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Introduction

Cambridge HR Solutions provides advice and guidance to organisations big and small in the private, public and third sectors on all HR matters.

We also have a sense of humour, and this is one of our favourite consultant tales, and our worst experience of PowerPoint.

Shepherd Story

A shepherd was herding his flock along the banks of the River Cam opposite King's College Chapel when suddenly a brand-new 7-Series BMW emerges out of the busy rush-hour traffic towards him. The driver, a young man in a finely-cut cashmere/silk blend suit, Gucci shoes, RayBan Aviator sunglasses, YSL tie and Rolex Oyster and smelling strongly of Louis Vuitton aftershave leaned out of the window and asked the shepherd, "If I tell you exactly how many sheep you have in your flock, will you give me one?"



The shepherd looked at the man, obviously a yuppie, then glanced across at his peacefully grazing flock and calmly answered, "Sure."

The yuppie parked his car, whipped out his 15" Retina Display MacBook Pro and connected it to a recently purchased silver iPhone 6 Plus, then he surfed to a NASA page on the internet where he called up a GPS satellite navigation system, programmed its coordinates to scan the area. Then he opened up a SQL database and an Excel spreadsheet with embedded formulae.

After bashing his keyboard for a few moments, he sent a template report by email to his head office in London, for a peer review and, after several minutes, received a response affirming approval for distribution. Finally, he prints out a 150-page document (with a two-page Executive Summary with plenty of bullet points) via Bluetooth on his hi-tech, miniaturized printer then turns to the shepherd and says, "You have exactly 1,586 sheep."

"That is correct; take one of the sheep." said the shepherd. He watches the young man select one of the animals and bundles it into his car.

Then the shepherd says: "If I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my sheep?"

"OK, why not." answered the young man.

"Clearly, you are a consultant." said the shepherd.

"Wow! That's correct," says the yuppie, "but how on EARTH did you guess that?"

"No guessing required," answers the shepherd. "You turned up here although nobody called you. You want to get paid a shed full of cash for an answer I already knew, to a question I never asked, and you know bugger-all about my business".

"Now give me back my dog."

