*The Nixon Method©
Step 3 - Stakeholders





This article describes the importance and application of ***The Nixon Method***, in particular, **Step Three - Stakeholders**. I cover three main areas: motivations, dialect and tactics.

Who are stakeholders?
I define a stakeholder as anyone that has something to gain (or lose) as a result of the change at the heart of the scenario being considered in the *Strategy Puzzle* (step one).

You are a stakeholder if you are leading, managing or a victim of the change at hand. Other stakeholders (or stakeholder groups) include buyers, sellers, employees, investors, debtors, peers, family, neighbours, suppliers, customers, clients, government, regulators, competitors etc. In a conflict, stakeholders can include your opponent but also those who may gain or lose as a result of how the conflict is resolved.

Unrepresented third parties (e.g. children in a divorce settlement, employees in a union settlement, customers in a product change etc.) are key stakeholders who are not included in the dialogue or negotiations leading to the agreed change. They have issues too (step two).

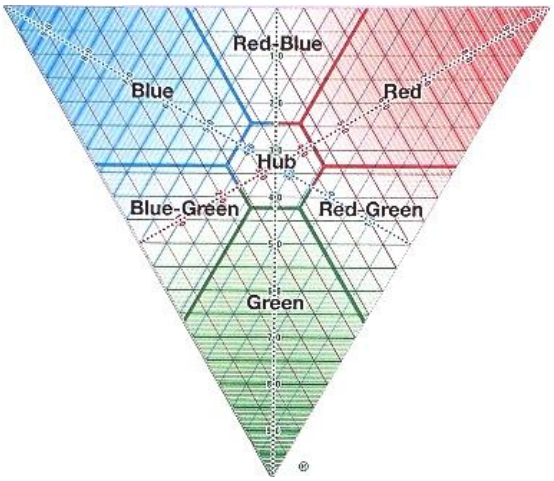
It is very important to consider who all the stakeholders are BEFORE proceeding to diagnose their motivational styles and how best to interact with them. This step might also send you back to step two – issues. If you have overlooked any key stakeholders then you have also most likely overlooked their issues and you need to update your *Issues List - Step Two*.

Success Today = +Professional Skills +AI Skills +People Skills*

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.

Motivational Styles

Over the course of my career I have been exposed to A LOT of psychometric and related assessments. Like most of the world today I too find most of these are at best interesting and at worst a waste of time. There is one theory however that I have found to be better than all the rest, better because it repeatedly proves itself true in my experiences across cultures and because people remember it better than any other I have shared with clients.

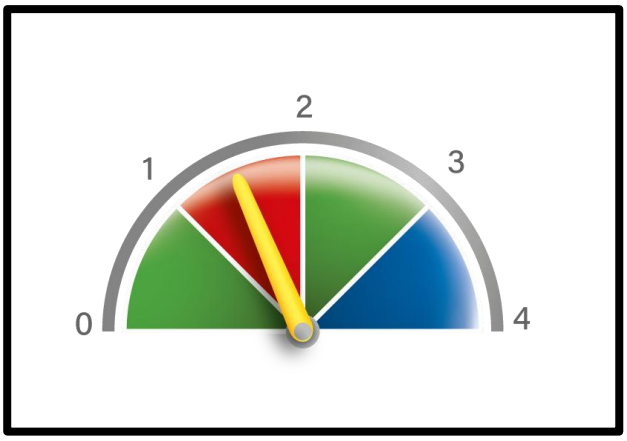


The winning theory is called *Relationship Awareness Theory,* and the related assessment is called the *Strength Deployment Inventory ("SDI")*. The theory was discovered by Elias Porter in the early 1970's building on the work of Carl Rogers, Erich Fromm and others.

Although I never met Dr Rogers I have been familiar with the SDI since the early 1990's when it was first introduced to PwC legacy firm C&L by *Behavioural Science Systems* in leadership workshops I was organising at that time. I became immediately interested to learn more and I became a master trainer for *Personal Strengths Publishing* which purchased the intellectual property from Dr Roger's widow in the years following his passing in 1987.

The SDI

The assessment has been upgraded several times from its original US$5.00 paper version to the US$250 online version I use with clients today. The intellectual property has changed owners several times and it is now part of the *Crucial Conversations* stable of products. I have no idea if it is still popular.



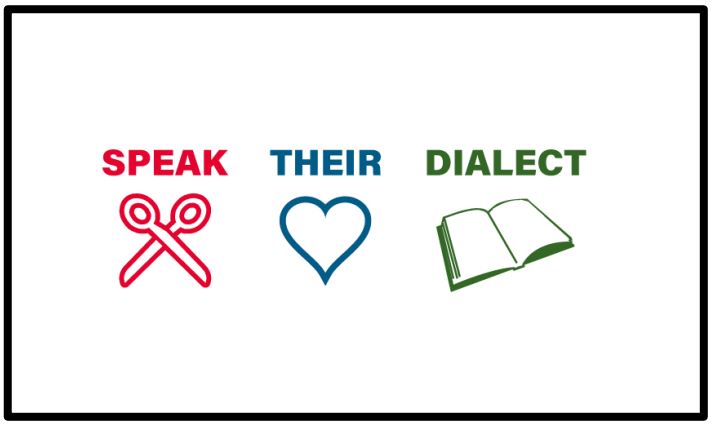
The assessment today, called the *SDI 2.0*, leverages the power of the internet to provide significantly more insight than did the original SDI. The new version includes three separate assessments (SDI + Portrait of Strengths + Portrait of Overdone Strengths) in one questionnaire and provides feedback for both individuals and teams. Pull away all the bells and whistles and one thing I know for sure, the underlying theory is still as relevant as ever in our AI era.

Colours RGB
One of the things Dr Porter did to popularise the SDI was to add colours to the three primary motivational styles. Red results-oriented people are those that push for and are motivated primarily by achieving results. Blue relationship-oriented people aim to enrich and protect relationships. Green rationale-oriented people are motivated by ideas and getting the information right. Although we all have the three colours as part of our make-up, there is normally one of the three that dominates our values. We can say people are primarily red, green or blue.

Conflict Sequence
Another powerful aspect of Porter's work was the discovery that our motivations change as conflict (or stress) escalates. In change leadership and in conflict management this is VERY important to know about ourselves and other stakeholders because it influences how we react and how best to influence others.

Self-Knowledge
Learning relationship awareness theory is relatively straight forward, and few people need an assessment to identify their primary style. The assessment is much more valuable for identifying our own conflict sequence (how we change under pressure) and that of other stakeholders.

My research in Asia
I am one of the longest serving SDI master trainers and have acknowledged the SDI in several of my books. My original introduction came from the UK which was the biggest user of the theory outside the USA where it began (California). Since I was working with a primarily Asian audience and since the assessment failed to illuminate the behavioural differences I found to exist in my fairly normative Asian audiences, I carried out my own research on the results before the SDI was available online.



Speak their Dialect
I found that Dr Porter's basic classification of red, green and blue was insufficient to differentiate my audiences in Asia (see stage 0-1). Whereas I agreed that blends were real (red vs red/blue vs red/green) the differences between red, green and blue provided sufficient basis for people to learn to speak these three dialects and by doing so, connecting faster and reducing conflict more effectively.

Stage Zero to One
My breakthrough came about when I questioned the underlying theory developed by Dr Porter who found people clearly progress through different colours as stress escalates. He called this transition from stage 1 (first stage of conflict) to stage 3 (final stage of conflict) a person's conflict sequence. I simply called people's resting state Stage 0 and suggested their primary

colour at this stage was red, green or blue (I did not recognise blends). By highlighting the transition of behaviours from stage 0-1 my advice to clients in Asia and beyond became more accepted and useful. I presented my results at an early Master Trainer conference in Southern California, but the publisher was not interested in changing their original theories. It would be interesting to interrogate their online database today and learn what more could be discovered.

Tactics

Alongside my work in dialogue (dialect) I was also investigating negotiation tactics. By watching lots of negotiations I identified that certain tactics were more readily used by one style of negotiator. It was this breakthrough that led to what I now call red, green and blue negotiation tactics. A red tactic is more commonly used by red negotiators and as such these same tactics can be used as counter-tactics when negotiating against red negotiators. The same is true with blue and green tactics. Black tactics, those unable to be commonly aligned with red, green or blue negotiators, are simply useful tactics used by any colour negotiator.

Trust, Needs & Wants

Trust has always been central to leadership and when asking people to follow you the first thing needed is trust. Trust can involve a great number of things. Are you trustworthy? Do people trust your vision of the future? Do people trust themselves and others to follow you? Do people trust it will work?



One way to better understand trust issues are to examine the needs and wants of the stakeholders involved. A good way to do this is by using the *Iceberg* concept with wants on top and needs below the water line. Or stated issues on top, unstated issues below. Or organisational needs on top, personal needs below. Each time you consider issues in this paradigm you uncover more understanding of the stakeholders and vice versa.

Summary

Step three involves identifying the primary motivation of the key stakeholders (or stakeholder group leaders). Then, knowing this, you can decide how best to talk to them (red, green or blue dialect) and which tactics are best to use to influence them (red, green, blue, black) to get what you want.

In meetings with clients years after our intervention and they still remember red, green and blue. If you want to learn more just let me know but everything about this theory is now available free on the internet, except of course the assessment which is strictly held by its current owners.

Having now considered what you want (step 1), the issues involved (step 2) and the stakeholders you need to influence (step 3), the natural next step is to consider the best approach to get what you want.

Step four involves learning tactics and techniques to use when dealing with your specific strategy puzzle. Change any element of your scenario (issues, outcome, people) and your approach will

necessarily change. Step four is about choosing the right way every time and making course corrections throughout the dialogue as required when things change. See you again in the next step. In the meantime add your comments and questions below.

Sincerely,

Peter

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THE SOLUTION IS IN THE DIALOGUE ©

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 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

