

Using AIDDA in the One on Ones

PURPOSE

The purpose of the One on One (OOO) meeting is to provide individual follow-up with the trainees which will ensure their understanding and ability act on concepts and applications presented in the workshop. The OOO is a fundamental element of the training approach. Effective training does not begin and end in the training room. Rather, it begins and ends with trainees' ability and willingness to improve the way they manage their work and their team. In particular, it is an opportunity to discuss trainees' implementation of the action assignment given in the workshops, to provide any necessary coaching to complete the assignments, and to coach for individual leadership development opportunities. It is the trainer's responsibility to sell the benefits of making positive, proactive changes in the way trainees manage their work.

PROCEDURE

We know that the training we offer is a sales process. We are selling the benefits of making positive, proactive change in management behavior. We also know that the most basic and most effective framework for taking another person through a sales process is the AIDDA formula. What will the trainees be asking themselves as you proceed together through the OOO meeting? The AIDDA formula helps us understand our trainees' perspectives so that we may appropriately address their questions and concerns. Once we understand this perspective, we must use specific strategies which will allow us to guide the trainees toward action. The following narrative will first describe the AIDDA formula from the trainees' perspective, then will provide strategies for the trainer to use in coaching the trainees towards action.

AIDDA: The Trainees' Perspective

The AIDDA formula is a 5 steps through process experienced by the trainees when new ideas or proposals to act are being presented. It is outlined as follows:

Step	Question from Trainees
ATTENTION:	Do I respect you?
INTEREST:	What can you do for me or my situation?
DESIRE:	Can you support your claim?
DECISION:	Is this the best thing to do now?
ACTION:	I will act. Now? When?

AIDDA: Strategies for building common ground.

In the context of the OOO meeting, your goal as the trainer/coach is to ensure action. The trainees will provide you with information which will identify areas of opportunity for improving their managerial skills and abilities. In order to do your best job of serving the trainees' needs, you need to think like a sales person. You are looking for every opportunity to sell the trainees your assistance and services in making positive changes in behavior. **If you have done your homework up front, you will have several things working in your favor as you walk into the meeting:**

1. **ATTENTION:** You have already established a rapport with this person in the training session, so they have, at the least, a basic sense of respect.
2. **INTEREST:** You have the endorsement of the organization's top management as to the importance/value of the training.
3. **DESIRE:** You are in the trainees' work space, or their comfort zone, which gives you plenty of opportunity to ask probing, "why" questions about how work functions in their area of operation. After all, you are a relative newcomer to the area, and your curiosity is normal. You can provide the trainees with a sense of urgency regarding existing situations which are ineffective, but which the trainee has gotten "used to" dealing with.
4. **DECISION:** You have asked the trainees to complete an action assignment which takes the concepts and applications from the workshop out onto the floor.
5. **ACTION:** The trainees understands that you are expecting their assignments to be completed by the time you arrive for the one on one.

These are the elements of the process which should be in place before you get to the trainees' workspace for the first OOO meeting. The work you do to:

- (a) set realistic and clear expectations in the first training session about the function of and procedure for OOOs, and
- (b) appropriately plan and schedule OOO appointments in a professional and deliberate manner, will allow for your success in the actual OOO setting.

As you plan for the first meeting, you want to be thinking of ways to structure that interaction so as to build common ground with the trainees. If we see ourselves as having opposing goals, views or objectives about the meeting, we will not succeed in moving the trainees toward taking action which will both improve their situation, and enable them to be more positive and proactive in the future.

Clearly, there will be situations in which you know that a trainee is not looking forward to your visit, or is non-compliant, or has attempted several times to reschedule with you in the hopes that eventually you will just go away. Your job in this situation is to **CREATE** common ground. In order to do that, you must be able to ask strategic probing questions at each phase of the AIDDA process, identify where the lack of common ground stems from, and build a bridge between your two opposing positions. This will

require active listening skills on your part. You need to have a strong understanding of your own purpose, paired with a keen sense of empathy which will allow you to understand, from the trainees' perspective, why a trainee (regardless of whether or not you personally would make the same choices as they do) would be motivated to take the action you are suggesting. What's in it for the trainees?

The following guide is designed to give you potential probing questions which may help you understand:

- (1) if you and the trainees have common ground and,
- (2) if not, why not. Where in the AIDDA process did the common ground break down, and what aspect do you need to revisit in order to rebuild a common sense of purpose.

ATTENTION: Do I respect you?

Sample questions.....

FRONT TALK – establish a positive, friendly environment

How are you doing? *I like and respect you. I care about how things go for you. I am interested in you as a person.*

FRAMING

What have you been working on since the last time we met? *We are here to discuss your work-related progress. I am interested in your work, and I want to learn about what goes on within your sphere of control. I respect your position as manager/supervisor of this area.*

Talk to me about your impressions of the last session? *Demonstrate your interest in the trainees' perspective. What they think makes a difference to you, and informs the way you do your work. Your primary purpose is to provide the service most needed and desired by the trainees. I am inviting you into my work space as well. Allowing you to see that we are both interested in reflecting on and improving our performance. Shake up the power dimension. Demonstrate that you are a real person.*

INTEREST: What can you do for me and my situation?

Sample Questions.....

What actions have you taken/do you plan to take in your work area as a result of the issues we discussed in the last session?

I assume that you have made some changes, and that you are interested and on board.

How are you doing on your Action Assignments?

We need to assess the current situation. If the trainees is non-compliant, make sure they understand that you are not going to judge them for that. Rather you are going to help get them going on their assignments, and that you will coach them on how to take the required action. You're sending the message that:

- (1) you will work with them regardless of the progress they have made and,*
- (2) you are there to help them go forward. Focus on the future – in particular their future development as leaders in the organization.*

(If non-compliant) What has prevented you from taking action as agreed in the session? If a participant is non-compliant, we need to understand what they see as barriers to taking action. As they describe their rationale for non-compliance, we come to understand whether this is a training/skills issue, or a motivational issue (refer to Task Achievement – Can/Will/Can't/Won't).

If the participant does not see the value of the workshop application, and is not motivated to complete it, we have the opportunity to sell the benefits of the action assignment. This requires first and foremost that we have done our part by effectively designing an action assignment that addresses the needs of the trainees.

DESIRE: Can you support your claim?

From your perspective, why did I ask you to do this assignment?

This is a chance to ask the trainees to reflect and articulate why you are asking them to take action as agreed in the session. Turn the tables briefly, and ask this person to participate in answering their own question. First, be clear with yourself on your motivation: Are you simply a task master, or have you developed an understanding of the need for action based on the input of managers and supervisors over the last several weeks?

The participant may take this opportunity to raise objections to the validity of taking the specific action in their area:

“It would be nice to have the time to do this sort of thing, but we've been really busy.”

I've noticed that you have been busy lately. What types of problems are you handling lately?

Probe to identify if this person is in a reactive or firefighting mode, or if they have been busy doing direct supervision (8 supervisory behaviors) or proactive planning. If not, you may want to use this opportunity to emphasize that the management tools we are offering will assist them in becoming less reactive and feeling less “swamped”.

“We already use [insert assignment] in my area, and have been doing it for years.”

That's really interesting. Will you show me how it's working out on the floor? Is this something that you can present to the group next time so that everyone can utilize your strategy?

Demonstrate your interest in celebrating the success of the participant. If they are having great success using tools for proactive management, ask them to act by providing those tools to their peers. Most of all, get out on the floor and show that you are interested in seeing the real picture of their operation.

As we've talked today, you've helped me to understand a great deal about how you manage your area. Of the concerns you have mentioned today, what are the things that you can control?

Help the trainees to expand their sphere of control by identifying the actions that are available to them to take today. If it's within their control, work through a SMART action plan for implementing a desired change. If it's outside of their control, assist them in filling out a Progress Alert report, or assist them in planning for an effective confrontation with the person or people who are in control of the situation.

DECISION: Is this the best thing to do now?

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.....

It never feels like the right time to plan. If we waited for a good time to plan, we'd never get around to it. Now that you have provided tools and established a potential course of action, break the action down into smaller actions which the participant feels that they can reasonable handle on a daily basis. Provide the possibility for early success.

How many more crazy days are you willing to go through?

By this time, the participant should have acknowledged that they do have a measure of control over the situations that are keeping them from being as effective as they would like to be. Create a situation in which they can begin taking action today, no matter how small the first step.

ACTION: I will act. Now? When?

Now that we've developed a plan of action, does it seem reasonable that you could dedicate X amount of time per day/week/month to get to your solution?

You have worked together to:

- (1) agree that a problem exists
- (2) define the problem
- (3) examine alternative solutions and,
- (4) choose the best solution.
- (5) implement the best solution
- (6) evaluate the results
- (7) communicate the results

It is now up to the trainees to take the next step in the 7 step problem solving process. Agree to a time when action will be taken and FOLLOW-UP appropriately (either before

action or just after....whatever is more suitable to the situation). Revise the plan as necessary, but follow up to ensure that the process is completed.

EVALUATION

These guidelines by no means provide an exhaustive list of all the possible probing questions to utilize in a one on one meeting. They do, however, indicate some key moves that the trainer makes during the meeting in order to encourage a participant toward positive, proactive management behavior. As you work through your one on one experiences, you will develop a repertoire of questioning strategies that work well for you, and which allow you to execute the steps of the AIDDA process.

Remember that we too must continually evaluate our performance as we complete our work. After the one on one, ask yourself:

- (1) What went well in the one on one? And,
- (2) What could I have done better?

Use the AIDDA steps to guide your self-evaluation.

Did you:

ATTENTION: Build liking and respect?

INTEREST: Demonstrate that you are invested in the trainees and their situation?

DESIRE: Develop the trainees' understanding of your proof of claim?

DECISION: Create a sense of urgency for taking action?

ACTION: Gain commitment to take the action needed?

If you and your trainees were not successful in developing an appropriate course of action, where did the process break down? Start at the bottom of the list (ACTION) and work upwards until you identify the point at which you lost common ground.

If you fail to build liking and respect, you won't get the interest, desire, decision or action. If you build liking, respect and interest, but fail to demonstrate your proof of claim, you will not motivate the participant to act. If you agree on an appropriate course of action, but fail to generate a sense of urgency, your meeting may result in a "feel good" sensation for the trainees, but will lack the substantial action necessary to make the changes.

A consistent application of the AIDDA formula, paired with effective evaluation and follow-up will allow for our success.