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Excellence in Internal Client Encounters

A series of training and workshop sessions
for Intel France, May to September 2021
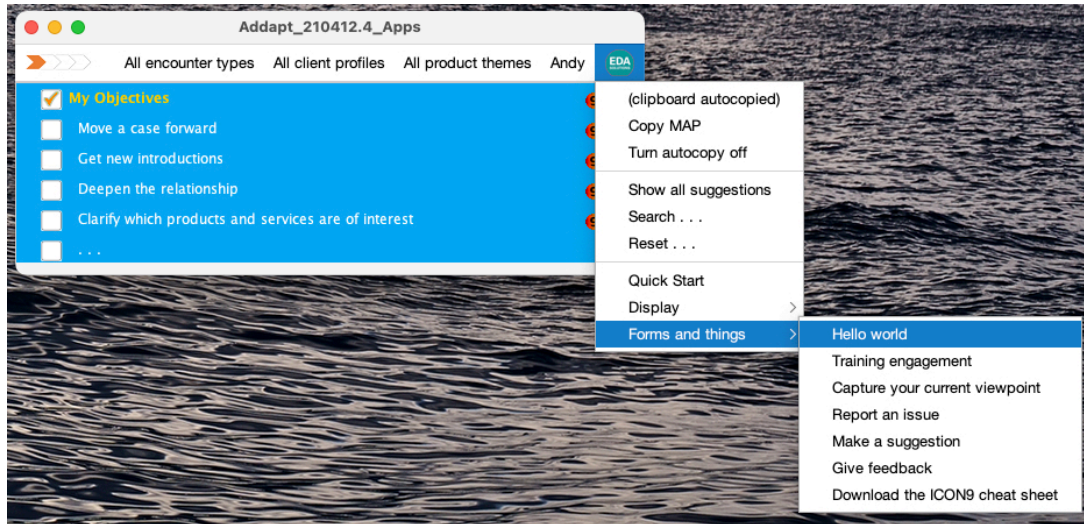Session 7

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To get started…

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From: Andrew Betts ICONDA <andy@icondasolutions.com>
Subject: Notes from this morning's session and for the summer

SLIDES : I just put a copy ...

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION : For a quick and effective entry point into Nonviolent Communication ...

GUIDING DISCOVERY : I would like to remind ...

CHECKPOINTS : ... the following preparation, gently spread out across the weeks to come will help:

    1. Recording - capture as many MAPs and Outcomes as you can, in any form you like
    2. Browse the Clients Encounters book and/or the slides and/or other material on my.icon9.net ...

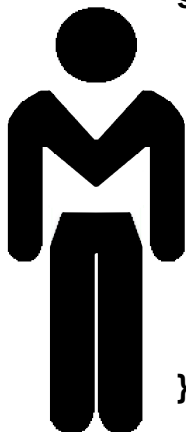© 2021 ICONDA Solutions

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Taking Control

Asserting, Dealing with Constraints, Power and Manipulation

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The SUBROUTINE to **ASSERT MYSELF**

subr(#ASSERT) {
  situation(); // My observations (avoiding judgements, interpretations and generalisations)

  problems(); // How this affects me and my organisation

  needs(); // What I therefore need (at a high level of abstraction)

  solutions();
} // Actions that may fulfil these needs: a request or a proposal for action

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SUBROUTINE/NVC:
Common Objections and Clarifications

The following bullets have the form of a claim followed by a couple of objections:

- Claim …
  - ✗ Objections …

- The 4-step protocol (SUBROUTINE/NVC) is a great way to structure difficult conversations
  - ✗ The 4 steps are too mechanical – you end up sounding like a robot
  - ✗ Conversations are too complex to capture in 4 steps
  - ✗ …

What are the counter-objections?

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1. A big advantage of the SUBROUTINE/NVC approach is that you can use it with anyone
   - ✗ How so? If I tell a bouncer at a club that he's hurt my feelings, he's likely to break my arm!
   - ✗ …

2. If you can explain your needs well, people will generally try to help you meet them
   - ✗ Nonsense. If what I need is in conflict with their needs, then they are not going to help me meet mine!
   - ✗ …

What are the counter-objections?

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- A well-formulated request usually provokes a positive response

    ✗ No it doesn't. If I ask my daughter to get out of the shower, she won't do it no matter how I ask.

    ✗ But the clarity of a request does not guarantee that there will be a positive response

    ✗ …

- In difficult conversations ,it's crucial to be 100% truthful: describing the real situation, real feelings and real needs

    ✗ Being completely truthful makes you too exposed. In a professional situation, for example, there may be confidentiality to protect

    ✗ But the truth can be hurtful, especially in difficult conversations

    ✗ …

- Empathy is the foundation stone of successful confrontation and the SUBROUTINE/NVC protocol facilitates empathy

    ✗ But a 4-step protocol encourages the exact opposite of empathy by reducing a conversation to steps that a computer could follow!

    ✗ Surely empathy can't be shown simply by following the 4-step protocol to make a request?

    ✗ …

What are the counter-objections?

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- The more a Problem is expressed in a personal way, the less likely it is that the client will object to it:

    – ☺ "I am very worried about the consequences of a software failure"

    – ☹ "That software could easily crash and cause a huge mess"

- The closer I can get to expressing my true Needs, the smaller the chances of conflict:

    – ☺ "It is very important to me to get away at 3pm. The person I am meeting next has come a long way, and I want to show my appreciation by being on time"

    – ☹ "I've got an important meeting at 3pm and have to go before then"

- Try to avoid interpretations :

    – Projections: he thought …, their idea was …, they wanted to …

    – Accusations: after he did this …, their software caused …, you told me that …

    – Judgements: good, bad, fast, slow, complicated, stupid, useless, boring, …

    – Rules & generalisations: they always …, my boss never …, it must …

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- **You have made repeated requests** to your product group to help you with a particular problem, and they have not responded in any useful way. You insist.

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- **You made a commitment** to do something for a client by a certain date, but your **success depended on them delivering something** to you first, and they did not do this. You inform them of the delay but decline responsibility.

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Taking Control

Dealing with Constraints, Power and
Manipulation

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Constraints

- Constraints limit or bias the "negotiation solution space"
    - Often imposed by the parent organisation
    - Many others are self-imposed
- Common example = the Bottom Line
    - e.g: "Don't let them have more than five samples!"
    - Acts like an Anchor, pulling the deal towards the Bottom Line ☹
    - Introduces rigidity ☹ – reduces the range of possible negotiation solutions by focusing on the Bottom Line number
- Time limits are common negotiation constraints
- Not all constraints are negative – we need a few!

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For Power Issues

- I must be ready to use my Fallback

- Preparation (MAP, TABLE, etc.) is vital when up against a negotiator who is in a position of power

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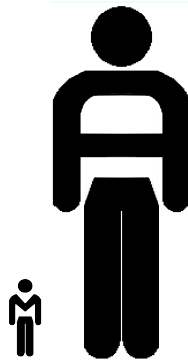
The TABLE tool

NEGOTIATION TABLE													
My objectives	Negotiation target, discovery targets, information to protect, …												
Audience	Anticipating the client negotiator(s), their concerns, etc.												
Plan	**Offer?**				**Cost to me**				**Value to them**				
	1				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	2				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	3				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	4				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	Request!				**Value to me**				**Cost to them**				
	1				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	2				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	3				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	4				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	Fall line (limits that trigger a pause/consultation/rethink)												
	My Fallback (plan B, or Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA))												
	Their Fallback (my assessment of their plan B)												
	My Fallout (the consequences of no agreement and using the Fallback, +ve & -ve)												
	Their Fallout (my assessment of the consequences for them of no agreement)												

Fallbacks — Ours and theirs

Fallout — For us and them

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Manipulation

- Manipulation is a form of Influence
    - but not all Influence is Manipulation
- Influence becomes Manipulation when the *Intention* is purely selfish
    - The victim is tricked into doing something
    - It might be against their interests
   - They might not do it if well-informed

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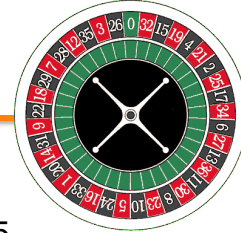# Manipulation: how is it done?

- Kahneman explains that the brain works as though we have two systems
    - System 1
        - Generates impressions, feelings, inclinations
        - Operates automatically and quickly
    - System 2
        - Effortful mental activities, including complex computations. Deliberate and relatively slow.
- Manipulation exploits System 1's blindspots

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

THINKING,

FAST and SLOW

DANIEL
KAHNEMAN
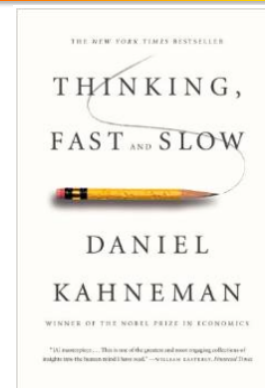
WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

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Example Blindspot: Anchors

- A wheel of fortune is rigged to only stop at 10 or 65

- People spin, write down the number, then answer:

    - Q1. Is the percentage of African nations that are members of the UN larger or smaller?

    - Q2. What is your guess at the percentage of African nations in the UN?

- Answers to Q2: 25% or 45%, depending on the anchor

    - Even though, obviously, the Wheel of Fortune number is irrelevant !!

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Manipulation Using Anchors

- Anchors condition the subsequent conversation, e.g:

    "We are not prepared to go above $10k"

    "I want 3 engineers on site here 100% for the next 6 months"

- Option 1: Simply refuse prejudicial anchors

    "Sorry, but I am not willing to discuss resourcing levels yet. Let's start by looking at the work to be done ..."

- Option 2: Metacommunicate (see later)

    "I think that's what they call an anchor – I'm afraid that I can't do anything with that suggestion."

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Example Blindspot: Statistics

- Study of indidence of kidney cancer in the 3,141 US counties
- *The counties in which the rates are lowest* are in rural, sparsely populated, republican areas of the mid-west, the south and the west

- That's good, healthy, Republican living for you!

- BUT *… the counties in which the rates are highest* are **also** in rural, sparsely populated, republican areas of the mid-west, the south and the west

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Example Blindspot : Availability

- When something comes easily to mind, that type of thing may seem more likely
  - After a big plane crash, people get nervous about flying
    - … while they remain confident when crossing the road, driving, etc
    (which makes no sense!)
- Similarly, when a customer has just seen a big issue …
  - … it can seem as though all is hopeless and rotten!
    - Keep a cool head – refer to facts and true observations

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Other Exploitable Weaknesses

- 'Representativeness' (stereotyping and comparison)
- 'Optimism/over-confidence' (under/over-estimation or complacency)
- 'Loss aversion' (holding on to things/resistance)
- 'Status quo bias' (inertia, default to no action)
- 'Framing' (orientation, accentuation, presentation, styling)
- 'Temptation' (greed, ego, short-term reward)
- 'Mindlessness' (negligence, avoidance, not concentrating)
- 'Self-control strategies' (habits and routines to counter weaknesses)
- 'Following the herd' (conforming, mob instinct, safety in numbers)
- 'Spotlight effect' (anxiety, pressure, "...everyone's watching my decision")
- etc. etc.

Homework: read Kahneman, Nudge theory, or some other book on manipula

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Metacommunication

- Metacom is communication about communication, e.g:

  In response to "It's got to be done by Friday!" …

  - *Are you trying to put the pressure on?*

  When my client uses an irrelevant comparison:

  - *The use of examples from a different business sector is not going to help us agree. Let's think of something more pertinent ...*

  When told that an offer is final and that there is no more budget …

  - *Are you saying that I should be talking to someone else. The person who looks after the budget ..?*

- Metacommunication exposes the manipulation

 - This automatically thwarts the manipulation attempt

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Key Points

- Constraints affect, and can distort, negotiations

    - Usually come from own organisation or self-imposed

- Power differences, if they exist, are unavoidable

    - Manage through good preparation – personal and professional

- Manipulation is influence with bad intentions

    - Recognition and Metacommunication are powerful antidotes

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Titan's Tale

- **Maxillion**, a global technology supplier headquartered in the USA

    – >50k employees

- **Titan**, Maxillion's European Business Unit (BU)

    – 40 people, Global Positioning System (GPS) software components

    – Supplied to other BUS, e.g for navigation & vehicle tracking systems, smartphone apps

    – Acquired by Maxillion a few years ago

- Titan's flagship product is **SwiftFix**,

    – Expert support needed to integrate it into finished products

- Titan most recent product = **AutoFix**

    – Easier to set up

    – Titan wants to deploy it in the Smartphone and Navigation BUs soon
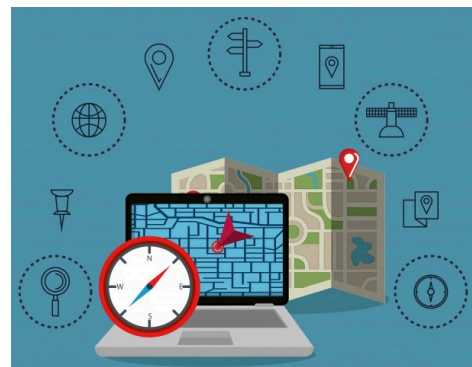
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The Cast

Chris : Titan Jnr Engineer
Curious and knowledgeable. Takes on too much work and is therefore constantly overloaded.

Drew : Maxillion exec (oversees multiple BUs)
Results-oriented. Charming and persuasive. Has a tendency to push people into competitive positions (i.e. slightly manipulative).

Erin : Smartphone BU manager
Conscientious. Strong views on *how* things should be done, more flexible on *what* should be done.

Francis : Smartphone BU Technical Lead
Technocratic, logical, organized. Can be impatient with others who do not see things as clearly.

Glen : Smartphone BU Engineer
Friendly. Creative. Tends to avoid taking responsibility for things.

Haven : Maxillion IT Manager
Technically masterful. Tormented by conflicting desires for speed and perfection.

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The Cast

Alfie : A Titan Team Leader

Whenever you take this role, play it as yourself

Brennan : A Titan Snr Engineer

Whenever you take this role, play it as yourself

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- Objectives
  - Refresh, reinforce, go further and deeper
- Means
  - Revisit material from a new angle
  - Improvisation around a single storyline
- 12 short scenes
  - 2 or 3 actors in each
  - Different learning points targeted by each
    - Other things will certainly come up too
- You have 2 scripts (PDFs)
  - One for Alfie and Brennan
  - One for your assigned character
    - Chris, Drew, Erin, Francis, Glen or Haven

SYNOPSIS

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SCENE 1: A FLEETING CHANCE TO MAKE A MARK
Active: Alfie, Drew and Erin
Passive: Other BU heads and senior staff

SCENE 2A: RESISTANCE
Active: Alfie, Erin and Francis
Passive: Other Titan and Smartphone BU people

SCENE 2B: TOO PROBLEM-ORIENTED
Active: Brennan, Francis and Glen
Passive: Other Titan and Smartphone BU people

SCENE 3A: GETTING DOWN TO WORK
Active: Brennan, Francis and Glen
Passive: Other Titan and Smartphone BU people

SCENE3B: REACHING AN AGREEMENT
Active: Alfie, Francis and Haven (Haven has been called in half way through the meeting)
Passive: Other Titan and Smartphone BU people

SCENE 4A: HEATING UP
Active: Brennan, Chris and Glen
Passive: Alfie, Haven

SCENE 4B: STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF
Active: Brennan, Glen, Haven
Passive: Chris

SCENE 5: CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK
Active: Alfie, Chris
Passive: none

SCENE 6: DELEGATION
Active: Brennan, Chris
Passive: none

SCENE 7: A TIME-WASTING MEETING
Active: Brennan, Erin and Haven
Passive: none

SCENE 8: RECEIVING POSITIVE FEEDBACK
Active: Alfie and Drew
Passive: none

SCENE 9: GIVING THANKS
Active: Alfie, Chris
Passive: none

Use the last page of each PDF to find characters and scenes