

## Events Diary

**Trustees & Their Staff –  
On The Right Side Of The Law****15 July, Bristol**

Avoiding pitfalls is crucial as employment law becomes more complex, and with more provisions being introduced in April of this year there is even more legislation to negotiate. A CFDG south-west and Wales members meeting.

**CFDG 020 7793 1400****Grantmaking Trusts and Foundations  
24 July, London**

A full-day course providing information about the current trust environment. It will teach about the nature of charitable trusts, the different types of foundations, how they work, what the trustees do, and how to work closely with them.

**DSC 020 7391 4805****Computer Support Workers Forum  
24 July, London**

A discussion forum aimed at those responsible for IT or IT support in charities, whether as a formal or informal role. The aim is to share best practice, exchange information, and network, plus hear from a guest speaker.

**NCVO 020 7520 2519****Improve Your Presentation Skills  
31 July-1 August, London**

A course to show how to prepare and deliver an effective presentation, considering the importance of organising materials. It will examine issues such as audio-visual aids, and provide practical skills in self-presentation.

**LVSC 020 7700 8113****NCVO Charity Trainers Network  
7 August, London**

A network for those who have a role in developing training and learning, and involves freelance consultants and trainers who work in the charity sector. Purpose is to swap ideas and resources, plus updates on latest issues.

**NCVO 020 7520 2521****Charities Marketing Masterclass  
28 August, London**

Making a difference is a big challenge in an increasingly competitive sector, and issues such as brand development and integration of marketing messages are key to standing out. These are some of the topics tackled in a series of seminars.

**Centaur Conferences 020 7970 4770****THE PROFILE:**

**Patti Rundall, policy director of Baby Milk Action, has campaigned against Nestlé and others in the interests of infant health for more than 20 years. Here she explains why she has no plans to let up on big business**

**How did you get involved?**

I had a neighbour in Cambridge in 1980 who was already involved in the Campaign and was asking for help. I started to help on a voluntary basis and, pretty soon, I was working on it full-time – unpaid. This continued for first five years until we secured some funding to pay for salaries.

**You had no experience in the sector then?**

No, I was trained as an artist and as a teacher – I never expected to end up doing this kind of work. But I had always felt we have a responsibility to look at the implications of our actions. Also, I can't bear to sit in a room saying nothing when people are lying. I found it extremely difficult to keep quiet about this extraordinary injustice, which was being carried out, in a way, on my behalf by companies based in my region – Europe.

I'm not an expert on infant feeding; there's masses to learn about that. But everyone I know who is involved with monitoring companies, trying to bring them into line, is trying to get at the truth and to be as accurate as possible. It is far too risky to exaggerate. It is actually very scary to challenge these large companies. You can be taken to court at any moment; you make one error and they will try to use it to destroy your credibility. That is why we are so careful to stick to facts that can be substantiated. Nobody is trying to exaggerate because it is a frightening job to do.

**Does increasing professionalism in the sector threaten the voluntary spirit that inspired you?**

Given the rigour that you have to have to tackle a multinational, quite honestly you wouldn't survive without professionalism. You don't always start with it but you have to learn it and, if you can bring people in with the right skills, then it is a fabulous help. But, at the same time, I cannot bear the idea that organisations led by people who are trying to defend social justice are being told that they haven't got professionalism just because they're not very good at raising enormous sums of money.

**Who should be responsible for regulating businesses' conduct?**

The role of NGOs should not be as cheap monitors for government. That is not all we're about. One of our important roles is advocacy, helping governments carry out their responsibilities under internationally agreed Resolutions and Conventions. We can help by signalling where the problems are. The

companies have no idea where we're going to be next. And that's one of the reasons they want to work with us. All this talk about dialogue – much of it is intelligence gathering.

Regulation of business can't be left to the companies. It's not that companies want to do the wrong thing – it's that they have a fiduciary duty to their shareholders to maximise profits. That's the problem. This pressure and the competition in the world markets means that they will inevitably oppose legislation that protects consumers.

*“The trouble is if you work with companies then you just get little changes but you don't notice the big things”*

**Does that put the onus on the public in the absence of government action?**

Definitely. And that is why moves like FTSE4Good and ethical investment have huge potential. But we've got to remember that our role should be to support governments to bring permanent, long-term changes and solutions to these problems. That's why we worked hard for so many years to get EU legislation.

It is absurd to expect corporations to be the leaders in this. We can, however, with public pressure get them to voluntarily stop harmful practices.

But businesses won't do anything real until there is enough pressure from the general public and policy makers so that they start to lose their reputation and feel the effects of that in their pockets.

**Is CSR all public relations then?**

I was talking to someone the other day in Switzerland who is reviewing all the CSR reports. He had a room full of them and he could point to about two that had something quantifiable, something measurable that was actually doing something. I mean, the Nestlé one is like a sponge. It is hopeless – you can't get anywhere with it. If you take just the section on infant feeding, every single word is a value judgement: 'lowering this', 'working towards' that; it's meaningless.

The trouble is, if you work with companies and ally yourselves with them, then you may get little changes. But you may not notice the big negative things they're doing and what they're doing with your name. And while you're working with them, of course, it's very bad manners to go public with your criticisms. That's the dynamic.