

Four Conversations “Cheat Sheet”

Initiative Conversation

When/Why to Use it: Share new ideas, goals, visions and futures with people who can participate in making them real.

What to Cover:

- **INITIATIVE STATEMENT:**
 - **WHAT** future are you proposing? (Be compelling)
 - **WHEN** are you proposing to have it done?
 - **WHY** it matters.
- **TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS:**
 - **HOW** it will get done
 - **WHERE** are the resources
 - **WHO** needs to be involved

Common Mistakes:

- Getting too caught up in the HOW, WHERE and WHEN. (Be prepared to provide general answers* to these questions, but save the details for an Understanding Conversation).
- Not being positive, enlivening and engaging
- Using them too often w/o follow-through. (Be wary of becoming the “guy with all the great ideas who doesn’t ever actually DO anything with them)
- Letting a couple people who don’t buy into your vision shut you down. If you truly believe in your vision, keep looking for others who share it...you WILL find some.

*Oftentimes the best answer will be, “That’s an important consideration I’m still thinking through. What thoughts do you have about that?”

Understanding Conversation

When/Why to Use It:

- To increase ownership, buy-in & engagement
- To create clarity about the future and what it means to “them” (and what it does NOT mean)
- To help people understand where THEY fit in
- To help YOU improve your plan (esp. the HOW, WHERE & WHO)

What to Cover & How to say it:

- Keep your initiative statement at the forefront – especially the WHY. Underscore the value of your new future and the consequences of not achieving it.
- Discuss concerns & information gaps you’ve become aware of through preliminary research with your target audience
- Make it a CONVERSATION that helps people create their OWN entry into the proposal
- Give people challenges and ask for solutions

Common Mistakes:

- Getting derailed by unproductive (victim) conversations. Put those issues in the parking lot!
- Over focusing on people who “just don’t get it.” Move on to the next person, or if you’re in a group, invite them to meet with you one-on-one at a later time.
- Thinking that understanding and/or excitement automatically means acceptance and commitment
- **Expecting that understanding will itself generate action**
- Not thinking a UC is important

Performance Conversation

When to Use: Every time you need to delegate a task

What to Cover:

- It’s not a PC if it doesn’t end with a specific request and promise for:
 - **WHAT** will be done and **WHEN** the results will be reported/delivered
- Also, set your follower up for success by:
 - Ensuring they understand **WHY** it is important and **HOW** they will to get it done
 - Helping them identify and access **WHO** else may need to be involved and **WHERE** the necessary resources can be accessed

Common Mistakes:

- Not being properly prepared or committed YOURSELF
- Making demands instead of having a conversation
- Overlooking the HOW, WHERE, WHO and esp., WHY
- Not requiring an explicit “yes” (promise) or “no” answer
- Accepting a “yes” from the wrong person. (Sometimes the “right” answer from a given person at a given time is “no”. In that case, find the “right” person to ask.

Closure Conversation

When to Use:

- Bring closure to open/unresolved items
- Could be promises that were never fulfilled, actions or statements that were perceived as inappropriate, etc.
- Restart something that has become bogged down
- Celebrate and acknowledge accomplishments

What it can Cover: The Four A’s

- Acknowledge the issue & its impact
- Apologize for mistakes & understandings
- Amend broken agreements – 4 Rs: Recognize, Report, Repair, Recommit
- Appreciate others

Common Mistakes:

- Failing to LISTEN
- Insincerity
- Losing sight of why we’re even doing this (i.e. the WHAT, WHEN, WHY)