Eliminating the Unproductive Meeting – Session Worksheet

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Pair and Share – Agenda Comparison

Compare the following examples of agendas.

- What differences do you notice?
- How can you use verbs (discuss, decide, share) to help clarify the conversation?

Example A

Team Meeting Agenda

Time	Lead	Topic
10 min	Hazel	Management Team Updates
30 min	Rodney	Upcoming Event

Example B

Team Meeting Agenda

Purpose of Meeting
- Inform and update team members on management team conversation
- Plan upcoming event

Time	Lead	Topic (and Key Points)	Expected Outcome
10 min	Hazel	Share management team updates • Leave time for questions	• Informed team members
30 min	Rodney	Plan upcoming event • Brainstorm and decide activities for event • Determine who is doing which assignments • Discuss venue	• Activities identified • Assigned action items to team members • Decision about venue

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Conversations and Outcomes

Type of Conversation	Possible Outcome
Brainstorming	Ideas
Coordinating	Clarity, Action Plan
Planning	Action Plan
Sharing Information	Learning, Team Building
Getting Feedback	Feedback
Reviewing or Approving	Revisions or Approvals
Decision Making	Decisions

Meaningful Conversations – Huddle Example

The table below describes two versions of prompt questions you could use to huddle. They are similar in intent, but are quite different in structure. The purpose of huddles is to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate work.

Version A	Version B
What did you do yesterday?	What happened yesterday that we need to learn from (or adjust to)?
What are you doing today?	Are you ahead, behind, or on track for what you need to do today? What barriers need to be removed? Where do you need help?
What will you do tomorrow?	What do you need to prepare for tomorrow?

- Version A – Responses may trend toward facts and activities.
- Version B – Responses may trend toward problem solving, coordinating, or adjusting work in real time to accomplish goals.

While both sets of questions may work and neither is right or wrong, they can prompt different types of conversations. There are times when you want to share facts and activities, and other times when you want to prompt deeper thinking. This principle applies to meetings as well.

Reflection question: What situations might call for Version A? Version B?

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Decisions

Based on work by Tannenbaum, Schmidt and Crosby

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">Participatory Management - Decision Making Styles</td></tr>
<tr><td>Who:</td><td colspan="2" align="center">LEADER DECIDES</td><td colspan="2" align="center">FOLLOWERS DECIDE</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type:</td><td align="center">Autocratic</td><td align="center">Consultative</td><td align="center">Group Decision</td><td align="center">Delegation</td></tr>
<tr><td>How:</td><td align="center">Decide and tell.</td><td align="center">Decide after consultation and/or recommendations.</td><td align="center">Followers share in the decision.</td><td align="center">Delegate the decision, with clear parameters.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Styles:</td><td align="center">Style #1:

Decide unilaterally and announce your decision (check for clarity)</td><td align="center">Style #2:

Almost decide, but get reactions from followers prior to your final decision.</td><td align="center">Style #4:

Majority vote – leader has one vote. Give up veto power.</td><td align="center">Style #6:

Delegate the decision. Be clear about parameters of freedom.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td align="center">Style #3:

Solicit ideas and recommendations, and then decide.</td><td align="center">Style #5:

Consensus – support after each agrees with no serious concerns</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Tips:</td><td colspan="4">

The leader decides how to decide. Make the choice clear to all involved.
Leaders honor followers' role and allow them to influence decisions.
Develop flexibility – all styles are effective in different situations.

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Pair and Share – Decision Making

Discuss with a partner:

- How do you or your team currently make decisions?
- What other decision making style might you want to try?

Ari's Favorite Facilitator Tips

Make Thinking Visible

Use flip charts, white boards, or visual management to:

- Capture ideas.
- Clarify opinions or words (drives alignment and shared understanding).
- Identify action items.

Manage Group Conversations

- Develop relationships with your teammates both in and outside of meetings.
- Consider doing an assessment as a team to help better understand each other's personality preferences or communication styles.
- Identify agreements around what norms or behaviors the team wants (can be overall or for individual meetings). Refer to agreements when the team or an individual needs the reminder.
- Some common communication or personality differences:
  - Relationship or Task – Balance people's different needs to focus on relationship and task. This might look like starting each meeting with team connection, but limiting the amount of time spent.
  - Vocal or Quiet – Invite quiet folks to talk (Ex: Is there anyone who hasn't shared yet that would like to?). Set up an agreement for participation – vocal folks step back a little and quiet folks step up a little.
  - Need time to process. . . .or not – Some people need time to think and process before contributing feedback and others don't. When introducing a new topic or document, give a moment for people to read or think.
  - Detailed or Big Picture – include both big picture and details or clarify the desired flight level for the conversation.

Attend to the Process of the Conversation

- Take time to design meetings. Know the purpose. Identify the expected outcomes. Identify which tools are best for different topics of conversation.
- Seek out tools. There are many tools available through website searches.
  - Decision making – When you want to ensure that every member has indicated their agreement to a decision, you can ask people to use thumbs up, side, or down. Clarify the definitions:
    - Thumbs up – I agree; ok to move forward.
    - Thumbs side – I'll go along with it; I don't have strong objections.
    - Thumbs down – I object or have concerns.
    - If you have people with a thumbs down, invite further conversation to share concerns (and address the concerns if possible).
  - Prioritizing – PICK Chart. http://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/PICK-chart-Possible-Implement-Challenge-and-Kill-chart
  - Multiple different facilitation techniques – Liberating Structures website. http://www.liberatingstructures.com/ls/
- If I am in charge of facilitating a larger event or meeting, I create a separate facilitator agenda for myself that include things like materials and method of conversation.

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