

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

The G.R.O.W. model helps people follow a logical sequence in thinking and discussing any topic or issue. It can help people feel more confident and comfortable facilitating complex conversations because the discussion is organized in a way that everyone understands.

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. Let's assume you are the facilitator. When you ask people to state the goal of the meeting, they may initially say it is to "fix our web site." As people talk further, it becomes clearer that the real goal is to prevent potential competitors from copying valuable information from your web site.

As the facilitator, you would say: "Based on our discussion, it's become clear that our first goal is to determine what changes we need to make to our website in order to prevent people from stealing valuable intellectual property."

Reality

The "R" stands for "current reality." The second thing people need to do is develop a shared understanding of the problem. Here's when you ask questions like: How did we get here? What do we know? What don't we know? Why is the status quo not acceptable? In this 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 current reality. What should we do? Hire a contractor? Change our management approach? Scrap the existing platform? Create a site available only to special clients and customers? Here's where people need to engage in creative brainstorming and share their ideas.

As the facilitator, you should ask questions and encourage people to offer specific ideas and solutions. You're not trying to decide what to do at this point – that comes next. You're just trying to hear everyone's 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, as the facilitator, you need to figure out what people think the next steps.

STEP	QUESTIONS TO ASK
Goal	<p>What is the issue we want to tackle?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the long term, what is our goal related to this issue? ▪ What is the time frame? ▪ What outcomes do we want by the end of this meeting?
Reality	<p>What is the present situation in more detail?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the background? ▪ Who is affected? ▪ What are the consequences if we do nothing? ▪ What causes us the greatest concern? ▪ Who has some control over the situation and how much? ▪ What steps have been taken so far? ▪ What stopped people from doing more? ▪ What obstacles need to be overcome? ▪ What is really the issue here, the nub of the issue or the bottom line?
Options	<p>What are some potential ways to approach this problem or solve it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are some options for solving this? ▪ 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? ▪ What are the advantages and disadvantages of each idea? ▪ Which would give the best result? ▪ Which of these solutions appeals to you most, or feels best? ▪ Which alternatives make the most sense to us at this time? ▪ What additional information would we like to have?
Will	<p>What are the next steps we need to take?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What do we need to do next? ▪ What further research needs to be done? ▪ Whom do we need to talk to? ▪ Who will do what by when? ▪ To what extent does this meet our objectives? ▪ What resistance could you encounter in taking these steps? ▪ What will you do to mitigate these external and internal factors? ▪ What support do you need and from whom? ▪ What will you do to obtain that support and when? ▪ When precisely are we going to start and finish each action step? ▪ What level of commitment do you have to taking these agreed actions on a 1-to-10 scale? ▪ What prevents this from being a ten? ▪ What could you do or alter to raise your commitment closer to ten?