

Soft Skills Workshops – feedback from participants

The S factor – Mindset for success

Halina 'gets' people and cleverly helps them to recognise their own behaviours and identify what's holding them and their businesses back.

Louise Ladbroke Growth Manager Business West

The Big Con – Confidence

What a marvellous afternoon, thank you. I wasn't going to attend as my sole intention was to only provide the facilities here and 'crack on' with my work. However, Claire challenged me on investing my time on me for a change and 'bingo' light bulb moment! I have implemented by acting and 'having it out' with my boss in a structured positive way. Onwards and upwards. Come back soon.

PA to Area Director, South West SME Banking Lloyds Banking Group

I think the time you invested in my colleagues in the room was greatly appreciated and it was wonderful to hear so many positive actions being taken away from it. I have taken great learning away from this as I now know I need to consider far more how I present an answer and also if I feel I haven't been understood then I will ensure I make the chance to re-word myself until I am understood.

I have recently finished reading 'Mindsets' by Carol Dweck and enjoyed hearing you use some of her theories in your workshop. I also understand that my 'fixed mindset' will not have helped my situation (so I know it is me that is at fault) and this is something I am desperate to change. Thank you again for your session. I hope that Women's Breakthrough Network will hold more like this in the future.

Consultant - Community Banks | Retail Learning | Colleague Experience and Conduct | Lloyds Banking Group

Networking better Better networking

Many thanks for this. I found the workshop really helpful and await business cards that are on order. Over the last few weeks I have been doing serious house hunting, as my house is sold. I found meeting a lot of new estate agents a perfect opportunity to perfect the handshake/greeting, and it gave me a huge amount of confidence. Long story short, I have now negotiated to buy a fab house (in Backwell) despite being a lower offer than some by over £5K - result. Obviously I made a good connection with the agent. Now I have a very interesting planning case to keep an eye on!

Secondary School Administrator

Up front & personal – deliver the perfect presentation for Women in Property

I was pleasantly surprising at the refreshing honesty and nature of your seminar today, it was like nothing I've ever been to before and I've certainly taken lots away with me. I await your next session with much eagerness.

Lawyer

Changing mindset for more effective engagement and communication

You will recall I committed to 'change what I want' in respect of a difficult work situation. There has been a result in that, following our weekly senior team meeting, another colleague (who did not know about my decision) said, "I liked your attitude in that meeting. It was firm and it worked." I am surprised that my mental shift was so obvious to others. Halina's approach obviously pays dividends.

Women in Management Steering Committee member

Transformational Conversations: workshop for high performing national sales executives Lloyds banking Group

You have the right to remain silent was my most valuable discovery.

Mortgage Manager, Manchester & Merseyside

Following on from the sessions held by Halina, I took on board really listening to my customers and not talking over them. I didn't think I was really too guilty of the latter but perhaps I was doing it more than I realised?

A particular example I can recall is one where I interviewed a customer who I can specifically remember as the interview 'flowed like a dream'.

After building up rapport I asked the customer how I could help and I found that by sitting back and just listening, he provided me with all the information I needed to enable me to make a recommendation without me asking prompting questions. When interviewing for a mortgage and giving advice, there is an advice form which I don't follow word for word and question one after the other but do use it as a guide. With this particular customer I listened to him intently, maintained eye contact, as opposed to jotting things down and found that I knew exactly what type of mortgage he required without even referring to Advice Form. I achieved this just by listening not butting in.

I know this wouldn't work with every customer as some of them do go off on a tangent and have to be brought back into line but I find myself listening much more intently and not being afraid of silence either whilst I'm thinking of what next to ask or whilst giving the customers time to think whilst I've asked them a question.

I continue to listen and have found Halina's training both interesting and useful.

Commercial Financial Planning Manager, Mayfair

I have noticed that by actually listening to the client and **giving them the chance to think** about what I have just asked them, I have managed to cut down my interview time as they seem to overcome most of the objections they would normally challenge me with by themselves.

It's as simple as asking the right questions that relates to what they have just told me and allowing them the time to really think about their answer!! Not only have I reduced my interview time I also seem to get bigger commitments from them, this self-discovery means they now realise even more the importance of protection and are as not bothered by cost!

Commercial Advisor Manchester & Merseyside

I have to say that Transformational Conversations has helped me tremendously! As an example, in July I have written 23,000 Vacs from 30 sales which is the best month of my career. Whilst I like to think I was capable of this performance without the course (following on from the Sales Mentoring Programme), I would say it is too much of a coincidence to say that the new techniques haven't played a major part in these results.

In terms of what I am doing differently I would say that I **now resist wherever possible butting in** when customers are talking and finishing off their sentences as I am horrified to admit I used to do! This means I **listen more and talk less** which means the conversation is on the customers' agenda. In addition, I am much more comfortable with using both silence and eye contact and this has given the customers more time to respond to questions and therefore their answers are much more insightful. It also means I can digest their answers before moving on to the next question.

I have made these changes because I recognised from the course the mistakes I was making and the value of putting them right. I thank Halina for this because as someone who has interviewed customers for 20 years it is too easy to believe that I know it all and have nothing to learn.

I use these techniques in all interactions with customers and colleagues and always review in my mind afterwards what went well and what I could do better so hopefully this will lead to continuous improvement. (Feel free to stop me if I interrupt you when next we chat!)

The only disadvantage is that my interviews are taking slightly longer so time management is even more important - but when the results are this good it's a small price to pay.

Commercial Financial Adviser, Manchester & Merseyside

Following the workshop, I have changed 2 areas: Silence and deeper listening. Both work perfectly together. In regard to listening, I now **actually listen** to what is being said, not formulating my next question but understanding what is being said and why?

This means that because I am listening and not 'jumping in' with my next question, I listen to the answer and then start to formulate the next question. This in turn creates a silence, which the customers tend to fill by enhancing their answer and so forth.

It means that as an advisor **you get more information out of the customer** and therefore your questions can become more 'targeted and powerful'. The silences can be a little 'awkward' at first- but it is surprising how long you can hold the silence. The reward is fully understanding the customer and their circumstances. The overall benefit is more sales/multi-sales as when you understand the customer better you can give better advice.

The good thing is that from a practical point of view, most training is based upon word patterns and what to say and when to say it, whereas this is simple... listen.

Commercial Financial Adviser South Yorks & Lincs

I have started to notice a big difference since the day in Bristol as I have worked on stopping myself from jumping in to 'fill the silence' and giving them an easy way out instead of making the customer think. It's still work in progress but already I have noticed that I get totally different answers compared with when I'd open my mouth previously. I actually feel that I am **getting to the customers real concerns / issues** and knowing what these are allows me to focus on the customer's needs and real issues.

Commercial Financial Adviser South Yorks & Lincs