



# In Form

Our newsletter, **In Form**, keeps you up-to-date with our training services and new initiatives.

In Form no. 38

## Glasses, Compasses and Tools for Positive Working

By César García-Rincón de Castro

### Are we cowboy operators or craftspeople?

Our social tools help us to make a good job of social DIY. The world is divided between cowboy operators and real craftspeople. **Cowboys** work in a slapdash manner, while **craftspeople** use their tools with skill and positive energy. The following chart shows how these two styles affect the workplace:

Interaction environment	Cowboys	Craftspeople
<b>Customer service</b>	Whatever! No concern for customers' needs or concerns; Everyone gets the same stock reply.	Friendly and warm; Listen to customers' needs and give them advice that targets their individual needs.
<b>Making criticisms</b>	Rude and aggressive; Look to crush others.	Warm; Choose words carefully to protect the self-esteem of others.
<b>Receiving complaints</b>	Defensive; Counter-attack the person who complains; Blame others or the organisation.	Listen closely and thank the person who complains for the comments; Learn from mistakes.
<b>Presenting a project</b>	Pay no attention to the communication media or the listeners; Improvise and do not adapt the presentation to the situation.	Research the preferences, interests and needs of the listeners; Use different communication media; Prepare the presentation.

**Teamwork**

See no need for it; Go it alone and do not listen to the ideas of others.

Know that teamwork delivers better results; Listen to everyone and contribute ideas; Generate a pleasant working environment.

When it comes to choosing tools, we tend to focus on the negative – something that may be down to habit. Let's look at how we often use our toolbox to evaluate work:

When we use the...	...we use it to...	...and we say things like...
<b>Hammer</b>	Judge	"This client's a clever so-and-so"
<b>Tape measure</b>	Calibrate	"I want the reports just-so"
<b>Brush</b>	Cover up	"Everything is stress for them"
<b>Saw</b>	Cut	"If you don't agree, you can leave"
<b>Flashlight</b>	Explore	"Keep an eye on so-and-so, he's a bit strange"
<b>Wrench</b>	Pressure	"We have to turn the screw on the supplier"
<b>Spirit level</b>	Equilibrate	"Everything's relative in this profession"

### Exercise-Suggestion for your personal development

Read the following story carefully and then reflect on how the tools in your environment or work team are used. Think about these questions:

- Who are our carpenters?
- Have they focused on our qualities or our defects?
- Who is our carpenter now?
- How does this carpenter work with us?
- Are we good carpenters?
- Do we work on the abilities and qualities of others?

#### Carpentry Shop Meeting

Once upon a time there was an unusual meeting in the carpentry shop. The tools had come together to settle their differences.

The hammer was chairing the meeting, but the rest of the tools told him he had to go. Why? He made too much noise! And he was always hitting the table.

The hammer accepted the blame, but asked that the plane also be expelled. Why? All his work was superficial. He never did anything but scratch the surface.

The plane also accepted his fate, but asked that the screw be expelled. He argued that the screw couldn't get anything done without going round and round in circles.

In the face of this criticism, the screw also agreed to go. But he asked that the sandpaper be expelled. He convinced the others that the sandpaper was too rough and was always rubbing people up the wrong way.

Here again the sandpaper agreed to leave, as long as the tape measure was also kicked out. After all, the tape measure was always seeing how others sized up against him, as if he were the model of perfection.

Just then the carpenter came in, put on his overalls and went over to his bench to start work. He used the hammer, the plane, the sandpaper, the tape measure and the screw to turn a rough chunk of wood into a beautiful piece of furniture.

After the carpenter had gone, the tools resumed their meeting. It was then that the saw took the floor. He said: "Gentlemen, it's clear that we all have plenty of faults. The carpenter, though, knows how to make the most of our strengths – he sees what makes us valuable. So, let's not dwell on our weaknesses when we should be concentrating on what we do well."

The tools in the meeting now saw that the hammer was strong and forceful. And that the plane was smooth and efficient. They realised that the screw was good at joining and reinforcing things. And that the sandpaper was a specialist in smoothing over situations and differences. And they saw that the tape measure was accurate and reliable.

They felt like a team capable of producing quality furniture. They were proud of their strengths, and of their ability to work together.

Does the same thing happen with people? Look around you and you'll see. It doesn't matter if you're at work, at home, at school or in church, when people spend their time looking for faults in others, the atmosphere always turns negative and heavy - with the threat of storm clouds brewing on the horizon.

And yet, when we focus on the positive and make a conscious effort to see the strengths of others, we – and they – are likely to achieve the best results.

As this story shows, we have an almost innate tendency to focus on the negative, a tendency that we often transfer to our relationships with other people.

Want to learn more about positive working? Just sign up for César's course: ***Gafas, Brújulas y Herramientas para Trabajar en Positivo*** (March 15). More information at: [www.readmatthews.com/opencourses/gafasbrujulas.php](http://www.readmatthews.com/opencourses/gafasbrujulas.php)