Meetings are the place where 'leadership lives' and a much underutilised opportunity to create learning and change. Is a participatory model of meeting leadership better or worse than traditional methods?

Trialing a Participatory Meeting Method: ProMeet

"I was dreading a whole day of sitting on my butt, hearing one person after another droning on. I felt more engaged and involved in this meeting than I have for a long time"

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Trialing a Participatory Meeting Method: ProMeet

1.0 Management Summary

The cross Government Organisational Design Community of Practice (ODCoP) commissioned trials of a new meeting method – the Participatory Meeting Method (PMM).

The objective

The objective of the field trials was to test the PMM within Government departments to assess the relevance of the PMM, seeking to understand if it was a better or worse method than a traditional approach, and to understand if it would be useful and might be adopted more broadly by Government departments.

This paper is based on participant evaluations of two meetings, one half day planning meeting of 16 Ministry of Justice (MoJ) staff (SEO to grade 3) and one full day meeting of 22 Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) staff (EO to grade 6). The two meetings took place on 30th October 2008 and 12th November 2008 respectively.

Key findings

82% of participants thought the participatory meeting method is better than the traditional way of meeting.

89% of participants thought meeting objectives are better than the more traditional agenda.

The wallchart and gridcard visual system gained near unanimous support for helping the meeting's structure, focus, progress and record, as well as aiding full participation.

93% of participants thought the PMM system would be useful in their department.

Over three quarters thought PMM should be more broadly adopted at DWP and MoJ.

The majority would adopt the PMM

This work suggests the PMM would provide a wide range of benefits (page 10) if it were adopted more widely at the government departments involved:

- 26 out of the 28 of the attendants thought the PMM system could be useful at DWP/MoJ. Seem as aiding creativity, increasing involvement and 'buy in' and emphasising action and learning the PMM system was seen as being useful.

- 23 out of the 28 attendants thought the PMM system could be adopted by DWP/MoJ. Some felt it was much needed approach and should be adopted, and people thought it could help improve business efficiency.

This paper presents evidence in favour of improved meeting methods, to stimulate action to improve an average meeting culture sometimes found in large public sector organisations.

2.0 Introduction

The cross Government Organisational Design Community of Practice (ODCoP) commissioned trials of a new meeting method – the Participatory Meeting Method (PMM). The PMM has been developed by ProMeet, and this paper was written by ProMeet's CEO, Sean Blair who also structured and ran the trials.

This paper is based on participant evaluations of two meetings, one half day planning meeting of 16 Ministry of Justice (MoJ) staff (SEO to grade 3) and one full day meeting of 22 Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) staff (EO to grade 6). The two meetings took place on 30th October 2008 and 12th November 2008 respectively.

3.0 Objectives

The objective of the field trials was to test the PMM within Government departments to assess the relevance of the PMM, seeking to understand if it was a better or worse method than a traditional approach, and to understand if it would be useful and might be adopted more broadly by Government departments.

4.0 Context

4.1 Governments Departments

Both DWP and MoJ are involved in major change programmes. In part, driven by a requirement to achieve significant financial savings both DWP and MoJ Organisational Development and Change teams are involved in leading change programmes and being affected by change. Organisation wide headcount reduction including those in the OD&C team is a human consequence of the required changes. Both meetings were being held, at different times in the change cycle, to support the changes taking place.

The dynamics surrounding these meetings is especially interesting, insofar as both teams are driving organisation wide change, in the knowledge that when the job is done, the drivers of the change will themselves have been changed (reallocated or retired) too. Both meetings were of OD&C teams gathering at times of uncertainty at pressure points in the change process.

4.2 ProMeet and the Participatory Meeting Method

ProMeet and the PMM was developed in 2007, and extensively tested and validated in 2008. DWP first used ProMeet in July 2008, and following a successful first use of it ProMeet was invited to become an associate of the National School for Government and demonstrate it at the September 08 ODCoP meeting. ProMeet is used in the public, private and educational sectors.
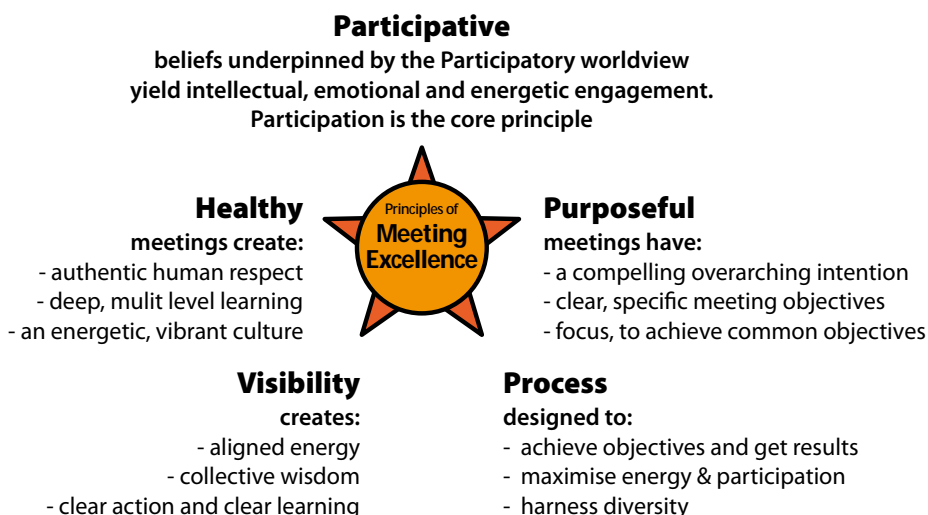
Core to the ProMeet philosophy are three ideas. Firstly, knowledge workers perform better in organisations where participation is a dominant living value, secondly, leadership lives (or underperforms) in every face to face encounter (meetings). A third key idea is that every meeting is an opportunity to learn, personally and organisationally, seen in this way meetings can be the day-to-day vehicle through which action learning lives, and change occurs.

The kind of Participatory Leadership ProMeet enables achieves high levels of employee engagement, in the most basic unit of organisational life, namely meetings. The PMM was designed by a group of organisational development specialists in response the very common poor meeting practice that exists in many organisations.

4.3 Five principles and four phases of excellent meetings
Core to the PMM are 5 principles of excellent meetings: Participation, Purposefulness, Process, Visibility and Health and 4 phases of excellent meetings, Define Objectives, Design Process, Release Action, Unlock Learning. These are illustrated below.

PMM overview: 5 Principles

Participative
beliefs underpinned by the Participatory worldview
yield intellectual, emotional and energetic engagement.
Participation is the core principle

Healthy
meetings create:
- authentic human respect
- deep, mulit level learning
- an energetic, vibrant culture

Principles of
Meeting Excellence

Purposeful
meetings have:
- a compelling overarching intention
- clear, specific meeting objectives
- focus, to achieve common objectives

Visibility
creates:
- aligned energy
- collective wisdom
- clear action and clear learning

Process
designed to:
- achieve objectives and get results
- maximise energy & participation
- harness diversity

PMM overview: 4 meeting phases

Define	Design	Release	Unlock
Objectives	Process	Actions with Passion	Learning
Define the objectives you wish to achieve in this meeting	Design a process that will allow the right people to participate in creating its success in the right way	Release the passion people have for the action that they know is needed and want to take	Unlock three level of learning at every opportunity. Ask: what have I learnt about me, it and us after every meeting

The *most vital* parts of the whole PMM system (not shown in its entirety in this paper) are:

1. Participation must be a deeply held value of the person convening the meeting
2. Establishing clear meeting objectives is the key
3. *Using the* clear meeting objectives to define a meeting process that is both participatory and energising
4. Clarifying actions in the meeting increases responsibility and accountability
5. Every meeting is the central time and place to create change through learning about self, subject, organisation and team

The delivery of PMM is supported, and made visibly different using a wallchart and gridcard system.

Typical wallchart mid process

5.0 The meetings

5.1 Meeting objectives and meeting process

The PMM does not use subjects based agendas, but instead converts every agenda subject into an objective. As well written objectives usually contain a verb, a subject and an outcome they help participants to know what is required from them and for each subject.

Clear meeting objectives implicate the process steps the meeting needs to take to ensure the objective is achieved. The PMM seeks to establish a meeting process that gets full participation from the very outset, focuses participation to achieve the meeting objectives and harnesses the physical and intellectual energy of participants throughout meeting.

Establishing objectives and meeting process for DWP and MoJ
In line with a central principle of the PMM each of the two meetings was prepared for, establishing the right meeting objectives, and using the meeting objectives to define a meeting process.

5.2 Objectives for DWP and MoJ meetings

12th November 2008
DWP Meeting Objectives

To gain a shared understanding of what's happening to progress changes to OC and L&D within DWP, JCP and PDCS

To explore our collective knowledge and experience of change to ensure we strengthen and apply our collective professionalism in support of the OC and L&D change programme

Detailed meeting plans for both meetings can be found in appendix 1 and 2.

30th October 2008
MoJ Meeting Objectives

Overarching HR Objective
To clearly define an emerging plan for HR to support the Performance and Efficiency Programme (PEP)

Meeting Objectives
To understand the latest strategies and plans of the PEP

To understand our individual skills / qualities that can support change

To create common understanding on the emerging HR plan

To agree the next 12 weeks priority deliverables

To identify the most likely blocks preventing efficient progress

To share suggestions for overcoming potential blocks

To create an action plan to progress deliverables

Meeting Culture Objective

To build the teams confidence, clarity, and sense of personal accountability for action to take forwards the work needed to support the change programme.

To breakdown silos and increase the sense of team

5.3 Structure

The two meetings were, by the PMM benchmark, standard meetings.The main differences between these meetings and their more traditional counterparts were that preparation had been well attended to, clear objectives had been drafted and agreed by the meeting sponsors and the objectives had been used to outline a participative meeting process. Detailed meeting process plans (appendix 1 and 2) had been carefully designed to allow group work, small group work, and individual work, to ensure attention and energy levels remained high. Tables had been set aside, and the room set up more informally, the meeting process set out on a large and very visible wallchart and a facilitator was used to attend to the meeting process.

Typical room layout

5.4 Outcomes

Participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 -5 the extent to which each of the stated meeting objectives were met (where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent). The range of scores was from 3.2 to 4.5. The average score across both objectives of the DWP meeting was 3.95 and the average score for the nine objectives of the MoJ meeting was 3.9.

Good progress was made in achieving the objectives in both meetings. These results combined with the findings that 82% of participants thought the participatory meeting method is better than the traditional way of meeting and 93% of participants thought the PMM system would be useful in their department suggest that the outcome of both meetings was significantly above average.

6.0 Findings
6.1 Summary

Feedback from the participants clearly indicates that the PMM was received extremely positively. (All 111 comments are in appendix 3 and 4) These comments are representative of the feedback.

1. Compared to other meetings you have had like this, overall, was it better or worse?

"It allowed everyone a voice, and also gave a focus and structure to the meeting"

2. This meeting used objectives to drive the meeting process, in your opinion was that better or worse than using an agenda?

"More goal directed, easy to measure whether it was achieved (rather than just ticking off agenda items)"

3. The meeting used gridcards and a wallchart, to get everyone's input, and to visibly progress and plan did these:

"I thought this method was excellent. It encouraged everyone to participate. Gave visual signs of progress, was available for all to see. Gave structure and order"

4. Do you think this kind of meeting system could be useful at DWP/MoJ?

"MoJ faces a number of complex challenges as it moves forwards in the spending period. This style of meeting simplifies the complex visually and with buy in of participants"

5. Could you see this kind of meeting system being more broadly adopted by DWP?

"I would like to see it used more widely and would hope that we (as a department) would be open to trying this method. Need to consider the cultural setting"

6.2 Summary findings

The quantitative data also clearly indicates that the PMM was received extremely positively. These 28 responses are a composite of both meetings.

1. Compared to other meetings you have had like this, overall, was it better or worse?			2. This meeting used objectives to drive the meeting process, in your opinion was that better or worse than using an agenda?			3. The meeting used gridcards and a wallchart, to get everyone's input, and to visibly progress and plan.			4. Do you think this kind of meeting system could be useful at DWP/MoJ?			5. Could you see this kind of meeting system being more broadly adopted by DWP?		
Better	Neither	Worse	Better	Neither	Worse	Help	Neither	Hinder	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Neither	No

6.3 Methodology & data
After the meetings were finished the attendees were asked to fill out a two page questionaire. The data is contained in appendix 3 and 4.

6.4 Detailed Findings.
Analysis of the comments and questionnaire results shows the PPM was clearly found to:

Increase participation
The significant majority thought the PMM was better because 'all contributed'. The engagement of all meeting participants was cited as a 'developmental process in its own right'. Some enjoyed the atmosphere and 'community feel' that PMM created whilst others commented focus was achieved by 'cutting down verbosity'. It was noted by one, that participation 'did take some people out of their comfort zone'. Many noted that the wallchart and gridcard system was a key way of getting the participation.

Provide clearer structure
The structured nature of the PMM was another commonly cited reason that the meetings were better, enabling 'keeping focus on sometimes intangible issues'. People thought the inbuilt action structure of PMM was better, and liked that the meeting 'order was very deliberate and visually stimulating'.

People thought the use of gridcards and a wallchart helped the meeting. Seen as 'visually appealing, organised and methodical', 'they enabled participants to see, hear, touch and speak to the activities which created a sense of ownership too'.

Create better flow
Many comments noted the facilitation as a reason that the meeting was better. 'Flexible, 'responsive to the needs of the group' and that' it flowed' and was 'stimulating and inclusive'.

Provide more outcome focussed discussion
Many thought the use of objectives provided clarity. Unlike agendas (usually lists of subjects) that 'don't focus on outcomes' the use of objectives provided 'focus and clarity of outcome' and helped the meeting 'stay on track' and helped 'focus on talking action after the meeting. One noted that 'sometimes an agenda would be more appropriate'. Some felt the PMM objectives structure also reduced the 'formality' of the meeting and increase the 'flow' of the meeting.

People commented that the use of meeting objectives provided clarity, helping participants know if each objective 'was achieved', and provided 'goals against which you can measure'. Also the ability to 'change (the subject) focus as we went along'.

Record of the meeting made real time
'A plan was created from everyone's input' thought one participant, another thought the visual aspects of the PMM was 'a brilliant visual statement of all that has been said throughout the day'. They were seen as providing an 'inclusive process' that 'reminds and records' what has been discussed and agreed.

And it seems likely that PMM would provide these benefits if adopted more widely at the government departments involved

- 26 out of the 28 of the attendants thought the PMM system could be useful at DWP/MoJ. Seem as aiding creativity, increasing involvement and 'buy in' and emphasising action and learning the PMM system was seen as being useful.

- 23 out of the 28 attendants thought the PMM system could be adopted by DWP/MoJ. Some felt it was much needed approach and should be adopted, and people thought it could help improve business efficiency.

6.5 Key findings
82% of participants thought the participatory meeting method is better than the traditional way of meeting.

89% of participants thought meeting objectives are better than the more traditional agenda.

The wallchart and gridcard visual system gained near unanimous support for helping the meeting's structure, focus, progress and record, as well as aiding full participation.

93% of participants thought the PMM system would be useful in their department.

Over three quarters thought PMM should be more broadly adopted at DWP and MoJ.

7.0 Summary

The objective of these two field trials was to test the PMM within Government departments to assess the relevance of the PMM as a meeting method and model of participatory leadership. The findings suggest that the PMM has a high degree of relevance.

8.0 A significant opportunity

Meetings are very costly. Both the direct expense of paying people to sit together (easy to measure with a £ value, and staggeringly large) as well as the cultural and productivity costs of getting it wrong. Government 'employee engagement' statistics show average and low level of engagement within the public sector.

If employees are not able to participate in the most basic unit of orgnaisational life, meetings, it is not surprising that they feel disconnected from the purposeful work of the organisation. If leadership is not creating a culture of participation in meetings, when and from where will a culture of participation grow?

Traditional meeting culture is not serving individuals or organisations well. There is demonstrably a better way.

9.0 Next Steps

Possible next steps with this work might include:

- ODCoP recommending possible next steps.

- DWP and or MoJ to undertake a more in depth action research based project. Establishing the economic, cultural and productivity metrics of current meeting norms, then trial a more systematic use of the PMM system, operated by trained DWP meeting leaders, aiming to make a measureable improvement to the quality of meetings.

- Seeking to establish a wider project with National School for Government or Institute for Government, to make public sector organisations work better, through better participative leadership of better meetings.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE

To explore the future of UAL LLR and understand options, trade offs, blocks and enablers.

The PMM in use

Appendices

1. DWP Meeting Plan
2. MoJ Meeting Plan
3. DWP meeting evaluation results in full
4. MoJ meeting evaluation results in full

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Meeting Objectives

To gain a shared understanding of what's happening to progress changes to OC and L&D within DWP, JCP and PDCS

To explore our collective knowledge and experience of change to ensure we strengthen and apply our collective professionalism in support of the OC and L&D change programme

Overarching objective: To be the leading HR function in the UK			
Timing	**Session Name**	**Facilitation Objectives**	**Notes**
9:00	Set Up	For prepare the meeting space to best support achievement of the objectives	
10:15	Arrival		Coffee/ Tea to be on hand – and available 'café style' all morning for grazing!
10:30	Welcome and Meeting objectives		MB to welcome and outline meeting objectives: **ARE THERE ANY OTHERS?**
10:35	Introducing ourselves and our central beliefs about change		Names, and 1 gridcard on 'My central belief about successful change is…'
10:50	I have heard (Fact and fiction)		Each participant to jot down 3 things they have heard/beliefs they carry about the current change

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Productive meetings at work

Overarching objective: To be the leading HR function in the UK			
Timing	**Session Name**	**Facilitation Objectives**	**Notes**
11:10	Latest OD&C Change	**To gain a shared understanding of what's happening to progress changes to OC and L&D within DWP, JCP and PDCS**	Gerry/Sue (Bryant) to use I have heard cards and qualify each as Fact or Fiction And give an overview on changes Participants to note questions
11:40	Questions for Clarification		
11:50	Does this mean…	To use this session to really really help people understand what's happening If time: 1. How clear is everybody – what could help make it clearer 2. What is it like knowing?	Participants to ask questions on Gridcards (Could be anonymous if that helps) Does this mean for me… Does this mean for us… (10 mins) Gerry Sue to answer. (20 mins)
12:30	Lunch		Low carb lunch please
1:15	Personal experiences (stories) of Change		Each person to remember a 'story' of effective change, jot down on 1 gridcard the name of the story and the learning / conclusion of it.

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Overarching objective: To be the leading HR function in the UK			
Timing	**Session Name**	**Facilitation Objectives**	**Notes**
			We could then hear about half the group telling stories (in about 5 mins) and all sharing conclusions and learning from their own
2:30	Applying the learning	To apply relevant aspects of the collective learning practically in individuals forthcoming work/responsibilities	Individuals to apply the learning 1. Clarify work / responsibility 2. Apply learning 3. State what will do differently
3:10	Actions and Learning about self and ProMeet from today's meeting	To commit to actions that support positive change, and double/triple loop learning from the day	
3:30	Review Meeting objectives and close	To review our performance in achieving the meeting objectives	

Primary Purpose:
To secure justice, protect the public and punish those who have broken the law

Departmental Strategic Objectives
DSO1: Strengthening democracy rights and responsibilities
DSO2: Delivering fair and simple routes to civil and family justice
DSO3: Protecting the public and reducing re-offending
DSO4: A more effective, transparent and responsive criminal justice system for victims and the public

Overarching HR Objective
To clearly define an emerging plan for HR to support the Performance and Efficiency Programme (PEP)

Meeting Objectives
To understand the latest strategies and plans of the PEP

To understand our individual skills / qualities that can support change

To create common understanding on the emerging HR plan

To agree the next 12 weeks priority deliverables

To identify the most likely blocks preventing efficient progress

To share suggestions for overcoming potential blocks

To create an action plan to progress deliverables

Meeting Culture Objectives
To build the teams confidence, clarity, and sense of personal accountability for action to take forwards the work needed to support the change programme.

To breakdown silos and increase the sense of team

Overarching objective: For HR to best support and enable the change programme at the Ministry of Justice			
Timing	**Session Name**	**Facilitation Objectives**	**Notes**
12:00	Set Up	To get the room ready to support the work	NOTE: Please can Jason do the room set up to my instructions? – I can brief him on Wednesday
12:45	Arrival and coffee?	For participants to settle, get refreshed	
13:00	Welcome	For participants to feel welcome and understand why ProMeet is facilitating	MB: BRIEF welcome: Mike Baker Brief explaination that the Organisational Development Community of Practice has funded ProMeet to help run today's meeting – over to Sean
13:01	Meeting Objectives	For participants to understand the 'agenda'	SB To run through meeting objectives
13:03	Ground Rules	For participants to agree the ground rules	SB to run though Proposed Ground rules - To listen generously to each other - To speak the truth, respectfully - To contribute to discussions freely, including on issues outside usual roles - To be fully present (energetically, and also phones and blackberrys etc. off) - To respect that everyone has a part of the truth and a part of the answer *Any others that people want to propose?*
13:04	Reframing and a the joy	For participants to know they have other	SB: We are all living in uncertain times, you in a

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Overarching objective: For HR to best support and enable the change programme at the Ministry of Justice			
Timing	**Session Name**	**Facilitation Objectives**	**Notes**
	of a Negative Capability	ways of seeing change	change process particularly. Share 2 personally empowering ideas briefly with you.
13:06	The change begins now: Worries and skills	For participants to feel confident (under clear leadership)	Mike Baker - HR is core to the implementing the PEP - We can help make it go as smoothly as possible - Change is a time for professionals to step up just as it is a time of organisational and personal renewal. - Today is a planning meeting, our key meeting objective to plan the next 3 months work to best support the PEP - I'm going to bring you right up to date with the latest news of the changes in a moment, but before I do I'd like to hear two things from everyone 1. What is any question/worry/ concern that you have that will stop you from being present and productive today 2. The key skill / quality you have that makes a really useful difference during times of change
13:10	The team: Worries/Concerns	For participants to own the meeting, air any individual 'show stopping' worries and share	SB to facilitate. Use Gridcards, 2 mins to jot down 2, then 1 min to hear from everyone

Overarching objective: For HR to best support and enable the change programme at the Ministry of Justice			
Timing	**Session Name**	**Facilitation Objectives**	**Notes**
	Skills in supporting change	skills they have to support change	
13:30	Responding to 'show stopping worries or concerns'	For senior managers to seek to give reassurances/ (truth)	To try to do this in 'non parental' way – **very** Adult to Adult
13:40	MoJ Change	For participants to understand; - Drivers of change - Key change targets - Likely impacts of change on MoJ as a whole - Headlines as to what this means for HR	Ideally a pithy, focussed, clear and brief overview from Mike Baker 10mins would be ideal
13:50	Questions for clarification	For participants to seek answers from questions for clarification	Working in 3's to distil the SINGLE KEY question for clarification the 3 has
14:00	Objectives and process	For participants to understand the workshop objectives and process	Brief run through the Objectives and Process and 1 min on how to get the best out of a ProMeeting
14:05	HR Plan Overview	For participants to get overview of emergent HR plan	Brief overview – 10 mins Headline themes and c35 projects on wallchart
14:15	HR Plan: Gaps	For participants to identify gaps in the plan	Small (cross functional 'silo breaking') groups of 5 to identify any gaps in the plan

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Overarching objective: For HR to best support and enable the change programme at the Ministry of Justice			
Timing	**Session Name**	**Facilitation Objectives**	**Notes**
			10 mins to review plan, and find gaps 2 mins per group to feedback
14:35	Tea/Coffee		
14:50	HR Plan: Priorities, Ownership, deadlines and deliverables	For participants to agree the immediate priorities and timelines of actioning each of the deliverables	1. Individuals get 2 mins to identify 5 priorities on A4 copy PEP plan 2. Make visible using dots 3. Any thing which is a priority with no dots? 4. Individuals to take off the wallchart each of the activities they own 5. Check any left over that need to be owned 6. Populate each with deliverables and deadlines that are needed for the activities to progress PEP 5 mins to work alone 25 mins to share All go up onto wallchart – creating a large visible plan
14:20	HR Plan: What does it tell us?	For group to learn what cocreated plan tell the team	Conversation
15:50	Blocks and Suggestions	For participants to identify the habitual,	Small (cross functional 'silo breaking') groups of 3

Overarching objective: For HR to best support and enable the change programme at the Ministry of Justice			
Timing	**Session Name**	**Facilitation Objectives**	**Notes**
	to overcome	behavioural or cultural blocks that might (unwittingly) hinder For participants to share practical suggestions to overcome the blocks	to identify one or 2 most likely blocks "We will potentially block our own progress by…" 5 mins to identify 1 or 2 KEY blocks and suggestions as to how each block might be overcome
16:10	*Commitments*	*For participants (especially senior people) to make any commitments that will help the potential blocks be overcome*	
16:20	Action Planning	For participants to identify personal actions they will take to ensure progress	5 mins alone, then group action planning - The Action gridcards will be reviewed at the next meeting
16:35	Gaps in Actions and Priorities	For participants to identify any gaps between the agreed priorities and the actions	
16:45	Learning	For participants to learn about change	
16:45	Review Meeting Objectives and Close	To review our performance in achieving the meeting objectives	

DWP Organisation Development Meeting: Evaluation results

This document shows the results and unedited comments from the evaluation of a trial of a new meeting method. The meeting had twenty two participants, all DWP Organisation Development staff. The five hour meeting had the following objectives:

> To gain a shared understanding of what's happening to progress changes to OC and L&D within DWP, JCP and PDCS

> To explore our collective knowledge and experience of change to ensure we strengthen and apply our collective professionalism in support of the OC and L&D change programme

It will be used with the evaluation of a similar meet at MoJ, to present a case study of meeting effectiveness to the cross government Organisational Development and Change Community of Practice, facilitated by the National School for Government.

1. Better or Worse
Compared to other meetings you have had like this, overall, was it better or worse?

17 ☐Better
4 ☐Neither better or Worse
1 ☐Worse

*What was the **biggest** reason that it was better or worse?*

Better comments
- Encouragement of participation, Very attentive, focussed. Objective facilitation.
- Involving everyone, Moving away from Chalk and Talk, A developmental approach in its own right – useful for our events.
- Really encourages people to join in and take an active part in the day. Nice relaxed atmosphere
- Active participation encouraged everyone to share their experiences, although it did take some people out of their comfort zone.
- All contributed, all views given equal weight.
- It allowed everyone a voice, and also gave a focus and structure to the meeting.
- Very professional facilitation. Well organised but flexible and responsive to the needs of the group. Maintained Interest.
- The process helped keep us on track, focus.
- Clear structure, excellent facilitator.
- Engagement of all meeting participants.
- Effective engagement/facilitation.
- Sharing, community feel, beginning, middle and end – it flowed.
- More participation and sharing.
- Good means of keeping focus on sometimes intangible subjects.
- Very good facilitator, liked the gridcards and the boards.
- Better as kept down verbosity/more focussed.
- Good to have an independent facilitator.
- Used before but low better this time.
- Felt freer not to comment!

Neither better or worse comments
- Neither – never been before.

Worse Comments
- Not Authentic

3. Meeting Objectives
This meeting stated two objectives, how well did you think each objective was met?
(1 is poor and 5 is excellent)

To gain a shared understanding of what's happening to progress changes to OC and L&D within DWP, JCP and PDCS

1   2   3   4   5   **Average score 3.9**

To explore our collective knowledge and experience of change to ensure we strengthen and apply our collective professionalism in support of the OC and L&D change programme

1   2   3   4   5   **Average score 4.0**

3. Meeting Objectives
This meeting stated two objectives, how well did you think each objective was met?
(1 is poor and 5 is excellent)

To gain a shared understanding of what's happening to progress changes to OC and L&D within DWP, JCP and PDCS

4. This meeting used objectives to drive the meeting process, in your opinion was that better or worse than using an agenda?

19   ☐Better
2   ☐Neither better or Worse
1   ☐Worse

Why?

Better comments
- Keeps us on message.
- In my opinion the day flowed better. Sometimes, particularly if there is a full agenda, the temptation is to rush through it.
- Sometimes structured agendas are too rigid as timescales for each item may not be sufficient
- Enabled us to change focus as we went along.
- Agendas are very fixed and don't focus on outcomes.
- You can measure outcomes better.
- Clarity about the purpose discussing what we did and the end result we were hoping to get.
- Provided a focus and clarity of outcomes.
- More goal directed, easy to measure whether it was achieved (rather than just ticking off agenda items)
- More clarity – stayed on track. Had a sense of direction, more manageable and targeted.
- Less formal, more open to discussion.
- For when one topic is involved, i.e. in this case change in HR OC etc.
- Gives purpose and encourages reflection.
- More focussed on taking action after meeting.

Neither better or worse comments
- Sometimes an agenda would be more appropriate.
- This is not new but did work.

Worse Comments
- Facilitator did not 'relax' group – little use of humour, atmosphere tense.
- Worse as it didn't really move us on a lot – gimmicky – stories one source of knowledge/ research evidence should be focussed on too.

5. Resources: wallchart and gridcards

The meeting used gridcards and a wallchart, to get everyone's input, and to visibly progress and plan did these:

20 ☐ help the meeting?

2 ☐ Neither better or Worse

0 ☐ hinder the meeting?

Why?

Better comments

- Visually appealing, organised, methodical.
- Evidence based. Can't say 'you were asleep'. Structured.
- A brilliant visual statement of all that has been said throughout the day – powerful.
- Encouraged full participation and gridcards were clearly visible for all to see.
- Gave a visual focus.
- I thought this method was excellent. It encouraged everyone to participate. Gave visual signs of progress, was available for all to see. Gave structureand order.
- Inclusive process and you can't hide.
- A structure and made it visible + a record of outputs.
- Good visuals, reminds/records.
- Visual story. Everyone participates.
- You could see it all up there & move things around. Provided clear overview.
- Its good for specific subjects. Could get a bit boring if overused.
- Really liked it so much better than reams of flipchart or loads of post-it notes.
- Visible but only if information is captured and circulated to participants following the event.
- Focussed people in capturing main points in a concise way.
- Record for writing up afterwards.

Neither better or worse comments

- Neither, not a big factor in success or otherwise for me, might have been more help to meeting sponsor.

6. Do you think this kind of meeting system could be useful at DWP?

20   ☐Yes (some very)
1   ☐Neither better or Worse
1   ☐No

What are the main reasons for you saying yes or no?

Better comments
- Keeps flow, is more stimulating and inclusive.
- Applicable to other situations.
- A brilliant visual statement of all that has been said throughout the day – powerful.
- Sharing experiences was helpful.
- Not necessarily for all meetings, but useful to have as an option.
- You should experience some of the meetings I attend.
- Quality of outputs to build on.
- Standard format – good with multiple stakeholders.
- Yes, because everyone gets heard.
- Encouraged everyone to participate, focussed and achieved objectives.
- Encourages individual thought and sharing of experience and ideas.
- Focussed, inclusive.
- For some events when one particular topics being focussed on which most are not – when an agenda might be better.
- Good focus on the process and emphasis on action and learning outcomes.
- Full participation.
- To get opinions.
- Gets people talking.

Neither better or worse comments
- No strong opinion either way – not a new approach.

Worse Comments
- No real gain – expensive for what it is.

7. Could you see this kind of meeting system being more broadly adopted by DWP?

17 ❑Yes
4 ❑Not sure/did not answer
1 ❑No

What are the main reasons for you saying yes or no?

Better comments
- Much needed – new approach to a stale, institutionalised approach.
- Encourages people to get more involved. Much more so than an agenda.
- I think it <u>should</u> be adopted. I was dreading a whole day of sitting on my butt, hearing one person after another droning on. Felt more engaged and involved in this meeting than I have for a long time.
- Reduces risks, records a you go along.
- Moves meeting forwards – everyone participates.
- - for some meetings.
- Meetings take time and money – could help business efficiency.
- Yes, for reasons above, but it does take an investment in time so would need to be carefully thought out when used in parts of organisation where delivery time is ring fenced.
- I would like to see it used more widely and would hope that we (as a department) would be open to trying this method. Need to consider the cultural setting.
- For some purposes.
- Obtains outcomes.

Worse Comments
- We should use internal resources – this sends entirely the wrong message.

MoJ HR Planning meeting 30th October 2008: Evaluation results

This document shows the results and unedited comments from the evaluation of a trial of a new meeting method. The five hour meeting had the following objectives:

Meeting Objectives
To understand the latest strategies and plans of the PEP

To understand our individual skills / qualities that can support change

To create common understanding on the emerging HR plan

To agree the next 12 weeks priority deliverables

To identify the most likely blocks preventing efficient progress

To share suggestions for overcoming potential blocks

To create an action plan to progress deliverables

It will be used with the evaluation of a similar meet at DWP, to present a case study of meeting effectiveness to the cross government Organisational Development and Change Community of Practice, facilitated by the National School for Government.

1. Better or Worse
Compared to other meetings you have had like this, overall, was it better or worse?

6 out of 6 Better

*What was the **biggest** reason that it was better or worse?*

- Well arranged and facilitated. Interesting people with a lot to say.
- Effectiveness of open / free discussion in team building
- Structure, timekeeping, flexibility
- It was different in that the order was very deliberate and visually stimulating.
- Use of the grid rather than someone on flipchart duty, Kept us focussed
- Well structured with a focus on action

2. Participation
What three key words would you use to describe the quality of the participation

Positive	Informed	Operational-focus
Engaged	Holistic	Focussed
Strong		
Energetic	Inclusive	Meaningful
Energetic	Targeted	Open
Engaged	Positive	Pragmatic

3. Meeting Objectives
This meeting stated seven objectives, how well did you think each objective was met?
(1 is poor and 5 is excellent)

							Total	Average
To understand the latest strategies and plans of the PEP	5	4	5	4	2	4	24	**4.0**
To understand our individual skills / qualities that can support change	4	5	3	4	4	4	24	**4.0**
To create common understanding on the emerging HR plan	4	5	4	4	4	4	25	**4.2**
To agree the next 12 weeks priority deliverables	3	3	4	5	4	4	23	**3.8**
To identify the most likely blocks preventing efficient progress	3	4	5	4	4	4	24	**4.0**
To share suggestions for overcoming potential blocks	2	4	5	4	4	3	22	**3.7**
To create an action plan to progress deliverables	2	3	4	4	2	4	19	**3.2**
To build the teams confidence, clarity, and sense of personal accountability for action to take forwards the work needed to support the change programme.	3	3	3	4	5	4	22	**3.7**
How would you rate the **overall** workshop facilitation	4	4	5	5	5	4	27	**4.5**

6. This meeting used objectives to drive the meeting process, in your opinion was that better or worse than using an agenda?

6/6 Better:
- You have goals against which you can measure.
- More measurable in terms of outcomes
- We could discuss more than one objective at a time and in any order
- Helped keep the discussion outcome focussed.
- Allows for Clarity of purpose and flexibility in approach

7. Resources: wallchart and gridcards
The meeting used gridcards and a wallchart, to get everyone's input, and to visibly progress and plan did these:

6/6 Help the meeting:
- No-one on flipchart duty, Everyone involved, To the point, Flexible to fit our needs rather than making our meeting fir the system
- They enabled participants to see, hear, touch and speak to the activities which created a sense of ownership too.
- Enables grouping of items/issues
- Visual clusters reinforce connections between actions/issues.
- Visual, and allowing for creativity
- A plan was created from everyone's input

8. Do you think this kind of meeting system could be useful at MoJ?

6/6 Yes. *What are the main reasons?*
- Something different may inspire creativity and increased involvement.
- It's good to try something different and this has the added advantage of capturing all contributions in format that is easy to 'replay' and store.
- We are not ….. creative enough naturally
- MOJ faces a number of complex challenges as it moves forwards in the spending period. This style of meeting simplifies the complex visually and with buy in of participants

9. Could you see this kind of meeting system being more broadly adopted by MoJ?

5/6 Yes. What are the main reasons for you saying yes or no?
- Yes - For large meetings that require involvement of people who are difficult to control [HR !] and to create action plans . No – small, to the point meetings as they seem to require a deal of preparation
- It is capable of being applied to other objective based processes.
- For the reason above, however MOJ needs to recognise the value of such meetings and create space and time for group planning work.

1/6 No: It would require a level of cultural change that may not be in place for a while.

10. Please tell us if you anything else that will help us evaluate ProMeet, things that you liked or things that you didn't.

- Pre and post workshop support was excellent