



Team Input for Creative Problem Solving

WHY DO THIS: You want to get team input on a joint, challenging problem.

WHAT IT IS: In 25 minutes, you can get a team to provide input, organize it, and report out on key themes for solving your challenge. This provides leadership with an easy-to-facilitate method of getting bottoms-up input.

HOW:

Preparation

1. Get crystal clear on why you are meeting with the group
 - write it down
 - explain what outcomes you want—like improved logistics or better customer service
 - let the group lead you to *how* to do it
2. Create a clear, easy to understand question for the input
3. Send an invitation to the group
 - introduce the question
 - ask for the group’s help in how to answer it or resolve it

Facilitation

4. On the day of the team meeting, write the question on a chart or slide
5. When you convene the group tell them why they are there
6. Warm up the group by stating your goal, and getting some initial conversation (keep this to a few minutes)

7. Then tell the group you want to capture as many ideas as possible.
8. Ask them to write down their ideas on sticky notes and tell them they will be organizing those ideas in small groups
9. Emphasize that you want their perspective (this is key)
10. Use post-it notes to get individual input

Provide half a pack of post-it notes to each person in the room

- Ask people to spend three minutes writing down their ideas
- Put each idea on a separate post-it note

11. Ask team to post ideas on self-titled flip-charts

- the first person to start posting writes a title on the chart
- have about six blank pieces of flipchart paper posted
- DO NOT pre-label the charts – that puts *your* perspective and organization on the data – you want *theirs!*
- Trust the process–people will self-organize and move along quickly

Organization and Presentation

12. Have team members organize the data into logical “chunks”

- Once the data are posted, ask people to go to the chart that interests them most
- Ask them to organize so people are spread in even sized groups
- Have the teams at each chart organize the post-its into meaningful chunks of ideas
- Ask them to use markers to label each major idea
- Team members at each flipchart station give 3 minute report-outs on findings

NEXT STEPS:

13. **Conclude the session** with a large group discussion of findings. You might want to ask who wants to assist in applying the findings and taking action.
14. **Decide what to do next.** Remember, start with one small step that everyone agrees makes sense. Action is easier when there's consensus—because then it's something people feel supported to actually do.

One tangible step that people agree on, no matter how small, leads to greater things.