

## The Untapped Aspect of Productivity

*"The simple act of paying positive attention to people has a great deal to do with productivity."*

... Tom Peters (b.1942) US consultant and author

Economic matters are at the forefront of minds of many people today. Much is written in the media about how to ensure the economy continues to do well and one of the key topics is productivity.

As these articles are generally written by economists, there is obviously a slant to the key factors affecting productivity. These factors are largely systemic in nature - technology, direction of resources, the ability to gain access to financial resources and so on.

Yet one key factor of productivity almost invariably goes unspoken - the quality of the relationships between the people who produce. Productivity is always the end product of some sort of process. No doubt some processes are largely done with technology, yet even they involve human participation at some point and once again that participation relies on the quality of the relationships of those involved.

In his Well Being at Work Report, business psychologist Robertson Cooper identified a clear link between good relationships at work and productivity. In his report, which was based on data from 40,000 public and private sector employees, he also noted that employees underestimate the importance of workplace relationships.

Yet, you only have to go into any organisation and listen to the quality of conversations to see the impact poor relationships have on productivity.

Consider these scenarios. Your manager publicly berates you for a small mistake, questioning your competence and calling you a fool. How do you feel? A colleague will not assist you in achieving a goal because, even though it is the organisation's interest, it is not one of their key performance indicators. How do you feel? One of your team consistently does not do what they say they will do. How do you feel?

These scenarios, and many more like them, are everyday occurrences in most, if not all, organisations. Think of the actions you would take as a result of your feelings in those circumstances. I am sure that many of you would feel de-motivated, resentful and frustrated in those circumstances and, accordingly, not perform at your best. That has an impact on your productivity. Think of that happening to many people around you and you start to get an idea of the scale of the impact of

poor relationships on productivity.

This is the great untapped opportunity for organisations to be more productive. This opportunity may be seen by some as too difficult a challenge as it involves what many see as the dubious area of people or soft skills. Yet, when you look at the way in which we relate to each other and how to improve that, it comes down to one thing - conversations. We are not talking about the "go to the coffee shop and have a chat" type of conversation but the process of interaction that we all do that helps us understand a situation, develop ideas to address it, make a decision and enrol others in getting something done.

This is not a haphazard process, but one which can be readily seen and utilised. In our professional coach training program and our coaching+ program and our coaching in general, we teach people how to do this effectively. Indeed we share with them our "effective conversations model". Imagine how much better a group of people could perform if they all understood and utilised a clear conversational practice to resolve issues, get things done and build better relationships. If you would like to find out more, write to us at [info@talkingabout.com.au](mailto:info@talkingabout.com.au).

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## Pause for Possibility

In this month's reflective piece, which we are now terming, "Pause for Possibility", we invite you to think about your relationships whether at work or in life in general. As Tony Robbins puts it:

*"The quality of your life is the quality of your relationships ."*

We invite you to spend a couple of minutes thinking about what your key relationships mean to you, how they currently impact your life and how you would like them to impact your life. Here are a few questions to help you:

1. *With whom do you have your most important relationships?*
2. *How would you rate each of these relationships on a scale of 10?*
3. *If a relationship is not where you want it to be, what is missing?*
4. *What conversation might begin a process of improving that relationship?*

After your reflection, we invite you to visit our LinkedIn or Facebook group depending on your preference and share any insights you may have. You can find us on LinkedIn at <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3716581>. If Facebook is your cup of tea then you can find us there at <https://www.facebook.com/Talking.About.Pty.Ltd>.

## Accountability

Accountability continues to be a recurring theme in our work. As we have spoken about above, relationships have a big impact on productivity and accountability plays a huge role in the way we relate to others.

If you think accountability is an issue in your organisation, then some of our ideas may be of value to you. To that end, you can download our introduction to accountability from our web site. Alternatively, you can get a free copy of our white paper on accountability by writing to us at [accountability@talkingabout.com.au](mailto:accountability@talkingabout.com.au).

## The Monthly Diversion

*One from Steve Trivett. Thank you Steve!*

The British Medical Association has weighed in on the new Prime Minister David Cameron's health care proposals. This is a summary of the voting.

The Allergists voted to scratch it, but the Dermatologists advised not to make any rash moves.

The Gastroenterologists had a sort of a gut feeling about it, but the neurologists thought the Administration had a lot of nerve.

The Obstetricians felt they were all labouring under a misconception.

Ophthalmologists considered the idea short-sighted.

Pathologists yelled, "Over my dead body!" while the Paediatricians said,

the Prime Minister was being childish and should "grow up!"

The Psychiatrists thought the whole idea was madness, while the Radiologists could see right through it.

The Surgeons were fed up with the cuts and decided to wash their hands of the whole thing.

The ENT specialists smelt a rat, didn't swallow the idea, and just wouldn't hear of it.

The Pharmacologists thought it was a bitter pill to swallow, and the Plastic Surgeons said, "This puts a whole new face on things..."

The Podiatrists thought it was a step forward, but the Urologists were 'pissed off' by the whole idea.

The Anaesthetists thought the idea was a gas, but the Cardiologists didn't have the heart to say no!

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