

Inclusive Meeting Tips

Tip #1: Credit the Ideas of Others

If I observe someone repeat an idea previously shared by another and get credit for it, then I'll verbally acknowledge the contribution of both individuals.

Examples

- "Thanks, Josh, for reiterating what Brenda said. I'll consider that."
- "Thanks, Cynthia, for bringing that up again. I think Joe said that earlier."
- "Mark, I'm glad you repeated what Sam said. It is an important thing to consider."
- "Jocelyn mentioned that point at the beginning of the meeting. Thanks for reinforcing what she said, Margaret."

Tip #2: Create an Opening for Others

If I observe someone dominating a conversation to the point that others can't contribute, then I'll redirect the conversation to other participants.

Examples

- "Thanks for your points, John. We haven't heard from Cynthia and Carl yet. What thoughts do the two of you have?"

Tip #3: Dial In Your Colleagues

If I own a meeting, then I will ensure a conference line or VC is set up for the meeting.

If I'm invited to a meeting and there isn't a call-in number, then I'll ask the meeting owner to add one. It might help you or a colleague out.

Setting up an option to dial in for a meeting helps your remote team members collaborate. This also gives flexibility to your Seattle colleagues if they need to be mobile during that time.

Examples

- How great would it be if you were able to dial-in and contribute to a discussion while you were driving to your kick boxing class? Or, while you were sitting in traffic on your way home? Or a colleague will be in Fiona for a different meeting right before or after yours.

Tip #4: Include Your Remote Callers

If there are participants on a conference line, then I'll write their names on a white board or a paper in the middle of the table. This will remind us that they are on the line.

I'll also assign someone to ensure we ask for their input / thoughts as we go along. Taking these actions will engage your remote callers in the meeting so they don't tune out and feel excluded.

Bonus Tip

- When I open the meeting for feedback or questions, I'll ask for the callers' input first! This may throw people off in the room a little bit, but it's OK to shake things up.

Tip #5: Optimize Meeting Times for Required Attendees

If I own a meeting (particularly a recurring meeting), then I'll ask for availability first and schedule the meeting to optimize the attendance of required attendees.

Examples

- If one of my key participants isn't available at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, then I'll find another time or day for our meeting.
- If a couple required attendees are only available via phone during their morning commute, and are in a capacity to engage while commuting, then I will include dial-in information.
- If a key team member has childcare or elderly care commitments when I want to hold a meeting, then I will be flexible and schedule at a time when he/she is available to fully contribute.
- Remember – If you dial in, you may discuss confidential topics, be mindful of who can overhear your conversation.

Tip #6: Ask for Others' Opinions First

If I am one of the more senior leaders in a discussion, then I'll ask others their opinion or ideas prior to sharing my own in order to learn what others think.

Doing this will likely encourage more input and discussion instead of the conversation just following the direction of senior leaders. This may spark new ideas that lead to even better, more creative solutions.

Tip #7: Allow for Processing Time

If I own a meeting with a document to review and discuss, then I will try to send 24 hours in advance as a pre-read. Or, if I need to provide the document in the room, then I'll take questions and feedback for a communicated period of time after the meeting.

For individuals who prefer processing time, this will help them gather their thoughts and questions. This may also foster a more robust conversation in the room and a well-rounded set of considerations.

Tip #8: Recognize Efforts

If I see someone demonstrating inclusive meeting practices, then I'll positively recognize and reinforce them.

Whenever you lead a meeting or participate in one, you play a part in making meetings as inclusive as possible.

Examples

- "Melissa, great job engaging our remote callers throughout the meeting. Let's remember to keep doing that."

Tip #9: Help Others

If I observe someone not following our inclusive meeting guidelines, then I'll bring it up to them in an appropriate setting.

We all play a role in speaking up if we see something that is preventing others from openly sharing their ideas.

Examples

- "Jesse, I noticed that you interrupted our newest team member a couple times in that meeting. Maybe next time think about waiting for him or her to finish their thoughts before jumping in."