

# Meeting your objectives

ALLOW me to paint a picture. I have sat through a series of meetings over the past few months mainly as an observer.

These meetings covered a wide range of subject matter and involved people from a variety of management levels in the company or they were department issues.

All the meetings had been called for a variety of reasons or so you would think.

All had one common dysfunctional feature and I wonder if you can guess what that was? There are the usual suspects eg the meeting started late, people were not sure what the meeting was all about, an agenda was missing, why so many attendees etc.

The consistent feature was the lack of a level of traction or a sense of purpose and as a result the discussions went the same way as a ship without a rudder, meaning all over the place depending on who were the most assertive people in the room.

This subject has been written about more times than I care to remember and yet, meeting a robust set of objectives still seems to elude the

basis of having meetings. The challenge when we interact with other people is to kick the bad habits we have developed over the years.

This means being able to hold a number of views simultaneously, some of which may well conflict with each other.

The following is a simple acronym that will help guide you to a desirable outcome no matter what issue or problem you are dealing with.

The acronym is PRIEST and no, it has nothing to do with religion.

Deciding what you want to achieve may sound simple but it is one of the most common problems faced by individuals, teams and companies.

Without a clear set of outcomes, the energy will be mid-channel.

So let us start.

## P-ositively stated

Define the outcome in positive terms.

Most people are good at stating what they do not want.

That in itself is not such a problem providing you then ask yourself: "What is it then that I do want?"

## R-esources

What are the resources you will need to make this happen?

You will need to consider both internal and external resources. Internal resources could be skill set, knowledge, thinking capability, systems, experience not to mention finance. External resources could be materials, training, information and people to mention a few.

## I-nitiated and maintained by you

This goes to the heart of who gets this process going and who maintains the momentum. The short answer to this is YOU because you will be the one who will be proactively moving this along.

If you wait for others to get this going or pass over the key controlling and decisionmaking, then you may start to wander off track as you will be constantly reacting to situations. This does not mean you need to go it alone.

Instead, it means that your ability to interact and communicate becomes even more fundamental.

## E-cological

The decisions you are taking have a counter productive effect somewhere else in the company, division or department. This a balancing issue and this again is where the ability to communicate effectively is crucial.

These four questions will help you:

- What will happen when I achieve this objective?
- What will not happen when you achieve this objective?
- What will happen if you decide not to pursue this goal?
- What will not happen if you decide not to pursue this goal?

## S-ensory evidence

What specific evidence will you expect to see to tell you the issue is progressing on track?

## T-ime phased

Do you have a timeline of when the stages of the overall project need to have been reached in order for the overall objective to be achieved?

A final word on listening. If we do not like what we hear, we in variably switch off

Let PRIEST help you to achieve results

## COACHING



because our brain either deletes, distorts or simply generalises what we hear.

The result is we misconstrue most of the message or in our rush to formulate a reply we stop listening. In short we become judgmental.

Stand back and truly listen to what is being said.

Do not jump to conclusions. Think about it.

Mr Ray Bigger is a director of Hospitality Strategies Asia Pacific and founder and managing director of Think8, a leading coaching, consulting and training company headquartered in Singapore. He has more than 25 years of sales, marketing, people and team development experience. Mr Bigger is a former English Premier League and Football League referee.

Tel: (65) 6875-0104, website: [www.think8.net](http://www.think8.net)



## MENTORING



**Q** In the new year, I will take up a management position with a new company. I am aware from the interview that the team has been in place for quite a while and one of the reasons for the appointment is to bring about some change. I am also aware that some of the team are older than me with more experience and I am mindful there may be a hurdle or two to cross. I would appreciate some pointers of how to approach this.

IN many respects, your coming in from the outside gives you many advantages. You do not have any internal baggage and are outside of the politics that affect decisionmaking.

Do not make any major changes until you are clear as to what needs to be done. Your team will be watching everything you do early on. If you make a change just for the sake of it, it will likely fail.

Secondly, I suggest you get a thorough briefing from your boss on his take on the team and in particular his expectations. Also determine how he operates, what his likes and dislikes are about the way he would like to be managed by you. It is crucial you and he are in step because they will have a bearing on discussing issues with the team.

Thirdly have an open but short initial meeting with your team to tell them about yourself. You can tell them you plan to sit down with all of them to understand more about them as individuals, what they believe are some of the key issues, where they see they can contribute and add value. This will demonstrate a willingness to listen and learn. Be clear that you do not see problems as a failure but as an opportunity

However you do expect that if someone brings up a problem they have a solution. Giving people more responsibility is good management.

I suggest you have the individual meetings out of the office.

The older members will need a little more time as they may feel threatened. Involve them as much as possible in what is good, what is not so good, how they would go about this or that or the other. Make them feel you are looking forward to working with them and you value their input and experience. Under your wing give them, if appropriate, a project to work on. Ultimately they need to see and understand that you will decide. In that way you are earning respect from them by showing respect to them.

An additional issue. If one of the team was a candidate for the position you now have, that will require a slightly different approach. At an early stage that requires a heart to heart to really understand with empathy just what they are feeling, and how they see the situation. It is important they look forward, not back, and put themselves in a position by their professionalism where they demonstrate they are capable of overcoming a setback and can prove they have what it takes next time. Ask him/her what they learnt from the experience and do it with sincerity. This is you moving into coaching mode.

Once you have a good grasp of what is happening and what needs to happen, agree your plans with your boss.

You have in the initial weeks and months consulted, questioned and listened to your boss, your team and probably other influencers within the division or company. You can now outline the direction your team needs to go in and the part each of them will play.

Have a work-related issue or problem? Write to Ray ([ray@think8.net](mailto:ray@think8.net)).

Novotel  
KL 18x3  
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