Converse to Gain Real-Time Intelligence

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Ellen Naylor
answers@thebisource.com
+1-303-838-4545 (USA)
www.thebisource.com
http://cooperativeintelligenceblog.com
“The next best thing to knowing all about your own business is to know all about the other fellow’s business.”

John D. Rockefeller
Cooperative Attitude
“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Dr. Maya Angelou
Who … are you?
Who is s/he?

- Cold Call?
- Attitude about information sharing?
- What have they shared before?
- Where comfortable sharing?
- Why share more?
- What will you share?
Practical Motivators

- Profession
- Politics
- Personal Issues
- Personal
- Predisposition
- Emotional Intelligence
Dominant
Influencer
Steady/Amicable
Conscientious
Interviewing

Do the research first!
Warm up the Call
Be organized!
Prepare YOU

Breathe
Planning

- Formulate Relevant Questions
- What’s Your Relationship with the Person?
- Re-word Questions to Motivate Sharing
Re-word Questions to Motivate

Minimize Ego Threat

• Start with broad/open ended questions
• Hypothetical questions
• Indirect questions/statements
• Narrow questions
Listen for the Hints or Cues

- Be patient, alert
- Judge target’s emotional state
Lay Aside Pre-Conceived Notions

- Failure to Listen
  - Biased expectations
  - Desire for self-expression
Elicitiation: Definition

Conversation that compels people to voluntarily tell you things without you asking
Remember Questions Better

• Who is s/he?
• Why are they asking?
• How will s/he use what I say?
• How much should I share?
• Or should I share at all?
Elicitor Skills

• Natural gift for making friends
• Good listener
• Establish rapport well
• Practical psychological insight
• Broad general knowledge
• Good memory
• Two level listener
Elicitation: “Planned Conversation”

- Your personality
- Your target’s personality
- Desired outcomes?
- What steps to take?
- Builds on what you know
- The right conversational points: timely
- Conversation is interesting to target
- Builds on human tendencies
Human Characteristics in Elicitation

- Desire to be recognized, appreciated
- Curiosity, Gossip, Complain
- Show off/share confidences w/other professionals
- Occupational hazards: advising, teaching, correcting challenging
- Self-effacement – downplay accomplishments
- Habit to correct others
- Prove someone else wrong
- Over-talking when overly emotional
The Conversational Hourglass

Intended Outcome

Customer Knowledge
Personal, profession
What’s worked before
Expertise, knowledge

Your favorite Techniques

Style
Innocuous and non-threatening

Test generalizations and presumptions about human factors in elicitation

Note signals from Target
e.g. discomfort or comfort

Pleasant and Non-confrontational

Macro Topics

Micro

Topic

Elements
Pre-selected Questions about general topics

Stacking of Elicitation Techniques

Attention on details of information being provided

Pre-selected questions on other general topics

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Paraphrased from Confidential by John Nolan, p. 28
Expression of Mutual Interest

• Often lowers defenses, and opens up conversation
Provocative Statement

• Used to engender a question in response, and usually sets up another elicitation technique
Simple Flattery

Often coaxes a person into conversation
Naïve Mentality

• Causes knowledgeable people to instruct
Opposing Stand

• Purposely take the opposite stand
Unbelieving Attitude

Denial of the obvious leads to enlightenment!
Quid pro Quo

• I’ll share if you’ll share
• Gesture of good faith and openness
Purposefully Erroneous Statement

• Deliberate false statements cause the knowledgeable person to correct you
Oblique References

• Comments made indirectly, in either a positive or negative light, which generate either defense or criticism
Exploit the Instinct to Complain

• Indirectly criticize an individual or an institution or industry expert
Bracketing Techniques

• Start broader, and get narrower
Silence
Ready
Set
Go

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