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PROFILE …

J ROCHIE HOLOHAN BA Mphil (IMC) FITD FIITD.

In conversation with PAULINE MATHEWS, Chapter Chairperson.

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**Rochie's Background and Education?**

Although long associated with Cork and the IITD's Southern Chapter, Rochie is a native of Nenagh in County Tipperary. He spent his second level schooling years in Saint Flannan's College in Ennis, where he says he was "very well educated, despite my very best efforts".

As regards third level, Rochie happily admits to having been "quite a slow starter", signing on for a five-year distance-learning degree programme at 30 years of age. He completed that multi-disciplinary Degree Programme in 1986 with the IPA [the Irish Institute of Public Administration] in Economics, Law, Management, etc …

**Rochie's entry to the world of Training & Development?**

From March 1985 to May 1990, Rochie was Staff Training Officer with Cork County Council. This was Rochie's first real taste of the world of Training & Development. During that time, Rochie led the development and delivery of an extensive in-house three-year Management Development Programme.

From 1988 to 1991, Rochie undertook the Masters Degree Programme in Management Training with the International Management Centres at Buckingham in England. "The Masters Degree Programme was a great experience. All of the Trainers on that Programme regarded working with Roger Bennett as a great privilege – We really learnt so much from him in those years. Personally, apart from upgrading my training skills, I learnt a great lesson in confidence – In the beginning, I was quite hesitant about joining an international group of Training Specialists, some of whom were from Europe's highest profile companies … At the end of the day, the Irish proved themselves to be at least as good as the best. When I work abroad now, I try to start from that premise …"

As if to prove the point, Rochie was admitted as a Fellow to the ITD, Britain's Professional Body for Staff Training & Development Specialists in September 1991. And in March 1992 at the Cork Annual Conference, he was the sole recipient of a Fellowship of our own Irish Institute of Training and Development.

Underlining his growing international reputation, in the past twelve months Rochie has accepted invitations to address international conferences in Czechoslovakia, Denmark and Greece.

**Rochie's recent work as a Training Specialist?**

Rochie has been associated with Limerick's Plassey Management and Technology Centre for a number of years. Under the PMTC flag, he has had 50 Participants working diligently from an "improvished campus" in Jury's Hotel Cork . These Participants have included Managers and Supervisors from companies such as Aer Rianta, Angus Fine Chemicals, Apple Computers, Bórd Gáis Éireann, Golden Vale Cheese plc, Musgraves' Centra/Supervalu, Iprodex, Logitech and Marathon Petroleum.

In all to date, Rochie estimates that more than more than 500 Chief Executives Senior Managers and Professionals have participated in Workshops led by him. In addition to the above, these have included Senior Staff Members from eight County Councils and trade union officials and activists from SIPTU [Ireland's largest trade union]. Accountants, Architects, Dentists, Doctors, Engineers, Solicitors and others in professional private practice have also worked with Rochie.

Rochie smiles as he adds to that client list a certain Liam Hogan of Deloitte & Touche and a number of well know Staff Members from the Applied Psychology Department of University College Cork.

All of those 500+ Managers/Supervisors/Professionals were already highly skilled in their own specialist areas – they worked with Rochie in his Workshops as a first foundation in the development of [1] their leadership styles, [2] their people management skills, [3] their time-management skills, [4] their own personal workstyles, [5] their communication and influencing skills and [6] their conversation control skills.

**And what training work does Rochie enjoy most?**

"Working with seasoned practitioners and established professionals can be very challenging. Often they have no appetite whatever for 'softly softly' training, sometimes they are overtly antagonistic. However, I think awakening this appetite is the type of training work that I enjoy most. And I often think that I am at my best at this type of work.."

**What training work does Rochie enjoy least?**

"I am afraid that I have a very low tolerance for repetitive training assignments. Fortunately, most of the work that I am engaged on right now is as much innovative research as it is straight training. Certainly, that SIPTU Project, which is ongoing, is very much about exploring 'at the edge', as are a number of the other projects I am working on at the moment with Dr Liz Dunne of the Applied Psychology Department of University College Cork – all great fun, Thank God.

And of course, this kind of work forces me to grow, to stay sharp and to keep up-to-date." "There is always the danger, you know, …"

**What motivates Rochie as a Training Professional?**

"When working in the Workshops with those Managers and Professionals analysing their workstyles and their lifestyles, inevitably we come face to face with the realisation that, had they been that much smarter, they world have achieved quite a bit more with far less wear and tear on their souls. Often, when looking back over the past number of years, there is an acknowledgement that much of the effort and the frantic chasing about has been pretty much a waste. And yet much of their talent remains unsung, they have only scratched at the surface of what they could have been. A shameful waste!

The single thing that drives me when I am working with Groups is the belief that together we can impact on that scenario, moving each individual towards the realisation of more and more of their talent in their day-to-day lives."

**What about Job Satisfaction?**

Yes, I find working as a Training Specialist very very satisfying. I suppose in any work where you are dealing directly with People, the level of satisfaction is likely to be higher and more immediate. In our case as Training Specialists, we are working with our Clients in what are the essential core areas of their lifestyles."

**Of course, dirty money would never enter the mind of the Great Rochie?**

"To a great extent, I 'grew up' in the permanent and pensionable civil service environment, where the pay package was always guaranteed but was unrelated in any way to performance. That atmosphere can be very liberating for an individual, but it can also become a prison, soaking 'the good' out of an individual. Perhaps it's for that reason that, yes, I do get a great 'buzz' out of earning a full professional fee for my work – especially when it is quickly and graciously paid.

Certainly, the money is part of the 'buzz', and I love it, at times I love it almost as much as your good self, Pauline!"

The Cheeky Beggar!

**Pauline Matthews MIITD.**
**November, 1982.**

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