The International communicator

communicating with competence

Winter 2005

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Winter 2005 issue of *The International Communicator*. This time the *Communicator* is coming to you from our new offices on Franz-Joseph-Strasse in the heart of Schwabing, the legendary "artists' district" of Munich.

We've got some topics in this issue that I think everyone can relate to. For example, how to deal with all those e-mails that distract you from the rest of your work (see right). And what about those difficult colleagues?—or is it just our attitude that makes them difficult? Read "Is Jack Really a Macho Jerk?" (p. 3) and I think you'll recognize the situation. For those of you interested in the empirical side of one aspect of our work, "If You Can't Measure It, You Can't Manage It" (p. 2) explains the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).

We hope you'll enjoy these and the other articles coming to you from our shiny new offices in our "Gartenhaus" in the heart of Munich.

Joe Butler, Editor

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N Vision Learning

Thirty Minutes a Day

Better time management has a lot to do with better information management. This is especially true of all those e-mails that come in each day. Here are six essential tips for coping with an overflowing in-box.

When I was a trainee, long ago in the days of "snail mail"—before e-mail was used in business—I remember waiting, yes, waiting for the post every morning.

Nowadays, information flow is faster than ever before. People commonly receive 30-50 e-mails a day.

> *"I come into the office and log in to have a quick look at my e-mail in-box. Before I know it, I'm answering e-mails and sometimes haven't even taken my coat off!"*

> *"Work sometimes seems to be the stuff I do in-between e-mails."*

We need to be pro-active and save time dealing with e-mail by:

❶ Knowing what our priorities for each day are

❷ Going into our in-box at low-energy times such as just before or after lunch, instead of at usually creative times in the mornings and late afternoons

❸ "Bundling" e-mail—doing it systematically in blocks of at least 20 minutes.

> *"I often have to read e-mails again, just to check that they're not important and that I don't need to do them straight away"*

> *"I start one thing and end up doing completely different things because I try to clear a few e-mails in-between."*

Avoiding reading e-mails more than once (by getting them out of the in-box), reducing the number of folders you have and switching off the automatic notification that an e-mail has arrived can all help save time spent on e-mails.

Using the 1-2-3 rule helps:

❶ Read and delete or file.

❷ Read and answer.

❸ Read and plan when to do it (drop and drag over to task list is one option, and/or file and enter on another task list).

Looking in your in-box when you *do* have time to write the short answers required is crucial. Organizing your e-mail is vital, too: How many people are really able to scan their in-box quickly and find the one important e-mail they are looking for?

These and many other practical tips are always hotly discussed at our "Personal Effectiveness Learnshop." People are different, yet this learnshop produces excellent results for linear and circular communicators alike. One absolutely typical piece of feedback we get is the statement:

> *"I've saved at least 30 minutes a day!"*

Jaquie Thomas

N VISION LEARNING SOLUTIONS GMBH

The Bottom Line

If You Can't Measure It, You Can't Manage It

The Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI)

A recent trend in the field of training and development is HR controlling. If we assume that HR controllers think and act like most other types of controllers, then we can expect that these people are going to start asking some tough questions. Questions such as "Is this huge investment that we are currently making in the personal and professional development of our employees actually producing any returns for our organization and for our shareholders?" "If so, how can we measure the return on investment and so begin to target our investment more accurately and so maximize its impact?"

In the future, spending time and money on learning must become a calculated investment rather than a simple act of faith. Organizations will start demanding that consultants like myself can actually measure and track some of the mindsets and skills that we claim are critical to their success.

The Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI) is an instrument that can be used to measure the current stage of intercultural development of an individual, a group or even an organization. The instrument has been used widely in corporate settings since 1998 and has been recently revised; further increasing its reliability and validity. It is truly unique as it measures a mindset or "worldview" rather than a set of behaviors and can be used in a number of ways.

> **"Spending time and money on learning must become a calculated investment"**

With individuals, we use it to support the design of pre-departure training for an expatriate assignment. This ensures that the person learns exactly what they need at this time to support their personal development. With teams, we use it to structure a group feedback session and address critical issues relating to the way they are handling their diversity.

The IDI can also be used in management development programs to identify the current level of intercultural development of a pool of global high potentials and as a basis for their development. For those organizations that take the current EU initiative on diversity seriously, the IDI can play a central role in an organizational needs assessment.

The IDI is a tool that allows us to measure and manage intercultural development in our organizations by investing in the right learning, for the right people at the right time. And that's the bottom line.

Mike Cook

Numbers

In 2004 N Vision worked with

1212 professionals of

38 nationalities in

11 countries representing

32 international companies

Leadership

Insights from the Top

"One of the things that I think leaders have to do—leading companies, leading people—is to see things before everyone else sees them. When something is obvious, it may well be too late."

—Carly Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard, *The Costco Connection*, May 2004

In 2004, I had the opportunity to exchange with, support or coach five CEOs, those folks that oversee their organizations from the very top. These five CEOs lead over 617,000 people throughout the world. Though Carly Fiorina was not one of them, I found the above quote very fitting.

During my discussions with these prominent leaders, insights came to the forefront that were inspiring and powerful. Here are some of them—directly quoted:

"You earn money when you are number 1."

"Create the best team possible and the rest will fall in place."

"When your fundamental business model doesn't work, you can't duplicate successfully. Get the fundamentals right."

"Strategy isn't for now – it's for the future."

"Our clients are our respected friends."

Go to the N Vision website at www.nvision-learning.com/ic/articles to read more CEO insights.

Which of these statements speak to you? Take one or more of these insights and compare them to your current attitudes and activities. How can you learn to create your "CEO insight" and in turn become more effective in your relationships, your teams and with your customers?

Dan Norenberg

N VISION LEARNING SOLUTIONS GMBH

Is Jack Really a Macho Jerk?

How "Mental models" influence our actions

I'm standing with a glass of prosecco in my hand at the company kick-off event. Everything is fine until Jack, who works in the next department, comes over. With a slight smile on his face (or is that smug arrogance?) he asks me about the project I'm working on at the moment. I tell him that we're having some problems. Jack says, "Too bad. Maybe we should be more competitive with that project?" and walks away.

I'm left alone. I start thinking to myself, "Jack is a macho jerk because he thinks as a woman I'm not competitive enough. He thinks that someone else should do this job, a man. Now I have an enemy and have to watch out for Jack. I'm not going to share anything with him anymore. In fact, I might even complain to my boss about his sexist, bullying behaviour."

If we stop and think about it, we've all had similar thought processes go through our heads at one time or another. Objectively—and when given time to "reflect"—we can clearly see that the thought process started with an **observable piece of data**, a suggestion in this case➲

"Maybe we should be more competitive with that project?"

This was followed by **a selection of a piece of the data** (according to the beliefs about myself and the world around me)➲

"should be more competitive."

A meaning was then added to the data➲

"Women are thought to be non-competitive in our society."

Assumptions were made➲

"Jack thinks I'm not being competitive enough probably just because I'm a woman."

Conclusions drawn➲

"Jack is a macho jerk who wants to undermine me because I'm a woman."

Beliefs about the world were adopted or re-enforced➲

"I can't trust Jack and men like him."

Finally leading to **actions based on these beliefs➲**

"I won't share any more information with him."

Mind models, coined by the Scottish psychologist Kenneth Craik in the 1940's, is the term used for our thought processes. They are the "tacit 'maps' of the world that people hold in their long-term memory, and the short-term perceptions that people build up as part of their everyday reasoning processes."* In other words, they are the stories and beliefs we have gathered through our lives from our experiences and conditioning. We need these "maps" to navigate through everyday life. However, they remain largely untested because they lie below the level of awareness. As in the case above, when not tested, they can then lead to self-generating beliefs and inferences that are counter-productive and detrimental.

> **"Bringing in clarity can unveil the beliefs in each of us that have led to deadlock."**

How can we become aware of our and other people's mental models? Go to the N Vision website at *www.nvision-learning.com/ic/articles* and find out.

Ieva Gaidulis

*Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (1994), p. 237

Authentic

"Actions speak louder than words"—an age-old saying that still holds true in the 21st Century. How others judge your degree of *authenticity* is largely determined by your actions.

How does somebody become truly "authentic"? Being authentic implies being true to yourself and those around you. This, in turn, requires self-awareness and deep knowledge of yourself.

The capacity for self-awareness is developed throughout a lifetime; it is not innate. In most cases it takes hard work, the ability to learn from setbacks and disappointments as well as successes. Moreover it allows you to know your strengths and weaknesses, your values and motivating factors and your purpose in life. People with self-awareness know what they want and lead a life using their heart *and* their head.

Being authentic is a crucial trait for leaders and managers to master. So how do you become authentic?

Be sincere: Employees may like a Christmas party, but when the company hits a bad patch you shouldn't hide away, avoiding the same employees.

Be you: The management style that works for one manager will be a flop for others; a low-key chat can be just as successful as a huge presentation.

View employees as individuals: Knowing individual strengths and weaknesses clarifies who should do which task.

Connect with people on more than just a professional level: Showing interest in a colleague "as a person" leads to a better understanding of what makes that person tick.

Above all, make it meaningful.
Be authentic.

Steven Hunt

Sales

Show Time!

It's trade fair time again. The space has been reserved, the stand design finalized. The mailers have all been sent. The team has been chosen and the hotel reservations made. All set, right?

Nowadays, simply being present at a trade show is not enough. With such a large investment, it's increasingly critical to have a holistic concept spanning pre-show processes, on-site performance and post-show follow-up. Most importantly, all of these factors must be centered on ***"The People."*** As all true sales professionals know, *people*, not organizations, make buying decisions. *Your people* are the best bridge to them.

The first of these are **"*The Known People."*** These include current business partners and potential partners with whom you are already in contact. In both cases, trade shows provide an excellent opportunity to reach not only these critical individuals, who already understand how your products or services can help increase their organization's profits, but also the other key *influencers* on the buying decision. That means the *technical buyer*, the *user buyer* and the *economic buyer*. The synergy created by meeting with some or all of these *people* together and at the same time is often a powerful push to accelerate the sales cycle forward rapidly.

> **"As all true sales professionals know, *people*, not organizations, make buying decisions."**

The next group is **"*The Unknown People."*** These are the seemingly random "walk-ups" who are perhaps the most difficult of all to deal with effectively. The range of possibilities is daunting—any of these *people* could be the next step to a lot of new business for your organization—or just someone with a nice smile who has no real interest and who distracts you from your true aims at precisely the wrong moment.

> **"*Your People* are normally the most important interface to your organization but *more than ever at trade shows*."**

Does your "screening" strategy truly take these high-stakes factors into account?

The last group is, of course, **"*Your People."*** Yes, they know your products and services inside-out, but are they capable of flexibly and dynamically performing consultative selling? Are they able to see each situation from the customer's viewpoint? Can they discover and clearly show the customer they understand what is needed, how your products or services will reduce costs, increase revenues and lead directly to improved profits?

Anything but an immediate "YES" to any of these questions means your trade show investment is not being maximized. ***Your People*** are normally the most important interface to your organization but *more than ever at trade shows*. Are they truly ready? N Vision Learning Solutions can help assure that they are.

Kieran McVey

News

New address

N Vision Learning Solutions now has a new address:

Franz-Joseph-Strasse 12
Das Gartenhaus
80801 Munich
Germany

Our telephone and fax numbers and our e-mail addresses remain the same:

Tel. +49 (0 89) 30 63 22-0

Fax +49 (0 89) 30 63 22-99

E-mail format: firstname.lastname @nvision-learning.com

We look forward to learning with you in our new offices!

Food for Thought

"A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done."

—Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969), general and U.S. president (1953-1961)

"So much of what we call management consists in making it difficult for people to work."

—Peter F. Drucker, Austrian-born (1909) U.S. economist and authority on corporate management

"The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on."

—Walter Lippmann (1889-1974), U.S. journalist

"I am more afraid of an army of 100 sheep led by a lion than an army of 100 lions led by a sheep."

—Talleyrand (1754-1838), French politician and diplomat

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