IFMA Facility Fusion’s Workplace Evolutionaries Educational Session
The FM’s Role In Building Community At Work
By Lisa Whited, Senior Associate, Advanced Workplace Associates
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Q&A Session

FMI, please feel free to contact Lisa Whited at (M) 207-329-2189 or (E) LWhited@advanced-workplace.com

How do you engage workforce positively in the last quarter of the project?

The short answer is don’t wait until the last quarter. As early as possible, employees should be engaged and invited into a conversation, using the methods I shared in the workshop.

However, I’ll be a realist here, and say that if you do find yourself down to the last quarter and no change management initiatives have taken place, starting with the Working Together Agreement Workshop is a great way to have a conversation with your employees about their work behaviors and patterns.

What’s the most creative way you’ve used the Meeting Sift tool?

I have used it for non-profit strategic planning, workplace focus groups, community-wide input meetings for proposed community change, with college students, etc.

There are more bells and whistles on the Meeting Sift tool then I actually know how to use, but what I love about it is that all people can participate and it is a much faster way to facilitate a meeting.

As you saw in the session, however, I don’t only use this tool. I firmly believe that one-on-one, face-to-face discussions are critical to building community, connections and understanding.

How do you get leaders on board?

As I mentioned, I don’t think people are as averse to change as they are to having authentic conversations to share what they really are thinking. To do it well, a conversation needs to be facilitated by a neutral party so no one person dominates the conversation and all voices are given equal weight.

The best way to get the leaders on board is to have a Vision Clarification session with them, where they identify their organization/business priorities, share those priorities with each other, and then think about their legacy.

I ask them, “What is the impact you want to have in 10-15-20 years? I have them work in small groups (3 people per group) and have them write out their “headline” – what would the headline be that they want to read in an international publication 10, 15, 20 years out, that resonates with their values?

They then share their group headlines (I have them create a “front page” as if it were a magazine cover or front page of a newspaper), identify the commonalities they see with their peers, and then we talk about what might need to happen/change to make those headlines/visions come about.

How critical is top Leader engagement/sponsorship?

The leader’s buy-in is critical as is the leader’s tenacity on staying laser-focused on the vision. Clear vision and an ability to articulate the “why” of the change so all levels of employees understand the “why”, is essential to a successful result.

If a leader said, “Just go make it happen and I don’t care what method you use, as long as you don’t touch my office or make me change,” then I would tell him/her to not even bother.

Who makes the final decision?

I am not sure, specifically, what this question is referring to. However, if the question is about who makes the final decision about a change, I believe that after a thorough discovery/research phase has occurred, then the recommendations should be presented to the leadership team. During this discussion, it is important to remind the leaders of their agreed-upon vision and organization/business priorities.
Once a decision is made, it is important to go back to employees and share what was decided and the “why” of the decision, and again, to continue to provide them updates and invite input where possible.

My experience has been that this two-way communication leads to greater trust, buy-in, and richer ideas for the project. Every time employees come together, they build connections with one another - this is the all-important community-building that we talked about. And, of course, this helps with that critical component of ownership.

**How do you balance the people centered-ness with the expenses/reality?**

I believe this is question is talking about the cost of bringing people together for a 45-60 minute discussion. To my mind, this is a very nominal investment when you see the level of engagement and connection rise within the group, not to mention – the key point of my talk – the level of ownership that results. Ownership at this level leads to people’s engagement and ultimate buy-in/support of a change.

**Small group or large group – which size is best for optimal results?**

Before I read Susan Cain’s book *Quiet: The Power of an Introvert in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*, I would facilitate workshops and have people work in small groups of 5-6 people. After her book, I realized that even in a group of 5 or 6, you will have at least 1 person who won’t participate.

So, that is when I changed my method to 2-3 people per group. When I facilitate employee workshops, I have people connect 1:1 and I have them work with a different person almost every time I ask a question.

When I facilitate the leadership Headline/Vision workshop, I have them work in groups of 3 or 4. But, even in the leadership discussions, I will also have the participants answer some questions 1:1. It is amazing how many people share with me that they met people they did not know (in large organizations), or had a deeper level conversation than they have had before with someone. Connections happen. People really listen to each other. And that is when understanding happens.

**Examples of case studies?**

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