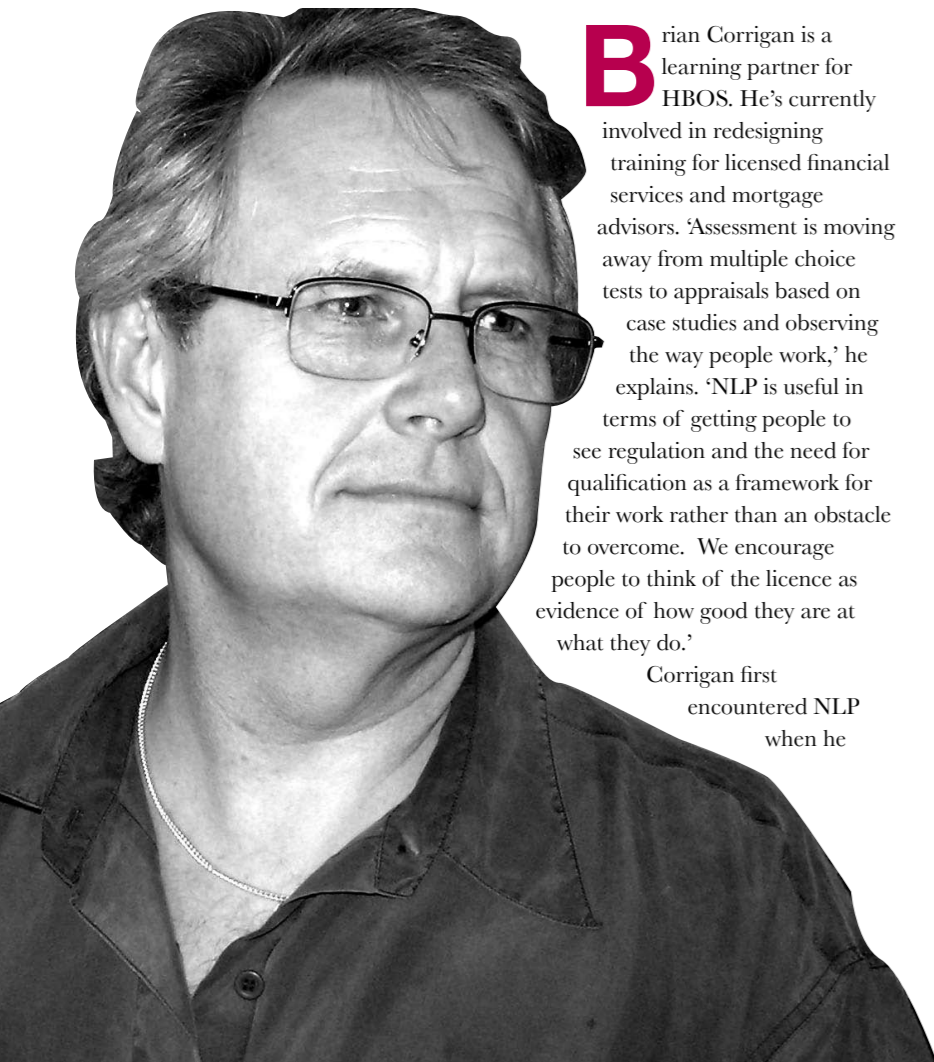


Connecting

Brian Corrigan manages training and development in banking and financial services. His team benefits from his company-sponsored NLP training. He applies NLP techniques to make himself and his teams more successful. Joanna Goodman reports.



Brian Corrigan is a learning partner for HBOS. He's currently involved in redesigning training for licensed financial services and mortgage advisors. 'Assessment is moving away from multiple choice tests to appraisals based on case studies and observing the way people work,' he explains. 'NLP is useful in terms of getting people to see regulation and the need for qualification as a framework for their work rather than an obstacle to overcome. We encourage people to think of the licence as evidence of how good they are at what they do.'

Corrigan first encountered NLP when he

was involved in delivering call centre training. 'Some of the telephone training techniques come from NLP,' he says. 'I then read more about it and decided that it could make me a better coach and a better manager.'

Under the guidance of Michael Beale at PPI Business NLP, Corrigan has developed techniques that have influenced both his own training methods and his management style. 'I give people feedback and help them build on what they have learnt,' he says.

NLP techniques are particularly helpful for call centre staff. 'When you're talking to somebody on the phone you've no idea how they're receiving your call, so listening techniques are important, as are calibration techniques to help move a conversation forward,' explains Corrigan.

Corrigan utilises NLP to help HBOS employees get through their banking exams. 'Increased regulation means that some people are facing exams after a gap of 10 or 15 years,' he says. He coaches people in techniques such as fast forwarding, visualisation, and

with NLP

mental rehearsals to help them develop a positive mindset. 'Most people find the techniques easy to pick up and the results have been quite dramatic, particularly with people who've failed exams several times,' he explains. 'It's partly to do with instilling confidence and partly a matter of treating the future as though it has already happened and the success is there already.'

Corrigan is proud of having removed pass marks from HBOS' in-house testing. 'There are no failures; there are simply people who don't achieve 100 percent,' he explains. 'Those people do far more to try to achieve 100 percent than anyone ever did when they simply had to achieve a pass mark. Learning is no longer a matter of jumping through hoops.'

How does he use NLP to train the trainers? 'It's important to use the right language to get through to people and to recognise how they receive messages,' explains Corrigan. 'I teach the trainers to understand that a message is not what you tell people; it's what they hear. Using the feedback loop when you're training people helps you find out how much they've understood.'

Corrigan also applies NLP techniques to meetings and his strategy has worked so well that he has managed to shorten the average length of his meetings by a factor of three. He says that this benefit alone was enough to justify the company paying for his NLP training. His success rate has also increased significantly. 'Very often we get into a meeting and concentrate on what we want to get out

of it. But the person on the other side of the table may have a different agenda,' he says. 'It's important to establish the desired outcomes and explain things to people in a way that they understand.'

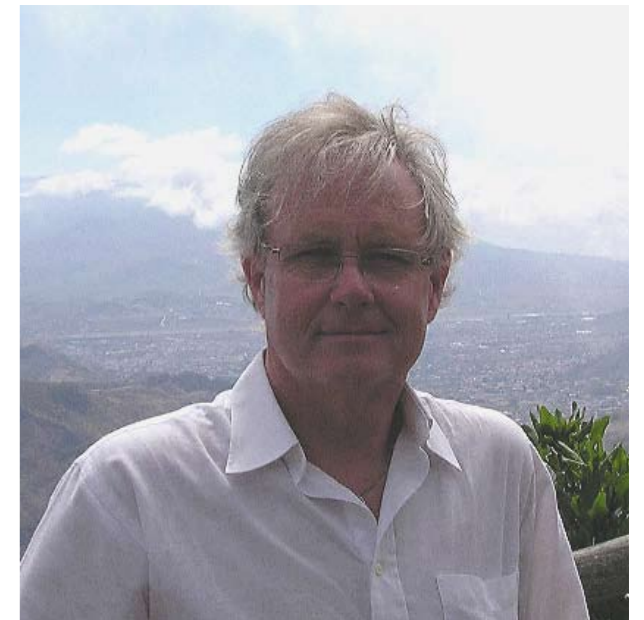
Corrigan prepares for a meeting by visualising his desired outcomes. 'It's not a matter of hoping something will happen, but of visualising it as if it's already happened. I then visualise how I'm going to report those outcomes to senior management and what the report will look like,' he says. But flexibility is also essential. 'If during the meeting it emerges that those outcomes are unachievable, it's vital to review and replace. It's another application of

“NLP techniques are by far the quickest and most effective way of getting people to improve their one-to-one skills”

the feedback loop providing a clear understanding of what the other party wants to achieve.'

Corrigan also recommends developing rapport by mirroring language. 'You have to be more careful about mirroring posture and gesture, but if you've got somebody mirroring you, you know you're in rapport with them,' he says. 'One of the great things about NLP is when you catch yourself doing it automatically.'

Corrigan believes that NLP has had a profound influence on his career. 'It's



given me the ability to decide what direction my career is going to take,' he says. 'It's a matter of synchronicity.

You come across something that helps you, but there are also other factors that you wouldn't be able to exploit if you didn't have that initial stimulus.

NLP has given me the opportunity to change the way HBOS tests people and to communicate at higher levels in the organisation. It's helping me move up the organisation.'

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