



Caswell **CORPORATE COACHING** Company

Making companies better places to work - worldwide

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Bill Caswell is an experienced coach of CEOs and senior executives around the globe. The author of 14 books, Bill has penned the 12-book series *The Respect Revolution* written, by a CEO for CEOs, as a guide to getting your company to *Excellence* and keeping it there.

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Earn your Practical MBA in a 18-session face-to-face seminar over 3 months on Saturdays.

When:

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Where: Ottawa face-to-face or, online from anywhere

Price: \$10,000

Limit: 10 persons only

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The Power of Many

Last week, I conducted a corporate strategy session with 15 people. Each person calculated that they came to the meeting with an average of 5 ideas (namely 75 ideas in total, assuming each person's ideas were unique). By the end of the meeting, we had over 200 ideas listed! That is, the 5-idea average somehow blossomed to an average of 13 per person, and more importantly 75 ideas blossomed to 200. (What we did with these ideas was to organize them and bring them to a practical solution; but that is another story.)

How and Why?

As one of the participant's admitted, "When I saw Cheri's idea, I had one more myself, not the same, but, nevertheless, it was triggered by Cheri's thought." That is, people feed on other people's thoughts. This explains the essence of the power of many. Ray Kroc, the founder of modern-day McDonald's, put it succinctly: "None of us is as good as all of us."

Unleash the Hidden Power within your Organization

My point is that you are missing the boat if you do not get your group together now and then. While good old George, your production supervisor, rarely has one idea let alone 5, put him with some others and you will be in for a pleasant surprise. He probably will sprout forth with ideas you never thought possible of him. You don't have to believe me, but surely you owe it to yourself to take a small risk of your time to try it out and form your own conclusions. I will even wager you \$50 right here and now. Get your group together for a brainstorming session (following the rules below) and if you are not pleased with the outcome, I will send you a \$50 cheque – no questions asked.

The Game is Afoot

- Rules for your winning game, (winning by getting more ideas than you imagined – not by getting my \$50!), are as follows:
- Find a place or situation where no interruptions are permitted.
- For this first experiment set a time limit of the meeting of one hour (and stick to it).
- Collect the cell phones in a basket at the door.
- Advise each person that you will allow them to say what is on their minds – there will be no dirty looks from you or any penalty now, or in the future.
- To be eligible for your \$50, send me a note telling me when your meeting is going to be held at bill@caswellccc.com. (Then, of course, contact me after the meeting, if it flops.)
- Advise people before the meeting what the topic is about.
- Select only one topic for this experiment. Here are some ideas, but it would be better if you come up with your own:
 - Sales are not growing as fast as we would like
 - The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing
 - We are not communicating well
 - Morale is down
- Lead the session yourself, having a flipchart and marker available.

**Strategic
Planning Seminar**
November 28, 2013

8 am till 11 am
Sheraton Ottawa Hotel
\$177 + HST

Over a hot breakfast, learn step-by-step how to develop your own planning strategy that looks down the road 6 months, 12 months, 2 years, as well as 5 years ahead. Take home a planning manual with you so you can institute this program, yourself.

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\$10,000
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Bill Caswell is always available for comments or questions at
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- Ask for ideas, any ideas about the topic.
- Stress that you are not looking for solutions at this stage, just any idea around the topic.
- Give people 5 minutes at the start to write their own thoughts down on paper alone – without conversing with anyone else.
- No names. Not: “Harry is not selling”, but, “Sales are down.”
- Ask people if they are ready to share some of their list items.
- Your intention is to list them on the flipchart, without your own comment whatsoever. (While you can put up your own thoughts as well, do it at the end.) NEVER comment on any participants’ thought.
- Begin with one member of your team, who you know will speak up.
- Progress systematically around the room, member by member, in the order in which they are seated from the starting person, (not in the order of raising their hands).
- Allow only one idea at a time, but keep circulating one by one around the room to collect second and third, etc., ideas.
- Instruct people that they may pass when their turn comes if they do not have a further idea. (We actually request them say the name of the person next to them, as they pass the baton, so to speak.)
- Instead of allowing debate on an idea, list Sarah’s idea even if it is the exact opposite of dear George’s. Tell people, at this stage, you are merely listing ideas, not organizing them, not debating them, not prioritizing them, not judging them – just listing them.
- As you fill each flipchart sheet, stick it on the wall with masking tape so people can read it for more inspiration.
- Therefore, write LARGE and somewhat legibly, if you wish to inspire others.
- Keep going around the room, one by one, until there seem to be no more ideas. Then, even after apparently done, circulate around once more to make sure. And if you do get an extra idea, circulate yet again all around. You are done when a complete circulation has no response. (We actually circulate three times to be sure.)

To win your bet, you need to ask people before they begin, how many ideas they have about this topic and take a count. Then, when done with the session, you need to count the ideas to see the difference that the group can make. More important for you as the leader, how many ideas on this topic came out of this group compared with your own solitary ideas about it? That would best reflect the power of the group. Later, look over all those ideas and perhaps you can review them yourself or with a few key people in your organization, debate them and bring them closer to a solution.

Our point is that when we (or you) conduct planning sessions, ideas flow forth at a great pace, leading us to action items and real solutions.

Best of luck!!!

Bill
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