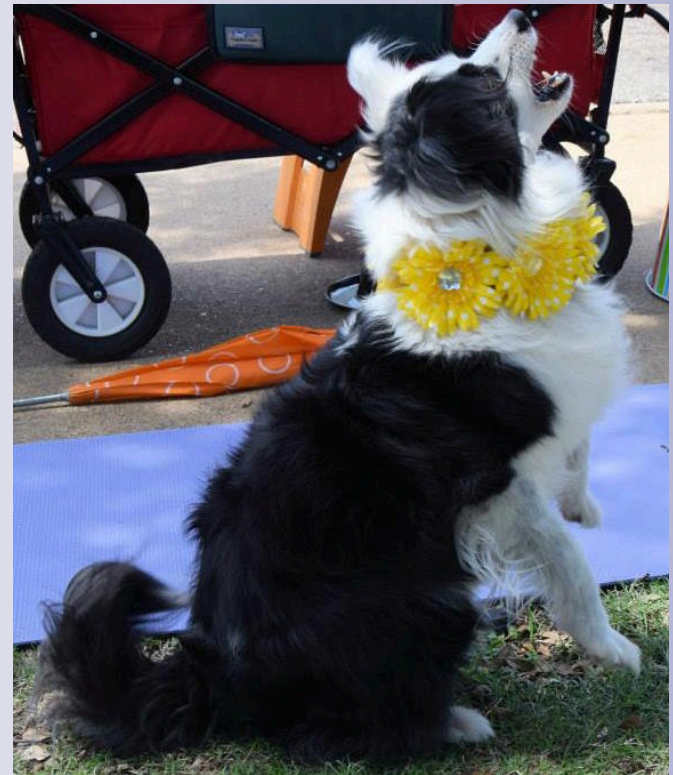


Not Because I Said So

Encouraging Your Team To Speak Up

Shari Heino
Compliance Manager
Brazos Electric Power
Cooperative, Inc.

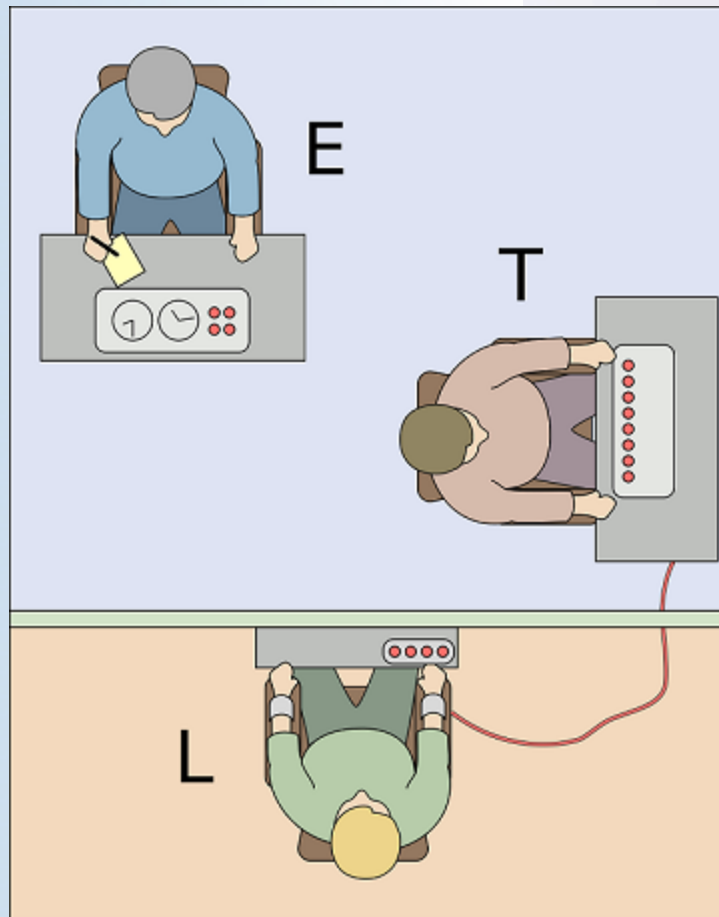


Milgram on Obedience

Milgram - Study Set Up

- ◆ Series of experiments in the 1960s by Stanley Milgram
- ◆ Measured the willingness of study participants to obey an authority figure who instructed them to perform acts conflicting with their personal conscience
- ◆ Experiment roles: Experimenter (authority figure), Learner (an actor), Teacher (the participant)
- ◆ Voltage increased in 15-volt increments for each wrong answer up to “450 volts.”

Milgram - the Experience



- ◆ Learner acted more visibly distressed as the corrections increased.
- ◆ Experimenter verbally encouraged volunteer to continue.
- ◆ **QUESTION: What percentage of the “teachers” do you think administered “shock” to their students up to the highest level?**

Milgram - Results

- ◆ In first experiment, 65 percent of participants “administered” the experiment's top 450-volt shock, though many were very uncomfortable about performing this.



The Challenges

- ◆ Following procedures blindly without considering risks can be dangerous.
- ◆ We want employees to speak up instead of simply following orders.

Let's Call a Meeting to Solve This

- ◆ Not so fast!
- ◆ Face to face meetings are good for making reports and can serve to build trust.
- ◆ However...



Studies on Group Interaction

Asch Conformity Experiments

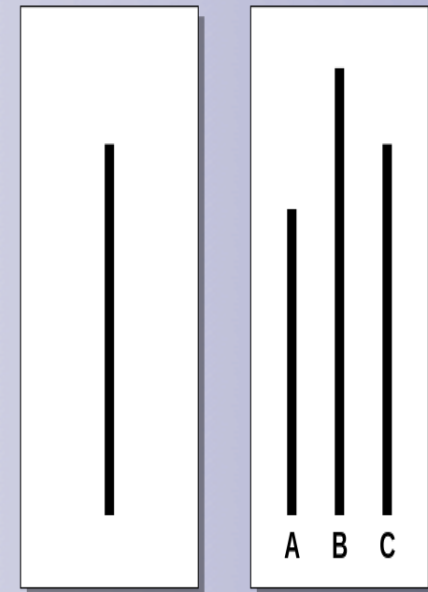
- ◆ Directed by Solomon Asch in the 1950s that demonstrated the degree to which an individual's own opinions are influenced by those of a majority group (many variations performed)
- ◆ Initial study:
 - 7 confederates, one test subject
 - 18 trials with 12 having confederates answer incorrectly

For a listing of articles:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asch_conformity_experiments

Asch, Cont.

- ◆ Perceptual questions
- ◆ Subject answered last or close to last
- ◆ Control: individuals tested alone



QUESTION: What would you predict the error rate to be?

Asch, Cont.

- ◆ Control: error rate less than 1%
- ◆ Test: error rate was 1/3 with at least 75% of the subjects answering at least one question wrong
- ◆ Interviews afterward suggested that some subjects (very few) believed the confederates; more chose to answer incorrectly to conform.



Everyone just wants to fit in!

Cell Phone Interaction Study

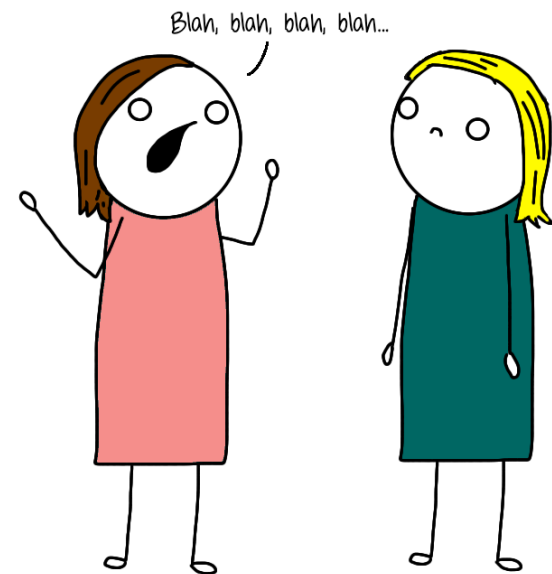
- ◆ “Can you connect with me now? How the presence of mobile Communication technology influences face-to-face conversation quality” - Andrew K. Przybylski and Netta Weinstein (2012)
- ◆ 2 Experiments:
 - Random pairings of participants
 - Conversation with cell phone or notebook present (non-obtrusive)
 - Interaction quality rated

Cell Phone Study, Cont.

- ◆ Study conclusion: “the mere presence of mobile communication technology might interfere with human relationship formation.”
- ◆ My take-away: Cell phone presence may further reduce the effectiveness of our meetings.

Other Studies

- ◆ Talkative people may be perceived as smarter and better leaders
- ◆ Computer based collaboration versus face to face collaboration in idea generation

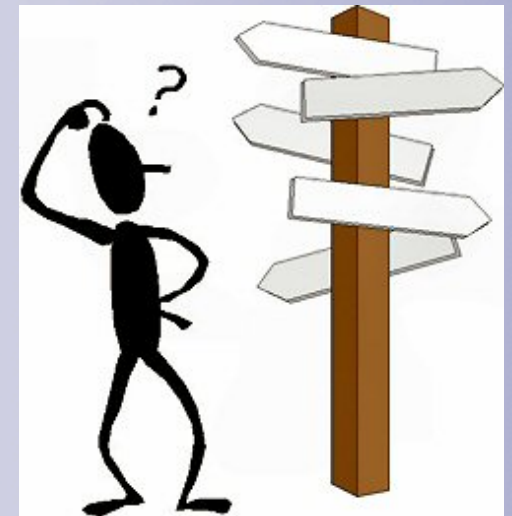


Introverts <-----> Extroverts

- Continuum, sometimes situational
- Introverts are not necessarily shy
- Key identifying characteristic – how a person becomes energized
- Introverts are 25-50% of our population
- Possibly higher amount of introverts in the electric utility industry?



Solutions?



Company-Wide Mechanisms to Encourage Reporting

- ◆ Means for anonymous suggestion reporting and email suggestions
- ◆ Regular employee engagement surveys
- ◆ Safety program which gives points for reporting unsafe conditions



Now, Let's Get Personal

- If you are a talkative person, pipe down and practice listening!
- In a group meeting, let newer (or less senior) members provide ideas first.
- Use the fast food rule (3 part communication).
- Allow your team to have control of their work.
- Put the cell phone away during meetings!
- Understand your audience:
 - Introverts and extroverts
 - Explore best options for interaction

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” -- Stephen R. Covey



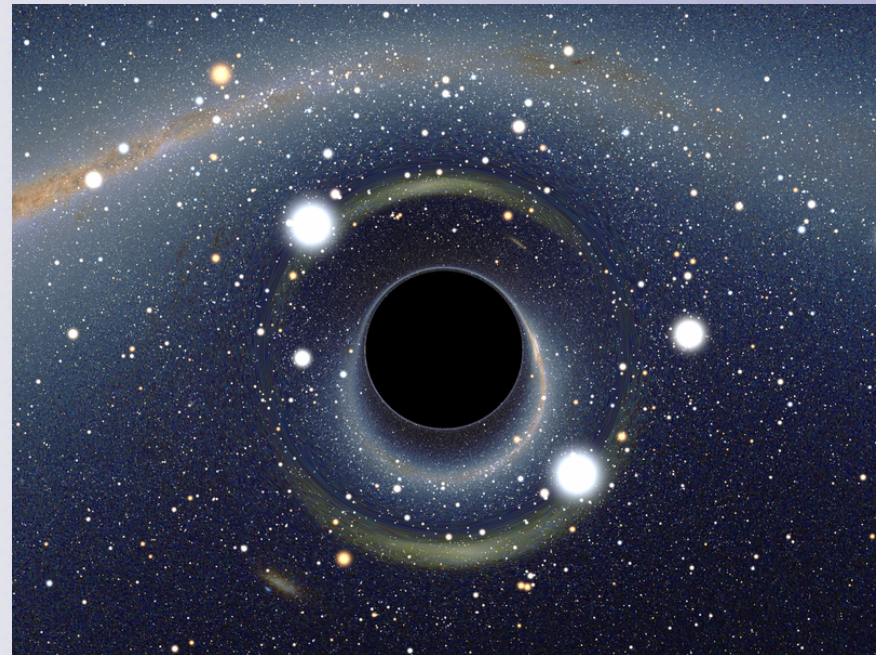
What I learned from dog training



- ◆ Punishment in any form reduces spontaneous offerings of new behaviors.
 - There must be no fear of reprisal for employees to feel comfortable making suggestions or reporting concerns.
- ◆ Reward in increments. Training dogs involves successive approximations.
 - Acknowledge and thank employees for all sincere input regardless of whether the input appears useful.

And most importantly...

- ◆ ACT on concerns and suggestions provided.
- ◆ If you choose not to act, explain why.
- ◆ Avoid the idea black hole!



In other words...

RESPECT

Wrap Up

- ◆ Let's share ideas on getting more input from employees.
 - sheino@brazoselectric.com
- ◆ Recommended reading:
 - *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain
 - *Inviting Disaster: Lessons From the Edge of Technology* by James R. Chiles

