

Organisational Effectiveness

Methods for Strategic Collaboration

All of Emerge's work involves facilitation or a facilitative approach to some extent. We believe that facilitation is the process of enabling groups to work cooperatively and effectively to bring out the best in each other.

Sometimes, this process can bring about conflict. Getting people together in a room doesn't automatically mean they will co-operate. This is where the power of facilitation makes a difference. In circumstances where people of diverse backgrounds, interests and capabilities come together, there is the potential for misunderstandings and compromise. Facilitation enables issues such as these to surface in a safe environment, thereby providing the conditions for group process to manage the issues and allow solutions to emerge.

The facilitator does not solve the problem; their role is to work with the group process to ensure the meeting achieves consensus. Emerge offers the following three facilitation tools and techniques:

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a major breakthrough in organization development, L&D, and in problem solving in general. AI is based on the assertion that "problems" are often the result of our own perspectives and perceptions of phenomena, eg, if we look for problems we'll find them. And if we perceive something as a "problem," we tend to constrain our ability to address it.

At the heart of Appreciative Inquiry is the understanding that positive change is informed by the best of the past, grounded in what is most alive in the present, and inspired by common dreams of the future. AI focuses energy on the positive and builds upon it. AI assumes that:

- We create more effective organizations by focusing on what we want more of, not what we want less of
- Whatever we want more of already exists, even if only in small quantities
- Through the act of inquiry we create the very social realities we are trying to understand
- Inquiring together into the best examples of what we want more of creates its own momentum toward creating more positive organizations.

The approach has revolutionized many practices, including strategic planning and organization development.

The World Cafe (TWC)

The World Café is an innovative yet simple method for hosting conversations about questions that matter. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, or community. As a process, the World Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims.

Using design principles that have been tried and tested over the years, TWC has the power to harness the power of conversation for business and social value for anyone seeking creative ways to foster authentic dialogue in which the goal is thinking together and creating actionable knowledge.



Address: VBox 881746
Singapore 919191
Office: +65 63465282
www.emergeassociates.com

Co Reg No: 53091904D

Open Space Technology

“Over the last 20+ years, it has also become clear that opening space, as an intentional leadership practice, can create inspired organizations, where ordinary people work together to create extraordinary results with regularity.”

www.openspaceworld.org

Open Space Technology enables small to very large groups to address complex, important issues and achieve meaningful results quickly. It has the potential to create breakthrough decision making, innovation, participation, and knowledge exchange or conflict resolution amongst many other uses.

The “technology” is a process or method. Attendees are invited to generate the meeting agenda as well as participate by leading small group break-out sessions during the meeting time. The central tenet is “the invitation to take responsibility for discussing your passion”.

Success stories of OST: Rockport Shoes held a 3-day, 300-person company-wide strategy conference in one of their warehouses and stumbled onto a couple of brand new product lines that netted \$18 million in their first year of sales. The idea came from the security guard and made the previously quite skeptical CFO very happy.

– Harrison Owen

Following are some examples of how these tools can be used.

Organisational Goal	Intervention
Low morale and lack of trust due to a series of merger. Goal is engaged staff, shared organisational values and culture	Visioning and organisational culture shaping - bringing stakeholders together using AI
Innovation, new product lines, action research.	Reach out to all parts of the organisation to get input using Open Space Technology with representatives from all departments of the organisation.
Organisation has moved on and reshaped itself. Need a new set of mission, vision and values that is co-owned.	Collaborative consensus using a blend of World Cafe and
Need to resolve conflict between production and management. Goal – a deeper understanding from both sides and willingness to co-operate.	Appreciative Inquiry blended with open space technology – start from where you want to be using appreciative interview.
Need to restructure senior management team in response to industry trends. The goal - a matrix to create synergism through shared responsibility between project and functional management.	Appreciative inquiry to explore the skills and value people currently offer. Visioning to explore benefits of a matrix. Blended with world cafe to explore what resources, capabilities etc the team needs to implement new structure.



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