
QuickTip – Talk Circuit

Talk Circuit is a pairs activity that elicits ideas from everyone and gets those ideas in front of the entire group.

When to Use

Use Talk Circuit when you want to create energy, encourage participation even from quiet participants, and help participants get to know each other. It works well with a large group.

Procedure

1. Pose an open-ended question to the group that you would like everyone to express an opinion on. For example, “What are the biggest opportunities you see for our organization over the next 12 months?”
2. Allow a short period of quiet time for all participants to silently write their responses.
3. Ask everyone to pair with a partner. One person in each pair should start by summarizing his responses while the other listens and asks clarifying questions. After two to three minutes, ask them to switch roles.
4. When time is up, ask participants to switch partners and repeat, but for a shorter time, such as two minutes each. Encourage people to improve their responses from one round to the next as they hear new ideas from partners.
5. Continue this for a third round, limited to one minute per person.
6. Gather the group back together. Share the ideas in the whole group and record them in a visible location, such as on a flipchart.

Considerations

1. The QuickTip for Visioning describes a variation of this technique that is tuned specifically to elicit ideas about a desired future state.
2. Since this technique requires everyone to participate, it is a good way to involve quiet voice and minority opinions. Most of the action happens in pairs rather than in the large group, appealing to people who prefer speaking in small settings.
3. Keep the times short to nudge participants to prioritize sharing key points. This also keeps the energy level up.
4. It is not necessary to do so many rounds that everyone speaks to everyone else.