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ALL INDIA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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PICTURE
Yda Bouvier

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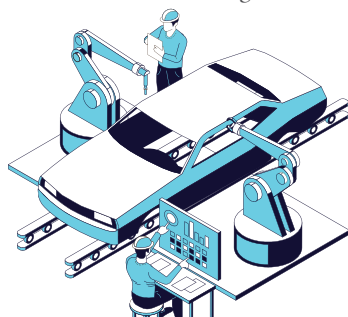
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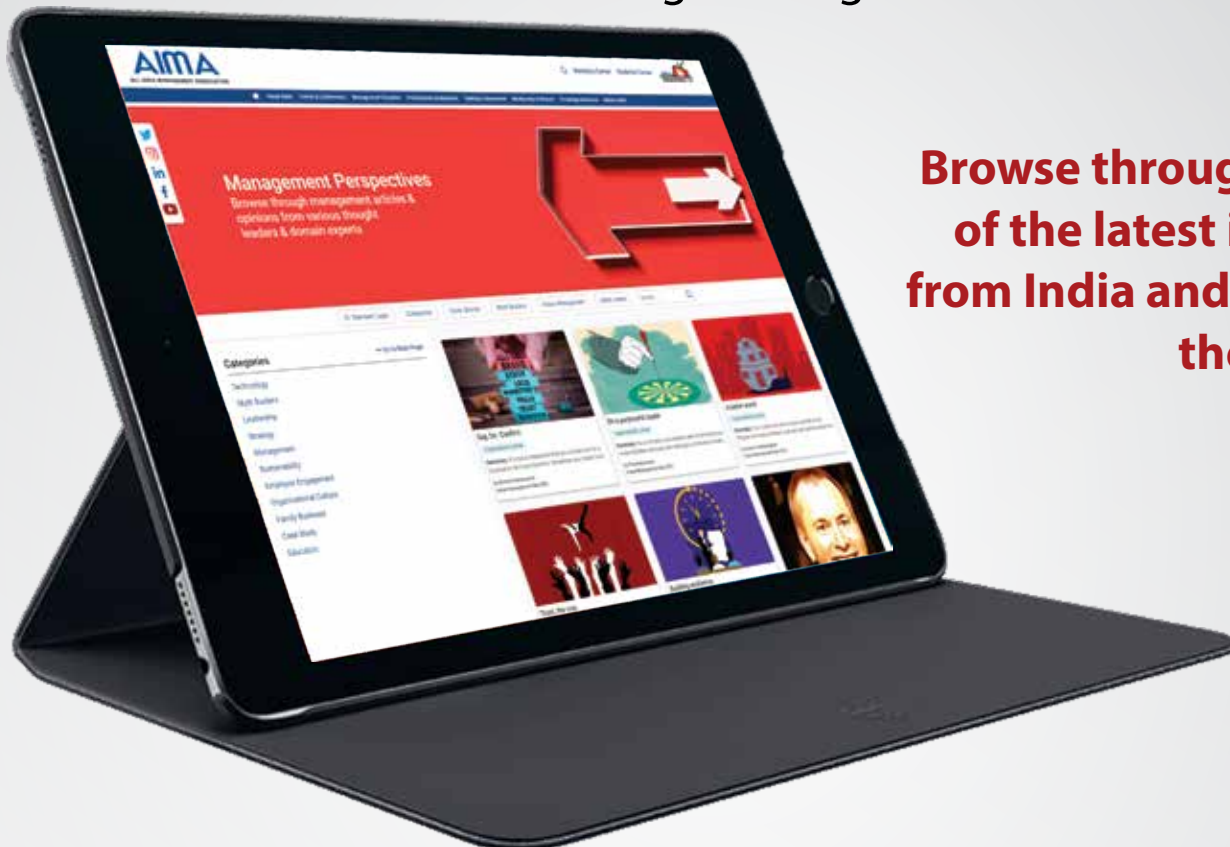
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Tapping entire brain

Shrinivas Dempo is President, AIMA & Chairman, Dempo Group of Companies.

Management's fascination with neuroscience has grown, in recent times, and there has been a lot of talk about 'getting inside the heads of the employees' to make them more productive and loyal. One of the strands of this trend is the call to tap into the right—the emotional and imaginative—side of the brain of the employees.

By default, businesses want and reward more of the calculative left side of the brain. However, this division of brain is more of a metaphor, or pulp science, than a science. However, it helps some people grasp the need for tapping into the entire personality of the employees and not just their reasoning expertise and quantitative skills.

In folk science terminology of right and left brains, the right brain is associated with making sense through feeling, connecting the separate facts, and factors into patterns, synthesising different perspectives, building verbal and visual narratives, and such things that make the world more tangible and accessible. The left brain is associated with quantitative logic, deductive analysis, linear thinking, mathematical abstraction, modelling, etc. Clearly, neither side can operate independent of the other. However, among

most individuals there appear to be biases in favour of one or the other kind of perception and focus.

Given that the 'left-brain' excellence is most required and rewarded in business, most employees tend to underuse their 'right brain'. That results in excessive micro focus and ignorance of the big picture. It restricts organization's view of the unfamiliar possibilities and options while blocking creative solutions to business problems. The 'left brain' is devoted to dealing with complications and not complexity, which results in longer and costlier learning curves when disruptive factors emerge in the business environment.

The 'left brained' culture also comes in the way of collaboration and resilience, because of its unyielding allegiance to logic and calculation. It nurtures transactional behaviour and relationships that are vulnerable to any change in the situation or the environment. Thus, it increases risks of internal and external troubles.

To ensure that the employees bring their whole self to work and use both sides of their brain in contributing to the organisation, leaders need to institute behaviours and practices that involve social interaction and beautiful expression. The leaders must accommodate diverse perspectives and accept the risks and rewards of breaking the mould.

The 'right brain' requires emotional stimulation and its activity produces a

The 'left brained' culture also comes in the way of collaboration and resilience, because of its unyielding allegiance to logic and calculation. It nurtures transactional behaviour and relationships that are vulnerable to any change in the situation or the environment.

Stimulating the ‘right brain’ requires social interaction, both formal and informal. Sharing perception with colleagues and seniors helps employees understand tasks better and perform their roles more optimally.

synthesis of data and feeling. Feelings provide important inputs in understanding situations and making decisions. Feelings flow from accumulated memories that have been distilled over time into emotional reflexes. When there is a gap in data, feelings fill up the gaps and provide immediate guidance for further consideration and action. When people are uncertain, they tap into their instincts that have developed through experience and allow exploration and examination beyond the available facts.

Ultimately, a mix of knowing and feeling help improve perception and decision.

Perception and expression are greatly enhanced when the ‘right brain’ is involved. Having columns and rows of data is useful but their understanding is improved when they are converted into visual patterns and descriptive narratives. The leaders need to encourage the employees to analyse and express data using their ‘right brain’ also.

The ‘right brain’ must be applied in hiring and developing people. Merely providing information to the new or the repurposed employees about their tasks is inadequate. Their learning curve can be shortened by showing them how to do things instead of just telling how things are supposed to be done.

The ‘right brain’ is also the seat of self-awareness. It allows people to improve

oneself and adjust to the big picture of the organization and the business. It allows people to protect their self-esteem and have empathy for colleagues. It shapes personal and social morality and enables reciprocity in help and loyalty.

Stimulating the ‘right brain’ requires social interaction, both formal and informal. Sharing perception with colleagues and seniors helps employees understand tasks better and perform their roles more optimally. The leaders need to create opportunities and platforms for socialisation, discussions and debates in the organisation. They also need to welcome intuitive inputs instead of demanding only data and logic.

By encouraging the use of ‘right brain’, the leaders can make the organisation more intelligent, more agile, and more resilient. While quantitative knowledge and logic are essential to build a framed reality, navigating the chaotic real world requires harnessing both sides of the brain. 

The opinion expressed is personal.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

According to a theory, the human brain is divided into the left side—which controls its logical, analytical aspects—and the right side—which controls its creative, artistic aspects. The theory further posits that humans are either ‘left-brained’ or ‘right-brained’, ie, in every human, one of these sides is dominant. However, many dispel this theory as myth.

Nevertheless, one can agree that sometimes it takes a combination of logical, analytical, creative, and intuitive thinking to come up with tangible, ingenious solutions to problems. While, traditionally, corporate business and work have been primarily associated with the left side of the brain, management is now exploring the ‘right brain’ facet of psychology to tap into the potential of their employees to bring different ideas and approaches to solving problems.

Expanding on this concept in the cover story of this issue, Yda Bouvier, an executive coach and author, *Leading with the Right Brain*, writes, “The ‘right brain’s’ capacity to see the whole and the new is especially invaluable when dealing with the kind of problems where it feels like you are going in circles.”

While success partly depends on the nature of the problem, the chance for success in ‘right-brained’ approach increases because such people tend to think by bypassing the usual routes, the pre-formulated approaches, and the obvious choices. Being a ‘right-brained’ person is not only a natural instinct, but also a matter of choice and training. So practising some engaging techniques can help managers activate the ‘right brains’ of their team members so as to make them better problem-solvers.

Do write in with your views to imeditorial@spentamultimedia.com

Maneck Davar
Maneck Davar

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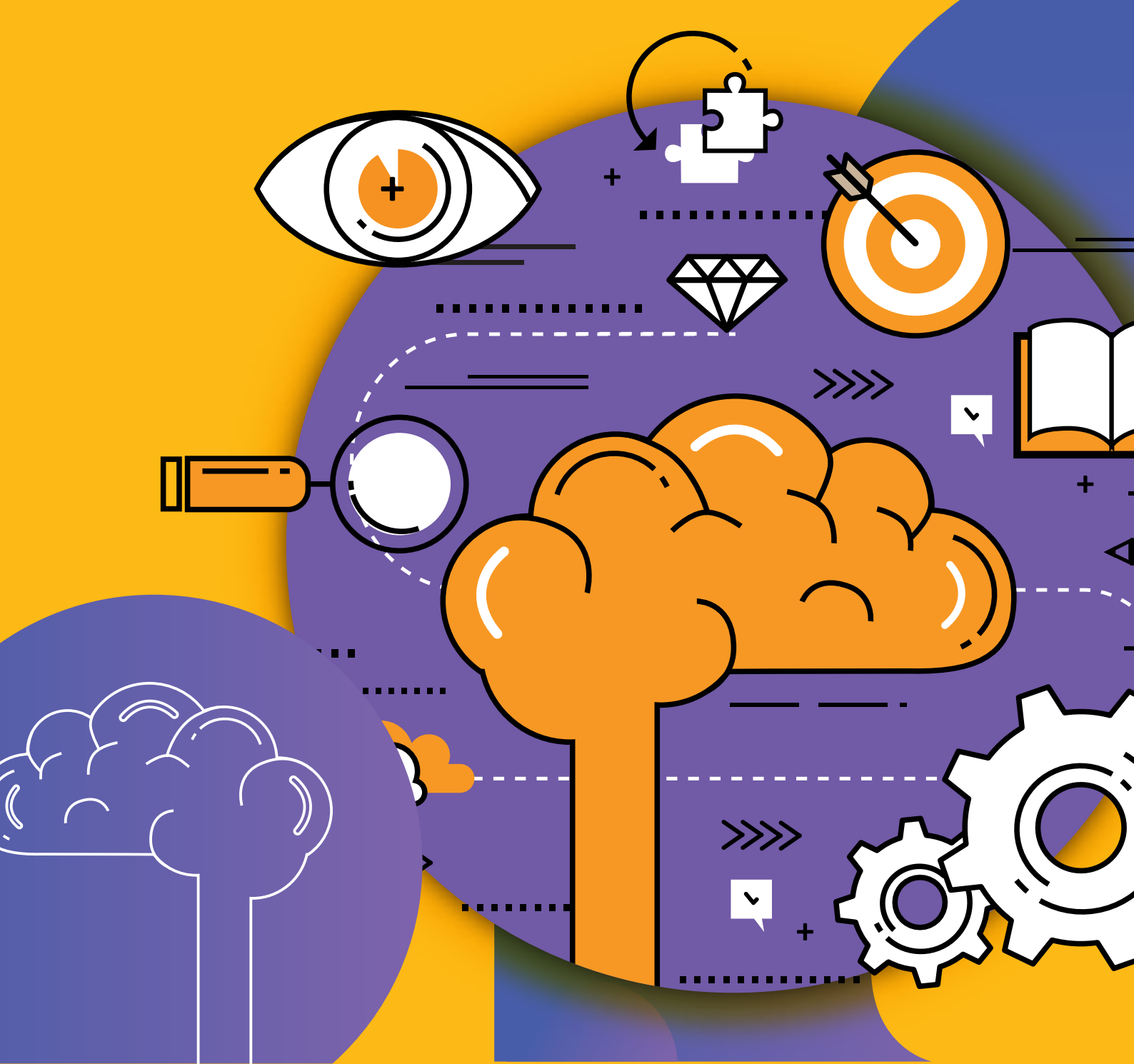
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ENGAGE THE RIGHT BRAIN

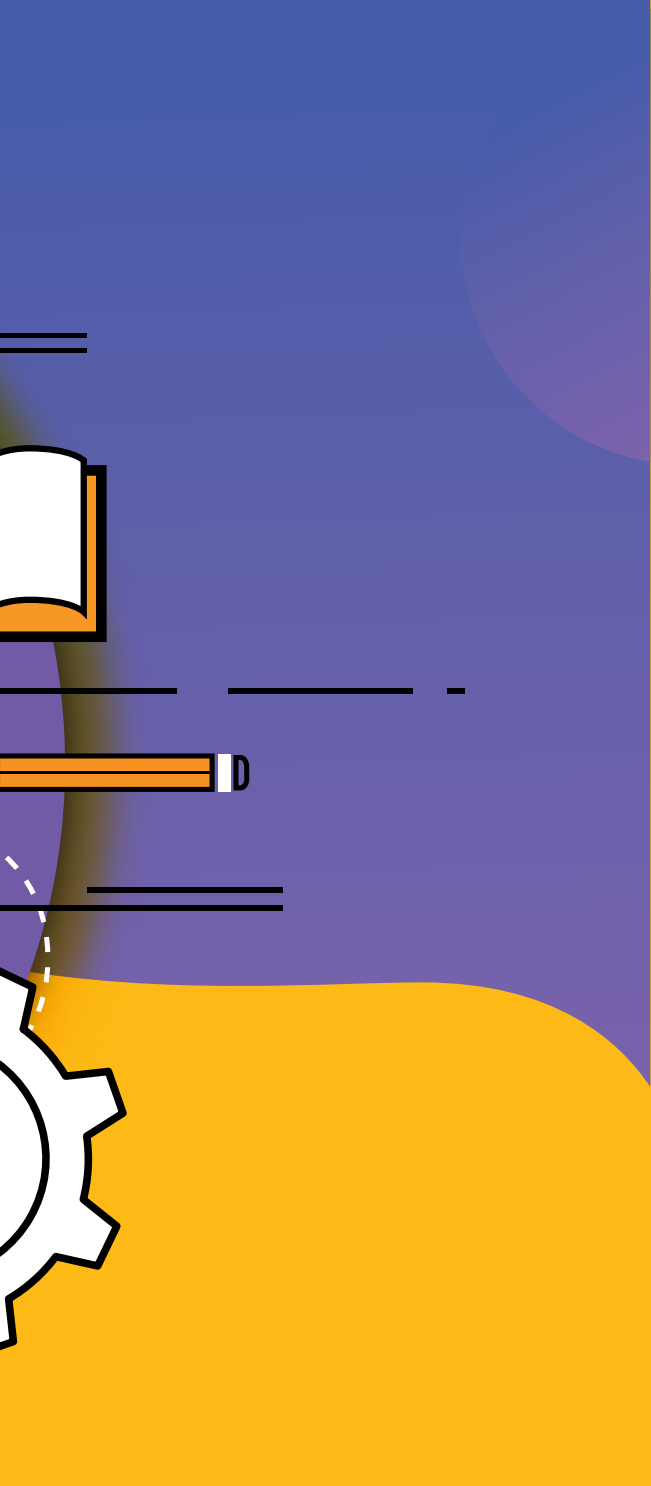




See the whole picture

When inviting the 'right brain' to participate in a conversation, we see more, think differently, and bring new insights.

♦ YDA BOUVIER, AUTHOR, *LEADING WITH THE RIGHT BRAIN*



their professional lives, allowing them to build strong strategic and goal-achievement track records. The left brain is also a powerful problem-solving machine but it can get stuck in its own thinking. When this happens, it can only be unlocked by bringing in the strengths of the right side of the brain. I am referring to the big, hairy issues that are really important and yet not making enough headway.

Our 'right brain' is able to see the whole, the proverbial wood for the trees, and to see the new, bringing a fresh perspective to situations fraught with complexities and contradictions. By engaging the 'right brain' it is possible to capture a situation in a single representation, regardless of its long history of details, number of parties involved, conflicting interests, etc. The 'right brain' can see and express a complex whole all at once.

But bringing the qualities of the 'right brain' actively into our day-to-day is not obvious to us because language, our dominant way of communicating, is the processing mode of the left side of our brain. The right side of the brain processes and communicates in images. Hence we often say, 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.

You may remember a time where you could not figure out how to get something done. Then while you are doing something entirely different, such as reading the newspaper or glancing at some advertisement, all of a sudden, there is a glimmer of an idea. Or a colleague makes an off-hand comment and you can sense something shifting. It can literally seem like the idea is at the edge of your awareness, and you have to pause to see it and hold on to it, to 'grab' it. These new insights enter the right brain first, which means that we can't immediately articulate them. "Give me a moment to find my words," is an often-heard expression.

The 'right brain's' capacity to see the whole and the new is especially invaluable when dealing with the kind of problems where it feels like you are going in circles. Without a doubt, activating the 'right brain' in your employees is vital for enhancing their innovative and creative problem-solving skills.

For many of us, our way of living and working is highly skewed towards using the left side of the brain—a consequence of our academic education and the ways in which we communicate and work. This doesn't imply we activate only half of our brain, but rather that the qualities of the left side of the brain dominate our overall functioning. Leaders and managers are especially capable in such left-brain functioning. It has served them well in

Dinesh Bhogale

Here are three vital techniques to practice with your teams to engage their ‘right brains’ and help them become better problem-solvers:

1. Change the question

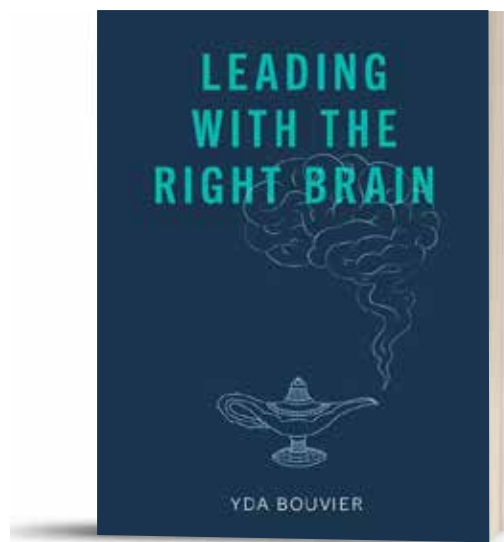
“What do you think?” is almost the standard way we proceed once a topic has been introduced in a conversation. Most likely you have asked or have been asked this many times today. For most people, this generates a left-brain response: a logical, structured, argument. Yet once an argument has been stated, many people focus on defending their thoughts or adding additional information that strengthens their argument, rather than investigating their point of view.

If we instead ask, “What do you see, hear, or sense?” we invite a right-brain response which naturally focuses on bringing a situation to life. This gives us a richer picture of the topic at hand, invites exploration, and inevitably generates new ideas.

Whether going after some ‘low-hanging fruit’, ‘riding out the financial storm’, ‘boiling the ocean’, or ‘winning the battle’—metaphors are often used in business conversations.



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2. Metaphors

Many leaders will be familiar with the power of a good metaphor. Whether going after some ‘low-hanging fruit’, ‘riding out the financial storm’, ‘boiling the ocean’, or ‘winning the battle’—metaphors are often used in business conversations.

Metaphors immediately activate the ‘right brain’ as they invoke images in our mind. Someone might naturally say, ‘this just feels heavy’ when referring to a piece of work. Your role as the leader is to capture the image your employee has given you and make it more visible. A little prompt like, ‘heavy, tell me more, what kind of heavy...?’, can already invite the ‘right brain’ to elaborate.

Not everyone speaks easily in metaphors, yet you can guide someone into a particular type of metaphor. For example, by asking what landscape, colour, sports, music, or animal comes to mind when thinking about a person or a situation.

In conversations with metaphors, the approach is as follows:

- Get someone talking about their metaphor



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and make the metaphor visible to both of you. Turn on your curiosity, that is all you need. You have to truly see the metaphor in both your own mind's eye.

- Once the image is clear, it is a good idea to explore together within the metaphor what to do next. Share ideas freely, the 'right brain' has remarkable intuition about what to do within the image. When the next step in the metaphor is clear, then link back to the actual situation and explore together what that step in the metaphoric world represents in the real world. This will reveal actionable steps the employee can take to solve the problem at hand.

3. Drawing

Drawing works particularly well to illustrate a complicated situation with a lot of history and facts, where the essence can be difficult to summarise in a few words. It can naturally focus the mind and conversation, possibly because it is impossible to illustrate all the details in the same way that we can with words.

In business meetings, when a discussion gets challenging, often someone walks to the flip chart to draw or write something. When we are looking at a piece of paper together, it instantly impacts the atmosphere which typically becomes more collaborative and stimulates new thinking.

A big advantage of drawing is that you can find a pen and a piece of paper just about anywhere. Even Zoom and other video conferencing platforms have whiteboards. Often people have some hesitation, saying for example, "I can't draw," yet a small nudge like "Just a few lines, anything simple to illustrate what's going on is fine," can bring someone over the line.

In a nutshell, when inviting the 'right brain' to participate in a conversation we see more, think differently, and bring new insights. In a world where the problem-solving abilities of AI are increasing every day, we need to get smarter too. The 'right brain' is like your personal genie in the bottle—an enormous power for you, and your team, to release and use. **IM**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yda Bouvier is an executive coach. Yda is author, *Leading with the Right Brain*.



“There is only one way through conflict, and that is ‘through’ it,” opines Penny Tremblay, author of *Sandbox Strategies for the New Workplace*. Penny is founder, Tremblay Leadership Center and the Sandbox System™. Penny is also member of ADRIIC, ADRIO, Society of Human Resources Managers in America, and has an Advanced Mediation certificate with Harvard’s Program on Negotiation.

**MYTH
BUSTER**

Agree to disagree

Workplace conflict costs global corporations hundreds of billions of dollars annually, and most of it is avoidable. What could your organisation do with the profits retained because team members are nimble, willing to embrace conflict as it arises, and leverage the opportunities to turn healthy debates into innovation and agreements?

MYTH 1: EDUCATED EMPLOYEES COME EQUIPPED WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS.

It is a known fact that people are hired for their technical skills but fired or stuck in dead-end positions because of their lack of ability to get along with people. The skills required to resolve conflict in the workplace and life are not necessarily taught in our educational systems. Possibly, employees who hail from tight-knit families with

strong values or faith may have some tools to deal with conflict, but the hard truth is that most people do not possess the skills required to be assertive, have courage to speak up respectfully, or have the confidence to enter into a difficult conversation and work through it to achieve new agreements and commitments for resolution. Conflict resolution education and the experience of implementing it will provide the skills, courage, and confidence for resilience with relationships.

MYTH 2: TIME HEALS DISCONNECTED EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS.

Most people fear conflict, and prefer to avoid it at all costs. Disgruntled employees of all ranks tend to revert to childlike behaviour when conflict surfaces and either pick up their toys and go home (quit or quiet-quitting), or move into their own corner and not face their foe (shut down, or gossip to others about the person they are in conflict with). Many managers assume that over time, the dust will settle and

Emailing, texting, or digital messaging of any type does not get sent with any emotion, facial expression, or tangible human energy. Additionally, the receiver reads it through his/her own lens, which could be clouded with assumption, insecurities, or negativity.

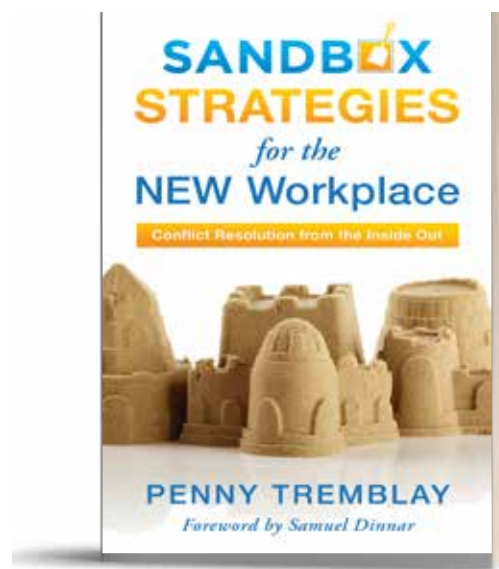
employees will reconnect, trust each other, and collaborate effectively. Nothing could be

further from the truth. Conflict left unresolved festers and can turn an entire workplace into a toxic culture. The best time to work towards reconnecting a fractured relationship or solving a workplace conflict is immediately. Once those involved feel in control of their emotions and are willing to talk it through, it is time! No one goes into conflict feeling warm and fuzzy. The prize of peace is on the other side of the discomfort, so the only thing worse than putting off conversations to resolve conflict for one year, or one month, or one week, is one more day.

Time will not heal broken relationships, but authentic and respectful conversation will. Do not let conflict fester.

MYTH 3: IT IS THE ROLE OF MANAGERS TO RESOLVE TEAM CONFLICT.

According to an article in *Times of India*, managers can spend 40 per cent of their time managing workplace conflict. Will it not be nice if everyone could approach the person or people that they are in conflict with, have a productive discussion, and come away understanding each other and feeling better about the way forward? Most workplace conflict resolution policies suggest that an employee should go directly to someone that they are in conflict with to attempt to work it out; however, the reality is that they do not know how, so they come to the manager hoping that the manager will solve their problems for them, but the manager cannot do their speaking or listening, so the whole attempt to



advocate ends up being a 'he said — she said' conundrum, that consumes far too much of the managers valuable time. The best way to teach employees how to solve their conflicts is to bring them both together and facilitate a respectful conversation. That way they will connect, and learn how to approach each other next time on their own.

MYTH 4: DIGITAL COMMUNICATION IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO DISCUSS ISSUES.

Emailing, texting, or digital messaging of any type does not get sent with any emotion, facial expression, or tangible human energy. Additionally, the receiver reads it through his/her own lens, which could be clouded with assumption, insecurities, or negativity. If you are thinking for a second that an email or text will not land softly, or if you have intention to fight, do not hit send! You will be making a permanent impression of a temporary emotion, or you will be risking a relationship hardship. Get face-to-face, on a video call or phone call to discuss challenging or sensitive issues. If



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you are a skilled communicator, you will know that this conversational approach gives you the opportunity to actively listen and understand the other person, demonstrate empathy, and problem solve together which will build better trust and loyalty.

MYTH 5: RELATIONSHIPS ARE SECONDARY TO PROFIT AND PRODUCTION.

Over the decades of my career, I have witnessed that when two people want to do business together the details do not stand in the way. Relationships are the key to success in business and this rings true for everything from employee commitment and retention, to sales, promotions and even politics. The more time invested in relationship building (especially with remote employees) the more production you will inspire, and the more profit you will earn. Emphasise that relationships come first and make a concerted effort to help people understand their value regularly.

Without confidence or practice, the multifaceted conflicts surfacing in the current landscape of managing people is cumbersome. Many issues including what to say or not say, dealing with employee resistance, resolving intergenerational

or interpersonal conflict, and preventing turnover are delicate responsibilities that could benefit with intervention. An external provider can help mitigate conflict with facilitated conversation, coaching, or alternative dispute resolution.

According to an article by Jack Kelly in *Forbes*, people don't typically quit jobs—they quit managers. The average cost of losing an employee to turnover is 33 per cent of their salary. That is a lot of potential for increased productivity being forfeited. Good leaders are worth investing in and keeping. Being a good employee is also worth striving for because everyone is better off when relationships are maintained, but let us face it, conflict is inevitable.

Helping remote and on-site teams resolve conflict for the last couple of decades, I have learned that there is only one way through conflict, and that is 'through' it, and that is why I have written *Sandbox Strategies for the New Workplace: Conflict Resolution from the Inside Out* and created the Sandbox System™—to help workplaces turn the prohibitive problem of workplace conflict into peace, professional growth, and productive lessons. **IM**



Resilience and growth

The automobile industry is one of the most competitive sectors in India's economy. The government has been encouraging FDI, but it mostly happens in large enterprises. Hence, startups and SMEs do benefit from it. One such example is Maruti, which was set up as a startup and later joined hands with Suzuki in Japan. Maruti Suzuki was started back on February 24, 1981, to manufacture cars for middle-class Indians. The company was formed as a Government company, incorporated as Maruti Udyog Ltd with Suzuki as its minor partner. Maruti Udyog then signed the license and joint venture agreement with Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan, on October 2, 1982, which began the start of the long-lasting and successful partnership. This is when the very first factory of Maruti Suzuki was established in Gurgaon, Haryana. In the first two years, when Maruti was set up, the company was engaged in the importing of fully-built cars from Suzuki, which later grew to include only 33 per cent components from India. This was not what the indigenous company had planned.

The company started its production in 1983, and launched the Maruti 800—an affordable, highly-popular car back then. When Maruti Suzuki entered the Indian market, the most prominent factor which made it the market leader at that time was the price of its cars. They were very successful in launching cars with excellent features and reliability at an Indian budget-friendly price which made it 'people's car'.

Most SMEs were encouraged to be a part of Maruti Suzuki as vendors and were enabled to collaborate with Suzuki vendors in Japan; they presented a very successful example of collaborations and joint ventures, technology transfers, and brought India from a net importer of components and vehicles to be a net exporter of vehicles. Today, India exports two-wheelers, scooters, motorcars, trucks, and buses in large numbers. As of 2020, the total assets of Maruti Suzuki is ₹63,627 crore (US\$8.9 billion).

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd has grown to be India's largest passenger car maker company, with more than 42.75 per cent market share in the passenger vehicles segment in FY22. The company recorded passenger vehicle sales of 1,165,483 units in FY22.

The contribution of automobile industry

to the National GDP has risen to about 7.1 per cent now from 2.77 per cent in 1992-93. It provides direct and indirect employment to over 19 million people. India aims to double its auto industry size to ₹ 15 lakh crores by end of year 2024.

Overview of MSMEs in Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh contributes 4 per cent of MSMEs in the country, with Indore being a hub. The state is rich in natural resources—fuels, minerals, agriculture, biodiversity, significant reserves of limestone, manganese and dolomite. Madhya Pradesh is home to all types of industries which range from automobile to pharmaceuticals, from software to retail, and from textile trading to real estate. There are several economic zones in the state which promote exports and economic development of Madhya Pradesh. On the automobile industry front, Pithampur is also known as Detroit of India due to presence of Indore special economic zone. By virtue of Madhya Pradesh's centralised location, it has excellent connectivity to several parts of India and its robust road network of over one lakh km makes it an ideal destination for centralised manufacturing and distribution hub.

There are more than 10 original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), 2770 engineering manufacturers, and 200 auto component manufacturers present in the state. They employ a workforce of 200,000 technical professionals. Some of the specific skill development institutes in this sector are: the Indo-German Tool Room—an initiative between Government of India and Federal Republic of Germany, the Pithampur Auto Cluster Ltd (PACL)—an initiative of Government of Madhya Pradesh, the MSME Technology Centre in Bhopal—an initiative between Government of Madhya Pradesh and Government of India with support from World Bank, and the Central Farm Machinery



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Training & Testing Institute, Budni—an initiative of the Government of India.

Pithampur auto cluster is an emerging auto hub of central India. It is home to top-notch industrial infrastructure, spans across total area of around 4,500 hectares and provides excellent industrial infrastructural facilities. The Pithampur auto cluster has over 120 large and 450 MSME units. Madhya Pradesh' auto clusters contributed exports of \$26.24 million from the state in FY 2021-22.

“Automobile industry, together with battery cell segment, is expected to attract an investment of ₹ 1.20 lakh crore in the next five years and Madhya Pradesh is a potential destination for auto investments due to economic cost of land, lower logistics cost, and industrial peace,” said Vinod Aggrawal, Vice President, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

MP has the potential to attract investments from auto industry in new technologies, research and development and component manufacturing. MP has a big potential to attract major investments to setup an Automobile Manufacturing and Assemble Projects.

Government policies

In 2021, the Government came up with a policy for Production Linked Incentive in

the PLI Scheme to boost industrialisation, particularly manufacturing. Initially they opened the scheme to three sectors, namely, electronics, medical device & drugs and active pharmaceutical ingredients. India has added 10 more sectors which makes it 13 sectors. Where foreign investors have been encouraged and SMEs are benefiting because SMEs manufacturing accessories and components for automobiles and electronics have benefitted the most.

Today, almost 97 per cent of mobile phones sold in India and are manufactured in domestically. Many SMEs are now getting attracted to Global Value Chain (GVC) particularly, in the area of automobiles and electronics, giving rise to vertical integration and mostly they are at the tier I and tier II level.

In the initial stages of Industrialisation, after India's Independence, the Government had encouraged ancilisation, manufacturing components and parts, and supplying to large public sector enterprises which has a very symbiotic relationship since the parent company will prove to be an assured market. This has graduated into a large company and vendor relationship, ie, BHEL, Bhopal. Now, SMEs are joining the GVC and succeeding.

Missions like 'Make in India' are expected to give a big boost to the manufacturing sectors and 'Startup India' to enterprise development.

Indian SMEs have been sharing their experience and expertise with other developing countries. I have been personally promoting investments and JVs, SME development, innovations, technology transfer, particularly in Mauritius, Botswana and other countries from India. In addition, we encouraged collaborating in many other countries through technology exposition and facilitating technology transfer.

Based on my knowledge and experience, I find SMEs are not only growing in

international business both in imports and exports, but are also going beyond that in setting up industries and businesses in other countries particularly the neighbouring countries and in Africa.

Moreover, Government of India has also been ramping up its efforts to revolutionise the auto sector through necessary policy interventions. In the same direction, the Central Government, in September 2021, issued a notification regarding a PLI scheme for the automobile and auto component industry worth ₹ 25,938 crores (about \$3.49 billion).

The Government has also collaborated with various Indian automotive industry associations and envisioned the Automotive Mission Plan 2016-26 (AMP 2026) as an initiative driving sector growth. AMP 2026 is the composite vision. The vehicles, auto components, and tractor industries are expected to grow over the coming decade in terms of size, global footprint, technological advancement, exports, economic growth, and institutional structure capabilities. It also defines the evolution trajectory of the automotive ecosystem in India, including the regulations and policies governing research, design, technology, testing, manufacturing, and recycling of automotive vehicles.

The automobile industry of India manufactured more than 22 million vehicles from April-March 2020, including passenger and commercial vehicles, three-wheeled vehicles, two-wheelers, and quadricycles, of which more than 4 million were exported. India holds a strong position in the international heavy vehicles arena as the largest tractor manufacturer, second-largest bus manufacturer, and the third-largest heavy trucks manufacturer globally. The sector pundits have predicted India to become the world's third-largest automotive market in terms of volume by 2026, which is currently worth more than \$100 billion and contributes



to 8 per cent of the country's total export accounting for 2.3 per cent of India's GDP.

The Indian auto industry is expected to record strong growth in 2022-23, following the recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. This growth is expected to reach up to ₹18.18 trillion (\$282.8 billion) by 2026, where the centrally located state of Madhya Pradesh is expected to be one of the major driving forces.

Innovation – key to success for enterprises*

India is ranked 40th out of 132 among the top innovative economies globally as per the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2022.

Innovation could be in the form of a new product or new design or a new process or a new marketing technique or change in the organisation it could lead to innovation. The MSMEs face a lot of challenges and simultaneously a lot of opportunities are emerging which the young people have to grab and put up successful enterprises.

As you know, MSMEs are provider of a highest number of jobs in the country

next only to Agriculture Sector. We have to continue motivating young people to set up their own business and industries, so that they may be job creators and not job hunters. They could own their business and become their own boss. We at AIMA have been organising programs for African Students in India on 'Don't Hunt For The Job, Be Your Own Boss' when they get back home after their studies. This have been very successful.

Innovation is the lifeline of an SMEs to grow and prosper and continue providing employment. Innovation has to be encouraged, we find SMEs have constraints as they do not have funds to innovate.

To encourage innovation amongst MSME, the Expert Committee has recommended that an SMEs Innovation Fund may be created to motivate enterprises to innovate. Simultaneously it is essential that SMEs must benefit from IPR.

On December 26, 2022, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, unveiled the Madhya Pradesh Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2022.

The main objective of this policy is to rank Madhya Pradesh as the top science, technology and innovation (STI) destination in the country, and to strengthen factors such as human resources, investment and knowledge-based labour force to position the state in the top five in the 'India Innovation Index' (from its current rank of 13) by the year 2030.

The policy will also focus on developing an effective STI ecosystem and help Madhya Pradesh to increase knowledge-based production in the state by strengthening indicators such as research publications, innovations, startups, industrial design innovations and patents.

There are plans to increase the enrolment ratio in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) courses at undergraduate, masters and PhD levels by promoting STEM education right from the elementary level, especially among girl students, by enriching the curriculum with STEM experiments and competitions.

Further, in order to promote innovation and science education, top institutions such as IITs, IIMs, will be encouraged to adopt a district in Madhya Pradesh and promote science and innovation locally in that district.

Innovation clusters, incubators and accelerators will be set up in leading institutions to help startups take advantage of early funding mentorship, training and best practices through coordination with the private sector.

Innovation ecosystem

India is and has always been at the center stage of some great innovations—be it the digit '0' by Aryabhata or the contribution

to astrology and technology. The world is coming back to accept the knowledge of ayurveda and yoga for the betterment of individual life. The recent success of indigenously built Mars Orbiter—Mangalyaan on its first attempt is a tribute to not only frugal innovation (cost incurred ₹7 per kilometer in covering the 650 million km distance to Mars, least amount spent—\$74 million, which is one-tenth of the \$670 million that NASA spent on its Maven explorer)—but also a demonstration of India's mastery of technology and leadership.

In the recent years, a lot of young people are scouting to setup their own enterprises, while others do so after gaining some work experience. Based on our assessment, we find that the entrepreneurial spirit in India is gaining ground. Some of the youth are setting up the industries and service enterprises based on the well-known technologies or family/ businesses/ experience. However, several of them do evaluate available technologies & market potential and evolve an idea for a creative and innovative product. Then, they undertake research & development and gravitate to a hub and setup a business venture.

India has earned its name as an innovation and R&D centre for IT & IT-related activities. It is serving as a global hub for offshore knowledge—intensive IT services and industry. It has set a leading example of economic possibilities which innovations can bring. India has also excelled in frugal innovations by creating high-quality products using existing technology and infrastructure. However, to be world-class and considering aspirations of the nation and motivation ushered by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and rising expectation of the people, universities and institutions of higher learning and industries both public and private sectors have to play a major role in this R&D effort.

Innovation clusters, incubators and accelerators will be set up in leading institutions to help startups take advantage of early funding mentorship, training and best practices through coordination with the private sector.

AI can carry out routine jobs, such as scheduling corporate meetings and responding to frequent client inquiries. Additionally, there are uses for artificial intelligence in business that go beyond convenience too.

Since the end of the previous millennium, India has been able to establish itself as a major player in the information technology and technology-enabled services (ITES).

India's exports of software services (excluding exports through commercial presence) are estimated to have increased by 17.2 per cent to US\$ 156.7 billion during 2021-22. Computer services continued to account for over two-thirds of total software services exports.

Emerging future opportunities

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world is shifting to a new norm where digital platforms enable the entire ecosystem. This shift is no longer a push but a pull now. It started with demonetisation, further accelerated by the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and has now reached unprecedented levels. Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI)- and machine learning (ML)-driven

technologies are assisting the entire business pipeline in discovery, conversations, transactions and fulfilment for smart decision making. These platforms are progressively becoming available even for small businesses as well.

AI can carry out routine jobs, such as scheduling corporate meetings and responding to frequent client inquiries, it can accurately assess billions of consumer purchasing patterns in a matter of seconds and dynamically fine-tune marketing efforts that improve audience signals, etc. These are just some of the benefits that make AI the most appropriate choice for SMEs.

Understanding AI, however, is quite complex, due to the numerous definitions and illustrations of too many scholars and experts. This article makes an attempt to explain and illustrate the concepts of AI in layman terms.

It has been observed that SMEs that implement digital technologies supported by AI increase their productivity and competitive edge. The time is right for small businesses to invest in AI solutions to monitor user behaviour and offer recommendations, enhance search results, and media



communication, increase sales, improve organizational performance, and cut expenses.

As a first step, MSMEs should start investing in gathering and capturing data, which could help them build AI applications. The good news is that MSMEs already generate huge volumes of data, which included data of transacting parties, sales on credit, payments, reminders etc. This data is a highly valuable resource in this digital age, and can act as a raw material for the development of innovative products or services.

It would not be wrong to say that the road to recovery of the MSME sector is paved with data. Data can provide the fuel to power better and faster decisions, and improve their resilience at this time of economic uncertainty and beyond.

Tech startups are increasingly leveraging technologies in data science and AI to offer business solutions that solve unique problems of MSMEs. They are fast emerging as technology partners of MSMEs looking at new-age solutions that are based on data and analytics to improve operational performance.

Conclusion

Studies have shown that innovations for most participating SMEs meant adapting others' basic designs with minor modifications, undertaken mainly through their in-house efforts. However, it was heartening to note that a few owner-innovators did recognise the need for innovating novel products, not only new to the firm but even globally and working in this direction. Though the nation has invested heavily in creating scientific and technological infrastructure by way of publicly funded R&D laboratories/institutes, universities, polytechnics, etc, it was surprising that the SMEs were largely not aware of their expertise, facilities, and knowledge assets or averse to availing of their assistance owing to bureaucratic attitude, failure to maintain delivery

schedules, inadequate contemporary knowledge of the specific sector etc.

Fostering of innovation in SMEs is crucial for their growth and development. Hence, SMEs need to be encouraged to innovate, and for which, awareness and financial incentives are required.

Innovation is the strongest tool for an entrepreneur to succeed in business. Innovation is often also viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing market needs. As an entrepreneur, one should always keep in mind that change is inevitable. If one does not innovate or bring any changes, his/her business will suffer. Fostering innovation through product, process, marketing, and organisation will not only bring monetary profits but also increases the life span of the business.

An innovation backed by entrepreneurial spirit is the ultimate mantra for success of an enterprise, even if it raises the need for continuous innovation in an ongoing enterprise.

The government must encourage creativity and innovation among SMEs. Innovation is the lifeline for MSMEs to grow and prosper and continue serving the nation by providing products and services generating much needed employment for the millions. To encourage innovation amongst MSME, One Man Committee headed by Mr. Prabhat Kumar, Former Cabinet Secretary, GOI, has recommended that an MSME Innovation Fund may be created to motivate enterprises to innovate. Through the fund with an initial corpus of say ₹ 500 crore, it should be possible to provide financial incentive for developing innovative ideas and promote improvements in processes and techniques. Since our experience has shown, many innovations stay at the *jugaad* stage for lack of funds and cannot realise their potential. **M**



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♦ ANTOINETTE OGLETHORPE, AUTHOR, *CONFIDENT CAREER CONVERSATIONS*

STRATEGY

Questions to ask

In an increasingly competitive corporate landscape, it is more crucial than ever for leaders to empower their teams to navigate their career progression. In my book, I describe a 'Career Conversation Toolkit', which provides a set of tools that managers can use to plan and structure career conversations with their employees. Drawing on principles of positive psychology, solution focus, and neuroscience, the Career Conversation Toolkit gives managers, mentors, and coaches a set of thoughtfully conceived questions to:

- Provoke reflection, insight, ideas, and action.
- Keep the focus on the employee.
- Encourage them to take ownership of their career progress.

You can use one tool or a few tools in whatever sequence or order makes sense for the individual and their situation.

The tools are simple and straightforward, but very effective. They help the employee see the situation differently by acknowledging progress so far, identifying what is already working, detailing the preferred outcome, highlighting existing resources, and building employee self-efficacy. That, in turn, helps the employee to develop new behaviours. The tools help them

recognise possibilities and turn challenges into platforms for opportunities. They encourage them to generate multiple options and identify small, achievable actions. They help them find ways to build on their existing knowledge of how to progress.

Let us explore the 10 tools:

- 1. Career Platform.** The 'Career Platform' tool serves as a starting point, helping employees identify areas in their career they wish to change and motivating them to take action. Through thoughtful questioning, employees can clarify what they want to change in their career and ignite the drive to take action.

Typical Career Platform questions are:

- What is going well in your current role?
- What would you not want to change?
- What would you like to be different?

- 2. Your Journey So Far.** Reflection is a powerful tool for growth. The 'Your Journey So Far' tool encourages employees to reflect on their strengths, values, and preferred working style. By understanding what they are good at and what truly matters to them, employees can make informed decisions about their career path. Typical questions to help employees look

back over their career are:

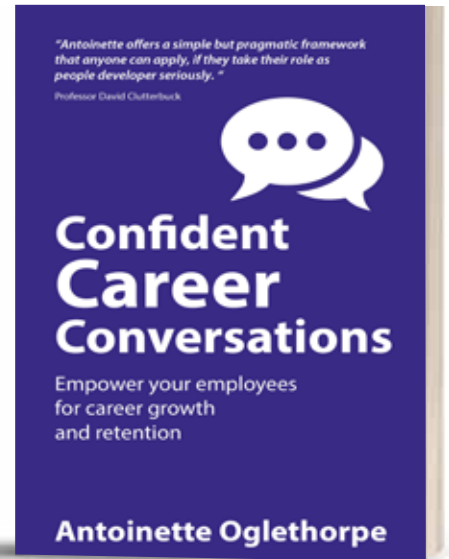
- What are you most proud of?
- What is it about that achievement that you found satisfying?
- When was your most enjoyable time at work?

3. **Career Kitbag.** The 'Career Kitbag' tool enables employees to identify and leverage their existing resources for career progression. It prompts them to consider their technical skills, soft skills, and career development skills, helping them recognise the assets they already have.

Questions that help them identify their resources are:

- What useful experiences have helped you get where you are today?
- What valuable skills have you developed?
- What positive qualities will help you make progress?

4. **Future Success.** Articulating a clear vision of success is crucial for career progression. The 'Future Success' tool guides employees to describe what their ideal future looks like, thereby encouraging them to envision their goals with clarity and purpose.



One way you can help employees think about their future is to ask them to imagine that a miracle happens. For example: Suppose you could wave a magic wand and develop your career in exactly the way you would like...

- What would you be doing day to day?
- Where would you be working?
- What kind of people would you be working with/for?





5. **Career Routes.** The 'Career Routes' tool assists employees in exploring the various options available to them within their current role or in new positions. By understanding the potential pathways, employees can make informed decisions about their career options. Questions to explore the different options and possibilities include:
 - How might you make your current role more satisfying and enjoyable?
 - How might you broaden your role?
 - How might you gain specific skills and experience through special projects, responsibilities or assignments?
6. **Career Kitbag Additions.** Building on the 'Career Kitbag' tool, career kitbag additions helps employees analyse the skills, experiences, information, and relationships they need to develop to progress toward their envisioned success. It encourages them to identify areas for growth and the resources required to achieve their goals. Questions you can use include:
 - What knowledge do you need to gain?
 - What skills do you need to develop?

- What experience do you need to get?
7. **Career Checkpoint.** Connecting employees' aspirations with their current reality, the 'Career Checkpoint' tool helps individuals assess how well their current situation aligns with their goals. It enables employees to evaluate their progress and determine if adjustments or new strategies are necessary.

One way to approach this discussion is to ask the following: on a scale of one to 10, where 10 is your picture of future success:

 - Where are you today?
 - What makes your score that high?
What's going well?
 - What elements of your future success are already in place?
 8. **Short-Term Milestones.** Setting achievable goals is an effective way to maintain momentum and focus. The 'Short-Term Milestones' tool encourages employees to define tangible, short-term objectives that are within reach. These milestones provide a sense of accomplishment and motivate further progress.



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Typical questions include:

- Where on the journey do you want to be in twelve months' time?
- How would you know you are there? What will you see, hear and feel?
- What would be different for you and for others?

9. Setting Off. The 'Setting Off' tool is all about taking action. It prompts employees to commit to feasible actions that will move them closer to their goals, no matter how small those steps may be. By committing to these actions, employees establish a pathway for progress.

Some questions you can ask are:

- What steps will you take in the next three months to progress towards your short-term milestones?
- What are the first small steps towards that?
- What support do you need? '

10. Progress Review. The final tool in the toolkit, 'Progress Review', helps employees reflect on their experiences, learning from both successes and challenges. By evaluating their progress, employees can refine their strategies and continue to grow

throughout their career journey.

Questions to ask include:

- What progress have you made?
- What helped you make progress?
- What have you learned?

Remember, for these conversations to be effective, they should feel natural and unscripted. While the Career Conversation Toolkit provides a structured framework, it should be adapted to suit individual preferences and circumstances.

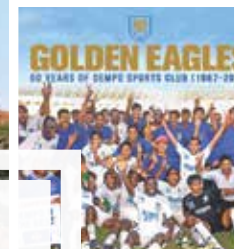
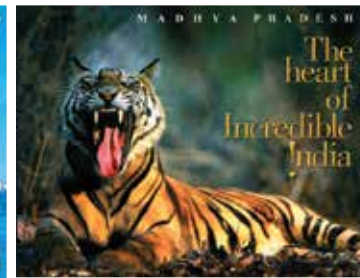
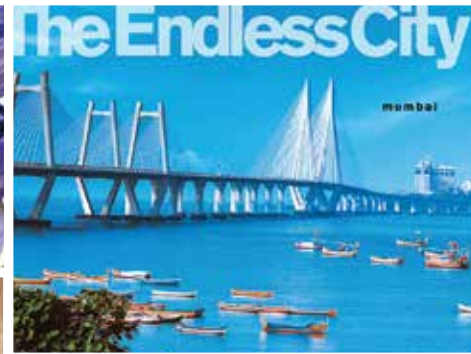
In essence, these tools empower employees to take control of their career development. They instil a sense of agency, highlighting that it's their journey to undertake. It also enables managers to understand, empathise, and effectively mentor their employees towards a fulfilling career.

By using these tools, you are not only investing in your employees' growth, but also fostering a positive corporate culture. And as we know, that is the key to an organisation's success. I invite you to embrace these tools to build a workforce that is motivated, engaged, and future-ready. **IM**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antoinette Ogglethorpe is founder, Antoinette Ogglethorpe Ltd. Antoinette is author, *Confident Career Conversations: Empower Your Employees for Career Growth and Retention*.



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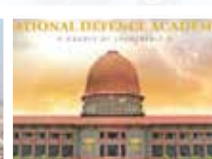
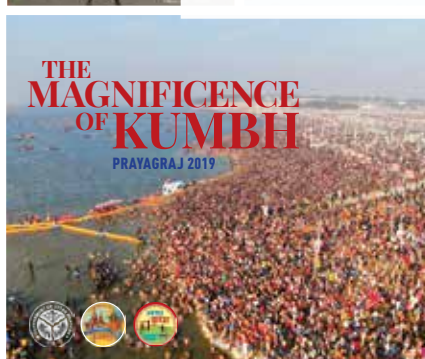
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Of goals and plans

Having worked with several companies to examine their planning processes, I have seen so many different words used to reflect forecasts, plans, and goals that I am never surprised to find confusion. In fact, I always expect it. Terms like plan, budget, objective, projection, forecast, latest estimate, latest thinking, best estimate, and most likely are used frequently, and often interchangeably.

If this were simply a problem of terminology, then it would be easy to solve. In fact, addressing terminology is how I lead executive teams to sort out and clarify the language that they use in their organisation. However, the important lesson is not what words we should use, rather it is how many terms we should have.

For example, one organisation was insistent that they only had one plan—what they called the Annual Operating Plan. It was set at the beginning of the year and did not change. It was determined based on top-down direction, and typically reflected an expected growth in revenue and profit that would satisfy the board and shareholders. The CFO

was proud that they had one number, and everyone knew what it was.

While that was true, the problem was that across the organisation, there was no clear understanding of how they would achieve it. That led to significant misalignment, performance issues, and frustration with the executive team.

The Annual Operating Plan was not a plan at all. It reflected a set of goals for the organisation, but not how to achieve them. Goals reflect a result or outcome. Plans denote actions that will deliver a result. If you take a moment to think about the language in your organisation, are your plans really plans? Or are they goals in disguise?

To the point on how many terms an organisation should have, the answer is at least two. The goals and objectives of an organisation should be stated and clear. They are typically fixed over a longer-term period (commonly a year or more). Separately, the plans to achieve those goals should also be stated and clear but they may change more frequently. In fact, the ability for an organisation to adjust its plans in pursuit of goals defines how agile it is. Agile organisations can pivot, adjust, and adapt to changing business dynamics. Agile

Goals are frankly much easier to define. It is easy to set a goal of losing 20 pounds. It is a lot harder to define the actions that I can and will take to achieve that goal.

organisations are much more successful in achieving their goals.

Why then, do businesses commonly confuse plans and goals? Goals are frankly much easier to define. It is easy to set a goal of losing 20 pounds. It is a lot harder to define the actions that I can and will take to achieve that goal. Goals can be set top-down by a board or leadership team. Plans, by contrast, cannot. Plans must be aligned bottom-up and top-down, and regularly synchronised across all the functions in a company.

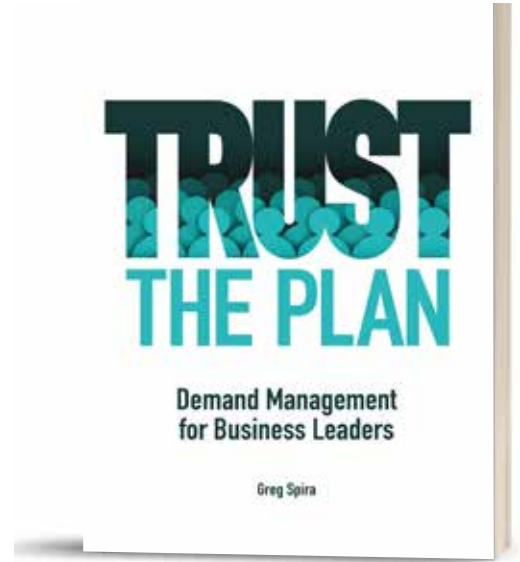
Importantly, it is foolish to expect that an organisation's goals and plans are always aligned. Certainly, in a perfect world they would be, but we do not live in a perfect world. Situations where plans are not sufficient to achieve goals are frequently real and must be made visible. Perhaps counter-intuitively, those organisations that embrace and manage these gaps are those that routinely achieve their goals.

Wise leaders ensure that conversations about plans address the following questions:

- Do we still agree on the goals that have been established, or are changes needed?



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- Will our current operating plans enable us to achieve the stated goals?
- If not, what do we need to change or do differently?

While this may seem simple, it is certainly not always easy. Leadership behaviours come into play in these conversations. I have observed many who are of the mindset that when they give their team an objective, they do not want to hear about all the reasons why it cannot be done. They feel that if they give in to listening to what they believe are excuses, the goals will be undermined. They fear hearing their teams say, "I told you we couldn't do it."

Other times, leaders feel compelled to 'help' their teams when there are gaps between plans and goals. Yet the help they try to offer is not always perceived as helpful. Additional scrutiny, deep dives, and micromanagement are all reasons why a team may not want to expose gaps at all.



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The root of these symptoms is a lack of trust. Trust cannot be dictated. It must be earned, and it begins with a common understanding that trustworthy behaviours are beneficial to everyone.

As stated earlier, I use the exercise in defining terminology to frame the issue with an executive team. That is an important first step in diagnosing whether there are behavioural gaps, process gaps, or both.

The good news is that leadership behaviours are within the control of leadership.

Take a moment to think about your own organisation and whether its processes and behaviours promote trust. Answering these questions might help you to find opportunities for improvement.

■ Is there an understanding of the difference between goals and plans—and what they are called?

- Is there a tendency to ‘shoot the messenger’, making it difficult for people to deliver bad news?
- Are goals achievable? Are they set based on a realistic set of expectations?
- Is there a routine process to align plans across functions, and assess whether those plans will deliver your stated goals and objectives?

As you reflect on your answers, keep in mind that these problems are rarely solved with software tools, analytics, or processes alone. Successfully addressing these opportunities starts with education to ensure that a leadership team has a common understanding of what good looks like, and what behaviours are needed from them. When a leadership team has common understanding, clear goals, and trustworthy behaviours, incredible results can be achieved. **IM**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Spira is an instructor of the Oliver Wight Demand Management course. Greg is also author, *Trust the Plan: Demand Management for Business Leaders*.



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