

# **Understanding the Impact of a Climate Intervention: An Executive Summary of Speranzini's 1997 Master's Project**

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## **Project Description and Guiding Questions**

This project described the author's personal assessment of the process of debriefing the SOQ (*Situational Outlook Questionnaire*) to a leader within a single organization (Speranzini, 1997). Outcomes of the project included various key-learnings and recommendations for the debriefing process.

The questions that guided the project were:

- 1) *What impact does a debrief of the SOQ have on a single leader and his/her organization?*
- 2) *What are the implications of these data for developing debriefing skills when using the SOQ?*

## **Project Setting**

An organizational leader requested from the author a survey to help improve his leadership skills and behaviors. The author recommended the SOQ as an appropriate assessment for the leader's request. Twenty of the organization's employees, including the leader, completed the SOQ. For two years the author worked with the leader in understanding and implementing organizational changes as recommended by the

assessment's results. Due to a confidentiality agreement, actual quantitative and qualitative results were excluded from the report.

## **Methodology**

During the two years, the author used the Debriefing Process as the primary method for communicating and managing the assessment's results with the leader. Debriefing is a method of reflecting on an experience by exploring what was observed, felt, or learned (Speranzini). Both the content and process characteristics of the debriefing experience were examined. Data for the debriefing process were collected using video documentation of the SOQ debrief session, a process log, and follow-up interview with the leader. Speranzini used the technique of triangulation and constant comparison to analyze the debriefing-process

## **Findings**

The findings were presented as key-learnings based on data collected and analyzed from the video, process log, and follow-up interview. Analysis of the data involved labeling and sorting various process and content elements such as: Types of questions asked, responses, agenda and time allocations, body language, tone and emotion. The following key-learnings were expressed in the project.

### *1) Time and Agenda*

1.5-2 hrs. were adequate for a debrief, consisting of the following agenda:

- Overview of the measure
- Quantitative results
- Qualitative results

- Recommendations
- Summary
- Extending

2) *Key-Learnings from the Video*

- Planning and preparing for a debrief involved careful consideration of various process and content elements.
- A clear understanding of each person's role in the debriefing process was essential.
- Debriefing required unique skills to be effective, such as the ability to create psychologically-safe settings for participants.
- Video documentation helped in understanding the verbal and nonverbal interactions.

3) *Key-Learnings from the Process Log*

- Task-appraisal was important in developing clear objectives and goals for the debrief.
- It was important to prepare the debrief by carefully planning the main points and probing questions.
- Time needs of the participant should be considered for them understanding the information, and subsequent debriefing may be necessary.

#### 4) *Key-Learnings from the Follow-up Interview*

- The leader became more aware of: The importance of employee participation throughout the decision making process, the need for positive feedback, and the value of organizational communication.
- The leader experienced changes in attitudes, behaviors and activities in the organization after the SOQ intervention. Examples included decision making through consensus, more communication of company objectives and financial reports, and training in problem solving.
- More people contributed to the daily operations of the business by looking for ways to improve their work.
- Employees showed more interest and motivation in their work.
- Employee relationships were better.

From the key-learnings, the author addressed the implications of the above data for developing debriefing skills when using the SOQ.

#### **Recommendations for Debriefing**

The following are recommendations for the SOQ debriefing process based on the author's experience

- Set clear goals and objectives for the debriefing session.
- Prepare the debrief by planning the main points and probing questions.
- Prepare an agenda and process plan that includes the SOQ overview, presentation of quantitative and qualitative data, recommendations, summary, and extending.
- Incorporate probing questions that stimulate reflective thoughts about results

- Bring supportive documentation of the assessment.
- Establish a safe and open climate by ensuring confidentiality, freedom of choice around participation, respect, anonymity, discussions of positive and negative content, deferred judgment, and consideration of other's feelings.
- Consider the time needs of the participant in understanding the information, as subsequent debriefing may be necessary and correct.
- Use experiential learning techniques to enhance the debriefing process.
- Know the content you're debriefing.
- SOQ should be followed through with a real initiative to use the results.

## **References**

Speranzini, G. D. (1997). *Understanding the impact of a climate intervention: Debriefing the situational outlook questionnaire*. Unpublished master project, State University of New York Buffalo State College, Center for Studies in Creativity.

## **Additional Reading**

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