

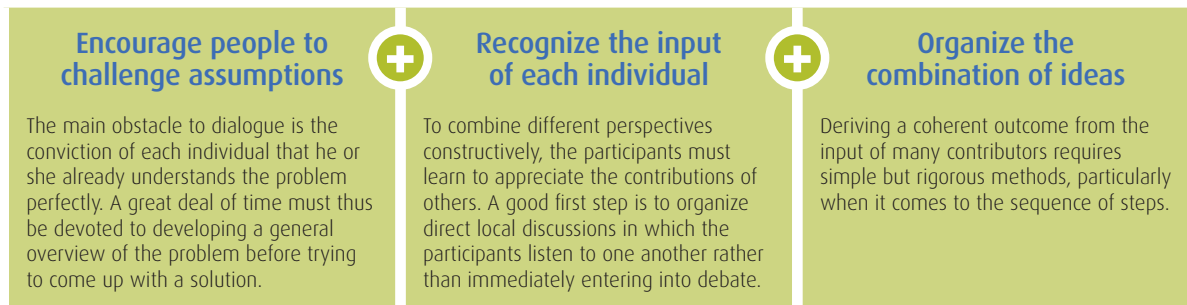


Four methods to organize large-scale productive dialogue

The challenge

Some subjects justify engaging a large number of participants to capitalize on their collective knowledge and creativity. Yet, how can you get a large group to collaborate effectively? How does one manage efforts to produce concrete, relevant results? Although some find the informal and open character of participative seminars to be a source of concern, these types of events are a surprisingly efficient way to get a large group to collaborate productively, provided discussions are structured effectively.

Three basic principles



Four participative seminar variants

WORLD CAFÉ

Objectives

Stimulate exchanges of ideas and collective reflection, build a shared comprehension of the situation, explore a complex problem, encourage cooperation, etc.

Key Principles

- Grouped around small tables, participants are invited to exchange their points of view on the subject and keep track of their discussions by drawing on the tablecloth.
- They then change tables and share what they learned from the discussion with the next table.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Objectives

Focus on what is working to imagine possible future options and trigger a dynamic that capitalizes on the strengths of the company.

Key Principles

- Participants share their best experiences on the topic at hand (e.g., cooperation), and identify the company's strengths in this regard and the vision they would like to pursue.
- They then develop an improvement project based on these strengths and this vision.

DESIGN SHOP

Objectives

Gather various stakeholders concerned by a problem to identify a solution leveraging collective creativity, e.g., design a strategy, rethink a process, deploy a complex restructuring, etc.

Key Principles

- A three-step process is conducted:
- *Scan*: Participants are invited to rediscover the problem from new angles;
 - *Focus*: They focus on finding solutions;
 - *Act*: They design an action plan.

FUTURE SEARCH

Objectives

Get participants to agree on a common project and define an action plan to reach it, e.g.: Design a strategy, have conflicting units collaborate with one another, etc.

Key Principles

- All concerned parties share their perspective on the past and its impact on the present.
- They share their respective scenarios of an ideal future.
- On this basis, they identify shared aspirations and collectively define an action plan.