

The Baron Report

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A New Year Begins

How time flies when you are having fun and even when you're not. 2001 is over and the start of an exciting and interesting year lies ahead. Exciting because it is the start of the second round of accreditation for many. Interesting because many facilities will quickly realise what they haven't yet accomplished.

The start of a new year is also a good time to look back and reflect on achievements during the past year. Did we meet all of our goals? Are we happy with what we have achieved?

Recently a number of people have asked us about ourselves and our activities, which we were only too happy to expand upon.

This caused us to reflect that it might be good to let others know who and what we are.

The following is not a 'figjam' session but simply the only way we know of getting our message across.

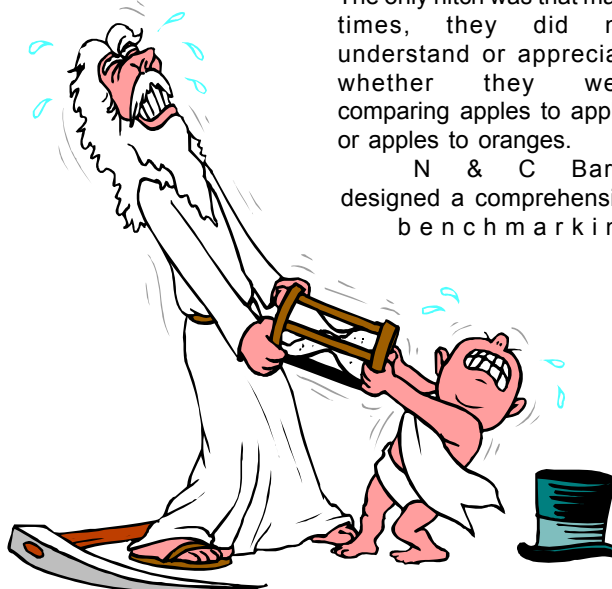
Carla is a Canadian hospital-trained Registered Nurse who completed her Bachelor of Health Science degree and post-graduate studies in education in Australia. She has worked as a clinician, as a senior manager and as an educator. She is a member of the Quality Society of Australasia enabling her to work as an external quality Aged Care auditor.

Neil brings a different dimension to the partnership with a background in business management and political consulting. He has undertaken post-graduate

studies in gerontics and completed a Masters of Applied Science in Leisure by thesis.

Neil has also completed the Aged Care Auditor's course.

Neil & Carla work as a team to provide the industry with advice, support and education. Their past and current experience gives them a wide base of



knowledge, research skills and contacts that enable them to give accurate information.

As educators both hold Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training with Carla holding a Graduate Diploma of Education.

So, that is who we are but what have we achieved?

Well looking at the last year, there have been many achievements of which we are proud.

While others were complaining about lack of access to Auditor Training

Programs in SA and how "somebody should do something about that", we did. Two External Auditor courses graduated 19 participants with a third course booked for 2002.

Benchmarking became the buzz word and organisations began to collect data to measure themselves against others. The only hitch was that many times, they did not understand or appreciate whether they were comparing apples to apples or apples to oranges.

N & C Baron designed a comprehensive benchmarking

program involving audits and education that has enabled participants to compare multiple aspects of their service and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Following the success of N&C Baron's Performance Appraisal Kit across Australia, we gained feedback that facilities found the kit so useful that they wanted additional areas covered. In response, PAK 2 has now been released providing appraisal formats for Clerical, Activities/DT's, Maintenance, Therapy Aides and Managerial/ Supervisory staff.

We noted recently that both ACS and Geriaction newsletters have included articles about the oral and dental needs of residents. One article particularly called on the Federal Government to supply funds to train Carers in this vital area.

We are pleased to advise that without government funds, we have produced, with the assistance of a dentist and dental hygienist well versed in aged care, a video and self-learning package endorsed by the Australian Dental Association that enables you to train staff NOW at a price affordable to everyone.

We were also pleased to facilitate SA nutritional workshops by well-known Victorian dietician and nutritionalist, Yvonne Coleman.

We have continued to provide on-site education to many facilities in SA, Victoria and Tasmania and have continued to offer rural support services to facilities in the South East, Mid-North, Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas, the Murray Mallee and Kangaroo Island.

And, of course, our favourite - The Thorny Issues 2nd Annual Conference challenged participants to consider who impacts on management of their facility.

The positive feedback and comments have ensured that we will endeavour to produce an even better event this year.

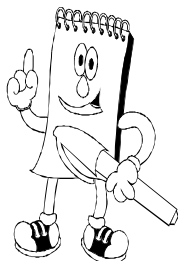
We are rested and ready to go again. Bring on 2002.

Current information for the Aged Care Industry

What Price Success?

Would you like to have something you have written or said published?

Simply mail, fax or e-mail us a copy with your details and we will try to make it happen.



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Everyone needs to keep a close eye on the budget; that is indisputable. But it does become worrying when the budget becomes the primary focus of any business.

Recently, *The Stock Journal* was saying much the same thing to proprietors of country properties and farm businesses. In that article (exact date and author unknown) the sentiment was "If you know the cost of everything but the value of nothing, you will never succeed in achieving your goal." This is a sentiment relevant to any business.

In residential aged care, the core business is quality care and accommodation for residents (customers). All expenditure should relate to these requirements. Yet, for many, the most often asked

question is not "How is this expenditure going to improve the life of our residents?" but simply "What's it going to cost?".

Too often in reviewing expenditure or approving costs, people look only at the dollars rather than considering the cost-benefit



balance. Some (in fact, most) expenditure should be considered as investment.

While it is generally agreed that it is more expensive to fix a problem than to prevent it, we see building maintenance minimised by some who will

only have to face additional expense later to fix a building problem that could have been avoided.

The purchase of appropriate equipment is much cheaper than the cost of a Workcover injury claim and subsequent rate rise.

And, what price staff education? Quality care can only be given by knowledgeable and motivated staff. Yet time and again, decision makers seem to believe education is just an "optional extra". Fact or fiction?

As staff shortages begin to cut deeply for some facilities, it is hoped they will not realize too late that staff are attracted to organisations where they are supported and feel valued. Well worth the investment, wouldn't you agree?

Documentation & the Privacy Act

Like everyone else in the industry we are on a learning curve about the implications of the newly enacted Privacy Act.

Already we have received questions from facilities regarding the practice of using names of other residents and of staff in individual resident files.

Those of you who have been to our Documentation and RCS workshops know that this is a practice we endorse as an important element of developing appropriate care strategies and as integral to factual and accurate reporting.

Our response was to seek clarification from Michael Hegarty, Privacy Act

expert and author of the Privacy Act program that many of you have purchased.

We are pleased to tell you that Michael has advised that we should not alter this good documentation practice. It is still important to know, for example, who causes the resident agitation or who the person does not get on with [*Resident becomes distressed and calls out when Mr Jones enters the dining room*] as well as what staff member has reported or directed what action [*Meth Sal rub to both knees as directed by F Nightengale, RN*].

Resident files are still confidential documents with limited access possibilities. It

becomes the job of the Privacy Officer of the organization to review when documentation is being accessed by other parties and then to "sanitize" the relevant areas through photocopy & whiteout.

We are happy to chase other queries you may have (that way we learn too) or you may wish to contact Michael directly.

He is pleased to provide clarification and is also happy to get feedback about the package. (Aged care are not the only people interested in continuous improvement).

How is Your Facility Managing?



How your facility is managing will be largely dependent on your facility is being managed at several levels.

Like all jobs, managerial duties require a set of specific skills and competencies about the various components of competent and effective management.

Management is not restricted only to senior managers; many staff are delegated responsibility for management of departments (ie. kitchen, housekeeping), work tasks (ie. quality assurance) or shifts (ie RN's, care supervisors). All of these positions require skill in some management aspect.

Many people climb the corporate ladder to become managers, learning by experience. Others, find themselves suddenly thrown into a position that requires management skills and expertise that they have never had the opportunity to either learn or experience.

Experience is a great teacher but it is problematic. When learning by experience one of three problems can arise:

1. Gaps of knowledge:

Even when in a position for a long period of time, one may not have the opportunity to experience certain aspects of management.

2. Incorrect practice:

Sometimes our experience is faulty; a situation is resolved more by good luck than good management but because it worked out, it is believed it was managed correctly. Or, the person that is mentoring the manager does not reflect sound management skill.

3. Trouble:

The ill-informed or incorrect management practice leads to a problem or crisis that requires remediation.

All managers should have some theory base to their management practice

and experience.

N & C Baron & Associates is pleased to present the Better Management Seminar Series of affordable seven one-day seminars on various components of management. Each seminar stands alone and is suitable to a variety of staff levels who are delegated management responsibility whether for the whole organisation or a single aspect.

Reduced fees are available for three or more persons from one organisation or for Management Skills Series Graduates who wish to refresh or upgrade components.

'Better Management' Seminar Series 2002

1 *Successful Management*

Friday, 5th April

Roles, planning, quality improvement

2 *Asset Management*

Friday, 26th April

Building, equipment, consumables,

3 *Human Resource Management – 1*

Friday, 31st May

Staffing, education, communication

4 *Human Resource Management – 2*

Friday, 14th June

Performance management, delegation, discipline

5 *Conflict Management*

Friday, 12th July

Teamwork, conflict resolution, negotiation

6 *Personal & Professional Development for Managers*

Friday, 16th Aug

Research, networking, time & stress management

7 *Representing your Facility*

Friday, 30th Aug

Media dealings, public speaking tips

Information in the next Baron Report or call Carla on 8276 9763.

Benchmarking

Doing it right or going through the motions ?

Feedback and observation of the Competitive Analysis Benchmarking program is showing that it is exceeding all initial expectations.

The ability to compare and relate to other facilities is important, but even more important is the ability to share and learn from like minded colleagues.

Benchmarking is much more than just

comparing, a concept that is more at home with little boys and their exploits. "Oh look my whatever is bigger than yours" So what? Is size or cost alone an indicator of anything? Don't get us wrong, both size and cost do have a place in the scheme of things but in relationship to the total picture; not as feature on their own.

Does knowing that your staffing hours are more

or less than others do anything for your residents? The answer quite simply is NOT NECESSARILY.

Knowing that if you have a certain number of nursing hours then your residents are getting X amount of time per resident also rings hollow. What could be important is knowing that a facility by being innovative and using X hours in a certain way is getting Y results.

It is very much like a major food chain advertising legs of lamb for \$2.99 per kilo. We know the price and the beast, but we don't know if buying one will be a good or bad investment. We need more information in order to make a sound judgement.

For more information on the benefits of benchmarking contact Carla or Neil on 8276 9763.

Star pupil can't help "pigging out"

Education sessions are always interesting due in no small measure to the variety of people that attend. Sometimes the entertainment might not even be a person.

Such was the case late last year when a very young and slightly injured little Tracy attended a session on Managing Challenging Behaviours. Was she happy to be there? You bet, so excited that she was a mass of squeals and in fact was just plain wetting herself. This is not the usual reaction to our sessions, although...

The poor thing was in the ideal education session for she has had many challenging behaviours despite her tender years.

It appeared that mum had not seen her while rolling

over which resulted in a leg being broken. But did this stop her from attending? Definitely not. Although she did display behaviour that has been seen at

in the refreshments. But hey, how often have you heard people who have attended an education function talking only about the food.? And lets face it



Tracy at the tap being watched by her friend Tyson

other sessions by nodding off and really only being interested

she is a growing girl who could stand to gain a few kilos.

Having mum do the dirty on her she was placed in the capable hands of Trish who just couldn't leave her to fend for herself. Is this a 'T' story by chance.

Anyway Trish did the right thing by ensuring that little Tracy was comfortable throughout the day with suitably warmed bottles and good exposure to a lawned area.

Evaluations indicated that participants weren't deterred from learning although it is questionable whether regular attendance would result in a roasting.

After all education sessions are serious affairs and it is important to get crackling and get positive results. And remember never to tell porkies.

Snakes Alive

A RN recently re-located to the country found an unwanted intruder on her turf and took after it with a spade. Not a very good way of getting to know the neighbours.

Nurse Identification

You know you are a nurse if you can identify at least two types of body fluids on your shoes and it doesn't faze you in the least.

Unknown

