

Donovan News

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... keeping in touch with clients and other friends ...

History Provides the Edge

There are a few managers who have little regard for the history of their organisations. Their claim is that they are only interested in the next job or the next product, not those that have gone before.

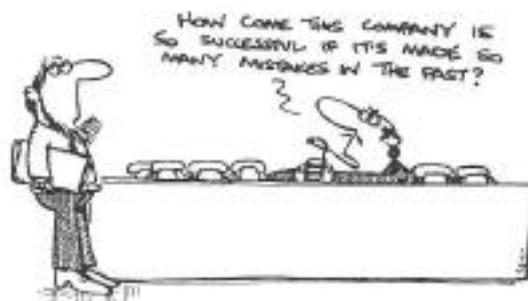
This is rather a short-sighted attitude because it is largely the success with which they have completed earlier projects or sold earlier products that enables them to compete for the next.

One of the key aims in any marketing strategy is to ensure product or service differentiation. And one of the most effective means whereby a successful organisation can differentiate itself from competitors is to point to past achievements and its record of satisfaction to clients.

Age is certainly no guarantee of competent management or future success. But a company that has met and overcome a number of challenges in the past and remains in the forefront of its industry might lay greater claim to a contested project than another that has not yet been tried.

A distinguished history is especially important for those companies wishing to do business overseas, particularly in those countries that value tradition and heritage.

Individuals learn from experience: so too should companies. Those organisations whose members have a regard for their history and the traditions to which they are heirs have a reservoir of experience and wisdom to draw upon in times of difficulty and in times of success when errors of judgement can easily be made. Companies with a history should highlight their advantage.



THE DONOVAN PHILOSOPHY

Those of us at **Donovan & Associates** enjoy our history and hope that our readers might share in this through the odd cartoon in our **News**. However, we also take our history very seriously and ensure that we remain informed of developments and practice in our profession.

To this end, the principals belong to numbers of professional associations.

Those bodies particularly concerned with the practice of History include • the Association of Professional Historians • the Australian Historical Association • the Oral History Association of Australia.

We advise on matters of heritage conservation and to ensure that we remain informed of current practice belong to Australia ICOMOS and the Association for Preservation Technology.

We also like to ensure that anyone who works for **Donovan & Associates** belongs to the appropriate professional organisations.

NEW PROJECTS

Donovan & Associates has begun several exciting new projects since the Autumn News.

One of the larger projects is concerned with the publication of E.J. Connellan's story of his special airline. Eddie Connellan was a dynamic man who went to the Northern Territory in 1939, determined to help develop it. He inaugurated all manner of schemes to do so, none did more to fulfil his ideals than his airline. The changing circumstances in the airline industry forced him to sell the airline to East West Airways in 1980: the new operation did not last twelve months.

Eddie Connellan fought bureaucracy for forty years. Once the airline had been sold he determined to write its story, only to have solicitors advise heavy editing. He died on 26 December, 1983 before the story was published. His son has pursued the task of publishing the story and engaged **Donovan & Associates** to help him do so. We are editing E.J.'s story for publication and also providing an overview of his life to provide the rich context within which to see his airline story.

Donovan & Associates is also helping Dame Nancy Buttfeld write her life story. She is able to provide a unique



Pamela Runge at the Adelaide Gaol

Interviewees have included one-time inmates, keepers, prison officers, social-workers and chaplains.

Most of the interviews have been conducted at the Gaol where we have been able to use the different parts to evoke memories. Others have been conducted at the Yatala Labour Prison.

The collection will comprise a valuable and graphic record of life in the Gaol from the 1950s to its close in 1988. Inmates have spoken of the importance of the kitchen, not only for meals but also as the supply of ingredients for home brews. Kitchen staff were amongst the few who could go to different parts of the Gaol, and for a fee, might carry items from one part to another.

Inmates and officers have spoken of the mind-games that one side played on the other. We have heard about the strategies for beating boredom, of how some did time hard, and we learned some of the tricks for doing it 'standing on one's head'.

Despite the primitive conditions of the Gaol immediately before its closure, one of the most common observations made by nearly all of those inmates and officers whom we interviewed was that it had a certain homeliness about it that the modern penal institutions do not have.

The Department hopes to use the interviews to produce one or more audio tapes to which visitors will be able to listen while walking about the Gaol. These will give visitors first-hand experience of what it was like 'doing time' in Adelaide Gaol.

ADELAIDE
GAOL

The oral history of the Adelaide Gaol, announced in the previous News has been proceeding apace during the last few months. This project was commissioned by the Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Planning in association with the Mortlock Library. Our brief has been to conduct a series of interviews with people who have had first-hand knowledge of the Gaol.

REI HISTORY

Work on our history of the Real Estate Institute of South Australia has continued since the Autumn News. It has provided us with the opportunity to take a unique look at the history of South Australia.

Land agents have been important in the history of South Australia since its inception. Before ever the colony was founded a certain number of land-orders had to be sold to prospective settlers, and



Alison Painter in front of REI House

once settlement was made, new settlers had to find land and housing. Since that time of South Australia's foundation, land agents have played an important role as facilitators of settlement and development and of the Great Australian Dream. They continue to do so in a market where annual property transactions are valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

However, despite their fundamental importance to the social and economic history of South Australia, land agents and others in the industry have generally suffered a bad press because of the charlatans and fly-by-nighters. Perhaps because the sale of land has been so fundamental to the development of any society it has always been a large industry that has been attractive to numbers of people, a certain percentage of whom have failed to abide by the standards set and maintained by the majority.

The Institute was formed in 1919 to help ensure the ethical behaviour of its members and to lobby for regulation of the industry that would help eliminate the unscrupulous.



Our history seeks to tell the story of the manner in which the Institute has gone about its task, the problems it has encountered and the measure of success it has achieved.

New Projects, continued

perspective on the history of South Australia. She is the daughter of Sir Edward Holden the 'father of the Holden motor car' and she became the first South Australian woman to enter parliament. She has a particular insight into the political history of South Australia from the interwar period and that of the Commonwealth from 1955 to 1974 where she served in the Senate.

Recently Donovan & Associates was also commissioned to undertake an oral history of Collison and Co., a local firm which can lay claim to the being the oldest licensed firm of patent attorneys in the world. Founded in 1877, the firm has been associated with many of the significant inventions in South Australia.

NEW from D & A



Connellan Airways: *Outback Airline*, is an illustrated history of Connellan Airways produced to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of this special airline. The airline was

founded by E.J. Connellan in 1939 as part of his endeavour to promote development in the Northern Territory. Until it was finally sold to East-West Airlines in 1980, it played a special role in helping to overcome the problems of distance and isolation in outback Australia. Because of this Connellan Airways has a special place in the aviation history of Australia.

Defending the Northern Gateway provides a historical overview of the development of Australia's defence policy and the role in it ascribed to Darwin and the Northern Territory, up to and including World War II. The book explores the identification of development in the Northern Territory with that of defence. While those in the 1950s spoke of 'Populate or Perish', others in the 1980s still speak of 'Defence through

Development' in the North. The work for this book was undertaken while Peter Donovan was a Visiting Fellow of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre of the Australian National University in 1988.



*What we have heard and known for ourselves,
and what our ancestors have told us,
must not be withheld from their descendants,
but be handed on by us to the next generation*

Psalm 78

PEOPLE

Since updating one of our vehicles people have been asking, 'Who is Clio?'

Clio was a Greek goddess, one of the nine Muses charged with recording the exploits of the Greek Heroes. She was the second of the nine and the one specifically identified with History. The several Muses each have items that identify them in sculpture and painting: Clio is always depicted holding a scroll.



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Historians and Heroes

In his book, *The Psychology of Winning*, Denis Waitley emphasised that winning was not about beating someone else, but about living up to and constantly increasing one's own potential. In much the same way heroes are not extraordinary people whom we can only admire, but more often than not, they are ordinary people who do things extraordinarily well whom we can emulate.

All organisations have their fair share of heroes who embody its tradition, spirit or culture. These heroes are to be found throughout the history of any organisation. The astute manager is the one who enlists his organisation's heroes to work for him by having a historian identify the heroes and their particular contributions to the organisation.

Founders

The founder of any organisation is the first of the heroes in the Pantheon of any organisation. Like pharmacist Francis Hardy Faulding, realtor Ronald Collier, the founder is the one who established the organisation's sense of mission, its distinctiveness, and determined that the enterprise would differ from its contemporaries.

But any hero is the product of his time. Those companies that have endured are those that have adapted to change, both generated from within and imposed from without. Long-lived organisations have had other heroes follow the founder who have recognised the need for change and the need to arrest the complacency that creeps into any successful enterprise. They are the

ones who have injected new direction and vitality into the organisation.

Successors

Each of Faulding's successors had to rejuvenate the firm, in some instances because of complacency within the company and in others because of new challenges facing it because of changes within the pharmaceutical industry. Henry Holden persuaded the family firm to fabricate car bodies rather than simply make harnesses and carriage trim, his son, Edward, seized the opportunity to build complete cars; his successors have had to combat competitors and the changes in the Australian automotive industry following the introduction of the Button Plan. Those organisations who have not had heroes to meet the challenges have died or have been taken over.

Numbers of heroes have helped win major projects for their companies: Roger Sprimont masterminded Kockums' bid to build submarines for the RAN; Jim Duncan, the Director of the South Australian task Force did much to ensure that the Fabrication Facility was built in South Australia. Others have saved their companies vast amounts of expence. James Cyril Stobie of the Adelaide Electric Supply Company, helped his company overcome the particular problem posed by South Australia's lack of timber suitable for electricity poles and in doing so helped promote great economies.

Other heroes have discovered new products or processes that have helped give their company the edge over competitors or increase productivity.

Des Smith, the Chief Civil Engineer with Australian National, oversaw the construction of the standard gauge rail-link to Alice Springs and devised an innovative track-laying process that slashed the construction time. Others in Australian National saw the potential of converting obsolete wagons into grain carriages at a fraction of the cost of building new grain carriages.

The Hero's Contribution

Managers need to recognise the contribution of the heroes to the life of any organisation. At one level the recognition helps counter ideas that only those presently in senior management positions have a monopoly on wisdom.

An understanding of the contribution of past heroes to the ongoing life of an organisation will also help contemporaries and new recruits identify with the traditions of an organisation.

Above all, the recognition of the heroes will help to promote an identity and a sense of purpose amongst all those in an organisation.

The Need for Heroes

A company like the Australian Submarine Corporation has a need to develop a positive culture quickly because of the demands of its contract with the Australian government. The recognition of those heroes who helped win the submarine contract can help highlight and define those qualities of excellence that should infuse the culture of the ASC.

The contract to build Australian's new generation submarines was won against enormous odds because of a single-minded commitment to the goal and an unshakeable belief in the excellence of the product that was being offered. The same spirit must pervade the Corporation as it sets about the task of actually building the submarines. The task is different but the qualities demanded of all involved are the same.

There are numbers of ASC heroes in addition to Roger Sprimont. Geoff Davis the first chairman and one time Managing Director of Wormald gave the company an Australian face, opened many doors, and promoted a number of publicity coups that caught to opposition off-side: Bill Hicklen of CBI negotiated the contract with the government. The latter two, along with a number of others, are no longer with the company yet their influence persists.

Numbers of others remain from the beginning of the project, yet they are quickly being outnumbered by later recruits who have little appreciation of the contribution made by their predecessors. The achievements of all of these heroes need to be recognised to highlight those qualities and the pursuit of excellence that helped win the submarine contract and will ensure its successful completion.

The identification of the heroes and the contributions that they have made to any organisation is the sort of task that historians are admirably equipped to undertake.

There are numbers of heroes in any organisation at any time. They might be those who suggest ideas for improving productivity, others on the shop-floor who have remained loyal to the organisation for thirty years or more, or the super salespeople. There are potentially new heroes awaiting encouragement.

The wise manager will recall those company's heroes who helped fashion the organisation and draw attention to the qualities that they demonstrated. The same manager will also recognise and reward those heroes who still belong to the organisation.

All of these heroes embody the company's traditions and spirit and help provide the human face. Present and future challenges will be different from those of the past but those infused with an appreciation of the organisation and its culture will be those best equipped to meet these challenges.