

A colleague of ours was invited to run residential training events for managers in a large manufacturing organization. The third group saw the event as a reward for good behaviour which need not be taken too seriously. Our colleague was only able to communicate with these groups once these expectations and assumptions had been uncovered and discussed openly. There seemed to be at least three different reactions from different sub-groups: Some managers looked really interested and spent the weekend frantically scribbling notes. He came back from the first of these looking very dispirited, and complained that he could not understand the reactions from the group of managers, who were supposed to be very committed to personal development. When he did this, he found that none of the managers had been explicitly told why they had been nominated for the training – their 'commitment' was a senior management assumption.??