

Client - Creating your 'Finest Hour' from the 'Darkest Hour'

Part 1 of 7

Client - Clarify - Create - Change - Confirm - Continue - Close



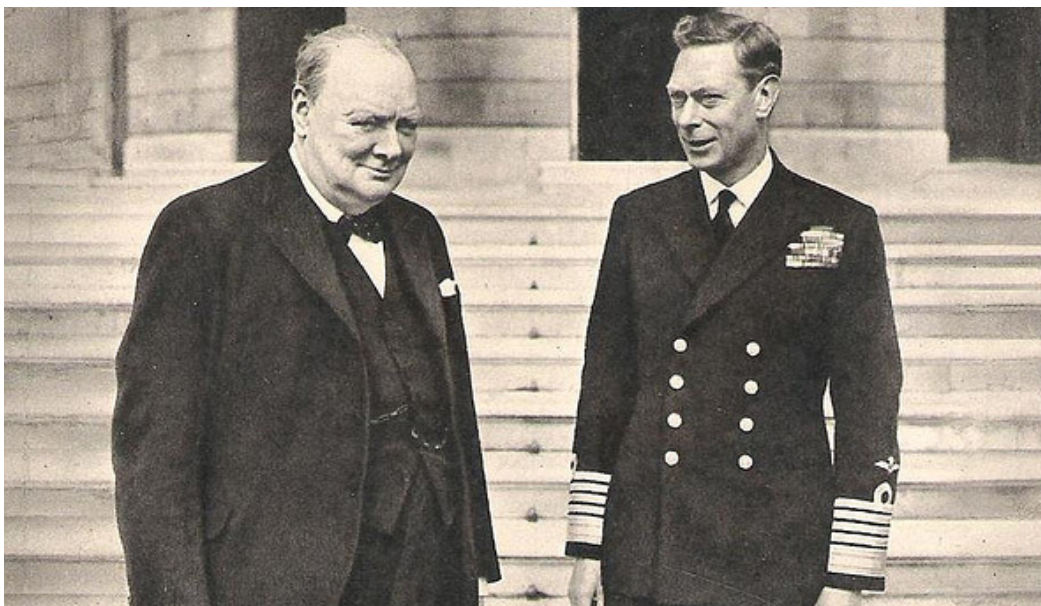
This weekend I took the opportunity presented by a dull wet January weekend to spend a few hours at the cinema witnessing Gary Oldman's excellent portrayal of Winston Churchill in 'Darkest Hour'.

As a history geek and student of leadership styles I am fascinated with this period of history, specifically the contrasting communication styles demonstrated by leaders in such an intense pre-social media environment. If available to him I am confident Churchill's use of Twitter would contrast greatly to that of Mr Trump, who seems to be intent on creating his own 'Darkest Hour'?



Whilst enjoying the drama and imagery of the film I couldn't help reflecting on Churchill's powerful oratory, how he created and maintained a single-minded, focused, resolute nation to ultimate victory. I am not a historian or military expert so will not endeavour unravel how the allies emerged victorious. Neither would I feel suitable well-read to comment on Churchill's tactical or political capabilities. But certainly, Churchill's words and delivery were important elements in achieving both VE and VJ days in 1945.

What struck me once again as I enjoyed Mr Oldman's performance is the importance in business of understanding our audience (Client) and engaging with them to build trust, the foundation of any relationship. Taking our nation into its second World War within two decades of the 'War to End All Wars' certainly required total trust. Not necessarily trust in the ultimate outcome but in the knowledge that the only conceivable positive outcome could be achieved through the leadership of Churchill and the authority of King George VI.



My thoughts were specifically drawn to Churchill's words and how he carefully crafted each speech to engage with his audience. And this took me to the 7Cs.

I have enjoyed working with the 7Cs Consulting framework for many years, for which the first 'C' is Client. An obvious starting point perhaps but I have had many consultation experiences when the client has been way down the list after a fistful of MBA models that the consultant is desperate to rattle off, at best to prove their credentials or more cynically to justify their fee?

So, Client has to be the first 'C'. Of course, there are many ways this can and indeed should be achieved, we are all individuals viewing the world in very different ways so require an approach tailored to our perspective.

The 7Cs offers three of the common perspectives that we apply to make sense of the world - Magnitude, Periodicity and the Holistic dimension, which we can remember through the acronym MPH:

Magnitude – how we use information to make sense of the world. Some prefer exploring every fine detail, whilst others have a preference for finding broad patterns and meaning in things, so a Meta – Macro – Micro dimension.

Periodicity – when formulating a strategy some have a preference to look back on what has happened or worked in the past, some more grounded in the reality of what is happening in the present and others prefer to speculate on what might happen in the future and creating a new solution. Our Past – Present – Projected dimension.

Holistic – some of us prefer to make decisions on gut instinct or how we feel about things, others have a preference for logic and thinking and thank God there are also 'doers' who prefer to just get on with things whilst the rest of us work out what we are thinking or feeling. So Heart – Head – Hand dimension.

Meta	Macro	Micro
Past	Present	Projected
Heart	Head	Hand

But what has this got to do with Churchill?

Well along with all great orators he had the ability to capture an audience, making every individual feel he was talking directly to them, at least for part if not all his words. If you take 'Darkest Hour', 'Finest Hour' or indeed any of Churchill's great speeches you will see he touches all nine perspectives of the MPH model.

He gives details to demonstrate understanding and diligence whilst painting a picture in peoples' minds of the overall situation. Remembering the sacrifices of the past whilst being resolute in the present and linking this to future victory. Talking about the things that need to get done, the reasons why this is necessary and typically finishing on how we will feel once victory is achieved.

Click the link to see the MPH model applied to Churchill's 'Finest Hour Speech'

[Churchill's Finest Hour Speech MPH Model](#)

In the same way, by listening to a client we can use MPH to understand their preferences and adapt our style to meet their needs and help them understand the need perhaps to flex from their preferred style to achieve their goals.

Alternatively, next time you are preparing to make a presentation or speech to a group, draw the MPH model at the top of your note book and check you are hitting each box at least once. I can't pretend it will make your presentation 'Churchillian' but it might just help you plan your client engagement. But to take a tip from the great man himself, always finish with how you want your audience to feel about your future vision, what you want them to be talking about as they leave – your Meta-Projected-Heart.

For more details of the 7Cs Consultation framework or just to check out Churchill's 'Finest Hour' speech visit www.7Cs.co.uk.

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(All credits for 7Cs framework to Mick Cope)

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