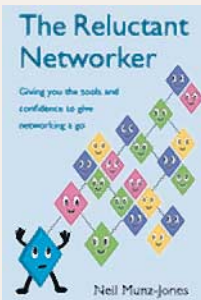


BOOK EXTRACT

Meet your goals on contacts

If you are going to networking events, you must make the most of them, says Neil Munz-Jones in this edited extract from his new book, *The Reluctant Networker*



■ Be clear why you are going. Even though I now enjoy many of the ones I go to, I would not choose to go to them in my “free time”. I need to get something productive out of them such as some new contacts or old contacts revived. Saying hello to most of the room without really “connecting” does not achieve my objectives. I prefer to have several conversations that are long enough to “make a connection”.

■ Be confident! Make eye contact regularly, smile and look like you are a natural. There will be many others in the room not feeling 100% confident and in their element . . . it is not just you who will be feeling like that. If you look like you would rather be somewhere else, you are unlikely to meet many people and have useful conversations.

■ If you are already in a group talking, keep an eye out for people trying to join you. Turn your body to let them in and tell them what is being discussed and introduce yourself.

■ One friend has what he calls “The Five Question Rule”. If after asking a new contact five questions they have still not asked him any questions, it’s time to move on!

■ If you take somebody’s business card and you enjoyed meeting them, jot down on the back some memorable details from your conversation. Enter their contact details in your database and drop them an email saying you enjoyed meeting and hope you can stay in touch.

■ *The Reluctant Networker* by Neil Munz-Jones, published by Hothive Books, is available post-free for £8.99 from *The Sunday Times Bookshop* on 0845 271 2134 or timesonline.co.uk/bookshop

Mentoring for beginners

FRANCESCO GUIDICINI

Giving youngsters a helping hand into the world of business is its own reward, writes Tariq Tahir

There are some things that all the management training in the world cannot teach you about handling people, according to Zena Goldrick.

Six weeks mentoring an intern made the manager at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, the City law firm, reassess the way she went about her work.

“When you have someone come in whom you mentor, you see them grow,” said Goldrick, 37, who manages 20 personal assistants in the firm’s finance practice. “You’re so proud of them when they leave because you can see that you’ve made a difference — it helps you to look at things in a different way.”

“That has allowed me to progress in my career as a manager significantly in the past year.”

Goldrick mentored Joel Blackman, a student from Merton College, south London, as part of the Career Academies programme, in which young people from deprived areas who are studying for three A-levels are given a leg-up into business.

For the 800 or so businesses that take part, the programme gives employees a chance to practise their mentoring skills with a dry run on the students.

Goldrick was approached in April last year to take part in Career Academies. She and a colleague selected Blackman to work with her for a six-week internship. He started soon after, working at first on simple administrative tasks such as printing and photocopying. He was soon designing documents using unfamiliar software and demonstrating his initiative.

It changed Goldrick’s approach to managing and mentoring her teams. “When you are a manager you can be quite controlling. You tend to trust yourself to manage tasks rather than leave them in the hands of others,” she said.

“When Joel come into the

office, I had to go back to square one, in order to instill confidence in him to complete the tasks I set him. So when I saw him shine I thought to myself that I have to let go, have confidence in him — and other people — and to delegate more.”

Mentoring and developing staff to cope with the high pressure demands of the partners and associates at the magic circle firm that employs 2,500 lawyers in 27 business centres around the world is now a key part of Goldrick’s job.

Her new approach was put to the test in July last year when, at the suggestion of her manager, she was put in charge of a new team as well as keeping an eye on an existing one.

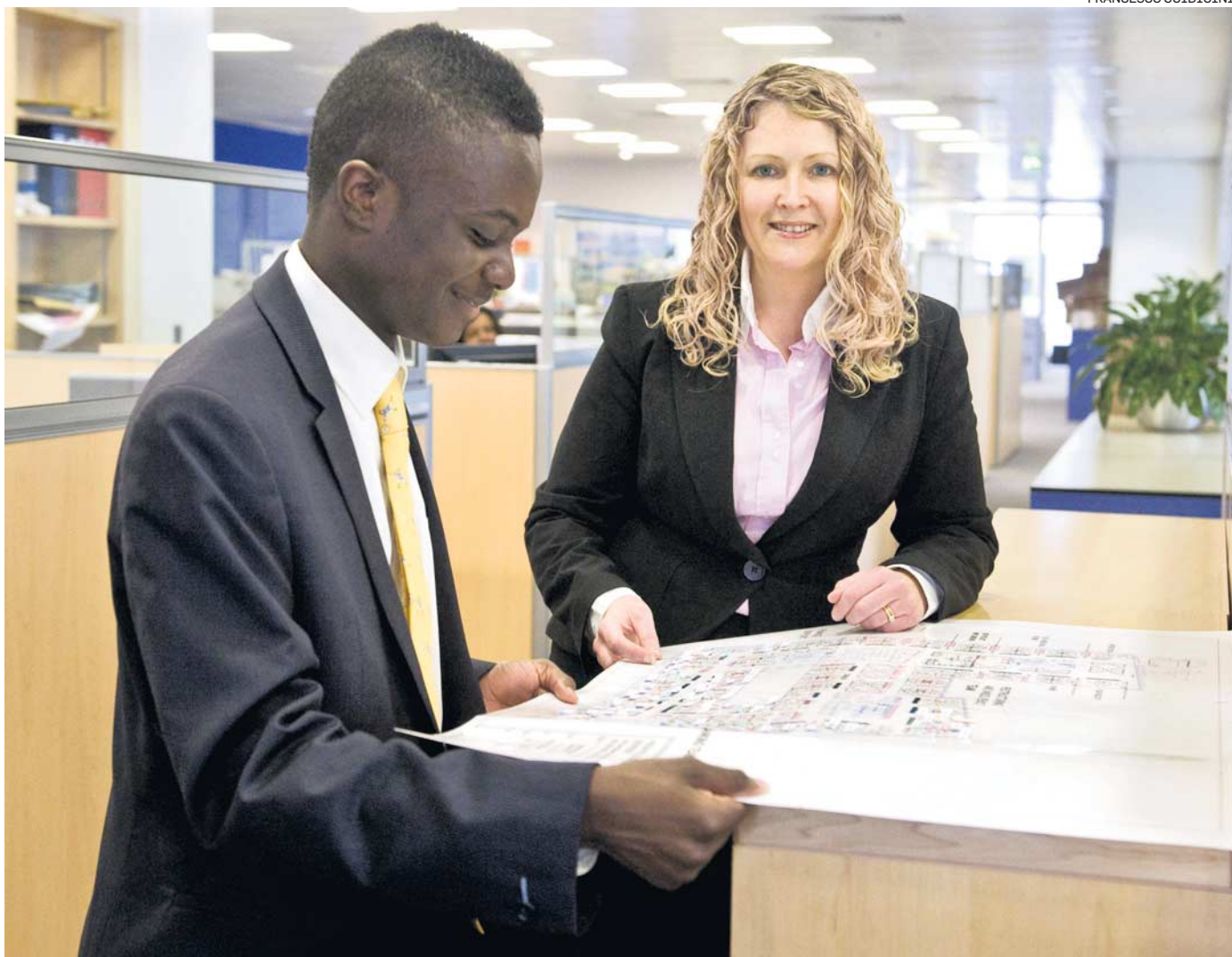
With that new role came the challenge of looking at new staff and assessing their capabilities. Again, the experience of working with Blackman gave her an invaluable insight into how to get the best out of her staff.

“I had to go back to the drawing board and look at people’s strengths and weaknesses and match them accordingly. Having Joel made me see the potential in some people that I hadn’t necessarily seen before.”

“It was definitely a challenge and we’ve ironed out the problems we’ve had. In the last round of appraisals, I was thanked by those I manage for the way that I went about it.”

Goldrick, ranked as a supervisor, now has set her sights on becoming business services manager, which involves supervising the entire department. She will take with her the measured approach gained from her mentoring experience with Career Academies.

“You reflect on situations first rather than just jumping in with your size 10s,” she said. “That is a massive learning curve that you would not be able to obtain through any management training.”



New perspective: Zena Goldrick at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer says she learnt a lot while mentoring Joel Blackman

For Blackman, 19, from Norbury, south London, the experience of working at Freshfields has opened his eyes to the possibility of a career in the City. He graduated from Career Academies last month and plans to go to Middlesex University to study business and economics.

“Zena gave me a big chance and it was fun as well,” he said. “It gave me confidence and it inspired me to want more.”

“I was knocking on the partners’ doors, asking them questions and getting to do things on my own, rather than her standing behind me all the time or talking to them for me.”

Career Academies was set up in 2002 after a core group of about half a dozen companies, including Citigroup, the banking and financial services organisation, were inspired by the similar National Academy Foundation in America.

Sir Win Bischoff, now chairman of Lloyds Banking Group and previously Citi’s chairman, is the national advisory board chairman. Funding is split three ways, with 75% coming from the private sector, 15%-20% from schools; and the rest from public sector from bodies such as regional development agencies.

The programme has many passionate, high-profile supporters

in the business world including Dev Sanyal, BP’s group treasurer.

The 44-year-old Indian national has been a board member for three years and is one of the guru lecturers. It is, he said, a challenge for his presentational skills.

“I did a lecture at St George Monoux College in Walthamstow [east London] and what’s very engaging about those sessions is having to distil what you do to a group of 16- to 19-year-olds and that’s very difficult.”

“But what I found perhaps more rewarding than the presentation was the Q&A. Typically, there are lots of multi-faceted questions and the thing that

comes across is how thoughtful these young adults are,” he said.

“I’ve certainly gained from getting a window into the way that young people think on various issues such as markets and the economy and how they think about particular industries. That is something one would not get in one’s normal schedule.”

He also agrees that mentoring through Career Academies is a two-way street for the businesses and students taking part.

“Mentoring is something that you do in any leadership role and getting that experience is as important for the mentor as it is for the protégé.”

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