog.worldvision.org.uk/2012/09/04/pigs-and-poultry-mean-progress-in-south-africa/) and [Part 5](http://blog.worldvision.org.uk/2012/09/05/a-fond-farewell-with-a-hope-to-return/).  James and Bev helped found the charity, Choko, that supports World Vision's work in South Africa and long-term readers will have heard about it before. Their major fundraising effort is a beer festival (held this Saturday, 29th September), and Painless Business are delighted to be a sponsor. If you are able to attend, please find Celia or James as they would be delighted to share a drink with you. There is something virtuous about drinking and raising money for charity at the same time! | | | |
| *Painless Puns*  Sometimes it pays to go with the blindingly obvious, so this month’s topic makes the following Henry Ford quote a must-have:  *If you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re probably right.*  There is some debate whether all the quotes attributed to Henry Ford were actually ever uttered by him, and they were almost certainly not thought up by him, but we’re not going to let the truth get in the way of a good story, so here are another few Ford gems:  *Don't find fault, find a remedy; anybody can complain*  *You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do.*  *When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.*  We received an email from a newsletter reader that said: “Another joke for your newsletter (if it makes the grade and fits!!) “. One wonders how painful a pun would have to be to not make the grade... Well, Louise, yours was painful, but the memories of Uma Thurman telling it in Pulp Fiction were enough to ensure we included it:  *What did the big tomato say to the little tomato as they were walking down the street?*  *Ketchup.*  On a more personal note, Celia recently challenged her husband as he returned home late after a night out with the boys. There was alcohol on his breath and lipstick on his cheek. "I assume," she snarled, "that there is a very good reason for you to come waltzing in at six o'clock in the morning?"  "There is." he replied, "Breakfast." | | | |
| *Final Words* | | | |
| Many of us have had those profound experiences where a casual remark stops us in our tracks and changes the way we think about the world. For James, the simplicity of Ledile’s reasoning has proved inspirational. We hope sharing it has helped you.  As we always say at our workshops, time spent on training courses or reading newsletters is only wasted if nothing changes as a result. We hope you realise you can do something you thought you couldn’t, and you do it. Please let us know. | | | |
| Warmest regards  James Butler, Celia Champion and the Painless Team  [james@painlessbusiness.com](mailto:james@painlessbusiness.com) [celia@painlessbusiness.com](mailto:james@painlessbusiness.com)  01491 659073 01189 795363  © Painless Ltd 2012  Painless Business is a trading name of Painless Ltd.  Registered in England No: 5362019 VAT No: 993 6996 33 | | | |
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