

The Influencing Conversation

Situation

The owner and President of a small, high revenue, organization wanted to grow the company and needed the individuals and teams of the various functions to work together more cohesively to accomplish this. The business was geographically dispersed and had an effective business plan and mission. The organization was managed at the executive level by a team of four key managers. Beyond this there was little infrastructure. Generally things were going according to plan but in order to take the next step in growing the business the President thought there was a need for people to work more effectively together. The various offices contained a wide variety of work functions and it was thought that the Influencing Conversation would fit well as part of a broader initiative.

Action Taken

A two day total company team building and needs analysis was conducted after securing buy in from management. Team Management Profiles were administered and work preference differences were clearly visible. Using this data, the group established behavioral norms to leverage strengths and off set gaps. Clear strategies to meet the business plan moving forward were also established

The next phase consisted of running short workshops to define the jobs in the organization. Accountabilities and job tasks for each office were written in a team environment and shared between offices. Groups used both the TMP data and the Types of Work Model to assist them in defining roles.

It was at this point that the Influencing Conversation was used. It was positioned here since people now had clear direction from the business plan and how various roles would impact accomplishing this plan. As they began to actually do the work required of them it would be necessary to interact with their colleagues on a continual basis. These interactions would consist, at times, of the need to influence others in a way that produced buy in and support.

People brought both their Team Management Profiles and their job definitions to the Influencing Conversation workshop. The session was facilitated to bring all the previous work into a specific business context and using real scenarios that would occur as people went about their day to day work.

Overview

Client - Professional Services - Investment Trust Company

Team Size - 33

TMS Products Used - TMS Influencing Conversation

The Conversation places personal work preferences and work accountabilities into a verbal framework that is easy to transfer to the real world. Communication skills are presented in the Conversation where they will help achieve job objectives while working with others. Participants thoroughly enjoyed the role plays based on their real life challenging situations and left the session prepared to use these skills as these situations emerged.

Results

It is important to note that the Influencing Conversation was used as part of a broader initiative to help improve business performance and the actions needed to accomplish this improvement became the 'content' of how the Conversation could be used.

Over the course of time the Influencing Conversation became an accepted conversational process in the organization and the visibility of the process enabled effective interactions to occur both in person and virtually. Use of the Conversation also brought a practical understanding of how work preferences illustrate themselves in people's day to day work and brought the TMP alive on a continual basis.

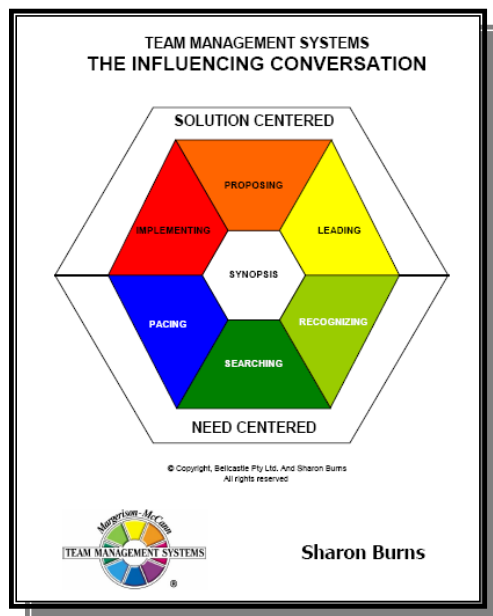
The organization continues to move forward in the direction of their business plan and report that their interactions have improved considerably, building greater levels of commitment for decisions made. Interestingly, many people also report that the length of time required for effective interactions to occur has decreased, which is important to a largely virtual organization.

Team Management Profile

The Team Management Profile (TMP) is a researched, work based preference assessment that is used world wide to help teams and individuals improve their performance. The 4000 + word profile is created from the participants responses to 60 questions focused on 4 measures of work preference. The on-line questionnaire takes about 15 - 20 minutes to complete and a hard copy profile is provided to the end user. The profile is debriefed with the end user by an Accredited TMS Network Member either one on one or in a group session such as the Influencing Conversation. The profile contains data concerning the individuals work preferences relating to:



- Primary Areas of Work Preference
- Related Areas of Work Preference
- Leadership
- Decision Making
- Interpersonal Skills
- Team Building
- Areas for Self Assessment and Improvement
- How Others Can Effectively Interact With You



The Influencing Conversation helps participants understand the conversational process in which influence is possible. Focusing first on mutually discovering the needs of one party to determine if there is a match with those needs and the potential solutions you bring creates a flow of conversation that ends in alignment and agreement to move forward. Engaging well in this process of conversation will also create trust and sustainable work relationships.

The Influencing Conversation uses the 4 Measures of Work Preference from the Team Management Profile and places them on the conversational map where they most readily are seen and experienced. By understanding where the 4 Measures of Work Preference are most important in the Influencing Conversation, participants learn how to recognize from which preference area others may be coming from and honestly adapt their conversational style to create a mutually beneficial conversation.

It is always a challenge to work with the skills of influence; the danger of using these skills to manipulate is never far away. The TMS Influencing Conversation is founded on the premise that influence is a naturally occurring process and that there are skills that can be built which enable people to influence from the spirit of mutual benefit, keeping the danger of manipulation at a minimum. We encourage participants to use the conversational map openly with others so both parties can navigate to the end point of the conversation together and reach goals that are appropriate for both parties.