

## Facilitator Tricks to Support Success and Mix Things Up

What	How	Benefits
1. Email reminders & agenda	Email a reminder about the meeting with a draft agenda 1-7 days in advance of the meeting.	Reminders keep the meeting on people's minds. Agenda helps people come prepared.
2. Purpose on agenda	At the top of the meeting agenda, and/or first thing when you state the meeting purpose.	Sets a focused tone. Minimizes other distractions.
3. Phase of discussion	If the team will be exploring ideas, indicate which parts/how much of the process they should expect to do in this meeting (divergent, convergent, decision) on the agenda.	Clarifies what types of conversations and behaviors will best help the group. Normalizes the groan zone if that's coming.
4. Decision Rules	On the agenda, include which "rule" will apply for any decisions to be made. If a portion of the agenda is simply sharing information, those decisions have already been made. Indicate if/how feedback on the outcomes of those decisions can be shared.	Clarifies team members' roles in discussions and decisions. People participate differently depending on how their participation will shape the end outcome/what power they have.
5. Check-In	Go around the room and have each person "check-in" with some combination of the following info (adjust to suit your group): Name, Role, Updates/Announcements, Time Constraint, Hope for the Day.	Builds social and professional rapport. Keeps the group updates on one another's progress, needs, etc. Creates a little space for those that come in late. They won't have missed truly critical information yet.
6. Snowfield	Ask people to respond to a question on post-it notes. Gather responses on a blank wall/chart paper. Sort responses into themes/similar ideas. Use these top ideas or common themes as next steps to discuss.	Gathers information quickly. Allows leader to see common ideas (those that come up a lot) as well as novel ones. Gets people out of their chairs (blood moving) to post their ideas.
7. Individual write	Before beginning discussion, give people a chance to write down ideas on paper. After the thinking/writing time, move to partner talk or whole group discussion.	Helps people who need more time to process participate more fully. Changes the dynamic with those who talk a lot and those who don't talk much.
8. Partner talk	Have pairs of team members discuss an idea (2-5 minutes) before sharing out to the larger group.	Can help balance participation. Helps get ideas flowing with higher level of participation.
9. Stand-up meeting	Have pairs or small groups stand up and discuss an idea together.	Small groups allows more people to participate at once. Standing boosts energy and creativity at low energy points.

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10. Handouts with space for ideas	Pose questions in writing. Ask team members to respond individually or in small groups. Instead of reporting out, collect responses to read later.	Everyone can participate at once. Evens the playing field for less outspoken team members. Allows for anonymous feedback.
11. Chart-writing	If gathering information from the group, record ideas on chart paper or electronically (but project electronic recording so others can see).	Creates a working, visual memory for the group. Decreases unnecessary repetition during the meeting. Can remind the group of progress made at a subsequent meeting. Avoids re-hashing the same conversations again.
12. Dot Voting	To help narrow down a large list of possibilities, give each team member a certain number of dot stickers (# of dots/person = no more than 20% of # the options on the list). Ask participants to place a dot next to each of their favorite ideas/which ones they think will best serve the group's needs. Depending on the outcome, discuss the results.	Creates a visual representation of the groups' preferences. Fast and relatively anonymous. Allows for multiple best options. Helps narrow down a list of MANY options into a few top ones.
13. Closing ritual	Much like the check-in, have a ritual that ends the meeting. Pose a question and allow each person to (briefly- even just ONE word) respond. Questions could include, "What's one thing you'll take away from today's discussion" or "What are your next steps to support this decision?"	
14. Evaluation (plus/delta)	Ask participants to share what worked and what they would change about the meeting. Responses can be oral or they can be written on a post-it note and stuck to chart paper on the way out of the meeting.	Encourages open feedback and continuous improvement. Allows those leading meetings to continue to tweak their processes to meet their teams' needs best in the future.
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