

Meetings That Motivate

How many times have you heard “I spend so much time in meetings, I don’t have time to do all the things I say I’m going to do in those meetings”? It’s a constant battle I face, trying to improve our meetings so that they are as productive as possible in the least amount of time, and ultimately beneficial to our business. After all, business is about bringing a group of people together to accomplish something, together. So you could say that these gatherings are one of the most crucial parts of business. It’s difficult to align people without that infamous word “meeting”.

Imagine a US football team in a huddle. Before each play, the offense and defense take a few seconds to analyze where they are, what down it is, what they think the opposing team will do and their own next play options. Next the coach or quarterback will call out a play that takes everything into consideration. In the same way, when people are brought into a meeting they discuss what they are trying to achieve, what is in the way of achieving that and any progress they have made.

We work diligently to make our meetings productive so that they keep us moving forward, but I find that we still manage to drift a little along the way. Last week after our usual Monday morning meeting with our Team leads in India via video conference, I kept the team together and asked one question. What is standing in the way of us becoming a better company? I set the timer and everyone had 3 minutes to write down their thoughts.

At the end of 3 minutes, one at a time we went around the room, each team member and team lead providing one idea. As we gathered ideas I started a list of them all, and then went back around and each person ranked their top 3. For their first choice, I put 3 marks, second I put 2 marks, and third I

put 1 mark. At the end, the ideas with the most points are the most pressing issues, and therefore are the ones that we will begin discussing. As a group we brainstorm possible solutions to the barriers, then finalize what our next step is towards making our company better in that area.



In my experience, meetings provide the best opportunity for true collective intelligence...where ideas feed other ideas, and new ideas grow. Taking the time to talk about pains, stucks, competition or even opportunities, you are supporting the work of your team and making meetings productive. Research shows that one of the biggest motivators for employees is progress. When you have a productive meeting, your team feels that accomplishment and thereby leaves the meeting more motivated.