

USING THE G.R.O.W. MODEL TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Teaching people the G.R.O.W.¹ model helps them feel more confident and comfortable in managing effective conversations. Using this model, people can tackle complex issues more effectively because the discussion is organized in a way that everyone understands.

The G.R.O.W. model assumes that a logical sequence to a discussion is better than having people speak randomly. Here's how it works:

Goal

The "G" in G.R.O.W. stands for "goal." The first thing in any important conversation is to establish the goal of the discussion – and its connection to a larger goal for the organization. For example, let's assume the initial goal is defined as: "How to fix our web site." As you talk about the goal, it becomes clear that the real goal is to deal with all potential competitors who might try to copy your services using information from your web site. Talking first about the goal ensures people are oriented toward the real goal.

Reality

The "R" stands for "reality." The second thing people need to talk about is the current reality. What's going on? How did we get here? What do we know? What don't we know? Using the example, the reality may be that the web site was developed without sufficient attention to how easily competitors could copy sensitive information.

Options

The "O" stands for "options." This is the part that people typically jump to before they talk about the goal and the reality. What should we do? Hire a contractor? Change our management approach? Scrap the existing platform? Here's where people need to engage in creative brainstorming and share their ideas.

Will

Finally, the "W" in G.R.O.W. stands for "will" – as in what will we do? This is the time to decide on the next step. It can be the toughest part of the discussion, since people need to commit to action. If the decision is being made consultatively, one person can decide. If by consensus, it can take several rounds of asking each person what they would like to do. But ultimately, people are likely to come to agreement, at least on the next steps.

STEP	QUESTIONS TO ASK
Goal	<p>What is the issue you want to tackle?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the long term, what is your goal related to this issue? ▪ What is the time frame? ▪ What intermediate steps can you identify, with their time frames? ▪ What outcomes are you seeking by the end of this meeting?

¹ The G.R.O.W. model was introduced by John Whitmore in his book "Coaching for Performance." Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 1996.

Reality	<p>What is the present situation in more detail?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What and how great is your concern about it? ▪ Who is affected by this issue? ▪ How much control do you personally have over the outcome? ▪ What causes you the greatest concern? ▪ Who else has some control over the situation and how much? ▪ What action steps have you taken on it so far? ▪ What stopped you from doing more? ▪ What obstacles will need to be overcome? ▪ What, if any, internal obstacles or personal resistances do you have to taking action? ▪ What resources do you already have? Skill, time, enthusiasm, money, support, etc.? ▪ What is really the issue here, the nub of the issue or the bottom line?
Options	<p>What are the different ways you could approach this issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What else could you do? ▪ What would you do if you had more time, a larger budget or if you were the boss? ▪ What would you do if you could start again with a clean slate, with a new team? ▪ Make a list of all the alternatives, large or small, complete and partial solutions. ▪ What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these? ▪ Which would give the best result? ▪ Which of these solutions appeals to you most, or feels best? ▪ Which would create the most satisfaction?
Will	<p>Which option or options do you choose?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are your next steps? ▪ To what extent does this meet all your objectives? ▪ What could arise to hinder you in taking these steps? What are your criteria and measurements for success? ▪ When precisely are you going to start and finish each action step? ▪ What resistance will you encounter to taking these steps? ▪ What will you do to eliminate these external and internal factors? ▪ Who needs to know what your plans are? ▪ What support do you need and from whom? ▪ What will you do to obtain that support and when? ▪ What could your team members do to support you? ▪ What commitment on a one-to-ten scale do you have to taking these agreed actions? ▪ What prevents this from being a ten? ▪ What could you do or alter to raise your commitment closer to ten?