



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: Effective Team Conversations

Have you had (or heard) a conversation like this recently?

- Omar: I disagree with the corporate vision of bringing Six Sigma to our organization. Six Sigma programs are a complete waste of resources.
Kathy: Not true for me! It worked very well in my last job (employer).
Ana: I have never been exposed to Six Sigma, but I wonder how helpful it will be.
Omar: Well, I think it's useless and I am glad that I don't have to participate.
Kathy: Anyway, I'm looking forward to it.

What is ineffective about this conversation? What would you add to this conversation to help Omar, Kathy, and Ana move forward?

Simple in concept, but difficult in practice, this is the concept of truth in multiple realities. It takes commitment to be curious and flush out each others' perspectives. So why would you invest the time and energy? Easy...if I am a leader and the Six Sigma initiative is important to me, it is clear that this conversation is truly rich and has lessons for the organization written all over it.

Yet, how often do I - and all of us - allow our conversations to fully bring out views and experiences of others? We often allow our own reality be the only truth for ourselves, as if we had the corner on the truth. We fight, as if there is no way to hold more than one truth as valid. We tell ourselves "I am smarter than them!"

If you - like me -- sometimes feel disagreement or discomfort when confronted with a reality that conflicts sharply with your own, remember that the goal is to hold all realities - mine and the others' - as equally valid.

Tips: Three steps to take when feeling disagreement or discomfort upon hearing a sharply conflicting perspective

1. Acknowledge the other person's reality (*most critical!*)
2. Seek to understand that reality
3. Negotiate a solution that holds both perspectives as valid (or simply be uncomfortable that your distinct experiences may just indicate a completely different approach!)

Application: Using these steps, how does the conversation sound now?

Omar: I disagree with the corporate vision of bringing Six Sigma to our organization. Six Sigma programs are a complete waste of resources.

Kathy: Not true for me! It worked very well in my last job.

Omar: Interesting, Kathy. Your experience has not been mine at all. Tell me how it was successful at your last job? What made it successful?

Kathy: Well, it was successful because... Ana, what do you think?

Ana: Kathy, when you mentioned your experience in your last job, I wondered...

Kathy: Ana, say more about that...

[Etc.]

Of course you can feel the difference between everyone stating their opinion and vs. probing to learn and understand. How many times do our conversations never bring out views and experiences of others? We often allow our own reality to be the only truth for ourselves, as if we had the corner on the truth.

Reminder #1: You don't need to give up your own view, but find some way to integrate the other reality into your own thinking or understanding of the issue.

Reminder #2: You do not need to have the role of "leader" in the group to take on leadership of a conversation. Leadership is both a role and a skill. In successful groups, all members can take on leadership responsibility to move the conversation toward holding multiple realities and develop solutions that address as many of those as possible!

You've heard me. Now I would love to hear from you. Tell me what you think about this topic. Do you have a same or different perspective? In your experience, what is a key factor that brings your team cohesiveness?

"Ciou for now"....LK

What's News

1. International Organizational Systems and Development Certification

I am happy to announce successful completion of the 18-month, International Organizational Systems and Development program offered through the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland.

As one of 38 international internal and external organizational development specialists from around the globe (Africa, Middle East, Europe, North America and Asia), we met in Italy, Ireland, South Africa, Hungary and Mexico to learn a new approach in helping groups to be highly effective teams -- and especially relevant for those working in multicultural environments.

What a stimulating, emotional, fascinating and lovely experience. Some of you out there have heard me tell stories? Or, you may recall, some of my prior E-Tips have derived from these experiences... Thanks for coming along!

2. Announcement: Institute of Management Consultants - Arizona

Looks like our entire Board will be heading up the IMC-AZ Chapter for one more year! We are on a roll... Among our notable accomplishments, we achieved a 25% increase in membership, increased number of meetings/year, established online member directory, and restored financial stability & vitality to the Chapter. Come check us out! Congratulations to fellow Board members: Abhay Padgaonkar, Natalie Sayer, Jim Soudriette, Ted Szaniawski & Janet Young.
www.imcaz.org

3. Want to print, forward or redistribute this Quick E-tip?

In all cases of printing or redistributing, we simply request that you leave our name and contact information attached. Thanks!

To your continued success around the globe,

Lisa

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