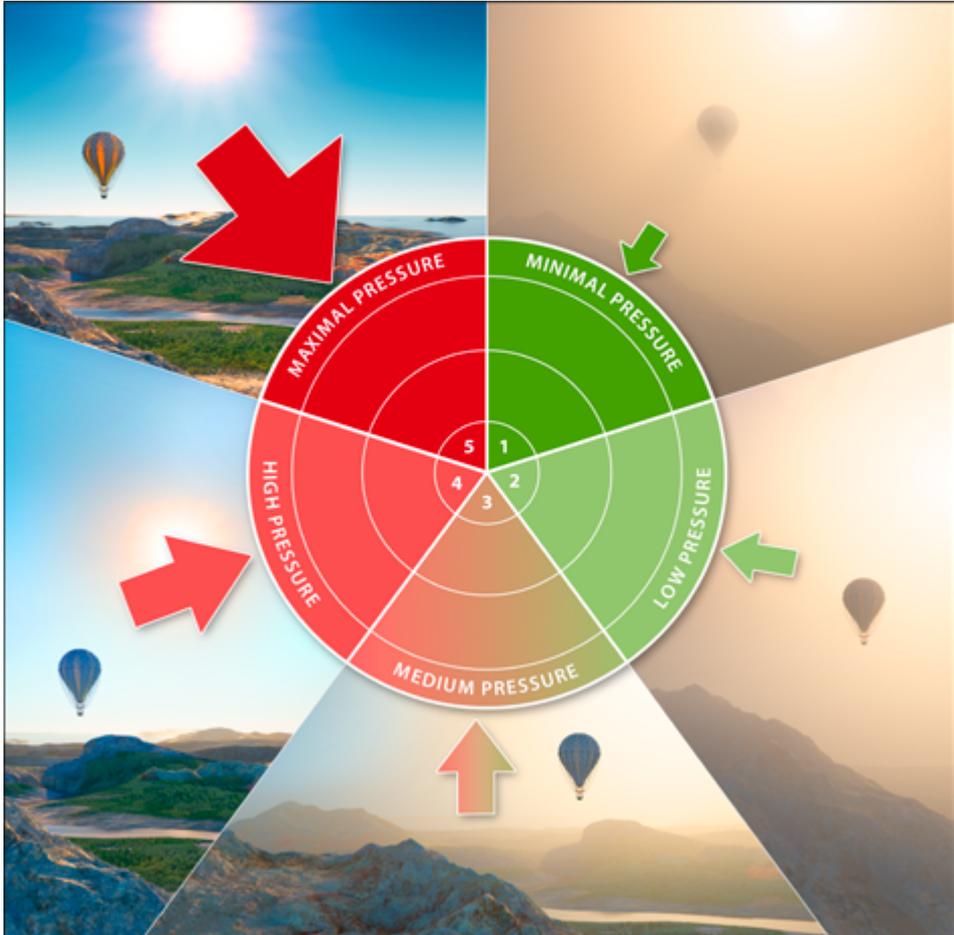


# MEETING SENSE

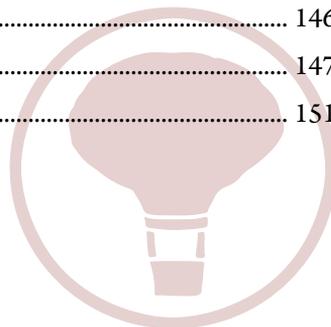


**Pia Moberg & Peter Chadwick**  
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# FOREWORD

## **We are guided by our expectations**

We know very little about the future. But we also do not want to live in uncertainty. Therefore, we create expectations for ourselves and those we will cooperate with in order to reach common goals. To succeed in our endeavours, we need to align our expectations.

We live in a global world. It is not homogeneous, but consists of groups and individuals, all having their own expectations emerging from different cultural backgrounds. When this heterogeneous mosaic converges in meetings, different or unclear expectations can cause the desired dynamic interaction to creak. Everyone can agree on the goals, but different mental images and scenarios can put spanners in the works.

This book is about how these kinds of problems can be effectively eliminated, or at least minimized by synchronizing our expectations.

Today there are many prescriptions on how to have efficient meetings, good presentations or become a good communicator. We believe that there is no one correct answer, but it rather depends on the context and who the receiver of the message is. In fact, it is all about aligning expectations in each individual meeting situation.

Our previous book Foolproof International Communication (FIC) was about communicating in a foolproof way. Based on the standard aviation protocol which pilots use, we developed a model which can be easily applied to global virtual meetings in the business world. We saw that aviation-inspired language is a way to align expectations from the very beginning, leaving no room for communication failure. We also presented a new method for using English in the international business world called Offshore English (you can read about the aviation language and Offshore English in Part 2 of this book). FIC's pedagogy received praise, but some readers thought it lacked a dimension. It was said that the clarity of the aviation language was good but that you do not have to 'be a pilot all the time'; that communication must not always

be so perfect and clear. Sometimes you need to be cloudy and mysterious as well. Readers saw a need to differentiate meeting levels, but did not really know how. Based on this feedback, a new model slowly developed, which is today the Chadberg Scale. The purpose of this book is to present the Chadberg Model and the Chadberg Scale and through the defined meeting levels align the expectations of the participants in each meeting situation or process. We think the book meets a need and hope you can use the book based on your particular work situation.

In case you're wondering, the name Chadberg is a combination of our two surnames: Chadwick and Moberg.

Göteborg & Lyon 18 March 2018

# INTRODUCTION

## Why we have to align our expectations

Virtually every decision, whether it's on a high global level or group work in school, is the result of information flow in meetings between a number of people. Meetings that do not carry forward and deliver results are not only a costly waste of resources, but can also be purely counterproductive.

When life is at stake, the communication must be crystal clear, with no room for misunderstandings. It could be a survival situation, not only between a pilot and Air Traffic Control during a landing in severe weather conditions, but in and between countries, companies, trade unions, political parties and authorities that develop, interact, exchange emotions, thoughts, services and capital. In the end, it is all about individuals who communicate with each other.

The challenge is to align our expectations in every step of the process. The Chadberg Scale is a tool that allows us to create this alignment.

The book consists of three parts.

In **Part 1**, we introduce the Chadberg Scale and its corresponding meeting levels. The Chadberg Scale's meeting model will help you to agree on what to expect of each meeting situation.

**Part 2** deals with the intercultural challenges we might experience in interacting with colleagues from all around the globe. If you work in an intercultural global context (teambuilding, negotiations, decision making, exchange of experiences and knowledge), it is crucial to be aware of the areas which need to be treated with special care and awareness. By 'culture' we mean not only national culture, but also organizational or corporate culture.

**Part 3** provides suggestions on how to formulate and reach agreements, which helps counterparts to align their expectations. We call this method ‘Establishing a code of conduct’.

Each part has a main text and a number of checklists summarizing the content of each subdivision. Case studies are written on a ‘roll of parchment’.

## **Efficient meetings are crucial for you if you are...**

### **...a manager**

You get a method of aligning your employees' expectations, especially in all meeting situations. As a manager in a global business environment, knowledge of intercultural leadership is important. In the book you will get some basic keys in CQ (Culture Intelligence) and discover how you can establish a code of conduct within your department, project team or organization.

### **...a co-worker**

The Chadberg Scale can be applied on all meeting levels. And you will get valuable insights into various ways in looking at cooperation, responsibility and roles.

### **...a meeting facilitator**

Whether you work in a small or large organization, on a national basis or in a global context, as a meeting chairperson you will benefit greatly by knowing how to direct your meetings in the way you want. The more you communicate your expectations of the meeting with the participants, the less the risk of misunderstandings. Whether you call yourself a meeting facilitator, moderator or meeting chairperson, this book will help you to become the king or queen of meetings.

### **...a meeting participant**

As a meeting participant, the book gives you tools to decide which meetings you should attend, and even more importantly – which you should avoid. The checklists will help you to find out if you are the right person in the right place in a specified meeting situation. In an international context, especially in hierarchical cultures, the participant's status is important. Are you expected to be active or passive during the meeting? Who are you in the organisation and what role are you expected to play in the meeting? This book will help you to answer all these questions.

### **...interested in meetings**

Maybe you are a researcher or work as a facilitator, moderator or chairperson and are interested in new approaches in your area of work.

### **...interested in CQ**

If you work in the field of culture with an interest in cross-cultural communication and business communication, we hope this book will bring you fresh insights.

# PART 1

## THE CHADBERG SCALE

The Chadberg Scale is inspired by the weather and by the barometer as a means of measuring pressure. Why have we chosen the weather? Experience shows that symbols are valuable tools, whether for memory training or as shorthand for complex contexts easily explained through a metaphor. Weather is something relatively universal: weather and what you can see (visibility) are phenomena that all people can relate to.

In the real world, the atmosphere surrounding us is not static, but it is constantly moving. The air is also not homogeneous. It may be thinner in some places, and more dense in others. These changing air volumes have different weights. Dense air weighs down on us more than thin air. This is what we mean when we talk about air pressure; in weather terminology, high pressure and low pressure. By measuring changes in air pressure, the barometer has historically served as a simple tool to try to predict weather changes. Roughly speaking, it can be said that high air pressure often means clear weather and good visibility, while falling and low air pressure often results in precipitation and poorer visibility.

The Chadberg Scale is a model consisting of five parts in a circular diagram. The five parts symbolize five types of pressure (necessity levels) with a corresponding visibility ratio (clarity levels). It invites us to think about the pressure level of each communicative situation. So, what is the purpose of the meeting? How much is at stake? How little, or how much error margin can the situation tolerate?

The scale also helps us to anticipate the need for 'clear vision.' How should the given pressure level be matched with a corresponding level of clarity in language use, preparation, implementation and follow-up to the meeting?

Not all communication requires maximum clarity. A creative kick-off meeting has a different purpose to a meeting aimed at coordinating a mountain rescue effort. The kick-off meeting may be hampered by excessive emphasis on

preparation and clarity which could easily inhibit initiative, creativity and spontaneity. Co-ordinating a rescue effort, on the other hand, is crucially dependent on crystal clear protocols and the greatest possible clarity in communication to minimize injury or loss of human life.

These are extreme examples which are relatively easy to define. Between these extremes there is a scale of pressure levels that may not be easy to see at first.

It is not uncommon for meetings to be convened without trying to define any current 'pressure' (level of necessity), and without first asking for a matching degree of 'clarity' (level of clarity). This can result in participants experiencing misalignment in both attitude and actions during the meeting. This type of frustration may occur in your home country, but also in international contexts, where cultural differences could cause a Japanese 'high pressure' system and a Scandinavian 'low pressure' system to collide with unnecessary turbulence as a result.

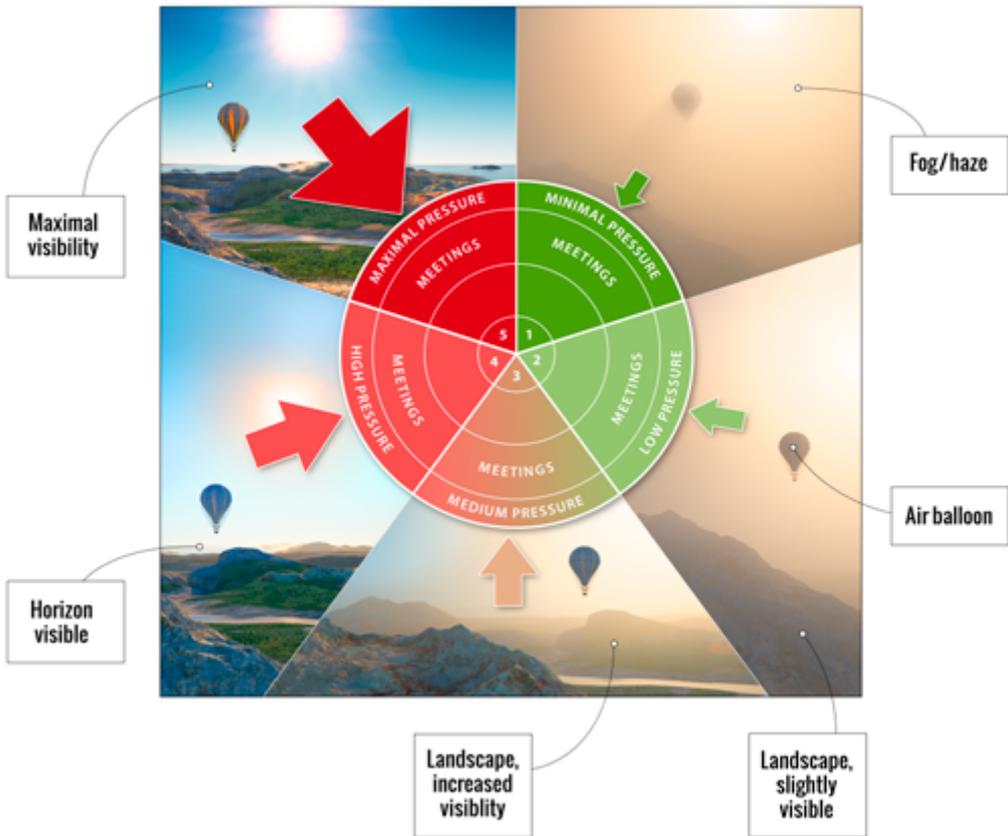
By defining and establishing pressure levels prior to a meeting or a process, clarity and intent can be synchronised between participants, avoiding unnecessary frustration and inefficiency.

The Chadberg Scale is graded from one to five according to the following illustration. Pressure Level 1 represents a low pressure situation with a very low visibility (to avoid possible negative associations, we do not mix rain, thunder or storm into our model. Our low pressure only results in a fog or haze over the sun). From the vantage point of our illustration we can observe variations of visibility depending on the extent to which the air pressure rises and the haze dissipates. At pressure Level 5, the visibility is the clearest possible.

Our goal and our situation are symbolized by a hot air balloon over a landscape. Depending on the level of pressure and haze, these appear more or less clearly.

At the highest pressure, Level 5, the balloon is completely unobscured. There are no doubts about what it is. Everyone who sees the balloon perceives and describes it in the same manner. The landscape is clear all the way to the horizon.

At the lowest pressure level, the balloon appears more like a very vague outline. You know it's there, but its detail is obscured and not everyone will see it in the same way. You have to be creative and visualize what it might be. The geography of the landscape is largely unknown. Here too, you must use imagination and creativity to try and orient yourself.

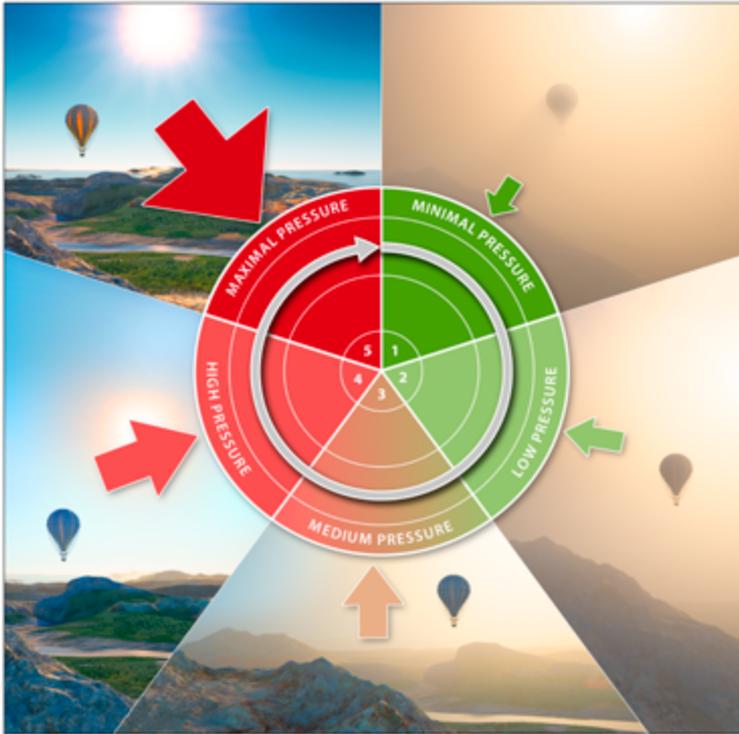


Thankfully, we are the masters of the weather in the Chadberg Scale landscape. Unlike the real world, it is up to us to choose air pressure and visibility before each meeting. But what is required is the capacity to choose correctly!

Each level is equally valid, all of them are needed and have a given place within each individual context. The challenge is to act at the right level according to the need. It is important to know what level is expected of all participants in a given situation and to align their expectations with each other.

If we apply the scale on professions (or various tasks) in order to shed some light on the different levels of the scale, we see that some tasks do need a certain level in order to be carried out correctly. A pilot or surgeon needs to be at Level 5 during critical phases since the consequences of a mistake might be fatal. A chef at a Guide Michelin star restaurant needs to be at Level 5 for the service, all preparations and stages in the process have to be strictly formalized, but there is still some room for improvisation. Complex logistical operations need to be at Level 4-5 in order to operate in a satisfactory way. Engineers and designers can be on Level 1-3 for the creative process, but on Level 4-5 when they give an important presentation or sign-off a design. A secretary on the other hand usually works on Level 2-4 depending on the task. Most projects involve all the five parts, representing different stages in the process be it producing a truck engine, writing a doctoral thesis or composing a piece of music. All parts of the scale are equally important and are necessary at a particular time at a particular place.

Many professions are on all five levels, some are unlikely to reach Level 5. On the other hand – all tasks and processes can be executed on Level 5, where every detail is carried out with precision. The grey arrow in the Chadberg Scale below indicates a process from Level 1 to Level 5.



In this chapter you will learn about the five parts of the Chadberg Scale, and which meeting situations they correspond to. After each section there is a checklist. The checklist is a flexible tool and intended to work as a starting point for self-understanding, and also useful as the starting point for establishing an internal communication contract for your organization's meetings (see Part 3). You can of course use the scale as you wish in your own organization. The important thing is that everyone totally agrees with what is expected of each and every one of the participants in each meeting. In the end of the chapter you will find various thoughts about meeting variations and what you need to consider in order to have the best meeting possible.