

Breakthroughs

The creative tension of conflict



Great work often comes from difference; different types of people involved in groups and projects, different talents, different perspectives and different experiences. Combine this with passion and creativity and there will be a few sparks along the way.

Here are some pointers for you to use as a group to help keep tensions to a minimum and to ensure they lead towards a breakthrough.

1. Remind yourselves of, and keep coming back to:
 - the values you share as a group
 - the purpose and goals you want to achieve
 - the criteria for success
2. Voice your views in turn while the others focus and listen. No interruptions!
3. Explore options. Lots of them.
4. Remove 'personality' in favour of the greater good and go from 'me against you' to 'us against the problem'.
5. Narrow the options down and agree the best solution taking all the above into account.
6. The breakthrough comes when there is genuine agreement.
7. Sleep on it. Consolidate.
8. Debrief. Draw a line in the sand. Move on.
9. Check everyone feels valued.
10. Use the creative spark from this process.
Instead of throwing cold water on new approaches, different ways of thinking and responsible risk taking, fan the flame. Innovation won't come from doing things the way you've always done things.

Conflict often gets in the way of a group's potential, sometimes because people fear disharmony. Similarly, difference can easily become a source of tension as opposed to an essential strength in a group.

Keep in mind the opportunities difference and conflict bring:

- Focused attention on problems that have to be solved
- A focus on who we are and what our values are
- What we care about and what we are committed to
- Clarification of how we need to change