



## The Right Question

*An article on corporate habituation*

There is a picture hanging in my house depicting a Mexican community, very pleasing to the eye with vibrant colours inside an intricate border. When I first bought the picture, I admired it almost daily, very proud and appreciative. After a while it became part of the painted wall. Every now and then I remind myself how much I like it.

In psychology Habituation is described as “a decrease in response to a stimulus after repeated presentations” (psychology.about.com); the ticking of a clock, post-it note reminders on the fridge, a lack of variety in training techniques or ‘this time it will be different’ speeches from football managers or cabinet ministers. Repetition is an effective form of messaging in marketing, teaching or discipline; but there comes a point when the repetition becomes white noise and the messages are then stagnant.

There was a time when every email received in the inbox of an office worker was an ‘event’, something to marvel at like an unexpected and exciting letter in the post. But twenty years or so of emailing has eroded our capacity for attention and so its effectiveness depends on the sender, the content, the length, the introduction and possibly whether a telephone call or face to face discussion comes before or after it.

### The Energy of Conversation



In the world of business, it is easy to forget that there are many other ways to convey a message; posters with photographs or cartoons, video newsletters, interactive seminars and animated conversations generated by lively workshops. Striking images can pull us in and hold our attention much like the mind magnets they put in Smart phones.



# The Energy of Conversation

Dedicated to Learning & Improvement

In an organisation there are several examples of habituation in the working day and what originates as an important message evaporate into a another lesser *form* and hence produces the effect of that new form:

Policies on a notice board → *Wallpaper*

Company presentations → *Adverts*

Emailed memos → *Junk Mail*

What then occurs is a 'disconnect' between top management and staff. It's often the case that members of staff are sitting on conscious or sometimes



unconscious ideas waiting to be ignited by 'the right question'. And this is how I believe a company can prevent habituation at work. Asking questions to initiate change and trigger improvement can help repair the corporate disconnect.

**ARTICLE BY:** *David Finney*

**CARTOONS BY:** *Clive Wakfer*

#psychology #performancecoaching #qualityauditing #continualimprovement

FOLLOW ME ON 



 Like



## The Energy of Conversation

Dedicated to Learning & Improvement

[www.TheEnergyofConversation.co.uk](http://www.TheEnergyofConversation.co.uk)