



Quick E-Tips



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Thank you for subscribing to this newsletter brought to you by International Advantage® - *Leading Across Cultures™*. Every month we bring you tips to help your team and organization, especially those operating in culturally diverse environments, reach their business goals.

Topic of the month: The Effective “Closing” of Events, Projects, and 2006!

A Ghanaian friend recently told me about the “gift” of a slow death. According to Ghanaian culture, an individual who endures a slow death does a tremendous service to others by allowing his/her friends and relatives a chance to say their “goodbyes”. A quick death, on the contrary, leaves dozens of survivors affected because they likely did not have a chance for closure with that person.

In another example of the significance of closure, have you ever noticed that so much of sincere, meaningful exchange happens just before someone walks out of the door?

And would you agree that the primary purpose of the psychotherapist is to help people achieve closure of situations that were not finished adequately?

In life and work, small and significant closures must happen on an ongoing basis for one important reason: Closure allows individuals and groups to move forward. The savvy leader will help provide it if s/he wants to promote forward motion. Despite busy schedules, substantive closure of meetings, events, projects, successes, failures, disagreements, conflicts and rumors can help individuals and groups save time in the mid and long term.

So if you, like me, will have celebrations and endings during the month of December that in some way will end or punctuate a relationship or a process, this may be an ideal time for special attention to the topic. Perhaps you need to finish something, celebrate the past, give a very special gift, or give an award?

Figuring out how to get the most out of your “endings” is both an art and a science. But there is one thing for sure: we are well-advised to think it through, guided by clear intentions that take into account the “what” and the “how”. Read on.

Tips for Leaders: One Method of Planning for Effective Closure

1. Make a list of what you perceive the individual or group may need to “finish”, as it relates to a particular situation. Address both the “meat” of the situation (the “what”, the tactical, the work to be done, etc) as well as the emotional (the “how”, how people might be feeling, how they might best hear it, what they might need to hear or say, etc.)

2. Establish your intended outcomes, as it relates to each.
3. Design an exchange/event (or whatever makes sense given your situation) that allows a space for each of those needs to be addressed or aired. (This is the art.)
4. Add to your design the time for comments and participation that would allow for other needs to be aired that you will not have foreseen.

A quick example?

(1) If you are disbanding a work team that finished a project, for example, you might list topics to “finish” such as group accomplishments, individual achievements, subgroup achievements, what was *not* accomplished, team humor, celebration, project debrief and learnings, next steps, emotion in changing work directions and/or disbanding the team, conflicts with other departments as a result of the project, etc.

(2) Outline your intentions in regards to each one. For example, your intention in discussion what was *not* accomplished might be to agree on a recommendation about what needs to happen next OR simply to make it clear that those items will not be finished and they can let it go.

(3, 4) Plan a multi-part event/closure that allows for sharing, learning or discussion on all of these levels, as well as space for others to address what feels important to them.

Good luck! And enjoy the fruits of efficiency, knowing that you helped...

- a. Allow people to “move on”
- b. Broaden the impact of your project, event, etc.
- c. Expand your range of abilities – dealing with the “what” and the “how”
- d. Keep yourself and the people around you off of the psychotherapist’s couch!

Do you have a similar or different experience? What comments or tips do you have on closure? Please share with me and I may ask to highlight your idea in next month’s Quick E-Tips!

What's News

1. Response to last month’s question

Last month, I asked readers the question below. Read on to hear from John DeLasaux of Inlynx (www.inlynx.com):

What tip do you have about working with (or leading) culturally diverse teams?

(John DeLasaux) *“Wouldn’t it be helpful to start a meeting this way: Have each person give an example, a 1 minute or less, of a specific practice in their country which is greatly expected or which people from that country are most sensitive about.”*

An example John gave follows: *“Japanese business people expect to be handed a business card at the very beginning of the meeting, as they are being introduced. And, although they still bow on occasion, they really appreciate having a hand offered for a handshake, if you are an American. (It doesn't hurt to bend slightly as you offer a hand!)”*

Thanks, John! - LK

2. Three Years of Quick E-tips!

That's right...we have been churning out the tips for 3 years this month, November. Thanks for joining us at some point along the way! I hope they have helped you in a small or big way -- in work and life.

What have you noticed about the tips? How have they been of greatest value to you? We would love to hear from you...

3. Changes in Passport Rules

The Department of Homeland Security, as of November 22, 2006, has officially announced the requirement of a valid passport for citizens of the United States traveling between the US, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by AIR starting January 23, 2007.

There is no change for citizens traveling into the United States by LAND or SEA, until JANUARY 1, 2008. Therefore, beginning January 1, 2008 you will also need to present a valid US passport to travel between the US, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda back into the US by LAND or SEA [or other authorized documentation, which include: US Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document (MMD), NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST cards if traveling by air and the Passport Card (called the PASS Card, currently under development) if traveling by land or sea]. *Info provided by Office of Raul O'Farrill & Associates*

4. Announcement: Institute of Management Consultants - Arizona

Please join us for our special Dec 8, monthly breakfast meeting where **Dr. Debra Peck** will discuss a tool addressing the soft-side of business: **Social Networking**. The event will be followed by a special holiday social networking hour with fun surprises for all attendees. [Click here for details and registration.](#)

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To your continued success around the globe,

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