

Leadership Tip Sheet: Group Note Taking Tool

Leadership tip sheets are one way to share what we have learned from the hundreds of leaders we have built enduring relationships with. They are meant to inspire, provoke, encourage, and support your courageous leadership. They are not advice or best practice, but pure, delightful, positive wisdom from the shared territory of leadership. Enjoy!

We recommend this group note-taking tool as it supports full participation in meetings and has a number of additional benefits.

This is a simple and elegant process to address the challenge of being a note-taker and fully engaging in the group discussion. Here is how it works.

At the beginning of a meeting, inform everyone that the group will pause at the end of each agenda item or topic to collectively construct the notes. Invite each person to jot down notes as the discussion progresses. Ask for a volunteer at the beginning of the meeting to write what the group later "dictates" as notes. Having a laptop computer available to the volunteer enhances efficiency, but is not necessary. When the group comes to the end of each agenda item or topic, someone asks the following questions:

1. "What do we want to remember about this discussion?"
2. "Would someone state what was decided?"
3. "Do we all agree with that summary?"

The volunteer scribe captures the key points of the discussion and what the group agrees to.

Group notes are shorter than meeting notes as there is no attempt to capture the evolving themes and nuances of the discussion. The focus is on collectively agreeing upon the highlights. A significant benefit of this tool is that the process ensures consensus on what was discussed as well as what was decided. This tool also addresses the often hidden power of the note-taker to interpret what took place and increases group ownership in outcomes.

Although this technique may take more time in a meeting than traditional note taking, with experience, groups using this method become more focused and adept at synthesizing essential points. Let us know how this tool works for you.

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