



### **Developing Ideas and Working on Projects Successfully**

It is essential to create positive ways to develop ideas and work on projects together. The method described in this article assists your company and teams to develop new ways to create excellence and success in your work.

The benefits of this method include:

- New solutions
- Innovation and creativity
- Effective teamwork
- Positive relationships

This method is often used with partners - a Listening Partner and an Action Partner. The Listening Partner listens to the Action Partner to understand their goals and asks questions which help them to develop innovative ideas and actions to achieve success.

Instead of offering suggestions, the Listening Partner listens and ask questions which invite their Partner to explore their ideas in depth. This helps them to create new solutions and innovative ways to go forward.

This method is also effective with individuals and teams.

The Listening Partner often uses open-ended questions. These are questions which cannot be answered by 'yes' or 'no'.

A good example of an open-ended question is:

*Can you say more about that?*

The following example shows how expanded results are achieved by using open-ended questions.

## Example of a Conversation With An Open-Ended Question

Let's say that you would like to surprise a colleague at work with a pizza party for his birthday. You would like to know whether he likes pizza and the kind of pizza he enjoys.

The first time you speak with him you use a closed-ended question.

"Do you like pizza"?

He answers 'yes'.

This question gives you only part of the information which helps you to organize a party for him.

Now, you ask him an open-ended question.

"What kind of pizza do you like?"

He answers: "I like pizza with several toppings. My favorite toppings are; salami, olives, artichoke hearts.

Now you know he likes pizza and the kind of pizza he likes. Asking open-ended questions can lead to other conversations about pizza - the kinds of pizza which are popular in other countries, the first pizza, how to make homemade pizzas and other topics.

One of the major benefits of asking open-ended questions is that they lead to new possibilities. For example, if your colleague is from Italy and the toppings he likes are traditional Italian ones, you could organize an Italian pizza party.

Using open-ended questions for work projects helps you to discover creative solutions and new directions in your work.

This method is most effectively used when practiced regularly. As a member of a team, you can practice it at meetings and while you are working on projects with other team members.

Here is an example of a conversation between a Listening Partner and Action Partner.

### Conversation Between A Department Manager and Team Member

In this example, the Listening Partner is the department manager and the Action Partner is a team member. The team member is sharing his feelings about a project.

Mike, the Listening Partner, is the head of an engineering department which works on

special projects for his company.

James, the Action Partner, is a member of one of the engineering teams. The team is working on a project to improve the health of families in developing countries.

James: Mike, thanks for the opportunity to share my feelings about the Water Project with you.

Mike: James, I am happy to hear your feelings.

James: After working on this project for three months, I feel there is more we can do to ensure the health and wellbeing of the families in these countries for many years to come.

The partnerships we have with local companies there are working well. Yet, I feel that developing relationships with government agencies will ensure the continuation of the health of the families there.

Mike, what are your ideas?

Mike: I have thought of this often and talked with Harry ( president of the company) a year ago.

Harry felt that we should have a stronger relationship with our local collaborative partners before developing government relationships there. I think we have that now and your ideas are timely.

I will set up a conference call with Harry for both of us to discuss this with him in more detail. How is this for you?

James: That sounds great.

Mike: Wonderful. Will check with you once I hear from Harry about a good time for him to meet with us.

The benefits of creating positive ways to develop ideas and work on projects together assists you to create success. These skills enable you to develop new ideas, positive solutions and effective outcomes in your work. They help you to develop success and excellence and contribute to society in positive ways.

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Oshana Himot, MBA, is a speaker and organizational consultant. She works with

companies and teams, assisting them to create success and excellence in their work. Oshana has a Masters of Business Administration degree from Golden Gate University in San Francisco, California and credits towards a Ph.D in Management from the Maharishi International University in Fairfield, Iowa. To speak about creating success and excellence in your work, email [oshana@oshanasjoyinstitute.com](mailto:oshana@oshanasjoyinstitute.com).