

Horses Inc.

A FEW YEARS AGO, MICKEY Connolly took his family on vacation to the Home Ranch, a luxury guest ranch near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, featured in the 2002 July/August issue of *America's Horse*. There, he saw owner Ken Jones gentle a young horse, and he had an epiphany.

The interaction between horse and human had many parallels to Mickey's work as a management consultant and leadership trainer, and the idea was hatched for a program that would be titled "Horse Sense: The Art of Natural Performance Improvement for Managers and Business Leaders." In October, Mickey, Ken and other Home Ranch staff members will put on the third such seminar.

"We think this has become one of the most effective things we've ever done

to help senior executives," Mickey says. The businessmen, most of whom are not experienced riders, learn to ride horses and work cattle – and then apply that knowledge to their work lives.

For instance, the executives must learn to ride a horse, not dominate it. And in working cattle – coordinating with other riders to get the animals in a pen – "there's no way they can disguise the way they normally attempt to get people to work together," Mickey says. "These very senior managers must confront how their moods and their attitudes are shaping the productivity of the communities they lead."

Debriefing sessions afterward help the executives apply the revelations to real-life challenges. "It has just been



remarkable," Mickey says. "There are too many lessons here that apply to our world."

Mickey Connolly, 53
Boulder, Colorado
CEO of consulting firm Conversant