Engineering Conversations for Action

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Discovering a clear view into Engineering Conversations

- Discover - What gets in the way
  - In the context of Quality/Engineering Management; Understanding and clarifying customer requirements and expectations

- Experience the domains of Opinions vs. Facts, Expectations vs. Commitments

- See and feel the power of a clear Request

- Bring these together with Engineering Conversations for Action Examples
  - Leading to Understanding and Clarifying Customer Requirement/Project/Any/Our Own Requests

NGC 6217
HST ACS/WFC

Setting the Context of Generating and Coordinating Action

- We generate and coordinate actions of many types.
  - Conversations are with others and ourselves to fulfill what needs to get done.
  - In other words, something is missing and generating actions to fill the void is my job.
  - This is especially valuable at the beginning of a project and during changes

- My ability to have clear conversations tarnished over time with my technical expertise, having me struggle with
  - Requests and commitments are not clear, often open-ended; resulting in varied coordination of action diminishing trust
  - Complexity and overwhelm resulting in lost line of sight to the overall strategy and promise
  - People are reluctant to have conversations when team members do not deliver

Managing Our Expectations

- Commitments un-kept are not equal to expectations unmet[1]
- "I learned it this way: Expectations are free. We can have all the expectations we want."[1]
  - Notice that expectations are our own, personal and private
- Expectations live as internal conversations and narratives

Big Impedance – When we treat our expectations as if they were commitments that other people have made to us

Opposite Opportunity – Speak Up, lodge a responsible complaint only when a commitment is not met verses an unspoken expectation being unmet.

1. "Language and the Pursuit of Happiness", Chalmers Brothers, New Possibilities Press 2005, ISBN 978-0-9749487-0-6

Assessments/Opinions are Tricky –
Getting in the way of Understanding and Clarifying

- **What gets in the way of Understanding?**
  - How long does it take for an opinion to form?
  - How long does it take to trade up and ground an opinion?
  - Accelerating understanding is founded in Who, What, When, Where and How
    - ❖ Not using Why moves us quickly to facts and away from opinions

Big impedance - Holding an opinion long enough it becomes the truth to us
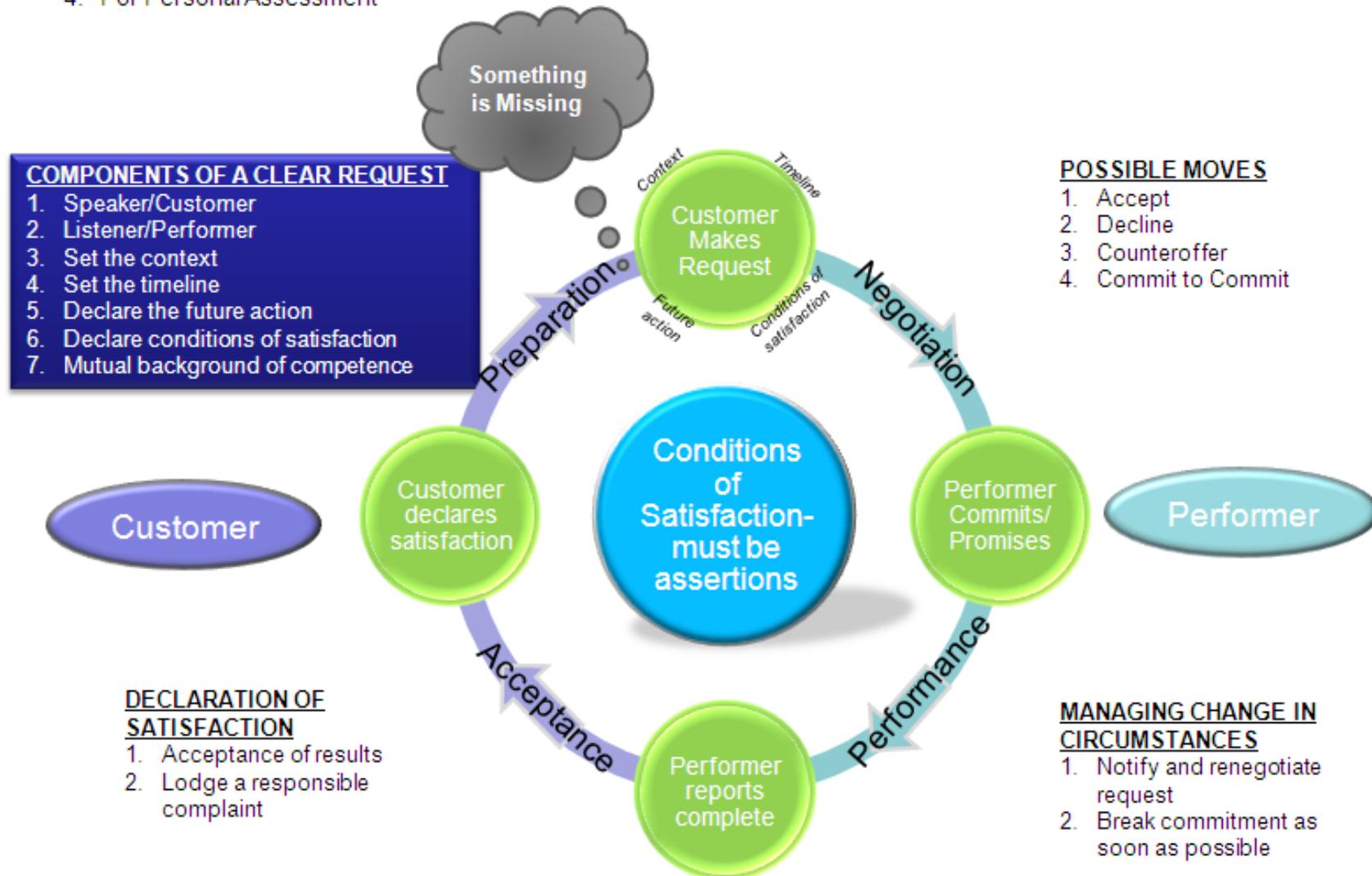
Opposite Opportunity – Intentionally trading up an opinion

Fundamental Conversation
1. Conversation for Possibilities
2. Conversation for Action
3. For Possible Future Conversations
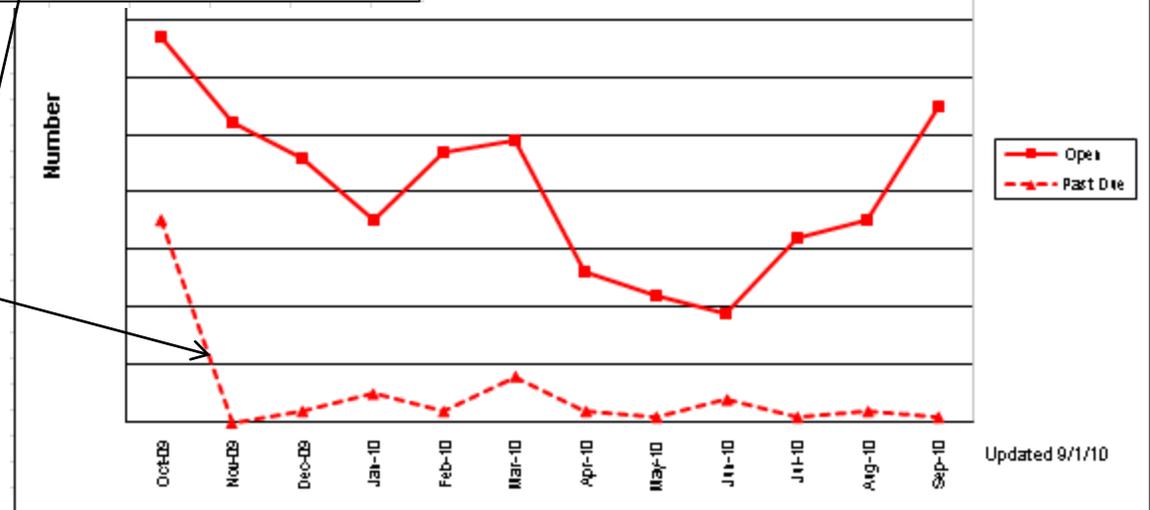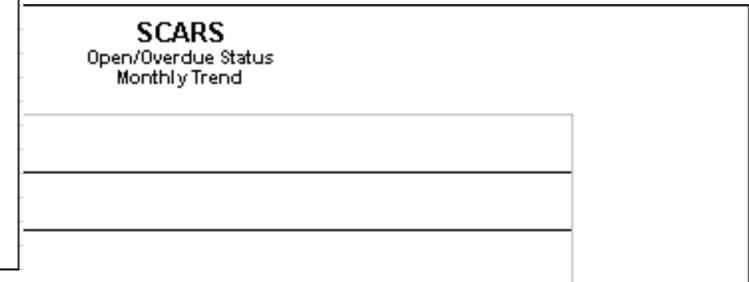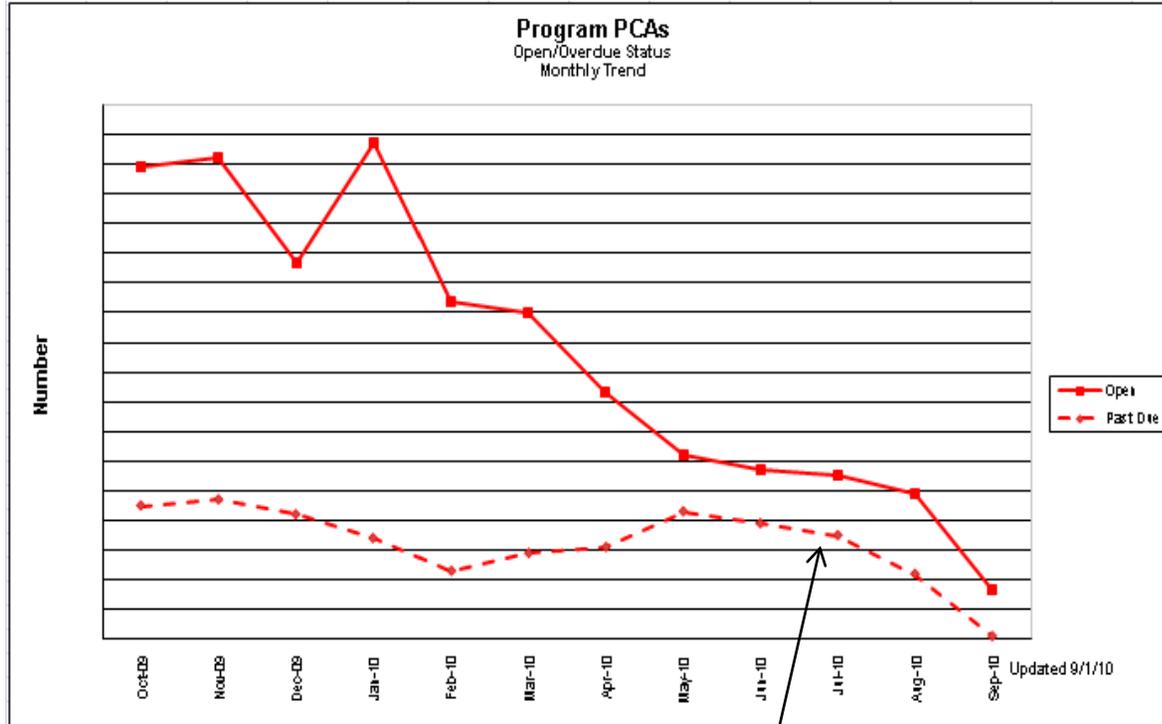4. For Personal Assessment

Conversation for Action Model

Something is Missing

COMPONENTS OF A CLEAR REQUEST
1. Speaker/Customer
2. Listener/Performer
3. Set the context
4. Set the timeline
5. Declare the future action
6. Declare conditions of satisfaction
7. Mutual background of competence

POSSIBLE MOVES
1. Accept
2. Decline
3. Counteroffer
4. Commit to Commit

Preparation

Customer Makes Request — *Context, Timeline, Future action, Conditions of satisfaction*

Negotiation

Customer

Customer declares satisfaction

Conditions of Satisfaction- must be assertions

Performer Commits/ Promises

Performer

Acceptance

Performance

Performer reports complete

DECLARATION OF SATISFACTION
1. Acceptance of results
2. Lodge a responsible complaint

MANAGING CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES
1. Notify and renegotiate request
2. Break commitment as soon as possible

Clear requests and actively managing conversations for action has virtually eliminated overdue corrective actions.

Managing Engineering Conversation Examples

- Continuous Improvement Opportunity: It is DCMA's impression that Ball could improve upon their current process for tracking CDRL approvals and the maintenance of that documentation. DCMA would recommend adding all CDRL approvals from customers as an attachment to the PDM document suite.

  (Good example of context, speaker, listener, future action. Could and Would diminishes impact)

- ……This process occurs but is not documented, and inclusion in the process document will support accuracy and efficiency.

  (Good example of opinions held as fact)

Getting out of our heads with practice

embodying a new habit