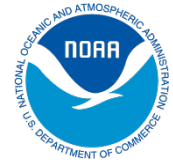


Designing the Meeting to Manage Conflict

MEETING ENGAGEMENT TOOL



Description

Develop a meeting process to reach defined objectives using techniques that allow participants to share perspectives without triggering disruptive conflict.

Process

1. Meet with the host of the meeting and participants that understand the potential conflict. This is the planning team.
2. Develop a meeting goal.
3. Develop objectives and outputs for the meeting with the planning team.
4. Develop the activities the facilitator will use to reach each objective. Consider how the participants will interact, and share perspectives.
5. During activities where conflicting perspectives may surface, consider using techniques that require individuals to listen to each other in order to participate. For example,
 - a. Develop ground rules that encourage respectful disagreement with no personal attacks.
 - b. Give individuals time to write down the perspective on a paper and allow the facilitator to read all perspectives to the group.
 - c. Ask participants to share in a round-robin fashion without interruption, and capture each on an easel pad.
 - d. Ask pairs to present their partner's perspective (perspective swap).
 - e. Consider using the 6 thinking hats technique to focus on ideas rather than people.
 - f. Use any creative technique that provides the opportunity for dissenters to hear the opposing perspective (listening walk).

Benefits

This work allows participants to learn about the reasons others disagree with their idea and find ways to meet the basic needs of everyone.

Considerations

Designing a meeting to reduce conflict takes a great deal of time.

Debrief

The debriefing questions and steps will depend on which technique is used. It is important to confirm understanding with the group through paraphrasing, synthesizing input, and summarizing discussions. Capture important points on easels for all to see, and review during debrief.

Resources Needed

- Planning team
- Ground rules
- Facilitator
- Process agenda
- Easel pad and markers
- Tape
- Resources required by chosen technique

References

- "How to Design an Agenda for an Effective Meeting" by Roger Schwarz at hbr.org/2015/03/how-to-design-an-agenda-for-an-effective-meeting.
- "Plan a Better Meeting with Design Thinking" by Maya Bernstein and Rae Ringel at hbr.org/2018/02/plan-a-better-meeting-with-design-thinking?referral=03759&cm_vc=rr_item_page.bottom.