

**Otters Des. Res.
Save & Prosper Group**
Homes for Otters
Stodmarsh Nature Reserve, Kent

A **Management Development** programme for the core management team of the company's Life and Pensions Division. A group of middle and senior managers undertook a complex project management exercise used to explore team and individual roles within the management team, as well as managing change, managing pressure, developing others and influencing upwards.

Project Background

All necessary technical help and advice, plus equipment, was available for the team to accomplish the task, they were briefed by Response DT facilitators and wardens from English Nature then, using a variety of sources of information were expected to create an initial project plan which was formally presented to the training staff. From then on, the team tackled the task as a 'project' working through all the classic stages from planning to final evaluation and review.

The main learning vehicle chosen for the participants was an Environmental / Conservation Project to be carried out in the grounds of Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve, near Canterbury in Kent. The project spanned a period of just over 36 hours - Wednesday Evening to Friday lunch time. The project was a 100% team based activity, in which co-operation, not competition, was the central theme. Individuals, however, were encouraged to explore their own styles and methods of team working, demonstrating leadership and supportive qualities as appropriate.

To provide a structure within which to observe and comment on team working behaviours an Observation Framework was used to measure and assess particular aspects of individual performance.

Project Context

The main task of the team project entailed building an otter halt (nesting hide), taking it out into a lake and then securing it in a position from which observations can be made. It was a large scale and complex operation with plenty of scope for creative input, planning and management skills and, of course, a great deal of team working activity.

The project was a positive contribution to the work of the nature reserve and set up conditions under which scientific and controlled monitoring of the otters movements could be made.



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There were other related activities associated with the main core task, which added interest and further complexity to the overall project. For example, it was beneficial to the client to have a small information leaflet which related to the hide and otter holt for the visiting public. The group provided details on content and a suitable design for the leaflet which was to be used as an 'educational aid' for visitors to the site.

In order to do this the whole area around the Hide, including the paths out from the main car park needed to be surveyed.

The leaflet highlighted points or features of interest which would enable visitors to find their way about using the seats, rest points, circular tour path.

Response Development Training facilitated the review process and transfer of learning whilst our technical experts from English Nature managed the specialist conservation and construction activities.

Group Presentations and Report

When the project was completed and finished, the Save & Prosper team were asked to make a major presentation of results to an audience comprised of staff and management from:

- 🌿 Stodmarsh Nature Reserve
- 🌿 English Nature Management
- 🌿 Response Trainers
- 🌿 Save & Prosper staff

All agreed it was a tremendous project filled with complexity and challenge which created some excellent learning points for all concerned.



**lifelong learning?
...think response!**

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