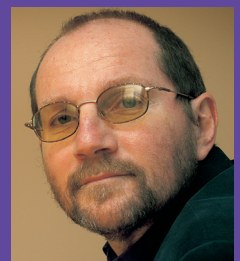


Your
**Coaching, Leadership
 & Innovation**
questions answered

Jonne Ceserani is a coach, facilitator and trainer with 24 years experience at all management levels. He has worked with a diverse range of companies in the private and public sector, including Mars, Unilever, Coca-Cola, BAA, Johnson & Johnson, Barclays, Sainsbury's, BBC, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the NHS. In this regular column he addresses some of the Coaching & Training issues facing businesses in Derbyshire



Question:

Why is it in meetings my good ideas and opinions are often overlooked or dismissed out of hand?

Answer:

One category of idea is the unsolicited idea. You may try and be helpful by offering an idea, however, if it wasn't requested it may be heard as interference. If you have not been asked for ideas ask someone if they want any, if not leave it.

There is also much confusion between ideas, decisions, opinions and facts. If someone hears your idea as a decision and they do not agree with you they are forced into arguing. If it is clear it is just an idea, open for change, then someone is more likely to hear it, even if they do not like it. In a meeting be clear about whether you are in an ideas session or making a decision.

Similarly, ideas are often heard as opinions or facts. If you are

sounding off about an opinion that is dear to you and you display lots of emotional attachments it may be heard as a fact. If someone is hearing a fact and does not agree again they will be forced into arguing with you. Be specific about what you are offering, opinions can vary, facts only allow one possibility.

A process to manage this minefield is called Best Current Thinking, (BCT). By definition BCT is a set of ideas and opinions that are offered for evaluation and modification before reaching a final decision.

By establishing precisely what is up for change, what is fixed and that the meeting is open for ideas you are preparing the ground so that people know what behaviour is appropriate.

Problem solving is a meeting structured for ideas and opinions leading to a decision. Ask someone if they want to problem solve with your help and both your ideas and opinions are more likely to be valued.

If you have a question you want to put to Jonne about a coaching, leadership or training issue within your own business, or would like Power and Grace to deal with an issue in your business related to this column, then call 0845 644 6831 or email jonne@powerandgrace.co.uk in strictest confidence.

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