

THE 7 WONDERS OF THE BANKING WORLD

Namely, 7 Things I Wonder About the Participants I Meet in Banking Seminars

I spend a *lot* of time in the classroom teaching bankers, and other staff in financial services companies, how to achieve the best outcomes for our businesses and our industry. Whether at a major banking school, a state banking association, a "corporate university" for a credit function, or delivering custom seminars for individual clients, **there are several preconceptions, habits, and attitudes I encounter again and again**, and . . .

. . . **they make me wonder!** When I meet these kinds of participants . . .

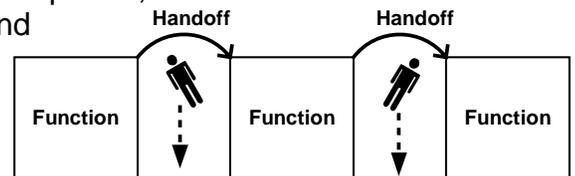
1. I wonder, **Where do they get the idea that faster = better?** Efficiency is a wonderful thing, and it is important to our success, there is no doubt about that. But efficiency is not the only thing. Taking the least possible time to do something is not *sufficient* to give you a competitive advantage.

Whether on a call to technical support, customer service, or any other function inside or outside your organization, I am sure you have been treated "efficiently" -- think "automated voice menu" -- to the point that it made your blood boil!

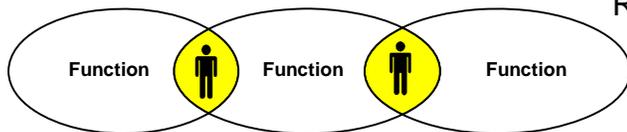
Efficiency is not an end, but a means, not a goal in itself, but part of the equation that leads to success.

2. I wonder, **Why do they spend so much time talking about "handoffs"?** That kind of language just brings to mind the childhood game of "hot potato," as if bank staff were trying to get rid of the customer (or task) as quickly and cleanly as possible.

Handoffs are a great opportunity to drop the customer.



Instead of focusing on getting rid of the customer cleanly, or of snatching the customer from the previous function as quickly as possible, why not stress the time you *share* the customer between functions?



Remember, the customer belongs to the organization! **Instead of taking the risk of dropping customers' concerns, needs, and desires, think about how to increase support for the customer by sharing the load.**

3. I wonder, **Why do they assume that the facilitator should be the hardest-working person in the classroom?** I've been at this business for decades, and if there is one thing I know, it is that I can't *teach* you a thing.

But I can *help you learn!* If you typically wonder, at the start of a seminar, what the teacher is going to do to make you better at your job, throw away that question!

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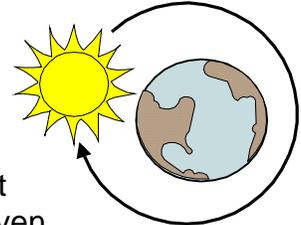
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By the way, this isn't *just* about training. The same attitude works against producing results from staff meetings and other management activities . . .

Next time, take a few minutes before class to wonder, What can I do to make sure I bring back something that will really make a difference in my work?

4. I wonder, **Do they think Copernicus was wrong, and that the sun really goes around the earth?** Probably not, but a surprising number of them think that the entire company revolves around their particular function.

These people are fairly easy to recognize. They don't want to know much about other functions, but they expect people in those other departments to learn a lot about what *they* do. They complain about what other staff do, or don't do, that has an impact on their work, but they don't spend much time thinking about how shared effort, and even some mutual sacrifice and inconvenience, can do more to reach the goals of the entire organization. **Know your organization, not just your job!**



5. I wonder, **How did they decide that "communication" is the same as "talking"?** Talk to managers, supervisors, front-line employees at any level of the organization, and they will nod their heads enthusiastically when you suggest that communication is essential to their success. But what do they think "communication" means?

Most of the time, it seems to mean "getting the message out." But what about *incoming* information? What about responses to your message, including disagreements with your goals, or your methods for achieving them?

Talking with your fingers in your ears can be fun, but it isn't *communication*. **The more listening you do, the better the communication AND the better the outcomes.**

6. I wonder, **Why do they keep looking for a more powerful microscope, when what they really need is a good "macroscope"?** I see students who return to an event year after year and enroll in the same subjects, always going deeper and deeper into the finer details of stuff they already know a lot about.



The problem is, they don't have the context they need to interpret the data they get, from their organization or from their customers. They really need to **learn about broader business and economic matters, about broader operational perspectives, and take a pass on that next course on same old, same old.**

7. I wonder, **What are they afraid of?** I meet participants who are afraid to ask questions, afraid to offer examples, afraid to answer questions, and above all, afraid to leave the secure company of the people they came with, or of other participants who are most like them, who do exactly the same kind of work.

They go to a major event in search of new ideas and new experiences, and then spend all their time hiding! Becoming better at your work, whatever your job title, takes some *guts*, so **make up your mind to jump in with new people, new courses, new instructors, new challenges!** And be prepared to take what you learn back to your organization!