

Session 8

GET OUT OF THE RUT: FINDING OPPORTUNITIES IN ROUTINE

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In a cyclical environment, it is easy to develop a detached attitude to your work and its outcomes. The same tasks arise day after day, week after week, month after month, and each year seems to offer a repeat of the previous year's efforts. The work can seem never ending and thankless. You become stuck in a rut and can't see a way out.

Is your workplace stuck in a rut? Have you overheard conversations that include phrases like '..well, what can you do?' or "...that's just the way it is..."? Do you find that you and your colleagues mutely accept the unacceptable, such as the same avoidable error appearing in work over and over? By identifying opportunities for improvement in processes and services, and by leveraging the talents of your staff, you too can **Get Out of the Rut!**

My presentation will explore ways to identify opportunities for change and improvement in routine tasks and cyclical activities. Using examples from the Admissions Unit in which I work, I will demonstrate how opportunities can be found and processes improved by answering 3 simple questions:

1. Can we do it better?
2. Can it be automated?
3. Do we need to do it at all?

When the Admissions Unit when started working its way out of the rut, some of the factors that they had to work around included externally driven deadlines, the political environment at our university and feedback from our stakeholders and clients. My presentation will detail the positive opportunities these factors presented and the strategies put in place to manage any constraints they imposed.

In addition to the process and system improvements, my presentation will also explore techniques for motivating and engaging staff in a workplace dominated by routine. Techniques such as the practical application of the FISH philosophies in an administrative environment, how to engaging staff in professional development and career planning, creative ways to nurture emerging leaders and tapping into their potential and building and sustaining professional relationships.

Presenters Biography:

Robyn Causley has been working in Student Administration since late 1989 and in that time has worked in 3 higher education providers. Currently, Robyn is the Manager of Admissions and Postgraduate Research Student Administration at the University of Western Sydney. Her portfolio covers admission of domestic students to all non award, undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the University, as well as candidature management of higher degree research candidates from admission to submission.

During her time at UWS, Robyn has implemented many system and process improvements across the breadth of her portfolio. Some of her major accomplishments include the implementation of an online application system for higher degree research candidature and online submission and processing of advanced standing, or recognition of prior learning, applications.