

## DIARY OF A TRAINING CONSULTANT

# A radio star in the making

Karen Roem makes her on-air debut, gets caught in a spam filter and finds herself locked in a hotel room with no one to call

### Tuesday 17 January

Psychologists say that men have 'positive illusion'. Blokes believe they are better at what they do than they are. Women, on the other hand, have 'negative illusion'. We don't think we are as good as we actually are. Is that why, this morning, I had seven women in my classroom and the token man on the attendee list didn't turn up?

### Wednesday 1 February

It's Wednesday, so it must be Holland. (Should have saved this line for a time I'm doing training in Farawaystan.) Global implementation has started and we've begun training the trainers. We kicked off in the States last week, followed by Singapore in two week's time, then London. I'm just going to repeat that last one... London. So here we are, in The Hague, with five attendees (and me) flown in from the UK and one from Denmark. No Dutch person in sight. (Well, apart from me.) Remember common sense?

### Wednesday 15 February

Being chronologically gifted, my memory isn't what it used to be. Which is why I created a checklist for when going 'on tour'. Laptop? (check) Evaluation forms? (check) Training material? (check) ... Well, no point having such a wonderful system if you don't take it with you, ain't it? So on my way to the airport to the next assignment I realise I left my laptop's power cord underneath the client's desk. D'oh!

### Friday 24 February

It's not every day you get invited to appear on BBC Radio, even if it is just the local station. So I put on my best clothes, comb my hair (it's radio, man!) and drive to the studio to pop in for a chat with Sue Dougan. First question, live on air. Ron from Cambridge. 'What's the Scroll Lock key on my keyboard for?' Nerve-racking start. What is this key that seems to serve no purpose whatsoever? In all these years I don't remember ever pushing it. Oh boy, do I feel silly! Right. Get over it. Next! Sixty minutes later and I'm the owner of a recording I probably never ever want to listen to. But in a strange way we seemed to hit it off... I'll be back on 7 April.

### Friday 3 March

Once upon a time, back in the almost unimaginable days before junk email, you did not have to worry about your legit messages



**'Psychologists say men have "positive illusion". Is that why the token male on my attendee list didn't turn up today?'**

landing in the spam box. Nowadays, they even have a name for it. False positives. (There was me thinking that this was linked to drug tests.) Well, turns out my messages to the event organiser who invited me as a speaker were trapped by his anti-spam software. I wasn't posing as a reputable financial institution. Nor was I claiming to be the surviving spouse of a former Nigerian government honcho, offering to transfer millions of dollars into his bank account in exchange for a small fee. And – honestly – my messages contained none of those kind of words that rarely make it into your inbox. ('Viagra' springs to mind.) Nonetheless, I didn't make it through. OK, sifting through spam is an irritating and time-consuming activity, but surely the loss of an email from a client or potential customer (or speaker) could prove devastating for a business.

### Thursday 9 March

End of a training day. But no rest for the wicked as I have to make sure the online training environment is squeaky clean for tomorrow morning. So it's well past 6pm when I suddenly hear a clicking sound coming from the door. What the ?? I go over and guess what? They've locked me in! So now what? I bang on the door for a while, but there is nobody there. OK, if worst comes to the worst I'll have a kip in the corner and be nice and early for tomorrow's session, but there must be something else I can try? So I go to the phone and ring the guy who hired me. I get through to his voicemail. So I dial 100. (Just felt like a good number to ring.) Nothing. 9? Nada. 0? Zilch! My mobile phone has no reception and dialling outside the company seems barred, so my plan to ring the hotel or hubby or 999 (panic? moi?) is useless. I then spot a notice saying 'If you encounter any difficulties using these facilities please call the helpdesk on extension 2111.' Assuming they'd gone home for the day I am surprised to hear a voice on the other end of the line. 'Out-of-hours helpdesk, how can I help?' I explain my predicament, and we both laugh about his joke that I'll have to wait until tomorrow. (He is joking, right?) Four hours pass (I check my watch; no, it's only four minutes) and I hear the sweet sound of the doors being released. Hi ho, hi ho, it's home from work we go. (Whistles.) Hi ho, hi ho!

Karen Roem is the founder of software training and support firm Roem Limited. Diary of a training consultant is an extract from Karen's Blog: [www.roem.co.uk/blog.html](http://www.roem.co.uk/blog.html)