

A Tale of Two Meetings

A different
approach to
problem
solving

A Tale of Two Meetings



yes!and...
FACILITATE, INNOVATE, TRANSFORM.

A Tale of Two Meetings

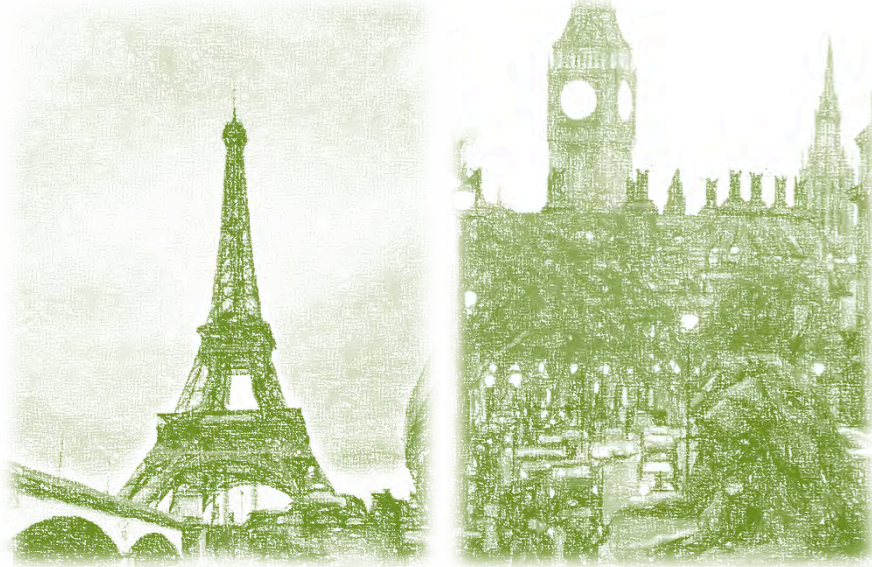
Author John Brooker



John joined Visa International in 1985, becoming a Senior Vice President in 1996. His speciality was service innovation and transformation. In 2001 he established Yes! And... and helps teams innovate and transform in a simpler way. Vastly experienced as a facilitator, he works regularly with multi cultural groups in Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

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The following is a true story related by Niklas Tiger, Managing Director of Hi5, an IT organization that provides outsourced IT services to customers over the Internet in Sweden.



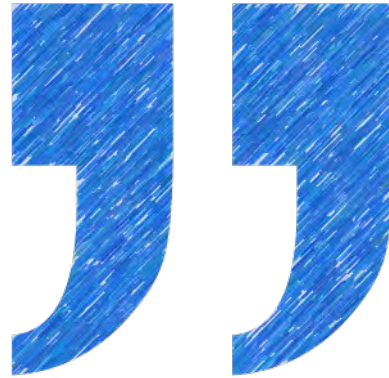
Hi5 is not a client of ours but Niklas has given us permission to use the story as an example of how the Solutions Focus approach to tackling problems can work.



We have slightly adapted the wording for clarity otherwise this is his story. Thanks also to Charles Dickens for the title suggestion.

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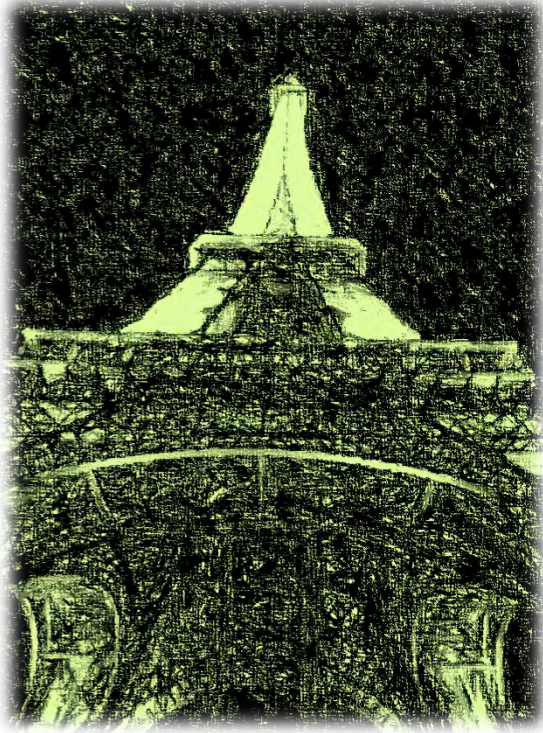
*“Solutions Focus
...really has
transformed our
company*



Implementing Solutions Focus (SF) as a way of managing change in our organization and also in collaboration with customers, really has transformed our company.

A very low tech down to earth example of this happened as recently as this morning, which is proof, that SF is able to make huge impact in the everyday life of any organisation. I describe what happened on the next page.

Meeting One



The Endless Definition

Seven people gathered in a meeting to discuss a potential security issue with our customer connected networks (making it secure is important of course).

What usually happened before our "SF era" began in January of 2012, also happened at the start of this meeting.

As soon as we had introduced the topic and free discussions began, we started to define the problem.

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Was
someone
to blame?”

The conversation went something like this:

“Is this really a problem?” *Some disagree that it is.*
“How much of a problem is it?” *There were many different ideas on that.* “What is the REAL problem?” *It turns out there are many potential security issues within the defined topic.*

“What other problems that are related can we also bring into the discussion?” *A few were suggested.* “Are those problems really connected?” *We couldn't agree.* “Why haven't we already done something about it? Was someone to blame...?” The list goes on...

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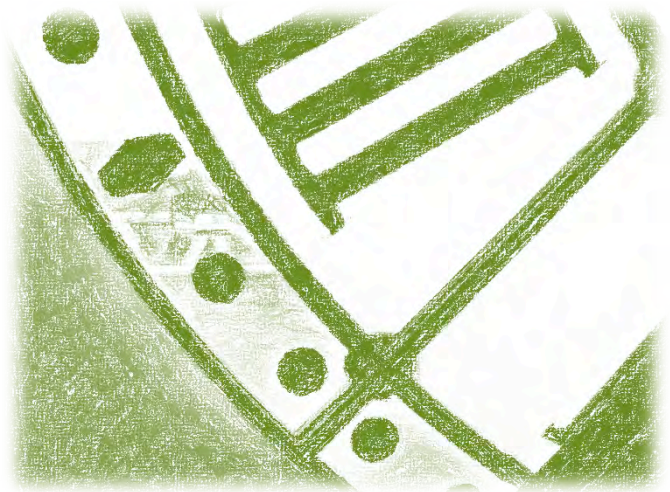


The Battle of Skills

... Our technical people are VERY skilled and where we usually end up is in an endless "battle of skills" focused on who can best define the problem using knowledge, experience, hearing what has happened elsewhere, or even the loudest voice as the ammunition.

Focus gradually shifts to winning the discussion and the reason for being there in the first place (actually creating some positive change) is forgotten about at the same time.

Time and Non Resolution



In the days before we began using SF, that would usually be where we would end our meeting, realizing we had run out of time. Maybe, in the worst case, we would hand out the task of finally deciding on what our real problem was to a smaller group, before we would get together for another meeting.

Eventually we would of course agree on something and move forward with some remedy for "the problem", but it was very time consuming and many times it would end up unresolved due to competition with the many other things that needed our time and attention.

Meeting Two

Well, now we have Solutions Focus and today was different! After 15 minutes of this problem talk, I realized what was about to happen.

So, I suggested we parked the "defining the problem" discussion for a minute.

Instead we turned our attention to what the situation would look like if we started out with a blank piece of paper and designed something new that was "the best of the best".

The Best
of the
Best



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From 3
Years to
5
Minutes



Where a minute before a handful of tech guys could agree on almost nothing, it took us only five minutes to identify the future perfect on which we all agreed.

My reflection on this was that I have probably heard our people defining this problem at least 20 times at different occasions over the past 2-3 years, but I have never heard anyone define the solution - and all the time it has been only five minutes away!?

A Move in the Right Direction



We then went on to identify what we already have in place that will help us move in the desired direction.

We found a couple of obvious factors along with ONE that very few knew about but that will be an essential building block in moving forward.



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Some Small Steps

Finally, we listed some possible next steps and ended up with many things we could do, both small and large.

We selected three that we can get on with immediately, where one of these was a first little step towards a bigger one identified.

We **ONLY** do small steps these days...

Big Smiles

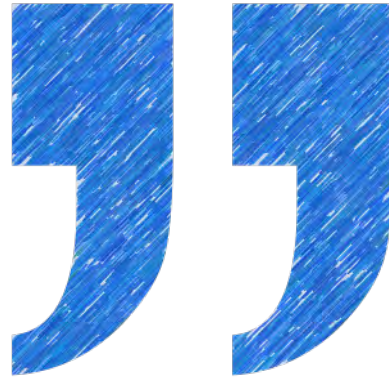


Before ending the meeting, I asked if anyone had anything to add. There was nothing! No more need to go back to define the problem. And the smile on people's faces told me that for the first time there was true belief that we would this time really "fix" the problem.

At least we had a very good beginning! The rest will be history in a couple of weeks - that I know by now!

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"We have used Solutions Focus since 2004 to help teams transform."



We trust this short tale has given you an insight in to how Solutions Focus can change the way you tackle change and challenges in your company, making it simpler and more efficient.

At Yes! And... we have used Solutions Focus since 2004 to help teams transform.

We use the “2/10 Approach”, a model that helps to clarify how you can use Solutions Focus, without being too formal a structure.

If you would like to find out more, please visit www.yesand.eu and look under “Transform.”

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