

# Urban Governance in Practice

p.81



## Developing yourself, your team and your partnership



Practical techniques, ideas and suggestions that you, your team and your partners can use to improve the way work gets done

Improving your own performance and your relationship with others holds the key to changing the way you do your job and the resulting benefits for the organisation, your partners and your clients or service users. To make partnerships and projects work for you and your team/partners, you will need to focus on solutions rather than problems, and be clear about what attitudes and behaviours will enable everyone you work with to feel they have made a difference.

Ask yourself - is this working? What needs to happen in this situation to make it work? Improvement requires you, and the people you work with, to do something different - what will it be? Learn new skills together? Display commitment and a positive attitude? Encourage and respect each other's contribution?

Use the tools in the Managers' Toolbox to **self-manage your own performance** and **improve your relationships** with colleagues or partners.



### The facilitation approach

The Toolbox supports a facilitation approach, offering you a number of learning tools to guide your thinking and action in various situations. Facilitation is a way of behaving. It's about relationships, a distinct way of communicating, relating to and acting with others to improve the performance of individuals and teams. It's about breakthroughs – about delivering results that matter to those involved – clients, colleagues, bosses, partners and not least, yourself.

The role of facilitator can be used to make meetings and training events more effective, because it seeks the full engagement of team members in getting ownership, clarity and focus into initiatives to improve their performance.

The key features of **a facilitators role** is to:

- Ensure that everyone knows 'how' the meeting/event/workshop will flow
- Help the meeting overcome conflict or disputes

- Ensure the participants remain focused on the agenda, or gain agreement to changing the agenda
- Encourage insightful questioning so everyone can contribute – helping quiet people to speak up
- Keeping out of the 'content', staying focused on what is happening and enable people with different personal styles to get involved.

It is important to appreciate that the best answer will not be an outsider's imposed solution. The team must be encouraged to find a solution that enables them, in their unique situation to find a better way of making the work work. As a result, some of the time you will be involving the team to **get clarity** and some of the time **coaching** them to give of their best.

As a manager you must be prepared to explore new possibilities, create new ways of doing things and be prepared to challenge your assumptions in order to shift old thinking patterns. This won't be easy, as we can often be blind to our own behaviour, but it will help you, your colleagues and partners feel that what you do can make a difference when you agree to change some of the things you have control of.

Only by learning how to coach yourself and others to change your attitudes and habits, not just your skills, will you be really effective in making the working climate more conducive to continuous improvement. Use this Toolbox to open up new options for you and your team and explore how to do things better - even in the presence of major constraints.



## Using the Toolbox

The pages that follow contain two types of facilitation tools.

■ **Tools for Clarity** - This part of the Toolbox has some key ideas and practical steps you can take to help you and your team work towards solutions and make good decisions. Making sense of complex and challenging situations requires teams to agree priorities, a shared set of objectives, and common methods for thinking about problems and making decisions. The tools are presented in such a way they can be used in team meetings, away days or training events. In that way, all team members stand a better chance of understanding their contribution and removing the barriers to improved performance.

■ **Tools for Coaching** - This part of the Toolbox has some key ideas and practical steps you can take to help you engage the individuals in your group in personal and collective change. Your aim will be to encourage team members to develop their capability and confidence to take responsibility for their own performance. The tools can be used whenever you are involved in conversations and meetings when you are trying to achieve a change. They can help you build better relationships in the team so it

becomes more constructive and confidence grows. This helps to release the team's potential.

All the tools highlight the need to take personal responsibility – and the need to be willing to change yourself before trying to get others to change. Why not find a 'buddy' or a coach who you meet regularly to test out your ideas and get some impartial feedback.

**Each time you use the Toolbox** in any meeting, try reflecting on what went well and what you and the group could improve on. Remember to reflect on the thinking, feelings and behaviours that were stopping you making the work work as well as it could.

It's important to see frustrations and failures as opportunities for learning. Focus on the solution you want to see and feel and be positive about the efforts you are making to improve things. Every little improvement moves you forward to bridge the performance gap.

For example, reflect on how good you think you are at something now (on a scale of 1 to 10) and then ask yourself and your team what it would take for you to improve things by 1 point.

Try and be as clear as you can about what needs to be done and focus your conversations and communications accordingly.





## 10 Tools for Clarity

Sometimes your team will need some help to work together more effectively, to achieve shared goals and support each other as they work to achieve their personal goals. The following tools have been chosen to help you work with your team to improve communication, clarify options and priorities, solve problems together, make better decisions, and engage everyone developing new knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits that will be needed to improve their performance.

- 1 > When you want to eliminate problems - not analyse them
- 2 > When people are jumping to conclusions too quickly
- 3 > When others refuse to open up or appear defensive
- 4 > When people are not thinking about the consequences of their actions
- 5 > When you need to think about options or alternatives
- 6 > When the way ahead seems blocked
- 7 > When you need to identify your priorities
- 8 > When you need to focus your time and energy
- 9 > When you need to create some positive thinking
- 10 > When you need to choose between equals





# 1

## When you want to eliminate problems - not analyse them

### *Adopting a Solutions Focus and a CLEAR framework*

#### When to use it

When everyone in the team has a clear view of what is their desired future and wants to focus everyone's attention on how they can make an effective contribution.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Leads to appreciative and supportive relationships.
- Focuses on actions that count towards a desired outcome.

#### How to get started

- Decide on a focus for action
- Explore what an ideal solution would look and feel like. How are people behaving?

Then use the **CLEAR** framework and focus on:

**C**ontributions – what you can actually do that will help get the results you are after?

**L**inks - what you can do to help others and they do to help you achieve your goals?

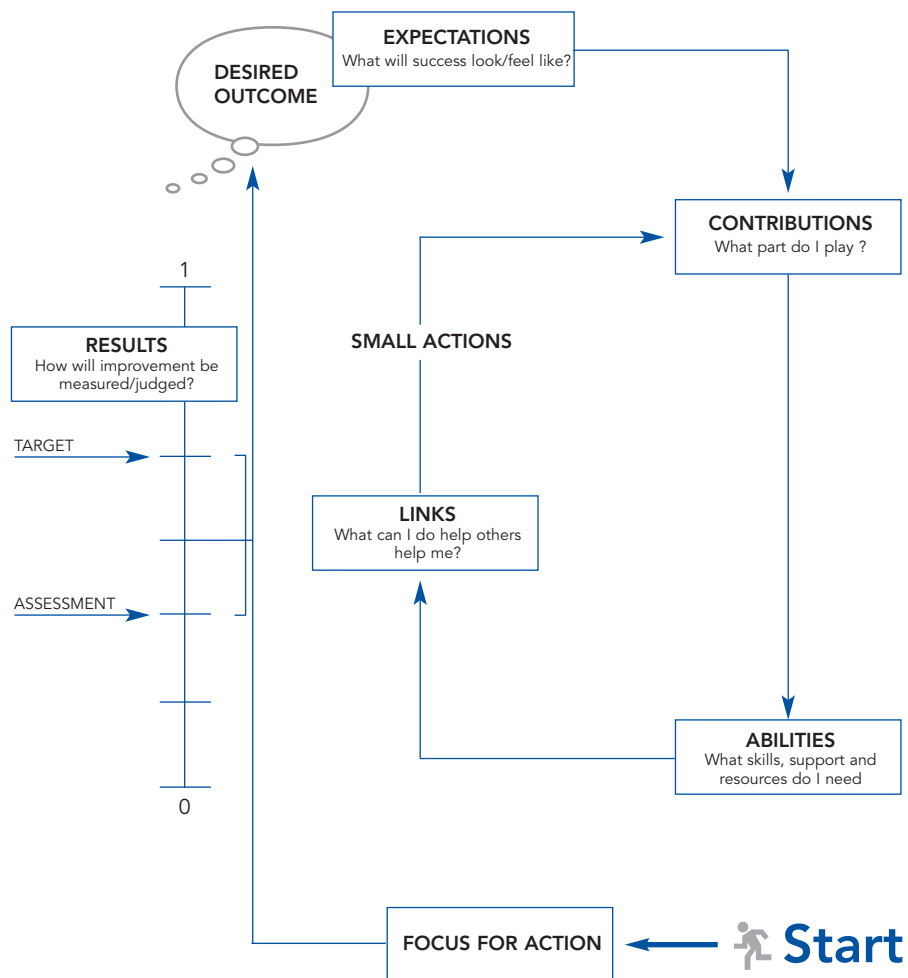
**E**xpectations - what will a good result look like and feel like for you and your team?

**A**bilities - what knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits do you need to develop?

**R**esults – how will you change your behaviour, measure success and monitor progress?

#### How to use it

- Focus on preferred solutions.
- Pay attention to relationships.
- Make use of what's available.
- Explore possibilities with others.
- Stick to positive thinking.
- Value ideas, emotions and needs.
- Focus on what works.
- Practice **CLEAR** conversations.
- Find examples of things working.
- Respect everyone's contribution.



### Some references

*The Solutions Focus : The simple way to positive change* - Paul Jackson and Mark McKergow. Published by Nicholas Brealey 2002.

## 2

# When people are jumping to conclusions too quickly

## *Using the Ladder of Inference*

### When to use it

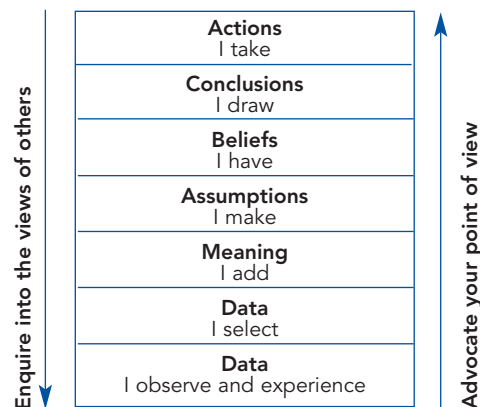
When team members are jumping to conclusions without thinking things through carefully enough.

### The benefits you can get from it

- It encourages more creative and productive reasoning.
- Helps you ask questions to make sense of things and explain your thinking.

### How to use it

The ladder outlined below explains how the mind works. It can be helpful when problems push the boundaries of normal problem solving conversations. To advocate a point of view you should start by explaining what you observed or which facts you selected and work up the ladder. When enquiring you ask questions that take you down the ladder.



### How to get started

Just try it. Start by listening to the stories of others and ask them questions for clarification by taking the conversation down the ladder.

### Try these activities

*To test assumptions and penetrate illusions you might ask questions such as:*

- What led you to that view?
- Help me see the steps in your reasoning?
- Can you give me an example?
- Here's what I saw; how did you see it?

*To seek common ground or develop a shared view as a team, ask questions such as:*

- What data can we all agree on here?
- What meaning does it have for us as a group?
- What might this mean for the way we act together?
- What assumptions are we making?
- What conclusions can we draw?

### The voice of experience

To improve team relationships, everyone must agree to share their opinions and how they arrived at them, and listen to what others have to say. It requires a balance between advocating your views and enquiring into the views of others.

### Some references

***The Fifth Discipline*** - Peter Seng. - Century, 1990.

***Leaning into the Future: Changing the Way People Change Organizations*** - George Binney and Colin Williams - Nicholas Brealey, 1997.

### Links with other tools

The Left Hand Column (Tool n° 3).

# 3

## When others refuse to open up or appear defensive

### *Revealing your Left-Hand Column*

#### When to use it

When team members are sending mixed messages, dealing with controversial issues or things that feel as if they cannot be discussed.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Managing your emotions.
- Improving relationships.
- Build trust and honesty.

#### How to use it

To get ideas and needs across to others:

- Make your thinking process visible.
- Walk up the Ladder of Inference.
- Publicly test your conclusions and assumptions by inviting others to offer alternatives or find gaps in your reasoning.

#### How to get started

Start by asking people to revisit a difficult conversation that left them feeling frustrated. Let them tell the story about who said what (in the right-hand column) and what you could not say (in the left-hand column). Explain why you felt the way you did, and why you could not share it with the other person.

As you continue the conversation ask...

- What assessments or judgements did you make about other people?
- Were the assessments made on valid information or invalid assumptions?
- When did you jump to conclusions or add meaning?
- What could you have shared with the other person from your left-hand column?

### Try these activities

To improve the way you get others to express their views, refer back to tool No.2 and...

- Ask others to explain their views or how they came to their conclusions.
- Gently walk others down the Ladder of Inference to get at the data and interpret it in a way you can agree on.
- Use assertive language.
- Compare your assumptions with others.
- Be aware of your assumptions but don't expose them.

### The voice of experience

If people do not feel safe enough to share what's in their left-hand column there is often a build up of 'toxic waste'. When this happens what is in the left-hand column eventually gets 'dumped' on other people which pollutes relationships. It's no good trying to 'bury' it because it will eventually seep out.

The best option is to look for a way of 'recycling' this toxic waste by sharing enough of what's in the left-hand column to clear the air and move on.

### Some references

*The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* - Peter Senge. Nicholas Brealey, 1994.

*Mastering the Art of Creative Collaboration* - Robert Hargrove - McGraw-Hill, 1998.

### Links with other tools

The Ladder of Inference (Tool n° 2)

# 4

## When people are not thinking about the consequences of their actions

### Avoiding the Quick Fix

#### When to use it

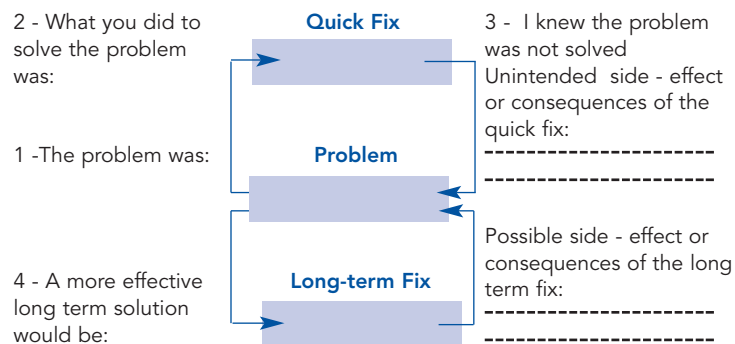
When you want to avoid the trap of quick fix solutions that so often leads to the vicious circle of crisis management.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Thinking carefully about the unintended consequences of your actions can deliver longer-term benefits.
- Dealing with the symptoms only ensures that a problem returns again and again.

#### How to use it

- Work your way round the diagram below starting at number one.
  - Identify the unintended side-effects of a quick fix solution.
  - What would be a longer-term fix that deals with the problem effectively.
- "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him to fish and you feed him for life"*



### The voice of experience

Remember that completing the map above is only one perspective. There may be others you could consider which relate to different circumstances, assumptions, outcomes or just defining the problem differently.

The real benefit is the richness and depth of the conversation that it generates in the team which reveals different value systems and mental models.

Look for patterns of behaviour and the things that stop you understanding what really needs to be done to deliver a longer-term solution.

### Some references

*The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* - Peter Senge - Nicholas Brealey 1994.

### Links with other tools

The Solutions Focus (Tool n° 1).



# 5

## When you need to think about options or alternatives

### *Using six Thinking Hats*

#### When to use it

This approach allows groups to make explicit the different roles needed to make them work more effectively together and consider options for improvement

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Provides a shared language, a short-hand for describing how people are behaving or ought to behave.
- Allows people to play 'devil's advocate' or adopt different positions without undermining their position.
- Allows people to change the direction of conversations in meeting when things are getting 'bogged down'.
- You can challenge inappropriate behaviour or explain your thinking.

#### How to use it

Allocate the following roles to people in the team as they focus on a particular issue or objective. This will help to stimulate discussion from a range of different perspectives and promote new options and alternatives for action.

- White Hat – to do with data and information.
- Red Hat – to do with feelings, intuitions, hunches and emotions.
- Black Hat – the caution hat, for critical judgment and pointing out the problems.
- Yellow Hat – for optimism and the positive view of things: looking for solutions.
- Green Hat – for creative thinking, new ideas, alternatives and possibilities.
- Blue Hat - for process control, setting the agenda, suggesting the next step, considering what type of hat is needed.

## How to get started

By letting people 'wear different hats' they can play whatever role is appropriate at different points in the meeting. You can also use it to pinpoint when inappropriate forms of thinking or behaviour are used, and try to move to something more effective.

Two or more people can wear the same hat at the same time, or they could wear different hats, taking different roles but in a positive way – recognizing the value of what each other is doing: one providing ideas through intuition, another backing them up with facts and another checking them for potential problems.

## Try these activities

It allows people to change the direction of a meeting in a simple and readily understood way and without offence: i.e. "I think we need some green hat thinking" or "Let's try wearing the yellow hat for a minute and see what that tells us".

## The voice of experience

Make sure everyone involved understands the purpose and role of the Six Thinking Hats tool.

If used with care, it empowers members of your team to be 'hard' on the problem and 'soft' on the people.

## Some references

***The Six Thinking Hats*** - Edward de Bono – Penguin, 2004 (2nd edition).

## Links with other tools

The Ladder of Inference (Tool n° 2)

Left-Hand Column (Tool n° 3)

# 6

## When the way ahead seems blocked

### *Applying a Force Field Analysis*

#### When to use it

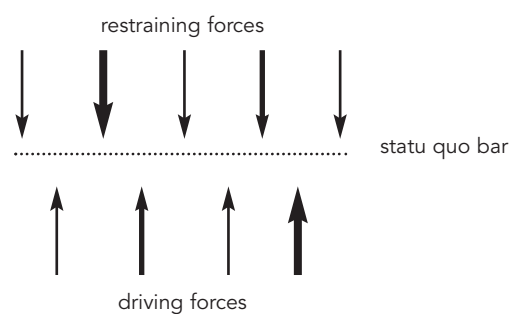
When you need to find a way forward when the way ahead seems blocked. An understanding of your potential and the things that are blocking your way can provide valuable insights.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Identifying opportunities for change and positive action.
- Generating conversations around possibilities can release creativity and focus discussion around possible solutions.

#### How to use it

1. Decide on a goal.  
Draw a firm line at the top of the flipchart and write the goal or objective on it.
2. Draw a dotted line across the middle of the flipchart paper (status quo bar)
3. Brainstorm the forces that support movement towards the goal (driving forces). Put these ideas on arrows as shown below. Large forces are given larger or longer arrows.
4. Brainstorm all the forces that prevent movement towards the goal (restraining forces). Place these items on arrows as shown below:



Put 3 and 4 together with the arrows facing each other - on status quo bar in the middle

5. Once you have analysed the field then develop options and strategies for eliminating or reducing the restraining forces and strengthening the driving forces.

6. Start with actions that can deliver a quick wins – but try and avoid the pitfalls of a quick fix – see No. 4

### The voice of experience

Force field analysis is very useful when the way forward is blocked. It helps you to start thinking about the possible actions you can take which would work with the driving forces and minimise the restraining forces.

What you are looking for are 'win-win' solutions. It isn't always necessary to lose something in order to gain something else. This can often be achieved by applying a little imagination about possibilities and exploring the impact those possibilities could have if opposing forces were combined in some way.

For example, you may have to balance the courage you would need to make something happen against considering the feelings and convictions of others.

### Links with other tools

- Avoiding the Quick Fix (Tool n° 4)
- Six Thinking Hats (Tool n° 5)

# 7

## When you need to identify your priorities

### *SWOT Analysis and Priority Matrix*

#### When to use it

When you want to focus your limited resources on what's really important in achieving your objectives or goals. SWOT helps you determine the viability of a proposal and the Priority Matrix helps you decide where to put your time and effort for best effect.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- To get a consensus and commitment from the team on what needs to be done as a matter of urgency and why.
- To ensure the best possible return on your investment of time, energy and resources.
- To focus action on shared goals and objectives

#### How to use SWOT

It is a diagnostic tool to discover the current status of a project, division or a whole organisation from a number of perspectives.

Draw up a matrix as shown below, and list the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats presented by the goal or objective you want to achieve.

#### Strengths

- 
- 
- 

#### Weaknesses

- 
- 
- 

#### Opportunities

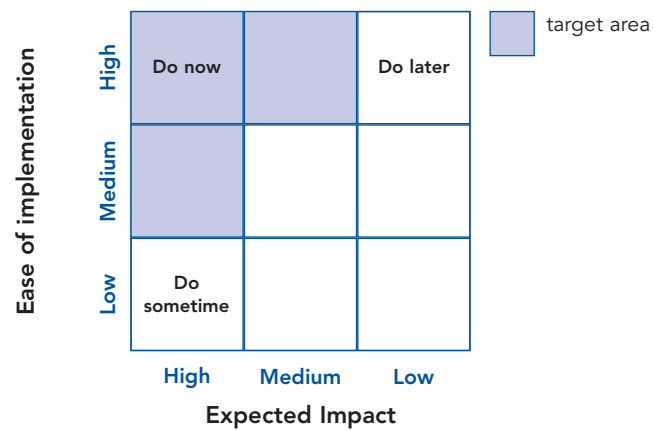
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- 
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#### Threats

- 
- 
-

### How to use the Priority Matrix

Having identified the actions you need to take to maximise on your strengths and minimise your weaknesses but them on the matrix as shown below. This will help you choose those actions that are most like to have the biggest impact with the smallest effort.



### The voice of experience

Using these two tools together enables you to justify your choice of priority actions in relation to the objectives or targets you are setting out to meet.

It is vitally important that those who are expected to implement the actions understand why they are important and have been part of the thinking that went into the assessment.

### Links with other tools

Coaching Styles (Tool n° 12).

# 8

## When you need to focus your time and energy

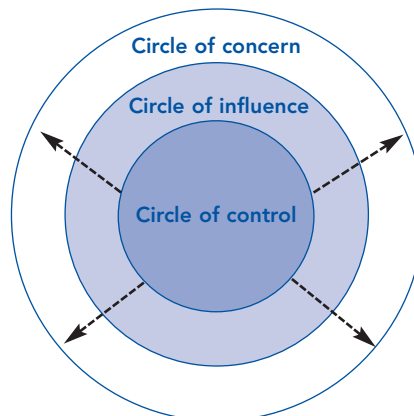
### *Using the Circles of Influence*

#### When to use it

When you need to be proactive in deciding where to focus your limited time and energy. We each have a wide range of concerns, but need to focus on those things over which we have some control or influence.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Proactive and effective individuals/teams focus their efforts on things they can do something about.
- Their energy is then positive, enabling them to develop the confidence to gradually influence more of the things they are concerned about.
- Reactive people try to deal with issues that are in their Circle of Concern.



#### How to get started

- List the things you are concerned about and over which you feel you have no control in the outer circle. Those are the problems you have to understand, accept and move on.
- List the ones you have direct control upon in the inner circle. Those are the problems that involve your own behaviour.
- List the ones you feel you can influence indirectly in the middle circle. Those are the problems that involve other people's behaviours.

## How to use it

This helps you focus your energy:

- First, by dealing with the things that are in your Circle of Control;
- Secondly, by getting other people to deal with issues placed in your Circle of Influence;
- Thirdly, by looking for ways of pushing out the boundaries of your Circles of Control or Influence.

## The voice of experience

Remember, if you react only to the things you cannot control they are controlling you.

It is better to focus your energy on improving what you can do to change things, than spending valuable time worrying about the things you cannot influence.

Being proactive is not about being pushy or insensitive. Just be smart, stay close to reality and stick to your values. That way you will be confident about what's needed.

## Some references

***The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*** - Stephen Covey - Simon and Schuster, 1994.

## Links with other tools

The Solutions Focus (Tool n°1).



# 9

## When you want to identify different perceptions

### *Drawing the Value Diagram*

#### When to use it

This simple tool can be used to assess progress in shifting people's perceptions

#### The benefits you can get from it

A quick comparison of the different perceptions held by different individuals or groups

#### How to get started

You select say 6 attributes around a change initiative and ask people to assess it on each attribute according to a scale of 0 to 10.

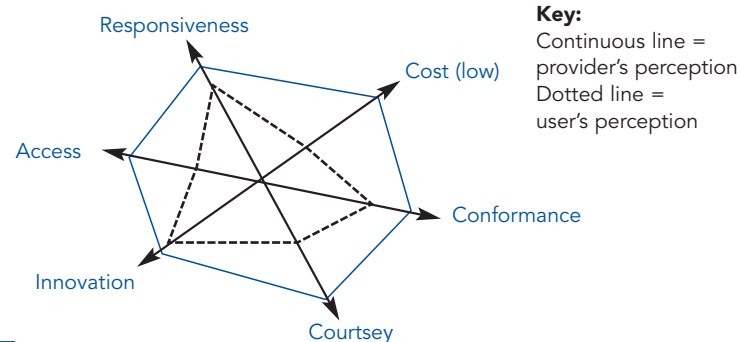
You then plot the results on a web diagram. Its shape reflects a profile. You can then see where individual perceptions differ, or combine them to show the differences of opinion between groups of people. It's simple to do and gives you snapshot of different views.

#### The voice of experience

The data provides a focus for discussion. You can use the Ladder of Inference No.2 to explore the differences and the meaning and conclusions people draw from it.

The CLEAR framework in the No. 1 will enable you to decide what action should be taken as a result.

#### Example :



### How to use it

The matrix above is an example of one produced to compare the perceptions of providers and users around service quality. The gaps suggest a focus for action to increase alignment and improve value.

### Some useful references

*The Shape Shifters* - John Mariotti - John Wiley and sons, 1997.

# 10

## When you have to choose between equals

### *Dealing with a Dilemma*

#### When to use it

When you are facing a situation in which both perspectives are equally valid and you cannot easily choose between them.

#### How to use it

When there is disagreement about the best of two positions and you are looking for a 'both-and' solution, rather than an 'either-or' decision.

Positive points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> </ul>
	POSITION (A) i.e REDUCE COSTS	POSITION (B) i.e IMPROVE QUALITY
Negative points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> </ul>

#### How to get started

Clarify the opposing positions as A and B. Then brainstorm the positive and negative points relating to each position. Look for actions that can combine the positives on both sides and eliminate or reduce some of the negatives on both sides.

In this way you get a 'Win-Win' solution.

### Try these activities

Draw a matrix on a flipchart as outlined below and ask for as many positive and negative points. Note that a positive on one side could be a negative on the other – include both.

### Some references

***Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*** - Stephen Covey - Simon and Schuster, 1994.

### Links with other tools

Win-Win Solution (Tool n° 17).  
Overcoming Barriers (Tool n° 18).

## 10 Tools for Coaching

To improve performance you need to foster good relationships between yourself and all your team members. This is often the role of the Team Leader, but it can be an 'outsider' that the team member trusts and can open up to. What is vitally important in achieving real and sustainable performance improvement is for each team member to want the desired outcome, and to work on the things that are stopping them from achieving it. These are the things that need to be learned.

There are three questions to grapple with.

- What are your performance goals?
- What do you need to learn in order to achieve them?
- How will you know when you have achieved your goals or made progress towards them?

11> When you need to find out what others think

12> When you need to differentiate will from skill

13> When you have to listen to others more carefully

14> When you need to motivate others

15> When you find yourself involved in conflict

16> When you need to make the best use of your time

17> When you need to get beyond fudge and compromise

18> When you have to deal with resistance

19> When you want your team to excel

20> When you want to empower others to act in your behalf



# 11

## When you need to find out what others think

### *Giving & Receiving Feedback*

#### When to use it

There are many formal opportunities for seeking and acting on feedback, including appraisals, 360 degree assessments, performance interviews, team meetings, project reviews and coaching sessions.

There will be other opportunities when you meet people whose opinions you value. This is helpful when you are discussing performance with colleagues or have started to do things differently and want to know if it's having an impact – positive or negative.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- You find about your strengths and weaknesses.
- It helps you build up learning relationships with others.
- You demonstrate a willingness to listen and improve.
- You learn to separate the behaviour from the person.

#### How to use it

Accept that all feedback has value. Be brave enough to ask for it before you give it to others. See it as an opportunity for learning.

#### How to get started

- Listen hard and keep listening.
- Ask others to explain their thinking.
- Don't get defensive – see it as data given with the best of intentions
- Giving and receiving feedback is not easy – you will need to practice it

#### Try these activities

There are two aspects – receiving and accepting. You have to be willing to hear it and accept it with a positive attitude (assume it has a message that you can learn from). Listen carefully and check for understanding at the end and evaluate its significance later.

Giving feedback works best when it's

- Descriptive – based on observable behaviour.
- Specific – relating to actual behaviours and events.
- Given with a genuine intent to help and preferably when asked for.
- Given as 'I' to 'you'.

Think about whether you want your feedback to be motivational, in which case you will be encouraging to boost confidence. Otherwise, use it to help people to learn and improve their performance

### **The voice of experience**

It can be awkward to ask for feedback for the first time. You will benefit from taking the first step.

Find a 'buddy' or a coach who you meet regularly to test out your ideas and get some impartial feedback.

Choose someone you are happy to confront you about your issues, behaviour, feelings and reactions – and they you.

### **Links with other tools**

Active Listening (Tool n° 13).

Overcoming Barriers (Tool n° 18).



# 12

## When you need to differentiate will from skill

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### *Coaching Styles*

#### **When to use it**

When you want to ensure that your coaching style fits the coachees situation or readiness for the task.

#### **The benefits you can get from it**

Link your management or leadership style to the development needs of the people you manage.

#### **How to use it**

When actions are not being moved forward and there is a need to clarify how the manager is going to provide direction and support. However, avoid the temptation to give advice, keep an open mind and be a good listener. Remember, the root causes of many problems are found in the system, not the person. So, be gentle and appreciative of the people who make things work, when the system is failing.

The objective is often seen as making the work work - despite the odds. That is fine, but improvements in performance tend to come as a result of growing self-confidence and better working relationships.

A good working relationship should not be confused with being good friends. It's about helping team members to establish their own goals and work effectively towards them.

#### **How to get started**

- Put sufficient time aside to sit down and actively listen to the person concerned (the coachee).
- Make the coachee feel that you are serious about supporting them, not disciplining them.
- Suspend judgements but work around givens to understand what's possible.

### Try these activities

Clarify the position of the person you are managing. When someone is new or nervous there is likely to be **low skill/low will**. An enthusiastic beginner who is new to the task will be **high will/low skill**. The skilled and experienced practitioner who lacks enthusiasm displays **low will/high skill**. The skilled person looking for opportunities to grow will be **high skill/high will**.

Try the following strategies to agree on the most appropriate approach with your coachee.

**DIRECTING** - When skill and will are low, provide clear and concise briefings, check for understanding and find out what the motivators are. Don't make assumptions and be willing to assist.

**GUIDING** – When skill is high and will is low, provide support to go it alone. Focus on building confidence and self-esteem.

**EXCITING** – When skill is low and will is high, provide training and support to practice new skills. Monitor to guard against over confidence.

**DELEGATING** – When skill and will are high control lies with the coachee, who decides when and how the coach can help them. Don't treat the coachee like a child.

### Some references

***Leadership and the one minute manager : Increasing effectiveness through Situational Leadership*** - Kenneth Blanchard and Patricia Zigarmi – William Morrow, 1999.

### Links to other tools

The CLEAR framework (Tool n°1).

# 13

## When you have to listen to others more carefully

### *Listening Actively*

#### When to use it

Where and whenever you want to connect with others through conversation.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- It demonstrates that you respect and value others.
- It encourages others to be themselves and offer more open and honest explanations of their views.
- Can save time as it makes it easier for people to find the common ground on which to reach agreement.
- Helps you concentrate on understanding the other person's point of view before expressing your own.

#### How to get started

- Stop talking.
- Recognise that listening is hard.
- Prepare yourself to listen: look at the talker.
- Avoid distractions.
- Be interested.
- Keep an open mind.
- Check and keep checking your understanding.
- Look for non-verbal cues.
- Put yourself in the other person's position.
- Don't argue – it stops you listening.
- Stop talking.

#### How to use it

- Listen generously with the minimum of interruptions.
- Listen for similar views not just differences.
- Listen for the detail so you can feedback accurately, not to agree or disagree.

### Try these activities

- Recognise that active listening is hard work. The more you do it the easier it gets.
- Listen as though your life depends on it.
- Listen carefully so you can report back accurately, rather than just agree or disagree.

Try the following ...

- "What I hear you saying is ..."
- "Is that what you mean ..."
- "That's interesting, go on ..."
- "Building on from your last point ..."

and ...

- Look at the person – good eye contact.
- Nod your head to indicate agreement, expressions, e.g. smiling.
- Create comfortable circumstances for important discussions, e.g. seating.

and especially ...

- Be willing to listen.
- Believe that the person has something useful to tell you.

### The voice of experience

Active listening is as much about using your eyes as it is about using your ears.

Find situations where you can practice without people feeling that something odd is happening.

Use it and notice the difference it makes.

### Some references

**People Skills** - Roger Bolton – Simon & Schuster, 1986.  
Published by Touchstone 1986.

# 14

## When you need to motivate others

### *Using Emotional Drivers*

#### When to use it

When you want to find out what drives people in your team and how you can use this information to influence their behaviour.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- It's a simple tool for gaining an insight into people's preferences.
- Has a high level of validity in that it makes sense to most people.
- Provides a straightforward language to discuss behaviour preferences.

#### Outline of this tool

The Drivers describe five patterns of behaviour driven by self-induced internal pressure. Most of us use one or two of the categories more than others.

The five drivers are:

**Be Perfect** – as if perfection is important.

**Hurry Up** – as if speed is important.

**Be Strong** – as if discomfort is important.

**Please people** – as if approval is important.

**Try Hard** – as if extra effort is important.

**Be Perfect:** They seek perfection and so may miss deadlines because they feel they do not have enough time to get it as right as they would like. Their strength is in attention to detail.

**Hurry Up:** They want to deal with things in the least possible time and so are often late for meetings because they took the last minute phone call, email or important conversation. Valuable when time is short.

**Be Strong:** They carry the world on their shoulders. Believe that to show feelings is inappropriate and so work hard to maintain control of themselves. This is valuable in stressful situations. They have to give themselves permission to be vulnerable.

**Please People:** They want to be liked by others and so tend to avoid conflict. They find it difficult to 'just get on with things' – they like an audience. Their strength is the efforts they will make to bring people together. They need to give themselves permission to get on with the task and let the results speak for themselves.

**Try Hard:** They value effort and so will keep working at something because finishing easily suggest they cannot have tried hard enough. Very valuable when persistence and resilience are needed and benefit from giving themselves permission to let go and get off home occasionally.

### How to use this tool

When you are in situations where you would like to improve the outcome you should consider ...

- What behaviour you deserve?
- What driver might be behind this behaviour?
- Is this behaviour helpful or not?
- Do you find it helpful to encourage it?
- If you find it unhelpful, what can you do about it?
- Is this a pattern of behaviour you find difficult?
- You may need to continually practice the range of styles that you have for working with different kinds of people.

### Some references

***Games People Play: the psychology of human relationships*** - Eric Berne  
- Penguin, 2004.

# 15

## When you find yourself involved in conflict

### *Analysing the Drama Triangle*

#### When to use it

To help you stand back, notice what is going on and avoiding intervening inappropriately. Whenever you see two people, or find yourself, apparently in conflict.

#### The benefits you can get from it

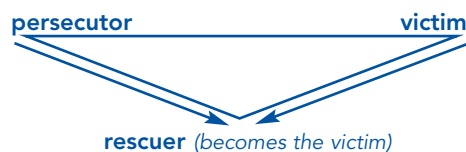
- Helps you avoid being 'beaten up'.
- Helps you avoid 'eating others up'.
- You allow space for others to take responsibility for themselves.

#### Outline of this tool

The Drama Triangle describes what often happens when one person observes two people 'fighting' and you take it upon yourself to 'break it up'.

What often happens is that either or both of the original protagonists suddenly turn on the person who set out to help break up the conflict. The helper becomes the victim. For there to be a drama there needs to be a switch of roles.

It can happen when a negative pattern develops, creating a downward spiral of argument and blame as the roles of persecutor, victim and rescuer are unconsciously exchanged.



### How to use it

- Observe when others try to break up a 'conflict'. What happens to them?
- Notice when people find 'conflict' OK. Don't try and rescue anyone from these situations.
- Think twice before setting out to rescue someone. Be really clear in your mind that rescue is necessary.

### Some experiences

The manager of a team with good relationships saw two team members 'apparently' rowing. She moved in to calm things down. Instead of taking a few moments to notice that the two people were quite OK with this level of emotion and anger she tried to break it up. As soon as she began to calm things down the two team members turned on her saying "What do you think you are doing". "We are perfectly OK thank you.

She was initially bewildered by the response and then thought about what she had done and what might have been more appropriate action.

It can happen when a facilitator makes the mistake of standing up for the victim of a persecutor's comments. Very soon the facilitator finds himself or herself the target of the persecutors venom. Let people speak for themselves. If they choose to adopt the victim role – let them.

### Some references

The **Drama Triangle** was devised by Stephen Karpman and comes from a body of work by Eric Berne called Transactional Analysis.

Karpman, S. (1968). Fairy Tales and Script Drama Analysis. Transactional Analysis Bulletin, vol. 7, no. 26, pp. 39-43.

<http://www.itya-net.org/TAJNet/articles/karpman01.html>



# 16

## When you need to make the best use of your time

### *Applying the Time Management Matrix*

#### When to use it

When you feel you are “chasing your tail” and need to plan your time more effectively. This often happens when you are under pressure and want to clear any ‘log jams’ in relations to your time.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Helps you to categorise your work.
- Allows reasoned prioritising of the work.
- Provides opportunities for delegation.

#### How to get started

Time is fixed. When the pressure is on there is never enough of it.

This four box matrix helps you to link work objectives with tasks that are considered to be:

- **Urgent** – things that need to be done soon.
- **Important** – things that will make a real difference.

Work is then divided into four categories. Things that are:

- Urgent and unimportant.  
You should **delegate it**.
- Not urgent and not important.  
You should **dump it**.
- Important and not urgent.  
You should **diary it**.
- Urgent and important.  
You should **do it now**.

### How to use this tool

Firstly, as a planning tool. As you go through your work, categorise everything according to the model, placing tasks into each box and organising your time and resources accordingly.

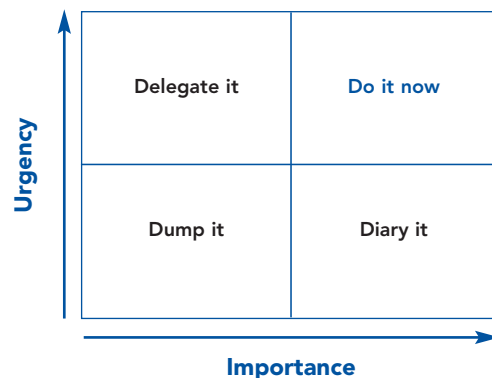
Secondly, in a more responsive manner. As you get to specific tasks or when tasks arrive unexpectedly. You can use the model to help you decide whether to **do it now**, or categorise it into some other time slot.

The model's primary purpose is to help discipline your thinking about when to do tasks. This may lead to seeking greater clarity about what really is important and what is only urgent.

It may enable you to ask more questions when being given tasks to find out how important it is and why it has to be done by a given date.

Some people make up a diagram like the one below to write in all their tasks for the day and the week. Others use it more reflectively, keeping the model in their head's and mentally allocating tasks into categories.

### Do whatever is best for you



# 17

## Getting beyond fudge and compromise

### Seeking Win-Win Solutions

#### When to use it

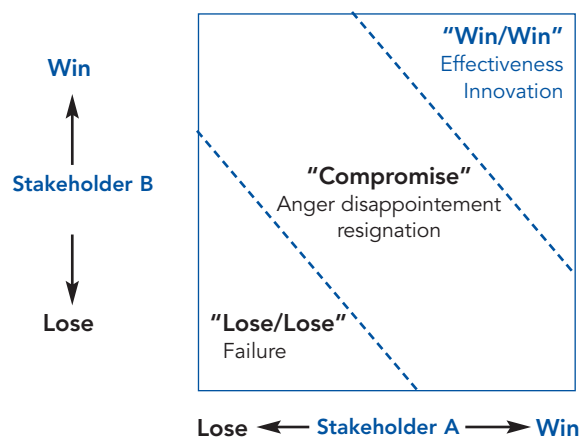
Wherever there are differences, conflicts of interest and lack of alignment. When disagreement is inhibiting progress or weakening support for the change. When innovation is needed.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Achieving win – win outcomes is satisfying for all concerned; the parties feel that the change is worthwhile and constructive.
- There are gains that may be different for each of the individuals or groups involved.
- As there are no losers, anger, disappointment, resistance or resignation are avoided.
- There will be greater enthusiasm and commitment than is possible from accommodating conflict through compromise.

#### How to get started

This diagram illustrates the relationship between the various Win and lose outcomes. This tool proposes that it is much more effective to strive for Win/Win than any of the other possibilities.



### How to use it

- Identify stakeholders, and involve them early.
- Notice how you view things and be as open as you can be about your views.
- Listen carefully to others and check for understanding, so that differences can be known.
- Explore intentions, expectations, hopes and fears.
- Encourage all the parties to describe the benefits they want.
- Notice where there are conflicts.
- Review your preconceptions and check everyone understands what is important.
- Where conflicts remain, seek creative solutions; they could include alterations to the ownership, intention, scale, order, speed, route, or duration.

### Try these activities

Requires listening, open mindedness, and creativity! It gets easier with practice.

### The voice of experience

Continually check understanding. Focus on benefits. Be open to possibilities. Seek agreement and recognise that some of the reasons for giving support may be different for different stakeholders.

### Some references

***The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*** - Stephen Covey - Simon and Schuster, 1994.

***The Answer to How is Yes*** - Peter Block - Berrett Kohler, 2003.

# 18

## When you have to deal with resistance

### *Overcoming Barriers*

#### When to use it

When you need to understand and learn ways to deal with any resistance to change or whenever you want to connect with others through conversation.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- To recognise resistance when it is encountered.
- To learn ways to deal with or overcome resistance.
- To be more effective in making my ideas clear to others.

#### Outline of this tool

Resistance is a predictable and natural behaviour and is often part of the learning process. Resistance is usually based on a desire to "be in control of yourself" and "not be vulnerable". Which result in defensive patterns of behaviour.

Maintain control is at the centre of much organisational behaviour. Being out of control is often uncomfortable.

When you are vulnerable you feel that you can get hurt easily. You don't like the feeling.

In over simplified terms resistance occurs when people are faced with making difficult choices such as:

- Dealing with poor performance.
- The political situation may be risky and the managers does not want to make waves.
- The organisation's services are out of date and this is discouraging.
- A developmental project is turning up some negative results.

#### Type of Resistance

"Give me more detail".  
"I need more information".  
"I don't have the time".  
"It's not practical".

"Anger or personal attack".  
"Silence".  
"Compliance".  
"Pressing for solutions".

Not all forms of defensive behaviour mean resistance. Disagreement is often appropriate.

### How to use this tool

There are four steps you can take:

1. Recognise that you are dealing with resistance by paying attention to the clues, especially the non-verbal ones like finger wagging, tone of voice, etc.
2. Listen to your inner voice and you will sense the difference between simple disagreement and resistance. The body resists alien ideas in the same way that it resists alien viruses. It creates defences that won't rest until the 'foreign body' has been eliminated.
3. Let the other person know, in a calm and neutral manner, that you seem to be encountering resistance.
4. Be quiet and give the other person a chance to respond to your statement.

### Some references

***Flawless Consulting*** - Peter Block - Jossey-Bass, 2000.

## When you want your team to excel

### *Creating High Performing Teams*

#### When to use it

When you want to test the health of any team to which you belong – be it your natural work team, project team or task group when you want to improve performance.

#### The benefits

- A simple and straightforward method of measuring and addressing team effectiveness.
- Easily understood and memorised by team members.
- Helpful in developing significantly more effective teams.

#### Outline of this tool

High performing teams are usually composed of ordinary people producing extraordinary performance.

This tool makes the most of the diversity and strengths found throughout a team.

#### How to use it

Using the list that follows, ask your team, “what’s missing?” Discuss the answers within the team and develop action plans to improve performance.

- All members know the team’s purpose and goals.
- All members share a common vision or direction.
- There is rapport and high morale among team members.
- The team has all the required competencies to improve their performance.
- All improvement is measured by clear objectives and individual work targets.
- All individual contributions are recognised and different points of view respected.
- All team members act responsibly in the context of the organisation.
- The team is always responsive to continuous changes taking place that could impact on its work.
- Team members feel switched on, are able to have fun and overcome setbacks.

- Everyone can speak openly and honestly without fear of criticism.
- Everyone is encouraged to challenge each other's assumptions.
- All team members are supported to eliminate practices that inhibit better performance.

### The voice of experience

It is advisable to visit the action plans produced at regular intervals.

Review progress and improvements. Celebrate achievements and appreciate each others positive actions and initiatives.

Pass on your best practices to other teams.

### Some references

***Teams at the Top*** - Jon Katzenbach - HBS, 1998.



## When you want to empower others to act on your behalf

### *Delegating*

#### When to use it

When you are trying to get agreement on who will take responsibility and be accountable for the tasks needed to hit key objectives or targets.

#### The benefits you can get from it

- Gives the team leader/manager more discretionary time to invest in strategic development.
- Increases effectiveness through clearly focused activities.
- Helps develop the competence and grow the confidence of colleagues.
- Colleagues learn how to take responsibility and be held accountable for what they do.
- Helps team members learn leadership and self-management skills.

#### How to get started

As the team leader or manager you must be prepared to:

- Be receptive to colleagues opinions and ideas, even if they are not aligned to yours.
- Be prepared for, and willing to accept, different outcomes and mistakes.
- Practice restraint and don't lose your cool.
- Exercise active listening skills and seek to understand.

#### How to use it

- Listen generously with the minimum of interruptions.
- Listen for similar views not just differences.
- Listen for the detail so you can feedback accurately, not to agree or disagree.

### Try these activities

To ensure the success of delegation activities ensure that the following are in place.

- Clearly stated and agreed policy guidelines.
- Assigned activities expressed in clear terms that describe the expected result.
- Measurable and observable goals and targets.
- Clear communication and flexibility to cope with continuous changes to the plan.
- Objective feedback and performance review systems that are used regularly.

### The voice of experience

Care needs to be taken not to overload the team or individual team members.

- Don't just delegate the things you don't like doing.
- Don't overlook the need to continually coach and develop your team.
- Don't see delegation as personal weakness, it takes high levels of trust and self-confidence.
- Don't think that delegation is your right – make it a shared decision that has clear benefits for both sides.
- Don't show favouritism or be inconsistent or inconsiderate when setting goals.

### Links with other tools

Active Listening (Tool n° 13).  
Left-Hand Column (Tool n° 3).  
Ladder of Inference (Tool n° 2).  
CLEAR framework (Tool n° 1).