

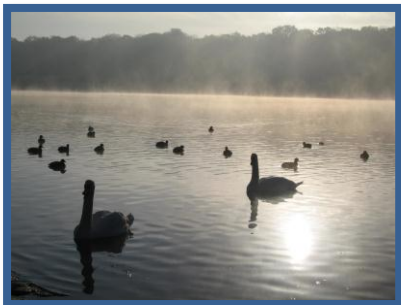
YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 128

Need to take account of different views...?

Create Stakeholder Maps ...

“Here, for once, was a product of man’s brain that was entirely beneficial to those who used it, and of no harm or irritation to others. Progress should have stopped when man invented the bicycle.”

Elizabeth West, Author



“Ruislip Lake”

Need to hear different views?

I was out riding my bike in the local woods early this morning and had to use a footpath because horses have churned up the bridle paths and made them impassable for wheels.

This made me smile wryly as recently, a reader of the environmental policy on my web site wrote to complain that I was inciting cyclists to ride on footpaths in his local woods. [It’s a long story; you can decide if you think I am inciting cyclists by checking out the page [here](#).]

Being a lovely day, there were a few walkers on the footpath. As I approached one couple I sensed they were a little frustrated at having to put their dog on the lead to avoid it colliding with my bike. However, I apologised for being on the footpath, explained the difficulty with the bridle paths and they seemed happy enough.

Riding on I thought about the different “stakeholders” in this situation; the woodland

rangers, the walkers, horse riders, cyclists, even the dog. They all have their own views, whether that’s “ban cyclists from the woods”, “establish separate paths for horses, walkers and cyclists,” or “Grow Winalot on trees”.

“What would be a way to hear the different views?”, I mused, which led me to think about how creative leaders might do it in organisations. I generated the following ideas from an individual and team perspective.

Individuals

Imagine yourself in a room with the stakeholders. Mentally position them in different parts of the room. If in an actual room, put a sheet of paper on the floor with the name of each stakeholder.

Do an imaginary walk round the room to each position (or physically walk round the name sheets) and “ask” them for their individual viewpoints. You could voice the answers and record them or write them down as they occur to you.

To build on this, play with the positioning and distance between them and note if that has an affect.

Building further, you might run this as a coaching session and have the coachee carry out the above.

As a Team

If working with a team on stakeholder analysis, have team members take up different positions

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in the room for each stakeholder (in effect creating a stakeholder map) and ask them to state or write down the stakeholder's perspective. You might choose to put some stakeholders nearer to or further from each other to reflect closeness of opinions.

Building on this, you could move people round the map to adopt and communicate the different perspectives. You are limited only by your imagination.

SO

This idea of using space as a tool for creative thinking is not new. People use space a great deal as a metaphor and time is often represented as a physical line for people to stand on.

The advantage with this approach as an individual is that it helps to separate the different viewpoints in your mind.

The advantage as a team is that you can appeal to different senses. People can see where stakeholders are on the "map". Talking and listening to opinions can improve empathy. Feeling what it is like to take an opposing viewpoint can change perspectives.

This use of the different senses makes the whole exercise much more participative, interactive and enjoyable.

ACTION

The next time you have to consider an issue from different perspectives, try using this approach. I'd be interested to hear how it worked for you.

TO CLOSE

Riding home past the lake in our woods, I stopped in the sunshine to watch two swans beating their way in to land (you can actually hear the beating of their wings echoing off the trees and the water).

I have seen it many times and I always stop to watch as they land with majestic aplomb.

"What a wonderful sight," I thought to myself. Just at that moment, an elderly lady behind me said, "What a wonderful sight!"

It may of course have been a complete coincidence that we were thinking exactly the same thought and using the same words, but it did make me wonder if there is not some hidden telepathy between people that connects at certain moments.

Wouldn't it be brilliant if we as creative leaders could tap in to that telepathy in a creative way?

Have an outstanding week.

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