How to Get Your Whole Team Talking

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Purpose of this session

Learn 10 simple changes
to make every meeting meaningful, collaborative, and welcome.
Context for the simulation

The Agile2017 organizing committee wants to make it even more valuable to its attendees than Agile2016.

For ideas and suggestions, they’re sponsoring a consultation with this year’s attendees. They can get 20 people to attend.

They are asking your team of meeting designers (everyone at your table) to plan that consultation.

Disclaimer: I made this example up for the session.
Please self-organize

- Each team (table) to have **at least 6 people**.
- One person to be the *discussion leader*.
  - Help the team stay on process and time so that they accomplish the outcome. You *don’t own* the outcome.
- One person to be the *scribe*.
  - Capture team decisions and contributions *visibly*. Make sure nothing important is forgotten or ignored.
- Note: both leader and scribe are also participants.
Activity 1

Decide on the purpose of the meeting.

Think of it this way: The committee’s intent ("make the next conference more valuable") is big and abstract. Don’t boil the ocean; determine a specific purpose that’s worth sponsoring and attending.
Activity 1: Process

1. Everyone write down 1-2 ideas:
   “The purpose of this consultation is to <action> <outcome>”.
   Write big letters for easy sharing with your team 😊

2. Team, review all ideas, combine duplicates.

3. Pick an idea that seems valuable & practical. Team vote (“All in favor say Aye ...”)

Discussion leaders... keep time! 6 minutes

6:00  5:00  4:00  3:00  2:00  1:00  End
Activity 1: A few possible answers

The purpose of this consultation is to...

- identify ways to improve attendee networking
- understand how effectively attendees learn in sessions
- identify Agile topics that need greater coverage
- discover options for improving session quality
Activity 2

What are the *deliverables* from this meeting?

In other words, what will the participants produce in this meeting in support of the purpose?
Activity 2: Process

1. Pair up with a neighbour and come up with an option or two. Be specific and realistic.
2. All pairs share with their team.
3. Team members now choose one option they are all willing to support.

Remember to keep time!

4:00  3:00  2:00  1:00  End
Activity 3

Who are the *right people* for this meeting?

In other words: the sponsors can get 20 participants; *who* should they get? How would they choose?

Process for this activity: free-form discussion.
Activity 4

What series of *open questions* will the attendees work through to produce their deliverables?

Think of it this way:

- Rather than work on the deliverable as a single large task, how would they arrive at it with a sequence of useful intermediate answers?

- This is like splitting an epic into stories – each one has some independent value.
EX: Agile Leadership Team kickoff

**Purpose:** Get our new Agile Leadership Team (ALT) started on the right foot.

**Deliverables:** ALT’s vision/mission, success criteria, initial composition

**Participants:** Any interested employee

**Agenda:**
1. What’s the team’s purpose?
2. What’s in the team’s purview (in and out of scope)?
3. Under what circumstances will this team no longer be needed?
4. What will be considered success, and in what timeframe?
5. What kind of obligations and commitments will team members have?
6. How, and how frequently, will the team’s composition change?
7. Who will be a member of the initial team?
Activity 4: Process

1. Privately, make your own list of questions.  
   3 minutes

2. Pair up with a different neighbour than before, compare notes, and produce a joint list.  
   2 minutes

3. At your table, review all lists, maybe edit a bit.  
   2 minutes

4. Table to vote on one of the lists with thumbs:
   - **Up** = I agree
   - **Sideways** = I’ll live with it
   - **Down** = I have a major objection

   If anyone votes Down, revise your list and revote.  
   4 minutes
The first 3 changes to your meetings

1. Articulate purpose & deliverable (product)
2. Invite the right people
3. Express the agenda as open questions
Change #4: Silent work
Change #5: Safety
Change #6: Suitable space
Change #7: Your opening

4MAT:
1. Why
2. What
3. How
4. What if
Change #8: Participation expectations

Examples:

- No electronics unless you have to
- One conversation at a time
- If you’re here, you’re here the whole time
- Everyone will hear others and be heard
Change #9: Make room for divergence
Change #10: Capture
More resources

- Courses at ICA Associates or Leadership Strategies
- Jean Tabaka’s book, *Collaboration Explained*
- My book, *The Human Side of Agile*
- My newsletter articles, *The 3P Vantage Point*
  (subscribe at 3PVantage.com)

THANK YOU!