

Principle: you start a discussion by

- (1) *creating the right atmosphere and avoiding distractions*
- (2) *outlining the CORPI of the discussion*
- (3) *asking if the other person agrees with this*

CLARIFICATION/DETAILS:

(1) Creating the right atmosphere and avoiding distractions

- Avoiding external distractions, creating a quiet setting for a discussion, having a 90° sitting position, taking enough time, having a drink, or breaking the ice by talking about generalities (e.g. the weather is not a bad starter, but also sport, politics, or your weekend). You can also say something about the circumstances which you have created for the discussion e.g. *"I've put my telephone off the hook and switched off my mobile phone. What about you? Was it easy to make some time for this discussion?"*
- Talk in a friendly manner, create a positive atmosphere, and use 'we' language (inclusive language). Here are some model openings:
 - *"I've been looking forward to this discussion and I'm glad we can make a start."*
 - *"Have you managed to do any preparation?"*
 - *"I hope that by the end of our discussion we'll have loads of new ideas."*
 - *"What do you think about this discussion?"*
 - *"Has anything else important happened since we made our appointment?"*

(2) Outlining the CORPI of the discussion

- Context: concentrate gradually on the subject of the discussion: outline the reason, the framework, and the history. Here are some examples:
 - "We've had some recent incidents and I asked you to investigate."*
 - "The project that you're co-ordinating could take on a broader scope at the request of the management."*
 - "We rounded off our previous discussion with ..."*
- Objective: outline the purpose of the discussion clearly (a joint or pro-social aim, if possible) or the desired result of the discussion e.g. *"What I'd like to see by the end of the discussion is that we can adopt a joint point of view regarding ..." " ... find a joint solution which we can both accept."*
- Role: if necessary, clarify your role e.g. *"Firstly, I'd like to hear from you how you wish to approach this project rather than tell you how I see it."*
- Procedure: suggest an approach/structure/procedure e.g. *"I suggest first of all that we make a list of possible solutions without assessing them immediately and then assess the advantages and disadvantages of these solutions and then make our choice and plan our actions."*
- Interaction: clarity in the above points will usually ensure a more effective discussion.

(3) Asking if the other person agrees with this

- *"Shall we approach it like that or do you have another suggestion?"*

