



**FUTURENOW**  
CONSULTING

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## SERVANT LEADERSHIP FOCUS

A monthly newsletter to promote and stimulate servant leadership ideas & tools into the Viox culture.

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## Transformational Stories

### Where the Seahawks Get Their Mental Edge By: MATTHEW FUTTERMAN

Updated Jan. 27, 2015 The Wall Street Journal

By the time you are reading this newsletter the outcome of the Super Bowl will be history. However, Kevin Barker, Fifth Third Bank Servant Leadership team, sent me this recent article about the Seattle Seahawk's relationship-based coaching model. He saw the parallels with our Servant Leadership Coaching System Process.

For most of the last two seasons, the Seattle Seahawks have been the most physically prepared team in the NFL, a collection of perfectly honed athletes who can outrun and outmuscle opponents at will.

The Seahawks' secret weapon, though, just might be the team's willingness to give a sports psychologist the freedom to roam the training facility, locker room and even the sidelines every game, to make sure their heads are as sound as their bodies.

For nearly three seasons, Michael Gervais has spent three days a week with the team, instilling what he and coach Pete Carroll call "relationship-based coaching." This means making sure coaches and players understand each other on the deepest possible level, so that everyone feels valued and can communicate effectively.

"We are an incredibly mindful team," said Tom Cable, the Seahawks' offensive line and assistant head coach, using an adjective that rarely comes across the lips of an NFL coach. "If I can understand someone like (guard) James Carpenter at a higher and deeper level, then I reach him further in terms of getting him to be the best he can be."

This sort of pursuit isn't new to the sports world. Sports figures have long aspired to what is known as "mindfulness"—an ability to perform without worrying about what has just happened or what might happen next. The Seahawks also are hardly the first team to give players

access to a shrink. But Cable and defensive line coach Travis Jones, who have more than four decades of college and pro coaching between them, say they have never seen a team listen so intently to someone like Gervais, a former competitive surfer based in Marina del Rey, Calif.

What has made Gervais the sports psychologist of the moment, working with clients as varied as beach volleyball star Kerri Walsh Jennings and space-diver Felix Baumgartner, is an approach that emphasizes the root causes of an athlete's anxiety.

"We want to invite the lion into the room and learn how to pet him," Gervais said in an interview last week.

Through her sessions with Gervais, Walsh learned how conflicted she was about trying to balance volleyball with motherhood. Gervais taught her to understand and embrace the challenges of being a working mother.

Baumgartner, who broke the sound barrier when he jumped out of a capsule 25 miles above the earth in 2012, suffered from intense claustrophobia while preparing for the jump. Gervais helped him understand that relying on the team of scientists and trainers helping to plan the jump was a struggle for someone who usually performed stunts on his own.

"We are a relationship-based club," Carroll said Tuesday. "In Mike I found a guy I could see eye-to-eye with."

Gervais and Carroll met through a mutual friend in 2011, and Gervais began spending substantial time with the Seahawks the following season. During a typical week, he arrives Saturday, and is with the team throughout dinner and the pregame meetings. He is there when players arrive at the stadium, with them on the sidelines throughout the game, and again all day Monday when they are reviewing what happened. Instead of making therapy appointments, he floats around and

talks to coaches and players about their lives and their endeavors.

"It's the most fascinating culture I have ever been able to witness," Gervais said of the Seahawks. "There is a relentless approach to the idea that relationships matter."

Matter more, in fact, than results, at least to him and the coaching staff, which has come to view outcomes as a byproduct of their approach rather than an end.

Gervais said he tries to de-emphasize results when he speaks to athletes, who live in the ultimate outcome-oriented world. The danger, he says, is when athletes allow those results to define them. "It's one blip on the 20,000 days you are alive," he says. "Life is a collection of moments. It's not possible for one moment to define a person."

Jones, the defensive line coach, said he didn't know what to think of Gervais when he arrived with the Seahawks last season, because he had never encountered a psychologist so deeply involved with a team's activities. Soon though, Gervais was talking him through all of the thoughts that were going through the minds of Jones's players in the seconds before the ball was snapped—the previous play, the play call, the cadence of the snap count and so on.

"We talked about how I react and communicate in critical situations, how do I relate to my players, how I can slow my heartbeat down," Jones said. "That's stuff that is going to help you in any profession."

To that end, Gervais and Carroll have formed a consulting venture to bring their relationship-based coaching philosophy to the corporate world. Boeing, which has its commercial airplane manufacturing base in the Seattle area, and San Francisco-based tech company.

"There is the overt objective and need to have the organization achieve," Gervais said. "Some organizations sell widgets and some, like the Seahawks, sell outcomes, and the foundation of a great outcome is a relationship."

## C-IQ: Meeting Cost Effectiveness Study

Michael J. Stabile, Ph.D. & Brian D. Warren

Recent studies have shown organizations are spending approximately **70%** more time in meetings than five years ago. It is believed that at least **1/3** of these meetings are unproductive leading to an estimated **\$37 billion dollars** a year in wasted time.

The greatest myth that exists about meetings is that they are inherently bad.

As a business society, we've come to accept that meetings are unavoidably painful and unproductive-one of the necessary evils of organizational life. But the fact is, bad meetings are a reflection of bad leaders. Worse yet, they take a more devastating toll on a company's success than we realize. **A recent survey pegged 'the waste factor' of 33 million business meetings held in America every business day at 49 percent.**

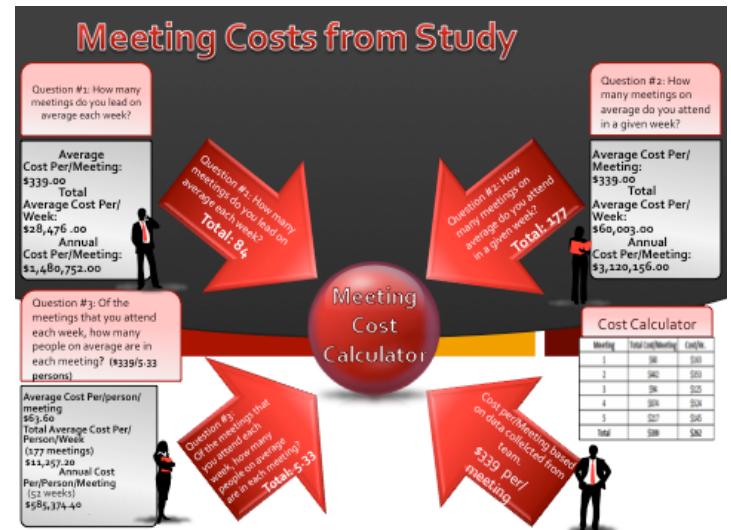
"Leaders need to ask themselves a basic question. **"What is more important than meetings?"** If they say "sales" or "e-mail" or "product design," then maybe they should reconsider their roles as leaders and go back to an individual contributor position. If you think about it, a leader who hates meetings is a lot like a surgeon who hates operating on people, or a symphony conductor who hates concerts. **Meetings are what leaders do, and the solution to bad meetings is not the elimination of them, but rather the transformation of them into meaningful, engaging and relevant activities.**" (Leniconi 2004, Death By Meeting)

A pilot study of meeting effectiveness and ROI in relationship to cost was conducted in the **fall of 2014**. This study is the first step in the process of investigating how to have more conversationally intelligent meetings that value time and resources.

**Eighteen members** of a base team of middle and senior level management leaders who participated in a leadership training process using the **Conversational Intelligence Framework (C-IQ)** over a 9-month period were involved in this case study. The training and framework is based on Judith E. Glaser's book *Conversational Intelligence: How Great Leaders Build Trust and Get Extraordinary Results*.

The research question we are purposing is:

**Does the cost of meetings justify the ROI in relation to perceived meeting effectiveness, engagement, involvement, results, and level of conversational trust?**



Using **Judith E. Glaser's T.R.U.S.T. Model** for having conversational intelligent conversations and meetings we constructed a 10 question survey and correlated to the model. See the below chart.

**Chart #1: Glaser's T.R.U.S.T. Model & Correlated Survey questions**

### + C-IQ: T.R.U.S.T. Survey Questions

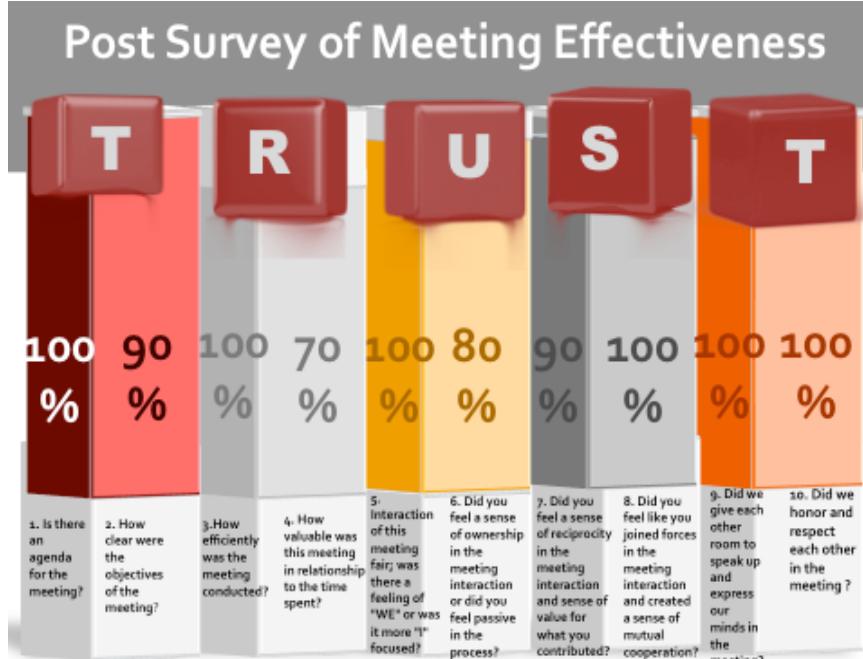
- T** Transparency  
1. Did this meeting have an agenda?  
2. How clear were the objectives of the meeting?
- R** Relationships  
3. How efficiently was the meeting conducted?  
4. How valuable was this meeting in relationship to the time spent?
- U** Understanding  
5. Was the interaction of this meeting fair; was there a feeling of "WE" or was it more "I" focused?  
6. Did you feel a sense of ownership in the meeting interaction or did you feel passive in the process?
- S** Shared Success  
7. Did you feel a sense of reciprocity in the meeting interaction and sense of value for what you contributed?  
8. Did you feel like you joined forces in the meeting interaction and created a sense of mutual cooperation?
- T** Testing Assumptions /Truth-Telling  
9. Did we give each other room to speak up and express our minds in the meeting?  
10. Did we honor and respect each other in the meeting?



## C-IQ: Meeting Cost Effectiveness Study

Michael J. Stabile, Ph.D. & Brian D. Warren

Results from the Post Meeting Survey:



and focused objectives. Shaping the quality of the conversational environment with conversational norms that enable members to be celebrated for having great ideas changes the amount of great ideas that show up.

**2. Encourage Candor and Trust** through straight talk, candor and open conversations (without repercussions and fear of punishment) are the operating norm for innovative conversations. Shaping the quality of the conversational environment enables employees to speak up, and share their innovative thinking

**3. Eliminate Politics** remember when conversations/meeting go to the lowest common denominator--people stop innovating. However, when shaping the quality of the conversational environment for safety, members trust they will get quality feedback on their ideas, and they speak-up.

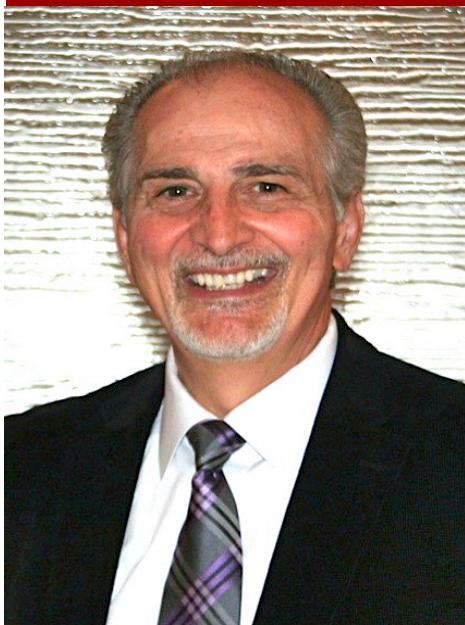
**4. Promote Recognition** often members have great ideas, and no one listens. When ideas are expressed, no one validates them or acknowledges them. There is an instinctive fear in many of us that our voices will not be heard, and our ideas will be pushed under the rug or their importance minimized. When members can trust that they will get the recognition from the top for being "idea catalysts," leadership will find that people have a lot to say!

### Implications from the Meeting Effectiveness Data:

This case study confirmed the high cost of meetings and the priority of reframing our mindsets that meetings are what leaders do, and the solution to bad meetings is not the elimination of them, but rather the transformation of them into meaningful, engaging and relevant activities. The cost of meetings is a constant, but what is under our control as leaders is meeting effectiveness in relationship to **engagement, involvement, results, and level of conversational trust**.

The data from each phase of the study affirmed key elements of having Conversationally Intelligent (C-IQ) meetings. Using the **Glaser T.R.U.S.T. Model** the 10 questions were formulated to build **Transparency, Relationship, Understanding, Shared Success, and Truth-Telling and Testing Assumptions**. This initial case study investigation would affirm the C-IQ Training framework as being valuable to the process of increasing the engagement, involvement, results, and level of conversational trust.

**1. Establish Meeting Clarity** through meeting agendas



This publication was produced  
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...one person  
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**Viox Services**

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"EVERYTHING RISES OR FALLS WITH LEADERSHIP."

CULTIVATING THE VIOX WORK CULTURE