

Engage your audience during online sessions

Break the silence in your online sessions and let people participate more! Darek explained us how to do that using tools, tips and tricks. We'll run through the different phases of an online session and you some suggestions on how to involve your participants and get them engaged and focussed.

We have listed some suggestions. Some ideas can be done with the use of certain tools (such as Miro, Mural or Mentimeter). You'll find the list of all these tools and their links in the presentation of Darek.

Start

1. Start your online session with a 'soft opening'. Instead of getting to the point immediately, give people time to literally (or technically) enter the session. People will also have the time to mentally switch to meeting-mode.
Example: Give information about a certain project that is going on in your company.
2. Why aren't we more engaged? Because we tend to do so much more during online meetings. We send e-mails, eat our breakfast, text someone, etc. Stop doing that! When in an online session, disable your computer notifications (such as Outlook) or close the apps and put your smartphone away. That way you'll stay focussed on the topic of the session.

Preparation

1. Let participants contribute to the content of the session. You can do this on beforehand, when sending the invite.
Example: Ask which topics participants would like to see discussed or which problems they would like to solve during the meeting.

Check in

1. Start with an icebreaker to get to know each other and to get everyone in an enthusiastic and positive mindset.
2. Ask participants about their knowledge/experience of a subject or ask where they stand concerning a certain statement.
3. Use a 'glamour shot' (type your name + "Glamour shot" in Google) that best describes your state of mind. This can start a small check in conversation about everyone's mood and mindset.
4. Use a small quiz to get people in the right mind.

Gather data & generate insights

1. You can brainstorm in many different ways. You can do a Squad/Team health check to see how your team scores on certain points and how you can improve other points. Use a spider diagram to check the importance of certain items.
2. Use the Lean Coffee method: As a group you decide on which subjects you want to discuss.
3. Have a break! Online meetings are mentally exhausting and challenging. Give people time to take a breath by adding a small break.
4. Or perform an energy level check. Let participants physically show you how much they are in need of a break.

Decide what to do

1. Give participants a number of votes (e.g. 3 votes). Let them vote for the ideas that are on the table. Give priority or choose the ideas with the most votes.
2. Determine the impact versus effort/feasibility of tasks together. Based on this diagram you can decide which tasks to handle first.

Check out

1. Formalize the water cooler/coffee machine moment. Instead of ending a meeting and letting everyone run off to the coffee machine and complain about the meeting, create this moment DURING the meeting. Let everyone complain, share their thoughts on the meeting. Ask what they would have done differently during this meeting or what they disagree with.
2. Check the mindset of the participants. Example: Ask if the meeting subjects were in line with their expectations.

Meetings can be made more interactive with tools and without tools. Make use of the camera, ask people to physically do something (a health check, thumbs up or down...). This increases the engagement of your participants.

Remember, try using one tip or tool at the time. Don't overload your meeting with tools! But most of all: experiment, discover and try some of these out!