

## STRATEGIC TRAINING: THE MAGIC WORLD OF CHANGE

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### SUMMARY

"Before convincing the intellectual part of the mind it is necessary to touch and prepare the heart", an aphorism by Blaise Pascal (Voza 1995), refers to one of the most important functions of strategic training, not only being successful in making communicative messages correctly and rationally understood, but also involving its addressee, above all by making one enter into emotional syntony with the communicative content. To understand the precious wealth of knowledge that has over time brought the necessary skills to do strategic training, it is necessary to find its roots by taking a step back in time. It is necessary to go as far as the fifth century BC, with Protagoras and its persuasive efficacy, with a rapid historical excursus passing by Aristotle and his Sophistic communication techniques to arrive at about 2000 years later, passing through social psychology, up to the Palo Alto strategic school. Among its various activities, the Genius Academy Centre for Research and Psychological Studies has decided to push two strategic training projects aiming to increase the level of well-being perceived by the addressee and encouraging the desired change. One of the two strategic training projects, A "Journey" in a journey, conceived by the writer, started in 2013. The educational and therapeutic value are amplified by optimizing the suggestions and stimuli of the journey. Another strategic training project for future aeronautical professionals, which gives a great contribution to the traditional technical training, is an innovative psychological programme specifically designed to prepare, not only for technical operational challenges, but also for numerous psychological challenges deriving from working in a particular environment such as the airport.

It is specifically designed to study and improve the travel experience of people in airport transit and aims to raise the level of traveller's well-being, through a series of highly innovative interventions in specifically provided areas with the use of digital reality in coping and helping with anxiety and fear of flying.

**Key words:** strategic training – change – academy - airport

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### INTRODUCTION

"Words were originally magical", said Freud (De Shazer 1994), because the human mind is organized in such a way that some words, written or spoken, have a more powerful effect than others. Some phrases or words, stimulate certain brain perceiving elements better than others by inducing the production of neurotransmitters responsible for activating feelings of well-being, discomfort, fear or excitement depending on the emotions evoked. A reader or a listener who experiences such emotional states can be literally fascinated by what one hears or reads. "Before convincing the intellectual part of the mind it is necessary to touch and prepare the heart", this aphorism by Blaise Pascal (Voza 1995) refers to one of the most important functions of strategic training, not only being successful in making communicative message correctly and rationally understood, but also involving its addressee, above all by making one enter into emotional syntony with the communicative content. In order to make a formative communication of this type possible and practicable, it is necessary to develop that ability to enter in emotional harmony with the people to whom the communication is addressed and to make them perceive positively what one wants to communicate.

### WORDS HERITAGE

To understand the precious wealth of knowledge that has over time brought the necessary skills to do strategic

training, we need to find its roots by taking a step back in time. It is necessary to go as far as the fifth century BC, with Protagoras and its persuasive efficacy, the first one who used the persuasive efficacy of language. His art was characterized by asking questions instead of proposing affirmations, questions structured in a very precise succession in order to induce answers in the interlocutor towards the direction imagined by the persuader. Protagoras did not oppose the point of view of his interlocutor but guided him, through answers he himself provided to the questions, in order to discover alternative images of reality. Unlike the metaphor, which evokes, but leaves the interlocutor free to construct a meaning and to interpret it subjectively, the aphorism, balancing analogical and logical effects of language, nails a deliberate effect (Reale 2006, Schiappa 1991). The rhetoric of Protagoras, in which the main aim was to persuade one's interlocutor, was later countered by the dialectic of Socrates, where instead of dialogue was oriented towards the search for truth. Socrates' method of investigation, based on reason, has left an important trace throughout the Western World. Proceeding in our historical continuum, to the research of Milton Erickson and Carl Rogers, (1901-1980) we give tribute of the studies on hypnosis and hypnotic language as well as an activity of systematization of suggestive communication techniques within the therapeutic dialogue. To C. Rogers (1902-1987) we owe the identification of a model of clinical communication aimed at creating empathy through a specific mirroring technique, defined by him as mirroring. In these years, we are witnessing

an evolution of studies and research, in particular it is necessary to mention the fruitful work of the Californian research group of the Mental Research Institute of Palo Alto. Palo Alto research group marks an epochal turning point, starting a new season for the study of language and its effects, especially if we consider that until this period, studies had mainly dealt with the structure and meaning of language. "It is impossible not to communicate", says the first axiom of the "Pragmatics of Human Communication" by P. Watzlawick (1967), from which we can deduce that communication constitutes an essential condition of human existence for which all defined interpersonal situations between two or more people are communicative. But if the possibility of not communicating is true, then one can choose whether to do it in a strategic way, in order to be able to guide and manage communication effectively, with a specific purpose, rather than randomly, and then to suffer the effects.

## STRATEGIC TRAINING

### Two Practical Application Experiments in the World of Tourism and the Airport World

In the light of the above arguments, strategic training does not end with the conclusion of the communicative exchange, but it can also continue later and trigger a series of chain mechanisms, which effects continue to work overtime and in the mind of the interlocutor. Among its various activities, the Genius Academy Centre for Research and Psychological Studies has decided to push two strategic training projects aiming to increase the level of well-being perceived by the addressee and encouraging the desired change. One of the two studies is aimed at the individual's bio-psycho-social betterment, and the fascinating perspective of using the opportunities offered by a trip as a catalyst for important changes, has found, in the past years, an important place. In the project A "Journey" in a journey, conceived and created by the writer from the 2013, the educational and therapeutic value of change, derives from the idea of contextualizing the growth training project by optimizing the suggestions and stimuli of a journey, where the individual can be predisposed to enter precisely in a suspended space, during which beneficial changes could happen, both psychophysical and psychosomatic (Spurio 2018). Another strategic training project, still work in progress but definitely promising, has started thanks to the collaboration between Alitalia and Genius Academy, signed in September 2018. It is a project for future aeronautical professionals, which gives a great contribution to the traditional technical training. This is an innovative psychological programme specifically designed to prepare, not only for technical operational challenges, but also for numerous psychological challenges deriving from working in a very particular environment such as the airport.

In the field of the research work studied for the airport world, The GHA project has recently born, an acronym that defines another work of research born by the tested partnership between Genius Academy and Genius Handling. It is a project born with the aim of studying and bettering the behaviour of people travelling (airport tourism). It is an activity designed to study and to improve the travel experience of people in airport transit and aims to raise the level of traveller's well-being through a series of highly innovative interventions in specifically provided area also with the use of digital reality, for example helping in anxiety and fear of flying. The intervention and research project born in March 2019, is also made possible by the presence of Genius Handling, as a company in around 50 European airports.

## CONCLUSION

### The Sixth Continent

With reference to the journal "The Economist" (2014) the set of global airports and people who pass through them, has been defined "The Sixth Continent". At the end of 2017, the "flying" passengers will have exceeded 4 billion per year (approximately the inhabitants of Asia, the most populous of the 5 continents), adding 7.4% compared to 2016, according to the data presented last June by IATA (International Air Transport Association, 2017), in 20 years it will be 7.2 billion. Therefore, the future of this sector is not only played on the safety of flights, but also on the development of hubs, which will best accommodate travellers, entertain them, help them relax and feel calm, and cope with states of anxiety and fears related to transit in "free" areas in which the difficulties are many. The airport areas have been defined by Marc Augé (2009) as the land of undefined places, opposed to anthropological places, because they are spaces without the pre-requisite of being identitarian, relational and historical.

In 20 years, there will be more than 7.2 billion passengers globally in transit at airports. One more reason to consider international airports as a destination in itself. Airports have become a third dimension that begins from the point of departure and ending at arrival.

Therefore, airports, the Sixth continent, are the spaces in which the world with all its diversity is enclosed, one of the last challenging frontiers for the researcher who loves to dedicate time and research to the study, growth and positive change of the human being.

The researcher who is always in search of innovation and knowledge, in order to use his/her professionalism, needs to be present with their work in contexts far from the non-realistic atmospheres of centres for research, closer to real life, where people come face to face with each other and find one another. This happens, for example, during the experience of A "Journey" in the Journey, where the suspended time space of a travel is the setting for innovative and interesting situations of

parallel discovery of one's inner world, and where the sensation and emotion evoked by the places visited are associated with specific psychological programmes like seminars, social dreams, individual and group psychotherapy. This also happens in those "Lands of no one" belonging to everyone e.g. airports - spaces of individuality that intersect without entering into a relationship, driven by the frenetic desire to consume or to accelerate daily operations: a gateway to change.

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