Straight Talk Accountability and Results (S.T.A.R.)

Two-Day Course

Workshop Overview
Business Rationale

Straight Talk teaches *direct, assertive communication* that creates raised productivity, harmonious work relationships, greater accountability, increased voicing of innovative ideas, and improved results for individuals, teams, and companies.

Managers, professionals and executives have both *task*-related and *people* problems that drain their time, energy, results, morale, job satisfaction, and health. For most of us, it's more often the people problems that keep us up at night, create stress, erode morale, and lower results.

Interpersonal astuteness and skills comprise a key competency differentiating great from good or average performers. Recent Gallup research found that only 30% of corporate employees are "fully engaged," and that most identify the key detractor as their boss. It's common sense, but not always common practice to improve interpersonal communication, or handle people problems with confidence and competence.

Workshop Deliverables

- Prework Learning Packet previewing the *Straight Talk* Model and Mindset with *Conversation Formats* to make various communication situations efficient.

- Multi-colored, graphic-filled, and content-rich *Workbook* containing teaching slides, activities, and multiple learning resources.

- Online *Straight Talk Skills Assessment* to compare pre-course and post-course interpersonal performance.

- Reinforcement job aids such as 30 Weekly *Application Emails*, each with a tip and task to apply the skills and the *Straight Talk Meeting Toolbox*, a manager's resource for increasing participation and honesty in meetings.

2-day Course Learning Goals
Core Interpersonal Savvy Skills

- Ownership and *accountability* for constructive communication, even in challenging situations.

- Confidence and empowerment in one-on-one and group communication situations, with behaviors that are *assertive* rather than *passive* or *aggressive*.

- Less "*bailing out*" of tough conversations in more relationship-driven company cultures, and *less abrasiveness* in competitive company climates.

- Consistently *appropriate* honesty, rather than blindly brutal, naive, or unwise honesty.

- Stellar *active listening* skills to raise understanding, convey empathy, and reduce costly listening errors.

Smooth and Rough Applications

- Efficient *smooth sailing conversation formats* to conduct more straightforward conversations: (1) gaining commitments to results, goals, or ideas, (2) consulting or advising others,(3) reminding about milestones or agreements.

- Powerful *rough sailing conversation formats* for more emotional, volatile situations: (1) giving tough feedback for improvement, (2) challenging ideas or saying "no,"(3) forging group commitments and handling resistance, (4) confronting problem behavior/ performance.

- *Managing defensiveness* or *resistance*, staying calm, defusing reactions, and refocusing conversations.

- *Sustainability strategies* and *reinforcement job aids* to help you model *Straight Talk* in meetings, as well as teach, coach, and cultivate best practices in communication skills within your company's culture.

Outline and Practices

Day One

Smooth Sailing Applications

The *Straight Talk* Vision
An engaging view of the learning outcomes, and a business rationale for the direct, fair, accountability-based communication called *Straight Talk*.

The *Straight Talk* Mindset
Participant pairs discuss where they fall along the *Straight Talk Continuum* of Passive, Aggressive, or Assertive, explore mental blocks to more constructive communication, and accept personal accountability for increased *Straight Talk*.

Assertive, Passive or Aggressive?
With negative and positive "Lightning Round" drills, the group learns precise Visual, Vocal, and Verbal behaviors for three classic communication modes.

Assertive Speaking (A.B.C.'s)
Many energizing activities and drills teach foundational skills of *Assertive Delivery* and *Appropriate Honesty* versus brutal or non-tactful expression, *Behavioral Language* versus loaded wording (including curbing "flaming e-mails," and *Checking Reactions* versus monologuing.

Active Listening (F.E.E.)
Learning *Focusing*, *Exploring*, and *Empathizing Skills* in intensive drills, including our signature "Fishbowl" format, where the trainer works one-on-one with participants for direct feedback.

Smooth Sailing Applications
Participants blend core speaking and listening skills with efficient *Conversation Formats* to (1) gain commitments, (2) consult and advise, and (3) remind about milestones and commitments that may have fallen off-track. Many different activities and drills ground participants in the structure and skills for such meetings.

Day Two

Rough Sailing Applications

Templates for Tougher Conversations
Throughout Day Two, we provide participants with step-by-step *Conversation Formats*, tips, skills and extensive practice experience for emotional situations with higher threat: (1) *giving feedback* for improvement, (2) *challenging ideas* or disagreeing, (3) *forging group commitments* when you manage resistance or challenges, and (4) *confronting* problem behaviors.

Understanding Defensiveness
Dynamic presentations and activities help the group see dynamics of volatile reactions, take them less personally, and avoid getting "hooked" or thrown off.

Defusing Defenses & Resistance
Fun, dynamic presentations, pairs drills, and dramatic live demonstrations teach proven skills for defusing volatile reactions and refocusing discussions away from manipulative, aggressive reactions. Each participant drills one-on-one with a trainer in a second "Fishbowl" drill.

"Thin Ice" and Empty Commitments
Participants learn to better manage soft, insincere, "I'll try..." claims to address issues and fix problems they confront. There is a final, cumulative "rough sailing" practice to integrate all the skills.

Building a *Straight Talk* Culture
We frankly confront the back-home culture and give reinforcement tools such as: *Straight Talk Meeting Tools* to raise team safety, a course debriefing agenda, action plan sheets, an online assessment to track course results, weekly application e-mails, and scripts for teaching the skills to one's team.

Lack of interpersonal savvy leads to losses...

To Organizations:
› Lack of personal accountability

› Performance gaps

› Less innovationand fewer new ideas

› Eroded work relationships due to cop-outs or bullying others

› Reduced feedbackand conflict resolution

› Work climates of resentment versus commitment

To Individuals:
› Failure to speak up, voice ideas, or get your needs met

› Decreased energyand physical health

› Lower morale and job engagement

› Lower confidence and self-respect

> **STRAIGHT TALK IS ALSO AVAILABLE AS A ONE-DAY CLINIC WITH FEWER DRILLS AND APPLICATIONS**