SAGATICA

Lead Brilliantly.

The Genius Forum

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Chapter

HOW DO WE CREATE A CULTURE THAT ENGAGES AND EMPOWERS?

Prepared exclusively for: | ASTD
SAN DIEGO CHAPTER
WORKPLACE LEARNING & PERFORMANCE

I. How do we create a culture that engages and empowers?

- To increase discretionary effort, and to give each employee a free day to focus on ONE project with no distractions.
- To attract the best and brightest, get rid of resumes. Make applicants create something that gets our attention.
- Realistic prioritization.
- Engages and Empowers: it starts with ME. ID my purpose and encourage others to develop their own.
- Recognize team members consistently and continually.
- Compassion
- Create an internal video with employees about the organizational story.
- Defining the culture we want as a company.
- Optimize team performance and retention by finding work/life balance via personalized work pathways.
- I believe one of the best ways to create cultures of engagement is to give employees stress relief modalities: yoga, massage, meditation training + room, etc – IN the workplace.
- Connecting all employees to the audience we serve.
- Expect engagement + responsibility.
- Fun
- Happy Hour
- Company Movie Night + early preview
- Increased Sr. management participation in front-line events, meetings, training, etc.

- Incorporate Social Media strategy LI groups.
- Welcome letters to family of new employee.
- External mentorship (other perspectives).
- Feedback
- Leaders to facilitate regular on-going department team discussions on engagement, rather then limiting to surveys every few years – otherwise only like dealing with each other every fear years.
- Push messages from upper level management.
- Using gamification to create a badge recognition program
- Make employee recognition activities more meaningful: Specific, Personal, Valuable, Ideas/Feedback from all.
- Strategize to engage the entire enterprise: EEs, Customers, Suppliers, Channel Partners.

II. Genius Forum Roundtables

1. Strong Management Development

A). What is the ONE thing you are dying to implement or recommend?

- Stretch Challenge assignments: create mixed groups of leaders and emerging leaders, and give them a business challenge that is mid-to-high level difficulty, almost like a school project.
- Needs assessments: end-goal model
- Mentoring – both ways, Coaching and determining needs, Hold each other accountable, increase collaboration with leaders by giving them a challenge.
- A thorough needs assessment of leadership/management needs for developing a culture of engagement
- Develop all levels of leadership and accountability

- Create a certification program for employees to develop new skills and increase company participation
- Introduce a multi-level group mentorship program
- provide tools and resources at different levels of the organization
- Create mentors within departments
- Creation of engagement leads to retention. Create personalized learning pathways (to leadership) that fit and balance customer lifestyle
- Increase time with all levels of management and employees
- Strong development programs
- Strong management development programs and support networks

B). What BEST PRACTICE experience do you have about this topic?

- Coaching: monthly coaching sessions that are intentional in nature and structured with SMART goals and quarterly strategies.
- "Leaders teaching Leaders"
- Learning by Teaching: Getting leaders to teach new leaders

2. Vision, Values, and Action

A). What is the ONE thing you are dying to implement or recommend?

- Vision: Personalized vision boards to compare/align with company's vision
- Vision boards at department level; define the vision at the individual level
- Engage and Inspire: Have a common goal that engenders passion and commitment
- Facilitate synchronicity through values, purpose, resilience
- Align individual values with how the individual contributes to organization's success
- Continuously clarify purpose/objectives or organization

- Work that has a clear purpose that links to organization's goals
- Alignment of vision and action

B). What BEST PRACTICE experience do you have about this topic?

- MPG program: managing professional growth
- GPS strategies program (align individual values with individual contribution to organization's success).
- Alignment of personal values with company values
- Accountability and follow-up

3. Collaboration and Creativity

A). What is the ONE thing you are dying to implement or recommend?

- Reciprocity
- Include people in decision process
- Collaboration
- Encourage creativity and collaboration
- Foster creativity by eliminating a risk-averse culture
- Make it ok to fail
- Off-site team building

B). What BEST PRACTICE experience do you have about this topic?

- Collect ideas and follow through with some of the ideas (and communicate feedback on why/why not)
- Bring together disciplines that have nothing to do with the problem (to provide new perspectives)

- Present a problem to a group of people. Divide up into teams and come up with solutions, and then present the solutions to all – kind of competition for implementing problem-solving

4. Communication and Transparency

A). What is the ONE thing you are dying to implement or recommend?

- YAM Jam (having leaders stay on yammers for an hour or so to answer questions on a given topic)

- Communication

- Enable employees the opportunity to meet everyone in the organization

- Transparency

- Culture of trust and ability to have open chains of communications

B). What BEST PRACTICE experience do you have about this topic?

- Yammer= Enterprise social networks

- Create groups and have leadership and department heads share updates

5. Survey and Responsibility

A). What is the ONE thing you are dying to implement or recommend?

- Commit to task force before formed

- Encourage surveys that have results communicated to management and acted upon

- By asking for ideas and feedback from all involved

- Actually do what employee Task Force Teams recommend

- Asking what our employees do in their free time when time disappears and align those activities to aspects of their job

- Create sup-communities to encourage collaboration and involvement

- Educate employees on what it means to be engaged and empower them to work with their managers

B). What BEST PRACTICE experience do you have about this topic?

- Commit to recommendations from leadership
- Consulting with client to provide the info at management meetings

6. Strengths and Diversity

A). What is the ONE thing you are dying to implement or recommend?

| - Identify strengths via Strength Finders |
|---|
| - Promote multiple cultures within the corporation that drive the common goals – can honor diversification with the meta cultures |
| - Focus on how all the pieces work together as a strategy to serve each customer |
| - Support professional growth through training, coaching, and education/mentoring |
| - Respect and integrate cultural diversity |
| - Respect and honor many perspectives – support creative and innovative ideas |
| - Train and raise awareness of individual temperaments to increase diversity of strengths and weaknesses. |
| - Play to employee STRENGTHS |

B). What BEST PRACTICE experience do you have about this topic?

- Promote Strength Finders to find individual's strengths

- Be aware of the differences of cultural background and how individuals respond to the styles and offerings

- How we communicate/interact and respond to each other still drives engagement by creating individual cultures and perspectives. Our personality types drive levels of engagement.

- Created a program (video) with individual's interests
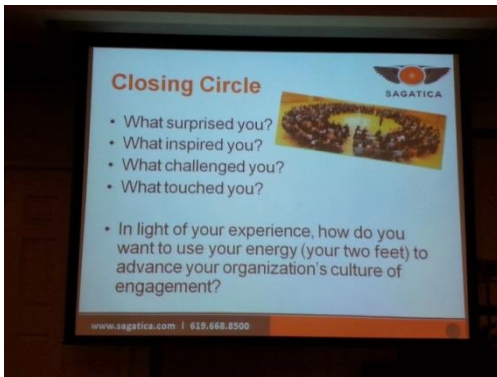
The Genius Forum: A Summary

INTRODUCTION: Genius Forum is a workshop design tool to use when situations include a diverse group of people who must deal with complex, and potentially conflicting material in innovative and productive ways. With Open Space, people tend to be creative, synergistic and self-motivated. It is a facilitation method in which people can identify specific issues on a given topic, self-select into discussion groups, and work with the issue with people also concerned with that issue.

POINT TO PONDER: "I can't believe that after all these meetings, workshops and conference sessions, the most valuable time for me was still during the coffee breaks, when I met with people I wanted to meet with and talk about the issues I wanted to talk about." *- Harrison Owen, author of Open Space Technology: A Users Guide*

DIRECTIONS: Following is an outline of directions for facilitating A Genius Forum.

What To Expect

Participants will learn and participate in a group discussion technique called A Genius Forum. This is a tested approach to the enhancement of group effectiveness. It can be used with groups of 5 to 500. It is particularly effective when a number of people must address complex and/or conflicted issues in a short period of time, with high levels of innovation, ownership, and synergy.

The Circle

The circular chair arrangement signifies that all are equal here--both as knowers and learners. Participants are all facing each other equally, with the opportunity to work together to discuss and resolve issues, if they so choose.

Passion and Responsibility

Open Space runs on two principles: passion and responsibility. Without passion, nobody is interested. Without responsibility, noting will get done. Obviously, different people feel passionately about different things and it is also obvious that people will not take responsibility for something they are not passionate about. In Open Space, people come together around topics they care about. Voluntary self-selection is the absolute sine qua non for participation in the Open Space event.

Stating the Theme

The facilitator should tell the group that in a few minutes they will be asked to (and not everyone has to) identify some issue or opportunity related to the

specific workshop or conference theme (such as "Common Issues About Leadership for Market growth"), issues for which they have a genuine passion and for which they will take real responsibility for discussing. They should be thinking of powerful ideas that really grab them to the point that they will take the responsibility to make sure that something gets done about that issue. The facilitator should remind the group that if nothing occurs to someone, that is OK, and if someone has more than one issue or opportunity, that is OK too.

The facilitator should introduce and make flipcharts for the following concepts for Open Space:

The Four Principles

1. Whoever comes is the right people
2. Whatever happens is all that could have
3. Whenever it starts is the right time
4. When it is over, it is over

The Law of Two Feet

The Law of Two Feet means that if a session no longer interesting to you, you have permission to leave. The law puts responsibility for your own actions on your own shoulders.

Bumblebees and Butterflies

Bumblebees and Butterflies are for those people who wish to use their two feet and "flit" from meeting to meeting. These people can pollinate and cross-fertilize, lending richness and variety to the discussions.

Additionally, you should...

Put the chairs in a circle, and set the tone by presenting the theme and explaining the process and purpose of setting the agenda.

Determining the Topics:

The facilitator should then tell the group that once they have their issue or opportunity in mind, to come out into the center of the circle, grab a piece of paper and marker and write down a short title and sign their name. Once done, each should stand in front of the group and say "I would like to address _____", or "I'd

like to talk with people about _____".   After each person has announced their theme, they should take the piece of paper and tape it up on the blank wall.

Proposing an area for discussion, and taking responsibility for it does not require that the propose-r be an expert or that a formal presentation be given. Either or both of those could be true, but it is equally possible that the propose-r could be virtually ignorant of the subject and was looking for some people with whom to share the ignorance and develop some knowledge. Taking responsibility means the propose-r will designate a time and space and then convene the session.

Developing the Community Bulletin Board and Agenda

After people have stood to announce their sessions, they should pass by a blank chart and affix their issue to it. Once the community bulletin board is created with all the possible discussion group topics, the facilitator should move on to talk about the market place.

Creating the Agenda

Now that all the possible topics are on the wall, people need to develop an agenda by determining when and where the session/discussion will be held. Give people time to discuss together, negotiate, combine similar session topics, and move sessions around so that most people can attend the key sessions of their choice.

 By the time the agenda is complete, the community should have specific discussion groups determined, as well as the time and place for each group.

 A number of groups should run simultaneously.

Session Recording

The facilitator should determine if the group wants each session proceedings recorded. If so, designate the facilitator / propose-r of the session to use a recording form and ask for a volunteer to record critical and important ideas and points raised during the meeting.

Suggested Timing for Open Space

The Launch

Take about 15 minutes for the overview of the session and technique and spend 30 minutes with the group creating the topics and working though the bulletin board and the market place.

The Sessions

These can take as long as necessary within the constraints of the workshop.

Genius Forum Planning Checklist

TASK	DONE
PRE-EVENT PLANNING	
Hold pre-meeting with facilitator to set givens and pick theme	
Determine who to invite, set target number for attendance	
Set date	
Select space (make sure it's okay to put tape on the walls!!)	
Main Room (adequate space = room capacity/2)	
Optional Breakout Rooms (5 per 100 people)	
Smoking area	
Registration area	
Create invitation	
Send invitation	

LOGISTICS	
Work with "Space" staff on set-up	
Provide an article or book on OST to staff	
Set up circle for main room, flexible breakout room configurations	
Get list of breakout room names (if using), maps to rooms	
Plan meals (buffet; food that can be out for several hours)	
Arrange details with caterer (breakfast, lunch, dinner, breaks)	
Arrange for any special food needs	
Arrange for computers (about 5 per 100 people)	
1 printer	
Adequate power, tables for computers	
Software for compiling proceedings	
Arrange for wireless microphone, plus spare battery	
Get supplies	
Masking tape (1 roll per breakout room)	
Magic markers (x per breakout room, x for main circle)	
Flip charts (1 per breakout room, spare chart paper)	
Paper for Issues (quarter chart paper; more than # of people)	
Post-its (2 packs per breakout room)	
Any legal issues?	
Any union issues?	
Signage required?	
Travel Support (hotel rooms, cars, maps)	
Name tags and other welcome materials (journal, pen)	
Cover for proceedings	
Set date for debrief	
Arrange for copying proceedings	
Arrange for typing participant phone numbers, addresses for proceedings	

DAY OF EVENT	
Prep sponsor for doing opening and their role	
Have sponsor write proceedings cover page sometime during the event	
Set up registration table (sign, name tags, pens, list: names, phone #s, addresses)	
Set up message area, registration table, signage, computers, microphone	
Make time/room matrix, signs (law, principles, surprise, mission control, theme)	
Make circle, put supplies in break out rooms, circle	

POST EVENT	
Hold debrief	
Copy and distribute proceedings	
Write thank you's	
Any measurement activities?	

Based on a template originally designed by Peggy Holman

Notes

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