Virtual Meetings: “A new reality?”

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Presentation Overview

• This presentation will:
  - Describe how the I-80 Corridor System Master Plan study is being facilitated;
  - Discuss Doyle a Straus Interaction Method for meetings;
  - Adaptations for virtual environments; and
  - Closing thoughts.

• Please go to www.i80vision.org
I-80 CSMP Study Organization
Conversation Level Dynamics

Community Level
Typical complex of public, private, nonprofit, and civic sector interactions. Actors are coping with modern issues in more or less traditional one-way communications strategies.

Task Force Level
Large groups (up to 100 members) broadly recruited from a diverse range of potential corridor stakeholders. The groups organized around four areas of interest: planning, technical, operational, and implementation. Communication is typically information exchange.
Conversation Level Dynamics

**Working Group Level**

Small groups (up to 20 members) recruited based on topical interest. Groups have a consultant chair and NDOT co chair to facilitate a self-initiated dialogue. Dialogue dynamics are encouraged and the group charts its own course and established their own work products based on their topic.

**Leadership Level**

Group comprised of executive level organizational individuals with decision making authority. This includes the consultant support team. Conversations focus on facilitating the hort and long term group initiatives.
How to Make Meeting Work

Michael Doyle and David Straus (1975)

Basic element in collaborative practice

Begins with why meetings fail: lack of focus; too many issues at one time; confusing process and content; abusing power;

Successful meetings: content focus; process focus; facilitate open balanced conversation; protect participants from personal attacks; and clear understanding of roles and responsibilities

Seek win-win solutions
How to Make Meeting Work

Michael Doyle and David Straus (1975) continued

**Facilitator** – neutral meeting leader focused on the meeting process and member interactions.

**Recorder** – individual recording the group's conversation in neutral terms to capture the short term memory for the group's ongoing work.

**Participant** – all other meeting attendees responsible for the content dialogue that is the focus of the meeting.
How to Make Meeting Work

The problem people

Latecomer – always late
Early leaver – always leaves early
Broken record – always brings up the same points.
Doubting Thomas – puts down everything
Head-shaker – Dismissive body language
Dropout – Sits in the back of the room
Whisperer – Constant talking to neighbors
Loudmouth – Talks too much and loudly
How to Make Meeting Work

The problem people (continued)

Attacker – gets personal
Interpreter – speaks for other people
Gossiper – introduces hearsay and gossip.
Know-it-all – overuses credentials
Backseat driver – tells what should be done
Busybody – always checking messages
Interrupter – starts talking before other finish
Teacher's pet – always looking for approval
Meetings Done Virtually

Adaptations for Conference Calls

**Require RSVPs** – know who plans to attend and send that information to all group members

**Roll Call** – call on all RSVPs to ensure they are in attendance and ask for others on the phone (people want to know who they are speaking with)

**Chat or Muter** – use the first five minutes of the meeting for everyone to settle in (joining a call in progress disturbs everyone)
Meetings Done Virtually

Adaptations for Conference Calls

Provide topical information to everyone – without the ability to do an effective group memory, members need to follow the conversation with a common text.

Call on attendees – constantly ask for ideas and opinions from attendees (silence is not acquiescence).

Constantly summarize and clarify – group memory for short term information must be done verbally in a conference call (your personal notes will look like spaghetti when the meeting is over).
Meetings Done Virtually

Adaptations for Conference Calls

Use short web surveys between meetings – surveys provide clarification and further organization of information (plus people like to hear the results)

Use a web page for the collective memory of the group's work – provides transparency and openness

Announce who you are – members have different abilities in recognizing voices so announce who is speaking until people are comfortable
Closing Thoughts

Still identifying strategies for problem attendees (we may not have any)

Strategies for recharging after facilitating a conference call

Enhance our feedback loop for the process

Excitement building for what these groups can produce