

Quadrant II Newsletter

Research shows that the difference between leaders who derail in their career and those that soar to great heights is social skills. Social skills appear in the second quadrant of Stephen R. Covey's Importance-Urgency matrix: social skills are important to a career but not urgent (Covey is author of the top-selling business book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*). Quadrant II provides an opportunity for business and technical professionals to learn and try out new social skills based in science.

23Feb2016, author: Valerie Patrick, PhD, *How Learning Improves Group Work*

Quotable (*Key Message*)

Group productivity is enhanced when differences in viewpoints and ideas are expressed during group learning activities.

Quantify (*The Science*)

Dr. Laurie R. Weingart, Carnegie Bosch Professor of Organizational Behavior and Theory at CMU, conducted a study involving 232 employees at a long-term healthcare organization (see: Todorova, G.; Bear, J.B.; Weingart, K.R.; "Can Conflict Be Energizing? A Study of Task Conflict, Positive Emotions, and Job Satisfaction," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2014, Vol. 99, No. 3, p.451-467). The purpose of the study was to understand conflict in organizations. In the study, a distinction is made between mild task conflict expression, characterized by debate of differing opinions and ideas, and intense task conflict expression, characterized by argument and attacking others while defending individual perspectives. The study also considered the possibility of increased understanding of the task through access to information about differing perspectives & opinions. Finally, the study looked at emotions

resulting from a social appraisal of different events as either positively or negatively relevant to goals and concerns. A key finding of the study was that positive effects of information acquisition from task conflict are best realized when people are engaged in learning.

Qualify (*Put into Practice*)

There are several facilitation techniques that help promote group learning. One such technique is shared here but feel free to contact Valerie Patrick to learn more (412-742-9675). The technique described here is called “Around the World.” The first step is to divide a task or challenge into 3 to 5 different parts so that 2 to 6 people can be assigned to each part. Next each group uses post-it notes to capture their input on their assigned part. In each group, it is best for the individuals to first work independently capturing input on post-it notes and then share to trigger more input. This process is repeated until input is exhausted. Finally the groups rotate to review the input from another group, learn from it, and contribute more input. Rotation continues until each group returns back to their starting place. This technique works even better with a professional facilitator who can help frame the tasks or pieces of the problem in a way to solicit maximum creativity and the desired meeting outcomes. In addition, a professional facilitator would have a broad repository of group learning activities and techniques that can be tailored to best suit the organization or project team.

Quip (*Fun*)

Group learning is about appreciating and being open to the ideas and perspectives of others and not about judging or competing with others as Ben Stiller’s character Derek does with Owen Wilson’s character Hansel in the



walk-off challenge from the movie Zoolander.

Quest (*Resources*)

Dr. Valerie Patrick, Founder and President of Fulcrum Connection LLC, is an expert on the people engagement side of technical

project management. Dr. Patrick is a Certified Professional Facilitator who can collaborate with you to plan, prepare, and execute engagements that are productive and rewarding experiences for all concerned. Dr. Patrick also provides training, consulting, and keynotes on facilitation, teamwork, collaboration, creativity, innovation, social intelligence, change management, and thriving on a steep learning curve. Contact Dr. Patrick (valerie.patrick@fulcrumconnection.com or text 412-742-9675) to set up an exploratory call. Ask about the new Performance Acceleration Package for technical teams.

Listen to the interview with Dr. Joanna Wolfe, Professor and Director of the Global Communication Center at Carnegie Mellon University, and author of “Team Writing: A Guide to Working in Groups,” on how to decide what type of collaboration to use with a project team on the “Science of Success: Social Secrets” podcast on iTunes here: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/science-of-success-podcast/id1063826280>. Please click on “ratings” in iTunes to provide your input. Also available on Stitcher Radio and all comments are welcome and encouraged!

Also see the companion blog post about the three approaches to manage gender bias in the workplace here: <http://fulcrumconnection.com/blog/how-women-can-survive-and-thrive-in-male-dominated-workforces/>.

About Fulcrum Connection LLC

Fulcrum Connection specializes in instructional design, training, speaking, facilitation and consulting to develop skills in leadership, innovation, sustainability, troubleshooting teamwork, and managing technical professionals.