

Business Purpose: To use a cost effective consultation process to maximise results.

Consulting Large Groups

A collaboration café



To be authentic, it's important to demonstrate the qualities of coaching when you are evolving an organisation, department or team towards a coaching culture. Qualities such as collaboration and inclusion, ensuring voices, views and ideas are heard, creating opportunities for meaningful discussion, so that each person believes their views genuinely count.

The logistics and constraints of achieving this are significant, so here are some suggestions for an approach we use, which we call "Collaboration Café".

Group size	More than 16
Venue	Comfortable for the size of group with lots of refreshments and goodies on tap
Set up	Tables to seat 4 people in café style layout with flip chart paper as tablecloths, waterproof marker pens on table and table decoration (vase / flowers)
Facilitators	High level of expertise in group facilitation and attention to detail
Environment	Inspirational, uplifting, hospitable
Time	3 hours (min)

Simplified overview

- The absolute key to success is the skilful crafting of the questions for the group. The right questions are an imperative for the information you want that will shape the organisation's future.
- Communicate the context to the intended audience with the request that they reflect on this ahead of the event.
- Set the context at the start of the Collaboration Café involving key profile people for the topic who can set the scene, offer the right information for the group and inspire.
- Allow a minimum of 20 minutes per question.
The table groups respond and use the flip chart tablecloths and / or postits to express their views and ideas.
After each question, 3 people from the group of 4 circulate to different tables, briefly share the main points from the discussion they have just left and start as a new group to respond to the next question, with everyone's contribution being expected and valued.
1 person remains at each table, not as 'chair' but for continuity.
- The facilitators round up the main themes and patterns emerging from the groups and represent these visually in summary for the whole group.
- The facilitators follow up by processing all the information, ideas and views from the flip chart tablecloths and presenting the discoveries creatively for the group with proposals.

Outcomes	A culture of dialogue; Inclusion and significance for all contributors; Cross pollination of ideas; Opportunities from collective creativity
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