



**CONNECT.  
CREATE.  
COLLABORATE.**

Meeting Design

**Your guide to finding the  
perfect meeting format.**

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## MEETINGS MATTER

Meetings are moving towards incorporating more face-to-face interactions, allowing us to gain insight into our participant's thoughts, opinions and ideas. Through multiple collisions of minds and people, innovative ideas are brought to the surface, and problems that seemed impossible to solve, find a solution. But how can we ensure every meeting is effective? One where big ideas come to life, where relationships are built and where problems are identified and solved.

With so many different styles and formats to choose from, we have simplified some of the most effective methods into more digestible content, specifically designed to help you make the most of your time at The Hive. Offering explanations for 13 different meeting formats, including objectives, the ideal number of participants and a detailed guide for each method. Whether you want to tap into the next big idea with your participants, or to test out opinions on a new product or system, we have a format to fit your needs. So, flip through the pages, have a read, and start planning your next meeting.



## World Café

### SUMMARY

Multiple small round tables are arranged in a café-like setting, discussions are undertaken at each table and participants are encouraged to move between the tables and engage in conversations.

### OBJECTIVE

To encourage strategic dialogue, multi-generational collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

20 - 30, working in groups of 4.

### HOW IT WORKS

The organiser will create an informal café environment, with four chairs (no more than five) to a table. The host will welcome the participants with a brief introduction to the method and the purpose of the meeting.

To begin each round, the host will pose a question to the participants, and they will have 20 minutes to discuss their answers. There will be three or more rounds taking place per meeting. The same questions can be used for more than one round, or they can develop to retain focus and guide the conversations to a desired subject.

After each 20-minute round is complete, the small groups, or an individual within the group will give a brief summary of their talking points and their agreed-upon answers to the larger group. These answers can be represented visually, with the preferred method of graphic recordings, i.e. visualising participants ideas through words, sketches and drawings.

After each round, all the members of the teams will move to a different table, one participant may remain on their original table to act as host for the new group, to recap on what was discussed previously.



## Sound Board

### SUMMARY

A group forum designed to extract opinions about a particular matter or subject, retaining a tight focus on the task at hand.

### OBJECTIVE

Identify solutions to ongoing problems, plan launches of new products or services, discover breakthrough ideas or gain momentum for new projects.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

20 - 30 participants.

### HOW IT WORKS

Prior to the meeting, the organiser should send out invitations that clearly define the main purpose and focus of the meeting, outlining the areas they would most like to receive feedback on.

This will allow the participants to research and organise their thoughts well in advance of the meeting.

The organiser will have to define how they would like these ideas to be presented and debated. The participants can either submit their thoughts prior to the meeting to be read aloud and discussed, be asked questions openly to be answered at random or technology can be used for anonymous feedback. Please consider time-limiting answers if a large number of participants are expected to attend.

The layout of the meeting should be inclusive, using either a circular or a horseshoe seating arrangement to encourage engagement and discussion. A 'parking lot' concept may also prove to be useful to revisit off topic ideas that are worth pursuing.



## Speakers Corner

### SUMMARY

Ideally taking place after a plenary or panel session, this format enables the audience to huddle around a keynote speaker, encouraging open dialogue and discussions.

### OBJECTIVE

Enable the audience to air thoughts and comment openly in a less public setting, to invite debate and open dialogue and to offer participants closer access to the thought leaders.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

20 per speaker.

### HOW IT WORKS

This should ideally take place after a panel presentation with the speakers representing different areas of specialities, perspectives and industries. The questions during the panel are often limited, so this format gives the speakers a chance

to share a wider breadth of their expertise and knowledge.

The moderator will invite each speaker to take the stage for 30 seconds at the end of the panel discussion, as they convince the audience to come to their 'section' of the room during the coffee break to summarise what was discussed during the panel. During the coffee break, each speaker will stand on a small raised platform. The participants are then able to engage with whichever speaker they choose.

Organisers get more value and knowledge from their key speakers as the participants are more comfortable questioning the speakers in an informal setting, exchanging and debating views, exploring subjects in more depth and huddling with those who share similar interests.



## Brain Dates

### SUMMARY

Encouraging participants to request and share their knowledge via intimate sessions that other participants can later book onto and engage with.

### OBJECTIVE

To exchange knowledge, share ideas and encourage debate.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

Small groups or one-to-one.

### HOW IT WORKS

An organised effort to draw like-minded people together to encourage the exchange of knowledge, debate, and idea sharing on specific areas of mutual interest.

Using technology or an alternative method, the participants will create an individual profile giving some background information on themselves, and either an offer or request for knowledge on a specific topic. The profiles are circulated amongst the other participants who are then able to book a brain date. Alternatively, areas are set up for different topics that are up for discussion, the participants can then choose which topic area they would like to engage with.

Two or more of the participants will then meet face-to-face to share their knowledge on their chosen subject.



## Fireside Chats

### SUMMARY

An informal and natural conversation between the moderator and guest speaker or expert in front of an audience. This encourages less confident speakers to share their knowledge in a more relaxed setting.

### OBJECTIVE

Deliver expert insights in a conversational manner, relax the speakers, provoke more insightful discussions and to engage and involve the audience.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

20, to a full plenary.

### HOW IT WORKS

There are many speakers who have vast knowledge and experience in their field, but one-way presenting may make them feel uneasy, hindering their ability to share their information with an audience.

A change in the delivery method can transform their performance from mediocre to stellar.

For a successful fireside chat, a skilled moderator who is well-prepared and is able to lead an engaging discussion and a speaker who is confident in addressing a whole range of questions are a must! The moderator and the speaker sit almost opposite one another, angled slightly towards the audience. The speaker directs their answers to the moderator, creating a more informal one-to-one conversation that the audience can engage with.

One of the main objectives of the fireside chat is to involve the audience in the discussion, so audience interaction tools can be implemented to crowd source questions or gauge reactions, using polling system applications available on smartphones.



## Campfire Sessions

### **SUMMARY**

A session with a pre-determined topic, using a free-flowing style of communication for participants to learn by engaging in conversation.

### **OBJECTIVE**

Encouraging networking and discussions by creating a learning environment for sharing experiences.

### **IDEAL NUMBERS**

20 per campfire.

### **HOW IT WORKS**

The organiser will select a variety of popular topics, based on the

demographics of the participants, running 2 - 4 sessions per topic. Here, an inclusive environment should be created, suggestive of a campfire scenario; warm, open and welcoming. A simple way to achieve this is to use camping chairs, benches, and even a video of a crackling fire.

The host will speak for 10 - 15 minutes to introduce the topics, setting up key points for the group discussions and peer-to-peer learning. The sessions are the most effective when there are no technological distractions, no presentations, mobile phones or tablets (excluding of course the video of the fire), so that the participants can remain focused on the task at hand.





## Jam Sessions

### SUMMARY

At the end of a day of meetings and conferences, the participants regroup to organise, evaluate and conclude what they have learnt from the different sessions, reinforcing their ideas and opinions.

### OBJECTIVE

To reinforce recently processed information at the end of a session, meeting or conference.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

50 - 100 participants

### HOW IT WORKS

The session reinforces what the participants have recently learnt, encouraging them to reflect on the previous session, what was

said, what they found interesting, and what they want to challenge, enhancing their quality of learning.

This session typically takes place at the end of the day, where participants are grouped by area of expertise in their different fields.

The organiser will put together clear targets and a balanced agenda to ensure a more in-depth discussion takes place. To begin, the participants sit together, with the host initiating a discussion by asking leading questions to reinforce key concepts and recurring themes that stood out during the day. Based on their biggest takeaway, participants are then categorised and regrouped so that they can engage in targeted conversations specific to their priorities.



**Fishbowl**

**SUMMARY**

Similar to a traditional panel session, however the speakers and moderator sit in a circle as opposed to a row, with the audience surrounding them.

**OBJECTIVE**

To encourage strategic and intimate dialogue, multi-stakeholder engagement and to create a less formal environment for panellists.

**IDEAL NUMBERS**

4 - 6 speakers (with the moderator),  
100+ audience.

**HOW IT WORKS**

The panel is sitting in a circle, with the audience preferably sitting in concentric circles around them. The speakers can engage in intimate conversations and debates, whilst being witnessed and observed by the audience.



## Lightening Talk

### SUMMARY

This format gives speakers only 3 minutes to present a scientific concept or idea in a clear and accessible way.

### OBJECTIVE

To encourage concise and focused presentations and the understanding of new topics.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

1 speaker, unlimited audience.

### HOW IT WORKS

The presentations will take no longer than 3 minutes, with the facilitator timing each one, actively managing the session. This method is most effective for academic and scientific talks.



## Affinity Grouping

### SUMMARY

A brainstorming method to help companies solve problems, assist with ideation and organising these ideas into themes.

### OBJECTIVE

To encourage engagement from all participants, identify key themes and concepts through brainstorming and to encourage collaborative approaches within corporate companies.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

Smaller teams and breakout meetings.

### HOW IT WORKS

The host of the session will encourage creativity from all the participants. Ideas will be discussed in turn by the participants, ensuring everyone contributes to the discussion and notes down their ideas on individual cards, with the aim of generating as many

ideas as possible. The cards the participants have been writing on will be randomly positioned on the table or on flip charts. Without further discussion, the participants choose two cards that appear to be related and place them side by side, creating a group. Other cards are then added or set alone to begin a new group.

Continue these steps until all the cards have been categorised into clear groups. Any cards whose positioning are highly disputed amongst the participants should be placed to one side. There should be fewer than 10 groupings.

Once a final, undisputed list of ideas has been agreed upon, all the grouped themes should now be discussed and moved around, where necessary, combining ideas to produce final paragraphs and conclusions for each of the ideas.



## Pecha Kucha

### SUMMARY

A quick and efficient method for speakers to present their ideas. Each presenter has 20 slides to present, allowing only 20 seconds per slide (6 minutes and 40 seconds in total).

### OBJECTIVE

Forces presenters to be quick and concise, encourages audience engagement, the sharing of ideas and bottom-up communication.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

1 speaker, 1 - 300 audience.

### HOW IT WORKS

The speakers are warned well in advance of the time constraints so that they can adapt their presentations accordingly. The presentations are limited to 20 seconds per slide for 20 slides, encouraging the speaker to use visual cues rather than text.

The audience can either be seated in a traditional layout or can be arranged in an unconventional seating style. The main focus of the session is to encourage the speakers to keep to the time constraint, forcing them to communicate their messages clearly and informatively.



## Dotmocracy

### SUMMARY

A voting method using dot stickers, or a similar alternative, each participant gets an equal number of dots so that they can vote on their preferred options. The option with the most votes is the winner.

### OBJECTIVE

To encourage collaborative decision making and engagement, to give equal opportunities to all participants and to share collective knowledge and experience.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

Smaller teams and breakout meetings.

### HOW IT WORKS

Each participant is given one or more stickers (usually a dot shape, but you can get creative with this). The quantity is decided by the meeting organiser, depending on how many options the participant is voting for.

Hard copies of the voting options are placed on whiteboards or paper throughout the room, and the dedicated speaker for each option pitches their ideas to the participants.

The participants are encouraged to place their dots next to the option they like the most, with the option with the most dots winning.

Variations of this method can include; colour coding the dots to represent the approval or disapproval of an option, or using different colours for different categories of voters, for example, an expert or novice in a chosen field.



## Ignite

### SUMMARY

Similar to Pecha Kucha, this format is a quick and efficient way for speakers to present their ideas. Each speaker has 20 slides to present, allowing only 15 seconds per slide (only 5 minutes in total).

### OBJECTIVE

Forces speakers to be quick and concise and encourages audience engagement, exposing them to the most important pieces of information.

### IDEAL NUMBERS

1 speaker, 1 - 500 audience.

### HOW IT WORKS

The presentations given will be almost entirely visual, as imagery will lead the information exchange as opposed to text. There should be no more than 20 slides per presentation and each slide will only be shown for 15 seconds.



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