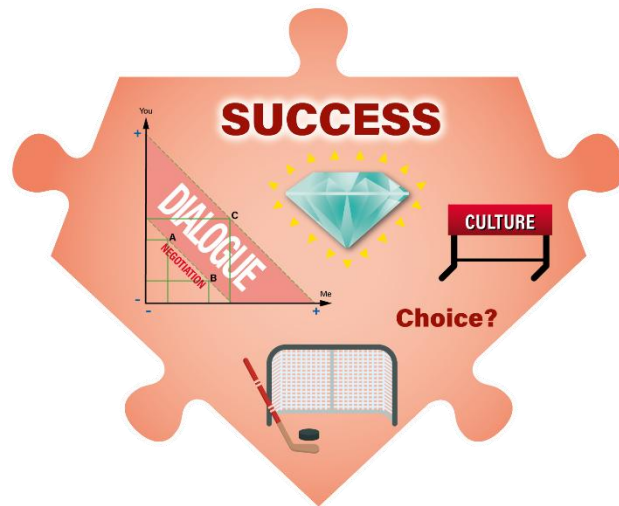


*The Nixon Method©

Step 1 - Goal



This article describes the importance and application of ***The Nixon Method***, in particular, **Step One - Goal**. I cover three main areas: What do you want? What do they want? What choices exist?

What do you want?

I have asked all my clients, now numbering in the many thousands, to answer this question at the start of every engagement. 99% of the time the answer I receive is at best unclear and almost always ends up changing through the course of my work with them.

Some people define their goal as *"improve the efficiency of my team"* when in fact they are wanting to improve profitability ahead of selling the company. Some say *"I want to increase fees"* when in fact they are concerned with engagement profitability and competitive pressure from other firms. Some say *"I have to get people to adopt a new way of working"* when in fact they just want to reduce the pushback caused by a unilaterally agreed adoption of a new software or technology. And now clients are asking *"How do we get people to adopt AI in their work"* when in fact they want to achieve the exponential improvements enabling their competitors to eat away at their market share.

$$\text{Success Today} = \begin{matrix} +\text{Professional Skills} \\ +\text{AI Skills} \\ +\text{People Skills*} \end{matrix}$$

One major European manufacturer asked *"how to adopt online marketing"* when in reality they were so far behind their AI enabled competitor it was almost impossible for them to catch up. Having been so totally focused on traditional manufacturing and supply chain and not at all focused on the AI revolution happening all around them, it was like an animal frozen in the headlights of an oncoming vehicle. Sometimes I have to tell clients they have the wrong strategy. Thank goodness they asked before it was too late.

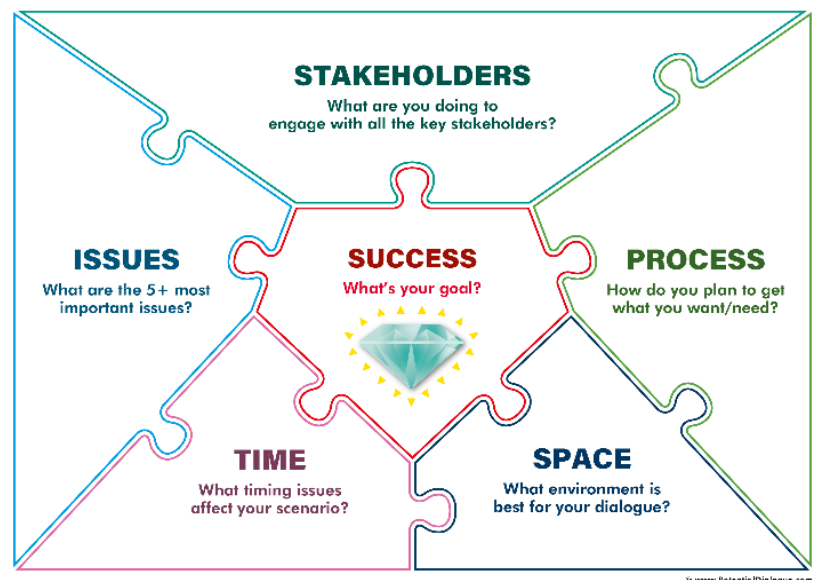
Wants vs Needs

Knowing what you want is different than knowing what you need but both are clarified through dialogue and analysis. Knowing your goal is important to begin the change process because it also begins to define what you don't want e.g. *"I don't want people to think they will get fired when we merge with our competitor"*.

The five-step process begins with the question, *what is your goal*, because it shines light on your destination which is necessary to launch into the other steps. In reality the five steps are a circular process and every time the blade turns the clarity of your goal improves.

Strategy Puzzle

The way we get people to think about their goal is by using our *Strategy Puzzle* (affectionally called *Dialogue Puzzle*), a relatively straight forward graphic that reminds people getting the right outcome requires getting the right people to discuss the right issues in the right way and at the right time and space. The dialogue puzzle is closely linked to *The Nixon Method*.



Resistance to Change

Resistance to change can take on 50 shades of grey (the bestselling book which competed for top shelf-space when my bestselling book *Dialogue Gap* was published in 2012). Here are some of the most common causes of resistance that I have dealt with over the years: *doubt, distrust, bureaucracy, fear, politics, opposition, hidden agendas, corruption, ignorance, loyalty, red tape*.

The saw blade graphic is selected to inspire people wanting to cut through the resistance, the noise, the BS which change leaders tell me causes them sleepless nights and difficult days.

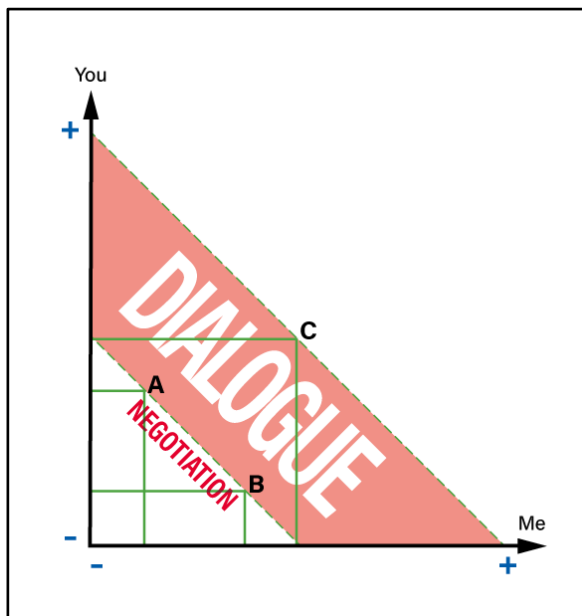
This article is part of a series of five, each describing a different step in the method. People wanting to learn in detail how to lead each step can [engage Peter](#) to speak or train in-company, subscribe to his [online learning platform](#), or read his [books](#).

What do THEY want?

Another big challenge in Step 1 is when I ask clients, *"what do the other stakeholders want?"* In many cases, especially when conflict is involved, the answer is typically *"Who knows"* or *"Who cares"*. This is where I need to explain Nobel Prize winning economics which prove *the optimal outcome is the point at which all parties get the most without any single party losing something*. In simple terms you may not get everything you want using my methodology, but you can achieve an optimal outcome i.e. lasting agreement.

What is your philosophy

If your philosophy is to maximise your return (regardless of what other people get) then you are best served studying the use of power. Power leads to unsustainable outcomes because once the bully loses power, opponents rise up to balance injustices. *The Nixon Method* is based on the philosophy of *Potentialism* which itself is based on *Nash's Governing Dynamics* – an important element of Game Theory and central to behavioural economics and the Nobel winning theory referred to above.



Choices

Step one also addresses the choices available to stakeholders. You have the choice to do nothing. Others have the choice to agree, disagree or walk away. *Everyone has the choice to negotiate*. In every situation you have to consider the choices available because if you have no choice e.g. in a monopoly, you basically have to say yes. Iran's closing of the Straits of Hormuz comes to mind. When Iran found they could control the Straits using drones, the USA realised controlling the price of oil would not be as easy as originally considered. When Canada was given no choice but to accept US tariffs, Canadians quickly got to work building trading relationships with other nations to reduce their reliance on the USA. They created a choice.

Summary

If you get no further than step one in your preparation, e.g. you are called to a meeting and only have time to think about the puzzle on your way into the call, you will still be MUCH better off than having never considered your strategy at all. If you find yourself with no time, ask a question of the other party and then think of the puzzle in your head while listening to the other person's reply.

The next steps dive into the details needed to understand the issues and the people involved. Only by doing this can we recommend tactics and the approach needed to resolve conflict (if any) and influence or negotiate an optimal outcome. The order of the five steps is important and only go into the depth you need. These steps also identify where you might be going wrong or why you might find yourself in deadlock.

Step two begins with examining the issues, a methodology I developed based on my experience as a Chartered Accountant (CPA) and in studies undertaken at both the *Harvard Program on Negotiation* and *INSEAD*. Part of my role has been delving into academia and bringing back valuable tools for practitioners e.g. Nash's Nobel winning *Governing Dynamics*.

See you again in the next step. In the meantime add your comments and questions below.

Sincerely,

Peter

Professor Peter Nixon FCPA
Founder and Curator - Domaine Dialogue
Master trainer, speaker, author, consultant;
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[Website](#) | [Online Learning Site](#) | [Books](#) | [Video](#) | [Podcast](#) |

The Nixon Method®

1. Goal

- a. Strategy - What do you want?
- b. Resistance - What do they want?
- c. Choices - yours & theirs

2. Issues

- a. Measure & Range
- b. Concession Exchange
- c. Packaged Offers

3. Stakeholders

- a. Motivations (RGB)
- b. Dialect & Tactics
- c. Trust, Needs & Wants

4. Approach

- a. Meeting Management
- b. Dialogue Skills & Methods
- c. Conflict Management

5. Dialogue

- a. Dialogue Stages & DNA
- b. Emotion & Process Control
- c. Faith, Culture, Never give up

THE SOLUTION IS IN THE DIALOGUE ©

**The Nixon Method®* is a five-step process designed to help leaders and their teams clarify what they want and then refine and rehearse the tactics and techniques needed to influence and negotiate with key stakeholders to achieve positive change @work, @home and @large in society.

The Nixon Method® was created by Peter Nixon, FCPA based on decades of training and consulting leaders from MNC's, Professional Firms, Government, Start-Ups, Banks and non-profit organisations in over 60 countries worldwide. The method also builds on his decade auditing for PwC legacy firm C&L in Quebec, Ontario, Switzerland, France, Hong Kong and China.

Peter Nixon is based in Hong Kong (Nov-May) and Montreal (June-October). He helps clients lead technological and organisational change personally (on-site) or by inspiring others to do so through keynotes, masterclasses and teaching. People can contact Peter Nixon through his website www.PotentialDialogue.com

For over thirty years Peter has specialised in the dialogue, negotiation and leadership of change. During this time, based in Hong Kong and consulting globally, Peter developed **The Nixon Method**, to help current and emerging leaders improve decision making, lead positive change and achieve better results at work, at home, and at large in society. Peter has helped thousands of leaders from hundreds of the world's leading organisations (both private and public sector) in over 60 countries. Peter's six books (Wiley, Routledge, Kindle) are available on Amazon. His popular **Leadership Passport to Positive Change** is only shared with onsite participants. Peter's service business **Potential Dialogue** #57627706-000-03-23-9 is registered in HK and all intellectual property marked ©Potential is owned by Peter Nixon.