
talking about...

... designing better relationships for better outcomes

August 2005
Talking About Pty Ltd

"In times of change, the learners will inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."

... Eric Hoffer (1902-1983)

Dealing with Feedback

"People ask for criticism, but they only want praise."

... W. Somerset Maugham (1874 - 1965)

All of the education we have ever seen offered in the field of performance feedback has related to how to give feedback. A little while ago, one of our clients asked us whether we had any material on receiving, rather than giving, feedback and this gave us pause for thought. How do people listen to feedback and how could they get the most from it?

Whether we are aware of it or not, we are constantly getting feedback and responding to it. When a friend tells us they like or don't like the way we are dressed – we are getting feedback. When we present an answer to a problem and someone tells us we are right or wrong – we are getting feedback. Indeed, whenever we hear someone giving us their opinion about us or something we are putting forward, this is feedback. And we may modify something in response to this feedback. We might change our clothes or change our answer. Yet, when most people enter into conversations specifically about performance feedback, they are normally more circumspect. Why is this and how can we make conversations about feedback on our performance more productive?

To begin with, we would like to point out there are no easy answers here. As human beings, we listen to feedback in a context largely constructed of the relationships we have with those giving us the feedback, the culture of the group within which we work and what we feel is at stake. If we feel we may lose something as a result of specific feedback then we are likely to enter the conversation in a defensive mood. In other words, we are closing ourselves to other's opinions and the value they may offer us. This is one of the challenges in linking salary reviews with feedback conversations. The focus becomes our financial outcome not what we can learn.

Let us look at how you can make feedback conversations more valuable in the context of your moods, which can provide a simple framework to remember when having these conversations.

The key is to decide what mood you would like to take to these feedback conversations and work to be in that mood when you enter the conversation. In our view, the best moods for receiving feedback are **acceptance, ambition and wonder.**

A mood of acceptance speaks to listening to the feedback and taking it as simply that - someone's view of you. You do not have to like what they have to say, just accept that as their view. After all, they see the world differently to you – we all observe the world in a different way

– and the other person's observations may provide you with some insights to you and your performance that you do not see. A mood of acceptance allows us to process the feedback on its merit.

A mood of ambition creates a future focus to taking more effective action. Feedback conversations are more valuable when they focus on what you could do differently in the future not what you have done in the past. All too often, we see feedback conversations where the predominant focus is backwards. A good rule of thumb is to spend a third of the conversation focusing on where you have been and two thirds of the conversation on where you want to go. If you find the conversation having too much of a backwards focus, seek to shift the conversation forwards. You can do this simply by asking yourself or the person giving you the feedback some forwards focused questions. What would you like to see me doing? How could I achieve this? Who could help me make this change? And so on.

Finally, a mood of wonder speaks to openness and curiosity. If we are to get more value from feedback conversations, we must be open to exploring what the feedback means and how we can utilise it into the future.

Ultimately the value of feedback predominantly lays in the opportunity it presents to you to generate more effective actions and better outcomes. You do not have to accept all feedback that comes your way, but you ignore it at your peril.

"In the beginning was the void teeming with infinite possibilities of which you are one."

... from the film "What the bleep do we know"

The Easiest Quiz in the World ...

See how well you do – the answers can be found at the end of this newsletter ...

1. How long did the One Hundred Years War last?
2. Which country makes Panama hats?
3. From which animal do we get catgut?
4. In which month do the Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific Ocean are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What colour is the purple finch?
9. Where are Chinese Gooseberries from?
10. What is the colour of a black box in a commercial airplane?

"To avoid criticism do nothing, say nothing, be nothing."

... Elbert Hubbard (1856 - 1915)

Upcoming Events

For those of you who have not seen Jacqui present, we invite you to her presentation on networking ...

"Building Better Business Relationships - Learn how to make the most of your relationship building opportunities!"

Speaker: Jacqui Chaplin - Director, Talking About Pty Ltd

Date: Friday 19th August, 2005

Time: 7.00am for 7:30am concluding around 8.45am. Informal networking from 7.00am. Seated networking from 7.30am.

Venue: Grand Hyatt Melbourne, 123 Collins St Melbourne VIC 3000

Cost: \$55.00 per person
\$495.00 per table or group of ten

Platinum members of Network Central receive a 20% discount - \$44 per person or \$396 per table of ten
- includes GST

Final RSVP By: Wednesday 17th August 2005

Profile:

While networking comes naturally to some of us, others need a hand.

Jacqui will share some key tools and tips to make business relationship building easier for you. Including:

The three steps to better networking
The five elements to better business outcomes
How trust builds better business relationships
How to maintain contact with those people you meet

Regardless of whether you are a seasoned networker or new to this important business skill, we guarantee you'll walk away with some new ways to build better business relationships.

For those of you who have not met Jacqui, she is a vibrant speaker with extensive conversational and business relationship experience across a diverse range of industries. She engages with individuals through to large groups and has local, national and international clients.

Her experience in successfully working with individuals, teams and large groups, from the shop floor to the boardroom results in well targeted, insightful, engaging and interactive presentations - engaging, fun, inspirational, practical.

International Coach Federation (ICF) Australasia Third International Conference

"Professional Coaching ... from the inside out"

September 29th and 30th, at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Gardens Point Campus, Brisbane, Australia.

Talking About's Coaches are members of the ICF and we subscribe to their standards and ethics and support their objectives. For those of you who are interested in finding out more about where the world of coaching is heading, we invite you to consider attending the ICF's third International Conference in September.

The ICFA (Australasia) has designed this conference as a catalyst for continuing to move coaching towards a profession, and to support all coaches in continuing to improve their own professional practices. A large part of this journey will be respecting the diverse paths that practitioners have taken to coaching, and to highlight the shared elements in the practice of professional coaches.

The first keynote address will be delivered by Patrick Williams, renowned psychotherapist and coach. The theme will be **"The Future of Professional Coaching: Taking a Stand for Quality."**

He will focus on how the profession evolved, where it is today, and what is needed for coaching to be recognised and embraced worldwide by consumers, clients, and organizations. Patrick will also offer an Interactive Learning Community - "The Theoretical

Foundations of Coaching". He will outline how the theories, techniques, and strategies from decades of psychotherapy research and application have influenced modern day coaching.

Details on Patrick and other keynote presenters, Sir John Whitmore and Marcia Reynolds, and the full program can be found at www.icfaustralia.com. Keep an eye on the website where you can watch further developments of the Conference Program, Register and learn about local Chapter events.

Our Web Site

More articles and information about our work can be found at our web site, www.talkingabout.com.au. We invite you to take a look.

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The Easiest Quiz in the World ...

See how well you do – the answers can be found at the end of this newsletter ...

1. How long did the One Hundred Years War last? – 116 years
2. Which country makes Panama hats? - Ecuador
3. From which animal do we get catgut? – Sheep and horses
4. In which month do the Russians celebrate the October Revolution? - November
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of? – Squirrel fur
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific Ocean are named after what animal? - Dogs
7. What was King George VI's first name? - Albert
8. What colour is the purple finch? - Crimson
9. Where are Chinese Gooseberries from? – New Zealand
10. What is the colour of a black box in a commercial airplane? - Orange

So how did you do?

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