



Around the Coffee Table with Dale Jodoin

Can We Still Ask Questions?

By Dale Jodoin
Columnist

Have you ever read something that helped put words to a feeling you had carried around for a while? That happened to me recently. I had been trying to understand why so many public discussions seem to leave us angry, divided and no closer to an answer.

Then I came across a study called The Rise and Fall of Rationality in Language. Quite a mouthful for something to bring to the coffee table, I know.

But stay with me. There is something here worth talking about.

The researchers looked at language in millions of books published between 1850 and 2019. They found that words connected with reasoning became more common until around 1980. After that, language connected with feelings and personal experience gained ground. The change picked up around 2007.

It made me pause. How often do we hear something now and immediately decide how we feel about it, before we know much about what happened?

I am not putting myself above anybody here.

A headline can get under my skin too. Especially when it touches family, fairness or the country I care about. Once that happens, it takes a little effort to stop and ask whether I have the whole story.

The study cannot tell us that everyone has stopped thinking. It measures language, not the honesty of every person using it.

But it helped me put a question into words: when did feeling certain become so easy, while being certain became so difficult?

That brings me to the government, because the same question belongs there.

Ottawa has a Protecting Democracy Unit within the Privy Council Office. The government also provides guidance on spotting and countering disinformation. There is a reasonable purpose behind that. Nobody wants their parents fooled by a convincing lie or their neighbours turned against each other by a made up story.

Yet I find myself wanting to pull up another chair and ask the people offering that guidance a few questions.

How easy are you making it for us to check your own claims? Can we see the records behind a decision?

And if we cannot, will you explain why?

These are ordinary questions. Suppose a decision affects your street, your child's school or the services you rely on. You hear the announcement, but something does not add up.

Wanting an explanation does not make you unreasonable. It makes you someone who has to live with the result.

There was news this week that speaks directly to that problem.

On November 2, Canada's information regulators called for better support for smaller public bodies, including municipalities, schools and police boards, to meet their obligations to release information.

They pointed to shortages of staff, money and technology that can leave people waiting.

The problem reaches Ottawa too. In February, Information Commissioner Caroline Maynard reported that more than one in five federal access requests in the previous reporting year had missed legal deadlines.

She also identified resistance to openness.

Those are different problems, and that matters. An office short of staff needs help. An office resisting openness needs to explain itself. Calling every delay a cover up would be unfair. Accepting every delay without question would be foolish.

This is where I want more from the Liberal government. If you want Canadians to trust your guidance about information, make your own information easier to obtain. That expectation should follow whoever holds office next.

I do not think most people expect to agree with every government decision. We would settle for a straight answer and enough detail to understand how it was reached.

And perhaps that is what this study brought home to me. Our feelings tell us something matters. They cannot, by themselves, tell us what is true.

It leaves me feeling that when a government will not be open with us, it has something to hide. The people in the office work for you, the taxpayer. Asking them to explain themselves is part of holding them to that responsibility.

If they work for us, why should we have to work so hard to get an answer?



Do You Want a Short Job Search? Answer This One Question

By Nick Kossovan

"I have a flair for language, but what I've found communicates best is dollars." - Nick Kossovan. Despite what self-proclaimed career coaches and resume writers tell you, your job search isn't prolonged because your resume has the wrong margins or your LinkedIn profile lacks this week's buzzwords. It's dragging on because you're misunderstanding the fundamental transactional nature of the employer-employee relationship. As someone who interacts with job seekers day in and day out, I find that most approach their job search hoping an employer will take a chance on their alleged "potential." However, employers don't hire out of charity or compassion, and they certainly aren't in the business of taking chances on a candidate's potential, no matter how ambitious they seem. From the employer's perspective, hiring is deploying capital to solve operational problems; therefore, they expect a measurable return on their compensation investment.

No matter the industry, profession, or job level, hiring comes down to one question: "How will paying this person's salary make our business better, faster, or more profitable?" If you can't answer that in financial terms (i.e., how you'll generate revenue, reduce costs, save time, or reduce risk), your chances of getting the job are virtually zero.

Consider the economic environment in which businesses operate today: operating margins are squeezed, supply chains face constant pressure, and executive teams scrutinize every budget line item before approving funds. Employees are a company's largest operating expense; therefore, hiring managers aren't merely conducting a validation exercise when screening applicants. Every open position represents a fixed overhead commitment; hence, your narrative can't rely on proof of capability alone. You must present a price-to-value calculation showing that hiring you will increase the employer's profitability.

These days, employers are under severe pressure. Corporate boards demand relentless operational efficiency amid high borrowing costs, volatile supply-chain realignments, and rapid AI integration to drive higher output with fewer employees. Client retention is fiercely defended, and every expenditure must justify itself. Headcount budgets aren't being allocated to keep desks occupied or to manage baseline workloads. That money is reserved strictly for eliminating high-cost operational bottlenecks, capturing shrinking market share, or executing strategic shifts that directly protect profitability.

Recruiters and hiring managers couldn't care less about your task lists. Anyone can pad a resume with duty-based bullet points. When someone in a position to hire reads your resume or LinkedIn profile, they're looking for one thing: proof that you positively influenced your employer's profitability. Pitch your bottom-line value explicitly! Leaving it to guesswork is why you're not getting interviews and job offers. No recruiter or hiring manager will build for you a business case for your salary.

When it comes to final candidates, technical qualifications are usually identical. However, the offer never goes to the candidate with the prettiest background; it goes to the candidate who unapologetically demonstrates how their work protected profit margins, increased output, or drove revenue. Taking full ownership of that math removes hesitation from the employer's decision because you positioned yourself as a safe, low financial-risk hire, which is the biggest competitive advantage a job seeker can give themselves.

The biggest mindset obstacle to explaining the financial return of hiring you is focusing on effort rather than impact. You track hours worked, projects coordinated, and workflows maintained, but on a corporate balance sheet, effort is an expense; impact is the return. Shifting your positioning requires translating everyday duties into economic terms. Regardless of your industry, profession or title, every functional role affects the numbers in one of two ways: it either drives earnings or controls expenses. Translating your experience into financial outcomes depends on how you frame your role.

· On the Revenue Side: If your role is tied to growth, stop speaking in broad terms about account maintenance or client communication. Instead, focus on conversion rates, contract expansion, customer retention, and new pipeline generated.

· On the Operations Side: If you work in support functions such as administration, technical support, human resources, or logistics, your economic value lies in efficiency and risk mitigation. Did you eliminate redundant software licences? Did you re-engineer a reporting process that saves ten hours per week? Did you introduce safety or compliance measures that protect the company from legal exposure?

Consider the difference between these two statements:

· Wrong approach: "Managed inventory tracking and coordinated weekly shipments from suppliers."

· Right approach: "Overhauled inventory audits, reducing warehouse holding costs by 12% and cutting write-offs for lost stock by 32% during peak season."

Don't wait for your interviewer to ask about your financial impact on your previous employers; instead, weave it into your answers.

When asked to walk through a past challenge, don't just explain the steps you took to fix it; finish your story by explaining the time, money, or headache you saved your employer. When asked why you want the role, anchor your interest in the specific operational problems you can solve from day one.

When job searching, you have one goal: prove to employers that hiring you won't be a net cost and that you'll improve their profitability. Keep this in mind when writing your resume, updating your LinkedIn profile, networking, and especially when interviewing

